

# SUBMISSION

## RADIO INDUSTRY INQUIRY

### ADEQUACY OF RADIO SERVICES IN REGIONAL & RURAL AUSTRALIA

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

Submission No: ..... 171 .....  
Date Received: ..... 24/11/90 .....  
Secretary: ..... Janet Holmes .....

From Mr Bill Caralis  
Broadcast Operations Group  
Sydney NSW

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Radio services in regional New South Wales and regional South East Queensland are more than adequate.

The quality and quantity of radio services in regional New South Wales and South East Queensland has significantly increased and improved in the last 10 years.

There is no need for the government to take any action in relation to the quantity and quality of radio services in regional New South Wales and South East Queensland.

This submission adopts and supports the submission by the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters Limited generally as to its recommendations and specifically as to its submission relating to the potential for new technologies to provide more localised regional radio services.

## THE BROADCAST OPERATIONS GROUP

The Broadcast Operations Group holds AM and FM licences covering a large amount of regional New South Wales and a lesser amount of South East Queensland.

The Broadcast Operations Group obtained its first AM radio licence in 1987 and acquired the majority of its licences through the period from 1987 to 1998.

In 1999 the Broadcast Operations Group acquired a licence for its only metropolitan radio station which broadcasts on the AM band, namely Radio 2SM in Sydney.

In general terms the Broadcast Operations Group covers regional New South Wales and the South East Queensland area.

This submission is made in the context of the Broadcast Operations Group significant and substantial experience in the regional radio arena in the abovementioned areas.

## THE PRESENT SITUATION

It is the submission of the Broadcast Operations Group that regional rural radio services within the broadcast area of the Broadcast Operations Group have improved both qualitatively and quantitatively since the acquisition of licences by the Broadcast Operations Group in that area.

In the early 1990's many of the rural and regional radio stations, which Broadcast Operations Group now own ceased, broadcasting at 11.00pm or 12.00pm until early the following day. All stations within the Broadcast Operations Group now provide a service 24 hours a day.

In the early 1990's there were no FM radio services in regional or rural Australia, and in particular no "younger generation" music FM stations. Now almost all towns in regional or rural Australia have an FM radio service in addition to the previously existing AM radio services. This FM radio service operates 24 hours a day and provides a completely different broadcasting service to that previously offered by AM radio stations in as far as its demographic audience is concerned.

Radio broadcasting services in the regional and rural areas have also significantly increased during the last decade due to the licencing of community and narrow casting licences. In addition, regional and rural Australia is well served by the ABC, AM and FM networks.

Comparatively between 1990 and the year 2000, there are significantly more radio services of a wide variety and type available to regional and rural Australia.

The combined AM and FM services offered by the Broadcast Operations Group to regional and rural New South Wales and Queensland are based on a properly conceived combination of local, regional and metropolitan influences. It is the view of the Broadcast Operations Group that radio broadcast services must attempt to cater for the interests of all potential listeners. Through its combination of AM and FM radio services Broadcast Operations Group provides a first class service to regional and rural New South Wales combining music; talk-back; and local, regional and metropolitan news, weather and current affairs.

The quality of the service provided by the Broadcast Operations Group is diverse, contemporary and relevant.

## LOCAL ISSUES

The Broadcast Operations Group maintains the second largest regional news service in Australia. Two journalists are employed at Tamworth, two journalists at Lismore, two journalists on the far North Coast and five to six journalists in the Hunter Valley region. Other journalists are employed in other regional and rural stations. Such employment of a significant number of local journalists across the geographical spectrum provides substantial local news and current affairs and broadcast services in regional and rural New South Wales. Local government issues, state and federal political matters, and community service announcements all receive significant air time on regional services provided by the Broadcast Operations Group.

Attached to this submission are photographs showing the strong local community involvement of the AM and FM radio stations in Dubbo. This local involvement is mirrored in all Broadcast Operations Group licence broadcast areas.

The local news services provided by the Broadcast Operations Group are complimented by network metropolitan radio services which must in necessity be provided from a metropolitan city. For many years national news has been provided to regional Australia by a syndicated metropolitan radio service and absolutely nothing has changed it that regard in the last 10 years.

Each radio station has a local manager who is well known to the local emergency services, local government and local political and community interest groups. Such managers are readily contactable and will arrange for any necessary or emergency local broadcasts to be effected. Managers within the Broadcast Operations Group have regularly served as managers of the local radio stations for upwards of 20 to 50 years. They are well known local

community figures who are readily approachable and completely up-to-date with the local community needs and aspirations.

In summary, regional and rural radio services in the area covered by the Broadcast Operations Group provide a substantial and regular radio service which is undiminished by any recent conduct and in fact is both quantitatively and qualitatively a significantly better and more diverse radio broadcasting service.

