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**Submission to the Australian House Of Representatives  
House Standing Committee on Communications, Information,  
Technology and the Arts**

**Date of Submission #4: 01 March 2006**

**End of data not for publication.**

**Qualifications:**

- **Broadcasting about 1600 hours live on air and about an equal amount of time preparing, voluntarily, on local community radio without production, secretarial or engineering support. This occurred between 1999 and 2004.**
- **Until 2003 I weekly broadcast two three hour long programmes of Australian Folkmusic - BIFCOA (see appendix A. "I am Folkmusic" and Appendix C. "BIFCOA Inc. Hello World") on Wyong Gosford Progressive Community Radio (PCR FM).**
- **From 2003 and largely in an effort to protect the position of PCR FM in its application for full-time licensing, I took up the role of the weekday morning broadcaster presenting a three hour programme relevant to the whole of the Central Coast's citizenry but targeted at our target market, the unrepresented, youth and multi-ethnic NESB. That programme primarily brought local organisations and government departments to the people and introduced the people to the organisations and their public servants. It was also used as a showcase for Folkmusic.**
- **About 100 to 150 hours voluntarily organising, planning, promoting, preparing applications, attending committee meetings and fighting inappropriate Australian Broadcasting Authority, ABA, decisions between June 2002 and today.**

- A lifetime of being inculcated with traditional heritage values, firstly in Great Britain and then in a country which largely devalues and refuses to recognise, preserve or inculcate the heritage values of all citizens  
**Preamble:** The House Standing Committee terms of reference that will be addressed in the submission are -
  - A. "threats to achieving a diverse and robust network of community broadcasters".
  - B. "the scope and roll of Australian community broadcasting across radio".
  - C. "content and programming requirements reflecting Australian character and cultural diversity"

**Submission # 4:**Please refer to the appendices A., B. and C.,  
A. - "I am Folkmusic",  
B. - "Fellow Folkies",  
C. - "BIFCOA Hello World 12 March 2004".

Firstly I wish to unashamedly state that I was born and raised in Blackpool, a relatively new town in Lancashire, England. My home town has a population of about 110,000 people but caters for about 19 million visitors every year through having created a brash tawdry spectacle and other commercial attractions. My ancestors possibly helped found the city of Dublin over 1000 years ago but were not Irish.

I was fortunate in having a primary school teacher at the age of five who believed in the value of introducing her pupils to English traditional heritage song and music. In my late teens I was very fortunate and privileged to be exposed to one of the country's best, a group of traditional folk musicians who coincidentally resided in the same town. Besides introducing audiences to English, Irish & Scottish traditional songs, the group leader Alan Bell, was writing songs about the history of the town, its people, industry and surroundings to become future heritage for generations to

come. We also welcomed any visitors from other parts who would share their traditional music with us.

Similarly here in Australia there are superb musicians performing heritage music & song as well as songwriter's writing in the folk tradition of their ancestors about Australian situations. The wonderful difference between what I experienced in Blackpool and here in Australia is that Australia has about 198 additional different cultures or ethnicities to experience, learn from, share, respect and enjoy. The whole of these artistes do not receive the recognition that they should because Australia, with the exception of Mr Egan of Alice Springs, from the Queen's Representative down do not acknowledge or promote the importance, significance and value of folk music to the Australian nation.

Sadly my experience has been that the practitioners in most of these cultural traditions have been so denigrated or ignored by Anglo Celtic white supremacy, driven out by commercial pap and the scramble by individual ethnic groups for position in the pecking order of Australian society that there has been a failure to preserve, share and enjoy this musical heritage on an equal basis.

An heritage which should now be proudly embraced by all Australians rather than today's practice which seems to be in favour of the heavily promoted American country and western, pop music and rap.

In submission #3 I mention a letter from Dr Keith McKenry, President, National Folk Festival. Dr McKenry has represented Australia at United Nation's symposia on the significance and importance of Folkmusic. In his letter to Ms Maddock of the ABA Dr McKenry states:

"the Community Radio sector is of pivotal importance to lovers of folk music and folk poetry. Commercial radio ignores these areas, and while the ABC has a very few programs which will play folk material, it is only the community radio sector that gives such material significant

airplay. Across Australia folk enthusiasts rely heavily upon community radio not only to hear their beloved music and poetry but also to keep up-to-date with folk events in their region and across Australia."

And- "PCR FM is one such pivotal community station. If it loses its access to the airwaves a sizeable community of folk enthusiasts in the region will effectively be disenfranchised. I ask that the authority act to ensure that PCR FM's access to the airwaves is not only maintained on a temporary basis but also is guaranteed by issuing it with a permanent community broadcasting licence."

It appears that I need to state the obvious. This government and its so-called autonomous body the ABA, not only has had no respect for 200 years of white Australian musical heritage but equally has no respect for the many people from different heritages who have been invited to migrate here since the end of white supremacy rule. The failure to protect not only old white Australian folk heritage but also New Australian folk heritage is akin to the Scottish Lairds who sold out their nation and became known as "The Rogues of the Nation". Their names are now largely forgotten but, as the collective group, they are still utterly despised hundreds of years later.

