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

Adequacy of Radio Services

The real victim of the changes to radio stations and the number of licences issued in Australia has been small businesses.

Example :

In Toowoomba up until a few years ago there was ;

Radio 4GR (AM) – a station with local news read by a local news reader and a good mix of top 40 music and older favourites. Very community minded and well listened to.

Radio 4AK (AM) – competition for the above station but tended to appeal more to the younger market.

Radio 4WK (AM) – this is the racing station and had a very strong country music focus with more of the older hits with the odd top 40 song. It also had and still has a very good breakfast program with wide appeal and a lot of local news content.

ABC - Of course we all know the format here – and don't forget **JJJ** for the alternate music buffs.

Now this was a pretty good mix and on top of that Toowoomba listeners could pick up **QFM** out of Ipswich (a 60s gold station) which also had some Toowoomba content on their news as well as some local Toowoomba advertisers.

Because of Toowoomba's geographical location residents can also pick up some Brisbane AM and FM stations.

Now anyone would tell you that for a city of 90,000 people that this is more than enough choice. But what does the government do ??? They encourage and allow more licences into the area.

On top of the above we now have **CFM** (modeled on the B105 BrisbaneFM style of station) which has a split signal into Dalby (an area that businesses could reach through 4AK and 4GR) plus they have also issued to the same company **FM Country**.

Radio 4GR was the leading commercial station. If you want to reach the same audience you now have to spend more money to do the job because they have split their audience. Note that I said 'their audience'.

Radio 4GR (RG Capitol) are laughing all the way to the bank, at the expense of small business.

SUMMARY :

The first part of this nonsense started when the ABC and the government put up

relay signals all over Australia to allow Triple J into areas such as Toowoomba. Once again this took an audience away from the traditional stations and cost small business money.

With this recent flood of stations the impact has been far greater. RG Capitol seem to have a large monopoly in regional Queensland and I think that it is unbalanced. Look at other areas in which they operate. It is the same. They are pushing out more signals from the same station premises and reaping more income from the same market.

I just returned from Mackay. They now own all three local stations. The extra Hot FM inclusion a few years ago once again cost local business more money to reach the same audience.

Most of the news now is on relay from the Gold Coast. There are a lot of syndicated national programmes which is fast taking away the local content.

The pressure is on the staff to perform harder and there have been large cut backs in staff in a lot of these stations. There is also a high turn over of staff in a lot of these stations – RG Capitol is a main offender.

Now the example I gave you is Toowoomba. If you want crazy, look at the Gold Coast and the number of FM stations. Look at Townsville.

I think the whole situation is corrupt and it really smells.

Thank you for the opportunityRegards Bob Carroll.

Trade Event organiser (representing small business) and manager Based in Toowoomba, operating in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Sunshine Coast and Brisbane.