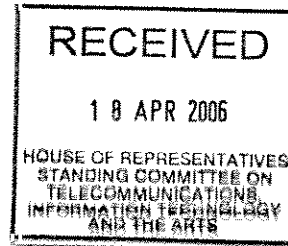


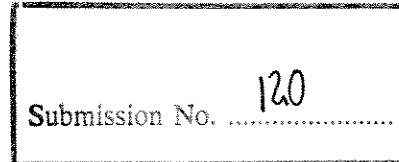


Government
of South Australia

06MAP/0025



Dr Anna Dacre
The Secretary
Standing Committee on Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



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Dear Dr Dacre

Thank you for your letter of 27 January 2006 seeking the views of the South Australian Government as part of the Community Broadcasting Inquiry being conducted by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communication, Information Technology and the Arts.

I submit the following information for the consideration of the committee:

Scope and role of community broadcasting

Community radio and television broadcasting plays an important and valued role in fostering a sense of community, particularly in ethnic, regional and isolated communities.

In 2004, McNair Ingenuity conducted research across Australia into community radio broadcasting, funded through the Community Broadcasting Foundation, which determined that:

- 53 per cent of community radio stations were serving specific communities of interest including those of Indigenous and ethnic backgrounds; those with a print disability; religious communities; the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities; young people or the over 50s age group; and people with a specialist interest in music.
- 47 per cent of community radio stations served a defined geographic community and catered to the diverse needs of the local service area, eg through the provision of local news and current affairs.

In South Australia, community television struggles to build and maintain audiences.

The 2005 report for the Government of South Australia *The Creative Industries in South Australia*, identified the creative sectors with the greatest potential for growth as being those based on digital technologies.

Economic and export development agencies at both State and Federal levels are currently involved in programs to accelerate growth and return in the film sector and the broader digital screen-based content creators.

New technologies – including internet and mobile phones - are attracting younger users and will increasingly be applied across the arts in innovative ways, in both programs and marketing.

Content and programming requirements reflecting the Australian character and diversity

In theory, multi-channelling, through the introduction of digital TV, will provide opportunities for niche programming, and thus, for a greater range of Australian content. However, it appears that this potential is far from being realised.

It will be important to ensure that Australian stories reflecting our diverse cultural identity are disseminated across all sectors of the broadcasting media – ie, *including* community broadcasting, but *not restricted* to this sector – and that these stories are recounted by Australian voices.

Technological opportunities to expand networks

Broadband has the potential to give individual creators access to the international creative industries marketplace – eg creators of computer games, animation and special effects, and documentary and interactive entertainment products such as music videos.

In relation to the role of the internet and other broadcasting technologies, there has been a growing trend across the arts for organisations to engage in on-line and SMS communication with their subscribers and potential audiences, particularly those in younger age brackets who prefer to make last-minute choices about their social/leisure activities. In South Australia these new technologies are being harnessed in a number of projects, as outlined below:

- the SA Film Corporation has been pursuing opportunities for cross-media initiatives in the screen industries, especially in the production of documentaries;
- the 2006 Adelaide Fringe is using mobile phone technology to provide potential ticket buyers with its program guide, real-time information about events and a map of locations for Fringe productions;
- the Adelaide Fringe Incorporated is also embarking on the *Fringe Benefits* project. This new marketing initiative will apply mobile phone and internet technology to build young audiences for a range of arts and entertainment activities;
- as part of a global portraiture project, the 2006 Adelaide Bank Festival of Arts has presented *The people's portrait* public projection experience, with large video walls in locations across the globe simultaneously displaying images of passers-by; and
- during *The Big Day Out* contemporary music event, patrons were able to transmit SMS messages from their mobile phones directly on to huge video screens.

Opportunities and threats

The major challenges for individual radio and television broadcasters will be to increase and maintain their audience numbers and, in the case of new technologies, to build loyalty amongst users.

Access to broadband will be a vital factor in regional arts development, allowing many activities such as publishing, report writing/design/production, marketing and advertising, film and digital content production to be undertaken wherever the talents happen to lie.

There is likely to be an increasing call for funding bodies to support arts initiatives using new technologies, particularly internet and other new/emerging broadcasting technologies.

However, in light of the very fast rate of technological progress, it will be a major challenge for Governments to keep abreast of changes, monitor trends and match policy and regulation with these technological innovations.

In terms of the screen industries, there is currently no Commonwealth or State mechanism or ministerial forum that has the overview and therefore the ability to review current and future regulatory and investment machinery and needs. Given the fact that both the States and the Commonwealth provide considerable investment for the creation of film, television and digital media projects, consideration should be given to the need for both levels of Government to assume a more active role in overseeing this sector. Such a step would help to establish efficient pathways for projects from conception to the marketplace, and to determine the role of private investment in the development of these kinds of projects. This may be a matter for the Cultural Ministers' Council to consider.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Community Broadcasting Inquiry.

Yours sincerely



JOHN HILL

Date: 11.4.06