



**The Western Australian  
Farmers Federation (Inc.)**

**SUBMISSION PREPARED BY  
THE WEST AUSTRALIAN FARMERS FEDERATION  
INTO THE  
ADEQUACY OF RURAL RADIO IN AUSTRALIA**

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The Western Australian Farmers Federation is the largest rural lobby group in Western Australia with some 5,000 plus members of all ages engaged in rural and pastoral pursuits across WA.

**NEEDS OF RURAL PEOPLE:**

The people living away from the major cities and regional centres require a good quality radio service, particularly in Western Australia, because of the size of the State, being a third of Australia's land mass.

Commercial Services tend to centre around a city or regional centre because of the commercial drive needed to acquire advertising. This advertising usually covers the business and services available in that centre, so the radio coverage only services the regional centre and the surrounding area.

The commercial radio stations do have an important role to play in the promotion of a centre, and the businesses that area, and we support that concept.

The people living away from these centres get at best, poor or no radio reception.

**FARMER NEEDS**

The Western Australian Farmers Federation supports strongly the continued role for an independent public broadcaster like the ABC. This public service needs to be adequately funded and allowed to operate Statewide, with a strong signal to cover the unviable areas for a commercial station to operate.

In times of cyclone activity and high fire risks farmers, and people living in the sparsely populated areas of the country need advance warning of such impending dangers, so that they can take appropriate action to protect themselves and their property.

Farmers also need a good, reliable and detailed source of weather information passed on to them on a regular basis. Details of harvest bans need to be made available through a strong broadcaster like the ABC that has a good coverage over large parts of the rural and pastoral areas.

Farmers and Graziers in Western Australia need a continuation of independent sources of agricultural information, as is now delivered through the many ABC country breakfast sessions, and the Countryhour.

These services keep farmers up to date with the rapidly moving agronomic scene, unbiased by the need for insecticide or herbicide chemical sales. The ABC currently provides the best avenue for the delivery of this information to farmers across the State.

### **COMMERCIAL IMPARTIALITY**

There is a clear need for the ABC to have a commercial impartiality in the broadcasting arena.

The 'Cash For Comments' affair on some commercial radio stations highlights this need for a section of the broadcasting industry to have freedom from any suggestion of such pressure.

The ABC provides a good alternative for viewers and listeners who do wish to be subjected to the pressure of commercial advertising as is the case in commercial networks.

### **POLITICAL IMPARTIALITY**

It is important that the ABC is seen to be politically impartial and that the major political options are given equal opportunity to express their views.

To see that this happens there needs to be an independent committee or watch dog, chaired by a political expert (i.e. Professor David Black) and two other eminent people.

### **SUNDAY PROGRAMMES**

The national "*Always On Sunday*" program is fine for Eastern Australia. However, because of the time difference in Western Australia, it does not fit our listening pattern.

In order to interact with the program, we in the West must be up at 3 –or 4am, depending on the summer or winter. This is unsatisfactory for us. Western Australia must have its own program or use the existing "*Sunday Session*" in its place.

The Western Australian Farmers Federation request that funding to the ABC rural and regional service be maintained, or increased, to enable it to continue and improve its radio and T.V. programmes, particularly in inland areas away from the City centre.