

Submission for the Community Broadcasting Inquiry to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

Community broadcasting is vital in building and maintaining the community network. The programs communicate to the public about relevant and important events and issues in their local area or ethnic community.

Asian Television Australia Association Inc. (ATVAA) is a community group that broadcasts a variety of programs on Melbourne's Channel 31. As one of the founding members of the Melbourne Community Television Consortium Pty Ltd (MCTC), ATVAA is a 100% community and volunteer based non-profit making TV program production organization. With a hardworking and dedicated team of volunteers, ATVAA has been broadcasting programs since 1994 with a primary focus on Asian culture and the Melbourne community. The programs aim to bring understanding to Australians about all aspects of the Asian culture covering traditions, customs, the arts, religion etc, while simultaneously entertaining and updating Melbourne Chinese viewers about the current events and issues in their community.

The languages spoken in the programs include English and Asian languages like Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cambodian as well. The programs could be defined as:

1. Ethnic Cultural Events: such as Chinese/Vietnamese/Cambodian new year festivals. The two major celebration events in Melbourne's China Town, Springvale, Box Hill, Richmond and Footscray, the Australian Moomba parade and Australia Day parade are among the most interesting and entertaining programs for filming. The very special International Dragon Boat Racing contest on the Melbourne Yarra

River is another major festival event in Melbourne city.

2. Asian traditional culture and religious activities: such as Chinese Calligraphy/Painting demonstration and exhibitions, Chinese Kung Fu demonstration and teaching, Chinese heritage dancing; Chinese Cooking, Chinese Medicine introduction, Buddhist Bardo procedures, Buddhism Seminar, Buddha Birthday celebration, Buddhist Temple Vegetarian Food Festival etc.
3. Documentaries on major Chinese community events and association activities: such as Miss Chinese Community Quest Melbourne, Miss Chinese University, Chinese Weekend School Student Quiz competition, Chinese Opera Charity Performances, Chinese Orchestra performance from local and overseas, Association Inaugurations and annual dinner parties, Oversea sports and arts delegation performances and International Convention of Arts and Literature.
4. Promotion on youth camp activities: such as Youth Leadership training camps organized by Indo-China Ethnic Chinese Association, in Victoria's Phillip's Island Adventure Resort Park for Leadership training and in Grampians National Park for Rock Climbing training.
5. Interview, Seminar and Workshop programs: such as discussion on Youth Gambling and Drug problems. Introduction of government new law/regulations implementation were introduced through the interview with local and federal MP on issues regarding new Industrial Law, Housing Commission and Racism problems.
6. Overseas tourist programs: China Henan TV Station in 2002 for its Annual Celebration event and East Malaysian SABA Tourist Promotion Department in 2003.

As you can see from the list above, ATVAA assists in representing the ever changing face of the Melbourne community.

The association is respected by many community groups and organizations as playing an important role in communicating, promoting and supporting community activity. Community broadcasting is important in providing opportunities for the community to speak their ideas and get their message through to the wider public. For example, broadcasting community events such as Victoria's first Chinese Weekend School Student Quiz Competition provides the wider community with the opportunity to see the younger generation involved in such a positive

event to promote the Chinese language. (Some Asian children who grow up in Australia do not pick up their cultural language, which is a sad loss to the following generations.) And also for all the young students, nothing could be more exciting than seeing yourself on television.

Different to commercial television companies whose workers are all paid, all of ATVAA's camera men/women, editors, program producers, set-up crew, interviewers, reporters and actors are all volunteers who often also have another job. They volunteer because they want to contribute to the community in a positive and constructive way, and to be involved with the community spirit

The community is always changing and so is technology. With the analog switch off date looming overhead, community broadcasting needs to be apart of the new digital technology to continue bringing a variety of programs representing many ethnic groups to the Melbourne community. Otherwise without community broadcasting, all that will be left on television will be the commercial stations who focus solely on program ratings and financial profits. Without community broadcasting, the public cannot gain an insight into the unique cultures, events and activities that exist in the community.

Not just in television, but community radio is also important in providing opportunities to the public. 3SER Radio Station in Pakenham organises school radio programs which allows primary and secondary school students to talk about their school activities live on air. This activity helps develop their communication skills as well as their self-confidence. Another example is 3ZZZ radio station, an ethnic community radio station located in Fitzroy that has numerous ethnic groups that broadcast in different languages. This station helps non-English speaking people keep up to date with news, important public announcements and community events and issues.

In both television and radio communications, Australia needs to continue community broadcasting into the future because it is essential in promoting multi-culturalism as apart of Australia's identity.