



Public hearing in Canberra – 25 May

Digital television – who's buying it?

Digital Broadcasting Australia and **Free TV Australia** will air their concerns about the switch-over to digital TV at the first public hearing in Canberra tomorrow into the uptake of digital television.

Both organisations are preparing to switch over to digital television in 2008, but there has been little interest among consumers.

The rollout of digital television in Australia began in the major metropolitan areas in 2001. Although the scheduled rollout of digital television in Australia has passed the half way mark, it is anticipated that digital television will be taken up by less than 50 per cent of Australian households by 2008.

Committee Chair Jackie Kelly said digital television can deliver high quality transmission and a greater range of programming to Australian viewers.

“Currently, Australians are either unaware of the technology, or reluctant to purchase digital televisions or set-top boxes,” Ms Kelly said.

“Existing analogue services will be phased out from 2008 onwards – we need to ensure that the Australian public is ready to switch on to digital.”

Digital Broadcasting Australia is a not-for-profit industry organisation whose members are made up from the four major layers of the free-to-view television industry: free-to-view television broadcasters, consumer electronics manufacturers and suppliers, audio/visual retailers and antenna installers.

Free TV Australia is an industry body which represents all of Australia's 48 commercial free-to-air television licencees. Free TV Australia provides a forum for discussion of industry matters by its members and is the public voice of the industry on a wide range of issues.

The Federal Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Helen Coonan, has requested the Committee 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 first day of the inquiry into the uptake of digital television by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. Digital Broadcasting starts at **9:05am on Wednesday 25 May in 1S4**.

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 (Jackie Kelly's media officer) on (02) 6277 2369 or (02) 4732 2844

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