

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



"TRALEE"  
 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts  
 Submission No: 249  
 Date Received: 31/10/00  
 Secretary: [Signature]

**Country Women's Association of N.S.W.**

All Communications to be addressed to the "Secretary" NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Branch/Group \_\_\_\_\_

Inquiry into the Adequacy of Radio Services in Non-metropolitan Australia.  
 Comments from namoi group of CWA of NSW.

Our main concern is the effect on individuals, families & small businesses in non-metropolitan Australia of networks of Radio programming, particularly in relation to local news, sport, community service announcements such as road closures, flood warning, storm warning, bush fires & other forms of local content.

The local communities feel as though they have lost their radio station. Local content does not exist after 6pm week nights & after 12 noon Saturdays & none at all on Sundays. The majority of country people are not interested in city based radio programmes.

With networking there is no choice of programmes. In this area, of the 3 radio stations available 2 network with the same Sydney station & the other station available is ABC.

Our group covers a large area in North West NSW from Willon Tree to Bellata, just south of Moree & we have approx 500 members.

Hoping that these comments will be considered even though they will arrive after the closing date. We discussed this matter at our group conference on 24-10-00 & mail in my part of this area is only 3 times a week. So time & the very high fuel prices (1.33-1.40 per litre) have meant I have had to rely on our local mail man.

Many thanks  
 Elaine Kennedy

MONDAY JULY 31. 2000

**Country leader**

# Closure of radio stations hurt bush

The Minister must consider the community benefit provided by these stations when renewing licences, he must demand as a condition of consent that sufficient

staff be retained to provide emergency services when required.

The replacement of local radio by city based networks only serve as an example of the upheaval being felt by the people west of the range. While ever government subscribes to the meaningless theories that are being expounded by the economists, the drift to the cities will never be arrested.

Add the above to the jobs lost in the north-west over the past few years such as the amalgamation of the electricity suppliers (jobs exported to the coast), the virtual closing down of Telstra's maintenance depots (jobs exported to Newcastle from Tamworth), the refusal of the State Government to award the bus construction contract to a Tamworth company (jobs lost to western Sydney) on purely political grounds, as was widely reported at the time.

These examples are but a few of a long list of closures that have been visited upon us.

Where councils once worked to bring new industries to increase their population now they battle to hold the line.

have expressed disquiet after

discussing the withdrawal of radio stations from the "bush". They see it as further evidence the Government, despite their paying lip service to the reconstruction of country areas, is failing in its duties to the rural communities.

The takeover of country radio stations such as 2TM has wider ramifications than the loss of John Laws and country music. Combined with ABC Radio this network covered most of north-west NSW and has in the past

proven invaluable in times of fire and flood, providing a fast accurate means of getting information and volunteers to cover the emergency. While it may give us a warm feeling of contempt/pity for our city cousins to

hear there has been an accident on the M4 and the city is gridlocked, or that two hours of an inane coastal fishing program is finally finished, then, the cold feeling hits when we realise that but for a few hours in the morning, we are receiving relayed broadcasts from anywhere in Australia.

The question must be asked of these stations, will their personnel be available to relay severe storm warnings, flood heights and warnings (an invaluable service to landholders as far west as Wee Waa) and to call for volunteers to control bush-fires. Other services such as police notices of road closures due to ice, water and accidents will also be affected.

FM community radio will probably be expected to take up the slack, but it presently hasn't the coverage of AM stations.

One possible solution is to decentralise the ABC. Spreading its various components to existing stations in the country, this could be financed by the sale of its city assets. We see no difference in relaying a program to the city than the city relaying to the bush.