



FreeTV
Australia

44 Avenue Road
Mosman NSW
Australia 2088

T : 61 2 8968 7100
F : 61 2 9969 3520
W : freetv.com.au

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Stephen Palethorpe
Secretary,
Senate Environment, Communications and the Arts Committee,
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600.

Dear Sir,

I am writing to respond to 3 questions that I took on notice during my appearance before the Committee on Friday 16 April 2010, as part of the Committee's Inquiry into the Broadcasting Legislation Amendment (Digital Television) Bill 2010.

Please find the questions and my responses below.

Senator Troeth asked about the provisions in the Bill relating to the conditional access system and the role of the Australian Communications and Media Authority in determining if viewers outside the known black spot areas are entitled to access the satellite service. Ms. Troeth asked if Free TV has any concerns about the categories and the role of the ACMA.

Response:

- I have spoken with the regional broadcasters who have been working with the Digital Switchover Taskforce and the ACMA on the Conditional Access Scheme for the new satellite service. We are broadly comfortable with the categories as set down in the Bill.
- As outlined in the ACMA's evidence to the Committee, the Bill sets down a co-regulatory process for the development of the Conditional Access Scheme whereby the industry will develop a proposed scheme for approval by the ACMA with reference to certain policy principles. That work is ongoing and we are working to make the process as simple as possible for viewers.

Senator Fisher asked when the broadcasters' list of candidate self-help sites for conversion to digital was provided to the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy.

Response:

- I have confirmed from that the list was provided to the Minister on 17 March 2010.

Response:

- It is broadcasters intention, where feasible, to have the self-help digital upgrades and the installation of new digital gap-filler facilities completed at least 6 months in advance of analogue switch-off in an area.

- Broadcasters will be working with the Digital Switchover Taskforce and the ACMA to ensure as much notice as possible is provided to viewers regarding the timeframes for completion of conversion and installation work in their area.
- There are no analogue self-help sites listed for conversion in regional South Australia

There are two existing analogue self-help sites in regional SA (at Burra and Quorn) which will not be converted as digital terrestrial signals are already available in these areas. As such, these sites will no longer be required.
- There are two further analogue self-help sites in regional SA (at Melrose/Wilmington and Orroroo) which will not be converted. Viewers in these areas will receive digital television services via the new free-to-air satellite service.

Yours sincerely,

Júlie Flynn
Chief Executive Officer