

Submission 87

To:

The Committee Secretary Standing Committee on
Communications, Information Technology and the Arts,
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Herewith is a submission on behalf of community radio
station 2RDJ FM 88.1.

This submission is intended to reflect the aims,
philosophy and importance which the members of the
Co-operative of 2RDJ FMM 88.1 and its governing Board
of Directors place on community radio broadcasting in
its mandate to serve such needs to the people residing
within the areas managed by the councils of Burwood, Strathfield,
Ashfield and Canada Bay in South West, Sydney, NSW.

At the outset it needs also to be mentioned that the abovementioned
officers and members are in broad support of a document before the
committee for consideration as part of this same inquiry into Community
Broadcasting, from the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia
(CBAA) (particularly as it relates to community radio).

Please allow me to mention how 2RDJ supports its
community and to examine the way further provision of
resources would allow it to continue and improve such
service:

* Since 2RDJ FM 88.1 began broadcasting from the
Woodstock
Community Centre in 1982, it has sought to produce a
diverse range
of programming. The community broadcast to,
comprises not only
English-speaking Australians but those of NESB's
from Greek,
Chinese, Korean and Pacific Island backgrounds as
well as smaller
local ethnic representations. Consequently, special
interest
programmes focus on various ethnic communities (eg
"Greek Night
Out", "Ireland Calling", "Clans of Scotland") and
some programmes are
broadcast in community languages (eg "Sound of Hope" broadcast in
Cantonese and a sister programme produced by the
local Chinese
students' association).

* Further diversity in programming is evidenced by the
wide variety
of musical genres represented in the station's

programming from
classical music ("Sunday Concert"), easy listening
("The Velveten
Music Box"), hip hop ("Hip Hop Connection"), rock
("Midweek Smack"),
international ("World Love Songs"), jazz ("Black
Roots"), country ("The
Sounds of Country") and rhythm & blues ("Sunset
Funkfest"). Further
diversity is evidenced in that the station has a
"drive-time"
programme from 7-9am Monday to Friday which, aside
from its
musical mix, also updates the local community on any
traffic or public
transport disruptions and runs local and nationwide
weather updates
(supplied to us by the Bureau of Meteorology).
Further, between the
hours of 7am to midnight, news is broadcast on the
hour (sourced
from the MacQuarie New Network). Between the hours
covered by
midnight to 7am, we use the BBC World Service to
ensure that the
station has content available to listeners 24 hours
a day, seven days a
week.

* As much as possible, there is an effort made at the
station, to
support local events and to broadcast items of
interest to the
community which we serve. The mayor of Burwood
weekly comes to
the studio to supply listeners with a Mayoral
report of events of
concern to the residents of Burwood and its
environs and similar
invitations have been extended to the mayors of the Ashfield,
Strathfield and Canada Bay areas. In recent months,
there have also
been interviews conducted with local state members
and the Federal
member for the area (Mr Anthony Albanese). Such
input from those
with influence and knowledge of the areas which
2RDJ FM 88.1 serve,
are not only warmly welcomed but have become and
will continue to
be essential for the station to fulfill its role in
the community as a
relevant and vibrant community broadcaster.

* In relation to community participation at 2RDJ FM
88.1, we have
approved the structure for a community liaison

committee and are

already a part of the Croydon Park Festival. We would sincerely desire

to continue to be a part of the Burwood Festival also, but a funding

shortfall has made our participation in this to be financially impossible as we continually strive to continue to exercise fiscal

responsibility in all areas of the station's operation.

* Local arts are also supported and our weekly 2 hour radio

programme, "Spotlight" focuses on this very important part of

the station's mandate and obligation to the communities which we serve.

Areas of concern

There are three main areas of concern which we have as a community broadcaster and which impact on the day-to-day operation of 2RDJ FM 88.1.

1. Even if conceded that commercial radio stations differ from

community radio stations in that they can secure much of their

operational revenue from commercials while community

broadcasters do not need to seek sponsors; there still appears to be inequity.

One of the conditions which ACMA administers in its ambit is one

which requires all sponsorship announcements to be "tagged" with

"a proud sponsor of this station". This appears to be unnecessary in

our view, particularly when the sponsorship announcement is not a

"live read" but is a recorded sponsorship message. If listeners to

commercial radio networks are sophisticated enough to recognise

that a recorded advertisement is indeed of a commercial nature

independent of their station's content; then surely community radio

listeners are sophisticated enough to recognise a recorded

sponsorship placement as distinct from the content of the station's

programmes without having a "tag" emphasise such.

Even Low

Power Open Narrowcasting Transmitter Licensees (LPON's) appear exempt from the requirement to "tag". We would ask that the Committee investigate this.

2. The day-to-day operation of the station is affected adversely in that the station is unable to fund a station assistant who would assist in receiving telephone requests for support, sponsorship and matters which could make 2RDJ FM 88.1 more effective in the community and more viable and able to meet all fiscal responsibilities in an ongoing sense.

Operating in a liaison capacity, documentation could be copied and distributed more effectively to external publics (eg the local mayoral offices, the councils whose areas our station serves). They could also rapidly advise of any concerns which impact on the technology which the station relies on for its day-to-day operations and could secure technical assistance (if required) in a much more timely and efficient manner than that which operates at present.

3. We respectfully request that the 88.0 MHz frequency not be used by any other broadcasters as it interferes with our broadcasts on the 88.1 frequency. At present, Low Power Open Narrowcasting (LPON) Transmitter Licensees operate within the FM radio broadcasting band using channels on frequencies 87.6, 87.8 and 80MHz. Further, 2RDJ FM 88.1 receives interference from Bondi, Manly and Cool Country (Razorback/Katoomba), ["LPON's"] who all broadcast on 80MHz.

In respect of licensing, within its licence area, a mainstream broadcasting service is guaranteed against interference from LPON services. Because of its community commitment and longevity, we believe that the same courtesy be extended to 2RDJ FM 88.1.

We request that this issue and request also forms part of the

Committee's enquiries.

In summary, 2RDJ FM 88.1 plays a vital role in the community which it serves and overall is relevant as a training ground for new presenters and support technicians (currently the Programming Committee is training a number of young interested students who have elected to pursue radio broadcasting/media and who are pursuing local TAFE courses in same).

As mentioned above the station also functions as much and as vibrantly as possible in the many roles which it fulfills.

Obviously the Committee does not need reiteration that community radio stations such as 2RDJ FM 88.1 are operated and managed by volunteers with a passion for community broadcasting but it is added by way of 2RDJ FM 88.1 requesting the Committee's indulgence in allowing us to express pride in what it has achieved to date and requesting the Committee's assistance in ensuring that community broadcasting receives all the support that the Committee is authorised to deliver.

On behalf of all at 2RDJ FM 88.1, I would like to thank the Parliamentary Inquiry into Community Broadcasting for the opportunity to make this submission.