

**SUBMISSION RE:
INQUIRY INTO COMMUNITY BROADCASTING.**

Disclaimer:

Firstly, to introduce myself, I am the Chairman of Radio Yesteryear Incorporated, a Community radio aspirant based in Gosford, N.S.W. However, this submission is from myself, is written entirely by myself, and does not necessarily represent the views of Radio Yesteryear Incorporated.

Relevant credentials:

I have been seriously involved in the broadcasting industry for the past 43 years, starting as Australia's youngest commercial announcer at 2KA Katoomba. I have held senior executive positions with several Australian television stations, plus announcer positions with both commercial and community radio stations. I have also worked with radio and television stations in Mexico, United Kingdom, South Africa, and Iceland.

I hold the world record for the "longest continuous broadcast by one announcer", as recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records. This was achieved on community radio 2CCC in Gosford.

I hold a Science degree with a Major in Broadcast Communications, and an M.B.A.

SUBMISSION:

Financing:

Community stations were originally allowed four minutes of "Sponsorship Announcements" per hour. Several years later, this was increased to five minutes per hour. Sponsorship announcements are different to advertisements on commercial stations, in order to protect the income of commercial stations. An enormous amount of A.C.M.A. resources appear to be used to investigate community stations broadcasting advertisements. To assist the A.C.M.A., I propose that community stations be allowed to broadcast advertisements instead of sponsorship announcements. However, to assist commercial stations, who rely on advertising for a living, I propose that community stations be limited to one minute of advertising per hour. After all, how much income do volunteer operated community stations really need in order to operate? Below are typical annual income and expenditure figures for Radio Yesteryear Incorporated, while they were providing a continuous service for three years with one of their temporary licenses.

INCOME:

Donations	\$1,000
Sponsorships	\$1,000
Memberships	<u>\$2,600</u>
	\$4,600

EXPENDITURE:

Phone	\$ 500
Insurance	\$ 900
Electricity	\$1,000
License fees	\$ 100
Maintenance	\$1,000
Postage	\$ 100
Equipment	<u>\$1,000</u>
	\$4,600

It is noted that some community stations pay a large amount for rent. I believe that this is a total waste of funds. There are usually rooms available in a Council, business, or private building that can be provided as a community service. It is also noted that some community stations actually pay some wages. Surely this is a moral issue, taking wages from a volunteer community group, which should be operated by volunteers, instead of taking donations, and often hard earned fund raising monies for wages.

Radio Yesteryear only accepts a maximum of one minute per hour of sponsorship announcements, and only charges two dollars per 30 second announcement. This is purely to assist small local struggling businesses which could never afford an advertising campaign on commercial radio. Surely this is what a local community volunteer operated station should be achieving.

Some community stations charge over \$100 per annum for membership of their incorporated organisation. Radio Yesteryear Incorporated has 2,600 members and only charges one dollar. Some community stations hold annual radiothons to raise funds of up to \$250,000 each year. Surely stations like this are operating as defacto businesses, and are not really representative of community groups.

At least one community station has been given a Government grant of \$90,000 for program production. Surely program production costs nothing for a volunteer organization. Radio Yesteryear Incorporated believes that Government grants are necessary, but should be for equipment and equipment maintenance. This would assist in the necessary establishment of community stations, rather than for covering ongoing operational expenses including production.

On behalf of Radio Yesteryear Incorporated, I have traveled (by invitation) extensively throughout New South Wales and Southern Queensland, visiting community stations and aspirant community stations. These visits were to impart our experiences on how to successfully operate a community station with minimal finances. The then A.B.A. once stated:

“Radio Yesteryear does not appear to have suffered any financial difficulties during its temporary broadcasts, which it appears to have achieved by keeping expenditure low”.

New Technologies (Digital radio):

The introduction of digital radio was described by Commercial Radio Australia as the “saviour” of the radio industry. The introduction of digital radio, when mentioned two years ago by the Government, was described as “a chance for **all** broadcasters to embrace this new technology”. As with black and white, then colour television, and F.M. radio, the Australian Government is to be applauded on holding off on digital radio until the “bugs” are ironed out. Given current technology advances, I believe that the introduction of digital radio is well timed.

A media release from Senator the Honorable Helen Coonan dated 14th October 2005, covered her Departments’ policy on the introduction of digital radio. However, this media release gives broadcasters such as Radio Yesteryear Incorporated **no chance** of gaining access to digital spectrum. Radio Yesteryear Incorporated spent 14 years broadcasting to the Gosford/Wyong area with various temporary licenses, before being denied a permanent license. This was despite commissioning an independent survey showing an enormous demand for their broadcasting format, together with over 35,000 petition signatures and over 2,000 letters in support. Since the last application for a permanent license from Radio Yesteryear Incorporated, all available frequencies have allegedly been allocated for the Gosford/Wyong area. This means that the high demand service provided by Radio Yesteryear Incorporated will never be able to gain access to the Broadcast Services Band.

Despite this setback, Radio Yesteryear Incorporated applied for a **Broadcast** license in the Narrowband Area Service. They were successful, being granted a frequency of 151.625Mhz. They were also assured by the A.C.M.A. that reasonably priced receivers were readily available from several manufacturers. Reasonably priced receivers were essential in order to sell them cheaply to Radio Yesteryear Incorporated listeners who are mainly pensioners. Radio Yesteryear Incorporated has now been on air for 5 months, at considerable additional capital expenditure because of the new frequency, with **no listeners**, as no receivers can be sourced. In addition to this, because Radio Yesteryear Incorporated is not broadcasting on a Broadcast Services Band, they will not be granted access to digital radio spectrum, according to the Senators’ media release, even though they have been granted a broadcast license.

Given that the Government had originally stated that “all broadcasters will have a chance to embrace this new technology”, and given that Radio Yesteryear Incorporated is on the air with a broadcast license, surely they should be allowed access to a digital license.

Internet:

Radio Yesteryear does distribute its programming on the internet at www.radioyesteryear.org.au . However, this is very expensive, and is only achieved through a private benefactor. In addition, it does not solve our problem, as most of our (potential) listeners are pensioners and therefore are limited in the number of computers they own. We are, however, taking advantage of this service by generating historical

radio information to be displayed on the internet. It is envisaged that this information will be a valuable reference source for media personnel, students, and anyone with a general interest in early radio station history.

Finally, I understand that public hearings may be part of the “Inquiry into Community Broadcasting”, including oral submissions. I am prepared to appear before this inquiry if asked.

Yours truly,
Bruce Carty.