



ATT: NT, Perth & WA Regional Media

**Inquiry to visit Darwin, Perth & regional WA
Regional Radio under investigation 12 & 13 March**

The House of Representatives' Communications Committee is investigating the adequacy of radio services in non-metropolitan Australia.

It is looking at the quantity and quality of all radio services, including those provided by the ABC, commercial and community broadcasters.

The Inquiry has already undertaken a comprehensive program of hearings and visits on the East Coast, and is now turning its attention to the Northern Territory and Western Australia. The Committee will be holding Public Hearings in **Darwin, Geraldton, Perth and Walpole** (near Albany) this **Monday and Tuesday (12/13 March)**.

The House Communications Committee Chair, Mr Paul Neville, says while the dominant issue of the Inquiry on the East Coast has been the perceived loss of local radio content because of centralised networking, the dominant issue in the Territory and the West appears to be quite different – the lack of any services at all.

Mr Neville says the Inquiry has "touched a raw nerve" in regional Australia. "The response to this Inquiry has been enormous," Mr Neville said. "The size of the response has confirmed just how hugely important radio is to people in non-metropolitan areas.

"In the lead-up to the Territory and WA hearings we have received submissions about large radio reception 'black spots' where no services are received, and large areas which receive very limited services. We will be looking into these matters with a view to Government action."

Mr Neville says the Inquiry has examined how changes in the regulatory environment and developments in technology have led to substantial changes in radio services. "The focus of this inquiry is on how those changes have affected people, the possible effects, both good and bad, of further changes and what, if anything Government can and should do about the situation," Mr Neville said.

Monday 12 March 2001

Darwin, NT

Public Hearing – 8am to 11am, Litchfield Room, NT Parliament House

Appearing: NT Dept of Communications, Science & Advanced Technology; Grant Broadcasters Ltd; 104.1 Top FM

Geraldton, WA

Public Meeting – 4pm to 6pm, City of Geraldton Chambers, Cathedral Avenue

Appearing: invited community representatives and open to the general public

Tuesday 13 March 2001

Perth, WA

Public Hearing – 8am – 11am, Commonwealth Parliament Offices, Perth

Appearing: WA Dept of Commerce & Trade; North West Radio Network; Red FM; ABC Radio

Walpole, WA

Public Meeting – 4.30pm to 6pm, Recreational Centre, Latham Street, Walpole

Appearing: invited community representatives and open to general public

For media comment, Mr Neville is available for preview interviews by contacting Scott Whitby on 07 4152 0744 or – on Monday and Tuesday – via Inquiry contact Rachel Carew on 0413 085 765

For further information about the Inquiry or the Program of visits/witnesses etc, please contact Janet Holmes, Inquiry Secretary, on 02 6277 4601, or via email at janet.holmes.reps@aph.gov.au, or visit the Inquiry website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cta