

PROTECTING LOCAL CONTENT IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

September 2016

To bring our media ownership laws into the digital era, the Government has announced the most significant reforms to Australian media regulation in a generation. As part of the changes, the Government is introducing measures that will protect and enhance the amount of local television content in regional Australia.



What change is the Government proposing to support local content?

The Government has introduced legislation to strengthen the local content obligations for regional commercial television licensees and introduce an incentive for local content to be filmed in the local area.

The new obligations would apply to regional commercial television broadcasters, who as a result of change in control known as a 'trigger event', become part of a group of commercial broadcasting licensees whose combined licence area populations collectively exceed 75 per cent of the Australian population.

This would ensure there is local television content in nearly all regional licence areas following a trigger event, including those where there is none currently.



YOUR NEWS



YOUR STORIES



YOUR TOWN



Australian Government

Department of Communications and the Arts

mediareform.communications.gov.au

What are the current local content obligations?

Commercial regional broadcasters in larger regional areas are currently subject to local content obligations. These include Regional Queensland, Northern New South Wales, Southern New South Wales, Regional Victoria and Tasmania. Regional commercial broadcasters in these markets are required to provide minimum levels of local programming to specified local areas, with the minimum required levels set by a points system. Points are accumulated by licensees through broadcasting local programming during eligible periods (6:30am to midnight Monday to Friday, and 8am to midnight on weekends) for timing periods defined in a licence condition. Points are accumulated on a 'per minute' basis, i.e. 1 point for 1 minute of qualifying programming,

with 2 points per minute for local news programming.

Specified licensees are required to meet minimum quotas of:

- > 720 points per six-week period; and
- > A minimum requirement of 90 points per week.

Non-aggregated markets, for example Darwin, Mildura, Griffith, Broken Hill and regional population centres in South Australia and Western Australia are not currently subject to any local content obligations.



What are the additional local content obligations in the media reform legislation?

In aggregated markets and Tasmania, following a trigger event broadcasters will be required to provide 30 points of additional local content e.g. a minimum of 120 points per week required with an average of 150 points over a six week period required in total.

Different obligations will apply to broadcasters in non-aggregated markets. In these markets, regional broadcasters that are party to a trigger event will be required to broadcast an average of 60 points of local content per week over a six week period, with a minimum of 45 points per week over the same period.

Compliance and review

Regional television licensees subject to the additional local content obligations will be subject to a compliance and review process.

A licensee must comply with the new content requirements from six months after a change of control, known as a trigger event.

Following this, broadcasters must submit two annual reports demonstrating their compliance with the obligations.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority will be required to undertake a review of the effectiveness of the local content obligations two years after the additional obligations commence. The Australian Communications and Media Authority will monitor and enforce these local content obligations.

How will the arrangements encourage filming in local areas?

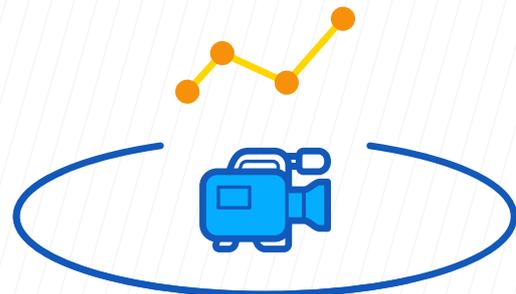
The local content obligations include a mechanism to provide an incentive for the filming of local content within the local area it is relevant to.

- > each minute of local content that both comprises news that is directly relevant to the local area, and is filmed within the local area, would accumulate three points.

This incentive would be built into the points system that broadcasters will be subject to in meeting their local content obligations under the new framework. Under the proposed arrangements:

These arrangements will encourage broadcasters to film content in local areas, which will in turn supports jobs and investment in regional areas of Australia.

- > each minute of the legislated amount of local content that relates to the local or licence area would accumulate one point,
- > each minute of local content that comprises news that is directly relevant to the local area would accumulate two points, and



News filmed in the local area

- > Licensees will be provided with a new points incentive to broadcast locally filmed content.
- > Locally filmed means using vision gathered from and broadcast in the local area.

Content type	Points	Examples
Licence area content	1	A show about fishing on Fraser Island broadcast anywhere in the Regional QLD Licence Area A news story on the Sunshine Coast broadcast in Cairns
Local area news	2	A news story on the Sunshine Coast broadcast into the Sunshine Coast
Locally filmed local area news	3	A news story on the Sunshine Coast broadcast into the Sunshine Coast that features vision gathered from the Sunshine Coast (e.g. interviews with locals on camera).

Existing local content obligations

Aggregated markets and Tasmania

- 720 points of local content per 6 week period.
- > average of 120 points per week
 - > minimum of 90 points per week
 - > 1 minute of local content equals 1 point
 - > 1 minute of local news equals 2 points
 - > in aggregated licence areas at least 50% of local content must come from the local area

Eligible periods

Points are accumulated by licensees through broadcasting local content during defined eligible periods, which are

- > from 6:30 am to midnight (inclusive) on Monday to Friday;
- > from 8:00 am to midnight (inclusive) on Saturday and Sunday.

Timing periods

Points are calculated during the following timing periods:

- > the period of 6 weeks starting on the first Sunday in February in a year;
- > each subsequent period of 6 weeks until the end of the 42nd week after the first Sunday in February; and
- > the period starting at the end of the 42nd week after the first Sunday in February and ending immediately before the first Sunday in February in the following year.

Non-aggregated markets

No obligations

Proposed local content obligations

Aggregated markets and Tasmania

- 900 points of local content per 6 week period.
- > average of 150 points per week
 - > minimum of 120 points per week
 - > 1 minute local content equals 1 point
 - > 1 minute of local news equals 2 points
 - > 1 minute of local news that is filmed locally equals 3 points
 - > in aggregated licence areas at least 50% of material of local significance must come from the local area

Eligible periods

No change

Timing periods

No change

Non-aggregated markets

Points system

- 360 points of local content per 6 week period.
- > average of 60 points per week
 - > minimum of 45 points per week
 - > 1 minute of local content equals 1 point
 - > 1 minute of local news equals 2 points
 - > 1 minute of local news that is filmed locally equals 3 points

Hours—non-aggregated markets:

Points would be accumulated according to the same 'eligible periods' and 'timing periods' arrangements as operate under existing obligations, outlined above.