

'ROSEVEN'
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5 October 2000

The Secretary
House Communications Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

Country and Regional Radio

My wife and I retired from Sydney to Failford 2 years ago. Failford is situated a little more than 20 klms almost equidistant from the regional city of Taree to the north and the twin towns of Forster/Tuncurry to the South. Taree is approximately 300 klms north from Sydney.

I was prompted to write to the Committee following the printing of a letter in our local paper; (see copy attached). Country radio is synonymous with country culture and whilst I am not country born 'n' bred, I fully support the sentiments by the writer from Bingara.

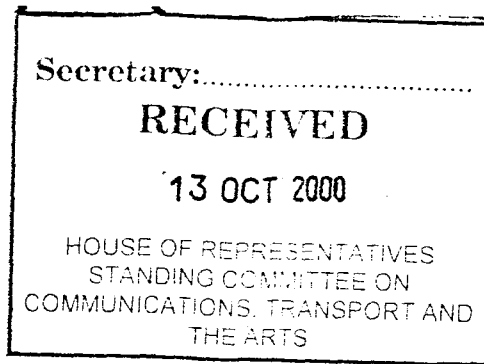
Having said that, it may seem incongruous that I now put forward my own (slightly varying) personal view as to what I would like to see happen to radio availability in the country. Whilst I will reiterate and say that "country radio" with its own unique qualities must stay and must remain localised, I rarely listen to my 2 local radio stations. When I was a resident in Sydney I was an ardent listener to Radio 2CH and would very much like to be able to continue to listen to that station. Sadly, I am not able to receive the station in this locale. I have made enquiries both locally and direct to Radio 2CH management, all to no avail. The message is the same; the output signal is not sufficiently strong enough to carry beyond the Sydney metropolitan area and it is the Government who sets the regulation/s as to output capacity. Someone did say that I could access the station via the Internet. That is not a viable alternative and is not what I want.

I believe I am close to the mark when I say that the target audience of Radio 2CH is the mid to upper age group bracket. Whilst I don't have precise figures available at my finger tips, I say with a great deal of certainty that as a popular retirement destination, Forster and surrounds has a high proportion of residents in the mid to upper age group. A significant number of those people have relocated from Sydney and the numbers are increasing.

The business world and the younger generation are able to take advantage of the ever-increasing electronic opportunities available to them. My question to you is simply this: Why are older people in the country being denied and penalised, (yes, penalised), by not having a greater degree of flexibility in radio listening options available to them? Thank you.

Yours sincerely


STEVEN MAHER



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