

SUBMISSION ON DIGITAL CONVERSION OF SELF-HELP TELEVISION RETRANSMISSION SITES

- 1. Whether the use of individual digital transmitters for each service or the use of multiplexers, would be the most effective option for converting existing analogue self-help retransmission sites to digital in relation to:**
 - technical viability;
 - costs of conversion, operation and maintenance; and
 - any other options for the digital conversion of self-help television retransmission sites

Costs of \$125,000 to \$210,500 to convert a self-help site to digital would be significant for a community like Oberon. It would mean money would have to be taken from other significant infrastructure provision such as roads, health and services.

It is not clear whether the multiplexer option offers any advantages, especially as there is no indication of the likely cost. It also has the added disadvantage of having to be reprogrammed from time to time. The question of having technicians specifically trained in multiplexer operation and maintenance makes it a least preferred option for a rural community.

- 2. Whether the DTH option for viewers residing in remote areas of Australia where the population is less than 500 should be adopted, rather than converting existing self-help transmission sites from analogue to digital.**

Oberon already has around 45 households with DTH satellites funded by the Federal Government's Television Black Spots Program because the cost of extending coverage through existing transmission sites was prohibitive. Without knowing what sort of coverage a digital transmission site might have and what factors may affect the transmission, it is not possible to say which option is preferable for Oberon at this stage.

The issue of replacing existing DTH reception equipment, however, is of significance to the Oberon community. Households would need adequate notice of the change required and indicative costs. Council has already informed the households funded for DTH equipment under the Television Black Spots Program that Council would not be responsible for any upgrade or maintenance on the equipment.

- 3. Any views regarding the timing of digital conversion of self-help transmission.**

At least 12 months' notice would be appreciated so any budgetary or works considerations could be scheduled into Council's Management Plan.