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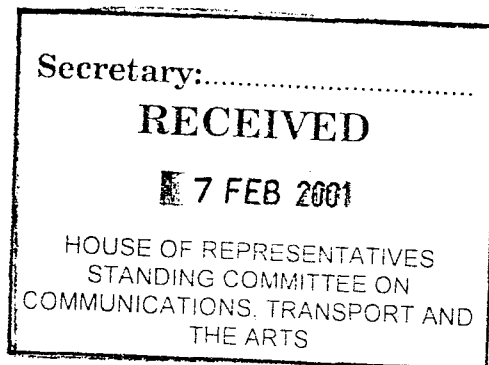
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31 January 2001

The Secretary
House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts
R1 117
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

House of Representatives
Committee on Communications,
Transport and the Arts
Submission No: 257
Date Received: 7/2/01
Secretary: Janet Holmes



Dear Sir

RE INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL RADIO SERVICES

The Floodplain Management Authorities of NSW (FMA) represents some seventy Local Government Councils and Authorities involved in Floodplain Management from through out New South Wales. One of the FMA's objectives is to assist in the minimisation of loss of property and life through flooding.

In recent years there has been an accelerating trend towards "networking" of Radio Stations and it is in relation to this matter that we wish to address our submission. The FMA is concerned at the impact that networking is having on radio news and community service announcements. In particular the ability of all Emergency Services to be able to utilise what is a very effective communication tool for the dissemination of Emergency Warnings and Bulletins.

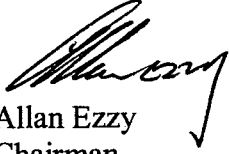
When radio stations are in a networking mode (relaying programs from another station) there are a number of impediments to Emergency Service Managers being able to issue vital information to the community. These impediment range from not being able to simply contact local radio staff to policies of discouragement of interruption to relayed programs on the part of station owners. These concerns relate to commercial radio networks as well as the Australian Broadcasting Commission network.

At a meeting of members held on the 23 November 2000 the following resolution was passed;

- the owners of radio/television licenses must be required to provide sufficient local access to the Emergency Services and that failure to provide sufficient access must result in loss of licences
- that the Commonwealth Government recognise the important role that radio and other electronic media plays in Emergencies and that
- networking that has now occurred effectively denies Emergency Service organisations the use of radio as an effective means of communication with the public.
- that the loss of life will inevitably occur in an emergency due to the loss of necessary access to local radio stations.

The Floodplain Management Authorities has no objections to this document being made available publicly and would indeed welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee to expand upon its concerns.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allan Ezzy', written in a cursive style.

Allan Ezzy
Chairman