Explanatory Paper

Draft Variation to Licence Area Plan for Perth Radio – No.1 of 2009
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Call for Submissions

Submissions on the matters raised in this Explanatory Paper may be made to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) as follows:

By email:  lais@acma.gov.au

By mail:  Draft LAP Variation –Perth Radio
National Licensing and Allocations Branch
ACMA
PO Box 78
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

By fax:  (02) 6253 3277

Please quote file reference 2008/2354 in your reply.

Any enquiries concerning matters raised in this document should be directed to Mr Alan Ashman on (02) 6256 2830.

The closing date for submissions is 5.00pm, 26 March 2009.

All submissions received will be made available for public inspection on the ACMA website.¹ (www.acma.gov.au)

¹ Note that any submission marked “In Confidence”, “Confidential” or similar, cannot be considered by the ACMA in finalising the LAP variation.
**Preliminary View – Commercial Radio 6PR – Perth**

ACMA proposes to make channel capacity available for FM translators in Carabooda and Rockingham for commercial radio service 6PR on 106.5 MHz with a maximum ERP of 500 W (DA) in Carabooda and with a maximum ERP of 100 W (DA) in Rockingham.

In the licence area plan (LAP) for Perth Radio determined in October 2001, ACMA made channel capacity available for FM translators at Wanneroo and Rockingham for the Perth AM commercial radio service 6IX to alleviate deficient AM reception in the northern and southern regions of its licence area. A similar option was made available to 6PR; however a decision was made by 6PR at that time not to pursue this avenue and instead 6PR chose to increase its maximum transmitter power to 10 kW from 2 kW.

In December 2006, Southern Cross Broadcasters Pty Ltd (SCB), the licensee of 6PR, informed ACMA that they are experiencing reception deficiencies in the northern and southern regions of their licence area, a problem elevated by the recent urban developments in these areas. It has consequently asked ACMA to allocate two supplementary FM translators which it says will rectify its reception deficiencies. This claim is substantiated by AM-MF field survey measurements conducted and reported by its engineers.

As FM spectrum in the Perth licence area is quite scarce and highly congested, the use of frequency 106.5 MHz is the only viable option available to rectify the reception deficiencies experienced by 6PR.

SCB requested that the northern FM translator have a maximum ERP of 4 kW. However, an ACMA engineering analysis of the survey measurements provided by 6PR indicates that two FM translators operating on 106.5 MHz from sites at Carabooda and Rockingham with a maximum ERP of 500 W (DA) and 100 W (DA) respectively, will resolve the reception deficiencies.

To avoid FM duplication of the AM signal and limit the area in which the FM signals would be received, the two FM translators will operate on the same frequency at the same time, which will create deliberate co-channel interference or an FM ‘mush’ zone in areas where the main AM signal is adequate. This is to ensure that the AM service retains its predominance.

The proposed changes to the technical specifications are set out at Attachments 1.31 and 1.32 of the draft variation.
Preliminary View – Commercial Radio 6IX – Perth

ACMA proposes to change the polarisation, from horizontal to vertical, of an FM translator assigned to commercial AM radio broadcasting service 6IX at Perth.

In 2005, commercial AM radio broadcasting service 6IX requested a change in polarisation for its FM translator at Wanneroo, from horizontal to vertical, to minimise reception interference with channel 10 (television). At the time, temporary allowance for 6IX to operate using vertical polarisation was permitted, with the view by ACMA that a permanent change would be made during the next Perth Licence Area Plan (LAP) variation process.

It is proposed that this change to the technical specification for 6IX, be made permanent during this Perth LAP variation process.

The proposed change to the technical specifications is set out at Attachment 1.11 of the draft variation.
ACMA proposes to increase the maximum height of the antenna tower for the community FM radio broadcasting service 6SON at Perth, from 95 metres to 116 metres.

The community FM radio broadcasting service 6SON has identified the need to replace its existing antenna tower and has requested that the technical specification be changed to allow for a new antenna tower to stand at 116 metres. 6SON has advised ACMA that the current tower which stands at 95 metres is over 20 years old and that an opportunity to acquire a new tower was made available to it at a recent auction.

The change in height of the new antenna tower is the result of mounting and design complications. Engineering analysis conducted by ACMA has identified that the change in antenna height will increase the potential to interfere with the reception of ABW5 Bunbury and the 6ABCFM retransmission service at Jurien.

