



Office of
Professor David Flint
Chairman

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

ABA File Ref: 200/0729

9 February, 2001

Hon. Paul Neville MP
Chairman
House Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts
RG.95 Parliament House
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Level 15 Darling Park
201 Sussex St
Sydney
PO Box Q500
Queen Victoria Building
NSW 1230
Phone (02) 9334 7700
Fax (02) 9334 7799
E-mail info@aba.gov.au
DX 13012 Market St Sydney

Dear Mr Neville,

INQUIRY INTO ADEQUACY OF RADIO SERVICES IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

The ABA is aware that public hearings have commenced and that the Committee is continuing its inquiries through February. At a recent discussion in the ABA, it was suggested that we provide additional material to the Committee to further assist you in the inquiry. In this regard, the following documents are enclosed:

1. A summary of the objectives and themes of the ABA research project into sources of news and current affairs;
2. A copy of a letter and program format survey to all commercial radio licensees; and
3. A copy of a letter to the Federation of Radio Broadcasters (FARB) regarding contingency planning for emergencies by commercial radio broadcasters.

You will note that the research project survey has a theme in Stage 2 that looks at regional coverage of news and current affairs. For the radio program format survey, we intend to have the results available for public release in early June.

The letter to FARB forms part of continuing discussions between the two organisations on this matter

I understand that at the conclusion of the hearings, the Committee will be in a position to meet with Members of the ABA to discuss the issues arising out of the hearings and possible ways of addressing them. I look forward to having this meeting and hope that we will be able to assist the Committee to formulate workable solutions.

*Yours sincerely,
David Flint*

David Flint



ABA RESEARCH PROJECT SOURCES OF NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

In June 2000, the Australian Broadcasting Authority commissioned Bond University's Centre for New Media Research and Education to conduct a study into sources of news and current affairs.

The project will cover media services that include free-to-air and pay TV, radio, metropolitan newspapers and the Internet.

The ABA's research is being conducted in two stages. The first stage aims to produce an industry perspective of news and current affairs production while the second stage will seek to establish community attitudes and the extent to which these are aligned to industry perspectives.

The objectives and themes (including on regional coverage in Stage 2) for the study are as follows:

Objectives

- To produce a 'map' of the Australian news and current affairs production industry in terms of its ownership, production and distribution;
- To determine which media services are considered by news producers and by the public to be the primary sources of news and current affairs;
- To gain an understanding of the process of Australian news and current affairs production from the perspective and practice of news producers as to what makes news;
- To compare the attitudes of news producers and the public on a range of selected social, economic and political current affairs issues;
- To establish a hierarchy of news and current affairs media in terms of frequency of use by various community sectors;
- To examine which media services are regarded as the most credible sources of news and current affairs;
- To canvass community attitudes about which news or current affairs content in different media services that are the most influential in shaping community views;
- To explore which media services may be used for different kinds of news or current affairs issues.

Themes for stage 1 - industry analysis

- Industry perspective of news and current affairs production
- Syndication arrangements
- Linkages and affiliations in terms of news and current affairs programs
- Ownership and control of the most significant news and current affairs providers

Themes for stage 2 - national survey on community views

- Time spent each day watching/reading/listening to news and current affairs
- Hierarchy of preferred news and current affairs services
- Use of Internet and pay TV as sources of news and current affairs
- Perceptions of influences on news producers
- Reasons for preferring specific services
- Perceived levels of credibility/accuracy in specific services
- Ranking of news and current affairs providers in terms of perceived influence
- Relative importance of news and current affairs in shaping attitudes
- Concerns about biased content, inaccurate material, intrusive reporting and sensationalised stories in news and current affairs
- Regional coverage of news and current affairs


**Australian
Broadcasting
Authority**

ABA File Ref: 2000/0865

9 February, 2001

«Stn_Name»
«Stn_Mail_Address_1»
«Stn_Mail_Address_2»
«Stn_City» «Stn_State» «Stn_Postcode»

Level 15 Darling Park
201 Sussex St
Sydney
PO Box Q500
Queen Victoria Building
NSW 1230
Phone (02) 9334 7700
Fax (02) 9334 7799
Email info@aba.gov.au
DX13012 Market St Sydney
www.aba.gov.au
ABN 16 097 897 479

Program Format Survey of Commercial Radio Licensees


You may recall that, in March 2000, the ABA requested program format information describing the types of programs broadcast by your station. In accordance with the primary functions of the ABA - of informing itself, among other matters, on service trends in the broadcasting industry and monitoring the operation of the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* - the ABA has decided to continue to conduct a program format survey on an annual basis.

