

BROADCASTING POLICY IN AUSTRALIA
Political Influences and the Federal Government's Role in the Establishment and Development of
Public/Community Broadcasting in Australia -
A History 1939 to 1992

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION.

This thesis is an argument about Australian government broadcasting policy, particularly as it relates to public broadcasting.¹ The topic originated from the coalescence of two paths of experience. Since 1985 I have been involved in public broadcasting, firstly in helping to establish the community station, 2CCC-FM, on the Central Coast of NSW, and later, as a volunteer at 2NUR-FM, the station at the University of Newcastle. Returning to a university environment inspired the resumption of historical studies, an undergraduate passion. The public broadcasting connection provided an awareness that although the sector was about twenty years old, no comprehensive history had been written. There was an urgent need to fill this vacuum as some documents were already missing and much valuable potential oral material was about to be lost with some of the pioneers nearing the ends of their lives.²

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1. When the idea of public broadcasting was conceived the Australian government defined it as all non-profit, non-government broadcasting, with community broadcasting as that part of public broadcasting which involved stations serving particular geographic areas. See Working Party on Public Broadcasting, *Report to the Minister for the Media*, Canberra, AGPS, 1975, p.1. With the *Broadcasting Services Act*, in 1992, the government confused the situation by calling the ABC public broadcasting and all that which was non-profit and non-government, community broadcasting. For the period under discussion, the original terms were used and seem more appropriate here. For this thesis public broadcasting has been defined as all that broadcasting which was both non-profit and non-government with community broadcasting as that part of public broadcasting which involved stations serving particular geographic areas. Broadcasting itself is basically point to multi-point communication by wireless transmission.
 2. Interviews or correspondence has been engaged in with 35 people who were involved in one way or another. Three of them are now deceased. The question of the value of this kind of source material is dealt with later in this chapter.

Initially the primary concern was with the development of this third sector of broadcasting and the myths that had evolved around it. It soon became apparent that what little had been written on the subject was either by public broadcasters themselves and a mere chronicle, or was slanted towards the interests of communications theorists. The quality of this work has been rather colourfully described by the historian, Humphrey McQueen: 'it is just as well that media scholars are (Mayer excepted) lazier than academics generally, since they cannot communicate'.³ Graeme Osborne and Glen Lewis have been less derogatory in their description of communications scholarship and have listed many of the publications in the field. However, they concluded that the work is still far from satisfactory:

There has been a discontinuity of discourses about the uses of communication in Australia since the 1960s - more than just a normal generational change of emphasis. One reason for this was that the first generation of full-time communication tertiary academics were fully occupied teaching and had little time for research. Another was that the discourses about the media in Australia that did emerge in the 1970s rarely had any historical dimension. The new research models tended to be social science rather than humanities based, and showed little interest in earlier discourses.⁴

They only found continuity in a few specific areas, such as the 'liberal to-left critiques of the effects of the media', the question of the concentration of media ownership and the argument about the Australian content component of programming.⁵

Furthermore, although they observed that there had been criticism of the 'stop-start nature of broadcasting policy', they noted that there was no consistency in the analyses given.⁶ In fact Osborne and Lewis discovered three different sets of analysis of

3. Humphrey McQueen, 'Newsfront', *Meanjin*, vol.38, no.2, July, 1979, p.266.

4. Graeme Osborne and Glen Lewis, *Communications Traditions in 20th century Australia*, Melbourne, OUP, 1995, p.142.

5. *ibid.*, pp.142-143.

6. *ibid.*, pp.144.

post-war Australian broadcasting policy. First was the chaos and confusion view put forward by critics like Myles Wright, former Chairman of the ABCB and Henry Mayer, father of media studies in Australia and founding editor of the journal *Media Information Australia*. This theory held that policy was unpredictable and irrational, really no method at all. Osborne and Lewis found that others, such as James Malone, Federal Director of FACTS and Peter White of La Trobe University, saw technological developments as determining Australia's broadcasting policy. A third conception of broadcasting policy was identified by Osborne and Lewis. This interpreted policy development as an incremental process determined by political pressures and administrative procedures, and was held by the previous broadcasting administrator, Geoff Evans and broadcasting law expert and sometime Chairman of the ABC, Mark Armstrong.⁷ All these ideas have some limited merit but it has to be remembered that none of these analyses were made from an historical perspective nor did they consider public broadcasting. Not only were Osborne and Lewis correct in their assessment that there has been little historical analysis, but the issue of the political influences and the government's role in the development of public broadcasting, has been almost entirely overlooked. In this thesis, political influences refers to all those factors which determine both the way the government makes decisions, and the decisions themselves. This overall interaction is also called the politics of public broadcasting.

These aspects of the subject are fundamental to this thesis because regulation and control of broadcasting became part of the federal government's responsibility for communication as this medium emerged in the years following federation. This was not the regulation and control of programming, which, when implemented can be used to exercise a measure of social control over the listeners. The restriction of broadcasting programs as a means of social control has been covered to some extent by the works cited by Osborne and Lewis, and as will be seen later, by some of those public broadcasters who have written about the sector. The regulation and

7. *ibid.*

control of broadcasting, that was of concern to the federal government in this context, was of the medium itself and was necessary in a way that it was not for newspapers because of the different technical nature of the medium. The example of free local newspapers illustrates the point. Any number of such newspapers can be delivered to people's letterboxes and they can read them all, sequentially. If a number of radio stations broadcast on the same frequency concurrently, none of them can be distinguished from a general noise. It was realised from the start that broadcasting cannot exist as a satisfactory medium of communication without the regulation and control of the use of the airwaves themselves, and the federal government took on this role. Kevin Livingston's two articles on the attitudes of colonial governments to public communication just prior to federation provided an understanding of the relationship between Australia's constitution and broadcasting policy.⁸

However, the constitution did not clarify how the government should view the use of the airwaves. There were two basic possibilities, as a public service and as a commercial enterprise. But even within the concept of broadcasting as a public service, there were a number of options, simply providing what listeners demanded or seeking to educate for citizenship. David Wilkinson and Mike Pedler have explained it slightly differently by asserting that, in any public service enterprise, those in charge have to determine whether they are dealing with 'customers' or 'citizens'.⁹ Since the constitution did not address any of these issues tremendous scope remained for various political influences to attempt to push government policy in different directions.

This thesis analyses the political influences at work, the unique response

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8. Kevin Livingston, 'Australia's 19th century communication revolution', *Australian Journal of Communication*, vol.20, no.1, 1993, pp.154-165; Kevin Livingston, 'Anticipating federation: the federalising of telecommunications in Australia', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol.26, no.102, April 1994, pp.97-118.
 9. David Wilkinson and Mike Pedler, 'Strategic thinking in public service', B. Garratt, ed., *Developing Strategic Thought*, London, Harper Collins, 1995, pp.223-245.

of the Australian government among governments of the English speaking world, and the resultant policies which determined the development of broadcasting generally, and later, public broadcasting specifically. One aspect of radio broadcasting which is not covered at all in this thesis is Radio Australia, the short wave service run by the ABC that was intended for audiences overseas. This service was originally under the authority of the Commonwealth Department of Information, and was established, in December 1939, as a war-time measure to counter enemy short-wave propaganda.¹⁰ It continued and expanded after the war. Like its counter-part in Britain, the BBC World Service, it held firmly to the policy of 'truthful and accurate news-reporting' and provided information and comfort in other countries during times of political upheaval.¹¹ This overseas service is not examined in this thesis because, although it has always been an important and political aspect of broadcasting in Australia, Radio Australia has never been considered to be part of the domestic broadcasting system in Australia and had no impact on the development of public broadcasting.

However, on all other aspects of broadcasting, which have been considered in this study, useful comparisons were available with the United States, Britain, Canada and New Zealand, which highlighted the fact that broadcasting developed differently in Australia with a unique dual system of public service and

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10. Fred Green, *Report to Minister for Post and Telecommunications on structure of the Australian broadcasting system*, ('Green Report'), Canberra, AGPS, 1976, p.A23; D. McKeown, The Department of the Media, 'Staff Briefing Paper; History of Radio in Australia', 1974?, p.6; Richard Harding, 'Australia: Broadcasting in the Political Battle', R. Kuhn, ed., *The Politics of Broadcasting*, Sydney, Croom Helm, 1985, p.238.
 11. Andrew Walker, *A Skyful of Freedom - 60 Years of the BBC World Service*, London, Broadside Books, 1992, front jacket flap and p.75.

commercial stations.¹² It is important to realise that the focus in this thesis, which has not been covered adequately before, is on the politics of public broadcasting in Australia

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12. Asa Briggs, *A History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, vol.1, London, OUP, 1961; Robert Hilliard, 'History and Regulation', R. Hilliard, ed., *Radio Broadcasting - An Introduction to the Sound Medium*, New York, Longman, 1985, pp.1-31; Greg Mundy, '"Free-Enterprise" or "Public Service"? The Origins of Broadcasting in the U.S., U.K. and Australia', *ANZ Journal of Sociology*, vol.18, no.3, November 1982, pp.279-301; Donald R. Browne, *What's Local About Local Radio? A Cross-National Comparative Study*, London, International Institute of Communications, 1988; Muriel and Joel Cantor, 'United States: A System of Minimal Regulation', R. Kuhn, ed., *The Politics of Broadcasting*, Sydney, Croom Helm, 1985, pp.158-196; Patrick Day, *The Radio Years - A History of Broadcasting in New Zealand - Volume One*, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1994; R. J. Gregory, *Politics and Broadcasting - Before and Beyond the NZBC*, Palmerston North, Dunmore Press, 1985; H. Wilson, ed., *The Radio Book 1994*, Christchurch, New Zealand Broadcasting School Christchurch Polytechnic, 1994; Helen Wilson, *Broadcasting Policy & Planning in New Zealand*, Sydney, Communications Law Centre NSW, Occasional Paper, no.6, 1992; Richard Collins, 'Canada: Nation-building Threatened by the US - Dominated Media?', R. Kuhn, ed., *The Politics of Broadcasting*, Sydney, Croom Helm 1985, pp.197-232; Richard Collins, 'Across the Pacific - Canadian Broadcasting Policy and the Public Sector 1968-91', *Media Information Australia*, no.62, November 1991, pp.41-50; Marc Raboy, 'The Role of the Public in Broadcasting Policy-Making and Regulation: Lesson for Europe from Canada', *European Journal of Communication*, vol.9, no.1, March 1994, pp.5-24; Marc Raboy, 'Canada: The Hybridization of Public Broadcasting', M. Raboy, ed., *Public Broadcasting for the 21st Century - Academic Monograph 17*, Luton, ULP, 1995, pp.103-119.

and not on how public broadcasting has influenced politics in Australia. As Muriel and Joel Cantor have pointed out, in a discussion of the situation in America, social scientists have tended to focus on the latter. In focusing on the politics of broadcasting Cantor and Cantor have shown that there have been numerous interest groups in America seeking to influence government policy on broadcasting. The mass media industry was just one of them.¹³

Bearing this in mind, a grasp of the nature of interest groups and pressure groups and how they interacted with government in Australia, especially over communications issues, was vital in appreciating the forces that influenced broadcasting policy. A brief background in the nature of Australian politics and the way government functioned, provided by an understanding of Australia's top bureaucrats was needed to grasp this situation. This was gleaned from the work of Dean Jaensch and Michael Pusey.¹⁴ The question of interest groups was approached by looking at a number of pieces in Roger Scott's *Interest Groups and Public Policy*,¹⁵ which did attempt to define interest groups and explore interest group theory, but only in their relationships to state governments. A number of other works dealt with the phenomenon at a federal level and analysed judgements about the positive and negative value of interest groups for

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13. Cantor and Cantor, 'United States: A System of Minimal Regulation', p.158.
 14. Dean Jaensch, *The Politics of Australia*, 2nd edition, Melbourne, MacMillan Education, 1997; Michael Pusey, *Economic Rationalism in Canberra*, Melbourne, CUP, 1991.
 15. Roger Scott, 'Introduction', R. Scott, ed., *Interest Groups and Public Policy*, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1980, pp.v-vii; Harmon Zeigler, 'Interest Groups and Public Policy: A Comparative. Revisionist Perspective', R. Scott, ed., *Interest Groups and Public Policy*, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1980, pp.1-16; Roger Scott, 'Conclusions: Interest Groups and the Australian Political Process', R. Scott, ed., *Interest Groups and Public Policy*, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1980, pp.224-241.

society.¹⁶ Elizabeth More has dealt directly with the communication between the government's executive bureaucracy and communications interest groups, pointing out that the government's communications policy is not something on which elections are won or lost.¹⁷ The thesis does uncover some occasions where public broadcasting matters have become issues in particular seats but never for the whole electorate. This is an important point which is even more significant when the question of the splintering of the public broadcasting lobby is analysed, particularly in relation to ethnic public broadcasting. Interviews with Ada Hulshoff and Tony Manicaros of ethnic station 4EB were very revealing in this regard.¹⁸

Further appreciation of the influence of various kinds of interest groups connected with national, commercial and public broadcasting was gained from interviews with Peter Westerway and Trevor Jarvie, Departmental Officers who were able to provide an insight into how government reacted to pressure from the various groups and Peter Pockley, who was one of the first lobbyists on behalf of public broadcasters.¹⁹

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16. Bob Browning, '"Interest Groups" and Public Policy', *Australia and World Affairs*, no.12, Autumn 1992, pp.14-26; George Kateb, 'Notes on Pluralism', *Social Research*, vol.61, no.3, Fall 1994, pp.511-537; John Warhurst, 'In defence of single-issue interest groups', *Australian Quarterly*, vol.58, no.1, Autumn 1986, pp.102-109; Peter Westerway, 'Pressure Groups', Wilkes, J. ed., *Forces in Australia Politics*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1963, pp.120-166.
 17. Elizabeth More, 'Australian Communications Policy - An Interest Group/Organisational Perspective', *Media Information Australia*, no.60, May 1991, pp.41-50.
 18. Ada Hulshoff, Personal Interview at Monash University, Melbourne, 25 November 1995; Tony Manicaros, Personal Interview at the Gold Coast, 30 November 1996.
 19. Peter Westerway, Personal Interview at Manly, Sydney, 3 February 1997; Trevor Jarvie, Personal Interview at Waverley, Sydney, 27 May 1994; Peter Pockley, Personal Interview at UTS, Sydney, 9 May 1994. Jarvie was both a Departmental

Although some useful works have emerged comparing the development of broadcasting systems in various parts of the world,²⁰ attempts to place the progress of public broadcasting in Australia in a larger context have not been very satisfactory. Bruce Girard's recent collection of short pieces showed the extent of world-wide development by the early 1990s, but, apart from half a page in the introduction, Australia was not included.²¹ Peter Lewis and Jerry Booth tried to relate public radio developments in Australia to those in other parts of the world, but their account was little more than an inaccurate chronology of events.²²

General histories of Australia have tended to pay scant attention to the politics of broadcasting, probably because broadcasting has never been a significant election issue. When broadcasting has been mentioned it has been mostly with regard to the influence broadcasting has had on ideas, culture and society. Manning Clark mentioned radio broadcasting only once and that was in connection with the spread of mass culture in Australia in the 1930s.²³ When Geoffrey Bolton considered broadcasting he analysed the influence of broadcasting on ideas, society and culture and dealt with

Officer and a public broadcaster involved in lobbying, making his perceptions extremely useful.

20. Donald R. Browne, *Comparing Broadcast Systems - The Experience of Six Industrialised Nations*, Ames, Iowa State University, 1989; Marc Raboy, ed., *Public Broadcasting for the 21st Century - Academic Monograph 17*, Luton, ULP, 1995. The public broadcasting referred to in the last title is public service broadcasting, like the ABC in Australia, and not public broadcasting as defined in this thesis.
21. Bruce Girard, ed., *A Passion for Radio*, Montreal, Black Rose Books, 1992.
22. Peter Lewis and Jerry Booth, *The Invisible Medium - Public, Commercial and Community Radio*, London, MacMillan Education, 1989.
23. Manning Clark, *A Short History of Australia*, New York, Nal Penguin, 1987, p.230.

issues such as censorship and Australian content. A comparison was made between the number of television listener licences and radio listener licences in 1970, to demonstrate the primacy of television. He touched on the politics of broadcasting only in relation to television and the interest groups involved with the debate over the proportion which should be in the hands of government and private ownership.²⁴

By the early 1980s historians were beginning to acknowledge the lack of attention that had been paid to broadcasting in Australia. Graeme Osborne²⁵ described the work on the history of broadcasting as no more than a beginning while Ken Inglis perceived it as 'sparse and uneven'.²⁶ What did exist rarely mentioned public broadcasting. Only two general histories of radio had been published. Ian Mackay's 1957 study covered the origins and development of the dual system of radio broadcasting from a technical, a political and an audience point of view.²⁷ His final chapter described the impact of television, which had just been introduced as he was writing. R. R. Walker's *The Magic Spark: The story of the first fifty years of Radio in Australia*,²⁸ was written to celebrate the jubilee of Australian broadcasting. Both works were soon out of date, having been written before the introduction of public broadcasting.

Three theses, very useful as source material, had been produced on the

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24. Geoffrey Bolton, *The Middle Way, The Oxford History of Australia - Volume 5 1942-1988*, Melbourne, OUP, 1990, pp.6, 67, 73, 128-130, 132, 184, 230.
 25. G. Osborne and W. F. Mandle, *New History, Studying Australia Today*, Sydney, George Allen and Unwin, 1982, p.157.
 26. Graeme Osborne, Ken Inglis and M. Dunlevy, 'Communications: panel discussion and comment', *Australia 1939-1988 A Bicentennial Bulletin*, no.4, August 1981, p.3.
 27. Ian Mackay, *Broadcasting in Australia*, Melbourne, MUP, 1957.
 28. R. R. Walker, *The Magic Spark: The story of the first fifty years of Radio in Australia*, Melbourne, Hawthorne Press, 1973.

history of specific aspects of broadcasting. The first was a 1961 MA thesis by Ross Curnow, 'An Administrative History of the Development of Wireless Telegraphy and Broadcasting till 1942'.²⁹ Curnow demonstrated that the early development of broadcasting in Australia was a haphazard business due to conflicting political pressures. The latter part of the thesis dealt with the ABC until 1942.

Barry Cole adequately scrutinised another aspect of broadcasting in Australia, the early development of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board (ABCB). As a PhD student from the USA, Cole spent two years in Australia researching his topic, 'The Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the Regulation of Commercial Radio in Australia since 1948'.³⁰ Unable to see many of the relevant documents because of the government's thirty year rule, Cole sought information by interviewing more than one hundred people. The Control Board Agenda and Minutes are now available and confirm that Cole's thesis was an excellent piece of research. It provided insights into an organisation which was very important in the evolution of public broadcasting and gave a useful background for a study of the sector's history.

The last of these works was Mick Counihan's 1981 MA thesis, 'The

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29. Ross Curnow, 'An Administrative History of the Development of Wireless Telegraphy and Broadcasting till 1942', MA Thesis, Sydney, 1961. The early part of this thesis has been published as Ross Curnow, 'The Origins of Australian Broadcasting', I. Bedford and R. Curnow, *Initiative and Organization*, R. N. Spann and H. Mayer, eds, *Sydney Studies in Politics no.3*, Melbourne, F. W. Cheshire, 1963.
 30. Barry Cole, 'The Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the Regulation of Commercial Radio in Australia since 1948', PhD Thesis, North Western University, Evanston, Illinois, 1966, microfilm by University Microfilms International, 1980, Department of Communications Library, Canberra.

construction of Australian broadcasting: Aspects of radio in Australia in the 1920s'.³¹ This work provided useful data for later works. Counihan was particularly concerned with the means and conditions that the public was recruited as a radio audience.

An interesting little piece by Murray Goot, 'Radio LANG', gave an insight into NSW Premier Lang's flirtation with the idea of state run radio and its hazards.³² But this was about the extent of the early writings on the subject.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s the development of public broadcasting itself partly influenced a surge of interest in the history of broadcasting as many tertiary institutions were given radio licences. At the same time an increased academic interest in communications generally emerged. An explosion of writing on the subject followed but only some of this was related either to the politics of broadcasting or to public broadcasting. It is really not surprising that *Mass Communication and Society*, edited by James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woolacott made no specific mention of public broadcasting.³³ This was published in England which was still dominated by the BBC. However, Ted Wheelwright and Ken Buckley did not include anything on the subject either, in their collection *Communications and the Media in Australia*.³⁴ Four other collected works all contained at least part of one chapter on

31. Mick Counihan, 'The construction of Australian broadcasting: Aspects of radio in Australia in the 1920s', MA Thesis, Monash, 1981.

32. Murray Goot, 'Radio LANG', H. Radi, and P. Spearritt, eds, *Jack Lang*, Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, 1977.

33. James Curran, Michael Gurevitch, and Janet Woolacott, eds, *Mass Communication and Society*, London, Edward Arnold, 1977.

34. Ted Wheelwright, and Ken Buckley, eds, *Communications and the Media in Australia*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1987.

public broadcasting, some of which attempted an historical outline.³⁵ However all these writers had a considerable involvement in the development of the activity and had written from the perspective of their own involvement, a social science viewpoint, which was more concerned with the effect broadcasting could or should have on politics and society than with the politics of broadcasting, and particularly the political influences which affected government policy.

For instance, David Turbayne's collection included two useful papers, one by Chris Tappere and one by Henry Mayer. Tappere was a public broadcaster who admitted a particular perspective. He hypothesised that the philosophical base for alternative media came from the improper influence of the existing media and that this view gathered credence when the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal ruled against Rupert Murdoch's takeover of Melbourne's ATV10. But he concluded 'Such "tokenism" would not, however, have satisfied your long haired new lefty; I should know, I was one. The only answer lay in returning the media to the people. "Access" was the key word. The evil influence of capitalism could only be destroyed by anybody and everybody being able to walk in off the streets and broadcast to his oppressed brothers'.³⁶ These comments are typical of analyses made by public broadcasters who took the trouble to write, and they had only a peripheral influence on either other broadcasters or governments. The bulk of radio has always been rather different material, such as entertainment and disaster reports, and the government has sought votes in seeing it was provided. But because

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35. Trevor Barr, ed., *Reflections on Reality: the Media in Australia*, Adelaide, Rigby, 1980; G. Major ed., *Mass Media in Australia*, Sydney, Hodder and Stoughton, 1976; David Turbayne, ed., *The Media and Politics on Australia*, Hobart, Department of Political Science, University of Tasmania, 1980; Helen Wilson, ed., *Australian Communication and the Public Sphere*, Melbourne, MacMillan, 1989.
36. Chris Tappere, 'What's This Public Broadcasting Anyway?' D. Turbayne, ed., *The Media and Politics in Australia*, Hobart, Department. Political Science, University of Tasmania, 1980, p.38.

Tappere freely admitted his perspective and the influences upon him, his piece is still useful in helping to provide a direction for research.

The paper by Henry Mayer addressed the issue of broadcasting regulation. Mayer listed the attempts at the history of broadcasting that had been made but he bemoaned the fact that 'hardly any of the necessary historical-analytical work has been done'.³⁷ This meant that widespread views, such as the alleged "engineers' mafia" which claimed that ABCB and Department engineers held back technological development, or the notion that Australian Broadcasting Policy had always been an *ad hoc* affair, had never come under critical scrutiny. Although Mayer, correctly, pointed to these issues as ones that needed exploring, he did not explore them himself. This thesis addresses both these issues.

Mayer had earlier expressed the hope that someone was keeping archives for when the history of public broadcasting in Australia would be written. He wrote this in 1976, before the first proper public broadcasting licences were issued so it was too early to write the history of the sector. Nevertheless, he had some useful suggestions for what should be addressed: 'the issue of what the various groups wanted, and hence what their conflicting criteria of "success" and failure" are, will have to be faced. The purely music bodies have very little in common with the Alternative Radio Association.'³⁸ David Barlow in his thesis in progress, 'The Promise, Performance and Future of Community Broadcasting',³⁹ is currently attempting to cover some of Mayer's

37. Henry Mayer, 'Broadcasting Regulation: The Eroding Bases', Turbayne, D. ed., *The Media and Politics on Australia*, Hobart, Department of Political Science, University of Tasmania, 1980, p.4.

38. Henry Mayer, 'What Should (and Could) We Do About the Media?' G. Major, ed., *Mass Media in Australia*, Sydney, Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, p.203.

39. David Barlow, 'The Promise, Performance and Future of Community Broadcasting', Thesis in progress, La Trobe.

suggestions but, early in the research, it became obvious that was not the direction of this work. This thesis is not particularly concerned about whether public broadcasters have succeeded in doing what they set out to do. It looks at developments from the point of view of how various interest groups were able to influence government broadcasting policy and regulations and the importance of the dichotomy of public utility and commercial enterprise in the concept.

Although Mayer never explored the evolution of public broadcasting, others writers on the media started to include it in their work as the sector was being established. As an assistant to Moss Cass when Cass was Minister for the Media in the Whitlam Labor government, Henry Rosenbloom was very involved with all the developments in the media. He published his own little book, *Politics and the Media*, where he elaborated on the press and all aspects of broadcasting.⁴⁰ By the very nature of his position Rosenbloom was aware of the details of the negotiations within the Labor government whereby Cass offered a dozen experimental public broadcasting licences to tertiary institutions. This short description in his book is about the politics of broadcasting, and particularly the politics of public broadcasting, but that was the extent of his coverage of the sector.

