

Broadcast Planning Instruction

Title: Planning of Open Narrowcasting Services	
Instruction no: 3	Version release: 2
	Date of effect: Immediate

Background

In planning of Open Narrowcasting services, the term ‘coverage area’ refers to the geographical area to be served by the proposed service. This definition is analogous to the ‘licence area’ concept used in the planning of commercial and community services. The reason for specifying Open Narrowcasting services coverage stems, originally, from the requirement to provide aspirant narrowcasters with an indication of the area served. Circumstances at the time dictated expediency in the planning of Open Narrowcasting services and this was reflected in adoption of a simplistic approach to the definition of coverage, based on a circle of specified radius. This approach, however, may not adequately reflect the actual coverage afforded by a service and, in some situations, may also be inappropriate (if, for example, there is a requirement for directional coverage in order to avoid interference or ‘overspill’).

This Instruction provides additional guidance on determination of Open Narrowcasting services coverage area and requires that Open Narrowcasting services licensees seeking a change of transmitter site comply with the Change of Transmitter Site Procedure specified in the ACMA’s *Technical Planning Guidelines*.

Instruction

The results of coverage predictions should be the basis on which the Open Narrowcasting service ‘coverage area’ is defined. This approach ensures the defined area provides a reasonable indication of service coverage, based on the nominal transmit parameters described in the Licence Area Plan (LAP). In the absence of specific information, planning of FM Open Narrowcasting services should assume a transmit height of 30 metres and nominal site location appropriate for the desired coverage. Planning should assume a minimum field strength value consistent with the reception environment (i.e., rural, suburban and urban), as detailed in *Technical Planning Parameters and Methods for Terrestrial Broadcasting*.

To provide potential Open Narrowcasting services licensees with an indication of service coverage, and to allow enforcement of operation within the specified coverage area, a user defined Special Condition is to be included in the LAP Technical Specification as follows:

‘The coverage area of this transmission is defined as ... [description of area to be served] ...’

Where convenient, and subject to meeting the specific coverage requirements of the proposed service, planning staff may choose to align the ‘coverage area’ with the defined licence area of a commercial or community service operating in the same area. This is likely to be practicable only if services are of comparable power and are co-sited. Where alignment is feasible, a user defined Special Condition will be required in the LAP Technical Specification linking the Open Narrowcasting service coverage to the appropriate licence area. Using the Melbourne commercial radio licence area as an example, the following clause would be inserted:

‘The coverage area of this transmission is described as [MELBOURNE RA1], as defined in the [Melbourne Radio Licence Area Plan]’.

To address the change of site issue, a pre-defined Special Condition is to be included in the Technical Specification, as follows:

'This transmission is permitted within the defined coverage area. The transmitter may be established at an alternative site to the nominal location only within this area. A change in site from the nominal location is to be in accordance with the Change of Transmitter Site Procedure of the ACMA's Technical Planning Guidelines, and is not to result in a maximum field strength beyond the defined area in excess of that which would have been provided at the specified power and pattern from the nominal site.'

In addition to these guidelines, Planning Staff should be familiar with the technical requirements applicable to Open Narrowcasting services, as specified in the [Radiocommunications Licence Conditions \(Broadcasting Licence\) Determination 2015 \(as amended\)](#).

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