

New scheme to reimburse consumer code development costs

Under a new scheme, telecommunications industry bodies and associations can now apply to ACMA for reimbursement of the refundable costs they incur in developing consumer-related telecommunications industry codes.

Industry self-regulatory bodies and associations will be able to recover the costs of consumer code development from industry through carrier licence charges collected annually by ACMA, which are incurred by carriers in an amount proportionate to their market share.

The scheme applies to telecommunications industry codes that deal principally with consumer-related issues and are submitted to ACMA for registration.

Refundable costs are able to be approved by ACMA before a code is developed, which will provide increased funding certainty. Refundable costs include the costs of securing professional services and specialist advice to assist in timely code development.

Some costs are non-refundable, such as costs not wholly related to the development of a code or that have been funded through other means (for example, by membership fees, salary or Commonwealth funding), but ACMA will consider all other categories of costs. Costs may only be reimbursed if ACMA is satisfied that the total of the claim is reasonable.

Bodies or associations that represent a particular section of

the telecommunications industry can apply for a declaration of eligibility for reimbursement at the time a code is proposed, and are required to provide an estimate of the total costs they expect to incur. A declaration of eligibility will be in force for two years and a claim for reimbursement can be made in that period once the code is developed and submitted to ACMA for registration.

Only certain codes are covered by the reimbursement scheme. Codes that do not deal wholly or mainly with the relationship between carriage service providers and their retail customers are excluded, such as codes that deal wholly or mainly with community safeguards or network operability. The scheme does not cover codes made under other legislation overseen

by ACMA, such as codes made under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*.

Until now, telecommunications industry bodies and associations have directly borne most of the cost of code development, with the exception of financial assistance provided to some consumer representatives by the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts under subsection 593(1) of the Telecommunications Act. Funding arrangements under this subsection will be varied to prevent duplication of funding.

A guide to the reimbursement scheme and online application forms are on the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au (go to Industry > Codes > Reimbursement of Code Development Costs).

TEMPORARY COMMUNITY BROADCASTING LICENCES ALLOCATED, 31 JANUARY-15 MARCH 2006

Licence area	Licensee	Community served	Frequency	Start	Finish	Allocated
New South Wales						
Ulladulla RA1	Milton Ulladulla & Districts Community Radio Association of Broadcasters Inc.	General	102.7 MHz	7/2/06	6/2/07	31/1/06
Coffs Harbour RA3	Coffs Harbour Christian Broadcasters Inc.	Christian	94.1 MHz	1/3/06	28/2/07	2/2/06
Taree RA3	Manning Great Lakes Christian Broadcasters Inc.	Christian	106.5 MHz	16/3/06	15/3/07	2/2/06
Narrandera RA1	Narrandera District Community Radio Inc.	General	92.3 MHz	3/5/06	2/5/07	15/3/06
Queensland						
Weipa RA1	Cape Care Association	General	94.5 MHz	22/2/06	21/2/07	31/1/06
Tiaro RA1	Tiaro Shire Community Centre Inc.	General	107.1 MHz	1/3/06	28/2/07	2/2/06
Bundaberg RA2	Bundaberg Burnett Community Broadcasting Association Inc.#	General	96.3 MHz	9/3/06	8/3/07	27/2/06
Bundaberg RA2	Bundaberg Media Aboriginal Corporation#	Aboriginal	96.3 MHz	4/7/06	28/12/06	6/3/06
Tasmania						
Oatlands RA1	Southern Midlands Community Radio Station Inc.	General	97.1 MHz	5/5/06	4/5/07	15/3/06
Victoria						
Kilmore RA1	Mitchell Community Radio Inc.	General	97.1 MHz	13/2/06	12/2/07	31/1/06
Bendigo RA4	Central Victorian Gospel Radio Inc	Christian	101.5 MHz	1/3/06	28/2/07	2/2/06
Western Australia						
Port Hedland RA2	Hedland Community Radio Inc	Aboriginal	101.3 MHz	30/1/06	29/1/07	30/1/06
Perth RA2	Capital Community Radio Inc.#	Senior Citizens	90.5 MHz	21/3/06	20/3/07	9/3/06
Perth RA2	Western Sports Media Inc.#	Sport	90.5 MHz	21/3/06	20/3/07	9/3/06

Operating under a time-share arrangements