

Submission

AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION AMENDMENT (RURAL AND REGIONAL ADVOCACY BILL 2015

Firstly I would like to inform the committee that I only became aware of this inquiry through the local paper on February 24th (note closing date is February 26th). I rang my local member, Rick Wilson and was informed by his office that the press release for this inquiry had only recently been received by them. I'm questioning as to why the ABC itself had not promoted a response to this enquiry by encouraging listeners to submit?

I live in the Esperance Goldfields region in WA. The following points are my impressions and suggestion of and for this service.

In general I believe there has been a steady 'dumbing down' of services over the last ten years as the state wide morning program from Perth was reduced from 8.30am to midday, then to 10am and now is a mere half an hour concluding at 9am.

My reference to "dumbing down" is such that the program which is broadcast out of Kalgoorlie at this time has limitation with the availability of content. I'm aware that the most recent formatting of the morning program is to contain international and national information. There has been attempts to include such material and invite comment from the public but audience participation is poor. I can speak with knowledge in this area of as in 2009 I was the mid -morning presenter on ABC Goldfields Esperance program. People in this vast and sparsely populated area are reluctant to even to call with a gardening question let alone comment on political issues. Therefore, we are deprived of knowledge and opinions of the state wide community as well as program guests with interesting things to say. We are left with 'the world famous quiz' and song requests from 'the regulars'!

The local Esperance station which broadcasts a breakfast program is short staffed. The presenter has no producer therefore is limited with how much he can do.

The recent change to formatting at 6.15am where the rural resources report is now broadcast is a retrograde move. No longer do we hear an immediate weather report and a bright introduction to the morning. The content of that report is then rebroadcast in the Country Hour. I'm involved in the farming industry and find most of the information in the rural report very basic and repetitive.

There appears to me that resources are miss directed. Regional news could be outsourced then broadcast at the usual times out of Perth. What is now called local news are stories that are from all over the state anyway and often form part of the general state news if they are news worthy enough. Other than that we are often subjected to court reports predominately about misadventures of our Indigenous community. I believe this is passive discrimination.

As a regional person I have no access to digital radio so I listen while at home to 720 ABC through my phone when my internet is working!

In summary I would ask for the state wide morning program to be reinstated for regional listeners.

ELAINE SIEMER