



NEW INQUIRY

Digital television – who’s buying it?

Although the scheduled rollout of digital television in Australia has passed the half way mark, there is a low uptake of the technology amongst consumers. This is the issue being considered in a new inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

The rollout of digital television in Australia began in the major metropolitan areas in 2001. Digital television services are being progressively rolled out in regional areas. The end of analogue television transmission is scheduled for 2008. The Australian public has not bought into the technology, and it is anticipated that digital television will be taken up by less than 50 per cent of Australian households by 2008.

The Committee Chair, the Hon Jackie Kelly MP, said “Digital television can deliver high quality transmission and a greater range of programming to Australian viewers. But currently, Australians are either unaware of the technology, or reluctant to purchase digital televisions or set top boxes”.

“With the end of analogue transmission scheduled for 2008, the Committee is keen to ensure digital broadcasting will be available to everyone, and the Australian public is ready for the switch-off of existing analogue services” Mrs Kelly added.

Referred by Senator the Hon Helen Coonan, the Federal Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, the Committee has been asked to inquire into and report on:

- the rollout process for digital television, including progress to date and future plans;
- options for further encouraging consumer interest in the uptake of digital television;
- technological issues relevant to the uptake of digital television; and
- future options.

The inquiry aims to report on options for encouraging consumer interest in digital television. The inquiry will also report on the rollout process and technological issues relevant to the uptake of digital television.

Interested persons and organisations are invited to make written submissions to the inquiry by **6 May 2005**, after which the committee will hold public hearings.

Further details on the inquiry, including the terms of reference, membership of the Committee and advice on making submissions can be obtained on the Committee’s website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cita or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4601 or emailing cita.reps@aph.gov.au.

For media comment, please contact Emily Tinson on (02) 4732 2844 in Mrs Kelly’s office

For background information, please contact the Committee Secretary, on (02) 6277 4601