Program format information is required for issues currently under consideration by Government and will assist in informing future Government decisions. For example, information outlining the amount and type of local content broadcast by regional commercial radio licensees would be useful for the Regional Radio Inquiry and, in the future, program information may assist in determining the effect of digitisation policies on the radio industry. Without data describing radio services as they stand now, it will not be possible to gauge the effect of policy changes on the industry or listeners.

The survey will begin with the 1999-2000 financial year and run for five years, when it will be reviewed. The ABA policy for the use of confidential data will apply to use of the survey data: the data will be used for statistical analysis and will not be released in any form that allows an individual licensee to be identified. However, the ABA does plan to publish the results at an aggregated level on an annual basis.

The attached survey form was developed in consultation with the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters and has been piloted with a number of commercial radio licensees. The survey form is designed to collect estimates of the broadcast hours by different program types in an average week. You may provide information derived from program records, or estimates based on your knowledge of your station's programming.

An electronic copy of the form may be downloaded from the ABA's website, www.aba.gov.au. (Click on search and select 'Forms' from the alphabetical listings.)



The survey form should be completed and returned to the ABA, marked to the attention of Ms Marion McCutcheon, by Friday 16 March 2001. If you complete an electronic form, it may be emailed to marion.mccutcheon@aba.gov.au.

If you have any questions regarding the form, or are having difficulty completing it, please contact Ms McCutcheon, either by phone (02 9334 7828) or via the above email address.

Yours sincerely

Phyllis Fong
Manager
Policy and Research

cc. David Bacon, FARB

ABA Form 56
(approved January 2001)

Australian Broadcasting Authority

**Program Format Survey of
Commercial Radio Licensees**

Introduction and instructions

The ABA requires information describing the different types of program material broadcast by commercial radio licensees. This survey is designed to collect the average number of hours broadcast by your station for each of a number of defined program categories.

Results of the survey will be reported in an aggregated form: information provided by individual licensees will be treated confidentially.

To complete the survey, you should estimate the number of hours devoted to different types of program material during an average week between 1 July 1999 and 30 June 2000, for each of a number of categories.

Definitions of each of these program categories and relevant sub-categories are provided throughout the questionnaire, and are based on definitions used by the *Commercial Radio Codes of Practice and Guidelines*, the ABA's *Commercial Radio Inquiry Final Report* and existing ABA research. Definitions have been further refined through discussions with FARB.

If your station does not keep program records in an easily accessible format, you may provide a rough estimate of the number of broadcast hours for each program category. You should indicate which estimation method you have used on page four of this form.

Hours broadcast for each program category should be split to identify in-house and syndicated or retransmitted material.

The estimated number of hours of each program category broadcast should include all incidental music breaks or associated announcements, but should exclude advertising. For example, time spent playing music played during a talkback program should be included in talkback programming. Advertising should be recorded separately in its own category.

Where no program in a specified category is usually broadcast by your station, please enter zero hours.

If your station broadcasts continuously, the total broadcast time for all program formats should equal 168 hours.

Supplying false or misleading information: The Criminal Code 1995 (section 136.1 and section 137.1) provides that persons giving false or misleading information or making false or misleading statements may be prosecuted.

1. Station information

Call sign	
Service licence number	SL
Usual or common name	
Network affiliation (if any)	
Description of format	
Region/service area	
Contact for survey	Name:
	Phone:
Address, if changed	

2. Program format information

Data required

The following information is required for each program category broadcast by your station between 1 July 1999 and 30 June 2000:

- Average weekly hours produced in-house;
- Average weekly hours of syndicated/retransmitted/relayed material; and
- Sources of syndicated/retransmitted/relayed material.

