



PO BOX 17
MOLONG NSW 2866
(02) 63 923 200
E-mail: cabonne@cww.octec.org.au

SUBMISSION TO A PARLIMENTARY
COMMITTEE INQUIRY - PREPARED BY
CABONNE COUNCIL.

INQUIRY INTO THE ADEQUACY OF
RADIO SERVICES IN REGIONAL
AND RURAL AUSTRALIA

E-MAIL : jsct@aph.gov.au

The Committee Secretary
House Communications Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**SUBMISSION BY CABONNE COUNCIL TO THE INQUIRY
INTO THE ADEQUACY OF RADIO SERVICES IN REGIONAL
AND RURAL AUSTRALIA**

SUMMARY:

Cabonne Council believes that regional radio services are of great importance to people living in rural New South Wales and is concerned that there is a strong trend towards loss of local content. Council believes this loss of local content adversely effects rural people through a reduction in "ownership" by listeners of radio services and the loss of a focal point for community events and issues.

ABC radio services have long been relied upon by the rural community for information and high quality reporting on issues important to them. It is of great concern to Council that funding cuts within the ABC may lead to a decline in the quality and quantity of news and information tailored for rural people through ABC radio services.

Council believes that it is most important for government intervention to ensure that significant local content remains within radio services in rural and regional Australia and that ABC radio services should be adequately funded to provide an ongoing and improved service to rural New South Wales.

SUBMISSION:

Regional radio services are an important part of the way of life of many rural Australians. This includes those who work on farms and small businesses often alone or with very limited social contact and the families of people on the land.

The take over of regional radio stations by larger networks has led to a decline in local content in relation to news and information, and general focus upon local issues. In rural New South Wales many radio announcers have been elevated to the status of minor celebrities and often are instrumental in promoting local events both on air and off air at community functions. The trend towards networking of radio services takes away this important contribution to the social wellbeing of rural communities.

The networking of commercial radio services reduces the number of people employed in the radio industry and removes an important training ground for those wishing to make a career in the radio industry. It is noted that many of the highest profile radio personalities began their careers in small country radio stations including John Laws who worked at radio station 2GZ at Orange, New South Wales at the commencement of his career. It is important that this training ground for future radio personalities is preserved.

ABC radio services have long been a source of quality information tailored to the rural sector and it is of great concern that funding cuts within the ABC may reduce the ability of that organisation to provide local and regional content appropriate to communities in country New South Wales.

Services provided by regional radio stations include the provision of community service announcements, coverage of local and regional sporting events, funeral announcements, talk back radio on local issues, and localised reporting of community events and issues. The provision of these services are an important social benefit to those who live in regional Australia and this is threatened by the networking of radio services.

Council calls upon the Federal Government to ensure that local content is preserved in regional commercial radio services and to restore funding in real terms to the ABC to enable it to continue to provide high quality services to rural communities.

Yours faithfully

G.L.P. Fleming
GENERAL MANAGER