## SOCIAL BENEFITS AND INFLUENCE

Radio services provided by the Broadcast Operations Group to regional Australia provide a necessary and unique service advantage when compared to other media sectors. Newspapers for example provide only immediate local coverage but delayed metropolitan coverage (local newspapers) or metropolitan coverage only (metropolitan and national newspapers). Radio is an immediate broadcaster in real time of both local and metropolitan issues and news.

Television does not compare to radio in that by virtue of its accessibility it is only viewable for a limited period each day and in circumstances where no other activities can be undertaken. Television is a more expensive broadcasting medium which of necessity must be networked and which thereby must contain little or no local coverage. Radio enables a proper combination of local and metropolitan coverage, in real time, accessible 24 hours a day and capable of being received whilst undertaking other activities (eg. driving or working).

Radio Broadcasting is significantly diverse and far reaching as it exists today when one considers privately owned radio stations, public, community and narrow casting services across the AM and FM spectrums cater for all the needs and desires of the regional and rural communities in New South Wales and South East Queensland.

## EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The Broadcast Operations Group provides many and diverse employment and career opportunities in regional and rural Australia.

The Broadcast Operations Group employs local members of the community in management positions and other administrative positions with ultimate opportunities in management of broadcasting businesses both in metropolitan Australia and nationally.

Administrative and accounting staff are employed locally by the Broadcast Operations Group, as are sales staff.

The Broadcast Operations Group leases sales premises and transmitting sites all of which creates business opportunities and thereby employment and career opportunities in regional Australia.

Journalists are employed locally, and with the journalism training and experience that such employees obtain in regional Australia, they are able to pursue further employment in both metropolitan and national media.

Engineering staff are employed from local communities, and future employment and career opportunities are pursued by such engineering staff by virtue of their original opportunities obtained in employment in regional radio. A Broadcast Operations Engineer, for example, has recently been nationally recognised as a leading Radio Engineer in Australia.

Illustratively, in the last five years the Broadcast Operations Group has built in regional Australia a large number of transmitter site towers which building activity has generated substantial employment in the local building and construction industries.

Future trends in regional radio broadcasting suggest no reason to think that this vast number of employment opportunities created by the Broadcast Operations Group in non-metropolitan Australia will not continue to rise.

## EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

The Broadcast Operations Group asserts that the effect on individuals, families and small businesses in non-metropolitan Australia of networking of some radio programs by the Broadcast Operations Group is beneficial.

Networking does not replace localism or local content. Broadcast Operations Group regional radio services continue to provide (in addition to network programming) local news services, sporting reports, community service announcements, political content and current affairs content by virtue of the large number of locally employed journalists and long serving station managers. This is on a regular and usual basis. Emergency and local issues of any immediate nature can always be broadcast due to the existence and immediate contactability of a long standing respected community figure, like the station manager.

Whilst local content has been preserved and improved by virtue of the Broadcast Operations Group business philosophy, the benefits of network radio programming have also been available to individuals, families and small businesses in regional Australia to enable such listeners to receive a diverse but balanced spectrum of services.

## NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Existing broadcasters such as the Broadcast Operations Group would continue to use new technologies to provide an enhanced radio service in regional and rural New South Wales, whilst at the same time maintain a radio service which preserves localism and local content. New technologies which continue to reduce the expense of broadcasting will continue to enable a more diverse range of radio broadcasting services to be provided. This diversity can not however occur at the expense of the existing radio broadcasting services as that will only result in the limiting or withdrawing of those existing high quality radio services.

This submission repeats and adopts the submissions made by the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters Limited in its submission to the inquiry insofar as they relate to new technologies.

The Broadcast Operations Group further submit that there should be:

- no regulation on content, as to do so would further disadvantage commercial radio broadcasters against their marketplace opposition and place further strains on their viability; and
- no additional licences in planned markets in recognition of economic viability considerations and to enable stations to sustain existing services.

## SUMMARY

The Broadcast Operations Group submits that within its broadcast area regional and rural New South Wales and South East Queensland is well served by an improved radio broadcasting service of a diverse nature which appeals to a large community demographic, and which satisfies the community demographic by a well balanced combination of local and network broadcasting services.



BREAKFAST MORNINGS AFTERNOON REHEARSAL  
See Leslie See de Rose Wake Lynch

ALL DAY EVERY DAY



THE ALL NEW

92.7 103.7

Dubbo City  
Toyota

6

GR





AUSTRALIAN OWNED  
AND OPERATED

20

NEWS, VIEWS  
& INTERVIEWS

20

GOING STRONG  
IN DUBBO  
FOR 65 YEARS

20

20

LOCAL  
23/11

BBQ CHICKENS



Shift your thinking.

