

NEWS

Audio Description

On 19 July 2012, The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, and Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Carers, Senator Jan McLucas, announced that the trial of audio description on ABC1 will commence on 5 August 2012, and run for 13 weeks between 5pm and midnight. The trial is intended to provide a greater understanding of the technical and consumer issues associated with providing audio description services, and test what is required to commission, transmit, and distribute these services. The ABC is to provide a report to government in late 2012. Further information is available on the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE) website at: http://www.dbcde.gov.au/television/audio_description_trial

Producer offset for documentaries

On 5 July 2012, the Arts Minister Simon Crean and Assistant Treasurer David Bradbury issued further advice about the Government's intention to update the legislation governing the Producer Offset to include a definition of 'documentary' and related terms, as announced in the 2012–13 Federal Budget. Mr Bradbury said relevant definitions will be consistent with the [Australian Content Standard](#) made by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). Consultation on the legislative amendment will be conducted by Treasury and an exposure draft of the proposed changes will be made available on the Treasury website when released. This measure will apply to productions commencing principal photography on or after 1 July 2012. Minister Crean's media release is available here: http://www.minister.regional.gov.au/sc/releases/2012/july/sc136_2012.aspx

National Film and Sound Archive of Australia and Screen Australia board appointments

On 10 July 2012, Minister Crean announced the appointment of Ms Gabrielle Trainor as the Chair of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA), and the appointment of the Hon Michael Lee to the NFSA Board. Minister Crean also announced the appointment of Mr Richard Keddle and Ms Claudia Karvan to the Screen Australia Board. The Minister's media release is available at: http://www.minister.regional.gov.au/sc/releases/2012/july/sc141_2012.aspx

ASTRA ACTIVITY

- **Anti-siphoning legislation** – ASTRA and its members have continued active consultation with relevant stakeholders on aspects of legislation to reform the anti-siphoning scheme, currently before Parliament.
- **Long term spectrum arrangements for television outside broadcasts (TOB) in alternative bands to the 2.5 GHz band** – ASTRA is continuing discussions with the ACMA in relation to future long-term arrangements for TOB spectrum.

- **ACMA: Planning for mobile broadband within the 1.5 GHz mobile band** – ASTRA made a short submission in response to the ACMA’s request for information and industry views on the suitability of options for the potential replanning of the 1.5 GHz mobile band for mobile broadband. Further information on the ACMA website at: http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_410368
- **Captioning legislation** – ASTRA is working with Foxtel and the ACMA in relation to the implementation of new captioning obligations for subscription television under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*. Detail of the ACMA’s approach to new provisions is available on the ACMA website at: http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_410404
- **Live odds in sports broadcasts** – ASTRA will continue discussion with the Government and the ACMA regarding the inclusion of provisions dealing with live odds in sports broadcasts in the ASTRA Codes of Practice. On 29 June 2012, the Government announced an agreement with broadcasters on measures to reduce and control the promotion of live odds, available here: http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/media_releases/2012/106
- **ASTRA Codes Review** – ASTRA is currently considering submissions made during the consultation process, as well as the impact of the Government’s announcement of 29 June 2012 regarding live odds in sports broadcasts.

ASTRA submissions are available on the ASTRA website at:

<http://www.astra.org.au/Menu/Policy/Overview/Submissions>

DISCUSSION PAPERS/REQUESTS FOR COMMENT

ACMA: Review of the 2.5 GHz band and long-term arrangements for ENG—conversion plan

An outcome of the ACMA’s review of the 2.5 GHz band is to enable the existing apparatus licences held by the broadcasters in the frequency range 2570–2620 MHz (the 2.5 GHz mid-band gap) to be converted to spectrum licences. The ACMA is seeking submissions on the regulatory framework that will enable the conversion to occur. Submissions are also invited on the technical framework that will apply to the new 2.5 GHz mid-band gap spectrum licences. Submissions are due **27 August 2012**. Further information is available on the ACMA website at: http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_410423

ACMA: Spectrum Outlook 2012-2016

The ACMA’s Five-year spectrum outlook (the Outlook) provides demand analysis for different areas of the radiofrequency spectrum. It outlines the expected changes to the spectrum demands for key radiocommunications services in the next five years. The Outlook also describes the ACMA’s proposed actions to address these changes and highlights spectrum requirements for radiocommunication services beyond 2016. The ACMA is interested to receive submissions on the spectrum demand analysis and work plan set out in the 2012-2016 Outlook. For submissions to be considered for next edition of the Outlook, which is scheduled for release in early 2013, submissions must be lodged with the ACMA by **31 August 2012**. Further information is available on the ACMA website at: http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_410360