



# LOCAL GOVERNMENT and SHIRES ASSOCIATIONS of NSW

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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

The Committee Secretary  
House of Representative Communications Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission No: ..... 201 .....  
Date Received: ..... 20/11/00 .....  
Secretary: ..... Janet Holmes .....

## Radio Industry Inquiry

The Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW received your media release and circulated it to all NSW Councils on 6 October 2000 indicating the Terms and Reference of your Inquiry, and inviting material to assist the Associations to determine a position.

The following information has been received.

### 1. Tumut Shire Council

I understand that a submission dated 18 October 2000 has been prepared by Tumut Shire Council and forwarded to you.

The Associations endorse the submission.

Essentially, the hilly or mountainous terrain is an impediment to good quality services being conveyed from other locations into the smaller towns of Tumut Shire.

As a result of these problems Council has formed a Shire Communications Committee comprising of representatives from each of the towns to find a solution to either poor quality or of no signal for radio services, television or mobile phone coverage.

The Council area being so diverse, each town has a different problem in obtaining adequate and reliable radio services into each town and its rural area.

The specific problems with radio reception are as follows:-

- Adelong - Poor reception for ABC and commercial stations during the day.
- Batlow - No reception of AM Radio. FM is variable-Riverina ABC and 2WG from Wagga not received. Can get pop music station Star FM.

- Talbingo - Radio reception on the AM and FM band is not good.
- Tumut - Receives Riverina stations ABC, 2WG and Star FM and these are also conveyed by FM Translator in Tumut. Other stations are poor quality. However there is a marked improvement for nighttime reception.

Of course most communities use radio during the day and television services in the evening.

### **The Tumut Submission**

Council and the Communications Committee have considered the terms of reference and would make the following submission to the Radio Industry Inquiry.

1. That a programme be implemented similar to the "Black Spot Television Fund" Programme to overcome poor levels of radio communication in small towns particularly those located in the foothills of mountains areas as experienced within Tumut Shire.
2. It is objectionable that radio programmes are being pre-recorded from Sydney and other larger centres for distribution in rural areas of New South Wales which has the effect of removing local content for local communities.
3. That community radio be provided by subsidy to enable local content to be broadcast for emergency purposes such as fire, flood, rescue and road conditions and for social, cultural and sporting information.

The Associations would be pleased Tumut's submission is considered for its general input and that the inquiry also consider it for specific problems that relate to small communities, that are isolated due to terrain even though they are only two hours distant from the nations capital.

### **2. The Cooma – Monaro District**

The Associations received information from Mr Greg Roberts, Tourism Promotion Manager of the Cooma Visitors Centre.

The district is well covered by one commercial station. Radio National is as good as JJJ. In the Monaro area reception is quite poor, particularly in the car and home. In Cooma reception is good on AM but FM cannot be received. The FM signal must be weak as it varies considerably around the region.

The major concern is the poor reception for the local ABC station. This is a big problem as the local ABC is a major source of information to the wider group of the community, and a long term commitment is needed to improve transmission.



### 3. The Kempsey District

The Associations received information from Mr Mel Booth, Community Services Officer of Kempsey Shire Council on behalf of the Kempsey Shire Access Committee.

Kempsey is mainly concerned with the availability nationwide of the AM 1224 Sydney service. This service meets the needs of the disabled and should not be restricted to the Metropolitan areas. If this service was to be available nationwide it would meet the need of the disabled within Regional and Rural Australia.

The Associations would be pleased if attention could be given to this district's radio problems.

### 4. Rural and Regional Access To SBS Radio

At the Annual Conference of the Local Government Association held in Gosford from 11 November 2000 to 15 November 2000, delegates expressed concern at black spots which exist right across the state with emphasis on the multi lingual services offered by SBS radio, but which are often difficult to receive across the state.

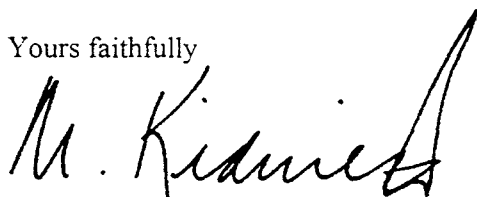
Unlike Sydney and the larger metropolitan areas, most rural and regional Local Government Areas cannot access SBS Radio. It would be desirable for the governments and local communities to work together to bring the 68 different language programs to isolated individuals and families for whom English is their second language. Some of the isolation experienced by many rural and regional ethnic communities could be alleviated by access to SBS Radio services that provide a most necessary language and cultural link.

SBS Radio has produced a guide to assist communities to gain access to the Federal Governments "Networking the Nation" subsidy. This allows a rebate of 50% of the costs spent on the necessary infrastructure. It is understood that Wagga Wagga City Council has applied for the Federal Government funding.

However, the great difficulty under this funding program is that many rural and remote councils cannot genuinely regard radio reception as a core activity, particularly as there is a significant local cost to matching and grant, even assuming that an application would be successful.

The Associations have received no further details about individual concerns of councils, but the Associations are confident that many areas suffer from inadequate radio communications.

Yours faithfully



Murray Kidne  
Secretary