



Public hearing in Canberra – 14 September

Digital television – who's buying it?

Developing consistent and standard requirements for digital services in Australia will be the focus of discussions at a public hearing in Canberra on Wednesday 14 September. The hearing is part of 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.

Appearing before the Committee is Alastair Tegart, Group Manager for Communications, IT and e-Commerce Standards, from **Standards Australia**. Standards Australia is recognised through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Commonwealth Government as the peak non-government Standards development body in Australia.

Standards Australia will provide the Committee with information on existing standards and the development of standards 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."

The public hearing is the 11th for the inquiry and is likely to be the final hearing before the committee tables its report in early 2005.

Public Hearing Program – Wednesday 14 September

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

9.05am Standards Australia

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

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