Rebel Media [RM] operates Queensland and NSW regional commercial FM radio stations 4BRZ and 4RBL. We thank the authority for planning these long awaited radio services within our licence area.

**Bocoble**

RM support the ACMA draft Licence Area Plan (LAP) proposals for inclusion in the LAP.

Our only concern is that the depth of the ACMA 310-340° proposed protection sector towards the town of Mudgee appears excessive. It does afford 100% overspill protection to Mudgee, but it does so at the expense of notably reducing the reach with the RM licence area compared to 250w OD.

Many of those people can fortuitously receive 2MG or 2GEE adequately, but will continue to have inadequate reception of their licensed commercial services 4BRZ & 4RBL, as they are impractical to service from alternative repeater sites.

RM accept the ACMA proposed specifications, but we suggest a better outcome is achieved if the ACMA licence a revised 50 watt or 75 watt restriction for the 310-340° sector. Modelling predicts raising power to 50 watts across this sector will at best only provide patchy isolated pockets of >54 dbuV/m reception in Mudgee, with the majority of the town falling well below that. Such poor non-contiguous rural grade reception could not credibly be classed as usable reception in a town where the ACMA plans new local services for a minimum of suburban grade(>66 dbuV/m) coverage, and where 2MG and 2GEE have blanket suburban/urban grade reception.

The proposed amendment will allow 4BRZ/4RBL, with a practical directional antenna, to further its licence area reach in the populated North East and North West Sector from Mt Bocoble.

With reference to the 2GEE submission, the fact the Mt Bocoble broadcast site is contained within the Mudgee RA3 licence area does not preclude RM services operating at the site. RM remind 2GEE that RM was the incumbent solus commercial licensee for Mt Bocoble.
2GEE recently was granted a licence area extension into the RM licence area, including Mt Bocoble. That has (at 2GEE’s request) created a large geographic licence area overlap between 2GEE, 4BRZ and 4RBL, that all three broadcasters now have equal rights to serve, and by design, would rightfully be expected to create a significant signal overlap between these three services. 2GEE appear to be under the false impression that an incursion of their licence area into the RM market somehow granted them exclusive rights to our market.

The ACMA proposal is an appropriate, practical solution that successfully restricts all avoidable overspill while reaching nearly 2,000 people unserviced within our licence area. Contrary to 2GEE’s inaccurate claims, independent ACMA modelling demonstrates the ACMA proposed specifications fully protects the township of Mudgee from any overspill.

With reference to Bathurst Broadcasters submission, contrary to their claims of overspill into the Bathurst market, ACMA modelling clearly demonstrates there is no overspill into any populated part of the Bathurst licence area whatsoever. It appears their submission is commercially driven by a stated desire for Bathurst Broadcasters to also extend its services into our market.

As the incumbent commercial licencee for this region of our licence area, we look forward to the ACMA finalising 4BRZ/4RBL specifications.

**Clermont/Yungaburra**

RM strongly object to the ACMA removing CD’s 3031502 and 3030701 from the 4BRZ/4RBL licence area.

These communities have been within the RM licence area a long time, possibly as early as 1996 or before. After “two decades in our licence area, no matter how they got placed in our licence area, it is reasonable for the broadcaster and authority to consider it a permanent feature of the RM licence area after such a long, long period of time.

These communities were clearly defined as being within the designated 4BRZ licence area at the time we chose to invest and purchase the 4BRZ licence directly from the ABA, and if the ACMA now attempts to remove the right 4BRZ has always held to serve those communities, it will negatively impact and retrospectively change the nature of the licence and territory that we were offered by the authority.

Over the past 16+ years we have been broadcasting, RM have made commercial decisions in the knowledge that these communities were clearly defined as being within our licence area, and that they would be served by us in the future. We have developed regional programming, financial and marketing models that have reasonably assumed these areas would form part of a planned regional cluster. If these areas are taken from us it will invalidate those models and commercially impact RM.

We are greatly concerned the ACMA has provided no compelling evidence of an “administrative error”. We ask the ACMA to please present any evidence it has, and allow us time to consider it, before proceeding further with its current proposal to remove these communities.

