

Secretary:.....
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT AND
THE ARTS

House of Representatives Standing
Committee on Communications,
Transport and the Arts
Submission No: *118*
Date Received: *26/10/00*
Secretary: *Janet Holmes*

90 Brougham St
NEW VIC 3101
23 October, 2000

To: The Committee Secretary
House Communications Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee members,

As a submission to your enquiry I am enclosing a copy of the letter I sent to the ABA with reference to the issuing of a **permanent FM Transmission Licence to Central Victoria Gospel Radio (CVGR) in Harcourt Victoria.**

Also enclosed is a copy of the reply from the ABA to me.

As indicated **this licence application** to operate on 88.7 MHz **failed** and the frequency was given to Vision Australia Foundation (RPH Network)

As a result of the ABA's comments on page 2 of their reply as follows....

"Unfortunately there are no other unassigned frequencies in the Bendigo licence area that could be used by CVGR that would not cause interference to existing broadcasting or communications services" **CVGR engaged the services of a professional engineer experienced in this area of frequency allocation.**

The engineer has investigated in detail and supplied a report and a suitable unassigned frequency.

CVGR have submitted this report and a new licence application for this frequency but is experiencing delays in the decision making processes of the ABA.

It should be noted on the bottom of page 1 of the ABA's reply

"all applicants satisfied the ABA that their proposed services would satisfy the criteria for being allocated the licence".

It is hoped that this submission to your enquiry will be favourably received and CVGR will be helped to soon obtain a permanent licence.

In the mean time CVGR is buying radio time on the local Community Radio Station but the available broadcast times – Midnight to 8.00 AM are unsuitable to the majority of listeners

Yours faithfully,
Robert T. Forster
Robert T. Forster

90 Brougham St
KEW VIC 3101

3 January, 2000

To: Professor Flint
Chairman of the ABA

To: Mr Paul Newton
Manager Allocation and Renewal
Licensing Section ABA

cc: The Prime Minister	Hon. John Howard
cc: The Treasurer	Hon. Peter Costello
cc: The Minister for Communications	Senator Richard Alston
cc: The Leader of the Opposition	Hon. Kim Beazley
cc: The Leader of the National Party	Hon. John Anderson
cc: The Leader of the Australian Democrats	Hon. Meg Lees

**Re: Refusal of FM Radio Transmission Licence to CVGR
(Central Victoria Gospel Radio)**

Dear Honorable Members and staff,

May I firstly thank you for your service to the people of Australia and wish you an encouraging new millennium.

My purpose in writing is to point out what many listeners believe is an unfair situation which has arisen in the refusal of a licence to CVGR in Harcourt, Victoria beyond 31 March 2000, and to request that this refusal be reconsidered so that CVGR has a permanent licence to continue.

CVGR has had over thirty temporary licences in a period of over fifteen years and at present has been on air continuously twenty-four hours per day, for almost two years.

The presenters, who come from different Christian denominations and from various occupations, identify well with the regional cities, and rural communities in Central Victoria over a wide area.

Their programming is well-balanced to meet the needs of all age groups with uplifting, challenging, and edifying content as no other station in Australia, at present, appears to be providing to the community.

Australia today, with its high unemployment and devastating social problems, is producing high suicide rates and hopelessness, particularly in the country but also in our large cities.

Our elderly shut-ins have no Christian stations to listen to, and should be provided with an option.

Overall, I believe the Christian community is being unfairly discriminated against in the refusal to grant this permanent radio licence.

By comparison, the ABC's nation-wide youth station, Triple J, which I as a taxpayer have to finance, is broadcasting degrading material, amongst which is their weekly 'Rage' program, which carries a warning for 15 year olds and under. I was informed of this recently which may be verified by you as evidence.

Also, finding CVGR amongst other adjacent radio stations using analogue (knob-tuning) radios is like swimming in a sewer - because the presenters' language and subject content is frequently at gutter level.

