



## NEW INQUIRY

# Tuning in to community broadcasting

Ways to support a vibrant and diverse network of community broadcasters is the subject of a new inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. The Committee will examine the role that community broadcasting has in Australian communities, and the role of the Australian Government in supporting community broadcasting enterprises.

Since Australia's first community radio station was established nearly 35 years, community broadcasting has grown to 460 independent community owned and operated broadcasting services. These include radio and television stations and remote Indigenous services. New technologies, including the internet and digital satellite services, provide opportunities for community broadcasters to expand and diversify but these changes also bring challenges.

The Committee Chair, the Hon Jackie Kelly MP, said "Community broadcasting plays a vital role for many Australians, uniting them through a common interest or a geographical location. It provides an avenue for many voices, including grassroots interest groups, ethnic, indigenous, and religious communities".

"Community broadcasting is also predominantly volunteer-based, providing valuable social connections and links into a social group. The Committee will be examining the role of community broadcasting across different communities and how the Australian Government can best support the independence and diversity of broadcasters" Mrs Kelly added.

Referred by Senator the Hon Helen Coonan, the Australian Government Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, the Committee has been asked to inquire into and report on:

- The scope and role of Australian community broadcasting across radio, television, the internet and other broadcasting technologies;
- Content and programming requirements that reflect the character of Australia and its cultural diversity;
- Technological opportunities, including digital, to expand community broadcasting networks; and
- Opportunities and threats to achieving a diverse and robust network of community broadcasters.

Interested persons and organisations are invited to make written submissions to the inquiry by **17 March 2006**, after which the committee will hold public hearings around Australia.

Further details on the inquiry, including the terms of reference, membership of the Committee and advice on making submissions can be obtained on the Committee's website at [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cita](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/cita) or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4601 or emailing [cita.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:cita.reps@aph.gov.au).

**For media comment**, please contact Emily Tinson (Jackie Kelly's adviser) on (02) 4732 2844

**For background information**, please contact the Committee Secretary, on (02) 6277 4601