There are two recent general works on Australian media, written by scholars with an academic background in communications, but both lack an historical analysis. Jennifer Craik, Julie James Bailey and Albert Moran's *Public Voices, Private Interests, Australia's Media Policy*, includes articles which are useful sources for aspects of public broadcasting.⁴¹ Cunningham and Turner's *The Media in Australia - Industries*,

40. Henry Rosenbloom, *Politics and the Media*, Melbourne, Scribe, Revised Edition, 1978.

41. Andrew Jakubowicz and Kerie Newell, 'Which world? Whose/who's home?: Special Broadcasting in the Australian communication alphabet', J. Craik, J. J. Bailey, and A. Moran, eds, *Public Voices, Private Interests, Australia's Media Policy*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1995, pp.130-146; Albert Moran, 'Multiplying

Texts, Audiences has articles on radio generally but none on public radio.⁴²

Towards the end of the 1980s two substantial works on radio had appeared which drew on Counihan's earlier investigations. Leslie Johnson's *The Unseen Voice* was a cultural study of early Australian radio.⁴³ She explored the fact that radio changed from being of popular scientific interest to being simply another domestic commodity, which, as well as other things, offered companionship for women at home. Johnson's study presented a contrast to some of the other works on the beginnings of radio which concentrated more on technical and political considerations. John Potts claimed his *Radio in Australia* was an ideas book, but one for the general reader as well as the student of communications. Potts was a media studies lecturer, not an historian and tended to view his subject as if the world was a static place. Although the sector was well established by the time he wrote this book, Potts focused on public broadcasting only in the last six pages, with nearly half of that giving a detailed description of one hour's program on one station. Since he admitted there was a great diversity between stations, this was not very informative when he devoted so little space

Minorities', J. Craik, J. J. Bailey, and A. Moran, eds, *Public Voices, Private Interests, Australia's Media Policy*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1995, pp.147-164; Helen Molnar, 'Indigenous media development in Australia 1970-1994', J. Craik, J. J. Bailey, and A. Moran, eds, *Public Voices, Private Interests, Australia's Media Policy*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1995, pp.165-178.

42. Toby Miller, 'Radio', S. Cunningham, & G. Turner, eds, *The Media in Australia - Industries, Texts, Audiences*, 2nd Edition, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1997, pp.47-69; Helen Molnar, 'Radio', S. Cunningham, and G. Turner, eds, *The Media in Australia - Industries, Texts, Audiences*, 2nd Edition, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1997, pp.201-226.
43. Leslie Johnson, *The Unseen Voice - A cultural study of early Australian radio*, London, Routledge, 1988.

to the sector as a whole.⁴⁴

Increasing dissatisfaction with the ABC, by both programmers and listeners, contributed to an increase in agitation for the expansion of broadcasting services, including the introduction of public broadcasting. Significant scrutiny of the national broadcaster followed and three valuable books had been written on the subject by the mid 1980s. 3ZZ had been the ABC's flirtation with 'Access' broadcasting, where community and ethnic groups had been allowed to make their own programs, under the control of staff seconded from other ABC stations. Community and ABC staff protest erupted against the demise of the station in July 1977. Joan Dugdale had been one of the staff seconded from elsewhere in the ABC to work at 3ZZ and was committed to its philosophy. She wrote *Radio Power* as a history of the station but it was very coloured by her own involvement.⁴⁵ Nevertheless it was a valuable work demonstrating the kind of commitment some people had for developing a more democratic society by the particular path of opening up the airwaves to the participation of the people. Dugdale shared this commitment with her fellow workers at 3ZZ. Some other people with a similar commitment to social change were seeking the same ends through the further development of public broadcasting, which had yet to receive legitimate licences. However, Henry Mayer's assessment of Dugdale's work was accurate in that, like many people with a similar perspective, her judgement was warped by the illusion that access for minorities to the airwaves, in itself, creates a more participatory democracy and 'threatens the powerful'.⁴⁶

The second work was Alan Thomas's *Broadcast and Be Damned*, a

44. John Potts, *Radio in Australia*, Sydney, NSWUP, 1989, pp.171-176.

45. Joan Dugdale, *Radio Power, A History of 3ZZ Access Radio*, Melbourne, Highland House, 1979.

46. Henry Mayer, 'Book Review - ABC and Ethnic Support: A Missed Chance?', *Media Information Australia*, no.15, February 1980, p.43.

history of the origins and first two decades of the ABC.⁴⁷ This work complemented Mackay's general history of broadcasting, but did not cover the period when FM and public broadcasting were introduced. By the time the third book appeared in 1983 there were more than 50 public radio stations licensed in Australia. In his comprehensive history of the first fifty years of the ABC, *This is the ABC - The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983*, Ken Inglis could not ignore the coming of FM, which the ABC itself embraced, and the new third sector of broadcasting.⁴⁸ Whilst giving detailed accounts of the dissatisfaction of ABC staff which led some to embrace the notion of public broadcasting, Inglis's coverage of the development of the sector itself was rather superficial and somewhat inaccurate.

An understanding of the relevant laws and their amendments was a prerequisite for any analysis of developments in broadcasting, particularly at the time of the introduction of public broadcasting. Mark Armstrong detailed the changes in legislation in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which gave legitimacy to the public broadcasting licences in *Broadcasting Law and Policy in Australia* but he did not explain why the changes were made.⁴⁹ Despite being dry and legalistic in style, this book proved an excellent preparation for tackling *Hansard* for the period. Armstrong also edited a valuable collection of papers, *New Media: Law and Policy*, which gave expression to the ideas and theories on the media that were current as Australia entered the 1980s.⁵⁰ Topics included: the 'New Media'; choice in broadcasting policy; the conflict, in law, between free speech and the public interest; the government's control of media development and the gap between law and planning in broadcasting. Although none of

47. Alan Thomas, *Broadcast and Be Damned*, Melbourne, MUP, 1980.

48. Ken Inglis, *This is the ABC - The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983*, Melbourne, MUP, 1983.

49. Mark Armstrong, *Broadcasting Law and Policy in Australia*, Sydney, Butterworth, 1982.

50. Mark Armstrong, *New Media: Law and Policy*, Faculty of Law, UNSW, 1981.

this directly described the situation with regard to public broadcasting, the issues discussed were of great concern to many of those trying to establish the sector, and directly relevant to this thesis.

A series of articles by Colin MacKinnon in *Electronics Australia*, gave an interesting account of early radio's technical developments.⁵¹ Colin Jones' recent book *Something in the Air - A History of Radio in Australia* attempts a history, but is little more than a series of nostalgic memories.⁵² The same is true of Patti Crocker's work, and that part of Leslie Rees' book which deals with radio.⁵³

When the academic community became more involved with communications and the media, The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the NSW Institute of Technology (NSWIT) and the Centre for the Study of Educational Communication and Media at La Trobe University each produced a series of occasional papers on media studies. A number of these are germane to public broadcasting but the quality is very uneven.

In 'Ethnic Broadcasting', Peter Heldorf and John Mowatt thanked seven people, who were significant in the development of ethnic broadcasting, for granting

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51. Colin MacKinnon, '70 Years of Radio in Australia - 1 The Sealed Set Debacle', *Electronics Australia*, vol.55, no.12, December 1993, pp.20-24; Colin MacKinnon, '70 Years of Radio in Australia - 2 Sydney's Sealed Set Stations - 2FC and 2BL', *Electronics Australia*, vol.56, no.1, January 1994, pp.28-32.
 52. Colin Jones, *Something in the Air - A History of Radio in Australia*, Sydney, Kangaroo Press, 1995.
 53. Patti Crocker, *Radio Days*, Sydney, Simon and Schuster, 1989; Leslie Rees, *Hold Fast to Dreams - 50 Years in the Theatre, Radio, TV and Books*, Sydney, APCOL, 1982.

them interviews.⁵⁴ If the paper had, in fact, dealt more extensively with the interviews it could have been a very valuable document. Interviews can be an invaluable source as was demonstrated by Barry Cole's PhD thesis. However, there are pitfalls as well as advantages in this kind of oral history. As Louise Douglas and Peter Spearritt have pointed out the value as historical evidence depends on a number of factors: 'The knowledge the interviewer possesses about the interviewee and the subjects being discussed; the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee; the conditions under which the interview is conducted; the interviewee's willingness to discuss the past frankly; and the ability of the interviewee to recall and articulate his or her memories.'⁵⁵ It has to be remembered that interviews provide a different kind of evidence from written sources. Martyn Lyons has emphasised that the distinguishing factor is the active role of the interviewer, who cannot hide as a neutral facilitator, and the resultant dialogue. For Lyons this interaction has made oral history unique and particularly useful when dealing with myths. He concluded: 'If oral historians consider memory itself as historical evidence, they are better able to expose some of these national myths, analysing how they have been formed and exploited over time'.⁵⁶ Bearing in mind their value and limitations and using them in conjunction with other sources interviews can provide information, not otherwise available, and assist in historical analysis, as will be shown with the extensive use of such material in this thesis. But Heldorf and Mowatt hardly

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54. Peter Heldorf and John Mowatt, 'Ethnic Broadcasting', *Media Papers no.7*, Sydney, Media Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, NSWIT, August 1980.
 55. Louise Douglas and Peter Spearritt, 'Talking History: the Use of Oral Sources', G. Osborne and W. F. Mandle, eds, *New History, Studying Australia Today*, Sydney, George Allen and Unwin, 1982, p.53.
 56. Martyn Lyons, 'Oral History and the History of Memory', *Locality*, vol.7, no.1, Winter 1994, pp.5, 8.

referred to their interviews. Instead their work consisted almost entirely of a potted version of a number of articles appearing in a special edition of *Media Information Australia* in February 1980, which was devoted entirely to ethnic broadcasting. This approach reduced Heldorf and Mowatt's paper to a secondary reference for information available elsewhere.

Another pertinent piece, published by NSWIT, was Caroline Graham's 'Public Broadcasting, Dissent and the State'. She looked at some relevant documents and talked to Trevor Jarvie. Her brief paper was too short to give a detailed analysis of the development of public broadcasting, even up to 1980. In any case, Graham had a specific ideological perspective and political agenda and her look at public broadcasting was coloured by her preconceptions about the functions of the media in a capitalist society. She was another who was concerned with broadcasting's influence on politics, where this thesis is concerned with the politics of broadcasting. Her analysis has the same shortcomings as that of Tappere but the paper is useful as a source. Graham asked some questions which illustrated typical concerns of those who shared her political perspective: 'Does the opening of the air waves to radical and revolutionary groups invalidate the concept of the media as ideological state apparatuses functioning "by ideology", as a cog in the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie? Or does this represent the kind of tokenism appropriate to the parliamentary form of capitalist state - a liberal gesture tending in the long run towards maintaining social cohesion?'⁵⁷

One of the papers from La Trobe University, David Griffiths' 'Autocracy in the Airwaves' was a revised version of a study commissioned by the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration. He was another who was preoccupied with broadcasting's influence on politics. Griffiths maintained: 'the media operate as an extension of capitalist society. The institutions of capitalist society

57. Caroline Graham, 'Public Broadcasting, Dissent and the State', *Media Papers no.3*, Sydney, Media Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, NSWIT, June 1980, p.1.

mutually reinforce each other Reform is tolerated, accepted and even promoted as long as it does not threaten existing institutions and assumptions the content of the media is innocuous, irrelevant and peripheral Our hopes and expectations of the media reflect our hopes and expectations for society. Thus, questions of reforming or restructuring society cannot be resolved in isolation from the larger context of a society in which the mass media operate and function.'⁵⁸ Griffiths was involved in the gestation of the sector as the head of the Alternative Radio Association in Melbourne. He wrote this paper for the Royal Commission when public broadcasting was still in the embryonic stage. Even though a comprehensive history was not yet possible Griffiths did attempt an historical interpretation of the existing development. Since his political perspective was much the same as that of Tappere and Graham his work must be understood in the context of the media being seen as a means of oppression and social control within capitalist society, which had to be overcome to develop a more democratic society. This leads to a vastly different approach to broadcasting from the one put forward in this thesis.

The second relevant contribution from the La Trobe University collection is altogether different. Patricia Edgar presents the transcript of an interview done with the new Minister for Post and Telecommunications Tony Staley in May 1978.⁵⁹ Edgar had been a Labor Party appointee to the Australian Broadcasting Control Board, which the Coalition government abolished. Nevertheless, she was quite impressed with what the new Coalition Minister had to say. Both the preamble and the transcript itself give a clear indication that staunch Labor supporters, like Edgar, had to concede that public

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58. David Griffiths, 'Autocracy in the Airwaves', J. Langer, ed., *media centre papers 4*, Bundoora, Centre for the Study of Educational Communications and Media, La Trobe University, 1976, pp.1-2.
 59. Patricia Edgar, 'Media policy a Liberal View - Interview with the Honorable A. A. Staley the Minister for Post and Telecommunications', J. Langer, ed., *Media Centre Papers 8*, Bundoora, La Trobe University, 1978.

broadcasting had a future, even under a Coalition government, with a Minister like Staley. However, in using what Staley had to say as a source, as with the interview conducted with him for this thesis, it has been necessary to verify the information with other sources.⁶⁰ On occasions it has been found that Staley's actions, or rather his inaction, belie his expressed attitudes.

Tertiary students have played a large part in the gestation of public broadcasting because more than half the very early stations were connected to tertiary institutions. Some students were actually involved in broadcasting and others were involved through their studies, which included graduate and post-graduate essays and theses in Social Sciences, English and Linguistics, Education, Journalism, and Political Science. They all covered some historical material, often including a detailed description of the formation of at least one particular public radio station. However, none were written as history and tended to prescribe the direction for the sector's development.

An example of this is Kerry Braslin's political science dissertation, 'Public Radio: The Lost Dimension in Australian Broadcasting'. Braslin wrote in 1977 just as public broadcasting was taking shape and was completely focused on the future: 'The aim of this dissertation is to present a comparative assessment of public broadcasting, looking to the experience of America, Canada, Britain and Holland, and from this to draw some implications for the scope and direction of an Australian pattern of development'.⁶¹ The work aimed to engage in social research not history. Furthermore, by including descriptions of 2JJ and 3ZZ, two innovative ABC stations, Braslin showed a lack of understanding of the concept of public broadcasting which undermined the credibility of the whole work.

In 1990 Michael Evans examined the inconsistencies in adult education

60. Tony Staley, Personal Interview at Monash University, Melbourne, 25 November 1995.

61. Kerry Braslin, 'Public Radio: The Lost Dimension in Australian Broadcasting', BA (Hons) Thesis, Tasmania, 1977, p.9.

public radio in his MEd thesis 'The Adult Education Role of Public Radio in Australia'. He developed 'a format for more accurately defining and categorising adult education and adult learning programming'.⁶² Evans made no attempt to write history. However, he provided something for historians to work with by supplying much needed definitions for education, adult education and their relationship to public broadcasting. This was particularly useful since so many of the early experimental public broadcasting licences were issued specifically for education purposes, without actually defining the term.

Andrew Greig also focused on adult education in his essay, 'Radio in Education - with particular reference to its use in the education of adults and to the development of Sydney Public Radio Station 2SER FM'. He included a brief comparative history of all types of educational broadcasting around the world. In examining educational broadcasting on public radio in Australia, he probed in some depth the educational licensee in Sydney, 2SER-FM. He defined theoretical models of educational broadcasting, constructed a grid, and determined 2SER-FM's position in relation to other educational stations.⁶³ The brevity of this otherwise excellent study restricted the depth of the analysis, but it remains a useful source document.

Marj Kibby, another with a social science rather than an historical outlook, looked at public broadcasting as communication in her MA Honours thesis, 'Radio as communication: Public Broadcasting in Australia'. Having reviewed the communications theories of writers like Karl Marx and Jürgen Habermas, Kibby expounded her own theory of public broadcasting as 'a move away from the one way

62. Michael Evans, 'The Adult Education Role of Public Radio in Australia', MEd Thesis, New England, 1990, p.iii.

63. Andrew Greig, 'Radio in Education - with particular reference to its use in the education of adults and to the development of Sydney Public Radio Station 2SER FM', a long essay, MA (Education)(Pass), Sydney, 1981, pp.119a-119b.

transmission of information towards a process of group communication'.⁶⁴ Her brief history of public broadcasting and her details on station 2XX Canberra are claimed to verify her theory. There was, in fact, no logical connection between them. Furthermore Kibby had very little grasp of the historian's concept of change over time. She was more concerned with what 'should' be. This word appeared six times on page 20. The only redeeming feature of this work was that she included some interesting information, not readily available elsewhere, from two surveys conducted in 1986. The first of these, released by the Public Broadcasting Foundation, gave a profile of the sixty five existing public broadcasting stations in Australia. Random Research and Marketing, through Bankstown Technical College, conducted the other survey. It inquired into the public's awareness of community radio stations in order to provide a marketing plan to maximise audiences and increase sponsorship potential. This survey concentrated on the western suburbs of Sydney.

Finding information about public broadcasting stations has always been a problem. The sector has never been included in general broadcasting surveys because it was too expensive. Any material is, therefore, very useful. One undergraduate work on public broadcasting was itself a survey. '6NR: A Study of a New Educational/Access Radio' was a study undertaken by Vic Whittombe and Jan Brown for a BA in Social Sciences at the Western Australian Institute of Technology (WAIT).⁶⁵ In 1977, in the early days of the Institute's station 6NR, these two students conducted a survey of the station's listeners seeking impressions of the station and its programs. This work provided useful information about the listeners and non-listeners of one station, 6NR, but some of the explanatory historical background was incorrect.

64. Marj Kibby, 'Radio as Communication: Public Broadcasting in Australia', MA (Hons) Thesis, Macquarie, 1988, p.iv.

65. Vic Whittome and Jan Brown, '6NR: A Study of a New Educational/Access Radio', BA, WAIT, 1977, p.9.

Helen Molnar's PhD thesis dealt with aboriginal broadcasting, particularly in remote areas in Australia, as part of 'The Democratisation of Communications Technology in Australia and the South Pacific: Media Participation by Indigenous Peoples 1970-1992'.⁶⁶ Molnar, now lecturing at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne and an editor of *Media International Australia*, completed her thesis in 1993, in the Department of Politics at Monash University.⁶⁷ Her thesis described the development of Aboriginal broadcasting in remote Australia from the perspective of the ABC, which was heavily involved. Molnar is a political scientist, not an historian, and her work places a lot of emphasis on what should be. However, the definitive study on the history of Aboriginal broadcasting will probably be carried out by the aboriginal people themselves from the perspective of the development of their society and culture, rather than as an adjunct to the history of public broadcasting in Australia as a whole, particularly since most of the development has happened in the 1990s. This is even more likely now that there are special training courses for Aboriginal broadcasters at Batchelor College in the Northern Territory and James Cook University in Townsville. There are already graduates from these courses. For this reason this thesis does not deal in detail with Aboriginal broadcasting.

In very recent times several more studies have come to light, the most significant being Chris Lawe Davies' work on the history of multicultural broadcasting in Australia.⁶⁸ This contains material not available elsewhere and is a useful source but is

66. Helen Molnar, 'The Democratisation of Communications Technology in Australia and the South Pacific: Media Participation by Indigenous Peoples 1970-1992', PhD Thesis, Monash, 1993.

67. *Media International Australia* was known as *Media Information Australia* prior to the August 1995 issue of the journal.

68. Chris Lawe Davies, 'History of Australian Multicultural Broadcasting', PhD Thesis, Journalism, Queensland, Draft, 1996.

written from the perspective of a School of Journalism and covers what the broadcasting needs were. Lawe Davies and I see our works as complementing one another. A number of other very recent theses provide some historical data, but the studies are in no sense histories themselves.⁶⁹

Many public broadcasters have been inspired to write short pieces on the subject, often tales of their own experiences. Numerous articles published in *Broadcasting Australia*, the short lived journal of the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia, fell into this category.⁷⁰ There was a feeling among those involved in the gestation of public broadcasting that they were 'making history', whatever that was. With almost no independent research, some people felt inspired to record and publish their perceptions of developments and often their own experiences, in short articles.⁷¹

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69. Bob Hope-Hume, 'Radio, Community and the Public: Community Radio in Western Australia', MA Thesis, Edith Cowan, 1996; Roxanne Ruscoe, 'Community Media: Questions of Resistance', BA (Communications)(Hons) Thesis, Newcastle, December 1994; Wanda Coates, 'A Phenomenological Study of Volunteer Community Radio Program Presenters' Understandings of the Community of their Radio Station - Community Radio 2NCR-FM, Lismore, NSW', BA (Hons) Thesis, Southern Cross, June 1997; Victoria Quade, 'Towards a Pedagogy of Community Broadcasting: A Critique of Current Training Practices in Community Radio in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand and Theorising an Appropriate Pedagogy with Reference to Adult Education, Communicative Competence and Vygotsky', Thesis in progress, Education, James Cook.
70. There were only ever eight issues of this journal published, at irregular intervals from October 1975 to November 1981.
71. Stephen Abell, 'Beautiful Bellingen - Part Two - 2BBB-FM to the Rescue', *Simply Living*, vol.2, no.8, 1985, pp.47-50; Con Castan, 'The Later History of 4EB', *Social Alternatives*, vol.3, no.3, July 1983, pp.37-38; Clare Dunne, 'A brief history of ethnic broadcasting in Australia', *Contact*, no.3, September 1977, pp.11-14;

While historians might not consider any of these to be history, they do provide some useful information.

Andrew Bear, the last editor of the PBAA journal *Broadcasting Australia*, was the only exception. This was no surprise since he was also Lecturer in Charge of Communications at Flinders University. Bear published a number of papers.⁷² One of these, 'Public Broadcasting in Australia', had a worthwhile bibliography. However, his writing was based largely on hearsay and it will be established in this thesis that his judgement that public broadcasting was a grass roots movement was flawed. These articles were only short and were written between 1979 and 1983. He has not followed this up with a more significant work on the new third sector of broadcasting.

Michael Law, a public broadcasting pioneer, commenced a book which was intended to be a substantial and comprehensive history of the sector but it remained unfinished at his death in the middle of 1994.⁷³ What he did write is available in

John Hill, 'The Early days of 2NUR-FM', *The Newcastle and Hunter District Historical Society Bulletin*, vol.7, no.1, March 1979, pp.3-4; Michael Law, 'Public Broadcasting in Australia', *Media Information Australia*, no.26, November 1982, pp.36-40; Brisbane Women's Media Group, 'Triple Z: "maintaining credibility" or did homogeneous radio turn sour?', *Hecate*, vol.3, no.1, February 1977, pp.108-114; Kalinga Seneviratne, 'Giving A Voice to the Voiceless', *Media Asia*, vol.20, no.1, 1993, pp.66-74.

72. Andrew Bear, 'Public Broadcasting in Australia', *Studies in Continuing Education*, no.2 1979, pp.1-20; Andrew Bear, 'The development of ethnic broadcasting in relation to Public Broadcasting', *Media Information Australia*, no.15, February 1980, pp.24-27; Andrew Bear, 'The Emergence of Public Broadcasting in Australia', *Australian Journal of Communication*, no.4, July-December 1983, pp.21-28.
73. Michael Law was a foundation member of the Music Broadcasting Society (MBS) of NSW, one of four representatives from MBS NSW to the Senate Standing

manuscript form.⁷⁴ Law's close associate Trevor Jarvie has recently commenced a history of 2MBS-FM, a draft summary of which gives some interesting background to the sector as a whole.⁷⁵ My article 'Debunking the "Whitlam" Myth: The Annals of Public Broadcasting Revisited',⁷⁶ is the beginnings of the exploration, developed in this thesis, of the political influences and the government's role in the development of public broadcasting. The article looks specifically at the years 1972 to 1975.

Although a unique perspective has been developing with this thesis, it was necessary to examine the debate that has already taken place on broadcasting policy in Australia. Much of this has been in terms of communications theories incorporating such notions as Jürgen Habermas' concept of the 'public sphere'. In the eighteenth century, Habermas maintained, cultural-political control was devolving from the court to the bourgeoisie. A 'public sphere' of debate on matters of cultural and political importance emerged, chiefly in the coffee houses in the towns.⁷⁷ During the nineteenth century this 'public sphere' was transformed as it was largely taken over by the mass media, firstly

Committee Inquiry into all aspects of broadcasting, Chairman of 2MBS-FM, Chairman of the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia (PBAA), Executive Director of the PBAA, Policy Consultant to the PBAA and official funded historian to the PBAA.

