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FREE TV NETWORKS USHER IN NEW ERA OF DIGITAL TV

Australia's commercial Free TV broadcasters are set to transform the free-to-view digital experience by paving the way for the development of free-to-air industry Electronic Program Guides (EPGs).

In what will be a major boost to the take-up of free-to-view digital TV, commercial broadcasters will make their program listing information available to manufacturers of set top boxes, personal video recorders (PVRs) and other service providers provided the equipment displaying the EPG complies with some base level requirements designed to protect copyright, protect the integrity of the program information and facilitate collection of ratings information.

Julie Flynn, Chief Executive Officer of Free TV Australia, says this is a significant advance for the industry and a boon for consumers:

"Free-to-view digital television is an open platform – available to every household in Australia.

"In the same spirit, we believe all consumers should be able to access our electronic program information.

"Following our announcement today, any EPG service provider will be able to receive our data and make it available on a range of retail consumer equipment.

"Free TV members acknowledge widespread availability of electronic program information is a critical plank in the transition to digital television, and today's announcement is a major step forward."

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