

*Exhibit*  
*Sub 274*  
*Auth 12/3/01*  
*Geraldton*

# SHIRE OF MOUNT MAGNET



ADDRESS ALL MAIL TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
P.O. BOX 62, MOUNT MAGNET, W.A. 6638

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## FACSIMILE

RECEIVED  
12 MAR 2001

BY:.....

**TO** : Jackie Healy - MWDC  
**FAX NO** : 9921 0707  
**FROM** : Peter Webster  
**DATE** : 11.03.2001  
**PAGE/S** : 6  
**SUBJECT** : Radio service - Murchison region

House of Representatives Standing  
Committee on Communications,  
Transport and the Arts  
Submission No: 274  
Date Received: .....  
Secretary: .....

Jackie

Sorry that I am unable to attend the meeting in Geraldton tonight but I would appreciate your support in raising the following item

I have attached a copy of a letter from the ABC Manager - Local Radio WA Mr Steve Altham that was the result of a motion carried at the Murchison Ward of the Country Shires Assoc. in Nov 2000.

Towns in the Murchison currently receive morning and afternoon radio from Karratha and on a number of occasions lately, from Broome via a satellite on the FM frequency and the pastoral areas of the region receive an AM signal from the Dalwallinu transmitter (ABC 531am)

People in this region whether passing through or living here use the ABC as the primary form of communication with the outside world. This communication includes road closures, community announcements etc.

I believe that a large transmitter should be installed in Meekatharra to transmit the Geraldton station on the AM frequency to the region.

Another issue that should be raised is the lack of communication options in the region particularly mobile phones on the highways. As you would be aware there are large distances between towns in the area and with no mobile phone service on these long stretches of road, emergency situations can sometimes take hours to overcome.

I believe that mobile phone coverage is being installed on the coastal road from Carnarvon to Perth and I believe that this should also occur in the region as freight to the northern part of the state is transported on the Great Northern Highway through this area.

Thanks



Peter Webster  
CEO  
Mt Magnet

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:2. If transmission is not clear or total content has not been received, please contact this office immediately on (08) 99  
634 001



SA/LN

2 February 2001

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Peter Webster  
Secretary  
Murchison Ward Country Shire Councils' Assoc  
c/- Shire of Mt Magnet  
PO Box 62  
Mount Magnet 6638

Dear Peter

Thank you for your letter of January 30 regarding ABC radio transmissions in the Murchison.

In response to the two issues you have raised:

1) Transmission

I have been investigating the option of a high-powered AM transmitter, similar to that in operation at Dalwallinu, to be installed in or near a town in your region, which would provide coverage over a large area without having to switch stations.

This would replace several smaller FM transmitters, which really can only be heard in or near the communities in which they are installed, ie. Mt Magnet, Cue, Meekatharra and Yalgoo, and provide cover over the main traffic arteries in the region.

I am advised that we are no longer able to get a licence for a transmitter of this type.

I am also advised that were we able to get approval for a high-powered AM transmitter, the cost would be prohibitive.

However I am continuing to pursue the argument that ABC services are really only available on a free-to-air basis over about 25% of the surface area of Western Australia, and data from the Main Roads Department and other agencies demonstrates a requirement for information from the ABC beyond the permanent population in communities through your region.

One option being explored at present is the potential availability of a high powered HF transmitter presently in the Northern Territory, and which may become surplus to requirements.

This would allow wide area transmissions to be received on car radios, and on portable radios available I'm told for about \$50.

## 2. Program source

At present there are 20 transmitters in WA which can only receive an ABC program signal via satellite, at Meekatharra, Cue, Mt Magnet, Yalgoo, Augusta, Nannup, Ravensthorpe, Hopetoun, Norseman, Menzies, Laverton, Leonora, Tom Price, Paraburdoo, Newman, Marble Bar, Pannawonica, Exmouth, Carnarvon and Kalbarri.

Because the ABC was able to provide only one satellite service, Karratha was originally chosen, because that was the most appropriate programming for the greatest number of stations.

Obviously that is little comfort to places like Augusta and Hopetoun, not to mention communities in your region.

Last year we were able to access a second satellite feed, and Kalgoorlie was chosen as the base, because this solved the programming problem for the next greatest number of communities.

The additional cost of this service approximates \$100,000 a year after an initial capital cost of about \$60,000.

We have identified the Geraldton region as the next region to provide a satellite service should funds become available.

Presumably Meekatharra, Cue, Mt Magnet, Kalbarri and possibly Carnarvon would choose to take this service.

The cost is significant, and I can not make any promises as to timing, or indeed if we will ever get approval to proceed as outlined.

However I'm an optimist and I trust we will be able to improve services in the future.

If you have any questions or further comments I'd be happy to discuss them with you by telephone, or visit you some time in the near future should that be your wish.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S Altham', with a long horizontal line extending from the top of the signature.

Steve Altham  
Manager Local Radio  
Western Australia

# ABC RADIO WESTERN AUSTRALIA

