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The Committee Secretary
RADIO INDUSTRY INQUIRY
House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Communication, Transport and the Arts
R1 Suite 119
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

I write simply to object to the centralising of country radio programs.

According to the Code of Practice of the Australian Broadcasting Authority, radio stations must have broad appeal. Radio stations are constrained from broadcasting more than 30% into an adjoining licence area; however, there is no provision where the adjoining licence areas of nearly two thirds of this state is under monopolistic ownership and can totally dictate our listening patterns. Earlier this year, without warning, the 31 radio stations owned by the Caralis family deleted a large proportion of the "country content" from their programming and relayed instead city based programs to the many thousands of disenchanting country listeners.

Due to work and family requirements I would not be described as a regular listener of night time radio but on many occasions while moving between various venues in northern and north west of New South Wales I have listened to the local commercial radio stations. An evening talk back show presented by Mr Paul Tolley seemed to be particularly popular. The diverse, informative, interesting and impassioned input by genuine country people from all walks of life provided not only good entertainment, but in my view, a real community service to the many people in disadvantaged and isolated rural sections of New South Wales and Southern Queensland.

That particular program no longer exists. It has been replaced by a program emanating from 2SM in Sydney. Their presenter struggles with an understanding of general rural issues and indeed it is another case of the city telling the bush they know what is best for us. I submit that your inquiry should investigate the monopolising aspects of rural radio and recommend to the relevant legislators that the anti-monopoly legislation that applies to the print media should be extended to cover the radio industry in Australia.

Yours faithfully

E.J. JOHNSTON
Chambers

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