

25 August 2015

## **New spectrum rules welcome, but must apply to all users**

ASTRA today welcomed a new Government proposal to modernise the way broadcasting spectrum is regulated.

The Government today announced it will replace current regulations with new legislation to streamline licencing, better integrate public and private users, and review prices to ensure the efficient use of spectrum.

“The subscription television industry has long advocated reforms that put all spectrum users on a more equal footing and encourage efficient use of spectrum through market-based pricing and increased trading of the commodity,” Chief Executive Officer, Andrew Maiden, said today.

ASTRA pledged to support the proposal subject to consultation and the final drafting of legislation, expected to be introduced into Parliament in August 2016 with progressive implementation from the middle of the following year.

The subscription television industry has a keen interest in ensuring that competitors are not granted special privileges that give them an unfair advantage over other users.

ASTRA is therefore concerned that the Government’s announcement is silent on the question of whether free-to-air broadcasters will enjoy preferential treatment.

“Free-to-air networks are large commercial users who profit from using publicly-owned broadcasting spectrum, so the integrity of the reforms will depend on free-to-air spectrum being managed and priced in accordance with the market-based principles espoused by the Government,” Mr Maiden concluded.

ENDS

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**About ASTRA** – The Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association (ASTRA) is the peak body representing the subscription media industry in Australia. Members include content makers, distribution platforms, technology companies and supporting industries. ASTRA members produce content that reaches one in three Australians. In 2013/14 they invested more than \$600 million in local content production, added \$1.9 billion to the economy, and created jobs for 6600 Australians.