

Dear Phil,



BPL - one step closer to reality

The recent ACA paper on Broadband Powerlines leaves the door open to the pilots and trials that are currently being planned.

This will be a good field test to see what degree of interference occurs (if any); and, if that is the case, what can be done to overcome the problems. A blanket 'no', as was requested by the radio amateurs, to BPL would not have been a good outcome.

From the very beginning the industry has said that it will ensure there won't be any interference with the emergency services, etc. So that has never been a legitimate issue. And those involved in the pilots have taken precautions, and are working with the agencies in case problems do occur.

I have twice organised a BPL Summit and on both occasions I invited the radio amateurs to attend these discussions. In addition, upon my advice, they have also been invited to the various industry demonstrations, seminars and trials.

I had hoped that the amateurs would take up the invitation to work with the industry to find solutions. Unfortunately, despite several appeals from me, they have declined to do this and their objective continues to be a total shutdown of BPL in Australia.

My argument is that, even if BPL were to achieve a 10% penetration, it would take several years to reach that level, during which time there would be ongoing opportunities for finetuning, reviews and other chances to get it right. But, whatever happens, the possible (still not certain) interference to radio amateurs would always be limited, while the benefits to regional BPL broadband users would be enormous. For example, perhaps 1,000 amateurs would be affected, while possibly 500,000 regional users would benefit.

Despite the lack of cooperation I have urged the industry to keep trying to work on a solution with those amateurs potentially affected by radio interference, regardless of their failure to consider these suggestions.

A totally separate issue is that ADSL2+ interference is potentially higher than BPL interference – the ACA would need to take an even-handed approach to all types of interference, and not just single out BPL.

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