- 74. Michael Law, 'Draft History of Public Broadcasting in Australia', Manuscript, 1987? Copy in Evans Archives with present writer.
- 75. Trevor Jarvie, "'THE BOOK" a draft outline of a history of 2mbs-fm from its origins to 1997', Manuscript, May Day 1997. copy with present writer.
- 76. Phoebe Thornley, 'Debunking the "Whitlam" Myth: The Annals of Public Broadcasting Revisited', *Media International Australia*, no.77, August 1995, pp.155-164.
- 77. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Gt. Britain, Polity Press, 1989, pp.30-31.

newspapers and later, in the twentieth century, by film, radio and television.⁷⁸ While Klaus Jensen and Nicholas Jankowski argued that Habermas' view painted too glowing an image of the eighteenth century and too bleak a picture of later developments there was no escaping the emerging issue of public communication as a form of social control.⁷⁹ Both Osborne and Lewis, and Trevor Barr evaluate theories about whether this social control lies with those who produce the media or with governments who regulate it.⁸⁰

Communications scholars have focused on these arguments and have defined the methods of social control to include both propaganda and the more subtle socialising aspects of communication. Important though they are, none of these issues are of concern here. Broadcasting is also a form of public communication which can supply life saving information and all kinds of entertainment. People cannot live in any sort of society without communicating in one way or another. Newspapers providing a similar service had always been left to private enterprise. But newsprint is virtually endless, limited only by the cost of production, as illustrated by the above-mentioned letterbox analogy. The airwaves, on the other hand, are a physically limited resource requiring at least allocation and regulation, to be able to function at all. The government had to determine how far wireless, as it was originally known, was an essential public utility to be owned and controlled by government and how far it was a commercial enterprise, primarily aimed at maximising shareholders' profits. The government's role and the political influences on it were intricately entwined in this dilemma, as broadcasting, and later public broadcasting emerged. These issues are the focus of this

78. *ibid.*, pp184-187.

79. Klaus Jensen, and Nicholas Jankowski, *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research*, London, Routledge, 1991, pp.184-185.

80. Osborne and Lewis, *Communications Traditions*, p.139; Trevor Barr, *The Electronic Estate: New Communications Media and Australia*, Melbourne, Penguin, 1985, p.224.

thesis.

Chapter Two examines how public communications became a separate entity from transport, needing control and regulation in the latter days of the Australian colonies and why the federal government took over this function, which included wireless, when it was developed in the early years of Australia's nationhood. As wireless exploded into radio broadcasting the government responded by setting up a dual system of government run stations designed as a public utility and commercial stations created to make a profit for shareholders. The chapter examines the tensions between these two aspects of government policy and the diversity of analyses of the industry which resulted. All these theories have been partly true at one time or another as later chapters will show.

After World War Two both sides of politics, with opposing broadcasting policies, restricted the expansion of broadcasting services. Chapter Three explores the political influences which led successive governments to expand the ABC, increase the transmission power of existing commercial broadcasters but fail to issue licences to those many aspirants who sought them. By the end of the 1960s the pressures for change were beginning to exceed the conservative forces which had held sway for so long.

Chapter Four reveals that although the demand for the expansion of broadcasting services now outweighed the call to maintain the status quo, the government was being pushed in many different directions at once by lobbyists and its own advisers, all of whom held vastly different views on how reform should take place. This chapter examines, in detail, a number of different, sometimes conflicting, reports to government on how the expansion of broadcasting services, including the introduction of FM and public broadcasting, should be accomplished. The result of this conflicting advice, together with the push from lobbyists with opposing views, dealt with in the next chapter, was that the Whitlam government issued an *ad hoc* jumble of licences of dubious legality. These were the first licences to FM and public broadcasters.

The political views of aspirant public broadcasters varied from ultra-conservative to extremely radical. Chapter Five analyses the philosophies of a

number of the individuals and groups who were pushing the government for changes to broadcasting policy. It was impossible for the government to accede to the wishes of all these lobbyists and produce a coherent policy.

Chapter Six examines, in more detail, the reactions of the Whitlam government to the buffeting it received from diverse forces and interest groups as it contemplated the expansion of broadcasting services with the introduction of FM and public broadcasting. The reasons for the changing role of the government is also explored. A very messy situation was left to the incoming Coalition government.

Despite some public broadcasters' fears that the Coalition might close their sector down, Chapter Seven reveals the reasons why the Fraser government and particularly Minister Staley, a small 'l' liberal, became a friend to public broadcasters and issued them with legitimate licences. The chapter concludes by disclosing the motivations of the conservative Country Party Minister Sinclair for vastly expanding the provision of public broadcasting licences in both rural and Sydney suburban areas. The public broadcasting sector was now securely established.

Realising the government had no coherent broadcasting policy and was subject to pressures from differing political forces as it pondered the expansion of services, aspirant public broadcasters formed themselves into an industry organisation and lobby group, the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia (PBAA). Chapter Eight examines the influence the PBAA developed with government in the early days and how this was later lost. The chapter shows why the association came to be seen as elitist by its own members, many of whom left to form their own specialist groups, who developed greater lobbying muscle with government than the PBAA itself.

Chapter Nine reviews the concept and development of educational broadcasting within the context of the government's attitude to public broadcasting. This chapter shows why there was a push, both from inside and outside government for the development for educational public broadcasting when the sector was embryonic but how this concept almost evaporated as the sector grew.

Chapter Ten concentrates on the government's role in foreign language and ethnic broadcasting and the political forces that were involved. Ethnic public broadcasting is analysed as part of that overall picture, and is shown to become a powerful lobby group in its own right, in spite of opposing factions within its ranks, with increasing influence on government, as public broadcasting expanded.

Public broadcasting originally had no direct government funding, but by the early 1990s considerable financial support was received via the conduit of the Public Broadcasting Foundation (PBF). Chapter Eleven explores the *ad hoc* decisions made in the early days of government funding and the pressures that forced the government to change its role in grants made available to the sector.

Chapter Twelve uses 2NUR-FM, the station at the University of Newcastle in the heart of a large regional area, and 2BBB-FM, a small community station in the rural area of Bellingen/Dorrigo, as examples of how political influences and the changing attitude of government led to *ad hoc* decisions which affected the gestation of all public broadcasting stations, even when they were very different.

Before analysing the effect of interest groups and other political influences on the development of the government's broadcasting policy as it related to public broadcasting and the role the government played in the gestation of the sector it is necessary to look back at the early days of broadcasting in Australia, which created the situation leading to the emergence of the concept of public broadcasting. Chapter Two revisits the unique origins of broadcasting in Australia and compares the situation with other comparable countries.

CHAPTER TWO - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND HIGH TECHNOLOGY COMMUNICATION: TO 1942.

Since federation the Australian government has always accepted the importance of public communication in the meaningful functioning of society and the efficient running of the economy. As a result the federal government embraced the role of regulating, controlling and sometimes providing what were deemed to be essential communications services, such as post, telegraph and telephone. However, unlike the other services, broadcasting started in Australia as a commercial enterprise. When it was realised that this was in conflict with its role as a public utility, lobbying began for the addition of a public service broadcaster. This chapter will examine the political pressures on government and its role in communications services from federation until the establishment of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) in 1932 and the passing of the *Broadcasting Act 1942*. The *Act* confirmed the legal basis for broadcasting in Australia which functioned as a unique dual system, both commercial and public service, not found in any other comparable country.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the term 'transport' and 'communications' referred basically to the same thing. Cobb and Co. coaches carried goods and the post.¹ It became meaningful to talk separately about these concepts in Australia in the mid 1850s when the telegraph spread across the country and the more so from the 1880s with the introduction of the telephone. Colonial governments were very quick to see the advantages of these new high technology forms of communication, which no longer involved the physical transportation of documentation from one location to another, not only for general social intercourse but for economic development and their own efficient functioning. Because their primary concern was their own operation

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1. There were forms of distance communication, which did not involve transport, such as semaphores, smoke signals and pigeons, but these were not significant in Australia at the time.

and since they already controlled the postal services, the colonial governments owned and operated these new services themselves, which were accepted as public utilities.²

It was soon realised that these advantages could be further enhanced if the colonies worked together to provide uniform services and regulations across Australia. From 1867 inter-colonial post and telegraph conferences were convened from time to time to debate relevant issues.³ By the 1890s these conferences were held at least once a year. Kevin Livingston maintains that these deliberations were a driving force leading to federation.⁴

An Australasian Federation Conference was held in 1890 to consider the concept of federation, but reached no agreement on the inclusion of posts and telegraphs in the federal responsibilities.⁵ Australasian Federal Conventions followed in 1891, 1897

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2. Kevin Livingston, 'Australia's 19th century communication revolution', *Australian Journal of Communication*, vol.20, no.1, 1993, pp.157-158.
 3. Indeed agreement was needed around the world on time zones, now that communication was instantaneous. In 1881 a Post and Telecommunications Conference of 25 nations held in Washington divided the world into 24 one hour time zones with Greenwich the prime meridian. Australia adopted three standard time zones for the whole country in 1893. See Kevin Livingston, 'Anticipating federation: the federalising of telecommunications in Australia', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol.26, no.102, April 1994, p.109 and Livingston, 'Australia's 19th century communications revolution', p.156.
 4. Livingston, 'Anticipating federation: the federalising of telecommunications in Australia', p.97.
 5. New Zealand was included at this stage but did not seriously contemplate joining the federation partly because the government had a different relationship with the Maoris from that of the Australian colonial governments with the Aborigines. New Zealand did not feel an Australasian government would understand this relationship. However, they saw the value of cooperating with postal and cable

and 1898 to consider drafts of a Commonwealth of Australia Bill, which listed the areas of responsibility to be under federal control. Number 5, after some debate and amendment, read 'postal, telegraphic, telephonic, and other like services'. The government later assumed responsibility for all forms of wireless transmission under 'other like services', as they became available.⁶

Overseeing and regulating the effective running of communications services, at the highest available level of technology, was accepted as a major role of the

communications and were prepared to contemplate a treaty to that effect. See speech by Captain William Russell, New Zealand Colonial Secretary 1990 *Centenary Edition - Debates of the Australasian Federation Conference 1890*, Sydney, Legal Books, 1990, pp.126-127. Andrew Clark, Attorney-General of Tasmania was in favour of the inclusion of posts and telegraphs in the federal responsibilities and Alfred Deakin, Chief Secretary of Victoria was not. See *Debates*, p.108.

6. *New South Wales. Official Record of the Debates of the Australasian Federal Convention. Second Session. Sydney, 2nd and 24th September, 1897*, Sydney, William Applegate Gullick Government Printer, 1897, p.1035. It is interesting to note that in the original draft bill this read simply as 'Postal and Telegraphic Services', but communications technology was expanding at such a rapid rate during the years of these conventions that this was, fortunately, amended before the final draft was accepted. See first draft of the bill in *New South Wales, Official Report of the National Australasian Convention Debates, Sydney, 2 March to 9 April, 1891*, Sydney, George Stephen Chapman Acting Government Printer, 1891, p.952. It was still not at all certain that the constitution did cover wireless, and particularly broadcasting. It took three cases in the High Court in 1935 1965 and 1966 to establish that this was so. See Richard Harding, 'Australia: Broadcasting in the Political Battle', R. Kuhn, ed., *The Politics of Broadcasting*, Sydney, Croom Helm, 1985, pp. 233-235, 240.

Australian government from federation. When the new federal Postmaster-General's Department began administering these services on 1 March 1901, it had 16,000 public servants or 90% of the fledgling Commonwealth Public Service.⁷

Just five years before the federation of the Australian colonies into one Commonwealth an even more remarkable communications technology came to light. In 1895 Guglielmo Marconi discovered wireless.⁸ At first this latest device was used for the same purpose as telegraph and telephone, point to point communication. It was instantly seen as invaluable for ship to shore contact and a boon to intercourse between Tasmania and the mainland, and New Zealand and Australia. Pressure grew both for the government to set up wireless stations and for permission for private companies to do so. The Prime Minister and the Postmaster-General were very reluctant to consider the introduction of wireless services because they wished to protect the viability of the existing cable companies and maintain control over the new medium.⁹ Already the government was under conflicting political pressures making a clear cut policy for development and a defined role for government in high technology communication problematic.

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7. Kevin Livingston, 'Anticipating federation: the federalising of telecommunications in Australia', p.97.
 8. SBS TV "'Whisper in the Air", - Life of Marconi', 30 March 1995.
 9. In 1901 Sir Edward Braddon urged the establishment of wireless telegraphy between Tasmania and the mainland as the cable service was unreliable across the stormy strait. A proposal was submitted to the government by the Marconi company at the end of 1902 to connect Australia and New Zealand by wireless. Admiral Fanshaw, Commander of the Australian Naval Station, recommended the establishment of wireless installations around the Australian coast in 1904. See Ross Curnow, 'The Origins of Australian Broadcasting', I. Bedford and R. Curnow, *Initiative and Organization*, R. N. Spann and H. Mayer, eds, *Sydney Studies in Politics no.3*, Melbourne, F.W. Cheshire, 1963, pp.50-52.

By 1905, the government had misgivings about the operations of some of the cable companies and felt less inclined to protect their viability. Furthermore the Telefunken Company was providing competition to the Marconi Company as a possible provider of wireless services. Governments of other countries had already passed legislation giving themselves control of this new medium of communication. New Zealand was the first country in the world to do so, in 1903, giving the government the right to receive and transmit messages by wireless telegraphy, establish stations for that purpose and fine those who established a station without permission. The British government passed similar legislation in 1904. The Australian government, now merely five years old, decided to establish its own control over this technology and passed the *Wireless Telegraphy Act 1905*. Wireless telegraphy was defined in the *Act* as 'all systems of transmitting and receiving telegraphic and telephonic messages by means of electricity without a continuous metallic connection between the transmitter and the receiver'.¹⁰

There was some confusion initially as to exactly what control the government was taking. Mark Armstrong has pointed out that 'Section 6(1) of the Act says that except as authorised under it no person shall: "(a) establish, erect, maintain, or use any station or appliance for the purpose of transmitting or receiving messages by means of wireless telegraphy; or (b) transmit or receive messages by wireless telegraphy."' ¹¹

Thus the government did not necessarily mean to be the only user of this technology but definitely intended to regulate any other users. The confusion arose from Senator John Keating's second reading speech, when he stated that the main object of the

10. Patrick Day, *The Radio Years - A History of Broadcasting in New Zealand - Volume One*, Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1994, p.13; Curnow, 'The Origins of Australian Broadcasting', p.53; Section 2(1) *Wireless Telegraphy Act 1905*, cited in Mark Armstrong, *Broadcasting Law and Policy in Australia*, Sydney, Butterworths, 1982, p.21.

11. *ibid.*

Bill was 'to make a Government monopoly of wireless telegraphy in the Commonwealth'.¹² The Senator later had to explain that the government control would in fact not only allow it to use radio frequencies to provide services for itself and the community as a whole but also to licence and regulate their use by private companies and individuals. The *Act* would allow the possibility that private enterprise could make a profit out of this latest communications technology as they had by supplying the cables for the earlier telegraph and telephone technology. As with the legislation in New Zealand and Britain, this notion of government control with some commercial participation in this new public utility was enshrined in law while wireless telegraphy was still only a form of point to point communication.

The law determined control but it did not prevent government procrastination, inter-departmental power struggles between the Postmaster-General and Defence and general agitation among those seeking to establish commercial ventures. Patent disputes also erupted between competing commercial wireless companies. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that Labor and non-Labor governments supported different companies. Those out of favour with the 1910 Fisher Labor government, Marconi and Telefunken, combined to form the Amalgamated Wireless Company of Australasia Limited (AWA). This company, with Ernest Fisk in charge, was able to dominate the Australian wireless scene for many years, under governments of both political persuasions. By 1916 AWA had negotiated to build a total of twenty wireless stations, under contract, for the government around Australia.¹³

A number of experimenters licensed with the PMG had begun operation by the beginning of the First World War. In 1910 George A. Taylor had formed the Wireless Institute of New South Wales for these 'hams' some of whom later started the early radio stations. With the coming of the war the Navy took control of all wireless

12. Senator John Keating, *CPD*, Senate, vol.XXV, 2 August 1905, p.464, cited in Curnow, 'The Origins of Australian Broadcasting', p.53.

13. Curnow, 'The Origins of Australian Broadcasting', pp.64-66.

activity and these operations were closed down. This delayed the formal start of point to multi-point communication, which had become known as broadcasting, until after the PMG regained control of all wireless communications in 1920. The situation in the USA was slightly different. There had been no legislation at all until the *Wireless Act* of 1912, and this provided inadequate regulation for the use of frequencies. Nevertheless, many licences were issued, particularly to colleges and universities. When the Navy tried to retain monopoly control at the end of the war it faced overwhelming opposition from licensees, whose proliferation caused chaos, until adequate frequency allocation legislation was in place.¹⁴

People were complaining in Australia too, about the Navy restricting the use of wireless telephony technology by private citizens after the war. The government returned control to the PMG's Department, in 1920, as broadcasting was developing as an additional use of wireless.¹⁵ Despite the government's roles being defined by the *Wireless Telegraphy Act 1905* there was still some confusion. Broadcasting regulations were needed to cover this latest application of the air waves. The first complete set was inserted in the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* in 1923.¹⁶ Although the government was now committed to broadcasting as a public utility it remained committed to ensuring the viability of telegraph and telephone. Conversations between individuals by wireless were forbidden. Stations could not broadcast the questions and answers if listeners rang up

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14. Curnow, 'The Origins of Australian Broadcasting', pp.66-69, 94; Robert Hilliard, 'History and Regulation', R. Hilliard, ed., *Radio Broadcasting - An Introduction to the Sound Medium*, New York, Longman, 1985, p.5; Muriel and Joel Cantor, 'United States: A System of Minimal Regulation', R. Kuhn, ed., *The Politics of Broadcasting*, Sydney, Croom Helm, 1985, pp.164-165, 168; Peter Lewis and Jerry Booth, *The Invisible Medium - Public, Commercial and Community Radio*, London, Macmillan Education, 1989, p.207.
 15. Curnow, 'The Origins of Australian Broadcasting', p.94.
 16. Armstrong, *Broadcasting Law and Policy in Australia*, p.35.

broadcasting lecturers with questions. This violated the regulations, which had been designed not only to facilitate wireless broadcasting, but also to protect cable services. Although the services were all commercial operations with none being run by the government, they were perceived as public utilities and the government saw its role as maintaining the commercial viability of all public communications services.¹⁷

The question of broadcasting regulations had been forced onto the government's agenda because of a formal proposal, in November 1922, from AWA to the PMG's department to set up a monopoly commercial broadcasting service in all states.¹⁸ AWA had broadcast a series of concerts in Melbourne, on an experimental basis in 1920 and 1921 and wanted to expand this to a permanent nationwide service.¹⁹ Other smaller aspirant broadcasters objected to a commercial monopoly for a public service. However AWA was not a normal commercial company. The government had become a majority shareholder in March 1922 in order to enable the company to provide direct wireless communication with England, and secure a virtual monopoly in the field of overseas communications.²⁰ A messy situation was already developing.

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17. Leslie Johnson, *The Unseen Voice - A cultural study of early Australian radio*, London, Routledge, 1988, p. 25.
 18. Ian Mackay, *Broadcasting in Australia*, Melbourne, MUP, 1957, p.19.
 19. Alan Thomas, *Broadcast and Be Damned*, Melbourne, MUP, 1980, p.7; Colin MacKinnon, '70 Years of Radio in Australia - 1 The Sealed Set Debacle', *Electronics Australia*, vol.55, no.12, December 1993, p.21; Curnow, 'The Origins of Australian Broadcasting', p.93.
 20. See Curnow, 'The Origins of Australian Broadcasting', pp.80-86, 97, for the details of the negotiations and the objections to the agreement based on the conflict of interest of the government between the interests of the nation and its involvement with 'Big Business'. The government had taken up £500,001 worth of £1 shares out of a proposed capital of £1,000,000 in AWA.

Political pressures from different interests led the government to become enmeshed in conflict in its efforts to fulfil all its roles in the development of broadcasting. Having heard a broadcast themselves in Queens Hall, members of parliament had recognised, as early as October 1920, that this wonderful new invention would serve as a way of reducing the isolation of outback settlers by providing them with news, music and political speeches.²¹ Wireless became accepted as an essential public utility for both point to point communication and for broadcasting as soon as it existed. There was never any argument about that. The arguments came with decisions about providers. Labor governments were inclined to favour the government's role to include being the sole provider of the services which were considered too important to be left to commercial interests. Non-Labor governments were inclined to see the government's role more as a regulator of private interests which provided the services at least partly as a public utility. This function was considered so important that the government wanted to ensure the economic viability of the commercial operators. In safeguarding this viability the Cook non-Labor government had become so heavily involved in AWA that it almost contradicted its own intention.

Ross Curnow, in his study on the early history of broadcasting, summarised the pressures and conflicts that faced the government as the birth of broadcasting approached. He characterised three types of political and administrative behaviour: the lack of a consistent, long-term wireless policy on the part of all political parties; the desire of the Postmaster-General's Department to exercise absolute control over all communications; the conflict between the two powerful agencies, A.W.A. and the Postmaster-General's Department. Curnow admitted that the fact that problems were solved on a daily basis rather than by a coherent policy was not confined to wireless telegraphy but was an example of 'the pragmatic, gradualist approach of Australian parties on most issues'. He pointed out that although the Postmaster-General's

21. *CPD*, vol.XCIV, 13 October 1913, p.5581, cited in Curnow, 'The Origins of Australian Broadcasting', p.93.

Department sought to maintain control over all communications, it took few initiatives and simply bowed to the pressure of interest groups when they became strong enough. For Curnow, the conflict between AWA and the Postmaster-General's Department was particularly noteworthy because both bodies were instruments of government, even if in a different form, 'to administer a supposedly uniform policy'.²² The names of some of the participants changed, but fifty years later when public broadcasting was being considered, the characteristic types of political and administrative behaviour was very little different.

Perhaps of greatest significance was the fact that the government was under considerable pressure to ensure that AWA did not obtain a monopoly of local broadcasting as well as overseas wireless communications. This demand came not only from the PMG's Department but also from other potential broadcasters. Early in 1923, George Taylor organised the Association for Developing Wireless in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, whose members included electrical firms, radio traders and manufacturers. The association pressed Postmaster-General Gibson to call a conference 'in order that suitable broadcasting regulations might be devised to avoid the difficulties and mistakes of older worlds'.²³ Taylor was concerned that AWA become any kind of monopoly; government or commercial were equally abhorrent. He was seeking fair competition for private enterprise in the embryonic broadcasting communications industry, whose profits would originate from the sale of wireless receivers. The government responded by determining that although broadcasting was a commercial

22. Curnow, 'The Origins of Australian Broadcasting', p.92.

23. George Taylor, 'A Review of Radio - Where Australia Stands', pamphlet, Sydney, 25 January 1927, p.11, cited in Curnow, 'The Origins of Australian Broadcasting', p.97. Taylor must have been referring to the fact that broadcasting in Britain began with the government giving a monopoly to a private operator, the British Broadcasting Company and broadcasting in America began with the chaos of many different unregulated private operators.

industry it was also an essential service which needed government regulation to ensure its commercial viability.

In spite of the competition between the PMG's Department and AWA, the regulations put to the Melbourne broadcasting conference in May 1923, were drafted by AWA's Ernest Fisk. These regulations were accepted by the conference and the government and came into effect on 1 August 1923. A 'sealed set' scheme was introduced. Stations issued with licences were to be funded by subscribers whose receivers were sealed by the PMG's department onto the station's frequency for a fee. It was possible to receive two stations by paying the fee for both and having the receiver sealed accordingly. Stations determined their own listener fee but there was a further listening fee to be paid to the government. New Zealand, where all stations were originally commercial operations, also brought down broadcasting regulations in 1923 but the social and political situation was slightly different. In his study of the relationship between politics and broadcasting, R. J. Gregory saw New Zealand as being a strongly Calvinist society, which expected to have standards imposed upon it. In this society, government and politics were conceived as entirely separate entities, with politics being confined to parliament and inappropriate for broadcasting. These notions, neither of which existed in Australia, led the New Zealand government to place a greater emphasis on the public service aspect of broadcasting when drawing up its regulations and place restrictions on the nature of material to be broadcast, which would never be accepted in Australia. Not only was political propaganda forbidden but so too was anything that was in any way obscene or offensive. By the mid 1930s these conditions became obsolete and were removed, but they were an additional aspect of the government's role in the establishment of broadcasting in New Zealand.²⁴ The USA, on the other hand, never had any such restrictions. Indeed no regulations at all were in place until the end of 1926. Although licences were needed previously, frequency allocation and transmitter power

24. R. J. Gregory, *Politics and Broadcasting - Before and Beyond the NZBC*, Palmerston North, Dunmore Press, 1985, pp.15-16.

were not allocated. As a result more powerful stations could drown out less powerful ones on the same or nearby frequencies. Every other country took the lesson from this chaos as licences in the USA proliferated faster than anywhere else in the world and many of the smaller stations soon went bankrupt.²⁵

In Australia, within a few months of the introduction of the regulations there were four stations broadcasting. 2BL in Sydney was in financial difficulties almost immediately, because it had set an extremely low listener licence fee of 10/- pa.²⁶ The station introduced this rate because its owners had hoped to recoup their costs from the sale of radio receivers.²⁷ This was an over-ambitious expectation for, in 1923 only a third of Australian homes had electricity. Indeed electricity was still regarded as a novelty in 1927 when Manly Municipal Council celebrated its jubilee by turning on some coloured lights. Although most Sydney homes had electricity for lighting by 1930 it was still only the middle class who could afford to use it for large appliances. Certainly the hype of advertising electricity and with it, radio, as part of modern life took years to penetrate the population as a whole.²⁸

With low receiver licence fees and the acceptance of wireless receivers as a necessity in the modern home taking longer than expected, all the stations soon found they really were not commercially viable. In an attempt to redress this situation the

25. Hilliard, 'History and Regulation', pp.7-8.

26. The other Sydney station 2FC, owned by the retailer Farmer and Company, and originally run by AWA, charged 3 guineas pa. See R. R. Walker, *The Magic Spark: The story of the first fifty years of Radio in Australia*, Melbourne, Hawthorn Press, 1973, pp.11,13,14.

