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Call for Submissions

Submissions on the matters raised in this Explanatory Paper may be made to the ABA as follows:

By email: lapvariation@aba.gov.au

By mail: Draft LAP Variation – Charleville
         Australian Broadcasting Authority
         PO Box 34
         BELCONNEN ACT 2616

By fax:(02) 6253 3277

Please quote file reference 2003/0477 in your reply.

Any enquiries concerning matters raised in this document should be directed to Christopher Roberts on (02) 6256 2863.

The closing date for submissions is 5.00pm, 14 July 2005.

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

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

The ABA proposes to make channel capacity available in the FM Band for the 4VL commercial radio service at Mitchell Airport, QLD as follows:

- 4VL to operate on 102.9 MHz from Warrego Highway between Mungallala and Mitchell with a maximum effective radiated power of 100 W, vertical polarisation, directional radiation pattern.

Translator for 4VL at Mitchell Airport

On 15 June 2004, the ABA received a request from the licensee of the 4VL commercial radio service at Charleville, QLD to establish an FM translator at Mitchell Airport to serve the eastern extremity of the Charleville RA1 licence area. The Charleville and Roma commercial radio licence areas are adjacent and the town of Mitchell is within the Roma licence area.

The licensee has requested a service with an ERP of 100 watts using an omni-directional radiation pattern with vertical polarisation at the proposed site.

The ABA assessed the proposed technical details of the initial 4VL request and found it to be unsuitable, as the proposed service using an omni-directional antenna sited at Mitchell airport would cause extensive overspill into the town of Mitchell in the Roma licence area. The overspill is significant and represents almost 100% of the Mitchell population (1011 persons). The population of Mitchell town represents approximately 6.6% of the population of the Roma licence area.

Further assessment by the ABA to reduce the level of overspill indicated that 102.9 MHz with an ERP of 100 watts using a commercially available antenna with a directional radiation pattern and vertical polarisation is more suitable for the 4VL translator service at Mitchell Airport. This pattern minimises overspill into the Roma licence area to 184 persons (1.2% of the licence area population) and 18% of the population of the town of Mitchell. 4VL have agreed to this recommended radiation pattern in the proposed technical specification for the 4VL translator at Mitchell airport.

Extension of Charleville licence area for 4VL to include Mitchell township

On 27 January 2003, 4VL the licensee of the Charleville commercial radio services made representation to the ABA to increase its licence area to share the town of Mitchell. Mitchell is in the Roma licence area. However, the Charleville licence area surrounds the northern part of Mitchell and parts of the town including the airport are in the Charleville licence area.

Initial analysis indicates that while there is some likelihood that extending the Charleville licence area to include Mitchell would be of interest to the residents, there is insufficient evidence to form a conclusive view about an extension.

Mitchell is in the Booringa Shire, half of which is in the Roma licence area and half in the Charleville licence area. As stated, the Charleville licence area includes some of
Mitchell, i.e. the airport and boards the north of the town. However, it is in the Roma licence area, and the licensee, DMG, has received funding under the Commercial Radio Blackspots Program to provide a service in Mitchell, where a frequency was allocated in 2003 and which is expected to start in the near future.

With the exception of the request from 4VL Charleville it is unclear whether there is demand for the 4VL service in Mitchell. Comments are sought on the licensee’s request to extend the licence area. Should the licence area be extended, Planning would propose an alternative specification for the service operating from the same nominal site omni-directional at 100 watts.