

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

Dear Sir or Madam,

### **Submission for the inquiry into the uptake of digital television in Australia**

"Digital TV penetration in the Australian consumer market is around 5 per cent, while penetration in the United Kingdom is around 70 per cent."

It would be pertinent for the inquiry to look at the successful uptake of Digital TV in the UK and compare the services offered there to what is available in Australia.

Digital TV in the UK has a service called "Freeview" which is a viable free alternative to Pay TV. It offers a comprehensive variety of up to 30 digital channels and interactive services with no further payment after the purchase of a set top box. More information can be obtained at <http://www.freeview.co.uk>

The Digital TV service on offer in Australia could be best described as pathetic-being little more than re-broadcasting the antiquated and inadequate existing analogue TV service.

The oligopoly interests of the existing free to air and pay TV operators in this country is further enhanced at the expense of the viewing public by the current policy of restricting digital TV access to new operators. This problem was further compounded by the granting of a large tract of digital spectrum to the existing oligopoly at no cost.

The existing broadcasters are not required to multi channel or provide any new content above what they are already inflicting on the analogue network (public broadcasters excepted). Considering a new digital operator would be required to buy spectrum, buy new broadcast equipment, buy new plant, buy new infrastructure, buy new content and presumably multi channel; it could be argued the concessions granted to the existing broadcasters seem excessive.

Comparing "Freeview" with the Digital TV service on offer in Australia clearly demonstrates that the existing broadcasters oligopoly interests are held above the interests of the wider Australian community and the viewing public.

If this enquiry is fair dinkum about the interests of the wider community and fair dinkum about its concern for the slow Digital TV adoption rate, then it should recommend a "Freeview" type service be implemented in Australia As Soon As Possible! This will put the Australian penetration rates on par with the UK.

We have recently purchased a standard digital widescreen TV and we are very happy with its technical performance.

Below is some background information pertaining to UK "Freeview" and available channels.

Regards,

A T Gallagher

**up to 30 free channels...**

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### frequently asked questions - cost

#### **Will I be able to get pay channels with FREEVIEW?**

No, there are no plans for this.

#### **What does FREEVIEW cost?**

Watching FREEVIEW costs nothing. The box required to enable your television to receive FREEVIEW costs around £60. If you need a new rooftop aerial or extra connection leads, there will be a cost associated with this. Your local electrical retailer will be able to advise you further. Some retailers offer a survey from around £30 and may refund the charge from the cost of installing a new aerial. A new aerial costs from £80.

#### **Isn't 'FREEVIEW' misleading because I have to buy new equipment?**

FREEVIEW is called that because it's television that is free to view - not pay TV. The one-off equipment cost is for the box or iDTV. You then receive up to 30 digital channels and interactive services with no further payment unless you require an aerial survey and / or upgrade. It's a one-off upgrade - like buying a TV set to watch television, or a computer to surf the internet.

#### **What is the cost of an aerial survey and who can carry them out?**

Your local electrical retailer will be able to arrange

### FAQ categories

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If you would like to find out more about FREEVIEW and the service we provide then click on the following link:

 [about FREEVIEW](#)

a survey should your aerial need one. Please ask for a quotation. Some retailers offer a survey from around £30 and may refund the charge from the cost of installing a new aerial. A new aerial costs from £80.

**What if I need further information?**

If you have any more queries please contact your local electrical retailer.

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entertainment for everyone

also on FREEVIEW



\* not available in Wales



**itv 4**

**children's channels**



**music**



**news and views 24/7**



\*Check regional availability

**lifestyle**

