



Office of the Director of
**Telecommunications
Regulation**

MEDIA RELEASE

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Regulator calls on ntl to give public commitment on MMDS licences

The Telecoms Regulator, **Etain Doyle** said today, Tuesday 1 October 2002, that she was very concerned that ntl MMDS customers in Dublin, Waterford, Galway and West Mayo are still denied access to digital television services due to ntl's continued failure to provide such services and repair breaches to its MMDS licences. It is a condition of the MMDS licences held by ntl that the company would make a digital TV service available throughout each of its licensed areas by 1 January 2001.

The ODTR has been in intensive ongoing discussion with ntl for almost two years about its failure to comply with the terms of the licences. The company has said that it has been exploring all options for providing consumers with digital television via MMDS. "The situation is now intolerable and I am calling on ntl to specifically state publicly by 15 October 2002 by what means and when these viewers will have a full digital service. Failure by ntl to provide the necessary clarity by this date will result in my Office taking whatever steps are appropriate under the regulations".

Notes to Editors:

ntl holds three MMDS licences, one for each of the areas of Dublin, Waterford and Galway and West Mayo. Under the terms of these licences ntl was obliged to roll out its digital services in these areas by 01.01.01.

- The ODTR first became aware that ntl might not meet its first milestone to make digital services available in its MMDS franchise areas in December 2000.
- The Director immediately responded by contacting ntl requesting renewed commitment to meeting all of its licence obligations.

- In an effort to ensure that consumers got full digital service the Director gave ntl the opportunity to review its business plan. The company, subsequently, indicated to the Director that it intended to sell its MMDS business. Ntl has given continual re-assurances to the Director in relation to its progress with the sale but these reassurances have yet to materialise.
- It is now almost 2 years since ntl missed its deadline. Ntl viewers are still deprived of access to digital television via MMDS and no commercial negotiations have been concluded regarding the sale of the MMDS service.
- Ntl's MMDS licences were awarded under the WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY (PROGRAMME SERVICES DISTRIBUTION) REGULATIONS, 1999.

ENDS

Issued By

Deirdre Healy

Public Affairs Manager, ODTR

Ph: 01 804 9639

Mobile: 087 2995609

healyd@odtr.ie