

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology & the Arts.
House of Representatives
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Submission 38

Bay & Basin FM is a small general interest station in the Jervis Bay region. Our Population base for drawing volunteers is about 20,000. We currently have about 30 volunteers covering an age group from 13 to 75++ something.

We operate with no paid staff. The station has strong links with local Community Groups. These include Schools, Rural Fire Brigade, Sporting Clubs, Support Groups, and Lion Club to mention just a few.

Bay & Basin FM has a very active outside broadcast use. Station volunteers go to many local events, get with the locals and conduct live radio broadcasts from these events. For example we are going to a children's long day centre to do an O/B to help them with a fundraiser and the end of the month. Who else would do this?

Much of our time is spent training our volunteers. For many they learn many new IT skills as well as self-esteem and confidence building which is a natural consequence of "Going On Air". Support in this area is a must.

Hopefully by now Community Radio/Television is now universally accepted as supplement to existing commercial and Government electronic media services. Accordingly it has a right to produce programs that are not part of mainstream services. Generally Community Radio stations are expected to "tough it out". It makes us stronger because we have to fight for everything.

With the digital medium approaching in the future methods and costs associated with the transition need to be addressed. Hopefully the issue of coverage area will not be an issue as all services will be on the same digital transmitter. Community Stations will not have the same bandwidth (bit-rate) as Commercial Stations but their coverage areas will be equal.

Given current analogue services, the Management and membership of Bay & Basin FM does not have an issue with a 5-minute limit to sponsorship or tagging of these announcements as sponsorship. This fortunately is one of the good differentiating factors of Community Radio over Commercial Radio. Current regulations in this area still allow Community Radio to gather sufficient sponsorship.

A concern we at Bay & Basin take issue with is the ACMA's policy of granting much lower transmit power to a Community Station as compared to the incumbent commercial service. The power allocated to a Community Station can be 10 or 20 times less than that granted to a commercial service. We believe that the ACMA technical staff be asked to re-examine power allocations to Community Stations as

compared to Commercial services. Where there is **no technical reason** why the power cannot be increased then this should be allowed.

Many listeners of Community Radio are socially and economically disadvantaged and can't afford to purchase high quality radios or put up outside antennas. Any service within an LAP should be receivable on an average radio inside a house. With the local Community Station running well below the commercial station power, many potential listeners simply cannot pick up the signal on an average radio.

Until the transition to digital radio (which will solve this problem providing automatic migration is approved), the ACMA should look fairly at transmit power and not with the preconceived idea that Community radio automatically must get 10 or 20 times less power than the local commercial service. Then the wider and more diverse programming done mostly by volunteers will truly be in reach to **all** the local community.

This favorable re-look into transmit power allocated by the ACMA will not be a cost burden on the Government.

Bay & Basin is open to all residents of the Bay and Basin Area. We provide diversity in our programming. Yes we do play "POP" music but we play all of it not just parts. Of course we play nearly every other genre of music.

We will be involved in the upcoming "See Change Festival" here in Jervis Bay with information, interviews and live broadcasting. Just the things we do at Bay & Basin for no gain or reward other than helping our local community.

Yours truly,

David Hawksworth
BBFM Station Coordinator