27. Mackay, *Broadcasting in Australia*, p.19; MacKinnon, '70 Years of Radio in Australia - 1 The Sealed Set Debacle', p.21.

28. Mick Counihan, 'The Formation of a Broadcasting Audience: Australian Radio in the Twenties,' *Meanjin*, vol.41, no.2, June 1982, pp.199; Peter Spearritt, *Sydney since the Twenties*, Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, 1978, pp.53-54, 68-69.

government permitted some announcements relating to businesses sponsoring their programs to be broadcast, although advertisements as such were banned.²⁹ However, the stations were still in trouble. By June 1924 there were only 1,400 listener licences issued. And of those who bought wireless receivers many discovered that by tinkering with their sets they could pick up stations other than the one they had paid a fee to receive. Experimenters could listen to any station they chose for the payment of one small fee. There had been over 5,000 applications for experimenters' licences. Clearly the 'sealed set' licensing system was a failure and would not realise Postmaster-General Gibson's hope 'that the advent of wireless broadcasting will prove a great boon, especially to the people in the country districts, as its successful development should place them virtually in the position of the city dwellers who obtain their news in the morning and evening'.³⁰ No non-capital city stations were licensed until a new licensing system had been introduced.

The 'sealed set' system was abandoned and new regulations were promulgated which incorporated two categories of licences, A-class and B-class. All stations were still to be run by private companies under government licences but A-class stations were to be funded largely by listener licence fees. Additional revenue could be raised by advertising with a restricted time limit. The four original stations were relicensed as A-class stations with additional licences being issued so that Sydney and Melbourne had two each and all other capital cities had one each. Queensland Premier W.N. Gillies welcomed the establishment of his Labor government's station, 4QG in

29. This was an arrangement very similar to sponsorship announcements on public radio more than fifty years later.

30. William Gibson, 'Souvenir of Australian Wireless and Catalogue of Electrical Exhibition', Sydney, December 1923, p.5., cited in Curnow, 'The Origins of Australian Broadcasting', p.102.

Brisbane as a means of ending the isolation of the man on the land.³¹

B-class licenses were issued to those who previously operated under experimental licences. These new stations were entirely dependent on advertising revenue. The oldest extant B-class station, 2UE in Sydney, commenced broadcasting on Australia Day, 26 January 1925 from the living room of the C.V. Stevenson's Maroubra home. The very next day experimenter *extraordinaire* Harry A. Douglas commenced 2HD in Newcastle in an improvised studio upstairs in his tyre works in Hamilton. This was only the second non-capital city station to commence and the first one to survive.³²

Not only did the Queensland A-class station have political affiliations, there were also similar flirtations in NSW, all of which would have been anathema in New Zealand. When 2KY was set up in Sydney as a B-class station in October 1925, by the Trades and Labor Council of NSW, there was a push to expand it into a state wide network which could counter the conservative political opinions pushed by the existing A-class stations. This plan was largely the brainchild of Albert Willis, a member of the Labor Cabinet in the Legislative Council and Emil Voigt who became Willis' Secretary. Premier of NSW Jack Lang later claimed the scheme as his own.³³ However, as Murray

31. Thomas, *Broadcast and Be Damned*, pp.7,12; Walker, *The Magic Spark*, pp.20-23; Mackay, *Broadcasting in Australia*, pp.22-23.

32. Walker, *The Magic Spark*, pp.23-24; Allen Fairhall, Personal Interview at Cambridge Press, Newcastle, 3 December 1992. Fairhall recounted that Harry Douglas was always lured by new inventions. Douglas became bored with wireless before it became a profitable business, sold his station to W.W. Johnson in February, 1928.

33. Jack Lang, 'How the State lost its big Chance in Broadcasting', *Truth*, 11 July 1954, cited in Murray Goot, 'Radio LANG', H. Radi, and P. Spearrit, eds, *Jack Lang*, Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, 1977, pp.119, 258; Goot points out in the Endnote that Mackay, *Broadcasting in Australia*, p.25, accepted Lang's account without question.

Goot emphasised in his work on Lang's interest in radio, it was not originally Lang's idea and, at the time, he had been apprehensive about setting up state run stations for purely political purposes: 'Governments come and Governments go; and what might be to our advantage today might be to our disadvantage tomorrow'.³⁴

For Lang, state radio might avoid the conservative political partisanship of some of the existing stations but its programs would have to be for the 'good of the country'³⁵ with weather reports and musical entertainment. 2KY would remain in the friendly political hands of the Trades and Labor Council. Recognising that state radio might fall into the hands of his political enemies, Lang envisaged such a network would need to have more public utility, rather than political, aspects in its programming. In fact, in his policy speech for the 1927 elections, he proposed to relay the existing Sydney A-class stations to country towns, which was exactly what the federal government was under pressure to facilitate.³⁶ But the Lang government was defeated at these elections, before the plan was executed, and the state broadcasting scheme was abandoned.³⁷ When 2GB was established in 1926 by the NSW branch of the Theosophical Society, it claimed to aim to cultivate notions of nationhood and citizenship and promote education and culture. In fact their aim was more political than Lang's for they hoped to 'Theosophise' Australia and provide a forum for conservative politicians.³⁸

There were eight A-class stations and twelve B-class stations by 1927, concentrated in the cities and heavily populated coastal regions where there was maximum listener licence fee revenue for the A-class stations and maximum advertising

34. Jack Lang, *NSWPD*, vol.102, 13 October 1925, p.1478, cited in Goot, 'Radio LANG', p.133.

35. Lang, 'How the State lost its big Chance in Broadcasting'.

36. Goot, 'Radio LANG', p.132.

37. Mackay, *Broadcasting in Australia*, p.25; Thomas, *Broadcast and Be Damned*, p.12.

38. Johnson, *The Unseen Voice*, p. 60.

revenue for the B-class stations. Dissatisfied country people were lobbying Country Party members of non-Labor governments for equal services for the only radio they received at this time was a few crackles from the distant A-class city stations when the atmospheric conditions were favourable. As Lesley Johnson has pointed out, 'In the mid-1920s the "B" class stations remained essentially extensions of the experimenters' or enthusiasts' licence', in spite of the claims of stations like 2KY and 2GB.³⁹ No-one seriously thought of them as a public utility with an obligation to provide a service for all Australians.⁴⁰ On the other hand, since they were funded by listener licence fees the

39. *ibid.*, p. 59.

40. Many of the B-class stations evolved in a very similar fashion to the small community stations more than fifty years later. They were technologically primitive, ran on extremely inadequate budgets, and tried to provide a very local service from the dedicated service of overworked radio enthusiasts. Sir Allen Fairhall revealed, when interviewed, how he became involved in commercial broadcasting. He had just finished an apprenticeship at the dockyard in Newcastle as the Depression hit the economy and found himself out of work. As he had been involved in amateur radio since 1928, starting up a radio station was his solution to that problem by converting his amateur radio transmitter to the AM radio band. At first he broadcast unofficially one hour on Sunday mornings since he had a turntable and records. Harold Pickover, known as Peter when he broadcast many years later on Newcastle's community station, 2NUR-FM, was his first announcer. This was so well received they built up a reasonable audience and soon someone offered them some advertising. Fairhall then decided he should apply for a commercial broadcasting licence. He needed to demonstrate to the Department, as community broadcasters did later, that there was the demand in the community for another licence as 2HD was already licensed. Having succeeded in proving a call for another station in Newcastle he still found it very difficult to find financial partners. He was forced to own the station individually with a small bank loan and

A-class stations were seen as having greater responsibilities even though they were operated by private companies whose overriding motivation was to make a profit. Unfortunately no profits were envisaged from providing a comprehensive service for the scattered communities in rural Australia.

The Bruce-Page non-Labor government of the late 1920s was under pressure from its Country Party constituents to find a remedy but still had no enthusiasm for adopting the recent British solution. Broadcasting had been taken over as a national service in Britain to provide for the whole population. H.P. Brown, Director General of the PMG's Department since 1923, advocated this for Australia. Brown's ideas developed during the previous twenty five years, which he had spent with the British Post Office.⁴¹

Regulated broadcasting, controlled by the Post Office, began in Britain in 1922. It started with a private monopoly company, the British Broadcasting Company, which was a consortium that could be joined by any *bona fide* British radio manufacturers. The operation was funded by a combination of listener licence fees and the royalties from the sale of sets. Spot advertisements were forbidden and although program sponsorship was allowed it was rarely used and the organisation was run primarily as a public service. In 1926, following the report of the Crawford Committee

to use largely borrowed gear. This proved to be to his financial advantage later for when the stations became profitable, the profits were his alone. He commenced broadcasting officially with his strange assortment of equipment on 2KO, 31 August 1931. Fairhall and Pickover were unpaid operators for the first twelve months, selling just enough advertising to raise sufficient money to eat two meals a day. Since it was the Depression they were content. It was only when the economy improved that it was possible to make a decent living from running a commercial radio station in Newcastle. See Fairhall Interview.

41. Thomas, *Broadcast and Be Damned*, pp.8, 9; Mackay, *Broadcasting in Australia*, pp.26-27.

into broadcasting the company was converted into a public corporation, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and granted a Royal charter, which guaranteed its autonomy from the government. Although the charter was renewed by parliament and the BBC operated as a monopoly under a licence issued by the Postmaster-General it was an entirely independent organisation providing a public service unhindered either by any profit motive or by government interference. Greg Mundy, in his work on the origins of broadcasting, maintains that the BBC envisaged itself as a cultural institution seeing its function as informing and educating as well as entertaining.⁴²

By contrast the USA broadcasting system was based on the free enterprise system from the beginning, with stations set up to make profits for shareholders. Programming was based on popularity as opposed to the British 'citizenship' model. There was very little regulation and by 1922 there were 500 stations in operation. Mass advertising for consumer products was booming and radio was an obvious medium for this expansion. Some sort of order was injected into this chaos with the passage of the *Radio Act* at the end of 1926. The Federal Radio Commission (FRC), was set up as a separate body to regulate broadcasting. Some attempts were made to regulate advertising. However, even after it was replaced, in 1934, by the permanent regulator, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which was charged with upholding 'the public interest, convenience and necessity', this body rarely did more than allocate frequencies and transmission power limitations to aspirant licensees. From the outset there was another small strand of American broadcasting which had values similar to the British. As early as 1912 Ohio University was broadcasting weather reports and other similar information. Non-profit university stations expanded with the rest of broadcasting in the USA and by 1924, Columbia University was broadcasting courses in politics and psychology. However, due to unsustainable costs during the Depression,

42. Greg Mundy, "'Free-Enterprise' or 'Public Service'? The Origins of Broadcasting in the U.S., U.K. and Australia', *ANZ Journal of Sociology*, vol.18, no.3, November 1982, pp.290-291; Mackay, *Broadcasting in Australia*, p.6.

university radio languished from the 1930s until well after World War 2 when some government funding was provided for what had become known as public broadcasting, which now basically consisted of non-profit university and community stations.⁴³ In spite of this development, broadcasting in the USA has been dominated, throughout its history, by the commercial imperative rather than any concept of public service or citizenship.

The Australian non-Labor government was not prepared to adopt the American attitude of allowing commercial forces to determine the distribution of broadcasting services. The rural population was too scattered for this to be a viable proposition and it wanted to keep more control over the public service aspects of the industry. The government did not find the British system of a non-profit monopoly as suitable for Australia either. Britain is geographically small with a relatively dense population making it financially possible to run an adequate system from listener licence fees. It would be prohibitively expensive for the government to use the same scheme in Australia. Furthermore this would have alienated the friends with B-class licences, who were emerging as broadcasting entrepreneurs. A compromise was needed, but attempts to induce the various A-class stations to pool their resources to assist the stations in less populated areas, were unsuccessful. To seek a solution the government set up a Royal Commission in January 1927 to investigate:

- (a) Wireless broadcasting within the Commonwealth in all its aspects, making recommendations as to any alterations deemed desirable in the policy and practices at present in force; and

43. Andrew Greig, 'Radio in Education - with particular reference to its use in the education of adults and to the development of Sydney Public Radio Station 2SER FM', MA (Education)(Pass), a long essay, Sydney, 1981, pp.36-37,40; Hilliard, 'History and Regulation', pp.9-10, 21; Cantor, 'United States: A System of Minimal Regulation', p.169.

(b) The development and utilization of wireless services for ***public requirements*** within the Commonwealth. (My bold Italics)⁴⁴

In its report the Commission acknowledged that an Australian version of the BBC could eventually be created but did not recommend its establishment at this stage.⁴⁵ As a result of the Commission's report the Prime Minister held a series of conferences with the A-class stations to initiate a scheme whereby all the licence fees would be pooled on a national basis guaranteeing a minimum income to the licensees in each state. In effect the stations in the more populated states were being asked to subsidise those in the less populated states. After months of discussions the stations would not agree to this sort of proposal. They were, after all, commercial operations with responsibilities to their own shareholders, unlike the government which had responsibilities to all its citizens if it wished to be re-elected. The government, itself, had to solve the problem for it was committed to broadcasting services being available to the whole population.

A compromise solution was implemented. The government acquired the A-class stations as their licences expired and established a system where the Post Office owned and operated the technical equipment but programming would be contracted out.⁴⁶ A consortium formed the Australian Broadcasting Company and won a three year programming contract to 30 June 1932.⁴⁷ Under this arrangement programming on a national level expanded, interstate relays were introduced and four regional stations were established in country areas. Although the Depression impeded the implementation of technical developments broadcasting generally improved during this period.⁴⁸

44. Cited in ABCB, *First Annual Report of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board*, Canberra, L. F. Johnston Commonwealth Government Printer, 1950, p.3.

45. Armstrong, *Broadcasting Law and Policy in Australia*, p.35.

46. ABCB, *First Annual Report*, p.4.

47. Thomas, *Broadcast and Be Damned*, p.8.

48. ABCB, *First Annual Report*, p.4.

B-class licence regulations remained unchanged but the stations became known as commercial broadcasting stations.⁴⁹ During this time also, the number of these stations increased. By 1932 there were forty three, with many of them providing satisfactory local services in the more densely populated country areas.⁵⁰

Since there is very little documentary evidence of the operation of the Australian Broadcasting Company⁵¹ it is unclear whether this system of the company providing national programming for the Post Office owned A-class stations and private enterprise providing local services on the commercial B-class stations would have eventually provided satisfactory services for the broadcasting needs of all Australians. The system did not last because the Australian Broadcasting Company decided not to apply for the renewal of its licence. The company was aware of a demand for the establishment of a proper national system. Australia was in the grip of the Depression but the company was still under pressure to extend facilities to country areas at a rapid rate. The Australian Broadcasting Company saw its commercial viability under threat. Licence fees failed to yield a satisfactory income. Not only did the number of licences not increase as swiftly as anticipated but in some months in 1930, at the height of the Depression, they actually fell. The PMG had only built four of the expected sixteen regional stations by 1932 and this further reduced the increase in demand for listener licences. Since the arrangement was not going to be as profitable as predicted the company bought the commercial station 2UW before the contract with the government expired, intending it to be a base for a commercial broadcasting network. Although it was the fact that the Australian Broadcasting Company did not intend to apply for the renewal of its licence in 1932 that was the catalyst for government action there had been increasing pressure for the establishment of a national broadcasting service similar to the

49. Mundy, "'Free-Enterprise' or 'Public Service'? The Origins of Broadcasting in the U.S., U.K. and Australia', p.293.

50. ABCB, *First Annual Report*, p.4.

51. Mackay, *Broadcasting in Australia*, p.31.

BBC for sometime.

After the 1927 Royal Commission reported its findings the government set up an Advisory Committee to assist the Postmaster-General. H.P. Brown, Director General of the PMG's Department, who had long supported the idea of establishing a national service, was appointed to this committee. When the committee recommended the arrangement which led to the formation of the Australian Broadcasting Company it had only intended this to be a temporary arrangement before a proper national service was established. Brown continued to apply pressure for this to be introduced. Within the population at large there were divergent views as to the function of broadcasting. Quite apart from the commercial operators' view that broadcasting was an opportunity for private enterprise there were two distinct views among listeners about the function of radio in the community. There was a feeling among the educated elite that a national broadcasting service should be established with similar ideals to the BBC to educate and inform the ignorant masses and that it possessed the power 'if used with wisdom and imagination, to bridge the gulfs of ignorance and misunderstanding that now divide the nations'.⁵² This was the sort of concept that had underpinned the development of broadcasting in New Zealand.

However, many of the country people in Australia, who were lobbying so hard for radio services to be extended to their areas, did not want that kind of broadcasting and expressed their concerns. 'The wireless is a great asset to the country people but I doubt if the licences of many would be renewed if a professor of music was directing the broadcast ... We people do not like what is called classical music, as we are not educated for it. How many are?'⁵³ The objections to this kind of programming were not necessarily restricted to rural people still seeking radio to be extended to their

52. W. Macmahon Ball, *Press, Radio and World Affairs: Australia's Outlook*, Melbourne 1938, cited in Thomas, *Broadcast and Be Damned*, p.9.

53. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 February 1932, cited in Thomas, *Broadcast and Be Damned*, p.9.

communities. The *Wireless Weekly* published a city listener's letter expressing similar sentiments. 'I, as an Australian, object to having education crammed down my throat by supercilious committees and art connoisseurs. In plain Australian, I don't want to be educated. I want the news and wireless features that please me.'⁵⁴ The 'intellectually aware citizens', as Thomas describes those pushing for a service similar to the BBC,⁵⁵ continued to send deputations to government with suggestions that any broadcasting body should include one woman and that a commission should comprise people of culture and standing. Support for the extension of broadcasting services by members of parliament crossed all party lines. The Country Party leader Dr Earle Page was mainly concerned that it would bring a better service to country listeners who supported his party.⁵⁶ Labor Party support was based on similar ideas to those of Jack Lang in NSW when he considered a state broadcasting network. The federal Labor Party saw that a national broadcaster, while not overtly supporting its policy, would provide a counterweight to the conservative forces behind the commercial stations.⁵⁷

The Scullin Labor government had played with the idea of introducing a truly national broadcasting system and had drafted a bill in 1931 to put all A-class stations under a broadcasting commission. Scullin had even contemplated nationalising all broadcasting services as a great public utility. This would have been in accord with the Labor Party's general policy on nationalisation but could not become a political

54. *Wireless Weekly*, 11 January 1929, cited in Leslie Johnson, 'Radio as Popular Education', *Labour History*, no.45, November 1983, p.77. For a detailed discussion of the conflicts in the demands for different types of programming see Leslie Johnson, "'SING 'EM MUCK CLARA", High Brow Versus Low Brow On Early Australian Radio', *Meanjin*, vol.41, no.2, June 1982, pp.210-222.

55. Thomas, *Broadcast and Be Damned*, p.9.

56. *ibid.*, p.11.

57. Mundy, "'Free-Enterprise" or "Public Service"? The Origins of Broadcasting in the U.S., U.K. and Australia', p.297.

reality for it was too costly and the commercial stations were already too far entrenched. In fact the whole idea lapsed because political manoeuvrings within the Labor Party over conflicting solutions to the Depression left the government in disarray.⁵⁸

This was also in contrast to the situation in New Zealand where the first Labor government was elected in 1935. The new government was anxious to circumvent what it saw as unfavourable newspaper publicity and took political control of broadcasting in 1936 with Michael Savage as first Minister for Broadcasting. The government nationalised the 22 existing 'B' class local radio stations and the four YA national stations. The national stations becoming one government department and the local stations, now transformed into commercial stations, were coordinated through another government department in 1937. These combined in 1943, ostensibly as a wartime economy measure, to form the New Zealand Broadcasting System. This system operated firstly as the New Zealand Broadcasting Company Ltd, then as the New Zealand Broadcasting Board and finally as the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS). These organisations ran commercial and non-commercial stations, until 1961 when television was introduced.⁵⁹ Not only was the social and political atmosphere different from Australia, but geographically the country was tiny by comparison. Although the rugged terrain provided obstacles to adequate broadcasting services in some areas, totally nationalised services were far more affordable, particularly with the smaller local stations operating as commercial stations.

With the Labor government in confusion in Australia, elections were called. One of the first acts of Joe Lyons and his United Australia Party (UAP)

58. Thomas, *Broadcast and Be Damned*, p.8.

59. Helen Wilson, *Broadcasting Policy and Planning in New Zealand*, Sydney, Communications Law Centre NSW, Occasional Paper, no.6 1992, p.1; Brian Pauling, '70 Years of Radio - An Overview', H. Wilson, ed., *The Radio Book 1994*, Christchurch, New Zealand Broadcasting School Christchurch Polytechnic, 1994, pp.7-10; Day, pp.1-3.

government, early in 1932, was to resurrect Scullin's draft bill which would form a national service from the A-class stations and leave the B-class stations unchanged.

The UAP government was forced into immediate action by the Australian Broadcasting Company's decision not to apply for a renewal of its licence. The licence was due to expire at the end of June. Since Scullin's draft bill was acceptable to all major political parties, to the Postmaster-General's Department and to Lyons himself, it was adopted almost unaltered.⁶⁰ Thomas has claimed that 'moreover, Lyons personally admired the BBC and believed that Australia should possess a similar organization. He identified with the attitudes of the Australian cultural elite who defined themselves in terms of educational and cultural levels.'⁶¹ The government was now assuming a role greater than had been originally envisaged by setting up a national service with cultural implications. This, clearly, was not going to be seen as a suitable public utility by those indifferent to educational and cultural levels in society. These people, largely in the country, sought local information rather than the promotion of anything purporting to be national culture. They were still not going to be satisfactorily provided for. The government having accepted its role in broadcasting as both expanding services to country areas and uplifting the population passed the *Australian Broadcasting Commission Act 1932*, 17 May 1932, creating the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC). Although a separate statutory body, this new organisation did not have the same independence as the BBC because it had been established by act of parliament whereas the BBC had been established by Royal Charter. The *Act* required the ABC to 'provide and shall broadcast from the National Broadcasting Stations adequate and comprehensive programmes and shall take in the interests of the community all such measures as in the opinion of the Commission are conducive to the full development of

60. Ken Inglis, *This is the ABC - The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983*, Melbourne, MUP, 1983, p.17.

61. Thomas, *Broadcast and Be Damned*, p.12.

suitable broadcasting programmes'.⁶² Once established the ABC itself considered:

Enlightenment must come through entertainment. The Commission therefore aims to develop side by side its two ideals of pleasing and benefiting, and this it hopes to do by continually striving to render its service pleasing and its pleasing serviceable; it will seek to appeal not to each section of the community in turn, but to all sections of the community at all times.⁶³

This was an unrealisable aim for it is not possible to be all things to all diverse sections of the community all the time and was rather more ambitious than the BBC, which sought to benefit rather than to please. The reason for this is accurately assessed by Greg Mundy. He claimed that this impossible objective was probably devised because 'the Reithian ethic of "public service" was in a weaker position ... since the A.B.C. did not enjoy the B.B.C's monopoly status',⁶⁴ and had to compete at least in some areas, particularly the cities, with the commercial broadcasting stations. Notwithstanding its confused broadcasting policy the Commission took over the existing studios of the Australian Broadcasting Company and began broadcasting from the stations as a national broadcasting service on 1 July 1932. It was financed by a proportion of listeners' licence fees and technical services continued to be maintained by the Post Office as under the company.⁶⁵

Thus, despite the fact that, from its inception, the Australian government had regarded all forms of public communications as public services over which it should have some control it initially considered private enterprise as a suitable vehicle for

62. *Australian Broadcasting Commission Act 1932*, cited in Mackay, *Broadcasting in Australia*, p.35.

63. *ABC: First Annual Report*, p.10, cited in Thomas, *Broadcast and Be Damned*, p.18.

64. Mundy, "'Free-Enterprise" or "Public Service"? The Origins of Broadcasting in the U.S., U.K. and Australia', p.297

65. ABCB, *First Annual Report*, p.4.

broadcasting services. It was only when, due to the unique conditions in Australia, private enterprise proved either unwilling or unable to provide a commercially viable public service to the scattered rural population that the government seriously considered its role to include establishing a national broadcasting service itself. Having accepted this role the government then incorporated the 'uplifting' function espoused by the BBC, in setting up the ABC. Australia now had a dual broadcasting system.

A national service was provided by the ABC and regulated by the government under the *Australian Broadcasting Commission Act*. Local services were provided by the commercial stations, and still regulated by the government under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*. The acceptance of this system coincided with the fact that radio was no longer seen as the latest scientific marvel but had become part of everyday living, the most recent essential public utility. The emphasis had moved from the wonders of the latest communications technology to suitable programs for potential audiences.⁶⁶ The development of these programming concerns during the 1930s led to changes which meant the distinctions between the national service and the commercial stations became somewhat blurred. When a second ABC network commenced it tended to concentrate on state and local issues and generally 'lighter' programming.⁶⁷ Some of the commercial stations combined to form national networks in the late 1930's. This was intended to counter the national service of the ABC, particularly as there was an increasing number of advertisers seeking nation-wide distribution of their products. These people saw the cost benefits of network promotion of their goods.⁶⁸

Nevertheless the basic concept of the dual system, once established, was not seriously challenged until the late 1960s. Graeme Osborne and Glen Lewis explained this as a balance between 'the competing rhetorics of consumption and citizenship', as

66. Johnson, 'Radio as Popular Education', p.70.

67. Inglis, *This is the ABC*, p.141.

68. Mackay, *Broadcasting in Australia*, p.142.

seen in the American and British models.⁶⁹ This is an accurate evaluation of the dual system for neither private enterprise seeking profits nor a national service seeking to provide a public service for its citizens, could provide adequately for the needs of all Australians. The dual system was generally accepted as best able to do just that.

