



CITY OF LITHGOW COUNCIL

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Contact:

24 July, 2007

B 30/7
The General Manager
Digital Broadcasting
Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
GPO Box 2154
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam

DITIGAL CONVERSION OF SELF HELP TELEVISION RETRANSMISSION SITES

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Digital Conversion of Self Help Television Retransmission Sites Discussion Paper. Council wishes to make the following comments.

The most effective option for the conversion of the existing analogue self help retransmission sites to digital can only be commented upon once factors such as the following are identified and evaluated:

- capital and recurrent costs of all options
- the availability of suitably qualified technicians who can provide a response to problems within a reasonable period of time
- an assessment of digital signal coverage
- the best result for the community in terms of television reception.

In addition to technical viability and the costs of conversion, operation and maintenance, the Government also needs to consider the financial viability of local councils to convert, operate and maintain these facilities. For example, with 3 self help retransmission sites in the Lithgow Local Government Area, the cost of conversion using individual digital transmitters would be approximately \$414,000 in addition to the recurrent costs which have not been included in the Discussion Paper. These costs are significant particularly considering that television transmission is not a 'core business' for local councils. Therefore, the Government needs to consider an appropriate funding program which looks at capital and recurrent costs to ensure that the community has access to television.

The provision of satisfactory television reception to the community within the Local Government Area is an important issue that this Council has lobbied for in the past and will continue to lobby for into the future. However, with restricted income generating ability through 'rate pegging' the undertaking of 'non core business' activities are limited and in many circumstances impossible. Therefore, the Federal Government's funding program for the conversion of self help retransmission sites to digital will dictate the success of this conversion.

Yours faithfully


Mr Paul Anderson
GENERAL MANAGER