

NEWS

Convergence Review

The Convergence Review Committee held a series of public consultations during August. The Committee released the five topics for the detailed discussion papers, expected to be released in September:

1. Layering, Licensing and Regulation
2. Australian and Local Content
3. Spectrum Allocation and Management
4. Market Structures and Media Diversity
5. Community Standards

Details are available on the DBCDE website:

http://www.dbcde.gov.au/digital_economy/convergence_review/review_timetable

Several major research papers have been released by stakeholders in relation to the Convergence Review:

- The Australian Communications and Media Authority: *Broken Concepts. The Australian communications legislative landscape; Converged legislative frameworks – international approaches*. See http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_410128
- Screen Australia – *Convergence 2011: State of Play*. See: http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/research/convergence_stateofplay.aspx

Anti-siphoning

On 4 August 2011 the Government amended the anti-siphoning list to remove the recent Rugby Tri-Nations matches between Australia and New Zealand, to allow the Nine Network to premiere these events on its multi-channels. Further information available here:

<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2011L01609>

The Government is still finalising the detail of legislation to implement changes to the anti-siphoning scheme as announced in November 2010. Details on the Government's proposed changes are available on the DBCDE website at:

http://www.dbcde.gov.au/television/antisiphoning_and_antihoarding/sport_on_television_review_of_the_antisiphoning_scheme

Copyright enforcement

On 3 August 2011 the UK Government announced plans to modernise UK intellectual property laws. Ministers have accepted the recommendations made in an independent review which estimate a potential benefit to the UK economy of up to £7.9 billion. It has also set out the next steps in the UK's illegal content sharing notification system required under the Digital Economy Act. See: <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/ipresponse.htm>

Live odds in sports broadcasts

The Government is in consultation with industry stakeholders regarding next steps to implement the Council of Australian Government Select Council on Gambling Reform announcement of 27 May 2011 on reducing and controlling the promotion of live odds during sports broadcasts.

Digital switchover

The Government has set the switchover date for the Southern NSW and Griffith television licence areas as 5 June 2012. The relevant legislative instrument and explanatory statement is available here: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2011L01767>

The latest Digital Tracker survey reports that 82 per cent of households nationally have converted to terrestrial digital TV. Darwin has the highest conversion rate of 89 per cent at the end of June, with Tasmania next on 86 per cent, Adelaide 85 per cent, northern New South Wales 84 per cent, and southern New South Wales 83 per cent. The Digital Switchover Taskforce's Digital Tracker Summary Report for Quarter 2 (April-June 2011) showed that in regional Queensland (scheduled for switchover on 6 December 2011) 84 per cent had converted by the end of June 2011, up from 46 per cent in early 2009. Further details available on the Digital Ready website at: <http://www.digitalready.gov.au/info-centre/digital-tv-reports.aspx>

Indigenous free-to-air television service

On 1 September 2011, the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy outlined the Government's preferred approach for the establishment of an Indigenous free-to-air television service. Senator Conroy has invited the National Indigenous Television service (NITV) and the SBS to commence discussions on the format and structure of a possible new Indigenous television service. For further details see: http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/media_releases/2011/245

INDUSTRY BRIEFINGS

Screen Australia

In a series of presentations in Melbourne, Adelaide, Canberra and Sydney (25-29 August) Screen Australia released *Convergence 2011: Australian Content State of Play*, intended to inform the Convergence Review by providing an overview of Australian content production and delivery.

ASTRA ACTIVITY

- **ACMA Consolidated compliance mark: Proposed implementation arrangements** – On 15 August 2011, ASTRA made a submission to this consultation.
- **Convergence Review** – On 22 August 2011, ASTRA made a submission in response to the Convergence Review Emerging Issues Paper.
- **Anti-siphoning legislation** – ASTRA is in consultation with the Government in relation to its proposed anti-siphoning legislation.

- **ACMA Five-Year Spectrum Outlook** – On 31 August 2011, ASTRA made a submission to the ACMA Five-Year Spectrum Outlook.
- **Captioning legislation** – ASTRA has been engaged in discussions with the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy regarding the detail of proposed legislation for captioning requirements on subscription television. The legislation is expected to be introduced in the Spring sittings.
- **ASTRA Codes Review** – the process of reviewing and updating the ASTRA Codes continues with the Australian Communications and Media Authority. Draft revised ASTRA codes are expected to be released for public consultation later in 2011.

The Policy Calendar on the ASTRA website is available here: <http://astra.org.au/pages/policy-calendar>

ASTRA submissions are available here: <http://astra.org.au/pages/submissions>

DISCUSSION PAPERS/REQUESTS FOR COMMENT

ABC programming decisions

On 17 August 2011, the decision by the television management of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) to cut the number and amount of ABC-produced programs (as announced on 2 August) was referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications for review. Submissions close **9 September 2011**. The reporting date is 12 October 2011. Further information on the Committee website at: http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/ec_ctte/abc/index.htm

ACMA Earth station siting

The ACMA has commenced consultation on the development of a long-term strategy for the sustainable siting of Earth stations. Submissions close **7 October 2011**. Further information is available on the ACMA website at: http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_410111

ACMA Review of the privacy guidelines for broadcasters

The Privacy Guidelines for Broadcasters 2005 were made by the ACMA in August 2005 to assist broadcasters to better understand their obligations relating to privacy as set out in the various broadcasting industry codes of practice. This is the first review of the guidelines since their commencement. Submissions close **7 October 2011**. Further information on the ACMA website at: http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_410123

Review of the Interactive Gambling Act 2001

On 19 August 2011, the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy announced a review of the IGA. Submissions close **21 October 2011**. Further information available on the DBCDE website at: http://www.dbcde.gov.au/broadband/online_gambling/2011_review_of_the_interactive_gambling_act_2001

National cultural policy

On Thursday 11 August 2011 the Minister for the Arts, the Hon Simon Crean MP, released a discussion paper on the National Cultural Policy. Submissions close **21 October 2011**. Further information is available here: <http://culture.arts.gov.au/>

Convergence Review

The Convergence Review Emerging Issues Paper released in July included details on the Committee's next steps for submissions. Submissions would be open until **28 October 2011**. Further information on the DBCDE website at:
http://www.dbcde.gov.au/digital_economy/convergence_review