Canada had similar geographic problems to Australia but its solution was different because its political and social situation was different. Canada was swamped with a multitude of powerful American commercial stations beaming their broadcasts across the border. Canada also had two separate cultural heritages of its own, French and British, as well as substantial indigenous populations. Canada was fighting for a national identity in a way that Australia was not, and this pervaded the thoughts of politicians of all political persuasions, particularly in the development of communications policy. The necessary establishment of a national identity was difficult because as Wilden puts it, Canada is defined by what it is not: not American, not British and not French, just 'Notland'.⁷⁰ Canadian radio began the same way as in the USA, with the free-market commercial model and a small number of non-profit educational stations. Dissatisfaction with the model grew rapidly as it became apparent that it did nothing to develop Canada's national identity. In 1929 a Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting, the Aird Commission, determined that radio had a cultural and educational function for Canada and advocated a national, publicly owned corporation to operate and oversee all broadcasting. The resultant *Canadian Broadcasting Act* in 1932 created the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission which was to set up a national system and oversee the commercial system until the latter was phased out.

However, the government policy in Canada was no more consistent than

69. Graeme Osborne, and Glen Lewis, *Communications Traditions in 20th century Australia*, Melbourne, OUP, 1995, p.162.

70. A. Wilden, *The Imaginary Canadian*, Vancouver 1980, cited in Richard Collins, 'Canada: Nation-building Threatened by the US - Dominated Media?', R. Kuhn, ed., *The Politics of Broadcasting*, Sydney, Croom Helm, 1985, pp.198-199.

it was in Australia. Since the government did not fund the Commission sufficiently to construct an adequate network of transmitters to set up a fully national service, the commercial broadcasters remained. A change of government in 1936 produced the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), modelled on the BBC, a public service broadcaster to encourage the development of a national identity. The aim was to achieve an 84% coverage of the population. Again this was too costly, as Canada had similar geographic difficulties to Australia. The result was achieved with some commercial stations becoming affiliated with the CBC. These private stations sold advertising to fulfil their commercial obligations to their shareholders but served the citizenship requirements of their audiences with CBC programs. This 'hybrid', 'mixed' and yet 'single' system remained, virtually unchanged, until new legislation was passed in 1958 and 1967, and provided a contrast to the situation in Australia.⁷¹

The Australian dual system concept was accepted by the *Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Wireless Broadcasting*, chaired by Senator W.G. Gibson former Postmaster-General (The 'Gibson Committee') on 25 March 1942. The committee had been asked to report on 'Should any and what change be made in the existing laws and practices relating to the control of broadcasting?'⁷² Although the committee's report recommended that the *Australian Broadcasting Commission Act 1932* be repealed and replaced by a Broadcasting Act which would include the regulations for commercial broadcasters currently promulgated under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act 1905*, it did not recommend major changes to the system. This was strange because only half the committee agreed with this view as an extra paragraph after

71. Collins, 'Canada: Nation-building Threatened by the US -Dominated Media?', pp.202-206, 210; Marc Raboy, 'Canada: The Hybridization of Public Broadcasting', M. Raboy, ed., *Public Broadcasting for the 21st Century - Academic Monograph 17*, Luton, ULP, 1995, pp.104-106, 108-109.

72. William Gibson, *Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Wireless Broadcasting*, Canberra, L.F. Johnston, Government Printer, 1942, p.5.

the main report testified. It read: 'We have signed the above Report and desire to state in amplification of our views that we believe that the whole broadcasting system should be nationalized(*sic*). The platform of the Labour(*sic*) Party to which we have subscribed contains a plank to this effect'.⁷³ It is not at all clear why the Labor Party members of the committee, which included Arthur Calwell, later Minister for Information and Immigration in Chifley's government, signed the report itself when they were fundamentally opposed to the continuation of the current system. Certainly the report was accepted and acted upon by the government as if that final paragraph had not been added. The *Australian Broadcasting Act 1942* enacted the committee's recommendations and provided for a Parliamentary Standing Committee to report to parliament on matters referred to it by either house or the minister.⁷⁴ The dual system of broadcasting in Australia and the government's role in it, as established with the setting up of the ABC in 1932, were confirmed.

Henceforth, in the post World War 2 era, whenever discussion of the expansion of broadcasting services arose the question always had to be answered as to whether it was part of the government's responsibility to provide a public utility or whether this was another opportunity for private enterprise to run a commercial operation. This situation still persists and the tension between these two aspects of broadcasting has led to opposing interest groups lobbying the government hard in different directions. Even though broadcasting has rarely been a significant electoral issue, the result has been confusion in the government over its broadcasting policy in post-war Australia, which continued even when public broadcasting was introduced to overcome some of the shortcomings of the system. Later chapters will reveal how the government tried to balance the conflicting political pressures as it sought to expand broadcasting services, and how the confused policy which resulted led to a diversity of interpretations by critics and investigators.

73. Gibson, *Report*, p.77.

74. Armstrong, *Broadcasting Law and Policy in Australia*, p.37.

CHAPTER THREE - RESTRICTING BROADCASTING DEVELOPMENT: 1945 - 1967.

Chapter Two examined in detail how the dual system of radio broadcasting in Australia, which consisted of the government and the commercial sectors, gradually evolved. The establishment of the ABC in 1932 was the final step in this process. Apart from the report of the Joint Committee on Wireless Broadcasting, chaired by Senator William Gibson, and the subsequent passing of the *Australian Broadcasting Act 1942*, which basically ratified the existing situation, there was a break in the development of broadcasting services until the late 1940s. This was due to the fact that Australia, like the rest of the world, was preoccupied with the Depression and World War 2, during this period. Neither commercial interests nor the government could really afford to think of expanding broadcasting services during the Depression. During the war investment was channelled into the war effort and the government was concerned about the possibility of subversion over the airwaves.

In the post war years, the contrast in policy between the Labor and Coalition parties was as marked as it has ever been, either before or since. Both sides of politics accepted broadcasting as an essential service which should be available for all Australians, but the way they intended to meet their objectives was very different. Labor's policy consisted of the expansion of centralised government control. This was exemplified in its desire to expand ABC services. The Coalition, on the other hand, professed a desire to allow private enterprise a larger part in the provision of broadcasting services. A close examination of the political pressures on and achievements of all governments in the 1940s 1950s, and 1960s will reveal that, in reality, both sides of politics treated broadcasting in much the same fashion. Almost without exception, political and bureaucratic pressures on the Coalition meant it maintained very tight political control of broadcasting, even though broadcasting was never really an election issue. While it developed the ABC's services it allowed very little expansion of commercial radio services. The Coalition virtually carried out Labor Party policy rather than its own. This chapter will examine the factors, including the Cold

War, the power of existing commercial interests and the introduction of television, which led all governments in Australia to follow similar restrictive policies after the war. Comparisons will be made with other comparable countries. The chapter will conclude by showing how these policies led to considerable dissatisfaction among many different sections of the electorate, including members of recent immigrant ethnic communities, due to political and social changes in Australian society by the late 1960s.

Ben Chifley's Labor government retained office until 1949 with Arthur Calwell as Minister for Information and Immigration. Calwell had always been very much in favour of nationalising all broadcasting as a public utility that should be provided by the government for every Australian.¹ It has already been shown that a Labor government in New Zealand had been able to do so in 1935. But, as a practical politician, Calwell was aware that, in Australia, it would be impossible to take over the existing commercial services. They were too entrenched and the cost would have been prohibitive. Under the circumstances, the best Calwell could achieve was to seek to ensure that any services involving new technologies, such as FM radio and television, would all be government owned, controlled and operated. This was the continuing policy of the Labor Party, after it lost office, and Calwell reiterated it in parliament in 1955:

The policy of the Labour(sic) party provides for the nationalization of radio services, and although it is too late to do anything about commercial broadcasting stations which are operating on the medium frequency band, we can at least prevent television from becoming a menace in the home if the motive force in obtaining television licences is to make a profit and not to provide information or decent entertainment for the cultural advancement of the people.²

In line with this Labor policy one of the first actions of the government

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1. Calwell had made his position clear when signing the 'Gibson' Report in 1942.
 2. Arthur Calwell, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.5, 11-12 November 1955, p.2922.

after the war was to legislate for an expansion of the services provided by the ABC, with the *Australian Broadcasting Act 1948*. The national broadcaster was now required to broadcast federal parliament proceedings and employ its own news gathering staff to broadcast news sessions.³ At the same time, to cope with this expansion in programming, the ABC introduced two distinctly different networks: the National Programme broadcasting parliament and other serious programmes and the Interstate Programme broadcasting for schools and other light programmes.⁴ Neither of these networks provided the local programming so eagerly sought in rural areas. From the end of 1943, ABC stations, such as 2NA in Newcastle, had been set up specifically for local areas, but this only happened where the population to be served had reached 100,000.⁵ This still left many rural communities without local programming. But, the method of funding the ABC was also changed with this new legislation. It became an independent appropriation by parliament. This meant that everyone was now contributing to the cost of the ABC through taxation, whether or not a service was available. The original method of funding the ABC from listener licence fees was scrapped because by 1947-48 the service cost £660,000 more than was collected in licence fees, which now become

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3. Fred Green, *Report to Minister for Post and Telecommunications on structure of the Australian broadcasting system*, ('Green Report'), Canberra, AGPS, 1976, p.A23; Terry Moore, 'Radio National: Survival in the Age of Economic (Ir)rationalism', H. Wilson, ed., *Australian Communications and the Public Sphere*, Melbourne, MacMillan, 1989 p.93; ABCB, *First Annual Report of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board Period 15th March to 30th June 1949*, Canberra, 1950, p.4.
 4. Ken Inglis, *This is the ABC - The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983*, Melbourne, MUP, 1983, p.142.
 5. Department of Communications, *Localism in Australian Broadcasting, A Review of Policy*, Canberra, AGPS, 1984, p.21; Inglis, *This is the ABC*, p.142; Ian Mackay, *Broadcasting in Australia*, Melbourne, MUP, 1957, p.210.

part of consolidated revenue.⁶

The Labor government was also concerned about the possible development of private monopoly control of commercial broadcasting. Commercial stations had started to band together into networks in the 1930s not only to reduce the cost of programming but also to enable advertisers to have national coverage. While the government accepted it as a political impossibility to implement its policy of nationalising the commercial stations it was determined to regulate the growth of networks to prevent an effective monopoly of commercial services. Labor passed the first legislation regulating commercial stations' membership of the networks in August 1946.⁷

Calwell's *Australian Broadcasting Act 1948*, covered more than changes to the ABC, bringing substantial amendments to the legislation. All the changes to the legislation were the result of recommendations by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Broadcasting and pressures from commercial broadcasters. The Committee had looked at the possible introduction of television and FM broadcasting. The Australian Federation of Commercial Broadcasting Stations (AFCBS), had lobbied to have broadcasting removed from political control.⁸ As a result of the Committee's recommendations the act now also covered the introduction of VHF-FM broadcasting, the introduction of television, and the establishment of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board (ABCB), a statutory body to control some aspects of licences for

6. Green, 'Green Report', p.A.23; ABCB, *First Annual Report*, pp.4-6.

7. Department of Communications, *Localism in Australian Broadcasting*, pp.22-23.

8. Ray Allsop, 'A Case for Television in Australia', Sydney, Radio Printing Press, 25 June 1951, Australian Archives Series A816/1 Item 48/301/157; Barry Cole, 'The Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the Regulation of Commercial Radio in Australia since 1948', PhD Thesis, North Western University, Evanston, Illinois, 1966, microfilm by University Microfilms International, 1980, Department of Communications Library, Canberra, p.4.

broadcasting, television and other like services.⁹ The *Act* very much reflected Calwell's Labor philosophy on broadcasting, as a public utility to be owned, controlled operated and paid for by government.

The government was interested in the introduction of VHF-FM broadcasting for a number of reasons: firstly its far superior sound would be appreciated by listeners who were interested in specialist music programmes and secondly it would enable a much larger number of stations to be established than was possible using the medium frequency AM band. Probably the strongest motivation, however, was that it enabled the government to expand broadcasting services without licensing any more commercial stations. This was possible because there were no existing commercial operations established on the VHF-FM band. The Labor government was determined to maintain control of these new services and thus increase the proportion of stations under its command. Hence experimental stations were set up by the ABC to test this latest technology, firstly in Sydney and Melbourne and later in Adelaide and Brisbane. The *Act* specifically forbade commercial stations from using FM.¹⁰

Quite apart from the advice of the Parliamentary Standing Committee, pressure had been exerted on the government for some time to establish a statutory body to control and regulate the licences of commercial broadcasters. Although the Postmaster-General's Department had always carried out most of the routine work,¹¹ control of broadcast licensing had been completely in the hands of the minister. Agitation from existing commercial broadcasters for an independent statutory body grew particularly after the Postmaster-General had revoked or suspended the licences of a

9. ABCB, *First Annual Report*, pp.4,8-9.

10. Barry Cole, 'The Australian Broadcasting Control Board 1948-1966, History of Board Appointments', *Public Administration*, vol.29, no.3, September 1970, pp.268, 270; ABCB, *Report on Frequency Modulation Broadcasting*, Melbourne, June 1972, p.5.

11. ABCB, *First Annual Report*, p.5.

number of stations just before and during the War, for what appeared to be purely political reasons. Postmaster-General Cameron is reported to have revoked the licence of station 2KY on one minute's notice when a speaker on the station accused him of being a Fascist for authorising the tapping of telephone conversations by union officials. After the station management published an apology, he issued a fresh licence. In February 1941, four stations had their licences revoked. These stations were associated with the Jehovah's Witnesses and were alleged to have been obstructing the war effort in their programmes, by broadcasting codes to the enemy concealed in the rhythm of the music put to air. Also in 1941, 3KZ and 2UW had their licences suspended for inadvertently broadcasting news of the sinking of the *Sydney*.¹²

Commercial broadcasters anticipated the end of this kind of interference when they heard a statutory body was to be created to oversee broadcasting. However, Minister Calwell's motivation and the 1948 *Act* which established the ABCB left them very disappointed. The removal of political control of broadcasting was not on his agenda, nor was it compatible with Labor policy. Calwell was merely concerned that, with the expansion of broadcasting services, the Postmaster-General's Department would not be able to cope with the administration. Prime Minister Chifley explained:

Although control by the Post Office had operated satisfactorily in the past, the remarkable developments in broadcasting in recent times and the possibilities in the future meant it could not continue to be controlled effectively on a part-time basis.¹³

The Board consisted of three members. Laurence Fanning, previously

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12. Mark Armstrong, 'Citizens' Rights and Broadcasting Regulation', P. Bell, and K. Boehringer, eds, *Australia into the 80's*, Proceedings of two national conferences published by Communications, Technology and Control Foundation, Sydney 1979, p.23; Mark Armstrong, *Broadcasting Law and Policy in Australia*, Sydney, Butterworths, 1982, pp.38-39.
 13. Ben Chifley, 'Announcement', 28 September 1948, cited in ABCB, *First Annual Report*, p.5.

Director-General of Posts and Telegraph was appointed first Chairman. Since many of the original staff of the Board were also drawn from the Wireless Branch of the Postmaster-General's Department.¹⁴ very little change occurred in the control and regulation of broadcasting. These officers continued to maintain a close working relationship with their previous department, which still handled the technical requirements of broadcasting. In addition Calwell's legislation left the ABCB under the control of the minister, the Postmaster-General. This further reduced the independence and effectiveness of the Board, so that in reality its only role was that of an advisory body to the Minister.¹⁵ Commercial broadcasters may have been disappointed but should not have been surprised at Calwell's action. It was Labor Party policy not only to facilitate broadcasting as an essential service, but as far as possible to control it to make sure the people received an acceptable service. Although nationalising commercial broadcasting was not a political possibility the government was determined to continue to control it as far as possible. The creation of the ABCB to carry out some of the work previously the province of the Wireless Branch of the PMG's Department did not alter that situation.

One of the first questions considered by the ABCB was the introduction of television. This was an easier matter for the Labor government to address than the very necessary expansion of radio broadcasting services in rural areas. The government was able to ask the ABCB to make recommendations on a national service without considering commercial operators because, like FM radio, television was a new type of broadcasting. On 14 June 1949, after the Board recommended to the government that

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14. ABCB, *First Annual Report*, pp.6-7; Cole, 'The Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the Regulation of Commercial Radio in Australia since 1948', pp.58-62; Armstrong, *Broadcasting Law and Policy in Australia*, p.39.
 15. ABCB, *First Annual Report*, p.6; Mark Armstrong, 'Broadcasting: Too much power is in the hands of the politicians', *National Times*, 22 July - 2 August 1975, pp.36-37.

'television services should be established in the six State capital cities as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made', the Prime Minister announced that a national television service would be introduced, initially in the six state capital cities.¹⁶ Since ABCB and the Post Office were unable to recommend the acceptance of tenders for equipment until 26 October 1949, it was too late for the Labor government to act before it lost office in December.¹⁷

The Chifley Labor government's legacy to the expansion of broadcasting was mainly in areas where it could be done by increasing government services. This included the extension of the existing ABC AM radio services, the introduction of experimental ABC FM radio and plans for the introduction of ABC television. Labor may have considered its role to be providing a public utility for all Australians but by adhering strictly to the idea that public utilities should be owned, controlled and operated by government for the benefit of the people, it lent towards providing extra services, some of which could really be considered luxuries, for people in the capital cities and large regional areas. It completely neglected those people in small rural communities, who had no services at all, for whom a small local service really was a necessity in post war Australia. In these areas a commercial service would have been the only viable alternative. There was no shortage of demand to provide such services. By 30 June 1950, 955 applications had been received for commercial broadcasting licences around Australia that had not been attended to. More than half of these were for rural areas. Some applicants, dating from the very early days of wireless, may no longer have wished to proceed, but there were still a great many who did.¹⁸

The Labor government had found an excuse for avoiding dealing with these applications. The 'Gibson' Report had included advice from S. W. Witt, a PMG

16. ABCB, *First Annual Report*, pp.9-10.

17. ABCB, *Second Annual Report of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board Year Ended 30th June 1950*, Canberra 1951, p.14.

18. ABCB, *Second Annual Report*, p.11.

engineer and V. M. Brooker, president of the AFCBS. The report claimed that although technically it would be possible to increase the number of stations on the AM band, it would divide the national advertising expenditure to the extent that stations' programming and listener services would be compromised. Witt and Brooker, with their own vested interests, were probably more concerned about the workload for PMG staff and the continued economic viability of existing commercial stations. Witt and Brooker's claims may have been true during the war but they were improbable during the economic prosperity after the war. This was pointed out by Barry Cole, a visiting PhD student from the USA, who studied the history of the ABCB.¹⁹ Cole appeared a little baffled as to why the Labor government continued to accept this advice. But his thesis revealed that he had understood that it was Labor Party policy to nationalise commercial broadcasting.²⁰ It suited the Labor government to accept dubious advice from vested interests about the inadvisability of the expansion of commercial services.

The incoming Coalition government of Robert Menzies did nothing to lessen the waiting lists of aspirant commercial broadcasters, even though its professed philosophical standpoint on broadcasting was poles apart from the Labor party's, formulating a contrasting role for government. Menzies had made the differences between the two parties on broadcasting policy very clear, during the election campaign:

In the Broadcasting field, we shall preserve the present mixed system under which a government National Service exists, side by side with Commercial Stations. We do not favour a Government monopoly of frequency modulation or television. We shall get rid of political controls now exercised by the Broadcasting Control Board. There is a great confusion of Authority now; a Postmaster-General; the Broadcasting Control Board, the Australian Broadcasting Commission, a Parliamentary

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19. Barry Cole, 'What's Really Preventing the Expansion of Broadcasting Services', *The Australian Quarterly*, vol.38, no.3, September 1966, pp.74-75.
 20. Cole, 'The Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the Regulation of Commercial Radio in Australia since 1948', p.65.

As Geoffrey Bolton has pointed out, 'Menzies and his cohorts attacked the government repeatedly as socialists in love with bureaucratic controls for their own aggrandizement'. The Coalition parties generally regarded the Labor government measures incorporated in the *Australian Broadcasting Act 1948*, both with regard to funding the ABC from consolidated revenue and to the establishment of the ABCB, as one more step towards the development of a totalitarian state, which they would reverse after the election. Although broadcasting policy was not a serious election issue for most Labor voters, Menzies used it as part of his overall attempt to discredit Chifley's government, and win their support.²²

It is not surprising, therefore, that the rhetoric of the election campaign was not followed by action in government with respect to much of the broadcasting policy. Most obviously, there was very little relaxation of the political control of broadcasting for a very long time. The Menzies government neither abolished the ABCB, as some of the Board's members were expecting, nor removed control from the minister. One of the first acts of the new Country Party Postmaster-General H.L 'Larry' Anthony was to abandon Labor's idea of establishing ABCB offices in each state.²³ This move showed the new government was more interested in cost cutting and retaining central control than anything else. It did not alter the power of the ABCB, which remained an advisory body to the Postmaster-General. The next change had been

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21. Robert Menzies, Supplementary Policy Speech of the Liberal Party 1949, cited in Cole, 'The Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the Regulation of Commercial Radio in Australia since 1948', p.65.
 22. Geoffrey Bolton, *The Middle Way, The Oxford History of Australia - Volume 5 1942-1988*, Melbourne, OUP, 1990, p.73.
 23. Cole, 'The Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the Regulation of Commercial Radio in Australia since 1948', pp.65-66.

foreshadowed in the election campaign. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Broadcasting, which had been reappointed at the first session of every parliament after it was set up, was not reappointed in 1950 as it was claimed it would duplicate the work of the newly formed ABCB.²⁴ Again, this was just a peripheral economising adjustment which did not in any way change the fundamental arrangements nor reduce the political control of broadcasting.

Initially, in some other respects the new government appeared to see its role very differently from its predecessor. Menzies viewed the commercial services as an important part of the dual system of broadcasting. This contrasted with the previous Labor government's grudging acceptance of those commercial stations which already existed and its determination that any new developments would be national services. The ABCB reflected the new government's move away from that attitude in its Annual Report in 1950:

The Board feels that there are considerable advantages in the present dual system which includes most of the distinctive features to be found in the broadcasting systems in other countries. The Board is therefore proceeding on the basis that, generally speaking, the National Broadcasting Service is intended to provide an Australian-wide service as a public utility, and that the Commercial Broadcasting Service is intended to provide, substantially, a local or regional service on a commercial basis through a number of separate broadcasting services serving relatively restricted areas. It should perhaps be made clear that this distinction in the scope and function of the two services is not intended to be construed as reflecting on the Commercial Broadcasting Service. The commercial broadcasting stations constitute an integral and important part of the Australian broadcasting structure, which it is the duty of the Board, under the Act, to develop.²⁵

This policy should have led to a proliferation of new commercial licences. However the government saw its role as ensuring that commercial radio stations

24. ABCB, Meeting Agendum no.30A, 29 March 1950, Australian Archives Series C1992/1.

25. ABCB, *Second Annual Report*, paragraph 14, p.4.

continued to be economically viable, because they performed a public service. Moreover, it was still acting on the advice of Witt and Brooker that an expansion of commercial services would jeopardise the viability of existing stations. As a result, the ABC was refused a third radio network and licences were rarely granted to applicants for new commercial stations.²⁶ However, the ABCB devised a plan, detailed in its Annual Report in 1951, for the improvement of the national service within the context of the two existing networks. This included the establishment of 20 new ABC stations, which grew to 28 by 1965. The operating power of 27 existing ABC transmitters was also increased.²⁷

Convinced that there was a problem ensuring the viability of existing stations while being aware of the need to increase the proportion of the country covered by commercial radio services the government asked the ABCB to examine the possibility of increasing the transmission power of existing commercial stations. The Board advised in favour of this proposition. This was not surprising as the Board members had expected to be disbanded by the new government and knew that they still had the power only to advise and not to make decisions. Sticking to the Witt and Brooker argument the ABCB pointed out that while there were 2,276 licensed stations in the USA on 1 January 1950, there was little room in Australia for more than the 141 that were licensed at 30 June 1950 because of the difference in the density of the population. The ABCB pointed out that sharing channels was a common practice in the United States, enabling far more stations to be licensed, but it failed to add that the American government did not see ensuring the commercial viability of stations as part of its brief. For this reason the ABCB was able to say that it did not recommend sharing channels

26. Armstrong, *Broadcasting Law and Policy in Australia*, pp.38-39.

27. ABCB, *Third Annual Report of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board Year Ended 30th June 1951*, Canberra, 1952, paragraph 45, p.8; ABCB, *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board for Year 1964-65*, Canberra, 1965, paragraph 49, p.19.

because, with the lack of population, it would 'restrict the service areas of stations to an extent which would be economically impossible in Australia'. Existing commercial radio stations were, therefore, allowed to increase their power output.²⁸

The Menzies government espoused a role as different from that from the American government as from the previous Labor government in Australia. Whereas the Coalition had accused Labor's attitude to broadcasting as part of moving towards a totalitarian state, it was not prepared to take the *laissez-faire* attitude of the USA where the government saw its role merely to license commercial stations and showed little concern about ensuring their commercial viability or the content of their programming.²⁹ The Coalition took the view that broadcasting should be provided by commercial enterprise as well as by the government. However, since all broadcasting was an essential service it was the government's responsibility to ensure that all the stations it licensed were able to survive and provide an acceptable level of programming. The new Menzies government maintained that this was the reason that led it to restrict the development of additional commercial radio services as severely as the previous Labor government.

