

## Release of Discussion Document on the Future of FM Band - 31 August 2001 (ARCHIVED)

Media Statement from Hon Paul Swain, Minister of Communications and Hon Marian Hobbs, Minister of Broadcasting

31 August 2001

Communications Minister Paul Swain and Broadcasting Minister Marian Hobbs have released a discussion document on the future of the FM radio broadcasting band.

The document sets out proposals for using spectrum in the upper FM band (100 - 108 MHz) for new and enhanced public broadcasting services. It also proposes that spectrum freed-up in the AM band and lower FM band (88 - 100 MHz) could be considered for auction.

"The recent clearance of spectrum in the upper FM band for radio broadcasting means that decisions need to be made about how best to use this resource for the benefit of all New Zealanders," the ministers said.

It is proposed that the upper FM band be used to provide four new networks with nation-wide coverage.

Public feedback is sought on what programmes should be given priority for broadcasting on these networks. The initial proposal is for National Radio, the relocation of Concert FM, Maori radio and Pacific Island radio.

"This is an excellent opportunity to think about how we can use the upper FM band to achieve our public broadcasting objectives," Marian Hobbs said.

"The discussion document asks whether we have got the priorities right, and if not, what programmes New Zealanders want to hear on FM radio."

The Government is keeping open at this stage whether the upper FM band should be used for additional non-commercial broadcast services (such as Access and Community radio) after the needs of the four priority programmes have been met.

"The document also seeks views on options for the top end of the band (106.6 - 108 MHz) for low power broadcasting," Paul Swain said.

"Sensitive aeronautical navigation and communication services operating on the adjacent frequencies means that we need to be careful about the types of services that are broadcast at the top end of the 100 -108 MHz band.

"There are opportunities for some types of broadcasting services to be provided in this band, however, and we are seeking people's views on what these should be."

A copy of the discussion document can found on this website, or can be requested from Dawn Randall on 04-474 2646.

Submissions closed on 28 September 2001. All submissions received by the due date will be considered carefully and used to inform final decisions about the future of the FM band and the process for allocating licences by November 2001.

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