Therefore, it is proposed that a new technical specification be included in this LAP variation as an alternative specification subject to the following conditions:

‘Implementation of the proposed specification in subject to clearance of ABW5 Bunbury or test transmissions conducted by the licensee, confirming to ACMA’s satisfaction that operation in accordance with the proposed specification does not cause interference to the reception of ABSW5 in the Mandurah/Pinjarra area where an alternative ABC television signal is not available.’

‘This service also has potential to cause adjacent channel interference to the retransmission service ABCFM on 98.3 MHz at Jurien. Should interference to the reception of 6ABCFM occur, the licensee is responsible for alleviation of the interference.’

The proposed change to the technical specifications is set out at Attachment 1.25 of the draft variation.
Preliminary View – Community Radio 6NME – Perth

ACMA proposes to change the nominal transmitter site location of the community FM radio broadcasting service 6NME from ABW2 Mast, Television Road Bickley, to TVW7 Mast, Television Road Bickley. ACMA also proposes to change the maximum antenna height and radiation pattern for 6NME.

Peedac Pty Ltd (PPL), the licensee of community FM radio broadcasting service 6NME, has made a request to ACMA for a change in their nominal transmitter site location. The proposed change in site location will allow 6NME’s FM transmitter to operate from TVW7 Mast, Television Road, Bickley, the same location as that of the FM community broadcasting service 6SON.

PPL, which currently is licensed on FM frequency 100.9 MHz, has advised that they have been given an opportunity to share the TVW7 Mast site with TX Australia. This will consequently ensure that PPL are able to save time and money, thereby making them a more viable broadcast service provider.

Engineering analysis conducted by ACMA has identified that the proposed changes (site, antenna height and radiation pattern) will increase the potential to interfere with the reception of the national television service ABSW5 Bunbury.

Therefore, it is proposed that an additional technical specification be included in this LAP variation as an alternative specification available to PPL on the following condition:

‘Implementation of the proposed specification is subject to clearance of ABSW5 Bunbury or test transmissions conducted by the licensee, confirming to ACMA’s satisfaction that operation in accordance with the proposed specification does not cause interference to the reception of ABSW5 in the Mandurah/Pinjarra area where an alternative ABC television signal is not available.’

The proposed change to the technical specifications is set out at Attachment 1.33 of the draft variation.
Preliminary View – Community Radio 6RTR – Perth

ACMA proposes to change the maximum antenna height of the community FM radio broadcasting service 6RTR from 95 metres to 116 metres.

Arts Radio, the licensee of community FM radio broadcasting service 6RTR, has requested a change in their antenna height from 95 m to 116 m to share the 6SON transmission site from TVW7 Mast, Television Road Bickley.

Engineering analysis conducted by ACMA has identified that the proposed changes (antenna height and radiation pattern) will increase the potential to interfere with the reception of the national television service SSW3 Bunbury.

Therefore, it is proposed that a new technical specification be included in this LAP variation as an alternative specification available to Arts Radio subject to the following condition:

‘Implementation of the proposed specification is subject to clearance of SSW3 Bunbury or test transmissions conducted by the licensee, confirming to ACMA’s satisfaction that operation in accordance with the proposed specification does not cause interference to the reception of SSW3 within the SSW3 licence area where an alternative SSW3 television signal is not available.’

The proposed change to the technical specifications is set out at Attachment 1.34 of the draft variation.
Preliminary View – Commercial Radio 6PER – Perth

ACMA proposes to change the nominal transmitter site location for the commercial FM radio broadcasting service 6PER from the TVW7 Mast, Television Road Bickley, to NEW10 Tower, Welshpool Road, Carmel and a decrease in effective antenna height.

In 2002 ACMA varied the licence conditions of the commercial FM radio broadcasting service 6PER to allow the service to transmit from an alternative location to that specified in the determined LAP.

Although, the specified antenna height of the service increased from 105 m to 128 m it resulted in an overall reduction in the effective antenna height because of the lower elevation of the new site (295 m as opposed to 340 m).

The licensed service is within the ‘performance envelope’ of the current LAP specification. While, strictly speaking, this means a LAP variation is not required, it is proposed to modify the LAP to correctly identify the technical specification that is in fact being used.

The proposed change to the technical specifications is set out at Attachment 1.14 of the draft variation.