Yet an agenda item written for the ABCB by its Principal Research Officer A.L. Hall, put forward a different explanation. The item was about the introduction of VHF FM broadcasting and was never actually dealt with by the Board. It suggested that this economic argument disguised a desire to keep as tight a control on broadcasting, particularly commercial broadcasting, as Labor had:

If, however, it were found possible to provide a channel for every applicant of character and substance, there would be little

28. ABCB, Meeting Agendum no.30A, p.11; Cole, 'The Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the Regulation of Commercial Radio in Australia since 1948', p.76.

29. ABCB, Meeting Agendum no.206, July 1952, p.12, Australian Archives NSW Series C1992/1; Mackay, pp.9-10.

more justification for refusing a licence than for preventing the opening of a new grocer's shop in one of the cities or suburbs. Provided he had enough capital to broadcast good programmes and stay the distance, the question of whether or not the would-be operator was likely to make a profit or loss would be of academic interest. But, in that event, we could no longer advance convenient engineering reasons for not granting licences. And if we fell back on economic reasons, the pressure of opinion might make it difficult to sustain a taut system of control, essential under present conditions, which finds no ready acceptance in other fields of endeavour.³⁰

Hall was arguing against the extension VHF FM broadcasting in Australia, although conceding it was well established in the United States and Canada and in the experimental stage in Britain. He advised against the proposition in Australia because to do so would release an abundance of new channels. It is not clear what he meant by 'under present conditions'. However, it is possible that Hall was referring to the Cold War and the possibility of Communist subversion, if not out right war,³¹ when he expressed the need to maintain control at that time. Free speech, including political subversion, was far more likely on commercial stations than government stations simply because the commercial stations sold blocks of airtime to those who could afford to pay for it while the ABC prepared its own programmes. In fact, by the late 1930s, the Communist Party had bought itself airtime to broadcast on commercial stations, realising

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30. A. L. Hall, 'Report on Full-Scale Introduction of Very High Frequency Broadcasting', 23 June 1952, ABCB, Meeting Agendum no.206, July 1952, p.12, Australian Archives NSW Series no. C1992/1.
31. There appears to have been a general anticipation of war, and this feeling was shared by those involved in broadcasting. Ray Allsop, who was soon to become a member of the ABCB wrote 'In these days of international tension and preparation for defence, television can do a major job in mass civilian defence training' If it is true, as we are informed by our political leaders, that war may come at any time within the next three years' Ray Allsop, 'A Case for Television in Australia'.

that its potential supporters were more likely to listen to the radio than read newspapers. The Party had secured a regular spot on Sydney station 2KY, which was networked to some other stations, as well as programmes on 4IP and 4BH in Queensland. However during the Cold War, all these programmes were silenced except for Joe Bailes', 'Voice of the Countryside', which ran from 1955 to 1966.³² Apparently, with the political tensions of the time, other station managers were no longer prepared to sell airtime to the Communist Party. Hall may have feared that any new stations, desperate to establish a viable income, might renew the practice. However, the American government did not see it as a reason to limit the number of stations in spite of its vigorous anti-Communist stance. Sir Allen Fairhall was amazed that Hall's document was not torn up and thrown away but was unable to shed much light on its meaning, except that he did not think Communism in broadcasting was an issue because broadcasting generally was never really an election issue in the 1950s.³³

Certainly Fairhall was not concerned about the spread of Communism over the airwaves. He had simply refused to sell the Communist Party airtime in Newcastle when he established his own commercial station 2KO before the War. Although he was aware of the government's 'pre-occupation with defence preparations',³⁴ he did not perceive any general politically subversive threat through broadcasting. In fact, as Minister for the Interior, Fairhall tried very hard to persuade Cabinet that the advice it received from the ABCB and the Wireless Branch of the Postmaster-General's Department was incorrect and that FM broadcasting should be introduced as soon as possible. He had revealed his attitude in response to a query from a potential

32. Steve Brook, 'Public Radio in Context', *PBAA Public Forum*, July 1988, pp.1-2, copy with present writer.

33. Allen Fairhall, Personal Interview at Cambridge Press, Newcastle, 24 October 1996.

34. Allen Fairhall, Letter to Bob Menzies about the defence potential of television, 24 August 1951, Australian Archives ACT Series A816/1 Item 48/301/157.

commercial broadcaster in Wagga Wagga who was refused a licence. In his ministerial capacity, Fairhall had advocated the establishment of a body similar to the American Federal Communications Commission to replace the ABCB and the Wireless Branch of the Postmaster-General's Department. He urged that such a body 'be charged with administering telecommunications in the "public interest, necessity and convenience", whereas at the present time it seems to be in the interests of Government Departments and considerably to public inconvenience'.³⁵

Peter Westerway, First Assistant Secretary to the relevant departments in the Whitlam and Fraser governments, has cast some light on Hall's motivation and Fairhall's assertion that broadcasting was being administered in the interests of Government Departments.³⁶ Westerway maintained that society was more constrained in those days. Books were banned, movies were banned and the Control Board had very tight codes and standards for technical requirements and the contents of programs, all of which were monitored regularly. The staff of the Board were very conservative individuals, whom Westerway claimed saw it as essential to continue the existing levels of monitoring of content and technical arrangements.. If there was a proliferation of stations this monitoring would have been impossible, with existing staff levels.

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35. Allen Fairhall, Confidential Letter to E. V. Roberts, Managing Director, Riverina Broadcasting Coy, Wagga, 28 March 1956, Australian Archives ACT Series M40 Item 3; Allen Fairhall, Personal Interview at Cambridge Press, Newcastle, 3 December 1992; Allen Fairhall, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.25, 8 October 1959, p.1928; Allen Fairhall, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.32, 23 August 1961, pp.382-386.
36. Peter Westerway, Personal Interview at Manly, Sydney, 3 February 1997. Westerway was First Assistant Secretary to the Department of the Media in the Whitlam government, and the Department of Posts and Telecommunications in the Fraser government and had to deal with the same attitudes which still prevailed in his early days in the Department.

Westerway asserted that these attitudes still prevailed during his early days in the Department, when officers of the Board continued to monitor commercial stations and opposed the issuing of additional licences. According to Westerway, there was a second motive for Hall's document. The Board members themselves represented the existing commercial broadcasters and sought to ration licences so that stations remained profitable. Some stations were highly profitable. In country areas some were monopolies. These stations did not want to lose their profits. Westerway concluded that these reasons would have accounted for the statement in Hall's document. The people concerned would also have been anti-Communist but that, for Westerway, was not what was driving them.

Westerway's argument is plausible and whatever the underlying motivation for Hall's statement, it was certainly easier for the licensing officers of the ABCB and the technical officers of the Wireless Branch of the Postmaster-General's Department to organise existing stations to increase their power output rather than to license new stations. These two groups, who had been partly formed from the same original group, were still based within close physical proximity to each other in Melbourne. They have been described as an 'engineers mafia' in their determination to see no new commercial stations licensed by baffling the politicians with spurious arguments. Fairhall bemoaned the fact that this was possible because, unlike him, all the other members of Cabinet were either economists or lawyers and knew nothing about broadcasting.³⁷ As well as the Board's attitude, the AFCBS, officially representing existing commercial broadcasters, continued to lobby for severe restrictions on the

37. Fairhall, Interview 1992; Geoffrey Evans, Personal Interview at Canberra, 5 December 1994; Ray Allsop, 'Should We Have a Politically Free FCC?' *Mingay's Electrical Weekly*, 16 July 1965, p.23, copy in Australian Archives ACT Series M40/1 Item 9 Part 2; Henry Mayer, 'Broadcasting Regulation: The Eroding Bases', D. Turbayne, ed., *The Media and Politics on Australia*, Hobart, Department of Political Science, University of Tasmania, 1980, p.5.

licensing of new stations.³⁸ Evidence suggests that the engineers and existing commercial broadcasters had been working together for their mutual interest ever since Witt and Brooker advised the 'Gibson' Committee in 1942.

It is difficult to determine how far government policy was driven by its role as facilitator of essential broadcasting services by protecting the economic viability of existing commercial broadcasting stations and how far it had a hidden political agenda of maintaining tight control. It is also possible, as Fairhall's memories have suggested, that succumbing to the wishes of the engineers and existing commercial broadcasters may have just been the line of least resistance, since the expansion of broadcasting services was not a serious election issue.³⁹

The outcome was that existing licensees were permitted to increase their power output and very few new commercial stations were licensed. Whereas the number of national stations increased from 37 in 1949 to 69 in 1966, the number of commercial stations only increased from 102 to 111 in the same period.⁴⁰ As a result of this policy the Sydney commercial stations increased their power to 5,000 watts, giving better coverage from Bowral in the south to Gosford in the north,⁴¹ but licences were refused to applicants from Bowral, Coff's Harbour, Gosford and Moree in spite of representations by members of parliament, Sir Earle Page, Ian Allan and Roger Dean, that these areas needed their own local services. Even those now covered to some

38. R. R. Walker, *The Magic Spark: The story of the first fifty years of Radio in Australia*, Melbourne, Hawthorn Press, 1973, pp.102-103; William Gibson, *Report of the Joint Committee on Wireless Broadcasting*, Canberra, 1942, paragraph 395, p.58.

39. Fairhall, Interview 1996.

40. ABCB, *First Annual Report*, p.5; ABCB, *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board for Year 1965-66*, Canberra, 1966, p.64.

41. ABCB, Meeting Agenda nos. 1955/52, 1 June 1955; 1955/54, June 1955; 1955/78, August 1955, p.5, Australian Archives NSW Series C1992/1.

extent by the increase in power of the Sydney stations, did not always receive good reception. The grounds for refusal were that there was only one clear medium frequency AM channel available and to allocate that to any one area would create resentment in the rest.⁴² Sharing channels would have solved the problem but the Board did not consider that because the real reason was a desire to restrict the expansion of services. And yet the Menzies government still claimed to be the government of free enterprise, encouraging competition with commercial development. In the area of broadcasting its actions surely belied its rhetoric.

Certainly the Menzies government honoured its commitment to free enterprise as far as legislating for the legality of commercial FM broadcasting and commercial television. The two were dealt with together in the final legislation for the introduction of television. The *Broadcasting and Television Act 1956* replaced the *Australian Broadcasting Act 1942* and the *Television Act 1953*, temporary legislation under which both commercial and ABC television were commenced. This not only finalised the arrangements for television but also repealed the previous Labor government's prohibition on commercial FM radio. However, it made no attempt to remove the decision making from the minister, as Menzies' election campaign had indicated, still leaving the ABCB as a mere advisory body.⁴³

The legalisation of commercial FM broadcasting did nothing to ensure its imminent introduction. With the establishment of television, the government not only became preoccupied with the new medium, but also became even more concerned that the licensing of any more commercial radio stations would be unprofitable now that a large proportion of advertising expenditure had been diverted to television.

42. ABCB, Meeting Agendum no. 1955/52, 1 June 1955, Australian Archives NSW Series C1992/1.

43. Charles Davidson, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.10 19 April 1956, pp.1531-1542; Cole, 'What's Really Preventing the Expansion of Broadcasting Services', p.82.

Furthermore, in 1961, as a result of recommendations requested by the PMG from the Radio Frequency Allocation Committee, it was decided to expand the number of television stations to thirteen.⁴⁴ This was to be achieved by using that portion of the VHF band reserved for FM radio broadcasting. To do this entailed closing down the existing experimental ABC FM stations. The government's aim for commercial television was the same as it had been for commercial radio: to ensure a substantial increase in the number of people able to receive transmissions in a technically simple manner, while maintaining economic viability. This was quickly achieved by having a small number of large coverage television stations. The internationally accepted VHF FM radio part of the spectrum was the only portion available to achieve this end technically and any future development of FM broadcasting was relegated to the UHF band. This band was used nowhere else in the world and the technology had not been developed, making it impossible to introduce FM broadcasting in the foreseeable future.⁴⁵

The development of FM broadcasting might have been very different if the Menzies government had not inherited a ban on commercial FM broadcasting. Before the introduction of television in the early 1950s, there was considerable interest in the expansion of the ABC VHF-FM experimental stations into a proper national and commercial service. Ray Allsop, a member of the Institutes of Radio Engineers in both

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44. The Committee had hardly started its general deliberations when the request came from the PMG, at the instigation of the ABCB, to examine the practicality of accommodating thirteen television channels in the VHF band. Since it was possible the Committee could not deny it, but if it had been allowed to carry out its deliberations properly this would not have been one of its recommendations. Leonard Huxley, *Report of the Radio Frequency Allocation Review Committee*, Canberra, CGPO, 12 October 1961, pp.7,69-70.
45. Charles Davidson, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.31, 11 May 1961, pp.1759-1760; Evans, Interview.

Australia and Britain, claimed he was appointed as a member of the ABCB for five years, in 1953, to expedite its development.⁴⁶ The Board spent some time on the matter when Allsop was a member.⁴⁷ Fairhall was now a very strong supporter of the concept in the Menzies Cabinet.⁴⁸ Fairhall and Allsop supported each other in their push for the establishment of FM broadcasting but no action was possible if national and commercial services were to be implemented concurrently, as commercial FM was still illegal. After the release of the *Report of the Royal Commission on Television* in February 1954, two members of the ABCB, Robert Osborne and Robert Mair were determined to push the early development of television in the capital cities on the VHF band.⁴⁹ They were anxious to maximise coverage immediately, without waiting for a total review of frequency allocations which would have included country television stations and FM broadcasting. Stations on the VHF band would have far greater coverage than the same number of stations on the alternate UHF band. Allsop disagreed with using the VHF band, knowing that there was only room for ten television channels on that portion of the VHF band internationally reserved for television. He correctly expected that more than ten channels would eventually be needed in Australia. Having been outvoted by Osborne and Mair in this decision Allsop quit the Board, by the end of 1954, before legislation repealed the prohibition of commercial FM broadcasting. The official reason for his going was that his wife was not happy to live in Melbourne. With Allsop's departure the ABCB, which had previously decided to hold an inquiry into FM broadcasting, focused its attention on the introduction of television, and the FM inquiry was held over until

46. Cole, 'The Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the Regulation of Commercial Radio in Australia since 1948', p.70.

47. ABCB, *Fifth Annual Report of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board for Year Ended 30th June 1953*, Canberra, 1954, p.19.

48. Fairhall, Interview 1992.

49. Osborne had actually written most of the report of the Commission, officially chaired by Sir George Paton.

1957. The AFCBS then raised some concerns and succeeded in having it adjourned until 1958. From outside the ABCB, Allsop continued to allege that the existing commercial broadcasters resisted the introduction of FM broadcasting at the inquiry because it would make available many more competing interference-free channels. He maintained that their argument should have been resisted.⁵⁰ By this time, the government, apart from Fairhall who still aired his grievances in parliament, was preoccupied with the expansion of television and the whole question of FM broadcasting was shelved.⁵¹

As Allsop had predicted the government soon wanted to licence more than ten channels for television, to satisfy demands by supporters of the Country Party in regional areas for the rapid introduction of television. To create sufficient frequency space on the VHF band Postmaster-General Davidson closed down the ABC FM experimental radio stations in 1961. This decision was in line with the government and the ABCB focus on the rapid expansion of television and the continued economic protection of existing commercial radio broadcasters, but it did not pass without protest from those enthusiasts in the community who had been listening to high quality

50. Ray Allsop, 'FM Decision Ignores Lessons of 27 Yrs' Success', *Mingay's Electrical Weekly*, 11 May 1962, copy of article in Australian Archives ACT Series no. M40 Item 3.

51. Allen Fairhall, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol. 32, 23 August 1961, pp.382-386; Cole, 'The Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the Regulation of Commercial Radio in Australia since 1948', pp.71-83; ABCB, Meeting Minute no.1901, 16 September 1954, pp.643-644; Meeting Minute no. 1913, 24 September 1954, p.649; Draft Meeting Minute no.2020, 13 December 1954, p.684; Meeting Minute 2019A, 30 December 1954, p.688; Australian Broadcasting Control Board Binder of Minutes of Meetings, Australian Archives NSW Series C1993/2.

transmissions from these stations.⁵² Even Davidson admitted he had received approximately 200 letters not only from listeners but also from manufacturers of radio equipment and trade journals as well as three petitions containing ninety signatures.⁵³ Gough Whitlam claimed, in parliament, that Davidson played down the protest and that, by contrast, he could remember 'no other matter of communications upon which I received and transmitted so much correspondence'.⁵⁴ Fairhall claimed that the closures rendered up to 100,000 FM receivers, already in Australia, 'inoperable and, perhaps, completely valueless'.⁵⁵ This was the beginning of overt dissatisfaction with the government's broadcasting policy among diverse sections of the community. These people were being affected by the lack of the expansion of radio services. But the Postmaster-General was able to pretend that the dissatisfaction was insignificant at this stage, as the television lobby was overpowering.

The coming of television unintentionally affected radio in other ways as well. Bi-lingual foreign language broadcasts on commercial radio, which had been encouraged by the federal government since 1952 to help assimilate non-English speaking ethnic communities during the post-war migrant boom were one of many types

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52. James Harrison, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.31, 11 May 1961, p.1759; Henry Turner, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.31, 17 May 1961, p.1974; Anthony Luchetti, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.31, 17 May 1961, p.1979; Norman Makin, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.32, 15 August 1961, p.5; Dominic Costa, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.33, 18 October 1961, p.2153; Neil Runcie, Personal Interview at Centennial Park, Sydney, 9 May 1994; Charles Davidson, Letter to Max Keogh, 26 September 1961, copy with present writer.
 53. Charles Davidson, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.35, 17 October 1962, p.2529. Later PMG Alan Hulme revealed that one petition had 400 signatures. See Alan Hulme, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.59, 6 June 1968, p.2132.
 54. Gough Whitlam, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.59, 6 June 1968, p.2137.
 55. Allen Fairhall, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.32, 23 August 1961, p.384.

of programmes affected.⁵⁶ When television began advertising on commercial radio changed from sponsorship of whole programmes to spot advertising.⁵⁷ This was partly because people were no longer interested in listening to the types of programs that attracted sponsorship, such as quiz shows, situation comedies and serials, because they were now available on television. But it also enabled the advertiser to seek maximum exposure all the time and left the programming to the station, rather than the sponsor. As a result programming on commercial radio became less varied. Programmes with smaller audiences, including bi-lingual foreign language programmes, ceased to be commercially viable, and they gradually disappeared from commercial radio.⁵⁸

Although the Menzies Coalition government had come to power with a commitment to expanding broadcasting as an essential service to meet the needs of all Australians, its method of fulfilling its role tended to have the diametrically opposite effect to the one professed. Protecting the viability of existing commercial operators by allowing them to increase their power output was a very poor way of expanding the availability of commercial radio to meet the needs of regional and rural Australians. The ABC, although it vastly extended its existing networks, was denied a third network to accommodate its required additional programming for schools, parliament and news. This restricted the variety it was able to incorporate in its programming. Such

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56. ABCB, Circular No. 11, 23 July 1952, cited in ABCB Meeting Agendum no. 1955/6 Appendix A, January 1955, Australian Archives NSW Series C1992/1.
 57. Sponsoring their own programs was how the Communist Party had managed to broadcast, as mentioned earlier.
 58. John Tebbutt, 'Constructing Broadcasting for the Public', H. Wilson, ed., *Australian Communications and the Public Sphere*, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1989, p.137; SBS, *Ethnic Broadcasting in Australia 1979 - Report at the end of the First Year of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)*, Sydney, SBS, 1979, p.10. The question of foreign language broadcasting will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 10.

experimental FM broadcasting as had existed ceased to operate and the concept of FM broadcasting was put on indefinite hold. Small commercial operators were denied licences to provide local services to rural areas. Finally, with the coming of television, the change in advertising on commercial radio led to the variety of programming being severely reduced as so much was no longer profitable. By the middle of the 1960s the government's broadcasting policy was at a standstill though the government kept reassuring everyone that broadcasting services in Australia were amongst the best in the world. Postmaster-General Alan Hulme claimed in the middle of 1965 that 'Australia it(sic) well served at present by its medium frequency broadcasting services'.⁵⁹

Australia had not been well served with broadcasting services when the Coalition came to power in 1949 and was even more poorly served by the mid to late 1960s as some services had actually been reduced. As well as the protests for the closure of the experimental FM services the pressure for expanded services now began to increase. Firstly people in rural areas, who were aware of the proliferation of television in city and regional areas, were becoming increasingly agitated that they did not have decent local radio services.⁶⁰ These people were generally Country Party supporters and

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59. Alan Hulme, cited in 'No FM Broadcasting for Aust. says PMG Hulme', *Mingay's Electrical Weekly*, 25 June 1965, p.4, copy in Australian Archives ACT Series no.M40/1, Item 9 part 2. Allsop and Fairhall continued to protest to no avail as explained by Allsop in a letter to the editor following the article quoting Hulme.
60. ABCB, Meeting Minute No.1476, 28 July 1953, p.482, Australian Archives NSW Series no. C1993/2 Item WOB Box 1 [5]; ABCB, Meeting Agendum No. 1956/24 April 1956, Australian Archives NSW Series C1992/1 Item WOB Box 3 [8]; Roger Dean, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.19, 8 May 1958, p.1615; Allen Fairhall, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.28, 13 October 1960, pp.2020-2021; Leonard Reynolds, House of Representatives, vol.48, 29 October 1965, p.2434;

it was going to be increasingly foolhardy for the Coalition government to ignore them.

In the city and suburban areas the lobbying for more and varied services had multiplied both because the population had increased and because the nature of society had diversified. The increase in population was, in part, due to the post-war migration policy introduced by Arthur Calwell. When the policy was introduced in 1947, only 9.8% of the population were non-Australian born. By 1976 21% of the population were non-Australian born and up to 39% were either born overseas or had one parent born overseas. Between 1947 and 1976 2.5 million migrants came to Australia, 1 million British and 1.5 million non-British.⁶¹ The non-British migrants sought programmes which expressed their native culture and those who could not speak English needed programmes in their own languages to provide them with basic information.⁶² Migrants from both Britain and northern Europe were often well educated and started up their own businesses or took professional positions. Ronald Taft claimed in 1962 that, 'about one-third of the entries in Australia's current *Who's Who*, and also of the present senior university staff, are foreign born, compared with about one-fifth of the Australian adult population'.⁶³ Many of these people were dissatisfied with the programmes available on radio in Australia and sought greater diversity, similar to that in their home countries. Perhaps the best known of these was Michael Law, from England, who became Executive Director of the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia.

Alan Hulme, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.65, 11 September 1969, pp.1194-1195.

61. These figures came from Frank Galbally, *The Report of the Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants - A Summary*, (Original report 27 April 1978), Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, May 1982, cited in SBS, *Ethnic Broadcasting in Australia*, Sydney, SBS, 1979, p.5.
62. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Ten.
63. Ronald Taft, 'The Myth and Migrants', P. Coleman, ed., *Australian Civilization*, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1966, p.199.

More Australians were also travelling overseas and were returning with ideas from both the USA and Britain as to how broadcasting services in Australia could be improved. This was particularly the case in the field of education, which apart from a few programmes for schools by the ABC, was virtually untouched in Australia. Some people were also impressed with the improved quality of sound in FM reception they had heard while overseas.⁶⁴

Interest in educational broadcasting developed partly from a much greater participation rate in secondary and tertiary education. This increased participation rate is demonstrated by the fact that whereas there were six universities in Australia in 1939, there were fifteen by 1970.⁶⁵ These better educated Australians interacted with the travelled Australians and the better educated migrants to produce a political, social, cultural and artistic diversity which grew to encompass more than just this interaction, covering the whole community, including poorly-educated, untravelled, locally born Australians. As such this diversity began to strive for public expression in its own right. As Bowman has pointed out, the flowering of political and social issues not only emanated from the tertiary institutions, it also moved beyond as these newly educated business and professional people became more involved in their local communities and associated organisations.⁶⁶ Warhurst has identified issues which became the concerns of people all over Australia at this time to include racism, aboriginal rights, environmental

64. The ideas of some of those who sought greater diversity in broadcasting will be discussed in Chapter Five, and educational broadcasting will be discussed in detail in Chapter Nine.

65. The increase in participation in education will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

66. Margaret Bowman, 'Suburbia', A. F. Davies, S. Encel, and M. J. Berry, eds, *Australian Society* (3), Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1977, pp.196-197.

protection, sexual preference, women's rights, conscription and the Vietnam War.⁶⁷

The expansion of cultural and artistic activities was exemplified by the establishment in 1954 of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust which provided artistic funding collected from all three tiers of government. This resulted in such successful productions as Ray Lawler's play *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, in 1956. The other arts began to expand with the opening of many new art galleries and new publications such as *Voice*, the *Observer*, and *Nation* commenced. Harold Holt, Menzies' successor, provided financial help to composers and replaced funding through the Trust with a more comprehensive body, Australian Council for the Arts (ACFTA).⁶⁸ As a result of these developments those with ambitions in the performing arts no longer needed to leave Australia.⁶⁹ Many of these expanded political, social, cultural and artistic activities sought an acceleration in the development of radio services to provide them with a public expression.

