



For Immediate Release

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ACMA's 4 Watt ruling a win for EPC/RFID

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has ruled that Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) devices with up to 4 Watt of power may now be used in Australia in the 920-926 MHz band. This follows four years of significant testing on the use of 4 Watt RFID devices by industry, led by GS1 Australia and the submission of test data to ACMA for review.

Radio Frequency Identification is a technology that allows the identification of tagged items using radio waves. An RFID tag with a tiny computer chip, containing the Electronic Product Code (EPC), allows users to identify items uniquely. As no line of sight is required for RFID to read an EPC, the identification process is faster and more efficient.

In Australia the radio frequency spectrum is governed by the ACMA and Ultra High Frequency (UHF) RFID services come under a Low Interference Potential Devices (LIPD) class licence which until now has limited the use of RFID power to 1 Watt between the 918 to 926 MHz band while much of the world uses 4 Watt within their allocated frequency range. Robustness of RFID performance is substantially improved with an increase in the allowable power output.

GS1 Australia, which has led the development of industry-driven standards for the EPC in Australia, has consistently lobbied the ACMA for a regulatory change to bring Australia's passive UHF RFID systems in line with international standards and other countries' regulations.

Three years ago ACMA issued a scientific licence to GS1 Australia that enabled the organisation to issue third-party authorisations for the use of site-specific 4 Watt power to companies trialling or looking to implement RFID. The purpose of the scientific licence was to gather data to assist ACMA to determine if an increase in power had any major effect on devices of adjacent users of the spectrum. Reports on these trials and the results of scientific testing were submitted to the ACMA by GS1 Australia in 2007 and 2008.

In December 2008 the ACMA notified GS1 Australia it had approved the use of RFID devices up to 4 Watt of power between the 920 to 926 MHz band. This decision was published in the Commonwealth Government Notices Gazette on 15 January 2009.

GS1 CEO Maria Palazzolo welcomed the decision saying it would bring improved efficiencies and greater ROI for companies wanting to use EPC/RFID systems in their supply chain.

GS1 Australia's General Manager of Standards Development, Sue Schmid, said the decision to approve 4 Watt removed a barrier to the adoption of EPC/RFID within Australia. "This is a much-needed boost to Australian industry which can now continue its adoption of this technology. ACMA's decision is a significant milestone in the journey of EPC/RFID use within Australia," she said.



GS1 Australia, in conjunction with Australian Industry representative RFID Vendors, users and Industry Associations, has developed an implementation guideline to assist companies that wish to use RFID devices with the high power. The objective of this document is to provide a set of installation guidelines that can be used for the deployment, installation and commissioning of RFID readers operating up to 4 Watt Effective Isotropic Radiated Power (EIRP) in Australia, to reduce as far as possible interference to Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) cellular mobile phone networks.

This document is available from

http://www.gs1au.org/assets/documents/products/epcglobal/4watt/epc_4w_instal_gl.pdf

For more information on the implementation of EPC/RFID in the supply chain businesses should contact GS1 Australia on 130 366 033.

*For further information and to arrange media interviews, please contact Mary Riekert at GS1 Australia on **(03) 9550 3409 or 0418 313 478.***

Background –

GS1 Australia is a neutral, not-for-profit organisation and the local affiliate and Member Organisation of GS1, a leading global organisation dedicated to the design and implementation of global standards to supply chains. A total of 108 member organisations in 155 countries are authorised to administer the GS1 System of standards, the most widely used supply chain standards system in the world.