

25<sup>th</sup> September 2006

Committee Secretary  
Senate Environment, Communications,  
Information Technology & the Arts Committee  
Department of the Senate

Via Email: [ecita.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:ecita.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Sir,

I write in regard to the proposed new licence conditions on regional radio relating to Local Content, Local Presence and Local Content Plans.

As I understand these new regulations are being proposed only on regional radio. There is no similar proposal on any other regional media or for any city media.

North East Broadcasters Pty Ltd and Rich Rivers Radio Pty Ltd are privately owned radio stations operating in the Wangaratta and Deniliquin licence areas with about 25 shareholders.

We employ only 35 people locally and produce local news and content. Furthermore, we do take some programming from Sky and other broadcasters which are of interest to our listeners.

We have a lot of competition from the ABC and other commercial radio broadcasters in adjacent licence areas. Imposing these new requirements could put our business in a very vulnerable position. There is always the possibility of having a very powerful competitor who owns both a newspaper & television service. This powerful competitor would not have any of the conditions that we as a regional radio operator would be expected to comply with.

Other media would be able to react immediately to changes in the market place. Regional radio could be restricted in making important business decisions until an inquiry took place.

The Federal Government has spent a lot of money supporting Community Radio Stations in Australia. These stations have very small audiences in most areas, especially where they compete with Commercial Radio Stations.

We oppose further regulation of our business as it will be time consuming and



expensive for small business such as ours. It's time the Government reduced the compliance requirements, not increase them.

We object to the Local Presence, Local Content and Local Content Plans that are proposed. We do not object to the rest of the Bill. If the Government wishes to control radio content in the stations that use radio hubs, it should aim at the companies such as Macquarie Media. These companies are the culprits, not small companies like North East Broadcasters and Rich Rivers Radio.

We ask that the proposed new licence conditions on regional radio be omitted from the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Media Ownership) Bill 2006.

Yours faithfully,

Walter H. Mott  
Chairman &  
Managing Director  
North East Broadcasters Pty Ltd/  
Rich Rivers Radio Pty Ltd