Moreover, by the mid 1960s, the novelty of television was beginning to wear off, not only for the viewers but also for the providers of equipment. Whereas the strong lobby of existing commercial broadcasters, now called Federation of Australian Commercial Broadcasters (FACB), was still in favour of restricting the expansion of services, another group with substantial lobbying powers increasingly supported expanding and diversifying services. The manufacturers, suppliers and wholesalers of equipment, through their organisation, the Electrical and Radio Development

67. John Warhurst, 'Politics Old and New', A. Curthoys, A. W. Martin, and T. Rowse, eds, *Australians from 1939*, Sydney, Fairfax, Syme and Weldon Associates, 1987, pp.188-189.

68. Joan Rydon and Diane Mackay, 'Federalism and the Arts', *Australian Cultural History*, no.3, 1984, pp.87-103; Donald Horne, *The Australian People*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1972, pp.242-247; Jim Davidson, 'Mr Whitlam's Cultural Revolution', *Journal of Australian Studies*, no.20, 1987, pp.83-91.

69. Bolton, *The Middle Way*, p.133.

Association (ERDA), could see the coming of the end to the boom in the sale of television sets, and was seeking something new, like FM radio receivers, to tempt the buying public with. ERDA had members of substance, such as EMI and Philips. Early in 1966 a group of its members retained Ray Allsop, still an ardent supporter of the introduction of FM broadcasting, as a technical consultant and unofficial publicity officer. ERDA itself prepared a submission to government for an FM inquiry in February 1968.⁷⁰

The tide of opinion had eventually turned so strongly that even the recently complacent PMG Hulme was forced to think about serious changes to the current broadcasting system. Furthermore the government was no longer so committed to its previous concerns, including: enabling the ABCB to monitor program content, protecting the essential viability of existing commercial broadcasters and fulfilling a secret role of preventing political subversion, and maybe even real war, during the Cold War by restricting radio's development. Even though the Vietnam War produced different fears, neither the government, nor the Australian population as a whole felt threatened in quite the same way because the Communist Party in Australia did not enjoy its earlier support.⁷¹ Substantial portions of the Australian population no longer felt the

70. 'New Breakthrough in Broadcasting? UHF makes possible new radio stations.' *Australian Financial Review*, 8 February 1966, p.5; Cole, 'What's really Preventing The Expansion of Broadcasting Services?', p.86; ABCB, *Report on Frequency Modulation Broadcasting*, p.98.

71. The paranoia of a threat in Australia from the Soviet Union which was manifest in 1955 with the Petrov defection may have won Menzies the election that year. Evidence from an SBS TV program suggested that it simply would not have occurred by the late 1960s. SBS TV, *Dateline - Menzies*, 2 October 1994. Paranoia about Chinese Communism via the Viet Cong may have won the Coalition two elections in the late 1960s, but fear about internal subversion from the Communist Party in Australia was no longer an issue. The threat was seen as

government was facilitating the development of that essential public service, radio broadcasting, to meet all their needs. The government could no longer ignore the clamour for additional services, in spite of the wishes of government engineers and existing commercial broadcasters.

Small concessions began in 1965 by allowing some use of directional aerial techniques at stations' transmitters, which reduced radiation interference and made it possible to use more shared channels. Seven additional extra-metropolitan licences were issued without examining the system as a whole.⁷² However, no-one seemed to notice, as Cole pointed out at the time, that the number of medium wave AM stations could have been doubled using this method.⁷³ The view, originally put forward more than twenty years earlier, by the engineers and commercial broadcasters, that this broadcasting band was full, was still entrenched. Therefore the additional licences issued, at this time, were seen as 'band-aid' solutions.

But with the power of the government engineers and the existing commercial broadcasters less potent and the political considerations which may have influenced decisions during the Cold War now past, dissatisfaction was growing to such an extent that complainants could no longer be appeased with 'band-aid' solutions. The demand was so strong that the essential service of broadcasting be expanded to meet the current needs of all Australians that the government was forced to reconsider the way it executed its role in the provision of this service. After all it had always accepted broadcasting as essential ever since radio's inception in the 1920s. Now that television was no longer a novelty, the importance of radio was re-confirmed. In 1967-68 the ABCB was asked by PMG Hulme to commence an overall review of broadcasting

external and so restrictions were not needed on broadcasting within Australia to prevent it.

72. Walker, *The Magic Spark*, pp.103, 183-184.

73. Cole, 'What's really Preventing', p.86

services.⁷⁴

This review finally led to some fundamental changes in broadcasting in Australia including the introduction of FM and public broadcasting. Because the Coalition policy had never publicly professed the desire to control broadcasting, the way Labor's policy of nationalisation had done, there was no need for any obvious change in government direction. It simply needed to implement its stated policy of expanding broadcasting services and fulfil its role of facilitator and regulator of services of which it was not necessarily the main provider.

Until the ABCB review commenced these two functions had not been carried out adequately ever since the Coalition took office in 1949. Although broadcasting was never a serious election issue, there were always vested interests with a concern for the government's broadcasting policy. In the early years of the Coalition government the pressure of the conservative forces of the government engineers and existing commercial broadcasters had exerted more influence on the role of government in the provision of broadcasting than the Coalition's official policy of facilitating the expansion of commercial services. The result was, that within Australia's unique dual system of broadcasting, the national government broadcaster, the ABC, expanded its services considerably but there were very few new commercial stations licensed. Other comparable countries did not have a dual system, so they did not have the same sorts of situations to deal with. However, in Australia, during the 1960s the lobbying power of a number of other interest groups grew and eventually outstripped these old pressures, which had succeeded in limiting the expansion of broadcasting generally, particularly commercial broadcasting. This was due to both technical advances in broadcasting and the introduction of television, and political and social changes in Australian society, due largely to education, travel and immigration. By the end of the decade, the government could no longer ignore public demand for the expansion of broadcasting services.

74. ABCB, *Twentieth Annual Report Australian Broadcasting Control Board Year Ended 30th June 1968*, CGPO, 1968, p.66.

Having explored the influences on the government's policy in the 1950s and 1960s the next chapter will analyse the tussle for control of who would determine the government's new direction in broadcasting policy, beginning with the ABCB review of services.

CHAPTER FOUR - DEBATING THE DIRECTION OF GOVERNMENT

BROADCASTING POLICY: 1968 - 1974.

The preceding chapter explained that, by 1967, the political forces in favour of the expansion of broadcasting services were beginning to influence government to review its restrictive policy. Unfortunately, there were many different ideas about the direction this expansion should take. This led to conflicting advice given to government by the various reports it commissioned. Since broadcasting was not a national election issue, the debate revolved around the strengths of various sectional interests. No single coherent policy had emerged when the first public broadcasting licences were issued in 1974. Although a third sector in broadcasting had been created, the conflicting advice to government had contributed to the fact that no definite plan for further developments had emerged and the government was confused about its own role in this endeavour.¹ This chapter will analyse the recommendations of the reviews and reports executed by and for the government between 1967 and 1974 and show how they contributed to the lack of a definitive policy.

As a result of the growing political pressures the government instructed the Australian Broadcasting Control Board (ABCB) to begin an overall review of

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1. In spite of Section 34b of the Public Service Act, John Hilvert, who was a Project Officer in the Planning and Research Section of the Department of the Media towards the end of this period, was prepared to admit this. Talking of broadcasting policy in general, Hilvert claimed 'In Australia we have only received hints of policy. I say hints because in my brief but exciting study of the literature available and in the company of big-time decision-makers in the Media, anything remotely resembling a policy could more properly be described as a quasi-objective of which a typical enunciation would be "...the encouragement of quality in broadcasting".' John Hilvert, 'Recent Developments on Australian Broadcasting', paper presented to WEA Conference on the Media, Sydney, 15 June 1975, Evans Archives, with present writer.

broadcasting services in 1967.² By 1973 this review had authorised the licensing of seven additional AM commercial stations outside metropolitan areas, by making greater use of directional aerials.³ But this decision was not part of the development of an overall policy and the government received no written report. Those of the Board's officers who had successfully blocked expansion in earlier years were continuing to make as few changes as possible.

This was despite the fact that developments and legislative changes to broadcasting were being carried out in other comparable countries and the ABCB was aware of these changes.⁴ In 1967 the USA passed the *Public Broadcasting Act*, which recognised the fact that, with no national service, some non-commercial broadcasting, known as public broadcasting, was expanding beyond the educational institutions and would not survive without government support. Frequency modulation (FM) broadcasting was already well established, having been transferred to the VHF band in 1945.⁵ Because there was virtually no restriction on the issuing of licences, these matters were of no concern. However, viability of non-profit broadcasters had become a problem and this act established a private non-profit corporation, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) as a conduit for federal government funding to public

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2. ABCB, *Twentieth Annual Report*, Canberra, CGPO, 1968, pp.16-17.
 3. R. R. Walker, *The Magic Spark: The story of the first fifty years of Radio in Australia*, Melbourne, Hawthorn Press, 1973, p.103.
 4. The ABCB reported extensively on developments in the UK, Canada, USA and New Zealand in two of its documents. See ABCB, Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts, March 1972, pp.2-34 and ABCB, *Report on Frequency Modulation Broadcasting*, Melbourne, June 1972, pp.8-16.
 5. Peter Lewis and Jerry Booth, *The Invisible Medium, Public, Commercial and Community Radio*, London, Macmillan Education, 1989, p.206.

broadcasters.⁶ As Trevor Jarvie has pointed out, when the Public Broadcasting Foundation (PBF) in Australia was conceived, much later, it was partly modelled on the CPB.⁷

While these changes in the United States gave official recognition to the fact that there was a dual system of broadcasting, commercial and public, in Canada legislation was being passed confirming the concept of a 'single' system and providing a new regulator. Early in 1968 the *Broadcasting Act* created the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to replace the old independent regulator, the Board of Broadcasting Governors, and oversee broadcasting generally. The CBC had never managed to fulfil its obligation to provide public service broadcasting to 84% of Canadians, so private commercial and non-commercial stations had filled the gap. The only difference after 1968 was that they were under the overall control of the CRTC.⁸ Like the United States the first experimental FM licence in Canada was issued in 1938 but further developments were delayed until after the war,

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6. Robert Hilliard, 'History and Regulation', R. Hilliard, ed., *Radio Broadcasting, An Introduction to the Sound Medium*, New York, Longman, 1985, p.25; Muriel and Joel Cantor, 'United States: A System of Minimal Regulation', R. Kuhn, ed., *The Politics of Broadcasting*, Sydney, Croom Helm, 1985, p.181.
 7. Trevor Jarvie, "'THE BOOK" a draft outline of a history of 2mbs-fm from its origins to 1997', Manuscript, May Day 1997, p.6, copy with present writer. See Chapter Eleven for the evolution of the PBF.
 8. Marc Raboy, 'Canada: The Hybridization of Public Broadcasting', M. Raboy, ed., *Public Broadcasting for the 21st Century - Academic Monograph 17*, Luton, ULP, 1995, p.108; Richard Collins, 'Canada: Nation-building Threatened by the US - Dominated Media?', R. Kuhn, ed., *The Politics of Broadcasting*, Sydney, Croom Helm, 1985, p.205.

when two licences were issued and FM was transferred to the VHF band.⁹ However the attitude in Canada was very different from that in the United States as far as the proliferation of licences was concerned. Development was not subject to the same kind of stringent restriction as it had been in Australia, but when new licensees entered the broadcasting field they were expected to complement and extend available programming, and avoid unnecessary duplication of services. As a result, one of the first announcements of the CRTC was the rejection of four new applications for FM services on the grounds that 'applicants did not undertake to provide significantly different programming opportunities to the communities concerned'. The CRTC then instituted a study of FM broadcasting to ensure its orderly development.¹⁰ Until this study was completed in 1975, no further private commercial FM licences were issued, but a number of private non-commercial community and student stations were established. As broadcasting development was reviewed in Australia in the 1970s there was some suggestion that the Canadian 'single' system be adopted.¹¹ Apart from the fact that it can be construed as fallacious to call even Canadian broadcasting a 'single' system,¹² the dual system of national and commercial broadcasting was far too entrenched in Australia for it

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9. ABCB, Meeting Agendum no. 206, July 1952, p.10, Aust. Archives Series C1992/1.
 10. CRTC, *FM radio in Canada: A policy to ensure a varied and comprehensive radio service*, 20 January 1975, p.1.
 11. Peter Collingwood, 'The Politics of Radio - The Federal Government's Broadcasting enquiry', *Radio Newsletter*, no.1, June 1976; Richard Collins, 'Across the Pacific - Canadian Broadcasting Policy and the Public Sector 1968-91', *Media Information Australia*, no.62, November 1991, pp.41-50; Ron Liddle, 'Aborigines and the Radio', *Identity*, vol.4, no.1, Oct 1980, pp.13-14.
 12. Marc Raboy, 'The Role of the Public in Broadcasting Policy-Making and Regulation: Lesson for Europe from Canada', *European Journal of Communication*, vol.9, no.1, March 1994, p.15.

to be disbanded.

In the UK, on the other hand, broadcasting was beginning to move away from being the official monopoly of the BBC. It was in fact no longer a monopoly because 'pirate' commercial stations in Luxemburg and the North Sea were beaming their signals across the country and establishing audiences for programs not available through the BBC. In 1967 the Labour government closed down the 'pirate' stations on ships at sea with the Marine Offences Act and authorised the commencement of BBC local radio as a counter measure.¹³ The new stations were designed to be a partnership between the BBC and the local communities they were expected to serve. BBC Radio Leicester, operating on VHF FM was the first of eight such stations to be established.¹⁴ In 1973, after the Conservative Party had regained power, the government expanded the concept of local radio by introducing Independent Local Radio (ILR). These were the first commercial radio stations in the UK. It was still many years before community groups could apply for these licences but the BBC monopoly was broken forever.¹⁵

New Zealand had been having a comparable problem with 'pirate' stations for similar reasons.¹⁶ The New Zealand Broadcasting Service (NZBS) had been taken

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13. Lewis and Booth, *The Invisible Medium*, p.209; Peggy Gray and Peter Lewis, 'Great Britain: Community broadcasting revisited', N. Jankowski, O. Prehn, and J. Stappers, *The People's Voice - Local Radio and Television in Europe*, London, John Libby, 1992, pp.156, 157.
 14. Yolanda Allen and Susan Spencer, *The Broadcasting Chronology 1809 - 1980*, Sydney, AFTS, 1983, p.H127.
 15. Angie Mason, 'Local Radio and Education', *Media in Education and Development*, vol.15, December 1982, p.167.
 16. 'Pirate' commercial stations only became a significant problem in countries like the UK and New Zealand where all official broadcasting was government controlled. Even Canada's 'single' system had commercial stations. In Australia, the only 'pirate' stations were politically rather than commercially motivated. Students

over by the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC) in 1961 with the passage of the *Broadcasting Corporation Act*. This had been part of the National Party's election promise to remove government control from broadcasting when television was introduced. However this did not occur. The situation just became even more confused. Some control was exercised by each of the following: (1) the Chairperson of the Corporation, (2) the Director General as chief executive officer of the Corporation, (3) the Minister of Broadcasting and (4) parliament, in its debates on the estimates. This *Act* also provided for the establishment of privately owned broadcasting stations but the confusion of power meant none eventuated. The NZBC was required to conduct a review of existing coverage before any privately owned stations were licensed and not surprisingly, the NZBC never saw a need. No applications for privately owned stations were sought.

As a result, programming available to New Zealanders remained influenced by the traditional balance the government had required. In the late 1960s a 'pirate' station, Radio Hauraki, took advantage of the coming of the transistor radio, and from outside the twelve mile limit broadcast a full range of current popular music to the many Auckland teenagers who gathered on the beaches with their 'trannies'. This station was financed with commercials during the programs. These broadcasts were so popular

involved with the Vietnam War Moratorium in 1971 set up two unlicensed stations, 3DR (Draft Resisters) at Melbourne University and 3PR (Peoples Radio) at Monash University to have their political views heard. Since broadcasting without a licence has always been illegal, police destroyed the equipment at 3DR and electronically jammed the broadcast at 3PR. Because Australia has always had commercial radio, there has never been the incentive for broadcasting entrepreneurs to set up 'pirate' commercial stations. Details of 3DR and 3PR are reported in Marje Prior, 'Public Radio in Australia', draft of uncompleted essay, Bathurst, 5 July 1978, Evans Archives, with present writer. Personal permission granted to quote from confidential document.

the government was forced to change the arrangements for licensing private stations. In 1968 it removed licensing powers from the NZBC to a new independent regulator the New Zealand Broadcasting Authority which was set up for the purpose. This Authority proved as conservative as the NZBC and even more restrictive than the Australian government at that time. In 1971 it conducted a hearing into FM broadcasting and concluded that there was no need to introduce FM broadcasting into New Zealand in the foreseeable future.

The New Zealand Labour Party was returned to power in 1972 and by the end of January 1973, the government had decided that the Authority and any further private bids for licences were to be abandoned. The NZBC was to be replaced by three independent corporations, Radio New Zealand, Television One and Television two, later South Pacific Television. Although no new private stations were to be licensed those that existed flourished. This system was barely in place when the National Party was returned to government in 1975 and policy was again reversed with the encouragement of private stations and the eventual introduction of FM broadcasting once more on the agenda. The development of broadcasting in New Zealand was, if possible, a series of even more *ad hoc* and expedient decisions than it was in Australia, without even a dual system to work from as a base. Radio New Zealand developed local commercial services in the smaller centres.¹⁷ New Zealand was certainly no model for Australia to emulate as it accepted the inevitability of the expansion of services.

Although other comparable countries were engaged in reforming and expanding their broadcasting services, none of them was directly applicable to Australia's dual system of broadcasting. Nevertheless, technical developments were universal, and conservative officers of the Control Board were forced to consider them, eventually. While the ABCB overall review of broadcasting was underway in Australia, there was

17. Brian Pauling, '70 Years of Radio - An Overview', H. Wilson, ed., *The Radio Book 1994*, Christchurch, New Zealand Broadcasting School Christchurch Polytechnic, 1994, pp.9-16.

considerable lobbying for the introduction of FM broadcasting. By his own admission, this persuaded Postmaster-General Alan Hulme to revise his previous attitude that the introduction of FM broadcasting was not warranted.¹⁸ On 13 May 1970 he asked the Control Board to incorporate an inquiry into the possible introduction of FM Broadcasting into its overall review of broadcasting.¹⁹ The report which resulted from this inquiry, completed in June 1972, was the first to concentrate on radio broadcasting since the report of the Joint Committee on Wireless Broadcasting, chaired by Senator William Gibson, in 1942.

An examination of this inquiry and its report exposes the prevailing attitudes of both the government and the ABCB. Previous commentaries on this document have focused on its recommendations that FM broadcasting in Australia should be located on the UHF band even though it was located on the VHF band everywhere else in the world.²⁰ This preoccupation was important because the UHF band was not technically developed and could not be used for a number of years. For those ABCB and PMG Department officers and commercial broadcasters, who were still opposed to the expansion of services, this was an excellent stalling tactic. However, important as this issue was, and it will be dealt with later in this chapter, focusing on it tended to obscure other aspects of the situation. From the beginning the inquiry was limited by the terms of reference given by the government:

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18. Alan Hulme, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.59, 6 June, 1968, pp.2131-2138; vol.67, 7 May 1970, p.1780.
 19. Alan Hulme, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.67, 14 May 1970, p.2130.
 20. Priorities Review Staff, *Report on Radio*, Canberra, AGPS, 1974, p.2; Michael Law, 'Media Diplomacy', Proceedings - Ethnic Broadcasting Seminar, hosted by 5EBI-FM under auspices of PBAA, Adelaide, 6-7 October 1979, CBAA Archives, Sydney, p.27; Chris Tappere, 'What's This Public Broadcasting Anyway?', D. Turbayne, ed., *The Media and Politics on Australia*, Hobart, Department of Political Science, University of Tasmania, 1980, p.40.

To inquire into the desirability or otherwise of introducing frequency modulation broadcasting into the Commonwealth. The inquiry is to embrace all the technical and economic factors involved having regard particularly to the experience of overseas countries which are making use of frequency modulation broadcasting services.²¹

Having been given such a reference it is not surprising that, in describing the 'Deficiencies of Present Broadcasting Services', the report concentrated on providing an 'acceptable listening standard' because of interference caused by atmospheric and man-made noise, particularly with the national stations, and financial viability with the commercial stations; that is the technical difficulties and economic factors.²² Although the government had always claimed it considered broadcasting to be an essential service, it had never defined what aspects were essential. The Control Board had no guidelines for making judgements. As a result the Board did not address the question of whether people, particularly in country areas, were well served by the existing high powered stations, which covered vast areas but contained little local content. Although submissions from the Music Broadcasting Societies and some educational interests made strong cases that present programming did not adequately cover cultural and educational material, and by inference minority views in general, the Board did not consider what the optimum transmission power would be to cater for local interests. It did recognise that country people in coastal north eastern Australia might have difficulty receiving distant high powered stations because of interference from frequent thunderstorms. However, it did not pursue this problem by looking at the question of whether the essential services needed by people in these areas were little local stations which could warn them of impending floods. In the cities, consideration was given to the shortage of city-wide coverage of cultural and educational material due to the apparent shortage of frequencies for providing an additional ABC network, but the need for social cohesion within the

21. ABCB, *Frequency Modulation*, p.1.

22. *ibid.*, pp.34-45.

suburbs which could be assisted by small stations covering local government areas was not on the agenda. Even when contemplating the introduction of 'Non-Commercial Services', the Board was still focused on the same sorts of considerations: 'The adherents of each of these groups, considered separately, are unlikely to be sufficiently numerous ever to provide a large enough audience to justify a commercial station's providing particular programming to suit them, and the national services have accepted so many responsibilities that no one minority group can expect to receive enough specialised programming over A.B.C. stations to satisfy it'.²³ This attitude of emphasising technical and economic problems reflected the influence that officers of the PMG's Department and the ABCB continued to have on the framing of the reference by the PMG. In spite of the growing political pressures, the officers of both organisations were obviously still pre-occupied with the technical and economic aspects of broadcasting, with apparently scant regard for the needs and demands of listeners.²⁴

Although the Board concentrated on technical and economic considerations, the recommendations of its report appeared to provide for fundamental changes and improvements to broadcasting in Australia, more substantial than any since the establishment of the ABC in 1932. These included the provision of a national regional network of FM stations, a national FM station in each capital city, the licensing of commercial FM stations both in capital cities and provincial areas and:

a new type of service, comprising FM stations to be known as Public Broadcasting Stations, which would be conducted on a non-profit basis, to cater for the needs of educational, religious, professional, musical and other like interests, but which would be available to the general public.²⁵

One public broadcasting station was to be established in each capital city and 'transmitting and studio facilities required should be provided by the Government and made available under a rental agreement to the various groups authorised to share

23. *ibid.*, pp.86-87.

24. Geoffrey Evans, Personal Interview at Canberra, 5 December 1994.

the use of the facilities'.²⁶ By owning the hardware the government was obviously going to be involved in some expenditure but would inevitably maintain a certain amount of control. Furthermore, although the interests to be catered for were those of minorities, they were still very much mainstream relatively conservative groups in the capital cities. This proposal was an inexpensive way of further expanding the national service, rather than providing real innovation.

Under the recommendations of the ABCB report on FM broadcasting, also known as the 'Red Report', broadcasting services were to be expanded with the technical innovation of FM broadcasting, but the government was to maintain a large proportion of the cost and control. Commercial FM licences were to be issued where such stations were expected to be economically viable, but this was a relatively minor part of the proposed expansion of services. Certainly the Control Board did not envisage the government moving more towards the American model of being merely a facilitator of an essential service which was actually provided by other commercial and non-commercial interests. There was no suggestion in the report that any public broadcasting stations should be self-funded, self-managed independent organisations even though some of the submissions to the inquiry had lobbied for this type of station.

These recommendations gave the impression that the ABCB was making plans for the immediate expansion of services. In fact there could not be a burgeoning of FM stations of any description for about five years because technical standards had to be formulated for FM broadcasting in the UHF band, as the report proposed. Since the rest of the world used VHF for FM radio there were no transmitters and no receivers developed for the use of the UHF band. The ABCB claimed it recommended the use of the UHF band because this was less difficult and less expensive than moving existing television stations from that part of the VHF band internationally recognised for FM radio use, onto the UHF band. It will be seen that later reports disputed this. The Board

25. ABCB, *Frequency Modulation*, p.90.

26. *ibid.*, p.9.

conceded that some FM stations could be licensed in spaces remaining on the VHF band. However the ABCB maintained this could cause interference to the sound on existing VHF TV stations and since ultimately more would be needed than would fit in the available space the Board felt it was preferable to put them all in the UHF band from the beginning.²⁷ It will be shown that later reports disagreed with this contention, also. The ABCB reasoning could still be seen as procrastinating tactics.

