



ATT: Brisbane and National Media & Media/Communications journalists

Industry heavyweights to appear at radio inquiry

Radio industry heavyweights including the ABC's **Jonathan Shier**, commercial radio's **Paul Thompson** and ABA head **Professor David Flint** will appear in Brisbane this Monday and Tuesday at public hearings of the House of Representatives Communications Committee's inquiry into the adequacy of regional radio services.

The Committee's investigation is looking at the quantity and quality of all radio services in non-metropolitan Australia, including those provided by the ABC, commercial and community broadcasters.

The Inquiry has already undertaken a comprehensive program of hearings and site visits from coast-to-coast around the nation. It is now talking to industry owners, representatives and regulators.

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," House Communications Committee Chair, Mr Paul Neville said.

According to Mr Neville, 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 basic services themselves.

Mr Neville says the Inquiry has "touched a raw nerve" in regional Australia. "The response to this Inquiry from regional areas 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."

Public Hearings Quay West Suites, Alice Street, Brisbane

Monday 28 May 2001

9:30am - 10:30am

ABC, Jonathan Shier, Managing Director; Sue Howard, Director - Radio; Colin Knowles, Director - Technology & Distribution

see *submission 108* (<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cta/irsub108.pdf>)

10:30am - 11:30am

Mr Warwick Higginbotham

11:45am - 12.45pm

Ace Radio Broadcasters Pty Ltd (the licensee of nine radio licences in Victoria)

2:00pm - 3:00pm

DMG Radio Pty Ltd, Mr Paul Thompson, Chief Executive, plus senior executives (DMG directly or indirectly owns and operates 57 AM and FM commercial stations in non-metropolitan Australia; an AM commercial station in Adelaide; and an FM commercial station in Sydney)

see *submission 106* (<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cta/irsub106-a.pdf>)

3:00pm - 4:00pm

RG Capital Radio Ltd, Tim Hughes, Exec. Chairman; Rhys Holleron, Managing Director (the second largest regional radio operator in Australia, providing 28 commercial radio services to 17 non-metropolitan markets. RGCR services are listened to by 1.35 million people in regional Australia each week)

see *submission 186* (<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cta/irsub186.pdf>)

4:00pm - 5:00pm

Broadcast Operations Group

Tuesday 29 May 2001

9:00am - 11:00am

Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters Ltd (FARB)

(National representative organisation of commercial radio broadcasters)

Graeme Carroll, Manager, Public Affairs; Mr Ron Camplin (Vice-Chairman, Regional)

see *submission 133* (<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cta/irsub133.pdf>)

11:30am - 3:00pm

Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA)

Professor David Flint, Chairman; Lyn Maddock (Deputy)

see *submission 79* (<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cta/irsub79.pdf>)

For media comment, Mr Neville is available for interviews on 0419 704 767

For further information about the Inquiry or the Program of visits/witnesses etc, please contact Janet Holmes, Inquiry Secretary, on (02) 6277 4601 or 0413 085 767 (Monday/Tuesday), or via email at janet.holmes.reps@aph.gov.au, or visit the Inquiry website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cta