

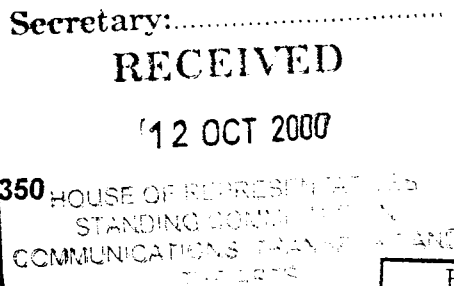
07 4635 8954

Apartment 2
466 Alderley Street
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

10th October 2000

The Secretary
House Communications Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir



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

Submission No: 36

Date Received: 12/10/00

Secretary: Janet Helmer

RE: THE INQUIRY INTO THE ADEQUACY OF RADIO SERVICES IN AUSTRALIA

Paradoxically, as technological advances makes radio stations more capable of localising their services, more stations are joining networks. Local radio delivered democracy to the world but networked radio is diminishing it. This problem will be difficult to solve, because our broadcasting laws do not permit the easy introduction of the necessary reforms.

People are discouraged from establishing local commercial radio stations, by the expense of buying licences at auction. Many community radio stations do not provide much local content because their licences are owned by incorporated associations whose factions act to prevent good programming and staffing, especially when temporarily licensed.

These problems can be easily solved by changing the law. Radio services in regional and rural Australia, will improve when commercial and community broadcasting licences, are replaced by a single new licence which is available to the maximum possible number of suitable applicants. A very similar system, appears to work quite well in the USA.

Suitable applicants for radio broadcasting licences, would be those who prove that they possess (1) the appropriate level of personal integrity, (2) the management, technical and creative and skills that are needed to operate a radio station in a professional manner and (3) sufficient money to purchase the broadcasting equipment, specified in the application.

To further encourage local radio, licence fees should be calculated on the basis of the transmitter's power and the time allocated to local content. Such a fee structure, would encourage aspirant broadcasters to use low power transmitters and provide considerable local content, including news, current affairs and the crucially important open-line forum.

Yours faithfully



Alan J Leslie