Countries that value the worth of their musical heritage not only fund access to it but also provide the funding for folk music institutes. The National Library despite inadequate funding has made some moves to collecting some music & song but still has a long way to go to make the information readily available.

I recommend that:

- a Free to Air Community National Music Heritage radio station covering the whole of the country 24 hours a day, seven days a week be setup and commence broadcasting true Australian folk music covering all ethnicities from the 'A's' to the 'Z's'.

- I repeat my previous suggestion that an Office of Australian Community Radio Ombudsman be set up
- I also repeat my previous suggestion that Australia cease its failure to adhere to the international human rights treaties that it has signed and forthwith implement and legislate a comprehensive Bill of Human Rights giving all citizens equality and protection
- That all significant Australians be encouraged to proudly and fearlessly promote, promulgate and share their individual heritage music with fellow Australians. I suggest that all who have no cognisance of their heritage try to learn it to take pride. This is followed by submission #5.

Yours faithfully, Richard J. Newby

Appendices A,B,C Follow:

APPENDIX A ~

# Bifcoa Inc.

(Bloody Incredible Folk-music Covering Our Australia)

Preserving & Promoting Australia's Multicultural Musical Heritage - Traditional and Folk Music For Harmony

ABN 54208764947

8 August 2005 revised 22 January 2006

**To anyone who cares and will read on: ~**

**I am commonly & often disparagingly called "Folk music".** This however is just like calling Zeus, Satan, Jesus Christ, Buddha or Mohammed "men". **I bear my name with modest honour.**

- I am thousands of years old.
- I spring from humanity with heartfelt truth.
- I am not religiously, politically, racially or socio-economically based even though many have tried to subvert me to their views and claim me for their exclusive ownership.
- I am enjoyed by all from the simple minded to the genius.
- I know no boundaries.
- I am simply complex.
- I mainly live through loving open-minded tolerant people.
- People have been assassinated to try and suppress me.
- I am your history, social or interrelationship commentary, your dreams and much more.
- If you let me, I will give you a lifetime of real pleasure.
- I belong to you, you, you and you. I am your heritage.

A wise man once said -"Only a fool discards or allows his heritage to be sold without learning its dimensions, composition, function, worth and true value". Are you a fool?

Today we have largely failed to properly share this heritage with our own children let alone with each other. Australia's population is sourced from about 200 different cultures. We each own and contribute part of that musical heritage. If we are wise, we will share it with our fellow citizens. December 2005's violent events in Cronulla & other parts of Australia showed reality and that no one heard or heeded our simple message.

Recent Australian governments, including today's, fail to protect our heritage allowing it to be overridden and replaced by commercialised homogenised pop. An uneducated Australia Council not long ago determined that Australia does not have its own folk music heritage!

Our schools no longer include heritage music within the curricula. Indeed many of today's music teachers are hard pressed to name a handful of our song titles.

Australia cannot, despite the belated late comments of Prime Minister Howard, genuinely claim multiculturalism whilst it continues to ignore our multicultural music heritage. Several government departments have in recent times reported on the significance and importance of recent migrants' musical heritage. Ask your MP why these common-sense findings continue to be ignored – they are also equally applicable to first and later generations of Australians.

**Recognition, respect & appreciation of our musical heritage helps to create mutual respect, national identity, character growth and community harmony.**

Folk music belongs to everyone not just a few who wish to exploit it for their monetary profit. Furthermore

Australian folk music is not, as some claim, limited to anglo-celtic and aborigine music.

*Thank you for reading this far. I hope that you can enjoy listening today, and every day, to genuine Australian folk music sourced from the more than 200 ethnicities.*

*Sadly most radio stations play commercialised pap sourced from one location. So good luck, your chances are small. RJN.*

Authorised by Richard J. Newby, Public Officer, BIFCOA Inc. 03.08.2005 revised  
22.01.2006

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Revision

Ref: I am Folkmusic 22012006

## APPENDIX B ~

**6 Feb 2006**

Dear Fellow Folkie,

### **Federal government inquiry into community broadcasting.**

Submissions to the inquiry have to be in by the 17th March 2006. This may be your last chance for the next 35 years to have your say about the lack of Folkmusic on radio.

Details can be got from:

- <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cita/>
- committee secretariat 02 6277 4601 or
- e-mail [cita.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:cita.reps@aph.gov.au).

We have already had national governments sell out our musical heritage in favour of commercialised homogenised musical pap from foreign sources. Most commercial development of local musical talent is designed to emulate un-Australian commercialised pap. I can only restate that "idolatry now creates idleness".

In other words our heritage, sourced from over 200 ethnicities, is being flushed down the toilet and a true



multicultural Australian musical "today-heritage" will never be allowed to develop.

Please do not rely on everyone else to say something to the parliament. The usual suspects and their stooges will already have the word-processors churning out their specified party line. That line may be strident intolerant religious dogma continuing to promote an opiate for the masses, for example gospel music, in itself an expression of terrorism against inhuman behaviour by Muslim slavers and Christian slave owners. Others with profiteering motive will promote lines such as "buy our country ersatz music heritage or if honestly stated, our commercial pap".

