

3 May 2005

The Secretary
Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2500

Dear Sir/Madam

Panasonic Australia thanks the committee for their request for submissions on the up-take of Digital TV in Australia.

Digital TV offers a wide variety of benefits to the Australian public, not just in the areas of improved picture quality and sound. Panasonic Australia believes that the uptake of 'Digital Television' products has not achieved expectations for several reasons. We believe that there are three principle drivers of the market.

- Quantity
- Additional Services
- Quality

Quantity: Currently, with the exception of SBS and ABC, the legislation doesn't allow the broadcasters to take full advantage of Digital TV technology in regards to offering services to those of the Australian public who desire more choices in TV programming. This could be addressed by allowing limited multi-channeling capabilities to the commercial broadcasters whilst maintaining the HD mandate. Adoption of limited-multi-channeling can be seen as an additional driver for the consumers to adopt Digital Television.

Additional Services: The third principle driver for the market would be additional services like interactivity. However, Panasonic Australia cautions this proposal due to the constraints of non-existence of a testing and conformance centre and the availability of OAD as explained below:

1. **Testing and conformance centre.** Currently there are many issues in the market with product and broadcasters not being 100% compatible. This can be addressed by the adoption of an independent industry body who can evaluate suppliers product and broadcasters transport streams against industry references.
2. **Over the Air Downloads (OAD).** Due to the complexity and interpretations of the standards, and the possibility of interactivity, this would allow numerous third-party software products to interact with consumers Digital TV devices. To maintain consumer confidence and reliability in this type of system, we can see the only option to service this need is the adoption of a responsible OAD system over-seen by a testing & conformance centre.

Quality: Quality has been addressed to some extent by the introduction of the HD mandate. Programmes broadcasted in High Definition fulfill the desire of those consumers who appreciate the best picture and sound quality. Panasonic Australia supports the on-going implementation of the HD mandate.

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Panasonic Australia recognises the decision made by the United States of America to mandate the inclusion of Digital TV reception capability in Television products. We would therefore recommend investigation of the success of this decision with the view to adopting a similar procedure for Australia.

Panasonic Australia fully supports any initiative to improve the take-up of Digital Television in Australia.

Yours faithfully



Graham Day
Director - Consumer Electronics Group

cc: Dr Anna Dacre – Parliament of Australia House of Representatives
cc: Toshiro Kisaka - Panasonic
cc: Evan Manolis – Panasonic
cc: Colin Harm - Panasonic



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