The definition of each of these terms is provided in the box below. Elsewhere in the form, where a program category is not self-explanatory, its definition is provided below each category collection table.

<i>Produced in-house</i>	Broadcast material created, usually locally, by your station.
<i>Syndicated/ retransmitted/ relayed</i>	Broadcast material created by another station or other program providers and is either directly broadcast or re-packaged.
<i>Source of syndicated programming</i>	Name of the organisation doing initial recording and compilation of broadcast material.

Unit of measurement

You may provide the broadcast time for each program category either in hours and minutes per week, or as a percentage of total weekly broadcast time.

Please indicate which unit of measurement you have used:

- hours and minutes, totalling 168 hours per week
- percentage of total broadcast time, totalling 100 per cent

Estimation method

You may provide program information derived from program records, or estimates based on your knowledge of your station's programming

Please indicate which estimation method you have used:

- calculation based on your station's program records
- estimation based on knowledge of your station's program formats

a. News and current affairs

<i>Category</i>	<i>Produced in-house (hrs:mins/ per cent)</i>	<i>Syndicated/ retransmitted/ relayed (hrs:mins/ per cent)</i>	<i>Source of syndicated etc programming</i>
News			
Current affairs			
Reports and features			
Talkback			
Other (specify)			
•			
•			
•			
Total: news and current affairs			

Current affairs	A program where: (a) the sole or dominant purpose is to provide analysis, commentary or discussion on social, economic or political issues of current relevance to the general community; and (b) the program is hosted by one or more presenters. Excludes talkback.
News	Mostly covers news bulletins. Includes sports news, financial and/or weather reports broadcast at the end of bulletins.
Reports and features	Includes traffic, snow, surf, beach, weather reports (not in news bulletins), reports and reports containing local, rural or farming information. Also includes community announcements and information about emergencies.
Talkback	Generally consists of a mix of telephone calls from listeners, pre-arranged interviews (often with politicians, commentators and others involved directly in issues of current interest), editorials, commentary, and incidental music. Excludes 'personality-based talkback', which is listed on p9.

b. Sport

<i>Category</i>	<i>Produced in-house (hrs:mins/ per cent)</i>	<i>Syndicated/ retransmitted/ relayed (hrs:mins/ per cent)</i>	<i>Source of syndicated etc programming</i>
Live or delayed events/games	:	:	
Sports commentary/ discussion/ interview programs	:	:	
Talkback	:	:	
Other (specify)	:	:	
•	:	:	
•	:	:	
•	:	:	
Total: sport	:	:	

Talkback	Generally consists of a mix of telephone calls from listeners, pre-arranged interviews (often with sports commentators or sports celebrities), editorials, commentary, and incidental music. Excludes 'personality-based talkback', which is listed on p9.
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c. Infotainment, information and personal advice

<i>Category</i>	<i>Produced in-house (hrs:mins/ per cent)</i>	<i>Syndicated/ retransmitted/ relayed (hrs:mins/ per cent)</i>	<i>Source of syndicated etc programming</i>
Finance, property & legal	:	:	
Health & medical	:	:	
Religious & spiritual	:	:	
Arts & entertainment	:	:	
Sport & hobbies	:	:	
Other (specify)			
•	:	:	
•	:	:	
•	:	:	
Total: infotainment, information and personal advice	:	:	

Information and personal advice	A program designed to inform listeners about a range of topics. Includes programs where the community can phone presenters to ask questions and obtain advice.
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d. Music

Category	Produced in-house (hrs:mins/ per cent)	Syndicated/ retransmitted/ relayed (hrs:mins/ per cent)	Source of syndicated etc programming
New Australian music	:	:	
Other Australian music	:	:	
Other music	:	:	
Announcements around tracks	:	:	
Total: music	:	:	

Which music category best describes your station?

