

MEDIA RELEASE

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BROADCAST AUSTRALIA

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Further Opportunities for use of Digital Spectrum

Broadcast Australia, Australia's leading broadcast transmission provider, has raised questions regarding the long term use of vacant spectrum, previously known as Channel A, which has been temporarily allocated to the community television broadcasting sector.

Broadcast Australia Group CEO Graeme Barclay said, "Broadcast Australia welcomes the government's decision to enable the Community TV sector to commence digital television broadcasting by allocating spectrum to them on a temporary basis. Broadcast Australia has worked closely with the community television sector over the years for analogue service delivery and we look forward to continuing this relationship with the sector in the transition to digital. Ultimately, it is important for all stakeholders concerned to understand the permanent solution for Community TV broadcasters."

"In addition, the question remains as to how the Government will manage the aspirations of others in the digital free to view community. For instance, open narrowcast or national broadcasters' services could be made available to viewers on this vacant spectrum as well. We encourage the Government to implement a mechanism that will allow otherwise vacant spectrum to be used to further expand the number of digital multi-channels that Australian viewers can enjoy".

In the Sydney market, Broadcast Australia has been trialling classes of digital television services known as datacasting and open narrowcasting. This trial (also known as Digital FORTY FOUR) has been operating since 2003, awaiting a Government decision to provide these services using Channel A spectrum on a permanent basis. The programme content, which is available for free to view digital television reception in Sydney, includes NITV, Teachers TV, The Australian Christian Channel, Federal Parliament and Expo, as well as the latest news and weather from the ABC, and a video program guide for digital viewing.

Mr Barclay continued, "The announcement is a positive one for the community sector. We will now be seeking further consideration by Government of the opportunity for other potential services utilising the rest of the Channel A capacity that will not be used by the community television services. Of course, we also need to understand what the consequences are for the existing Digital FORTY FOUR trial services in Sydney.

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Company background

With over 75 years experience as the owner and operator of one of the most extensive terrestrial broadcast transmission networks in the world, Broadcast Australia provides end-to-end transmission services for radio and television (analogue and digital) broadcasters. The company's core competencies include planning and network design, engineering design and project management, complex systems integration, site development and installation, operations and network management and in-house repairs and maintenance.

Broadcast Australia also develops world-class solutions and applications for new and emerging technologies—such as Datacasting, Digital Radio and Mobile TV—working with strategic partners throughout the Asia Pacific region. Subsidiary companies include Hong Kong-based confined space coverage group Radio Frequency Engineering Limited (RFE), digital media network/infrastructure specialist Singapore Digital, systems integration and product supply specialist The Bridge Networks, emergency communications specialist, Airwave Solutions (Australia), and critical application and hosting provider, Hostworks.

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