Even if there is a view that an error appears 'likely to have occurred', we submit that is insufficient grounds to remove these communities from our licence area.
From what limited information we have been able to ascertain from the ACMA to date, it appears ABT/ABA documentation of LAP decisions that far back is somewhat limited, and there is no firm evidence to unequivocally support either a claim that these communities were purposefully added to the RM licence area, or accidentally added to the RM licence area. It is quite possible they were purposely added, and the ACMA can not find supporting evidence dating back that far to either support or refute that proposition. On that basis alone, with a lack of historical clear documented evidence, the ACMA should err on the side of caution and not start deleting communities from the RM licence area when there is any possibility they were meant to be there.

The ACMA noted the two areas are enclaves that can not be served from the main body of the RM licence area. This is not evidence of an error. It is the nature of the RM licence area that it contains many enclaves that are not contiguously joined with the greater body of the licence area.

The ACMA noted that the RM Clermont CD is within the Emerald RA1 licence area and that the Yungaburra CD is within the Atherton RA1 licence area. This is also not evidence of an error. The RM licence area currently overlaps dozens of other commercial radio markets, and the RM licence area already overlaps additional other CD’s within both the Emerald RA1 and Atherton RA1 licence area.

Halving the number of commercial radio services licenced to these communities can only serve to adversely reduce the future diversity and ranges of currently licences services available for retransmission.

RM has also invested its resources, in good faith, to find the best sites and specifications to serve these communities, including extensive modelling to identify a suitable new greenfield site for the Yungaburra services. The ACMA has also invested its resources in planning these services. In 2009 we reached preliminary agreement with RPS on suitable location, power levels, frequencies and radiation patterns for both services. Our support and agreement with RPS on those specifications remains current. We therefore ask the ACMA to finalise those agreed specifications and allow these services within our existing licence area to commence.

Coolah

We support the ACMA draft LAP proposals for inclusion in the LAP.

In addition to serving Coolah, the township of Dunedoo (Population 802 – ABS 2011) falls within the rural grade stereo contour of this service, but is outside the protected 66 dbuV/m contour. For viability of 2kw services and spectrum efficiency, our aim has always been that both localities are adequately serviced from a common site.

We understand from RPS that the services are quite likely to be interference free within Dunedoo within the 54 dbuV/m contour, but RPS has not had the opportunity to confirm with a more detailed analysis, which it is willing to do so after the LAP is finalised.

We request consideration be given to potentially removing the 66 dbuV/m protection condition, at least for the Dunedoo region, and in the event that is not technically achievable, that alternative specifications be developed in consultation with RM that allow both communities to be serviced from one site.
Karumba
Kilcoy
Stanthorpe
Tara

We support the ACMA draft LAP proposals for inclusion in the LAP, and thank the ACMA for improving the reach of these services.

We note the Stanthorpe 4BRZ service has been broadcasting on 90.1 MHz for many years, with no known interference issues within its 66db uV/m contour.

Thursday Island

We support the ACMA draft LAP proposals for 4BRZ, although note that there is some potential for 4RBL 98.9 MHz to cause 2nd harmonic interference to ABC Digital TV on 198.625 MHz. New 200 watt FM services at Millman Hill will provide in excess of urban grade reception to residential pockets on the North Eastern side eastern side of TI that are shadowed from the low power Green Hill Digital TV site and receive marginal digital TV reception.

Given the remote nature of TI and spectrum availability, we suggest it is desirable 4RBL be allocated an alternative frequency, separated by 2.4 - 10 MHz from 4BRZ, that affords reduced potential of interference to TI ABC Digital TV.

Warrumbungles

We fully support the ACMA draft LAP and thank the ACMA for planning these services that will reach ~9,000 unserviced people in our licence area.

Suitable Antenna & Pattern Choice

It is the nature of our licence area in the region that numerous RM target UCL's encircle Mt Cenn Cruaich on all sides, making a omni directional or slightly directional radiation pattern the only practical, economically viable and spectrum efficient approach. RM and the ACMA have previously extensively discussed and modelled a variety of more directional services, and the conclusion has always been the same; that providing highly directional or nulled patterns across all four sectors is prohibitively expensive (i.e. likely the single most costly commercial FM antenna system in Western NSW), and simultaneously leaves one or more target UCL's with inadequate reception, that can not be practically matched with additional repeaters, and leaving large tracts of our target rural catchment area and major highways unserviced.

