

Australian Communications and Media Authority response to Questions on Notice from Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee – 19 March 2013

Senator McKenzie

How will the public interest test impact of local news and its availability?

The ACMA is unable to answer this question beyond observing that:

- The public interest test has the potential to prevent the controller of One Registered Media Voice coming into control of another Registered Media Voice;
- The ACMA cannot speculate on the specific transactions the test might prevent;
- The ACMA would continue to administer the current control and diversity rules which stipulate that:
 - o A person cannot control more than one commercial television licence in a television licence area;
 - o A person cannot control more than two commercial radio licences in a commercial radio licence area;
 - o A person cannot control commercial television licences whose combined licence area populations exceed 75% of the Australia population;

and which prohibit:

- o Any transaction which will reduce the number of independently controlled media operations in radio licence areas to less than five in metropolitan areas or four in regional areas;
- o Any transaction which would result in a person controlling a commercial television licence, a commercial radio licence and a newspaper associated with the same licence area;

The ACMA would continue to administer the licence conditions imposed on licenses of regional commercial television licensees in regional New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania, to broadcast minimum amounts of material of local significance. Material of local significance includes but is not limited to local news