



## Public hearing in Canberra – 10 August

# Digital television – who's buying it?

Options for encouraging consumer interest in digital television will be the focus of discussions with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and Retravision Pty Ltd, at a public hearing in Canberra on Wednesday 10 August. The hearing is the sixth for the inquiry into the uptake of digital television 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. Although the scheduled rollout 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.

The **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission** (ACCC) is an independent Commonwealth statutory authority. It was formed in 1995 to administer the Trade Practices Act 1974 and other acts. The ACCC promotes competition and fair trade in the market place to benefit consumers, business and the community.

The ACCC believes that current restrictions on multi-channelling may function to reduce the incentives for the timely adoption of digital TV services.

**Retravision Pty Ltd** is the largest retailer of electrical appliances in Australia and has been operating since 1961. Retravision now has a branded network of over 500 stores in Australia that remain privately owned and operated. Sales of audio visual products make up approximately 30% of Retravision's overall sales mix.

Retravision believes a firm analogue switch-off date needs to be established and clearly communicated to ensure suppliers and consumers know exactly where they stand and can plan accordingly.

The Federal Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Helen Coonan, has requested the Committee to inquire into progress on the rollout process for digital television and options to encourage greater consumer interest in the uptake of digital television. Issues under consideration by the Committee include:

- 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.

Committee Chair Jackie Kelly said digital television can deliver high quality transmission. "Currently, Australians are either unaware of the technology, or reluctant to purchase digital televisions or set-top boxes," Mrs Kelly said. "Given that analogue services will be phased out from 2008 onwards – we need to ensure that the Australian public is ready to switch on to digital."

## **Public Hearing Program – Wednesday 10 August**

**Venue:** Committee Room 2R2, Parliament House, Canberra (HMS 98.7)

**9.05am** **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission** (Submission 65)

**10.00am** **Retravision Pty Ltd** (Submission 76)

Further details on the inquiry, including the terms of reference, membership of the Committee and advice on making submissions can be obtained 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).

**Media comment**, please contact Emily Tinson (Jackie Kelly's media officer) on (02) 4732 2844  
**Background information**, please contact the Committee Secretary on (02) 6277 4601