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Dear Mr Gray

Allocation of the 700 MHz (digital dividend) spectrum band

I am writing to you because you hold, or have recently held, one or more television transmitter licences for services that use channels 52–69.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of important changes to the radiofrequency spectrum band in which your service is licensed (694–820 MHz inclusive). The Australian Communications and Media Authority (the ACMA) is providing you with this information in advance of a formal process that will commence shortly.

If you have any questions or concerns after reading this letter, I encourage you to contact Robert Hughes, who is the dedicated contact officer for enquiries. He can be contacted on (03) 8651 5712 or by email at majorspectrumallocations@acma.gov.au.

Realising the digital dividend

By the end of 2013, all analog television services in Australia will be switched off. Any (digital) television services remaining in UHF channels 52–69 will be moved to lower channels, leaving a large block of spectrum available for new uses. This block of spectrum, between 694–820 MHz, is commonly referred to as the 'digital dividend band'.

There are three parts to realising the digital dividend:

1. **Switch-off:** Analog television will be switched off region by region, following a timetable determined by the Federal Government. Ahead of switch-off in each area, alternative arrangements are being made to ensure all viewers can receive digital television. Depending on where they live, viewers will receive digital television either from digital terrestrial television transmitters or via the VAST satellite service.
2. **Restack:** All digital television services remaining in the digital dividend band will be moved down to one of the remaining available television channels (VHF channels 6–12 or UHF channels 28–51). The Minister has asked the ACMA to complete this work in all areas of Australia by 31 December 2014.
3. **Reallocation:** Once all television services have vacated channels 52–69, a large block of vacant spectrum will be available for other uses, which are expected to

include advanced mobile telecommunications. The ACMA has commenced the process of reallocating the spectrum to be cleared, with a view to conducting an auction of spectrum licences in 2012. The spectrum licences are unlikely to come into force until after the television services have been cleared from the spectrum.

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These three overlapping processes all need to be completed in order to realise the digital dividend.

Commencement of the reallocation process

The ACMA is commencing the process of reallocating the digital dividend band. The reallocation process has a number of formal legal steps. The first of these is for the ACMA to recommend that the Minister declare some of the digital dividend for reallocation, so that it can be allocated via a public auction. The ACMA has prepared a draft reallocation recommendation, which includes details of the exact location and size of the relevant spectrum to be reallocated. This will be the subject of industry consultation before it is finalised. If your licence is within the part of the band to be reallocated via auction, you will receive a letter inviting you to comment on the draft recommendation.

On the basis of the current draft recommendation to the Minister, we expect that:

- > Holders of licences operating in the bands **703–748 MHz and 758–803 MHz inclusive** will shortly receive formal notice of the draft recommendation that may affect their services, in preparation for reallocation of the spectrum by public auction. Licensees will be given the opportunity to submit written comments to the ACMA regarding the proposed reallocation.
- > Holders of licences operating in the remainder of the digital dividend (**694–703 MHz, 748–758 MHz, and 803–820 MHz**) will also need to cease operating in the digital dividend band, but will receive formal notification at a later time.

Licensees will be contacted shortly with specific information relevant to each licence category.

What the changes to the digital dividend band mean for you

You are being contacted as you hold, or have recently held, at least one apparatus licence located in the digital dividend band (channels 52–69). All analog television services are being switched off, meaning that your analog service will not be able to continue operating beyond the switch-off date in your area. Alternative arrangements are being made for all viewers in Australia to receive digital TV.

The precise arrangements for clearance of your licence from the digital dividend band will vary depending on the part of the band in which the licence/s are located, their category of service, and the nature of the licence/s.

What happens next?

The ACMA has released the terms of the draft reallocation recommendation it proposes to make to the Minister. It will shortly provide details of this recommendation to apparatus licensees located in the part of the spectrum proposed to be reallocated, and invite written comments. The ACMA will take into account any written comments from these licensees before providing a recommendation to the Minister.

The terms of the ACMA's draft reallocation recommendation are also set out in an information paper, which can be viewed online at www.acma.gov.au/draftrecommendations.

I hope that we will be able to work together to achieve the best outcome for licensees and for Australia at large.

If you require any further information or clarification about the restack or reallocation process, please contact Robert Hughes on (03) 8651 5712. Alternatively, you can contact Robert by email at majorspectrumallocations@acma.gov.au.

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If you would like to find out more about the switchover to digital television, or the future arrangements for digital television reception in your community, please contact the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy on Digital Ready Information Line 1800 201 013 (8am-10pm AEST).

Yours sincerely



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