



THE ADMINISTRATION OF NORFOLK ISLAND

Secretary:.....

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS TRANSPORT AND
THE ARTS

IN REPLY PLEASE

QUOTE:

20 November 2000.

The Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Communications Transport and The Arts
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
ADMINISTRATION OFFICES
KINGSTON
NORFOLK ISLAND 2899

Dear Ms Holms,

Re: Inquiry into the Adequacy of Radio Services in Regional and Rural Australia.

I refer to our telephone discussion and attach a short submission to the Committee.

Apologies for the delay.

Yours sincerely,

R.G. McAlpine
Program Manager Corporate Services

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts	
Submission No:	216
Date Received:	11/12/00
Secretary:	Janet Holmes

NORFOLK



ISLAND

SUBMISSION

of the

NORFOLK ISLAND GOVERNMENT

to the

House of Representatives Standing Committee

On Communications, Transport and the Arts

INQUIRY INTO THE ADEQUACY OF

RADIO SERVICES

IN

NON-METROPOLITAN AUSTRALIA

Norfolk Island

November 2000

INTRODUCTION

The Inquiry Into the Adequacy of Radio Services in Non-metropolitan Australia by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts ("the Committee") follows recent Inquiries conducted in Norfolk Island. These being, the Commonwealth Grants Commission 1997 Inquiry into Norfolk Island, and the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories Inquiry into Communications To and Within Australia's External Territories.

The Committee's Terms of Reference are to inquire into and report on the *"adequacy of radio services in regional and rural Australia and the extent to which there is a need for the Government to take action in relation to the quantity and the quality of radio services in regional and rural Australia."*

The Norfolk Island Government considers that, at the very least, the radio service needs of the Norfolk Island Community are presently being adequately met. This view is supported by the last 2 Inquiries.

OVERVIEW

The Norfolk Island Broadcasting Service is operated by the Administration of Norfolk Island and provides both radio and television services to the local community. These services are:

Radio:

Local Radio VL2NI	89.9 Mhz FM	1566 AM
Triple J	(available overnight on local service)	
ABC Regional Radio	Permanent Relay	95.9 Mhz
ABC Fine Music	Permanent Relay	93.39Mhz
ABC National	News Relays	
Red FM W.A.	Permanent Relay	88.9 Mhz
News Radio		

The Broadcasting Service is managed by a Broadcast Manager who is the only full-time member of staff. About 10 casual paid and voluntary staff also work for the service. Technical services are provided by a Technical Officer with assistance from Norfolk Telecom personnel.

The studio and masts are situated in New Cascade Road with antennas located on Mount Pitt. The station provides approximately 70 hours live local radio per week and broadcasts music, recorded programs, local news and notices, relays of Australian and New Zealand world news services as well as recorded interviews with persons on topical items of interest to the community. Meetings of the Legislative Assembly are broadcast live and repeated at a later time. At the end of live broadcasts VL2NI reverts to a relay of Triple J in the FM band and either News Radio or ABC Regional in the AM Band.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee's Terms of Reference require particular reference to four issues -

- (i) The social benefits and influence on the general public of radio broadcasting in non-metropolitan Australia in comparison to other media sectors.
- (ii) Future trends in radio broadcasting, including employment and career opportunities, in non-metropolitan Australia;
- (iii) The effect on individuals, families and small business in non-metropolitan Australia of networking of radio programming, particularly in relation to local news, sport, community service announcements and other forms of local content, and;
- (iv) The potential for new technologies such as digital radio to provide enhanced and more localised services in metropolitan, regional and rural areas.

In terms of these issues the Norfolk Island Government makes the following brief submissions -

Response to (I)

The Norfolk Island Community is well served by a variety of radio channels that provide a broad range of programs. The community has access to a range of television services that are broadcast on Norfolk Island:

ABC Television	From Eastern Australia
SBS Television	From Eastern Australia
7 Central	Queensland Regional
TVN	Local Tourist Channel

In addition the community can subscribe to pay TV channels and obtain access through home receivers.

Response to (ii)

The Government recently commissioned a study into our future needs.

Response to (iii)

The Norfolk Island Government considers that this aspect is well catered for with our Community Radio Station.

Response to (iv)

Technological changes bring with it inherent costs. The Norfolk Island Government operates the Broadcasting facilities on a very small budget and any changes to present systems would require close analysis. Current equipment is adequate but antiquated.

SUMMARY

The Norfolk Island Government is aware of the need to maintain a quality broadcasting service and considers that this is being achieved through the range of channels and programs.

Re-broadcasting of Australian Radio services remains dependent on our existing satellite service which presently provides a signal that is described as "fortuitous" given that Norfolk Island is not within the footprint of the Optus B3 Satellite. Weather conditions can severely affect reception.

The Norfolk Island Government is aware of the needs of the Norfolk Island Community and also the challenges that new technologies bring. The change by ABC Television to a digital transmission resulted in the Norfolk Island Government having to channel much needed broadcast technology funds into a 10 metre satellite receiver. Further changes that would affect the Island's ability to receive a suitable signal should only be introduced following consultation and provision of assistance.

Authorised by
George C. Smith
Minister for Tourism and Commerce
