



**Public Interest Criteria for Reissue of Spectrum Licenses
Submission**

Qantas Airways Limited

June 2009

***Regarding Public Interest Criteria for re-issue of Spectrum Licences –
Discussion Paper for Public Consultation***

Dear Sir/Madam,

Qantas is pleased to participate in the consultation process regarding the re-issue of spectrum licenses in Australia. Our interest in the matter is specifically related to the potential inclusion of co-existence conditions in re-issued spectrum licenses to facilitate the deployment of new and emerging technologies in Australia.

Qantas aims to act as a long term strategic participant in the provision of inflight connectivity and passenger communications services, and aims for innovation and market leadership in all markets served. In 2007, Qantas was the world's first airline to trial in-flight passenger access to GSM-based services due to the cooperation with our "GSM on board" service provider, regulatory authorities and Australian spectrum license holders. The "GSM on board" service is provided by a pico-cell BTS onboard the aircraft that provides a low-power, highly localised GSM signal, enabling only those GSM devices onboard the aircraft to access the service.

During the 9-month trial, one Qantas B767-300 domestic aircraft flew 1351 flights ranging from just over 1 hour to 5 hours with pico-cell technology enabled. The customer usage of this connectivity service proved overwhelming during the evaluation. Over 2,000 customers were surveyed during the trial, with more than 90% indicating they would like the inflight text and email capability on an ongoing basis. Throughout the duration of the trial period, the "GSM on board" trial service did not interfere in any way with the operation or rights of terrestrial based GSM mobile operators.

The Qantas "GSM on board" trial is an excellent example of device co-existence where a secondary spectrum user is able to access spectrum while not interfering in any way with, or diminishing the rights of, the primary spectrum license holder.

Since the start of the Qantas trial, many airlines have already launched either commercial or trial services in Europe, the Middle East and Asia where spectrum licensing regulatory frameworks enable the deployment of new services that do not interfere with primary license holders' rights and operations.

The current radio communications regulatory framework in Australia, including the current spectrum license regime, appears to place Australian industry and consumers at a relative disadvantage compared with much of the world.

Another important limitation of the current spectrum licensing definition is related to the license boundaries. While geographic boundaries and interference limitations are set, there appear to be no explicit limitations on the affected maximum transmitter altitude or minimum power levels. Although the spectrum license regime appears to be designed to support terrestrial transceivers at fairly high power levels, this approach does not allow for the efficient use of spectrum resources that are otherwise outside of the scope of the primary spectrum license holder's business and operational capabilities or objectives.

Qantas believes that Australia's spectrum licensing approach must allow for the deployment of new and emerging wireless technologies by, for example, applying co-existence conditions to all re-issued spectrum licenses.

Qantas supports the co-existence of spectrum licences, specifically in support of the innovative and progressive inflight mobile technology services offerable in other regions of the world, and one that Qantas would seek to offer its customers.

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