Explanatory Paper

Draft Variation to Licence Area Plan for Bendigo, VIC
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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: lapvariation@acma.gov.au

By mail: Draft LAP Variation – Bendigo Radio
Australian Communications and Media Authority
PO Box 78
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

By fax: (02) 6253 3277

Please quote file reference 2007/1602 in your reply.

Any enquiries concerning matters raised in this document should be directed to Ms Sarah Toaldo on (02) 6256 2874.

The closing date for submissions is 5.00pm, Friday 4 April 2008.

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 – Community Radio 3CH – Kyneton

ACMA proposes to vary the technical specifications of the 3CH Kyneton community radio service on 100.7 MHz to transmit from the Repeater Tower, MOUNT MACEDON at a maximum effective radiated power of 1kW (directional).

ACMA proposes to extend the licence area of the service and redefine it using 2001 Census boundaries.

The Kyneton RA1 licence area was determined by the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) in the Bendigo Licence Area Plan in August 1997.

At that time the ABA decided to plan a community service for Kyneton with a licence area that did not include the towns of Woodend and Macedon as they were located in the Melbourne and Geelong planning zone, for which a LAP was yet to be determined. The view at the time was that the planning of any frequencies for use in this area should be considered together with other demands for the available channel capacity in the region.

Central Highlands Broadcasting Inc (CHB) was allocated a community broadcasting licence to serve the general community in the Kyneton RA1 licence area on 25 June 1998 and commenced broadcasting on 26 April 2000. It provides programming for the general community within the licence area.

The Kyneton RA1 Licence Area covers part of the Macedon Ranges Shire, including the main service centre at Kyneton. The licensee requested a change of transmitter site to Mount Macedon, a power increase to 2kW and an extension of its licence area.

Proposed licence area extension

The proposed licence area extension would enable the licensee to cover the entire Macedon Ranges Shire, including the towns of Woodend, Macedon, Romsey and Gisborne. These towns currently fall outside the Kyneton licence area and are located in the Melbourne RA1 licence area.

The extension would allow 3CH to provide a service to the entire Macedon Ranges Shire. This local government area is not currently served by any one single radio or television service. CHB states that there are strong community of interest ties across the Macedon Ranges Shire. It will also allow 3CH to become part of Victoria’s Emergency Services Network and provide emergency information to people across the entire Macedon Ranges Shire, should an event such as a major bushfire occur again.

Proposed variation to technical specifications

CHB’s transmitter site at Kangaroo Hill is at a low elevation (574 metres), limiting its signal projection over its licence area and thereby causing some towns and localities within the current licence area to be unable to receive the service. It states that it also receives interference from 3GLR in Gippsland. It proposes to relocate its transmitter to a site at Mount Macedon with an elevation of 983 metres.

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2 Preliminary View 11- Kyneton Community Radio, Reasons for Preliminary Views Central Victoria and Central Murray Radio, March 1997
Although the proposal to extend the Kyneton RA1 licence area will overlap with part of the Melbourne RA1 licence area, there are no community radio services which specifically target the outer north west part of the Melbourne licence area that 3CH is seeking to include within its licence area.

ACMA proposes to retain the effective radiated power (ERP) of the service at 1kW from the proposed new site at Mount Macedon. Given the height of this site, ACMA considers that this proposal will enable 3CH to serve the proposed licence area with an adequate signal level and minimise overspill into adjacent licence areas. The directional radiation pattern for the proposed service is based on the practical RFS antenna 828 DA.

Detailed interference assessment indicates that the area intended to be covered by 3CH would not receive interference from, or cause interference to, 3GLR in Gippsland/Latrobe Valley, 3MEL and 3TTT in Melbourne, 3BBB in Ballarat or the proposed ABC NewsRadio service in Bendigo.

ACMA has identified considerable overspill into neighbouring licence areas if the service provided from the proposed site at Mount Macedon was transmitted at an ERP of 2kW, as requested by the licensee. If the operation of the proposed service at 1kW proves that the actual interference from 3GLR is higher than predicted, a further power increase could be considered.

Engineering assessment also indicates the potential for second adjacent channel interference between the proposed service and two Melbourne commercial radio services (3MEL on 100.3 MHz and 3TTT on 101.1 MHz). Detail theoretical assessments indicate that there is potential for some second adjacent channel interference to these two Melbourne services near the proposed 3CH transmitter site within the Melbourne licence area. Test transmissions are recommended to verify the extent of the interference.

Broadcasting on the 3CH frequency 100.7 MHz at 1kW from the proposed Mount Macedon site has the potential to cause localised interference to the reception of Channel Nine television from Melbourne. If this interference were to occur, the licensee would be required to take appropriate action to rectify the interference.

The Electromagnetic Compatibility check on the use of the frequency 100.7 MHz from proposed site at Mt Macedon indicates that there is potential for the fourth order harmonic to fall within the bandwidth of the two radiocommunications receivers on 403.05 and 403.07 MHz. The two receivers are co-sited at site ID: 11737 at a distance of 977 metres. If fourth harmonic interference were to occur the licensee would be required to rectify the interference in accordance with the Technical Planning Guidelines.
Preliminary View – Community Radio – Maryborough (VIC)

ACMA proposes to make channel capacity available for a community radio service at Maryborough to operate on 99.1 MHz from the Community FM Radio Site, 53 Burns Street, MARYBOROUGH (VIC), with a maximum ERP of 250W (omni-directional).

ACMA is aware of interest in providing a community radio broadcasting licence for Maryborough (Victoria) from aspirant community broadcaster Strengthening Goldfields Community Radio Incorporated (SGCR).

SGCR has been providing temporary community broadcasts in Maryborough on 99.1 MHz since 31 January 2007.

SGCR seeks to provide a community radio service to the general community in Maryborough. The town of Maryborough and the immediate surrounding area is not currently served by any permanent community radio services.

From the evidence before it, ACMA is of the view that there is demand for a community radio service to serve the Maryborough area.

ACMA is proposing that the frequency 99.1 MHz be made available for a community radio service in Maryborough, with a maximum effective radiated power of 250W to cover the Maryborough (Victoria) RA2 licence area.

ACMA seeks submissions on the proposal to make a permanent community radio service available to serve the Maryborough area.
Preliminary View – High power open narrowcasting service – Bendigo

ACMA does not propose to make channel capacity available for an additional high power open narrowcasting service in Bendigo.

ACMA has received interest in establishing an additional high power open narrowcasting radio service in the Bendigo area.

The Bendigo Licence Area Plan provides for one high power open narrowcasting radio service in Bendigo on 945 kHz. That service is licensed to 3UZ Pty Ltd.

Engineering conducted by ACMA has revealed that there is no spare channel capacity to accommodate another high power open narrowcasting radio service in Bendigo.
Preliminary View – Redefining Licence Areas

ACMA proposes that the Bendigo RA1, Bendigo RA2, Bendigo RA3, Maryborough RA1 and Echuca RA1 licence areas be redefined using 2001 Census boundaries.

The licence area for the community radio service in Kyneton is currently described using terms used in the 1996 Census.

ACMA proposes to take this opportunity to redefine the Bendigo RA1, Bendigo RA2, Bendigo RA3, Maryborough RA1 and Echuca RA1 radio licence areas using 2001 Census boundaries, but otherwise remain unchanged.