The ACMA draft LAP proposals represent highly efficient use of spectrum, allowing the surrender of Coonamble channels and the reassignment of scarce vacated spectrum to the planned neighbouring Coolah repeaters – without which those Coolah services could not commence. Based on an RFS828MP antenna array, it is also a cost effective and practical antenna pattern to implement.

A typical example of highly directional services that have already been considered by RM/ACMA and just won’t work, has recently been put forward in the Southern Cross Austereo (SCA) submission, which they have based on an RFS902CP array. SCA incorrectly assert that their proposed alternative 902CP purchase
and installation is a similar cost to the RFS828 solution. A quick check with RFS reveals one RFS828MP bay (with a single driving point) has a list price of $1,650, a weight of 7.5kg and an effective front area of 0.05 sq m. One RFS902CP bay (with a single driving point) has a list price of $6,314, a weight of 23kg (excluding the mandatory divider) and an effective front area of 0.34 sq m.

RM is planning an 8 bay implementation, so the costs escalate accordingly.

Each 902CP has 2 feeder points, doubling the size and number of connection points (and potential points of failure) in a power divider network, compared to an RFS828MP which has a single feed point. The cost blow out in the antennas and power dividers is daunting by itself, but would be easily eclipsed by the additional prohibitive heavy duty tower purchase and installation costs required to accommodate a large heavy 902CP array on an exposed remote high mountain peak, compared to a light/medium duty tower structure to carry a simple lightweight RFS828MP array.

The SCA submission states a 902CP array adequately covers the RM licence area. Critically, SCA’s 902CP coverage modelling in their own submission does not support that statement at all. It shows that three of the five target RM UCL’s (Gulargambone, Mendooran and Binnaway) do not receive a target rural grade stereo signal (depicted in purple/blue) and would only receive a sub standard rural grade mono service (depicted in green/aqua).

In summary, the SCA proposal would be cost prohibitive to implement, and SCA modelling shows the majority of RM target UCL’s and rural catchments, representing thousands of people, would be left with no access to commercial radio, and little prospect of ever getting it.

In contrast, the ACMA draft LAP proposal will see all five UCL’s delivered with adequate reception for the first time, with the bare minimum ERP required to do the job, utilising a cost effective and practical antenna pattern, optimally oriented to reduce overspill.

**Minimal Change to Overspill in Dubbo RA1 and Gunnedah RA1**

We remind the ACMA that SCA invested in its 2DBO Dubbo licence well after the existing 4RBL specification was licensed in the LAP in 1996. Under ACMA planning policy, SCA would be aware that similar coverage would likely be afforded to a 4BRZ service. SCA had an opportunity to consider how, if at all, that impacted their 2DBO investment before they made it.

The 'net change' question is how the current draft LAP proposal impacts overspill into neighbouring markets, and how many additional people in the RM licence area will be able to receive adequate commercial radio reception from the Warrumbungles for the first time.

Extrapolation of ACMA modelled statistics demonstrate the draft LAP RM Warrumbungles overspill increase into the Dubbo RA1 market is minimal at ~1,200 people, and the Gunnedah RA1 market at ~500 people.

ACMA modelling shows no additional UCL’s outside the RM licence area are impacted by RM overspill.

In contrast, the increase in existing reach within the RM licence is over 5,000 people, representing a significant 129% increase in existing LAP specification population reach. Additional UCL’s will be serviced
for the first time, many of whom have no realistic chance of ever getting their only licenced commercial radio services without this change being advanced by the ACMA.

It is a modest proposal that the ACMA have correctly determined benefits thousands more people within the RM licence area than it effects people in any adjacent licence area.

Mendooran Correction

There is an error in the signal values for Mendooran in Table 5 in the ACMA Explanatory Paper. The table shows the existing RM LAP specification provides adequate coverage to Mendooran UCL, and the draft LAP specification will not. We suggest that is a transposition drafting error, and that the table should show the existing LAP specification does not adequately service Mendooran, and that the draft LAP specification will now remedy that deficiency.

Regards

Aaron Jowitt
Director