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31 May 2001

Ms Janet Holmes
Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Transport & Communications
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Janet

Regional Radio Inquiry



We refer to our appearance before the Committee on 6 April 2001.

The Committee asked us to specifically consider the situation of radio reception in the community of Walpole in Western Australia. I am advised that the situation in that area with respect to National services is as follows:

- Walpole is currently on the fringe of the Mt Barker ABC FM radio service coverage area (JJJ, Classic FM and Radio National) and the Albany ABC AM radio coverage area (Local Radio) and is well outside the Busselton, Manjimup and Wagin ABC AM radio coverage areas.
- Consequently, any current reception in the area is purely fortuitous.
- Further, Walpole is located on the coast and is bordered by a forested national park which impacts on the quality of reception. The strength of the radio signals is reduced due to the surrounding hilly topography and clutter due to trees. This also means that any reception of these weak radio signals, particularly from AM radio transmissions, is highly susceptible to interference from any local electrical noise.

Since the sale of the National Transmission Network to ntl Australia in 1999, responsibility for extension and amelioration of national radio (and television) reception resides with the ABC and SBS. ntl is a service provider to both national broadcasters and would compete for extension work of this type.

As for any community, possible solutions will require access to an available frequency and suitable site. A frequency would need to be made available from the ABA. Given the relatively remote location of Walpole to our neighbouring radio transmissions, a suitable frequency should not be too difficult to find. With respect to a suitable site, this may prove less difficult for Walpole, given that it is currently receiving television via a "self help" facility and provision of further services is being considered under the TV Black Spots program. Site sharing could be considered. However, any solution will require funding.

I note the suggestion made by Kirsten Livermore MP during our earlier appearance before the Committee that it might be appropriate to establish a Federally-funded 'radio black spots' similar to what currently exists for television services. It is clearly conceivable that a fund of this type could assist communities like Walpole around Australia.

I trust this information is of assistance to the Committee. Please do not hesitate to contact Clive Morton, ntl's Broadcast Services Director, or myself if further information is required.

Yours sincerely

Tom Bennie
Managing Director

House of Representatives Standing
Committee on Communications,
Transport and the Arts

Submission No: 192.01

Date Received: 4 June 2001

Secretary: Janet Holmes

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Submissions Processing Record

Submission Number 192.01

Is submission from..... Organisation/individual

Submission Author ntl

Is it a confidential submission Y N

Format received
Hard Copy
Fax
Email
Disc

Do we photocopy all attachments Y / N

Should we send survey sheet with authorisation letter..... Y / N

Prior to authorisation

- Submission Numbered
- Submission checked in CIMS
- Already received in another format Y / N
- Details entered into CIMS
- Confidential submission filed
- And no further action
- Photocopied and paginated
- Copies distributed to J. A and G
- Filed

After authorisation

- Updated list of subs to J and A
- Letter of acknowledgement sent
- Survey sheet enclosed
- Posted on web site
- Published in volume

Secretary:.....

RECEIVED

4 JUN 2001

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT AND
THE ARTS

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Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tom Bennie'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Tom Bennie
Managing Director

Holmes, Janet (REPS)

From: Tibb, Jane [Jane.Tibb@msj.com.au]
Sent: Friday, 15 June 2001 3:14 PM
To: janet.holmes.reps@aph.gov.au
Cc: Ickeringill, Peter
Subject: Confirmation

Janet,

As requested by you, I confirm that the further documents provided by DMG in relation to the hearing in Brisbane on 28 May 2001 are for the public record.

Thanks for you help.

Kind regards

Jane

*Katie This email page
For the file
but not for
photocopying*