

1 Waverley Drive  
Dubbo 2830

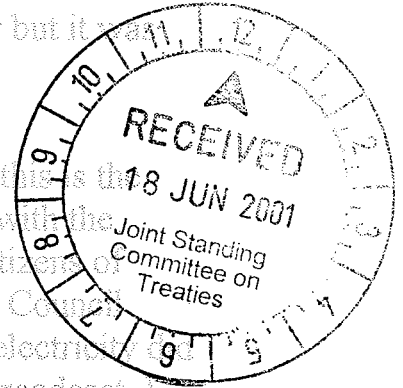
Thursday, June 14, 2001

Mr Grant Harrison,  
Committee Secretary,  
House Committee on Communications,  
Transport and the Arts,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra 2600.

Secretary:.....

RECEIVED

18 JUN 2001



COMMUNICATIONS

Dear Mr Harrison,

Thankyou for providing me today with the submission from Western Broadcasters Pty Ltd that passes comment on my statements made at the Bathurst hearing into regional radio. You asked if I wished to make comments on this submission. Outlined below is my reply. I have never felt my defeats in politics have been humiliating, far from it, they just inspire me to try harder. As you are aware my political career as such was outlined in my initial submission.

It is disappointing to see that Mr Reg Ferguson of Western Broadcasters has still not read my initial submission to the inquiry. If he had done so he would realise that I have always supported 2DU along with 2BS Bathurst as the models that regional stations should follow regarding the use of networked programmes. Mr Ferguson continues to rely on a highly inaccurate report in our local paper the Daily Liberal that followed up on the proceedings in Bathurst. The paper got my networking hours for 2DU wrong yet he persists in quoting these figures.

I read with interest the actions carried out by 2DU on the night of the storm in question. My knowledge of the operations at 2DU tell me that I don't doubt for one moment what is reported in their submission to be nothing but 100 percent accurate. The point remains they did not go live on the night of this disaster as they did for the Nyngan flood and other past

House of Representatives Standing  
Committee on Communications,  
Transport and the Arts

Submission No: 66-01

Date Received: 14/6/01

Secretary: Janet Holmes

disasters. Again, the Sunday morning broadcast was excellent but it was done in a non network time.

Finally, I commented in my submission on the demise of local news. As for the accusation of 'grandstanding' on Saturday evening, this is the most hurtful statement of the whole submission. I went to air with the support of my fellow Councillors to give information to the citizens of Dubbo. The information gathered came from the SES and our Council resources and at the time it was believed to be accurate. The electricity did come on as I stated, to parts of Dubbo half an hour after the broadcast. I was not told by anyone to broadcast that some parts of Dubbo would remain blacked out for a lot longer. I could go on with more detail here but the fact remains I had to ring a Sydney radio station and not our local station 2DU to have this information broadcast in good faith to the people of Dubbo.

Yours sincerely,  
I stand by my statement about staff being worried about their employment if they ruffled the feathers of senior management in Sydney. Whether it is true or not in real terms, it was perceived among the ranks at 2DU while I was there that you "don't upset Bill", meaning Mr Caralis. The fact that no live broadcast took place on that evening led me to surmise that nothing had changed. Of course, if changes have eventuated since my departure from 2DU and I am wrong, then I sincerely apologise.

My original submission tried to paint a picture of the demise of radio in Dubbo since the introduction of more stations into the marketplace. Commercial stations are businesses that have to make money. Networking improves the bottom line because it is cheap to run. Networking during periods of low revenue is not an issue, in fact in my original submission I noted that if it were not for networking then 2DU would not be able to afford a midnight to dawn programme.

Networking during periods of high listening namely daylight hours is not justified unless it is for specific purposes, ie sporting broadcasts, special events etc. The disgraceful performance by the DMG network was the main thrust of my attack along with smaller regional towns being wholly networked over weekends and weekday afternoons as happens on parts of the Caralis network. Networking takes money out of country communities and returns very little in terms of real local programming. Further, it is my contention that DMG do very little for employment in Dubbo. Their staff

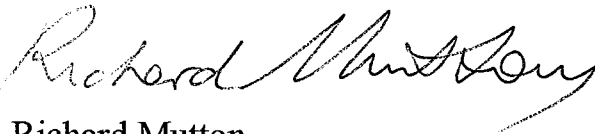
is approximately one third of the 2DU/ZOO FM staff, if that.

1 Waverley Drive

Finally, I commented in my submission on the demise of local news services on regional stations and the complete lack of them in some cases. Nothing has changed here. A new worry has occurred in the past week regarding news in regional areas and that is the proposed closure of the PRIME TV newsrooms in the Gold Coast, Woolongong and Canberra and their associated radio news services. Radio news is expensive and if cost cutting needs to take place in any radio station then live news readers and newsrooms are usually the first to go.

I hope the House Committee will accept this explanatory note on the Western Broadcaster's submission and my other comments.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Mutton". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Richard Mutton.

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1 Waverly Drive,  
East Dubbo, NSW, 2830.

Telephone: 68 842124  
Fax: 68 846778

Number of pages including this one [4]

## MESSAGE

Attention

Mr Grant HARRISON

Committee Secretary

House Committee on Communications

Transport & the Arts

Parliament House

FAX 6277 2067

Please forward to Paul Neville MP

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Dubbo 2830  
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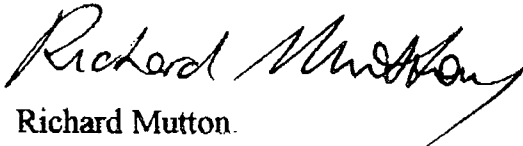
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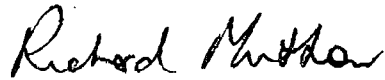
Richard Mutton.

**Attention Mr Grant Harrison**

Please note a correction in the fax I sent to you yesterday regarding Western Broadcasters and the regional radio inquiry.

Please read for Newcastle in the second last paragraph the **Gold Coast**

Thankyou



Richard Mutton

0409 - 228 - 229 ph

02 68 846 778 fax