EXPLANATORY PAPER TO DRAFT LICENCE AREA PLAN

OATLANDS, TASMANIA (RADIO)
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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 – Oatlands
Australian Communications and Media Authority
PO Box 34
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

By fax: (02) 6253 3277

Please quote file reference 2004/2261 in your reply.

Any enquiries concerning matters raised in this document should be directed to Stirling Finlay on (02) 6256 2874.

The closing date for submissions is 5.00pm, 9 September 2005.

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 ACMA in finalising the LAP.
Preliminary Views

Preliminary View – New Community Radio Service – Oatlands

ACMA proposes to make available a new community radio service to operate as follows:

- 97.1 MHz from the Radio Mast, Midland Highway, 2 km NE of Oatlands, with a maximum Effective Radiated Power of 2 kW, omni-directional and mixed polarisation.

The licence area is proposed to be defined in terms of areas defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics at the Census of 5 August 2001.

Oatlands is located some 60 km north of Hobart in the Southern Midlands Municipality which has a population of some 5,800 persons. Oatlands is outside the licence area of the Hobart commercial and community wide coverage radio services.

Previously conducted medium wave field strength surveys show that Hobart national services 7RN (585 kHz) and 7ZR (936 kHz) provide a suburban grade service in Oatlands. Similarly, field strength predictions of Hobart high power national and commercial FM radio services also provide a suburban grade of service in Oatlands.

There is currently no community radio service at Oatlands. Southern Midlands Community Radio Station Inc. (Mid FM) has been operating on a Temporary Community Broadcasting Licence (TCBL) since May 2003 and has been providing a general format service.

Mid FM has been operating under a TCBL from Oatlands on 97.1 MHz. Although currently operating at 1 kW effective radiated power (ERP) omni-directional with mixed polarisation, it is licensed under the TCBL to operate at maximum ERP of 2 kW. ACMA is proposing to formalise the temporary nature of the Oatlands service with the specifications as currently licensed and seeks comments on this proposal.
Preliminary View – Variation to Frequency Allotment Plan – Hobart/Southern Tasmania

**ACMA proposes to vary the frequency allotment plan (FAP) for the VHF FM radio band for R14 Hobart/Southern Tasmania as it relates to the preliminary view on a new community radio service for Oatlands.**

In forming this view, ACMA considered and reached views about the likely effects of its proposal, having regard to the local circumstances within the market, the likely impact of other planning proposals in this draft LAP and other relevant matters under s.23(a)-(g) of the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (the Act). An account of this process of consideration follows.

The FAP and LAP for an area together constitute ACMA’s ‘blueprint’ for the development of broadcasting in that area using the broadcasting services bands. The frequency allotment plan sets out the number of channels and the licence area plan describes the characteristics of the services using, or that are proposed to use, those channels. The two documents must be consistent (s.26(1) of the Act).

In preparing its initial, Australia-wide frequency allotment plan of August 1994, the then Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) foreshadowed that the plan would be revised as necessary, market by market, to accommodate any additional or changed broadcasting requirements disclosed during public consultation at the licence area planning stage:

> ‘(The FAP’s) assumptions about demand, nominal transmitter specifications and siting will be re-examined during preparation of the LAPs for particular areas of Australia, at which time it will be subject to intensive public consultation. This may necessitate variations to this FAP... Consultation on the changes will take place within the LAP consultation process.’

> ‘The FAP will also be revised to reflect any additional services planned during the LAP stage (particularly low power channels). If the revised FAP results in changes in channel capacity for areas outside the area for which the licence area plan is being prepared, the changes will be subjected to public consultation in affected areas.’ (Frequency Allotment Plan; August 1994; Pg. 9, ‘Planning Process Overview’)

ACMA proposes to add capacity to the FAP for one FM channel for a new community radio service at Oatlands as shown in the proposed FAP variation instrument.