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**Submission to the Australian House Of Representatives
House Standing Committee on Communications,
Information, Technology and the Arts**

Qualifications:

- **Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award.**
- **Voluntarily recording spoken books for the blind through the NSW Royal Blind Society.**
- **Broadcasting about 1600 hours live on air, voluntarily, on local community radio without production, secretarial or engineering support. This occurred between 1999 and 2004.**
- **Until 2003 I weekly broadcast two three hour long programmes of Australian Folkmusic - BIFCOA (see appendix A. "I am Folkmusic") on Wyong Gosford Progressive Community Radio (PCR FM).**
- **From 2003 and largely in an effort to protect the position of PCR FM in its application for full-time licensing, I took up the role of the weekday morning broadcaster presenting a three hour programme relevant to the whole of the Central Coast's citizenry. That programme primarily brought local organisations and government departments to the people and introduced the people to the organisations and their public servants. It was also used as a showcase for Folkmusic.**
- **About 100 to 150 hours voluntarily organising, planning, promoting, preparing applications, attending committee meetings and fighting inappropriate Australian Broadcasting Authority, ABA, decisions between June 2002 and today.**
- **A lifetime of being inculcated with traditional heritage values, firstly in Great Britain and then in a country which largely devalues and refuses to recognise, preserve or**

inculcate the heritage values of all citizens (see appendix A. "I am Folkmusic", appendix B. "Fellow Folkies" and appendix C. "BIFCOA Hello World 12 March 2004" on submission #4).

Preamble: The House Standing Committee terms of reference that will be addressed in the submission are -

A. "threats to achieving a diverse and robust network of community broadcasters".

B. "the scope and roll of Australian community broadcasting across radio".

C. "content and programming requirements reflecting Australian character and cultural diversity"

Submission #6: The following was most unusually published in a local newspaper -

The Central Coast xxxxxxxxxxxx 10 November 2005

Decent role models needed

Would we have fewer problems in society if more citizens had grown-up being exposed to worthwhile role models? In recent decades we have been exposed to political leaders disregarding truth and breaking promises, parliamentary behaviour that now includes rude gesticulations, assaulting a government minister, intoxication in the house, molestation of a female Member, rorting of allowances, and more. On the sporting scene drug taking, cheating, bad language and spitting are today's common rules. In religion, it's kill the non-believer, enslave the weak, bugar the altar boy and be avaricious.

Sadly when people don't know any better they copy the behaviour of their supposed leaders whether they are government members, politicians, sports players, avaricious preachers, paedophile protectors, divisive media announcers, corrupt businessmen, inferior teachers, fraudsters or spin doctors peddling propaganda. Also by copying other countries, there has been an overwhelming failure to promulgate human rights, humility, selflessness, tolerance, community harmony, freedom from tyranny and honesty in deed and word. I suggest prolonged exposure to humanism and many worthwhile role models may help result in a better future. **Xxxx Xxx, Woy Woy**

The above letter published at the time of countrywide publishing fervour against impending government legislation to curb free speech is interesting not only in respect of the prima facie reason for publication but also for its viewpoints presumably shared by the editorial staff who allowed it and the subsequent absence of readers letters opposing the viewpoints. In over twenty-five years of living on the Central Coast I have never previously read such openly expressed honesty of viewpoint.

It is little wonder therefore that local community radio is hidebound with the same problem of narrowness of viewpoint previously displayed by a local press pandering to limited interests. The exponents of community radio have largely only been lead by the quality of commercial radio and local newsprint. Equally the quality of the ABC, although usually better than commercial operators, is frequently inferior to that of the national broadcasters of many countries. The pathetic starving of the national broadcaster through the application of crude economic rules of monetary profitability identifies a lack of pride in the national flagship, a subservient acquiescence to large commercial interests who are not prepared to work for the good of Australia but are simply out to feather the nests of their, often foreign, shareholders. Is this behaviour creating an appropriate role model for Australians and enabling democracy through genuine freedom of speech?

Similarly as mentioned in the letter above, the parliamentary representatives are most frequently chosen by a limited number of party faithful in local committees. Such candidates are also frequently selected for their compliance with the party line. In other words they frequently represent the party not the electorate. Can it be honestly stated that they are genuinely democratically elected? What quality of role models does this give society other than the blind leading the blind?

