

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts	
Submission No:	204
Date Received:	18/11/00
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17-11-00

The Committee Secretary,

House of Representatives Communication s Committee

Parliament House

Canberra A.C.T. 2600

The Radio Industry Inquiry

1. The social benefits and influence on the general public of radio broadcasting in non metropolitan Australia in comparison to other media sectors Radio broadcasting in rural areas is paramount to the very existence of the people who choose to live and work there.

The life style and work practices of those in regional and rural Australia, makes radio broadcasting the ideal medium in the media The importance of best quality radio to those living in isolated regions could never be overstated Radio broadcasting has been the lifeblood and the servant of the people of the inland of Australia for over 50 years. It has been their companion in times of disaster and need and a medium to deliver good news. Radio has always been there. It is affordable, reliable, is mobile and can be with one always either at work or at play, twenty four hours a Day.

Other media sectors, such as television and now the World Wide Web to deliver information, are cumbersome and less mobile than radio. These mediums also are much more expensive to obtain and to maintain than radio. It may be many years before all Australians will be able to have affordable reliable access to on line media. Many of those living in rural Australia are older and will not adapt readily to accept on line media as the preferred means of gaining access to news and information and entertainment

2. Future trends, in radio broadcasting, including employment and career opportunities, in non-metropolitan Australia.

The Government has the opportunity to ensure that radio broadcasting in rural Australia has a secure and exciting future. With vision, and a clear understanding of the needs of those living in regional Australia, and a commitment to secure long term funding, career opportunities for young people who live in rural areas could be a possibility. This would be an incentive for all those considering employment in radio, to be trained in non-metropolitan areas. Ultimately, it would become a boost to rural radio to be able to outsource their skilled staff to create on line. Also with the advent of digital broadcasting, all facets of media, could be created and up graded using local staff in regional radio. Educational, and industry-based information using the skills of the local population, would be an exciting venture.

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3. The effect on individuals, families and small business in non metropolitan Australia of networking of radio programming, particularly in relation to local news services, sport, community service announcements and other forms of local content It is evident the disastrous effect that networking of commercial radio stations is having in rural Australia. This is particularly so, where there is only one radio station in the area. This has left those communities without ownership of the radio broadcaster. Therefore important information is coming via landline from a capital city, except for a few hours daily that contains relevant information of local interest. . The rural communities want more localization, not less. It is insulting from the rural person's perspective that economical rationalization has deprived them of quality local radio.

Networking deprives local communities that have little access to a variety of media outlets. With limited access of local news, sport, and community service announcements, rural residents feel like second rate citizens. It appears that multi nationals some which are based overseas, are purchasing a large number of rural radio stations, and are dictating what should be broadcast, e.g. types of music, and news broadcasts that have a commercial basis Rural Australians feel passionate about their radio, as they feel that it is the convenient link to the outside world News Broadcasts, when they effect a local community in times of severe weather information, should be expected to be available accurately 24 hours a day.

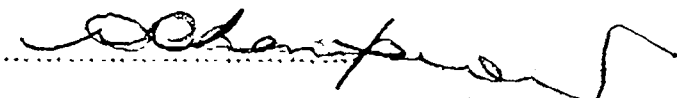
When the radio station comes on line from a capital city, it cannot have relevant information for local communities, as some situations are constantly changing. The public is told to at all times listen to the radio for all the latest weather information and current road conditions. These are services that are expected from radio, as it is the most appropriate method of delivering information, especially in a crisis. This also applies to sport and service and community announcements, where local content, is critical.

4. The potential for new technologies such as digital radio to provide enhanced and more localized radio services in metropolitan, regional and rural areas.

In order to address this issue, I would need more information, and a better understanding of the technology of the potential of digital radio. The Government, has to understand the relevance of radio, commercial, community, and the public broadcaster to those who live in rural areas Radio has always provided a mantel of safety for those in the bush. The reliance on the C. Band two way radios, satellite and mobile phones as safety mechanisms, has become part of the daily life of those living in remote situations.

If you require any more information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



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