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TO
The Secretary,

House Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts.

"Adequacy of radio services in non-metropolitan Australia" enquiry.

This is an individual/private submission from a <u>passionate radio enthusiast</u>.

Synopsis/overview: In what follows I have divided my submission into four major

divisions (according to the topic outline the committee has provided) as follows:

<u>*1. "adequacy, quantity quality":*</u>

 A. *"adequacy"* population clusters of 10,000 or above <u>need</u> their own station.

 "quantity" wherever possible, competition/choice is desirable (even from

community radio!).

 C. "quality" has suffered due to a number of factors e.g. personel turnover, city-

based orientation of programme presentation (depersonalisation), narrowing of

music-choice.

<u>*2. "social Benefits . . Influence . . In Comparison":*</u>

 A. "social benefits" Information about local weather conditions, local

government concerns, local/regional agri-business; entertainment aimed at a local

audience; employment opportunities.

 B. "Influence" People to shop locally not treck to the regional centre, thinking

about council/regional issues, promote pride in one's towna feel-good factor.

C. "comparison" (with metro radio) local issues need coverage wherever; city better off because of available diversity.

3. "future Trends" Hopefully, increased diversification thanks to new technology!

4. "Effects .. of Networking":

Networking has benefits such as access to influential regional/state/national information; its negatives are to crowd out specific local content. However, this has not dramatically occurred in my district.

COMMENTS CONCERNING THE DISCUSSION TOPICS:

1. "Adequacy" Having thought about this, it seems clear that population clusters of 10,000 probably provide a good indication of having specific, local needs/interests.

[2] "quantity" it would be nice to have more than one choice (other than regional A.B.C.) but, realistically, only some areas will be able to staff a community station since there's not enough advertising revenue, available, in small communities.

[3] "quality" has suffered due to the rapid turnover of staff and their failure to gain affinity with the local community: this phenomenon is lessened where local management is long term. Stations, increasingly, opt for city formatting of programmes whether the "hits and memories" or the "today's best music" trying to ape tt-fm or 2-day. There also appears to be a narrowing of music selection, generally, with limitation to past, as well as, current 'top ten' choices.

2. "social Benefits . . .":

[1] "benefits" exist wherever radio functions, in rural areas they include

>> Information about local weather conditions, stock prices and other agri-business details; 'specials' and events happening in the local town (perhaps 60km away?), about local government concerns.

>>Entertainment aimed at the target audience viz people working/driving alone for long periods.

>>Employment opportunities for those starting out, perhaps some may stay in or return to the bush as a result.

[2] "Influence" can be strong in that probably more people take more notice of and/or are affected by bush radio. People can decide to shop, locally, rather than treck to the regional centre; be informed about council issues; feel a sense of pride in their town/district.

[3] "in comparison with metropolitan" Local issues need coverage no matter where. Metro areas have different needs but many more niche stations to meet them.

3. "Future Trends": Hopefully, the improvement in granting of fm licences (and the progress made in technology, much of which I am unaware of) will mean that a wider choice, even of city-based programming, will come to the bush.

4. "effects .. of networking":

[1] Networking has both its positive and negative side. Positively. it affords access to top-range state and national news/sport to all. Creatively. it could be that the proposed 1611 country network in N.S.W. and Queensland could mean the expansion of agri-information and regional-politics coverage—as well as slaking the musical thirst of country-inclined music fans. Negatively, networking does tend to squeeze out local content particularly during segments of time when programming is directly from the capital/main station, involved.

[2] Specifically, I must say, that local news, sport and community service announcements are okay in my town; however, when programming comes, directly, from (in our case) 2SM, I notice that more corporate ads and generic government-generated csa's are played.

Conclusion: I want to be realistic, where commercial radio is concerned, and say that I would like to see regulations in place which would discourage the cheapest option being taken and would encourage community radio (at least) and alternate city-radio (as an aside) to be available: if 2KY can provide "racing radio"—and its good that they do—then why not others?

Stefan Slucki.