- A Mainstream rock, album oriented rock, contemporary rock, top 40, alternative
- B Hot/mainstream adult contemporary, country, classic rock
- C Soft adult contemporary, country, classic rock
- D Oldies, easy listening, easy gold, country gold
- E Nostalgia, jazz, NAC

New Australian music	New Australian music means a sound recording of a previously unpublished performance of a musical item performed by an Australian which has been on sale to the Australian public for a period not exceeding 12 months from the date which is recorded in <i>The Aria Report</i> as the date of its initial release in Australia.
Music category A	Mainstream rock, album oriented rock, contemporary rock, top 40, alternative.
Music category B	Hot/mainstream adult contemporary, country, classic rock.
Music category C	Soft adult contemporary, country, classic rock.
Music category D	Oldies, easy listening, easy gold, country gold.
Music category E	Nostalgia, jazz, NAC.
Announcements around tracks	If announcements around tracks (back announcements) cannot be separated, please allocate proportionally to different music categories).

d. Music

Category	Produced in-house (hrs:mins/ per cent)	Syndicated/ retransmitted/ relayed (hrs:mins/ per cent)	Source of syndicated etc programming
New Australian music	:	:	
Other Australian music	:	:	
Other music	:	:	
Announcements around tracks	:	:	
Total: music	:	:	

Which music category best describes your station?

- A Mainstream rock, album oriented rock, contemporary rock, top 40, alternative
- B Hot/mainstream adult contemporary, country, classic rock
- C Soft adult contemporary, country, classic rock
- D Oldies, easy listening, easy gold, country gold
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New Australian music	New Australian music means a sound recording of a previously unpublished performance of a musical item performed by an Australian which has been on sale to the Australian public for a period not exceeding 12 months from the date which is recorded in <i>The Aria Report</i> as the date of its initial release in Australia.
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Music category B	Hot/mainstream adult contemporary, country, classic rock.
Music category C	Soft adult contemporary, country, classic rock.
Music category D	Oldies, easy listening, easy gold, country gold.
Music category E	Nostalgia, jazz, NAC.
Announcements around tracks	If announcements around tracks (back announcements) cannot be separated, please allocate proportionally to different music categories).

e. Hybrid programs

<i>Category</i>	<i>Produced in-house (hrs:mins/ per cent)</i>	<i>Syndicated/ retransmitted/ relayed (hrs:mins/ per cent)</i>	<i>Source of syndicated etc programming</i>
Personality-based talkback	:	:	
Breakfast-style hybrid programs	:	:	
Other (specify)	:	:	
•	:	:	
•	:	:	
Total: hybrid programs.	:	:	

Hybrid programs	Programs which combine a number of different program features, including music, interviews, talkback, competitions, etc. For example, breakfast style programs, music programs with extensive audience participation.
Personality-based talkback	Generally consists of a mix of telephone calls from listeners, pre-arranged interviews (often with politicians, commentators and others involved directly in issues of current interest), editorials, commentary, and incidental music. Personality-based talkback usually features a well-known or celebrity host.

f. Advertising

Category	Produced in-house (hrs:mins/ per cent)	Syndicated/ retransmitted/ relayed (hrs:mins/ per cent)	Source of syndicated etc programming
Short-form advertisements	:	:	
Infomercials/advertorials (not included elsewhere)	:	:	
Station promotions	:	:	
Sales promotions	:	:	
Classifieds	:	:	
Other (specify)			
•	:	:	
•	:	:	
Total: advertising	:	:	

Advertisements	Material designed or calculated to draw public attention to a product or service to promote its use.
Short-form advertisements	Advertisements usually 20 seconds to 2 minutes in length and broadcast in a cluster.
Infomercials/ advertorials	Longer advertisements, consisting an entire program segment, rather than 30 secs or 1 min.
Station promotions	Call sign announcements and other material serving as an advertisement for your station.
Sales promotions	Other, often innovative, forms of advertising.
Classifieds	Buy/sell/swap.

g. Other programs

Please specify other program categories in detail.

