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The Secretary  
House Communications Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA, A.C.T. 2600

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts	
Submission No:	82
Date Received:	23.10.00
Secretary:	Janet Holmes

Dear Sir/Madam,

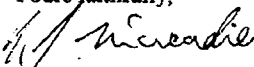
I write to you with regard to the adequacy of Radio services in Tasmania.  
Radio stations networking and small stations being bought by large national stations have led to several problems in Tasmania.  
There are four main areas of concern:

1. Less employment in radio media because, quite simply, with national ownership and networking becoming the norm, fewer people are required for both on and off air positions.  
This has a devastating effect in a small State, essentially a country or regional area, like Tasmania, on young people trying to gain a foothold in a radio media career.
2. The cost of advertising for small business is increasing because radio stations are owned by an increasingly smaller number of companies who can, because of their power, control pricing.
3. More concentrated ownership has also led to greatly diminished local news and sport and non existent community service announcements. Community and some specific regional stations have attempted to plug this gap but are simply unable to do so because of a lack of equipment powerful enough to transmit further than a very localized area.
4. Radio reaches more of the populace during weekdays until 5.30 or 6pm than any other form of media. At every workplace and in every motor vehicle a radio is operating. Radio is the first means people hear of local warnings. e.g. State Emergency Service information, violent weather, bush fires, Police and accident emergencies. The National stations and those networking, are unable to advise people of these warnings because they do not have sufficient staff manning the station.

To illustrate these problems let us look at the following information.  
In Tasmania nine out of eleven commercial stations are owned by the RG Capital Radio Network. (How the ACCC allowed that to happen, I can't imagine.)  
In southern Tasmania, station TTT has no local news after midday, it is broadcast from the Gold Coast. From 6pm until 7pm the "Retro" show and from 7pm until midnight the "Fat 30" show are both broadcast from the Gold Coast.  
Recently the TTT breakfast "team" consisting of one male and one female announcer were on leave and the spot was not filled by local people but by a broadcast from the Gold Coast. As with the evening shows there was no mention of local events and I may state here, that the main topic of sport, particularly during the "Fat 30", show is of rugby league, a very minor sport in Tasmania.  
In Northern Tasmania, all shows on stations, 7AD Devonport, 7SD Scottsdale, 7BU Burnie, 7LA Launceston and SEA FM Devonport are broadcast from either Launceston or the Gold Coast. I.E. With the exception of some shows for Launceston, nothing is local.

It is easy to see how one network can control the people's access to news, sport, employment and fairly priced advertising when it owns nine out of eleven commercial stations in a small state like Tasmania.

I believe that The House of Representatives Communications Committee Inquiry will establish that the people of Tasmania, (and I have no doubt, other regional areas) have suffered loss of employment and local services as a result of networking and of large companies seeking to gain as much profit as possible whilst paying only the most basic attention to the people's needs.  
Further, I fervently hope The House of Representatives will, as a result of the Committee's findings make the required legislative changes to reverse the effect of the inadequacies inherent in the current Radio Broadcasting system, thus ensuring they will not be a problem in the future.

Yours faithfully,  
  
R. J. McCreadie