



## Public hearing in Canberra – 1 June

# Digital television – who's buying it?

The **Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts** and the **Australian Broadcasting Authority** will appear at the second public hearing in Canberra tomorrow for the inquiry into the uptake of digital television by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

Representatives from the Department and the Authority will appear together before the Committee at **9:05am on Wednesday 1 June in Committee Room 1S4.**

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.”

The Federal Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Helen Coonan, has requested the Committee 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 Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts is responsible for providing policy and advice and contributing to the development of legislation in relation to television. The Department is currently conducting several reviews concerning the rollout of digital television.

The Australian Broadcasting Authority is working with the Department in managing the conversion of television from analogue to digital. The Authority plans the availability of segments of the broadcasting services bands for analogue and digital broadcasting.

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](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cita) or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4601 or emailing [cita.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto: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