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**REGION 3**  
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**BPL – the Australian experience**

The threat of BPL (Broadband over Power Lines), which uses high frequency radio waves transmitted along power lines as a medium to carry broadband digital services, is now of global concern.

The WIA has been watching developments in other countries, and in the middle of 2003 a promoter of BPL held an industry seminar in Sydney, Australia.

There was plenty of interest in BPL if attendance at the seminar is a guide. However, it soon became clear at the seminar that the issue of “interference” was unknown to those who had paid their money to attend and learn about the technology.

Among those attending were at least three radio amateurs, who are also employed in the electronics industry. They raised questions about the potential for interference radiated by BPL and the impact on reliability of a BPL network, including its set-top boxes, which could suffer from HF radio interference.

Those promoting BPL had difficulty in explaining why the issue of interference is not included in promotional material for the technology.

One argument put forward was that there is very little use of HF radio in Europe, and BPL works very well. While this is a doubtful claim, Australia probably has one of the highest uses of HF radio.

The Australian Communications Authority was also quick to point out the interference potential for BPL, and how the difference in power distribution system in this country was also a factor in relation to interference.

The previously hidden issue of “interference” was now out in the open. While the promoters of BPL are continuing to say wonderful things about the technology, the HF radio users in Australia are now stating their case against BPL.

This user group includes road transport companies, interstate bus lines, tour operators, emergency services, defence, radio amateurs, and many more.

The aviation and maritime communications industry is also keenly interested in the issue.

In a crowded market for the transmission of broadband services, which includes fibre optic cable, satellites and microwave, BPL should be struggling to show it can do it better, faster, reliably and cheaper.

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