Proposal to vary the Community Radio Licence Area Plan – Murrayville

Consultation paper

AUGUST 2022

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Executive summary

## Proposed changes to the community radio licence area plan (LAP)

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is seeking comment on proposed changes to the [Community Radio Licence Area Plan - Murrayville (Radio) - August 1996](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2005B00831) (Murrayville LAP).

We are proposing to vary the Murrayville LAP to:

add a technical specification for the existing service serving Lameroo.

make other various minor amendments and updates to the instrument.

The draft variation instrument, Variation to Licence Area Plan – Murrayville Community Radio – 2022 (No. 1) that would give effect to the proposed changes, is available alongside this paper on the [ACMA website](https://www.acma.gov.au/have-your-say).

# Issues for comment

We welcome comment from interested stakeholders on the issues raised in this paper or any other issues raised relevant to the proposed LAP variation.

Details on making a submission can be found at [Invitation to comment](#Invite)at the end of this document.

# Introduction

## Planning of broadcasting services and the preparation of LAPs

The ACMA’s broadcasting planning functions are set out in Part 3 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (BSA). We promote the objects of the BSA (section 3), including the economic and efficient use of radiofrequency spectrum, and consider the planning criteria set out in section 23 of the BSA. When planning analog broadcasting services, we refer to the [ACMA’s approach to broadcast planning and varying LAPs](https://www.acma.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/ACMA%20approach%20to%20broadcast%20planning%20and%20varying%20LAPs.docx), which provides an overview of the regulatory framework, policy objectives and planning process for analog broadcasting services.

Under section 26 of the BSA, the ACMA must, by legislative instrument, prepare LAPs that determine the number and characteristics, including technical specifications, of broadcasting services that are to be available in particular areas of Australia. The BSA also provides the ACMA with a discretionary power to vary LAPs.

## Overview of the Murrayville LAP

The Murrayville LAP specifies one community licence area, Murrayville RA1, in which the ACMA has planned for one technical specification to serve the general area of Murrayville with a 5 kW omnidirectional (OD) transmitter located 6 km south of the town of Murrayville, Victoria, on 103.5 MHz. This service is currently licensed to Mallee Community Broadcasters Inc (MCBI) and is operating with the callsign 3MBR. In 2000, an apparatus licence was issued to MCBI to serve the town of Lameroo, South Australia, which is located within the Murrayville RA1 licence area.

# Proposed changes to the Murrayville LAP

## Summary

In the Murrayville LAP, the ACMA proposes to:

add a technical specification to the Murrayville LAP (for the proposed full technical specification, see [Appendix](#_Appendix_B) A – Attachment 1.3) to incorporate the existing transmission covering the town of Lameroo, South Australia. The proposed technical specifications permit operation of the services provided to the Lameroo area.

make other various minor amendments and updates to the text, schedules and attachments, as outlined in the next section.

The ACMA considers that these proposals constitute an economic and efficient use of spectrum, and promote the objects in section 3 of the BSA. In particular, the proposals support the availability of a diverse range of radio services (paragraph 3(1)(a)) and the need for appropriate coverage of matters of local significance (paragraph 3(1)(g)).

In putting forward these proposals, we have also taken into account the planning criteria in section 23 of the BSA, specifically:

relevant demographics and social and economic characteristics (paragraphs 23(a) and (b))

the number of existing broadcasting services and the demand for new services (paragraph 23(c))

technical restraints relating to the delivery or reception of broadcasting services (paragraph 23(e)).

## Background

**Murrayville RA1 licence area**

MCBI is the licensee of the community radio broadcasting service 3MBR[[1]](#footnote-1) in the Murrayville RA1 licence area which is approximately 536 km northwest of Melbourne. The western part of the licence area stretches from Lameroo across the South Australian and Victorian border and follows the Mallee highway towards Underbool outside the eastern boundary, but does not include the town of Underbool. The licence area includes the regional town of Murrayville in the centre, the locality of which has a population of 214.[[2]](#footnote-2) The town’s major industry is agriculture, especially grain and cereal crops, sheep and cattle. The area’s reliable underground basin which supplies high quality water allows it to additionally support less conventional farming enterprises such as olives, goats, permaculture and potatoes.

Lameroo is located within the Murrayville RA1 licence area. See the map at   
[Appendix B](#_Appendix_B_1) for the location of Lameroo. It is on the Mallee Highway. It is a rural area and primarily serves other surrounding rural areas by growing grain and farming sheep.

3MBR is a community radio service based in Murrayville. It features programs that include community announcements and those that are focused on the topic of agriculture. The provision of this service supports the availability of diversity in the range and content of services in the area, providing a service in addition to national and commercial radio broadcasters to the Mallee Border community on the Victorian and South Australian border.

## Analysis of proposed changes

**Addition of Lameroo service to the Murrayville LAP**

MCBI’s main transmitter is located at Murrayville and operates on 103.5 MHz. The licensee provides an additional FM transmission with the same call sign to Lameroo on 107.5 MHz. This service is not currently planned in the Murrayville LAP.

The ACMA has carried out engineering analysis of the current transmission serving Lameroo and proposes that the specification be added to the Murrayville LAP without modification beyond changing to mixed polarisation. We also propose that an advisory note protecting the transmission to 66 dBuV/m against interference from other broadcasting services be added. Assessment by the ACMA of the technical specification concludes that it is suitable, giving adequate coverage to the Lameroo area without unreasonably overspilling outside Murrayville RA1 licence area in which Lameroo is located.

