

Radio Inquiry
The Committee Secretary
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra. ACT 2600

Secretary:.....

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COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT AND
THE ARTS

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

Submission No: 113

Date Received: 25/10/00

Secretary: *Janet Holmes*

Radio Industry Inquiry.

My husband and I would like to bring to the Inquiry some concerns that we have:

1. That the Social benefits of Christian Radio and the influence that it can be, have been lost to the area due to the Radio Print Handicapped being given a 'double dip' and using networking to the maximum through the 1179 KHz AM and as yet have not fulfilled their obligation to transmit on 88.7 MHz FM
2. Radio print Handicapped are able to transmit network programs for many hours each day.

When Radio Print Handicapped were given, by the ABA, 88.7 MHz FM, Gospel Radio had been broadcasting for 15 years on the frequencies that had been allotted to them ie. 104.7 MHz and latterly 88.7 MHz. Every alteration that the ABA had requested of Central Victorian Gospel Radio had been done. It was a real concern that an organisation that had 30 to 40 local presenters, both presenting their own programs and 'manning' the station, should be totally over looked to an organisation that is Government funded.

The TV news from Bendigo of Friday October 13 stated that the Print Handicapped would have a new studio built in the Government funded Mirridong Blind Home. We would like to inform the Inquiry that Gospel Radio is totally Community funded. There is no sponsorship or is money ever asked for. There is a membership and those who subscribe do so without the need to become members. The ABA even had the committee change the membership forms to comply with their wishes only to have the organisation loose the frequency on which it was transmitting.

Whilst Gospel Radio was going to air, local churches would send in their news items and announcements of up coming events. These were given free publicity. There was no Commercial advertisements for any organisations, companies or businesses.

Local programs had precedence. Local church services were taped and presented weekly. Local ministers who wished to be involved, were, but most of the presenters were 'lay' people, vitally concerned with both local Churches and local issues.

Gospel radio has been vitally concerned for those living in Rural areas that have had most of their services taken out of them. Banks and their staff, School Teachers, Doctors have now left many Mallee towns and with them the Ministers of Religion have also been relocated to more 'profitable' areas, leaving a sparse aging community, who once had a thriving church fellowship just down the road from the home farm. We find now that some towns no longer have regular church services. Gospel radio was once ministering to many of these and finding that there was a real hunger for Spiritual teaching and preaching.

Gospel Radio does have an aim, that if it was ever possible that it would seek to transmit to the Mallee, and never has it been so requested than now with the major hike in fuel costs, round trips to larger centres have been drastically curtailed.

Gospel Radio saw the need to have a radio Christian Kinder. This was a daily program each morning. Each afternoon, many good Christian radio drama programs for early teenagers in a "Schools out" program were put to air each day. This was keenly listened too by both old and young! Many has been the farmer who has told us of listening to the morning interview programs on the tractor or the dairyfarmer who listens to the breakfast programs or Drive Time whilst milking the cows.

The need for local content in programming and local people doing programs cannot be under estimated. The thrill people have when the presenters are met, is like meeting on old friend who has been 'in their home' many times and have become 'friends'.

Whilst my husband and I were away from home and had time to listen, we did listen to RPH in the evening and found that we were listening to Talk-back that was coming from England! We wonder what is meant by local programming!

We would thank the Inquiry Committee for the opportunity to send this letter to you and trust you may have some impact on the sorts of concerns that are out in the community.

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