



**Submission re**

**ACMA Proposal**

**Remake Radiocommunications (Allocation  
of HPON Transmitter Licences)**

**Determination 2014**

ANRA welcomes the opportunity to respond to the recent ACMA Media Release **ACMA consults on remaking the HPON allocation determination**.

While our comments are put forward as a general overview from ANRA's diverse membership, we note that individual members may elect to make their own submissions which may emphasize or nuance certain matters slightly differently.

ANRA, the Australian Narrowcast Radio Association, is the peak industry body representing Low Power Open Narrowcast (LPON) Radio services and the High Power Open Narrowcast (HPON) Radio services located across all States and Territories of Australia. Our membership includes the major Narrowcast radio program providers such as fringe music services, foreign language groups, racing radio, tourist services, indigenous and religious services, as well as many other diverse, independently owned and operated services.

As always ANRA appreciates the opportunity to make this submission and is aware that ACMA has a good understanding of the ongoing development of the Narrowcast sector when making decisions that may impact its future growth.

**From:** Australian Narrowcast Radio Association (ANRA)

**Date:** 26 July 2024

## **RESPONSE FROM ANRA**

ANRA supports the ACMA's proposal to remake the Radiocommunications (Allocation of Transmitter Licences – High Power Open Narrowcasting Licences) Determination 2014 prior to the sunset date.

Following discussions with the ACMA, we are aware that there may be minor changes, so that its ongoing effect is preserved and with these changes the ACMA is looking to update the Instrument to give them more flexibility and overall more user-friendly as this Instrument will be valid for another 10 years.

### **ANRA's view on Proposed changes to the HPON allocation determination**

ANRA supports

- Modernising of protocols that delivers more user-friendly systems.
- The removal of the Register of section 34 determinations
- A greater flexibility in the auction system
- The minor changes mentioned on page 6 of the Consultation Paper June 2024

### **ANRA view on "Other Matters also on page 6 of the Consultation Paper June 2024**

After recent meeting with ACMA, we were advised that this is now a standard requirement to consult with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), when any new allocation determination for HPON licences occur.

ANRA would not want to delay the sunseting of this instrument determination if the changes are minor, eg, wording that may have been missed.

However as if there are any changes made by the ACCC, ANRA would expect quick consultation regarding any changes that may impact on our members or Narrowcasters in general.

ANRA's view that the current ACMA's Method of Operation works and has delivered a diverse group of Narrowcast operators.

### **Current HPON situation showing the DIVERSITY of the HPON Sector**

There are approximately 238 HPONs allocated to over 40 different operators, including 23 single licence operators, with formats ranging from religious, racing radio, indigenous, tourist information, niche music formats and ethnic language...with licences held by both commercial and not-for-profit operators.

## **ANRA - Other Matters**

As previously stated, this Instrument will be valid for another 10 years, ANRA would therefore like to take this opportunity submit some suggestions that the ACMA might take into consideration which could help current operators survive the many technological changes they are experiencing and as was expressed in the Future of Radio Report.

At recent discussions, the ACMA expressed that their current focus is on supporting existing services and is not looking into expansion for any sector.

Appreciating the above statement, ANRA would still like to have further discussions with ACMA regarding the possibility of revisiting the **Planned, Unallocated HPON Services**, to gauge the current level of interest in these areas with members and non-members.

ANRA requests that if ANRA, or an aspirant narrowcast operator, was to make a submission for a HPON in a new area that the ACMA would at the least enter into discussions with the operator within a reasonable timeframe.

ANRA would also like to see the streamlining of procedures to identify HPON spectrum to find ways to reduce the risk for prospective HPON licensees who invest time and money in identifying potential HPON licences.

ANRA would like to have HPONs included in the rollout of digital radio where feasible.

## **Conclusion**

ANRA is also of the view that the HPON allocation determination is currently operating effectively and efficiently, and continues to form a necessary and effective part of the legislative framework.

ANRA supports the remake of a new Instrument prior to the sunset date with only minor changes, so that its ongoing efficacy is preserved.

ANRA is available at any time to be informed in regard to any proposed changes no matter how small.

As shown in this response, HPONs play an important role for DIVERSITY in the broadcasting sector and should be afforded an even-handed level of support as the ACMA has provided for other broadcast sectors and as detailed in the Future of Radio Report.

Finally, the HPON Sector deserves the modernisation of protocols that move towards more user-friendly systems and inclusion in industry initiatives that will support the future development of the sector.