



**Australian
Competition &
Consumer
Commission**

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Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

By e-mail: cita.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Inquiry into the uptake of digital television in Australia

This letter covers the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's (ACCC) submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts inquiry into the uptake of digital television in Australia.

The ACCC is the independent statutory authority responsible for compliance with, and enforcement of, the *Trade Practices Act 1974* (the TPA). The statutory object of TPA is to enhance the welfare of Australians through the promotion of competition and fair trading and provision for consumer protection.

The ACCC considers that especially pertinent to the inquiry's terms of reference is the issue of the current prohibition on multi-channelling by Free-to-Air (FTA) broadcasters. International experience suggests that increased consumer choice in the form of additional channel offerings provided by digital TV may be a key driver in promoting the take-up of digital services. In this regard, the ACCC believes that the current restrictions on multi-channelling may function to reduce the incentives for the timely adoption of digital TV services.

Attached for the Committee's consideration are three reports on the issue of multi-channelling. These comprise the ACCC's submission to the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts Issues Paper, *Provision of services other than simulcasting by Free-to-air broadcasters on digital spectrum* and the advice provided by LECG on, *inter alia*, multi-channelling in overseas jurisdictions, as part of this submission. Also attached is a report by Convergent



Consulting, commissioned by the ACCC, examining the technical requirements and associated costs of providing multi-channelling services in Australia.

The ACCC would be happy to assist further with any questions the Committee has on the submission. Questions should be directed at first instance to me, on (03) 9290 1914.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Cosgrave', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael Cosgrave
General Manager
Telecommunications