



Neil Street, Maryborough.
Victoria. 3465.
October 2000.

Submission to Radio Industry Inquiry.

Submission made relevant to Terms of Reference:

- ❖ The effect on individuals, families and small business in non-metropolitan Australia of networking radio programming, particularly in relation to local news services, sport, community service announcements and other forms of local content.

Background of Central Goldfields Shire.

The estimated population of the Goldfields area is 18,000 approx. Census statistics of 1996 indicate that the area has a **lower average household income** with approximately 30% of households with a gross weekly income of \$120-299 and 24% of households with an income of between \$300-499 compared to the regional Victoria's average of 21.9% and 19.6% respectively. **Unemployment figures** of the Shire are higher than the Victorian State average, and there is a larger than average representation of senior citizens in the Shire.

Present Radio Locations:

The "local" community radio station 3CCC at 89.5 is based in Castlemaine which is 50 kilometres from Maryborough. Regional ABC and commercial stations are located in Bendigo and Ballarat, which are 70 kilometres from Maryborough.

Previous Radio in Maryborough.

A radio licence was granted for a radio station in Maryborough with the call sign 3CV, which opened on 31 March 1938. This station operated locally for 60 years. However, it was lost from Maryborough to Bendigo in a take over which was agreed to provided that the station, now broadcasting under the call sign of 1071, continued to have a Maryborough local content.

This has been continually reduced over the last two years until now it is basically nil. The effect on the community at large and individuals, families and small businesses has been very detrimental. Most would feel that once again rural communities have been passed over and little, or no attention paid to their needs.

Community life and information is a key factor in sustaining social capital in rural communities, and if local information is not available or accessible then the social capital must deteriorate, sometimes dramatically.

The Central Goldfields Shire is a very deprived area in relation to the circulation of local news, sport and community announcements. There is not a central point where people may listen to hear what has, what is, what may happen. While regional stations have some content, the actual time given to the information and the time at which it is broadcast is very much on the “poor relations’ side”.

Small Businesses and tourism suffer as a result of the lack of proper up-to-date information.

The community generally suffers, for example if there are no local sports news or results there is a lack of encouragement given to people to participate either as a competitor or as a participant. To see sport simply as exercise in rural areas is a failure to understand the special role it plays in general socialisation.

The need for a local community radio station has been discussed within the community. It has also been suggested that it could be a training ground for young people interested in the media as a future employment option.

Need.

There is clearly an enduring desire of communities everywhere to see themselves, their lives, their concerns, and their experience reflected in the media. Emphasis needs once more being placed on the *value of local community* life, on self-reliance and mutual help with respect to the social, cultural, and economic well-being of local rural communities

There is a need for a local rural FM Community Radio, which can provide a quality local radio service with emphasis on local news and information, discussions and interviews with local people as well as broadly entertaining programs and items for local people of all ages. The music could be an appealing mix of songs from the past. All of these could make the local FM sound really different from the commercial services, which are currently available.

Plans could be made for a range of special interest programs intended to work particularly closely with the whole community, and survive by the support of our community in the Central Goldfields Shire.

Recommendation:

That consideration be given that a local FM community licence be granted to Central Goldfields Shire and to similar neglected rural Shires.

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