Most peak bodies are no more representative than politicians representing the party rather than the people. Some peak bodies lobby for intolerance and tyranny to create racial, ethnic or religious purity and advantage. One example: those who want world homogeneity so long as it is based on United States of America ruling ideals. **The collateral damage of the genocide of your Australian uniqueness is intentional.**

Some performers may applaud the principal of only performing American based music however it is like pyramid marketing. A favoured few ride on the backs of the masses. Morris Rosenfeld succinctly wrote "For Hire" more than 100 years ago -

**Work with might and main,  
Or with hand and heart,  
Work with soul and brain,  
Or with holy art,  
Thread, or genius' fire—  
Make a vest, or verse—  
If 'tis done for hire,  
It is done the worse.**

As a performer or a listener what do you think of rules that, if adhered to, do not allow more than three tracks from a given performer to be played on the same programme but those same three tracks can be played every day for a year. For example the Settlers songs of the Snowy Mountain scheme cannot be played in one programme according to the CBAA however Achy Breaky heart can be played every day for a century. When performing at a club or festival you are usually required to perform for more than 30 minutes which enables a decent audience time to evaluate not only you but also your material.

Similarly, some will maintain that only Waltzing Matilda music is folk music but that the music for the varsovienna, the polka, the sword dance, the mazurka or the waltz is not. Thank you Italian, Chinese, Greek, Scot, Scandinavian, German, Finn, et al, for your industry but forget your heritage music!

Whether you are a full-time performer, part-timer, groupie, "once-a-yearer", organiser, collector, club member, festival goer, instrument maker, radio presenter or audience member put pen to paper. Let them know that you want your folk music heritage protected & that you want to be able to hear it played on radio 24/7.

**Let the philistines know that there are some who put great value in folk music and New Australian heritage.**

As I have very limited resources will you please forward this on to your e-mail list of folkie friends. I also print overleaf the recent BIFCOA Inc. "I am Folkmusic" pamphlet.

Yours in Folkmusic, **Richard John**

Enclosure: BIFCOA Inc. 22.01.2006 I am Folkmusic.

**APPENDIX C ~**

# BIFCOA INC.

(Bloody Incredible Folk-music Covering Our Australia)  
Preserving & Promoting Australian Heritage - Traditional and Folk Music with Multicultural Harmony  
ABN 54208764947

**From:** The BIFCOA Committee, Management and Members.  
**To:** All Lovers of Traditional & Folk Music.  
**Copy to:** Please help us by recycling this leaflet or make a copy and send it to your family, friends, neighbours and anyone who will support us. You will not only be doing yourself a favour but also us and your fellow citizens.  
**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> March 2004  
**Subject:** An Introduction or "Hello World" Message

**H**ere, not long ago, traditional and folk music was routinely taught in primary schools. Commercial radio and record companies promoted and helped to maintain our culture and heritage. Unfortunately a song or tune popular for a hundred years or more does not make the repeatable profits of short lived (unmemorable?) entertainment & so was dropped. This sorry state of affairs is not helped by community radio programmes devoted to non-current commercial music and biography, jazz or evangelistic fundamentalist religious money raising programmes. The American free trade agreement will probably exacerbate the situation.

**I**mmigration to Australia has resulted in the oral, record, tape and CD recording transference of traditional music to our heritage. Australia sources its population from about 200 ethnicities. We are probably the premier world location for the treasure trove of music and song heritage. Australia is also a melting pot for the formation of "today" heritage to be developed and passed on to future generations. We will be remiss if the future concludes that we have left a cultural desert or allowed the extinction of our heritage.

strives to overcome racial exclusivity and sexism. We are aware that a BIFCOA few traditional songs and music are jingoistic or help promote racial exclusivity and sexism. This can be overcome with appropriate contextualisation and explanation when addressing progressive audiences. We do not want enmity or prejudice between peoples. We look to the development of understanding, tolerance and harmony acquired from the genuine sharing and appreciation of this music.

Today we have the interesting situation of many 1<sup>st</sup>, or 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Australians who do not have fluency in their ancestor's native language. Many want to gain familiarity with their roots. BIFCOA musically provides that exposure to the individual's culture and heritage. We also enable all people to hear, share, understand, enjoy and support each other's pride. **This ancestral traditional music and song is now our Australian traditional folk culture and heritage.** Our broadcasts,

**I**n using Australian English as the lingua franca, achieve our goal of enabling cross cultural participation. In this, we long preceded the NSW legislation "*Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*". To date, broadcast on Wyong-Gosford Progressive Community Radio, **the programme**

**BIFCOA has broadcast over 1000 hours of music & songs sung in more than 70 languages.** This diversity compares favourably with both SBS and the variety of ethnicities within the National Ethnic Broadcasters (NEMBC). We are now

**Asking** like minded people, who are fluently bilingual, and interested in presenting programme segments to contact us. You can also help if you have material to share.

*~ Yours in folkmusic for harmony,*

***Richard John***