The addition of the Lameroo service to the Murrayville LAP will formalise the operation of the existing transmission which has been in operation since 2000. The ACMA has not received any objections or complaints about this transmission since the start of its operation.

There are several national services available in the Lameroo area, as well as the recently planned commercial radio broadcasting service provided by Flow FM (8SAT). However, the 3MBR service is the only community radio broadcasting service in the area and is well-established.

Lameroo, like Murrayville, is a rural area on the Mallee Highway near Pinnaroo. They are both rural areas with strong grain and sheep industries. The communities show strong enough similarities and ties that it is likely broadcasts from a Murrayville service would be of relevance and interest to listeners in Lameroo.

As the Lameroo service is currently operating, this proposal does not result in the use of spectrum beyond what is already being used.

The ACMA engineering assessment shows that the commercial broadcasting service in Lameroo Flow FM, which was planned when the MCBI service was already operating, is unlikely to interfere with the MCBI service and Flow FM service may receive a small amount of interference from the MCBI service, but this is considered negligible. Therefore, the ACMA considers the formalisation of the Lameroo specification in the Murrayville LAP to be an efficient use of spectrum.

The proposed technical specification, according to which the service is currently operating, is set out at [Appendix](#_Appendix_B) A.

As Lameroo is already included in the Murrayville RA1 licence area (see [Appendix B](#_Appendix_B_1)), there is no proposal to change the licence area boundary.

# Preliminary view

We propose to add the technical specification enabling transmission to Lameroo to the Murrayville LAP. The proposed full technical specification is at [Appendix](#_Appendix_B) A.

The ACMA considers this variation to the Murrayville LAP to regularise the current operation of the service will promote the objects of the BSA in section 3, in particular, by supporting the availability of a diverse range of radio services and coverage of matters of local significance. The ACMA has taken account of the planning criteria outlined in section 23 of the BSA and is of the view that the proposal represents an efficient and economic use of radiofrequency spectrum. The ACMA also considered relevant demographics and social characteristics of the Murrayville and Lameroo communities and the likely relevance of the service (paragraphs 23(a) and (b)), the demand for the Lameroo service considering the availability of other services in the area (paragraph 23(c)), and technical restraints, including the recommendation to include an advisory note, and spectrum efficiency in relation to signal coverage and overspill (paragraph 23(e)).

# Proposed minor amendments to the Murrayville LAP

In addition to the proposal outlined above, we propose to make the following minor amendments to the text, schedules and attachments in the Murrayville LAP to:

Rename the Murrayville LAP to ‘Licence Area Plan – Murrayville Radio’.

Insert the subheading ‘Licence Area: Murrayville RA1’ before Schedule One.

Make consequential amendments and updates to Schedule One as a result of amendments to and the addition of attachments.

Update the various transmitter site nominal locations and change all Australian Map Grid references to a latitude and longitude co-ordinate format using the Geocentric Datum of Australia (GDA94), which is the current standard reference   
for LAPs.

Update all references to the ‘Technical Planning Guidelines’ to the ‘Broadcasting Services (Technical Planning) Guidelines 2017’.

Amend Attachment 1.1 to address a typographical error and to numerically order components of the area description.

Amend Attachment 1.2 to change polarisation from ‘vertical’ to ‘mixed’, which is the current standard for LAPs.

The draft Variation to Licence Area Plan – Murrayville Community Radio 2022 (No. 1)is available on the [ACMA website](https://www.acma.gov.au/have-your-say).

# Invitation to comment

## Making a submission

We invite comments on the issues set out in this consultation paper.

[Online submissions](https://www.acma.gov.au/have-your-say) can be made by uploading a document. Submissions in PDF, Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format are preferred.

Submissions by post can be sent to:

The Manager

Broadcasting Carriage Policy Section

Australian Communications and Media Authority

PO Box 78

Belconnen ACT 2616

The closing date for submissions is **COB, Friday 23 September 2022**.

Consultation enquiries can be emailed to [BCP@acma.gov.au](mailto:BCP@acma.gov.au).

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# Appendix A

## Proposed specification for 3MBR infill transmitter to serve Lameroo

**Attachment 1.3**

LICENCE AREA PLAN : Murrayville Community Radio

Category : Community

General Area Served : Lameroo (SA)

Service Licence Number : SL10374

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION - FM Radio

Specification Number : TS12000650

Transmitter Site :-

Nominal location : Broadcast Site 1 Bews Tce LAMEROO

Nominal Co-ordinates Latitude Longitude  
(GDA94) : -35.330677 140.517187

Site Tolerance : Refer to Broadcasting Services   
 (Technical Planning) Guidelines 2017

Emission :-

Frequency Band & Mode : VHF-FM

Carrier Frequency : 107.5 MHz

Polarisation : Mixed

Maximum antenna height : 25 m

Output Radiation Pattern :-

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Bearing or Sector (Clockwise direction) | Maximum ERP |
| At all angles of azimuth | 100 W |

***Advisory Note :-***

Any transmission in accordance with this specification is planned on the basis that it will be protected to a minimum median field strength level of 66 dBuV/m against interference from other broadcasting services.

# Appendix B



1. Broadcasting services licence number 10374. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Population information taken from Murrayville as an Urban Centre and Locality (UCL) using 2016 ABS census data – <https://www.abs.gov.au/census> (QuickStats). This is the most recent census data available. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)