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House Committee on Communications  
and the Arts

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts	
Submission No: .....	255
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Secretary: .....	Janet Townsille

Radio Industry Inquiry.

Please accept this late submission, I had been wrongly  
informed by our local news paper that a hearing was  
to be held at the mayoral reception room at 10am  
this morning.

Addressing your terms of reference is no problem.

① The ABC is the most important broadcaster in  
Australia. The ABC is, if it is fully funded and  
maintained - ~~was~~ one of the most important sources  
of information for the people of Australia.

In fact the ABC is essential for the maintenance  
of and efficacy of our system of government.

Unless the ABC is fully funded and maintained  
the people cannot be said to be making fully  
informed choices at elections.

At the moment I believe services being provided  
by the government is inadequate.

The ABC parliamentary news network as I understand it  
does not extend past Brisbane.

Recent parliamentary debates have been truncated

and contented to achieve illegitimate aims in my opinion. Issues such as native title have been blown out of all proportion by conservative elements and has been used to divide the community.

If the parliamentary news network was extended to towns like it will enable people, the people, to become better informed of parliamentary processes and debates.

At the moment, as a law student I believe the standard of information being given to the people leaves much to be desired.

I know that parliamentary debates are webcast at the moment, but this costs money to access.

The ABC is not at fault. It is the government where the blame lies.

In my opinion, having followed the digital and NTA sale debates - the analogue spectrum should be maintained and handed over to the public for public ~~proper~~ purposes.

I believe also that in addition to the services being provided by the abc at the moment a 24hr news service should begin. This would enable a more in depth analysis of legislative issues - debates and general ~~public information~~ political issues arising from these debates to be discussed.

The ABC including Triple J does do a marvellous job with the resources they have at the moment, but their role must be enhanced.

I am finishing this in a hurry whilst the committee is having a meeting. An issue has been

raised about stories being pulled in relation to the hearings of the committee itself.

I would like to point out the close commercial relationship between industry lobby groups and local media in MtOId particularly Townsville. The history of contentious issues being misrepresented by local media - has in my view - actually led to violence - eg - Hinchbrook - Nelly Bay. This highlights the importance of maintaining a fully funded national broadcaster and locally that broadcasts balanced information relating to these issues which ~~is~~ is not biased in favour of industry.

I regret that I haven't been able to do a detailed submission. But I only heard about the hearings this morning. I would also like to point out that the hearing for today was wrongly advertised as being 10am at the Mayor's Reception Room (Townsville).

This highlights to me that in relation to inquiries that there must be a one stop shop for all enquiries federal, state, and local. I suggest that it be laid that every single government inquiry happening in Australia should be on a central database. This could be done by placing a central like style - search engine could be placed at every council building. This simple apparatus would greatly enhance free access to the democratic process.

Malcolm  
2/2/2001