



“WHERE MUSIC MATTERS”

Submission 37

The Committee of Management
Wagga Wagga Community Media Inc

The Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Dear Sir / Madam

I am writing to you on behalf of the Committee of Management of Wagga Wagga Community Media Inc (Radio Station 2AAA / FM 107.1).

WHO ARE WE?

2AAA FM has been a part of the Wagga community for the past 25 years where it has developed from being the first FM station in Wagga to a station today that operates 24 hours a day, providing a variety of programs by volunteers who present their programs in a very professional manner.

STAFF / VOLUNTEERS

This station has 55 regular on air presenters and in the last 25 years has trained more than 1000 local people in the skills of radio presentation. At least 2 training courses are held each year which generally allows us to maintain numbers on air. We have had a number of personnel move on to careers in Commercial Broadcasting, Television and other media positions.

2AAA also has a number of volunteers working in the office assisting the station's paid operations manager with administration duties.

The station also employs a Sales Manager and a sales assistant both working on a contract basis.

CAREERS / OPPORTUNITIES

It is now recognised that if you wish a career in radio, community radio is the best place to start and it is pleasing that the residents of Wagga have this facility to not only create a career, but to be able to take up an interest in radio, present programs to complement the other radio broadcasters in Wagga.

2AAA Community broadcasting not only allows for radio presentation, but also allows members of the community to become involved as members of the station, participate in station's operations through the Committee of Management and sub committees.

We are extremely pleased that we have the commitment of our volunteers to be able to set up a substantial sub committee structures, allowing station personnel to be actively involved in areas of programming, technical, library, maintenance and training.

2AAA over the years has become more closely connected to the local community by providing this access to the station, by increasing its profile through good programming, through regular interview programs with local personalities and organizations and providing information to the community through its community diary and access files.

Members of the community regularly look to us to promote their local activity.

FUNDING

It is essential that community radio is able to be in a position to continue to provide local programming, an area which major network broadcasters no longer provide for a large portion of the day. The survival of community stations is subject to what local funding can be obtained, whether that is through sponsorships or government funding.

With government funding, it is essential that it continues to be provided, especially for support of community broadcasters in regional and rural areas with small populations and minimum local resources.

For stations in the larger centres where local sponsorship is more readily available, that sponsorship will generally cover the day to day running of the station. We still look and support the provision of funding to provide upgrades of equipment, further expansion of the station such as providing improved reception to parts of our broadcast area which is not serviced properly due to the topography of the region.

WINNING

Attracting and utilising local sponsors has meant some modifications over the years to our programs, but we have been successful with changes made, where we are now able to maintain regular programs by providing a easy listening format during the work day week, then providing specialised programs at night and weekends such as Jazz, Blues, Country, Multicultural and many other styles of programs to the satisfaction of not only our sponsors but the community in general.

2AAA provides many programs to the local community not available on other broadcasters.

FUTURE

For the future, ongoing funds availability is essential, some of our future projects will be back up power for both the station premises and transmitter sites, installation of STL links, and as always replacement of ageing equipment as this station celebrates its 25th year.

WHAT ABOUT DIGITAL?

More specific simple straight forward information on what the future is with digital radio is required as soon as possible.

How will it affect community broadcasters?

How will many community stations manage to fund a change to digital?

Also will it be necessary to move in the direction of digital, how soon, especially in the country areas?

Will FM broadcasts be discontinued or will both formats operate together indefinitely?

Some answers easily understood by our technical committee would be appreciated.

NATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY STATIONS

Community stations are locally owned and it is important that local ownership be encouraged. The commercial media is in the hands of a few media barons.

I thank the committee for its time to consider our submission and its serious consideration of the future of community broadcasting.

Yours Sincerely,

Chris Jacobson
Operations Manager
For the Committee of Management
Wagga Wagga Community Media Inc
FM 107.1 / 2AAA