



**SUBMISSION TO SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT
& COMMUNICATIONS
INQUIRY INTO THE BROADCASTING SERVICES AMENDMENT
(MATERIAL OF LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE) BILL 2013
PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA**

This submission responds to a Private Bill of Senator Nick Xenaphon who represents South Australia in the Senate and who has sought to have the *Broadcasting Services Amendment (Material of Local Significance) Bill 2013* considered by the Senate Standing Committee on Environment & Communications. In particular, Senator Xenaphon has sought to have Section 43A(2) Added to include Regional South Australia. Our submission responds to this amendment only.

While the Amendment sought is to add Regional South Australia to the Bill, WIN is the Solus licensee of the Mount Gambier/South East TV1 and Riverland TV1 License Areas in regional South Australia and our submission addresses those two Solus license areas.

We respectfully ask the Committee to reject the amendment.

The WIN Network is the Licensee of commercial television free to air broadcast licenses throughout Australia with a potential audience of over 9 million viewers broadcasting to Southern NSW; Regional Victoria; Tasmania; Mildura; Regional Queensland; Perth and Regional Western Australia and Adelaide Mount Gambier and Riverland South Australia.

WIN is committed to regional news and understands the importance of local news to our dedicated viewers. WIN delivers some 25 local news bulletins across Australia each weekday delivering a half hour of local news, sport and weather. No other broadcaster knows news like us, our commitment is unequalled.

The License conditions imposed on the Aggregated Market licensees from February 2004, took into account license area features such as population, revenue, profitability and service delivery considerations. The WIN Regional South Australia licenses are Solus markets and on population alone do not meet the population average within each of the Aggregated markets, that average being 278,281 people per 'local area'. Mt Gambier/Limestone Coast has a population of approx 86,000 people, The Riverland has a population of approx 38,100 people, a combined population of approx 124,100 people. Neither license meets the test applied at the time the local licence conditions were imposed on regional broadcasters, nor do they now separately or combined.

In terms of revenue, in this financial year to date 17 (14 WIN clients) local businesses have closed in Mt Gambier and 19 (13 WIN clients) in the Riverland. In the same period a total of 76 clients have cut back their advertising spend.

WIN NETWORK

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WIN acquired the Mt Gambier and Riverland licenses from the Scott Family of Mt Gambier in August 1999. The licenses were Solus licenses broadcasting an analogue commercial television service each. On 15 December 2010 the analog services were switched off and replaced with digital services, for Mt Gambier and Loxton WIN added the TEN Network State Service and the Seven Network State service multiplexed into one transport stream and transmitted on one channel. At approximately the same time, the federal government decided that the license areas would receive the terrestrial multichannels throughout the license areas, this decision meant that the licensee (WIN) was required to install 2 additional digital transmitters at each transmission site to deliver the three network digital multichannels. (GO, GEM, 7TWO, 7MATE, ELEVEN and ONE) The government and the broadcasters agreed to fund the additional transmitters and operating costs up to 31 December 2013 50% of all costs each. At the end of 2013, the broadcasters would take over the full costs of the additional services. WIN completed the roll out of the additional digital channels for Mt Gambier/South East transmission sites on 10 November 2011 and completed the Riverland on 20 March 2012. This exercise was designed to give Mt Gambier and the Riverland the same digital services that their metropolitan counterparts received. With a combined population of approx.. 124,100 and the choice of viewing 9 commercial free-to-air channels and ABC and SBS national free to air networks (provided by WIN), there are not enough viewers to support a dedicated local news service, nor enough news. WIN was faced with the reality of spending an immense amount to produce a news bulletin for an audience of 3-4 thousand viewers.

The slowing local economy, the loss of people living in the license areas and the increased cost of delivering 9 commercial free to air channels coupled with the increasing difficulty of sourcing enough local news to fill a half hour local news bulletin week days, compelled WIN to consider its delivery of local services.

The license areas now receive WIN's Channel 9 South Australia State News Service, Seven Network South Australia State news service and TEN Network South Australia State news service. Breaking news stories within the license area are broadcast within the Channel 9 State news Service which includes the State Weather service.

WIN supports and sponsors local organisations with cash and airtime. They are:-

Mount Gambier/South East TV1:

Austimber; S.E. Road Safety; S.E. Country Music; Taste the Limestone Coast; S.E. Field Days; Naracoorte Business & Tourism; Mt Gambier Golf Club; S.E. Drag Racing; Millicent Racing Club; Penola Racing Club; Mt Gambier Racing Club; Coonawarra Vignerons; AC Care; Boral Blue Lake Fun Run; Australia Day Breakfast; Mt Gambier Show; Millicent Show; Pines Enduro; Bayside Festival; Coonawarra Arts Festival; East Gambier Rodeo; Border Show; Rotary Bowel Scan; New Year Eve Festival; Legend of the Lakes; WIN Biggest Golf Day (breast cancer); Generations in Jazz; Harness Racing SA; St Vincent De Paul; Mt Gambier Pioneers; North Gambier Football Club; South Gambier Football Club; West Gambier Football Club; Mt Gambier Christmas Parade.

Riverland TV1

Riverland Football League; Riverland Field Day; Riverland Apprentice of the Year; Riverland Businesswoman of the Year; Renmark Rose Festival; Riverland Country Music Festival; Renmark Time machine New Year Eve; Foodbank; Big River Nationals; Barmera Main Street Markets; Swan Reach Music Festival; Rotary Club Elderly Health; Karoonda Farm Fair; Riverland Speedway; Waikeri Australia Day Celebrations; Bruno Bay Australia Day Celebrations; Berri Speedboat Spectacular Riverland Motor Sport Club; Riverland Historical Society Hit N Miss Rally; Riverland Sheep Dog Trials; Riverstock Monorail Club; Waikeri Santa's Cave; Renmark Riverland Balloon Festival; Riverland Dinghy Derby; Renmark Xmas Pageant; Barmera Xmas Pageant; Pinaroo Spud

Festival; Loxton Mardi Gras; Little Town Play; Loxton Show; Loxton Business Group; Business Riverland; Berri Lions Club Riverland Calendar; Riverland Special School.

The current License Conditions imposed on regional broadcasters to broadcast material of local significance as previously stated does not apply to regional South Australia licensees. WIN has delivered the free to air multi channels to its license areas in regional South Australia providing delivered to the communities the same choice as their metropolitan counterparts, the removal of the half hour news service which could not be sustained commercially has not removed local news but has delivered breaking local news stories within the State based Channel 9 news service which includes federal, state and local government news relevant to the license areas. The local business community has access to advertise their services as they always have had and the local charities, sporting groups and community groups still receive our support and promotion at our cost.

It will be necessary for us to continue to monitor our business and where necessary make the changes essential to ensure that we can continue to provide the viewing services that the community needs.

WIN Network Pty Ltd
5 April 2013