

Digital television

Government has agreed various policies to promote the transition of the longstanding analogue based terrestrial television services to digital technology. The Government has agreed to offer terrestrial licences, without resource charges, for use by the main, near national, free to air broadcasters. These are subject to various conditions and will last until the date of analogue switch off (ASO). In particular, access to new programme providers is provided for, initially through the licences to be owned by Kordia.

Licences have been accepted by MediaWorks, Television New Zealand, and Kordia and services under the "Freeview" brand to cover up to 75% of the population are expected to occur in the first months of 2008. Additional licences for coverage extension, when required, have also been planned. In addition, the planning allows for a fourth or fifth licence in some areas of New Zealand to meet potential needs for additional capacity if programme demand exceeds that available on the three initial licences. The [frequency plan](#) to be used has now been finalised. The specific programmes to be broadcast are determined by the licence holders. Refer <http://freeviewnz.tv/>

In addition industry has purchased capacity on the OPTUS D1 satellite and have commenced services under the "Freeview" brand to ensure that people outside of the terrestrial licences can receive the Freeview services.

Digital conversion policy for the UHF-TV band

Analogue switch-off (ASO) will provide an opportunity to rationalise the terrestrial UHF-TV spectrum band and release some of the frequencies currently used for analogue television to additional broadcasting or other uses ([the 'digital dividend'](#)). The Ministry of Economic Development sought opinions from broadcasters, content providers and other interested parties as to how this might best be accomplished, in a [discussion paper](#) released in May 2008. Sixteen responses were received.

Cabinet considered the submissions and agreed its digital conversion policy on 27 August 2008. The Minister for Communications and Information Technology [announced](#) the [Cabinet decisions](#) on 29 September 2008.

Background

Additional material concerning the overall policy development in the 2003-2007 period, funding arrangements, and new policy development relating to ASO is published on the [Ministry for Culture and Heritage's website](#).

Relevant material prior to 2003 is archived on the [Ministry of Economic Development's website](#).

[Discussion paper](#)

A discussion paper on the review of digital conversion policy for the UHF-TV band [published May 2008].

[Submissions](#)

Sixteen submissions received in response to the digital conversion discussion paper.

[Cabinet minute: Review of Digital Conversion Policy for the UHF-TV Band](#)

Minute of the Cabinet decisions of digital conversion policy.

[Media release](#)

Announcement by the Minister for Communications and Information Technology, 29 September 2008.