Category	Produced in-house (hrs:mins/ per cent)	Syndicated/ retransmitted/ relayed (hrs:mins/ per cent)	Source of syndicated etc programming
	:	:	
	:	:	
	:	:	
	:	:	
	:	:	
Total: other	:	:	

h. Total programming

Check total weekly broadcast time for all categories equals 168 hours (if your station broadcasts continuously) or less (if your station does not broadcast continuously).

Produced in-house (hrs:mins/ per cent)	Syndicated/ retransmitted/relayed (hrs:mins/ per cent)	Total (hrs:mins/ per cent)
:	:	:

Please provide an estimate of the time taken to complete this form. Include:

- the time actually spent reading the instructions, working on the question and obtaining the information
- the time spent by all employees in collecting and providing this information

hours minutes



Office of
Professor David Flint
Chairman

Australian
Broadcasting
Authority

16 January, 2001

Mr David Bacon
Chief Executive Officer
FARB
PO BOX 299
ST LEONARDS NSW 2065

Level 15 Darling Park
201 Sussex St
Sydney
PO Box Q500
Queen Victoria Building
NSW 1230
Phone (02) 9334 7700
Fax (02) 9334 7799
E-mail info@aba.gov.au
DX 13012 Market St Sydney

Dear David,

CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES BY COMMERCIAL RADIO BROADCASTERS

Thank you for your letter of 30 November 2000. It was useful to learn of the way in which stations such as 2TM and 2TTT and the station manager Bill Morrison dealt with the recent emergency in rural New South Wales. I tabled your letter at the Policy and Content Regulation Committee meeting of 14 December 2000. The Committee was particularly interested to know of the contents as well as the results of FARB's questionnaire to your members on their contingency arrangements in the event of emergencies.

While it is apparent from the information you provided that individual stations have implemented their own procedures, the ABA is concerned that there are no agreed minimum standards in place to assist commercial radio broadcasters to deal with broadcasting services in times of emergency or disaster recovery. It would be useful to build on your members experiences in order to identify those minimum standards.

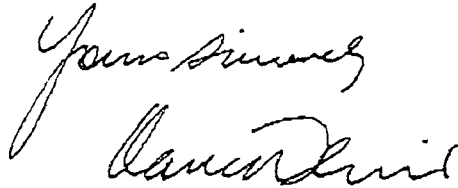
The ABA accepts FARB's view that its member stations are situated in a variety of climactic conditions and geographic locations and are therefore subject to various types of emergencies and natural disasters. However, the ABA does not believe that this makes it impractical to develop a template for contingency planning across the board. Having a template would provide all commercial radio broadcasters with clear guidelines on the minimum standards expected of them in responding to emergencies, thus establishing "industry best practice" in this regard.

I note recent reports in the print media regarding the storm which devastated Dubbo on 6 January. These reports indicated that the response of local media outlets, including commercial radio stations, to broadcasting warning signals issued by the Bureau of Meteorology was far from uniform.

The ABA considers it appropriate that the matter be addressed by implementing a Code of Practice and associated guidelines. It is not expected that these should be prescriptive, but rather that they consolidate the existing procedures and experience of member stations into a codified minimum standard. The ABA is of the view that the following minimum requirements should be addressed in this Code and the guidelines:

1. Ensuring the contact details for the relevant State Emergency Service contact person in the area are known to the Broadcaster and all relevant staff at all times; and
2. ensuring that each commercial radio station broadcasts any emergency service announcements when necessary; and
3. providing contact details of the relevant staff on duty who can interrupt radio services (particularly pre-recorded services) to broadcast such announcements.

Given the seriousness of this issue, the ABA considers it important that this matter be dealt with expeditiously. I understand that FARB is currently addressing certain Code related matters with a view to finalising by mid- 2001 the review of FARB's Codes of Practice that commenced in 1998. This being the case, it would be timely to develop a Code for commercial radio broadcasters in respect of emergency services and to submit this Code, along with the others, for registration by the ABA in 2001.



David Flint