Explanatory Paper

Draft Variation to Licence Area Plan for Gympie, QLD
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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 – Gympie Radio
ACMA
PO Box 78
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

By fax: (02) 6253 3277

Please quote file reference 2006/806-3 in your reply.

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

The closing date for submissions is 5.00pm, 31 October 2007.

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 – National Radio – Gympie

ACMA proposes to make channel capacity available for a national ABC NewsRadio service at Gympie to operate on 94.5 MHz from Broadcast Site, Black Mountain with a maximum ERP of 20 kW (Directional).

The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Helen Coonan issued a media release on 29 September 2004, stating:

If re-elected, the Coalition will:

- Extend ABC NewsRadio to all transmission areas around Australia with populations over 10,000, subject to availability of spectrum;

Established in 1994, NewsRadio is Australia’s only continuous news radio station. It is currently transmitted to our capital cities, Newcastle, Gosford and the Gold Coast. Today’s announcement has the capacity to extend NewsRadio’s coverage to around 95 percent of Australians.

Channel capacity has been made available for a national ABC NewsRadio service at Gympie as part of the Governments’ staged rollout to extend ABC NewsRadio services across Australia.
Preliminary View – Commercial Radio 4GY – Gympie

ACMA proposes to make channel capacity available for the transmitter at Noosa/Tewantin for commercial radio service 4GY at Gympie to operate on 107.1 MHz from Panorama Dr, Doonan with a maximum ERP of 200 W (Directional).

ACMA also proposes that the Gympie commercial radio licence area be redefined using 2001 Census boundaries, but to otherwise remain unchanged.

In a variation to the Licence Area Plan (LAP) for Gympie radio services in November 2001, an AM frequency was made available to 4GY, Gympie to provide an additional transmitter at Doonan to address deficient AM coverage to the Noosa/Tewantin area.

In February 2002, Gympie Noosa Broadcasters Pty Ltd, the licensee of the commercial radio service 4GY in Gympie, requested the then Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) to consider the allocation of an FM frequency for its additional transmitter at Noosa/Tewantin because it was unable to find a site for its AM transmitter.

Following consultation between 4GY and the ABA a potentially suitable FM frequency (107.1 MHz) was identified. To confirm the suitability of the frequency 107.1 MHz the ABA requested 4GY conduct test transmissions on the proposed frequency.

In December 2004, Gympie Noosa Broadcasters Pty Ltd commenced test transmissions at Doonan on the proposed FM frequency 107.1 MHz. At the time Gympie Noosa Broadcasters Pty Ltd advertised in the local press and advised neighbouring licensees that it was conducting tests at Doonan. After the tests were concluded Gympie Noosa Broadcasters Pty Ltd provided test results to the ABA. On the basis of the information provided the test results indicated the channel is suitable and ACMA now proposes to vary the Gympie LAP to make FM capacity available at Doonan.

The technical specification for the proposed FM transmitter at Noosa/Tewantin has been planned to provide adequate coverage to the 4GY licence area whilst ensuring any overspill into neighbouring licence areas is kept to a minimum. At the same time, the translator has been planned in such a way as to minimise overlap between the existing AM coverage that provided as a consequence of implementation of the proposed FM translator.

On balance, it is considered that the FM translator is the best option for 4GY. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that providing 4GY with an FM translator will not lead to an unplanned and unintentional AM to FM conversion and that planning such a translator will be in the overall public interest.

The licence area for the 4GY commercial radio service in Gympie is currently described against the 1996 Census count. ACMA proposes to take this opportunity to redefine the Gympie commercial licence area using 2001 Census boundaries, but otherwise remain unchanged.
Preliminary View – Commercial Radio 4NNN – Gympie

ACMA proposes to increase the power of the main transmitter of the commercial radio service 4NNN at Gympie and remove capacity for the additional transmitter at Noosa/Tewantin. The commercial radio service 4NNN at Gympie is proposed to operate on 96.1 MHz from Mt Wolvi with a maximum ERP of 3 kW (Directional).

ACMA also proposes that the Gympie commercial radio licence area be redefined using 2001 Census boundaries, but to otherwise remain unchanged.

In a LAP variation in November 2001, an FM frequency was made available to 4NNN to provide an FM transmitter service at Sunrise Rd, Tewantin, to address deficient FM coverage at Noosa/Tewantin. The service has been operating since December 2004.

In December 2005, 4NNN was sold to AMI Radio Pty Ltd. ACMA issued a licence to 4NNN authorising the retransmission of the primary service at Noosa/Tewantin. This was an interim measure until the change to the translator service could be formalised in a LAP variation.

In April 2006, AMI Radio Pty Ltd, the licensee of 4NNN, requested an increase in power for both the main transmitter at Gympie, operating on 96.1 MHz and its additional transmitter at Noosa/Tewantin on 100.5 MHz to improve coverage to the south, east and south east of its licence area.

After consideration by ACMA and further discussions with the licensee of 4NNN, it is expected that an increase in power of the primary 4NNN transmitter at Gympie will resolve the coverage deficiencies and that the translator service at Noosa/Tewantin will no longer be required. 4NNN agreed to this proposal in August 2006.

A further submission was received from 4NNN in July 2007, requesting a change to the radiation pattern of the main transmitter at Gympie from directional to omni-directional and an increase in antenna height from 30 m to 45 m. After consideration by ACMA and further consultation with the licensee it is believed that the proposed technical specification (which includes a change in antenna height, a decrease in power and a change in radiation pattern) will provide adequate coverage to the 4NNN licence area whilst ensuring any overspill into neighbouring licence areas is kept to a minimum.

The licence area for the 4NNN commercial radio service in Gympie is currently described against the 1996 Census count. ACMA proposes to take this opportunity to redefine the Gympie commercial licence area using 2001 Census boundaries, but otherwise remain unchanged.
Preliminary View – Community Licence Areas

ACMA proposes that the Gympie and Noosa community licence areas be redefined using 2001 Census boundaries, but otherwise remain unchanged.

The licence areas for the community radio service in Gympie and Noosa are currently described against the 1996 Census count.

ACMA proposes to take this opportunity to redefine the Gympie and Noosa community radio licence areas using 2001 Census boundaries, but otherwise remain unchanged.