Free to air local community radio should enable local communities not only to be exposed to worthwhile role

models but also enable exposure to minorities and therefore, removal of some of the “fear of the unknown syndrome” and the divisive “hate propaganda” so evident in the events leading to the recent disturbances. The continuing denial by many with regard to the causes is not a surprise to most migrants who have experienced covert & overt “new chum” discrimination and sledging. Did the Australian cricketers learn the so called sledging from role models, their elders, or was it that the people learned from the cricketers?

Similarly with the incipient advent of 'flu pandemics I ask why the Health Department has not been campaigning against the evils of sportsmen spitting on the playing field? Particularly when it is recorded and broadcast on television to set the precedent for all to follow suit. I remember, when a child, that spitting was illegal and widely advertised because it was the main vehicle spreading TB. Has that situation changed? Has TB been eradicated? Ill educated sportsmen who put their colleagues in danger by spitting will not change through self regulation, like most of us, they are largely blind to their particular fault. Decent local community radio stations can rapidly and effectively change communities' attitudes to such anti-social habits at virtually no cost. In fact I ask why, unless it is rank cronyism, is some of the \$millions spent with so called free enterprise to promote government policy to the people not equally spent to buy time on the ABC and community radios? It sounds more honest and less susceptible to corruption, will achieve the same purpose and, provide additional revenue to these non commercial broadcasters. It rewards the people helping community by returning to them some of the taxes rather than lining the pockets of commercial shareholders and cronies. There are also advantages of using locally based 'front line' public servants rather than professional advertising bureaux to represent government initiatives with actors. I found that listeners would rather hear and be more inclined to properly listen to an informative ten minute conversation with the local

council's sewage treatment plant manager on septic tank pump-out pricing changes than a forty second ego trip by the councilor and chairman of the water & sewage talkfest that had promulgated the policy change on the manager's advice. I suggest that the reason for this is the cynicism that the public generally has for all politicians and representatives. Cynicism created by poor role models.

In conclusion I wish to say that in some respects Australia has and has had some superb role models who have not been identified until too late or identified but not properly exposed because of petty political, ethnic or religious bickering.

To conclude I wish to share with you (see attachment A below signature) a "postcard" that I wrote to my fellow club members after attending the 21st Annual Illawarra Folkfestival. I was moved to write about the experience because as you will read, the festival was with very small exceptions, a role model of harmonious societal behaviour. It was a credit to the organisers, performers and the people attending.

I wish to place on record my thanks to all those citizens who have directly and indirectly contributed to the submissions, to the CITA committee office staff for their courteous, prompt and appropriate assistance including Hansard preparation and lastly to the CITA Committee for taking on board my many suggestions and concerns expressed in submissions #1 to #6.

Yours faithfully,

Richard J. Newby

Attachment A

To: Fellow Troubadourians, Woy Woy

'Postcard' from the 21st Illawarra Folk Festival

Sitting on the "Chapel" veranda in the Grevillia Park at Bulli, a man's thoughts have room and freedom to roam to the blue ocean horizon and beyond. The chapel and beautiful gardens also overlook the Bulli showground, new home for the 21st Illawarra Folk Festival. Like the view, the

festival and its future can extend without restriction. Festival director Dave de Santi, Russell Hannah and the rest of the hard-working committee have created a festival that has now reached the traditional coming of age in fine fettle.

The venues:

Nine are situated in the Bulli Showground. The largest is the 600 seat circus tent, the “Big Top”. Next in size is the 400 seat “Betting Ring”, the 150 seat “Show Pavilion” and the 100 seat “Grandstand Bar”. The “Grandstand Restaurant”, “Greyhound Kennels”, “Horse Stables”, “Grevillia Park” and “Chapel” together with a “Pavilion Tent” on the “Village Green” complete the on-ground venues. External venues included the Woonona Bulli Memorial RSL (not visited), the Bowling Club (excellent friendly service and reasonably priced great buffet meals) and the delightful Bulli Heritage Hotel.

Camping was fine and unmuddy even though there had been heavy rain the day before. The associated facilities, as usually occurs at all festivals, had morning rush-hour jams. A unique feature of the festival was a Friday night greyhound racing meet. Once it was over another 5000 could have easily camped on the central Oval.

