



## Ethnic Broadcasters' Council

of the ACT and Surrounding Districts Inc.  
Canberra Multicultural Service (1CMS)  
Community Radio FM 91.1 MHz  
PO Box 3882 WESTON ACT 2611

ABN 43 178 039 578

Submission No. 87

Date 21 February 06

To the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts

**RE: Inquiry into Community Broadcasting:**

### Background:

#### Ethnic Community Broadcasting through Canberra Multicultural Service (1CMS):

- We currently broadcast in 30+ languages weekly. (see attached form for more info)
- We estimate that we reach regularly on a weekly basis 28,000 people in Canberra and the region.
- We reach both longer established and emerging communities in the ACT and region. Each ethnic community has its own listeners profile, depending on the levels of English spoken in the particular community; the length of residence in Australia; the general age structure; and access to alternative sources of information.
- Programs typically provide a mix of general news, local information, information on government services and government initiatives; they also support cultural maintenance. Particularly for people with low levels of English they provide a link to the local community in general.
- Programs are typically produced and presented by volunteers who are required to demonstrate that they are responsive to their respective listening audiences. The station is run on a cooperative basis by representatives from the various languages programs (unpaid volunteers).
- We have consistently supported youth programming, by encouraging young people to participate as well as by providing broadcasting time especially for youth.
- We also offer access to other community groups and interests – such as Community @ Work, and indigenous broadcasting. We also rebroadcast some interstate/international programs.
- Digital radio has the capacity to be more interactive than analogue broadcasts and has improvements over analogue sounds including improved quality, greater choice, interference free reception, no re-tuning, random access, and text and data services

## Specific points relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference:

- *The scope and role of Australian community broadcasting across radio, television, the Internet and other broadcasting technologies*

We believe that it is important to enable Australian community broadcasting to maintain relevancy in the evolving context of technologies; competition for audiences will continue to increase but we believe that locally produced radio programs will continue to be both desirable and needed even if new hybrid forms of programs may be developed. Community radio also plays an important role in distribution of governments messages (eg GST, industrial relation etc) in targeting specific languages.

The community broadcasting sector is a significant part of the media landscape, providing the community with a diverse and independent platform for expressing views and ideas, offering a range of cultural and community services that commercial and public services are not expected to provide.

- *Content and programming requirements that reflect the character of Australia and its cultural diversity*

Australia has evolved an enviable and internationally unique system of community media, particularly in community radio; a system which is responsive to the needs of our culturally diverse community. There are, however, still unmet demands, particularly for recent (emerging) and small communities. As well, in some larger language communities the existing broadcast times may not enable program makers to cater equitably for the diversity found within that community (eg, age; gender; religious; cultural/linguistic needs)

- *Technological opportunities, including digital, to expand community broadcasting networks; and*

While there may be many opportunities to expand community broadcasting networks, a very important principle must be preserved: the closeness between program makers and their audiences. Ultimately INDIVIDUAL listeners must find that they are being addressed. Technologies may improve the quality of the signal and distribution, but closeness to target communities remains the overriding issue.

- *Opportunities and threats to achieving a diverse and robust network of community broadcasters.*

We believe that Australia's network of community broadcasters at present is based on a suitable mix of technological experimentation and innovation; government encouragement; sponsorship; and, voluntary effort. However, as sweeping changes are about to impact on the sector there will be a need to enable the migration to and use of new technologies. This will require a clear policy by Governments – both on the introduction of new technologies and on how to continue support the robust participation by the broad range of community interests.

In particular, we believe that Australian ethnic community broadcasting needs to be supported not only technologically, and through some support for all groups to get to air with important community information in a wide range of languages, but also through continuing training programs.

Respectfully yours,  
On behalf of the EBC Executive Committee



Werner Albrecht  
President EBC

Attachment (Data 1CMS FM 91.1 Canberra)

	Language	Country	Broadcasters	Hours per week	
1	Bosnian	Bosnia	3	2.0	Europe
2	Cantonese	China	6	2.0	Asia
3	Croatian	Croatia	6	2.0	Europe
4	Czech/Slovak	Czech	2	1.0	Europe
5	Danish	Denmark	1	0.0	Europe
6	English(comm@work)	Australia (Local)	1	1.0	Australia
7	Farsi	Iran	3	1.0	Asia
8	Flemish	Belgium	2	0.5	Europe
9	French	France	4	2.0	Europe
10	German	Germany	3	2.0	Europe
11	German	Austria	1	0.0	Europe
12	Greek	Greece	1	8.0	Europe
13	Hindi	India	0	0.0	Asia
14	Hindi	Pakistan	1	1.0	Asia
15	Indonesian	Indonesia	3	2.0	Asia
16	Italian	Italy	2	1.0	Europe
17	Laos	Laos	3	1.0	Asia
18	Macedonian	Macedonia	2	3.0	Europe
19	Mandarin	China	12	2.0	Asia
20	Motu	PNG	6	3.0	Oceania
21	Polish	Poland	9	2.0	Europe
22	Samoan	Samoa	10	6.0	Oceania
23	Serbian	Serbia	3	2.0	Europe
24	Sinhalese	Sri Lanka	2	2.0	Asia
25	Slovenian	Slovenia	3	3.0	Europe
26	Spanish	Chile	4	1.0	S. America
27	Spanish	Spain	2	2.0	Europe
28	Swiss German	Switzerland	3	2.0	Europe
29	Tamil	Sri Lanka	4	3.0	Asia
30	Thai	Thailand	1	2.0	Asia
31	Tongan	Tonga	8	6.0	Oceania
32	Urdu	Pakistan	3	1.0	Asia
33	Vietnamese	Vietnam	2	0.0	Asia
34	Youth English (hot91)	Australia	2	2.0	Australia
35	Youth English Group 2	Australia	3	2.0	Australia
36	Youth English Group 3	Australia	2	1.0	Australia
	<b>Total</b>		<b>121</b>	<b>72</b>	
	<b>Satellite feeds and volunteer hours</b>				
	Internat. Bouquet	International	0	6.0	
	NIRS-Sat (Min)	Indigenous Australia	0	10.0	
	DW Sat or NIRS-Sat	International	0	80.5	over night
	Total Programming			168.0	