

Submission 78

17th March 2006

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Re: Tuning Into Community Broadcasting

We apologise for our late submission to your inquiry and hope that it will still be able to be considered. Unfortunately, as a volunteer organization, our efforts have been directed to a number of other issues. Thankfully a reminder from the CBAA alerted us to the chance for us to contribute our story.

Whilst our trading name is "Voice FM", our call sign is "3BBB", our company name is "Ballarat Community FM Radio Co-operative Limited."

We have a general license and currently have 7 ethnic programs (Dutch, Filipino, German, Greek, Hindi, Italian and Japanese). We have had Chinese and French programs but the presenters for these programs recently moved from Ballarat. These programs will be filled as soon as new presenters become available. We have a Russian presenter currently training and have been approached by a potential Spanish presenter.

We were one of 14 stations who received awards for a "Toot Your Own Horn" competition. Our entry focused on our Reading For The Print Handicapped (RPH) program. This program is supported in our community by Vision Australia, nursing homes, disability groups and the general public. We have had reports that some nursing homes switch all their radios to our station specifically for this program. The introduction of this program has meant our station has gained 32 new volunteers onto the roster as the program is presented for an hour each week day. These new volunteers have not only enabled us to present this valuable program to our community, but some have gained in their confidence and are now presenting other programs such as "Community Voices" and "Books on Voice".

Our station, like many Community Radio Stations, has had it's share of bad management and financial difficulty. The reason we are able to submit a positive report is because of the passion that surrounds Community Radio. The opportunity for community groups to have their story told, their voices heard and their issues discussed in a public forum is the driving force that binds people together to ensure that we work through the difficult times. Our passion to provide air time for local and Australian artists. The amazing group of volunteers we have at the



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moment who have worked through the financial difficulties so that we have been able to secure grants to repair and replace our transmission equipment.

Yours truly,

Helen Bath
Board Member, Treasurer