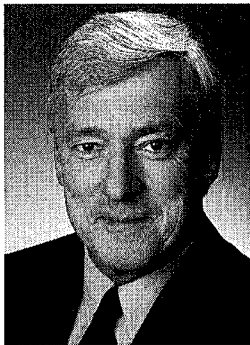




8 June 2005



Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology & the Arts  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Peter Andren M.P.  
Federal Member for Calare

To Whom It May Concern

**Inquiry into the Uptake of Digital Television in Australia**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comment to the inquiry into the uptake of digital television in Australia.

The Television Black Spot program was developed in response to concerns about inadequate television reception in regional and rural locations. However with analogue television transmissions scheduled to end in 2008, it is clear that those locations will then be facing the same problem of little or no (digital) television reception.

Some seven communities in my rural electorate of Calare have benefited from the Black Spot TV Program, which has funded the installation of five analogue retransmission television towers. Another two communities are accessing analogue television under the Alternative Technical Solutions part of the Black Spot program.

These retransmission facilities are now owned by local councils or community groups, who can ill afford the cost of converting the analogue receivers into digital.

As noted in Part 3.2 of Free TV Australia's submission to this inquiry, an "essential requirement for a successful transition to digital services is a stable and robust terrestrial transmission platform".

If we are to be serious about consumer uptake of digital television we must ensure that *all* Australians have access to free-to-air digital television broadcasts.

This should necessarily include the government funding the conversion of Black Spot analogue retransmission facilities to digital.

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I also suggest government should fund the ongoing maintenance of these facilities

This will not only ensure those living in rural and regional areas continue to have access to free-to-air digital television in the future, but will protect government's original expenditure, as well as the substantial investment by broadcasters converting to digital broadcast.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Andren". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**PETER ANDREN**  
**Federal Member for Calare**