Can I say to you that, as legislators, even if you wanted to change the actual standard of material coming over the air today, you would have great difficulty with the vocal minority. The only way to raise standards and morale, which is effective, and has been proved over the centuries, is the teaching of the Bible and the Christian faith. CVGR has excelled in building up the church and general community with relevant Bible teaching and true-life stories of those helped by the Living Christ who says He is "...the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

CVGR has no advertising from sponsors and has never been in debt, yet intend to build their own studios on their land as soon as a permanent licence is granted. This aforementioned advertising policy prevents problems which the ABA has with presenters, such as the recent case of John Laws.

Can I lovingly warn you that God holds governments and individuals responsible for their leadership, particularly for stumbling blocks put in the way of the young.

In conclusion, CVGR have maintained a very high standard, both technically and ethically, with content more worthwhile and encouraging than any I have heard around Australia in my work as radio instructor with Airservices Australia.

Yours faithfully,



Robert T. Forster.

P.S. I live in an elevated position in Melbourne, and have listened to CVGR consistently over its fifteen years of operation, but with considerable difficulty after the frequency change from 104.7 to 88.7 which is very close to Plenty Valley FM on 88.6. This is only half the minimum spacing required for FM station separation. In view of the dearth of quality radio programming in the metropolitan area, a station spacing of 0.2 MHz would allow more extensive reception of this station by Melbourne's interested listeners.



**Australian
Broadcasting
Authority**

ABA File Ref: 98/0217

1 February, 2000

Mr Robert T. Forster
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KEW VIC 3101

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Dear Sir:

Allocation of community radio broadcasting licences in Bendigo

I am writing in response to your letters regarding the allocation of two permanent community radio broadcasting licences in Bendigo.

The Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) received four applications for the larger licence available for allocation in Bendigo: from Central Victorian Gospel Radio Inc. (CVGR), Bendigo FM Education Broadcasting Inc, Vision Australia Foundation, and Bendigo Aboriginal Transmission Association Inc. Two applications were received for the smaller licence: from Vision Australia Foundation and Bendigo FM Education Broadcasting Inc. CVGR did not apply for the smaller licence.

All applications were assessed against the criteria at section 84 of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (the Act). Under section 84, the ABA is to have regard to:

- a) the extent to which the proposed service would meet the existing and perceived future needs of the community within the licence area; and
- b) the nature and diversity of the interests of that community; and
- c) the nature and diversity of other broadcasting services (including national broadcasting services) available within the licence area; and
- d) the capacity of the applicant to provide the proposed service; and
- e) the undesirability of one person being in a position to exercise control of more than one community broadcasting licence that is a broadcasting services bands licence in the same licence area; and
- f) the undesirability of the Commonwealth, a State or a Territory or a political party being in a position to exercise control of a community broadcasting licence.

Every allocation is made on a case by case basis depending on the particular needs of the community to be served and the relative merits of the applicants. A permanent licence allocation is open to all groups, including those who have not been previously broadcasting. The licence is allocated to the applicant that has demonstrated the strongest claim against the above criteria. In the case of Bendigo, all applicants satisfied the ABA that their proposed services would satisfy the criteria for being allocated the licence. The ABA considered that Vision Australia Foundation on balance, best met the criteria for the

larger licence. A statement of reasons is being provided to the CVGR as a result of their application under section 13 of the Administrative Decisions Judicial Review Act.

Unfortunately there are no other unassigned frequencies in the Bendigo licence area that could be used by CVGR that would not cause interference to existing broadcasting or communications services. In response to your comment regarding reception of the 88.7 frequency in Melbourne, the frequency in Bendigo was allocated to specifically service the Bendigo licence area and is not planned to provide broadcasting services into the Melbourne licence area.

In your letter you express your concern that the ABA has discriminated against the Christian community, let me assure you that all applicants are assessed equally against the criteria. While this allocation was a difficult decision for the ABA, the ABA has sought to find a solution that will best meet the diverse and competing needs of the Bendigo community. I understand your disappointment that CVGR were not allocated the licence, however, the ABA will not consider changing its decision.

Yours sincerely



Helen Ward
Licensing Section