



Public hearing in Canberra – 17 August

Digital television – who's buying it?

Consumers' attitudes to digital television will be the focus of discussions with the Australian Communications and Media Authority and market researcher GfK Australia at a public hearing in Canberra on Wednesday 17 August. The hearing is the seventh 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 Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)** is responsible for the regulation of broadcasting, radiocommunications, telecommunications and online content. On 1 July 2005 the Australian Communications Authority merged with the Australian Broadcasting Authority to create ACMA.

The ACMA will brief the Committee on a major national household survey it recently conducted into digital media in Australian homes.

GfK (Growth from Knowledge) Australia is part of the GfK Group, one of the largest market research organisations worldwide. It specialises in monitoring the product sales and market trends of industry sectors such as consumer electronics, entertainment media, information technology, major & small domestic appliances, photographic & imaging, telecommunications and toys. GfK provides essential market data to over 200 organisations in Australia and New Zealand.

GfK will present an extract from its recent conference held in Sydney concerning the uptake of the digital lifestyle in Australia.

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 17 August

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

9.05am Australian Communications and Media Authority
10.00am GfK Australia

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 or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4601 or emailing 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