Australian Government
Bureau of Meteorology

Bureau of Meteorology Submission on IFC 21/2016: Proposed update to the Australian Radiofrequency Spectrum Plan

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1. Introduction

The Bureau wishes to thank the ACMA for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Australian Radiofrequency Spectrum Plan..

2. Specific Comments

As part of the revision of the Australian Radiofrequency Spectrum Plan, the Bureau of Meteorology wishes to propose that footnote AUS105 be deleted and the single reference to it (on page 71) for the RADIOLOCATION service in the 2700-2900 MHz band be removed.

3. Background

Footnote AUS105 was inserted in the previous revision of the ARSP (IFC 35-2012) in response to the Bureau's proposal to upgrade the Radiolocation Service in the 2700-2900 MHz band from secondary to co-primary status with the Aeronautical Radionavigation Service. However the ACMA did not consult the Bureau during the development of AUS105, resulting in a footnote that in no way reflects the intent of the Bureau's proposed change at the time. On the contrary, this footnote represents an unacceptable risk to the effective operation of the Bureau's S-Band meteorological radars by stipulating that they are not protected from harmful interference from services operating under spectrum licences in adjacent bands.

The submission by the Bureau to IFC 35-2012 to upgrade the Radiolocation service in this band to co-primary was intended to provide:

- recognition of the fundamental and growing role that weather radars play in the Bureau's ability to provide accurate and timely services to the Australian public and to industry, and

- commensurate protection from interference from services operating in adjacent bands.

Radars operated by the Bureau and by meteorological agencies worldwide fulfil a crucial safety-of-life role. Interference into a weather radar's receiver can substantially degrade its performance, thereby compromising the ability of the Bureau's meteorologists to issue appropriate and timely warnings, and for the public to effectively utilise the Bureau's web-based radar display. Consequently, in circumstances involving rapidly evolving severe weather conditions such as thunderstorms and associated gust fronts that can present a serious risk to aircraft from downbursts, and intense localised rainfall resulting in flash flooding, interference to meteorological radars may increase the potential for lives to be put at risk.