

New community radio service for Arnhem Land

ACMA has decided to make channel capacity available for a new community radio service in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory.

ACMA has made AM frequencies available for a community radio service at Nhulunbuy (1503 kHz), Yathalamarra (1593 kHz), Elcho Island (1566 kHz), Gapuwiyak (1476 kHz) and Darwin (1530 kHz). Nhulunbuy, Yathalamarra, Elcho Island and Gapuwiyak are located some 600 km east of Darwin.

The decision follows a proposal from the Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc. (ARDS), an aspirant community radio group wishing to establish

a community broadcasting service in the Yolngu Matha language, based in Nhulunbuy with translator services across north-east Arnhem Land and Darwin.

ARDS has been operating services on a temporary community broadcasting licence at Nhulunbuy and Darwin since May 2004.

On 1 November 2005, ACMA released for comment a proposal that MF-AM band channel capacity be made available for a permanent community radio service in Arnhem Land. There were six submissions, all which all supported the proposal.

ACMA will call for applications for the licence later in 2006.

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Variation to analog television licence area plan and digital channel plans for Tasmania

ACMA has released a variation to the licence area plan for analog television for Tasmania. The variation adds new channels, deletes channels no longer needed or operated by broadcasters and varies the conditions of some of the technical specifications for existing national and commercial analog television services.

ACMA has also released a variation to the digital channel plan for the southern region of Tasmania. The variation includes the allotment and assignment of channels for digital repeater services at Acton Road, Bicheno, Cygnet, Dover, Dover South, Geeveston, Maydena, New Norfolk, Orford, Rokeby, Strathgordon and Swansea in the Tasmania licence area.

Draft and final variations to licence area plans, and explanatory papers are on the ACMA website, www.acma.gov.au (and go to ACMA > Publications > Radio & Television > Broadcasting > Planning > Final licence area plans (LAPs)), or telephone 1800 810 241 for a copy.

The digital channel plan sets out the channels the existing commercial and national television broadcasters will use for their digital transmissions. ACMA has also identified as yet unassigned channels that may be used for other purposes, including datacasting.

In finalising the variation to the digital channel plan ACMA weighed up factors including spectrum efficiency; the need to minimise any changes that viewers will have to make to their existing reception equipment to receive digital broadcasts; and the desirability of broadcasters being able to use their existing transmission facilities to broadcast digital television services.

Additional radio channel capacity for Dubbo

ACMA has decided to make additional channel capacity available for radio services in the Dubbo region of New South Wales.

ABC services in Dubbo and for the 2Z00 commercial radio service at Dubbo and Wellington will use the new capacity.

Dubbo is approximately 100 km from the nearest high power transmitter for ABC services at Mt Cenn Craich (Central Western Slopes) and this transmitter does not provide adequate coverage in Dubbo.

While ACMA has planned the new channels, establishing and beginning the new services is a matter for the ABC and 2Z00. ACMA has determined the following frequencies for ABC services in Dubbo—95.9 MHz, 96.7 MHz, 97.5 MHz, 98.3 MHz and 99.1 MHz.

When 2Z00 begins its services in Dubbo and Wellington, they will operate on 91.1 MHz and 89.5 MHz respectively.

LPON exclusion zone in Tasmania removed

ACMA is now accepting applications for low power open narrowcasting services in the Mt Barrow region of Tasmania. Although the FM radio sub-band 87.5–88.0 MHz is available for low power open narrowcasting services, in some areas the availability of all, or some, of these frequencies is restricted because of the potential for interference to the reception of other broadcasting services. These areas are given protection radii, and the frequencies that can be assigned for low power open narrowcasting services within these protection zones are detailed in ACMA's LPON Planning Model.

The protection radii around Mt Barrow have now been removed because the channel 3 ABC television transmitter is no longer operating. Applications for services in the Mt Barrow region must comply with the criteria specified in the LPON Planning Model. For more information, contact Janice Carle, telephone: (02) 6219 5490 or email: janice.carle@acma.gov.au