The Action Started with:

The Thursday night opening concert held in the Betting Ring, the stage uniquely backdropped with rusty corrugated iron. Among the opening artists that I saw (I was late) were Christina Giorgio Band, Junior, Nick Charles, the Sydney Cove Project, Collector and The Rhythm Hunters who must have had a busy day scurrying down from the Woy Woy Australia Day facilities.

Unfortunately, as is usually the case at most good festival's, too much occurred to see every performance that I wanted to.

Highlights included:

- the Black Diamond theme concert,

- Christina Giorgio's beautiful singing of her band's songs and music,
- The Rhythm Hunters, but I still ask the question "why is this group called the "Rhythm Hunters"? They have superb rhythm at their fingertips & don't need to hunt for rhythm.",
- Cantolibre happily impatient to perform their South American music. Sonia bursting with just pride to tell everyone that Chile now has its first woman president & hope, after the inhumanity of Pinochet's US backed regime,
- Allez-Gator continuing to expose audiences to properly performed Cajun and Zydeco music even though there were no Cajuns in the audience for their personal heritage,
- Similarly Ka-OZ Klezmer still sharing and keeping the audience stomping with their Jewish heritage though they seem to be gravitating from the folk side of klezmer towards the jazz side,
- Kurt Williams and his band - An absolutely superb young performer on steel guitar to watch out for in the future,
- Andy and David de Santi with L'Emigrante, Joe Dolce, Mark Holder-Keeping and audience guests, in an Italian themed concert at Friday's Italian lunch at the Woonona Bulli RSL Sports Club (Bowling Club). The food was excellent and the entertainments allowed us all to share pride in Italian heritage now belonging to Australian citizens,
- Collector, Australia's answer to the folk music 'foreign super-groups'. Unfortunately no new album yet but still very much performing the best of the works collected by those to whom we all owe a huge debt - the collectors.
- Chloe Roweth still possesses a beautiful voice but I only heard one song. I look forward to her & Jason's visit in March,

Who I Missed but Wanted to Hear:

Alex Hood (See CD Review), Beeswing, Bhan Tre, Big Snore Hammers, BMC Concert Party, Bob McDonald, Chloe and Jason Roweth (See CD Review), Chris Fraser,

David Meyers, Decafro, EcoBeat, Emma McCready, Hernan Flores, Jess Randall and Friends, Jigzag, John Broomhall, John Dengate, John Warner and Margaret Walters, Leon Arundell, Margaret Bradford, Mihirangi, No Such Thing, Pettibone, Seamus Begley & Jim Murray, Sin Fronteras, the Sydney Cove Project & many others.

Disappointments:

- **An egocentric selfish artist who stole time from the next performers.**
- **Artists performing religious work ad nauseam. The prolonged example was the folk music of the North American Negro. Folk music that represents the slave's reaction to the horror of the crimes against humanity by Muslim slavers and Christian slave owners. I consider it to be foreign ersatz religious folk music when performed without contextualisation. It was performed however by an otherwise excellent group of harmonising white performers. Also being a humanist, I found it offensive without the proper contextualisation or variation.**
- **Either Ka-OZ Klezmer didn't want to hear my voice (I can't blame them) or simple translation of Morris Rosenfeld's yiddish poetry, still fresh, pertinent (new I.R. Laws), transportable (humanistic), powerful (from the heart) and 125 years old (withstanding the test of time),**
- **As many already know, I continue to be disappointed by those who have not explored their individual musical heritage but have preferred to adopt the heritage of others or even worse – commercial pap. This has been written about in the BIFCOA Inc. 22.01.2006 handout.**

Lasting memories:

- **The enthusiasm and three beautiful Stanwell smiles of the band early on Saturday morning at the RSL Bowling Club after their late Friday night was not just a case of “the Show must go on”,**
- **Beautiful, beautiful and more beautiful unfettered views,**
- **Unpretentious honest pride in coalmining and steelmaking forefathers,**

- **An enjoyable intelligent conversation with a beautiful young woman,**
- **An exuberant, possible white supremacist Christian, enthusiastically stomping out the rhythm to a West Sumatran Muslim based song.**
- **The fabulous festival line-up of artists old and new.**
- **The hard work put in by the festival director, committee and performers to make the festival a great success. I consider myself privileged to have been allowed to attend to enjoy, thank you everyone.**

Yours in folk music,

Your fellow Troubadourian,

Richard

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