**BREAKFAST**

**MORNINGS**

**AFTERNOON REQUESTS**

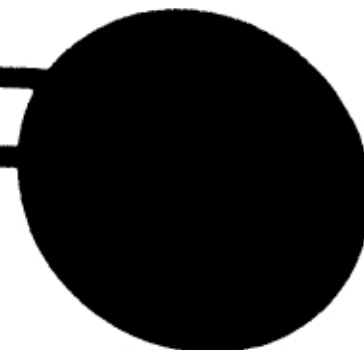
*LIVE WITH*

*WITH*



**AUSTRALIAN OWNED  
AND OPERATED**

**20**



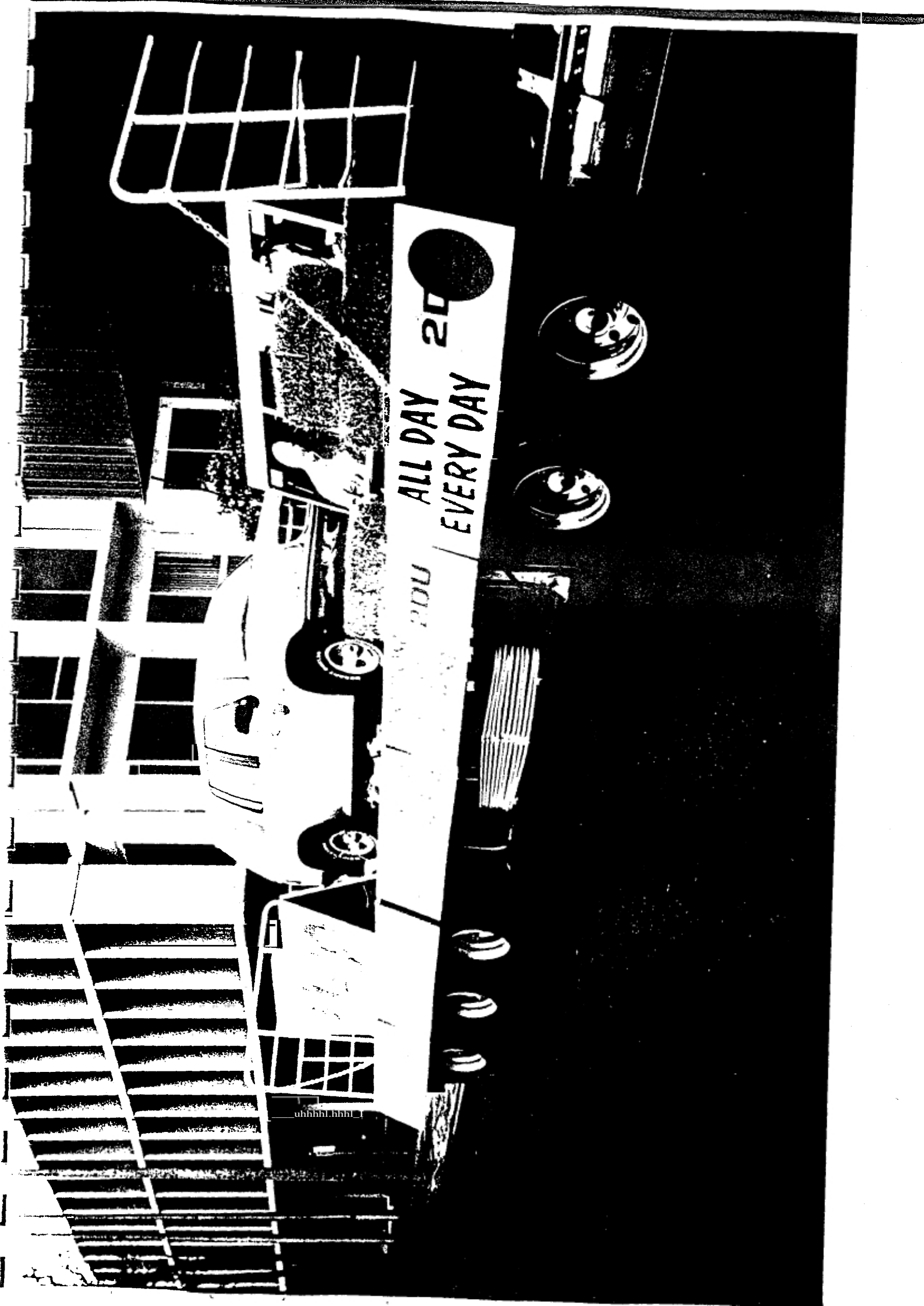


**TRALIAN OWNED  
D OPERATED**

**20**



**NEWS, VIEWS  
& INTERVIEWS**



ALL DAY 24 HOURS EVERY DAY

YOU

uhhhhl.hnhl\_l



NG

RS

20

20

LOCAL RADIO BY  
23 LOCAL PEOPLE

SI



AUSTRALIAN OWNED  
AND OPERATED

20



NEWS, VIEW  
& INTERVIEW