

Tender for trial of **internet content filtering** products issued

ACMA recently issued a request for tender to conduct a trial of internet content filtering in Tasmania, at the internet service provider (ISP) level, seeking submissions from suitably qualified and experienced organisations to test a range of ISP-level commercial filtering products.

The successful tenderer will be responsible for establishing a test environment and reporting on:

- the effectiveness of content filtering products at the ISP level in blocking illegal and inappropriate content

- determining whether the operation of content filtering products at the ISP level would introduce delays into an ISP's network
- an analysis of the features available in content filtering products at the ISP level and
- the capabilities of current products in filtering non web-based content.

The Minister of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Helen Coonan, directed ACMA to conduct the trial as part of the government's Protecting

Australian Families Online initiative. ACMA is to report on the results of the trial by 30 June 2008.

The purpose of the trial is to determine the capacity of available technology to filter, at the ISP level, illegal or inappropriate content that consumers may access through an ISP, and advances made since previous trials of such filter technologies were carried out.

Content filtering at the ISP level has been assessed on three previous occasions in Australia:

- a technical study by CSIRO and

reported on in 2001

- a study by Ovum in 2003, commissioned by the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts and
- a technical trial by RMIT Training on behalf of NetAlert Limited in 2005.

Tenders closed on 18 July 2007 and the tender will be awarded in 2007. For more information about the trial, contact Vince Humphries of ACMA's Education and Telephone Content Section by email to vince.humphries@acma.gov.au.

ACMA accepts formal undertakings from 2GB

ACMA has accepted formal undertakings from Harbour Radio Pty Ltd, the licensee of commercial radio service 2GB Sydney, in response to breaches of a provision of the 2004 Commercial Radio Codes of Practice. The undertakings relate to new training procedures on vilification.

In three investigations over the last six months, ACMA has found the licensee in breach of the vilification provision of the code for broadcasts between May and December 2005. Clause 1.3(e) of the code provides that a licensee must not broadcast a program that is likely to incite or perpetuate hatred against or vilify any person or group on the basis of certain attributes including ethnicity.

In response to these findings, 2GB will introduce a comprehensive training program on vilification that is intended to ensure its future compliance with the code. These new

procedures, which supplement the revised regime introduced by 2GB's licensee in mid-2006, will better align the licensee's approach on this matter with the code. The new training is to be provided to all presenters, producers and on-air staff to the satisfaction of ACMA.

The 2GB Board of Directors will formally review and approve the compliance program for implementation, and the licensee will report to ACMA throughout the process on the development and application of the new regime.

If not satisfied at any time that the new arrangements will ensure compliance with the code, ACMA will revisit the matter to consider the heightened compliance options available to it. 2GB accepts this position and has reiterated its commitment to meeting its responsibilities under the code.

ACMA welcomed the considered and constructive approach taken by 2GB in developing a program of activities that specifically addresses the concerns raised by ACMA.

CODES OF PRACTICE

Codes of practice are developed under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* by industry in consultation with ACMA. Codes may relate to, among other things, preventing the broadcasting of programs that, in accordance with community standards, are not suitable to be broadcast. In developing codes about this matter, community attitudes to the portrayal in programs of matter that is likely to incite or perpetuate hatred against, or vilifies, any person or group on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual preference, age, religion or physical or mental disability are to be taken into account.

ACMA must include a code in the Register of Codes of Practice if a group representing a section of the industry develops a code and ACMA is satisfied that it provides appropriate community safeguards is endorsed by a majority of the broadcasting service providers in that section of the industry and the public have been given an adequate opportunity to comment on the code. ACMA can investigate complaints about compliance with a code that is included in the register.

The Commercial Radio Codes of Practice, which are due to be reviewed in late 2007, are on the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au (go to For licensees & industry: Content requirements > Broadcasting: Radio content & advertising > Radio codes & standards > Commercial radio).