

# Port Stephens FM Inc – 100.9

## Keeping Your Music Alive

28<sup>th</sup> March 2006

The Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Communication, Information Technology & The Arts  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2060  
Australia

### **RE COMMUNITY BROADCASTING IN AUSTRALIA**

It is with great pleasure we submit our thoughts to you for inclusion in your review of Community Broadcasting in Australia.

Port Stephens FM – 100.9 is located at Salamander Bay NSW in the heart of the Local Government area of Port Stephens. Our radio station operates on a 24 hour license and is staffed entirely of volunteers from our local area and Newcastle to our South. Whilst our prime audience is in the Port Stephens area, we transmit as far south as the central coast of NSW, North to Buladelah and west to Maitland, enjoying a broad listening audience from these areas. Apart from the excellent assistance from the Community Broadcasting Fund with equipment grants, we are funded by Sponsorship from local business and members.

We operate in a very competitive area with many commercial radio stations, ABC and Community stations broadcasting into our zone. Whilst it is difficult to get precise listening audience figures with our limited resources, we believe we have established good community interest in our programs.

Involvement with the community is of very high importance to us and to this end we have established the following –

- Community Bulletin Board - broadcast twice per day for community groups wishing to advise the community of events and fund raisers.
- Local News – Refreshed three times per week to inform locals of local issues.
- Sports Programme – involving local and national sporting news, interviews with local clubs etc. plus a further Football club programme (results, key players etc)
- Youth programme broadcast weekly involving local School children.

- On air interviews with local charity groups, Port Stephens Council members, Local Tourism heads, Community Festival organizers.
- World music, Classical music programs as well as current, nostalgic and Country music to cover a full range of local interest with a strong support for Australian music.
- Ongoing training programs for presenters in conjunction with the local Community Training College.
- Ongoing interaction with the local people surveying their needs from their local community radio station.
- We have a caravan which is used, as volunteers are available to get out into the community as part of community festivals and fund raisers.
- Provision of hobby for retirees, youth, unemployed with sickness issues otherwise not able to work.
- Assistance to local church groups when called upon
- Interaction with Coastal patrol giving advice, interview and reports to the community
- Development of a Web Site to provide information on programs, local issues, opportunity for local interaction, ongoing community communication with our community.

### **Summary**

- Predominantly a music station addressing broad musical taste.
- Community service through bulletin board addressing community issues and help to involve local people not in employment
- Local news and events
- Interest to local presenters including the youth
- Important training ground for presenter both young and old.
- Service to all aspects of the Community not addressed by commercial stations
- Sporting clubs addressed with two programs with strong local content
- Strong relationship with local council and tourism bodies with help in promotion of local issues
- Interaction with local Coastal patrol with regular reports from them broadcast to the community
- Caravan addressing community issues.
- Important Community training ground to a broad cross section of the community
- No paid staff
- Apart from CBF, fully self funded
- Main expenditure is rent and equipment purchase.
- 24 hours per day 7 day per week of local content programming. A minimum of 25% (music, interview, local news, Bulletin board) as well as utilization of the Community Radio Network overnight.

We are very proud of our station and the service we provide. Funding is always critical, but we have taken the responsibility to raise funds with a committed effort by our members. Operating on a 24 hour license puts strain on all resources,

particularly the equipment which is in constant need of replacement and funds are not always available to do this effectively. This results in constant patching and fundraising activities to provide equipment over and above the CBF provided equipment. We are conscious of overall needs in the government sector. Community broadcasting provides good local involvement and interaction and is an extremely important aspect in the daily community life. Any increased assistance to community broadcasting would be appreciated. This would assist us with more robust equipment, an ability to get out into the community to reach out community groups which are wide spread, and give us some office stability with paid staff to chase sponsors and manage daily programming. We are always subject to the whims of the volunteer, whilst we handle the presentation aspects on an ongoing basis by training programs, we suffer when sales ability and management skills are lost.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this to you.

Yours sincerely,

R.L. McKay  
President  
Port Stephens FM – 100.9