Nevertheless the Coalition government accepted the 'Red Report' in October 1972.²⁸ In doing so it placed both the general concepts of frequency modulation and public broadcasting on the agenda. It conceded that broadcasting services in Australia were not satisfying the needs of the people and recognised there were frequencies available to rectify the situation. If the government had in fact restricted the development of broadcasting in the years since the end of the War, because it felt the need to maintain as much control as possible of broadcasting surreptitiously, as suggested in Chapter Three, this position was no longer possible. The recommendations of this report meant control in the future was either going to be obvious or non-existent. Considering the majority of the expansion was conceived as either in the national service or in a government controlled public service, the government would, more or less, maintain its existing level of control. As Postmaster-General Hulme pointed out in his statement to parliament, the government was accepting a general principle, the details of which would be worked out later.²⁹ Since the government accepted the use of the undeveloped UHF band, there was going to be plenty of time to work these out. When

27. See verbal submissions by Myles Wright, Chairman ABCB and Jim Wilkinson, Technical Director ABCB to Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts, Reference on Broadcasting and Television, *CPD*, Senate, vol.2, 14 June 1973, pp.1159-1181.

28. Alan Hulme, Ministerial Statement on Frequency Modulation Broadcasting by the PMG, *CPD*, *House of Representatives*, vols.79-81, 10 Oct,1972, pp.2249-2250.

29. *ibid.*

the Coalition lost power to Gough Whitlam and the Labor Party just two months after it accepted the report, it had made no progress in this direction.

On 19 August 1971, while the ABCB was in the middle of its inquiry into FM broadcasting the Senate resolved that the matter of 'All aspects of television and broadcasting, including the Australian content of television programmes' be referred to its Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts (SSCESA) for consideration. This reference was far broader than that given to the ABCB, dealing with much more than just technical and economic interests. It neither emanated from the government nor was its original motivation primarily with broadcasting services. Lionel Murphy, a member of the Labor opposition in the Senate at the time, had received a petition from the Young Democratic Labor Association of Victoria seeking an inquiry into the development of the creative and performing arts in Australia. This group felt that particular attention should be paid to television and radio in addressing their concerns, but their motivation remained the development of the arts not the development of broadcasting. As Geoffrey Bolton has pointed out Coalition Prime Minister John Gorton was one of the first politicians to see the arts, as an electoral issue at the end of the 1960s.³⁰ The previous chapter showed how the arts had been developing in Australia since the mid 1950s. By the early 1970s both sides of politics had realised that the arts was a small but significant electoral issue. It was as a result of this petition by the Young Democratic Labor Association that Murphy took the reference to the Senate.³¹ Once the SSCESA began investigating the matter, its origins in the issue of the arts were forgotten and the Committee found itself re-considering much of what had been covered by the ABCB in its inquiry into FM broadcasting. The Senate inquiry lasted until 1975 and during that time had a number of chairmen from both sides of politics. From the Coalition the most significant was Gordon Davidson, who realised that the reference he

30. Geoffrey Bolton, *The Middle Way, The Oxford History of Australia - Volume 5 1942-1988*, Melbourne, OUP, 1990, p.210.

31. Lionel Murphy, *CPD*, Senate, vol.49, 18 19 August 1971 pp.43, 173.

had been given by the Senate was such a wide one that it could not be adequately covered in one report at the end of the inquiry. He decided to submit interim reports as the Committee dealt with aspects of the reference.³² Altogether three progress reports were presented to parliament, the first of which was in October 1972, about two weeks after the ABCB report was tabled.³³ The ABCB presented its written submission, which covered a broader range of issues than its own inquiry, to the SSCESA in March 1972 before it had completed the report on its own inquiry.³⁴ This duplication of effort is a clear example of the government's lack of a coherent broadcasting policy or even general direction.

The first report of the SSCESA inquiry was completed after only preliminary investigations had been made. It did briefly mention the possibility of other types of broadcasting stations besides the existing national and commercial services. It also foreshadowed examining the possible introduction of FM broadcasting despite the fact that the Postmaster-General had accepted the ABCB's FM report.³⁵

The government was already receiving complaints about its acceptance of the ABCB recommendation of using the UHF band for FM broadcasting.³⁶ Of the

32. Gordon Davidson, *CPD*, Senate, vol.52, 1 June 1972, pp.2431-2432.

33. Gordon Davidson, *Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts Progress Report on All Aspects of Television and Broadcasting, including Australian Content of Television, October 1972*, Canberra, CGPO, 1973.

34. ABCB, *Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts*, Melbourne, March 1972.

35. Davidson, *Senate Standing Committee*, pp.8-9.

36. Examples are: Michael Townley and Ronald McAuliffe raised the matter in the Senate, Michael Townley, *CPD*, Senate, vol.54, 31 October 1972, p.2231; Ronald McAuliffe, *CPD*, Senate, vol.57, 21 August 1973, p.10; Paul Gardiner wrote a series of 5 articles in the *Australian Financial Review*, Paul Gardiner, "'Development costs are in the air' FM Radio Has a F111 Look', *Australian*

members of the SSCESA, both Liberal Senator George Hannan,³⁷ and committee secretary, Geoff Evans, were aware that the arguments put forward by the ABCB were questionable and that if the VHF band could be used FM broadcasting could start almost immediately instead of having to wait five years to develop costly new technology. Neither Hannan nor Evans had any desire to employ the ABCB's procrastinating tactics.

Expert technical opinions were needed to counter those of ABCB and PMG Department engineers, who claimed to be in favour of UHF because it would enable them to start with new circuitry and new designs. This would be marginally better technically than VHF, which had been developed in the USA before the War and before the development of hi-fi equipment.³⁸ The inquiry had to overcome the opinions of

Financial Review, 21 June 1973, pp.1,11; Paul Gardiner, 'Is a taxitruck worth more than a symphony? Don't ask the people who rule the air waves', *Australian Financial Review*, 22 June 1973, pp.2-3; Paul Gardiner, 'FM - the ABC of counter revolution', *Australian Financial Review*, 26 June 1973, pp.10-11; Paul Gardiner, 'Who needs tariff barriers with technology like that?', *Australian Financial Review*, 27 June 1973, pp.11-12; Paul Gardiner, 'The social cost: Look what they've done to my song, Ma', *Australian Financial Review*, 26 June 1973, p.7; Trevor Jarvie wrote an article in the *Current Affairs Bulletin*, published by the University of Sydney where he was a Teaching Fellow in English, Trevor Jarvie, 'FM RADIO - THE FUTURE', *Current Affairs Bulletin*, vol.50, no.6, November 1973, pp.26-31.

37. George Hannan had some electronics knowledge as he had worked with radar during the war and he was a music buff seeking better quality radio reception of his favourite pieces. This gave him both the expertise and the desire to push for FM broadcasting to be returned to the VHF band and commenced immediately. Even while the SSCESA were considering the question, Hannan asked the new Labor Minister for the Media Doug McClelland to review the situation. George Hannan, *CPD*, Senate, vol.55, 15 March 1973, pp.470-471.

38. Evans Interview.

Australian manufacturers as they were in favour of UHF because they would have a monopoly of sales of equipment since it was made nowhere else in the world. On the other hand importers were in favour of VHF because they could start selling equipment immediately. No importers had been invited to make submissions to the ABCB. Geoff Evans secured a submission to the Senate inquiry from Philip Jacoby, principal of the electronics importer Jacoby-Kemphorn. Jacoby claimed that if UHF was used FM would be delayed for many years because Australian manufacturers were pre-occupied with colour television which would be far more profitable than developing the untried UHF FM radio.³⁹

The Music Broadcasting Society of NSW had substantial technical knowledge in Graham Wilson and Max Benyon and made a significant submission in favour of the advantages of VHF. But their later claim that without their submission Australia would have been stuck with UHF is denied by SSCESA secretary, Evans, who maintains that the committee was fully cognisant of the situation.⁴⁰ It was searching for a credible authority whose opinion would carry enough weight to counter the opinions of the engineers in the ABCB report. For Evans this authority was Neville Fletcher, Professor of Physics at the University of New England, who pointed out that the continued expansion of television would lead to the use of UHF, at which time it would not be so difficult to move existing stations from VHF to UHF. This would free up enough space in the VHF band to fill all the requirements of FM broadcasting, which

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39. Philip Jacoby, submission to Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts, Reference on Broadcasting and Television, *CPD*, Senate, vol.2, 26 July 1973, pp.1301-1326.
40. Max Benyon, Trevor Jarvie, Michael Law, and Grahame Wilson, submission to Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts, Reference on Broadcasting and Television, *CPD*, Senate, vol.2, 25 July 1973, pp.1220-1293; Trevor Jarvie, Personal Interview at Waverley, Sydney, 27 May 1994; Law, 'Media Diplomacy', p.27; Evans Interview.

could be started immediately in the space currently available.⁴¹

By August 1973, the committee presented its second report, this time to the new Whitlam Labor government. Because the terms of reference were much broader than those for the ABCB FM broadcasting inquiry, this report was able to examine society's goals for its broadcasting system and examine the criteria for determining broadcasting arrangements. The committee ranked these in a deliberately descending order of importance; social, economic and technical. Not only did these differ in order of importance from the previous pre-occupation with technical factors but the report elaborated:

Decision makers may be too easily persuaded that technical considerations rule out alternative arrangements which may have worthwhile social or economic advantages, and for which it may be worth forgoing a degree of technical excellence.⁴²

From this perspective the SSCESA second report dealt in detail with, amongst other things, non-commercial, non-national broadcasting and the introduction of frequency modulation and came to very different conclusions from the recent ABCB report.

The Control Board's recommendation for government owned public broadcasting stations, on which time was made available to different user groups, was

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41. Evans Interview; Neville Fletcher, submission to Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts, Reference on Broadcasting and Television, *CPD*, Senate, vol.2, 26 July 1973, pp.1326-1343. As well as being Professor of Physics, Fletcher had also helped students set a campus station, Radio UNE at the University of New England (UNE); see Keith Jackson, 'Community Radio in Armidale', unpublished paper, compiled for 2ARM-FM, Armidale, May 1977, copy with present writer.
 42. Jim McClelland, *Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts Second Progress Report on All Aspects of Television and Broadcasting, including Australian Content of Television Programmes August 1973*, Canberra, CGPO, 1974, pp.3-4.

endorsed as an outlet for intermittent access. However, the committee felt it was 'unnecessarily cautious, restrictive and paternalistic to restrict potential non-commercial broadcasters to the shared station' and recommended that organisations such as music broadcasting societies, universities, religious groups and ethnic groups should be encouraged to operate their own stations. Furthermore the SSCESA saw a place for low powered community stations to service small geographic units with local programming. The report suggested diversity in both types of stations and types of programming.⁴³ If this were implemented it would inevitably and obviously reduce the government's control over broadcasting.

In order to do this the SSCESA recommended that the Control Board's policy of limiting the allocation of licences to those it deemed to be potentially economically viable should be completely abandoned and replaced by a system similar to that in the USA. If a licensee failed to provide the service the licence covered, for whatever reason, then the licence would be lost and given to a licensee who could provide such a service. Although this recommendation was in the section on public broadcasting, it would of course apply equally to commercial licences, thus facilitating the licensing of many more commercial stations as well as the establishment of public broadcasting. It is clear that if this recommendation was implemented it would completely undermine the longstanding ABCB and PMG Department ethos of protecting existing commercial licensees.⁴⁴

The SSCESA second report also seriously questioned the recommendation of the ABCB report that FM broadcasting in Australia be developed in the UHF band. Here the committee recommended a slight technical sacrifice for a huge social benefit. Because the technology for VHF was already developed and there were estimated to be about a million radio receivers in Australia catering for the VHF-FM

43. *ibid.*, pp.15-16.

44. *ibid.*, pp.16-17.

band,⁴⁵ VHF-FM could commence almost immediately. The estimated cost of developing UHF-FM was spiralling and would be a drain not only on the public purse but also on those purchasing the sets needed to receive it. The time it would take to develop the system was also unclear. Since the committee had uncovered technical evidence that the ABCB's examination of the question was inadequate and that space could be found in the VHF band for FM broadcasting, the SSCESA report recommended that the whole question be re-examined from technical, economic and social points of view by qualified people from overseas who had no previous association with the problem in Australia and no existing position to defend.⁴⁶

For the first time, since the government started accepting spurious advice given to the 'Gibson Committee' in 1942 by S. W. Witt, a PMG engineer and V. M. Brooker, president of the AFCBS, a group of politicians had refused to be overawed by the opinions of the government's own technical experts. Instead they had taken into account the total concept of broadcasting primarily as an essential service for the people, rather than the plaything of technicians or the enterprise of local manufacturers and existing commercial stations. In doing so the committee was paving the way for the government to be forced to release a little of the tight control it had maintained on the services in the past. This did not happen because the Coalition was replaced by Labor on the government benches, but because one of the Senators on the committee had some technical knowledge and all had no connection with the ABCB, the Department or commercial broadcasters, and were not swayed by the vested interests of these groups. The committee was bipartisan. When the Coalition lost power in December 1972, Chairman Gordon Davidson relinquished his position to Labor's Jim McClelland, but the questions being considered did not divide the Senators along party lines. Their

45. VHF was incorporated on most medium and higher priced imported sets and some importers were advertising receivers for sale with 'FM to international standard'; Sony advertisement, *Australian Financial Review*, 18 February 1974, p.10.

46. McClelland, *Senate Standing Committee*, pp.22-23.

recommendations reflected a perceived need, at least within the committee, for a thorough shake up of the government's attitude to broadcasting services in Australia which was not coming from Minister Doug McClelland or his new Department of the Media, which still had many officers from the old PMG's Department.⁴⁷ The committee's final progress report in April 1975 elaborated on issues covered previously and also addressed the matters of cable and satellite services and the most appropriate body to allocate frequencies.⁴⁸

Certainly Jim McClelland, who was Chairman of the SSCESA at the time of its all important second report, was aware of the danger of governments leaving the fate of broadcasting in the hands of 'experts'. Giving a paper on the media early in 1975 McClelland quoted a statement of Myles Wright, Chairman of the ABCB, as the first witness before the committee. Wright had said: 'As I understand it and from my

47. This led to a perceived conflict between the two McClellands. George Georges, who became the final Chairman of SSCESA, asked: 'Is the report correct in inferring that there is conflict between the Minister for the Media and the chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Education (*sic*), Science and the Arts?' George Georges, *CPD*, Senate, vols.57-58, 12 September 1973, p.439. Despite the Minister's denial the problem grew, contributing to departmental recommendations for media reform remaining vague. See 'The Doug and Jim Show', *Australian Financial Review*, 22 March 1974, p.4 and Patricia Edgar, 'Radio and Television', A. Patience and B. Head, eds, *From Whitlam to Fraser - Reform and reaction in Australian politics*, Melbourne, OUP, 1979, pp.218-219. Whitlam has acknowledged the problems between the two McClellands. He has described their relationship as having 'some creative tension'. See Gough Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government 1972-1975*, Melbourne, Penguin, 1985, p.578.

48. George Georges, *Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts Third Progress Report on all Aspects of Television and Broadcasting including Australian Content of Television, April 1975*, Canberra, CGPO, 1976.

observations I think technically we have the best broadcasting and television services in the world'.⁴⁹ McClelland commented on this remark with derision in his paper: 'The enormity, nay fatuousness, of this claim is illustrated by the fact that at the time he spoke Australia, unlike such advanced countries as Burma, Thailand and the Philippines, had no FM radio. We had no colour television, no local low-power stations, and no cable television. It is hard to think of any advanced western country which lacks all these.' McClelland felt more work needed to be done to wrest broadcasting from the 'experts' and return control to government. While he conceded that his Senate Committee had done good work, it was restricted by the limitations on its sitting days, particularly at times of political turbulence, such as the double dissolution of parliament when it did not sit for nearly six months. McClelland maintained that a more thorough review of broadcasting in Australia was necessary and that nothing short of a Royal Commission would be adequate in the circumstances.⁵⁰

Although Prime Minister Whitlam had been aware of a need for a thorough examination of broadcasting services and its administrators for some time he did not share McClelland's view that a Royal Commission was necessary.⁵¹ The government's response to the SSCESA inquiry was piecemeal, influenced by conflicts within its own ranks. But Whitlam had come into office with a mandate for change. Many of his ministers were anxious to accomplish as much as possible.⁵² The

49. Myles Wright, Verbal Submission to Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts, Reference on Broadcasting and Television, *CPD*, Senate, vol.1, 4 May 1972, p.56.

50. Jim McClelland, 'Case Study No.2: The Great Australian Scandal', G. Major, ed., *Mass Media in Australia*, Sydney, Hodder and Stoughton 1976, pp.115-116.

51. Whitlam was aware also of Fairhall's lone battle in parliament, on behalf of the Coalition, for improvement and extensions to services during the 1960s; Gough Whitlam, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.59, 6 June 1968, pp.2135-2138.

52. Bolton, *The Middle Way*, pp.213, 216.

government did act on the major recommendation of the SSCESA second report, for the re-examination of the FM issue. Even with broadcasting, which was not a significant issue for most of the electorate, the government was anxious to be seen to be promoting change. At a press conference on 25 September 1973 Whitlam announced that Cabinet had decided to set up a new public inquiry into the implications of establishing FM broadcasting in Australia.⁵³ Special Minister of State, Don Willesee and Minister for the Media, Doug McClelland announced, in November 1973, that an independent overseas expert would head the inquiry. Unlike the Senate investigation this independent inquiry was to look only at FM broadcasting and recommend whether the VHF or UHF band should be used. Although this was a relatively narrow reference it did include taking into account technical, social and economic implications of the situation. Furthermore a list of eight matters, some of which were quite general in nature, to be taken into account by the inquiry, meant that it did allow for comments on a general philosophy of broadcasting within the Australian context.⁵⁴

With the report due to be presented to government by 31 March 1974 the hearings of the Independent Inquiry into FM Broadcasting were held in January and February 1974 under the chairmanship of Sir Francis McLean, who was Chairman of the Telecommunications Industry Standard Committee of the British Standards Institute and had previously been Director of Engineering at the BBC. He had overseen the introduction of FM broadcasting at the BBC. The second member of the inquiry was Professor Cyril Renwick, Director of Research at the Hunter Valley Research Foundation.⁵⁵ McLean was an international technical expert and Renwick was an Australian economist with no connection with existing vested interests in broadcasting.

One hundred and twenty eight submissions were received in spite of the brevity of its investigation, illustrating that interest in the subject was continuing to grow.

53. Lionel Murphy, *CPD*, Senate, vols.57-58, 26 September 1973, p.874.

54. ABCB, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report*, Canberra, AGPS, 1974, pp.20-21.

55. *ibid.*

Naturally some of these came from people or organisations who had made presentations to earlier inquiries. Groups such as the Music Broadcasting Societies continued to be strong advocates for VHF, advancing social, economic and technical arguments for their position.⁵⁶ The ABCB submission still canvassed the same opinion that it had in its own report that the UHF band should be used.⁵⁷ Although this position had previously been supported by the Australian Electronics Consumer Industry Association, the manufacturers were no longer able to speak with a united voice. AWA, being both a radio station operator and the only manufacturer which was not also an importer, maintained strong support for UHF. The company used the technical argument of possible interference of the sound on existing VHF TV channels from the second harmonic generated in the FM receivers, if VHF were used. Philips was undecided, being overseas owned and possibly able to take advantage of importing VHF receivers. By July 1974, it was already scaling down its manufacturing operations in Australia and retrenching staff.⁵⁸ The other manufacturers, particularly General Electric (GE) which was also an importer, spoke out for the first time in favour of VHF because they were convinced that it was in the consumers' interests, especially now that tariffs had been reduced on the imported receivers.⁵⁹ Des Foster, representing the commercial broadcasters' association FACB, was more concerned that commercial broadcasters were

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56. Paul Gardiner, 'Strong opposition to UHF decision at new FM inquiry', *Australian Financial Review*, 30 January 1974, p.21.
57. ABCB, 'Independent Inquiry into Frequency Modulation Broadcasting, Submission by the Australian Broadcasting Control Board', reprinted in ABCB, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report*, Canberra, AGPS, 1974, pp.250-254.
58. Senator Davidson and Senator Bishop discussed Philips retrenchments in the Senate; *CPD*, Senate, vol. 60, 10 July 1974, p.24.
59. Paul Gardiner, 'Every maker for himself - FM splits the radio industry', *Australian Financial Review*, 1 February 1974, pp.1, 4.

included if FM licences were issued than whether it was UHF or VHF.⁶⁰ Thus, on both social and economic grounds, VHF was obviously preferable. The decision had to be made on whether the technical question of possible interference with the sound on existing TV channels was going to override other considerations. This inquiry had an advantage over previous inquiries in tackling this problem because its chairman was an outside technical expert. McLean was able to state categorically that his experience overseas was quite different and in fact he had never heard of this second harmonic problem until he arrived in Australia.⁶¹ Apparently those technicians in Australia who supported UHF had discovered the problem to be a theoretical possibility. World expert on frequency modulation, Dr Lothar Rhode, partner in the German electronics firm, Rhode and Schwarz, who had played a leading role in the development of both the German and South African systems, was flown to Australia especially to give evidence on this matter. He informed the inquiry that, in practice, he had never experienced these problems which the Australian technicians had discovered in theory. With the technical situation no longer obscured by Australia's own self serving experts, the inquiry was in a position to make a decision giving greater weight to the social and economic factors as instructed by its terms of reference.

In making its deliberations the 'McLean Inquiry' had taken into account that the Australian government wanted FM broadcasting to be introduced as speedily as possible in the public interest whilst encouraging a plurality of interest in the media. The inquiry determined that the public interest meant that any solution must satisfy public demand in the short term and yet permit adequate flexibility for the expanding requirements of the long term.⁶² The report recommended that FM broadcasting be

60. Paul Gardiner, 'Commercial broadcasters sit on fence at FM inquiry', *Australian Financial Review*, 31 January 1974, p.26.

61. Gardiner, 'Every maker for himself', p.4.

62. Francis McLean, and Cyril Renwick, *Independent Inquiry into Frequency Modulation Report March 1974*, Sydney, Government Printer, 1974, p.3.

started in Australia as soon as possible on the VHF band. This should be in a little over two years from the date of approval and could include two or three stations once television was removed from Channel 5. Planning for the provision of additional stations should begin so that frequencies were available as demand grew. A network of FM stations should be developed by the ABC for national purposes. Public access stations should be established under the control of the Department of the Media and non-profit making self funding community stations should be licensed. This would include those run by music, education and ethnic organisations. Commercial stations should also be authorised. The licences for all FM stations were to be granted by the ABCB after public hearings and in the light of the availability of channels and the specific needs for services in FM.⁶³

The report was accepted by the government and was tabled in the Senate earlier than expected by the Minister for the Media, Doug McClelland.⁶⁴ The ABCB found itself doing a 'backflip', claiming that it agreed with this new decision which it could not take itself. The Board asserted that it had been constrained in its recommendations by aspects of the *Broadcasting and Television Act* which had not inhibited the 'McLean Report'.⁶⁵ The 'McLean Report' was a milestone in Australian broadcasting in as much as FM broadcasting was now to be situated on the VHF band and was no longer held up by the need for expensive technical developments. However, there was still no coherent government policy as to how this should be achieved, and particularly how public broadcasting should be introduced. Different arms of government and different lobby groups all had separate schemes. This can be contrasted with Whitlam's Medibank scheme for health insurance, where the government established a coherent policy.⁶⁶ But, unlike broadcasting, health was a major election issue, and a

63. McLean and Renwick, *Independent Inquiry*, pp.7-8.

64. ABCB, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report*, p.21.

65. ABCB, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report*, p.23.

66. Bolton, *The Middle Way*, pp.208-209, 221.

coherent policy was essential.

The Department of the Media started working on plans of its own for broadcasting reform and to heighten its perception in the electorate. In its submission to the 'McLean Inquiry' the department had enunciated its own version of government policy on broadcasting as part of the larger issue of communications: 'The Australian Government is determined that communications must be elevated to the status of a recognised social need similar to that of housing or education.'⁶⁷ It claimed that this principle was one of the major reasons for the establishment of the Department of the Media. Minister McClelland stated that every nation must have a vision of itself and that to this end radio and television could profoundly influence the educational, cultural and artistic viewpoints of Australians. This conformed with the government's policy on the arts, with its emphasis on Australian content.⁶⁸ It was therefore important that a diversification of ownership of the media and a plurality of viewpoints and cultures be encouraged. The establishment of public broadcasting 'would bring the Government's objective of plurality in the media one step closer to realisation'.⁶⁹ These were all very high minded ideals but apart from incorporating public broadcasting into the plan to help realise these aims, there was nothing new. The Australian government had claimed to promote diversity in broadcasting since its inception. As John Hilvert so aptly described these emanations from the department, 'we've been getting waffle when we really should have been on about nitty gritty policy'.⁷⁰

When the department did create a strategy for the development of broadcasting services in the middle of 1974, it was meant to be secret until the views of potential public broadcasters were ascertained. However, the plan was leaked to the

67. Department of the Media, 'Submission to the Independent Inquiry into Frequency Modulation Broadcasting', February 1974, p.2.

68. Bolton, *The Middle Way*, p.230.

69. Department of the Media, p.4.

70. Hilvert, 'Recent Developments'.

press, which made an issue of it and the plan became known as Document 'J'.⁷¹ There was provision for an ABC national FM service, extensions to the ABC national AM service and various types of public broadcasting and 'Young-Style' broadcasting stations. Furthermore, apart from a few privately funded FM stations to be run by organisations such as the music broadcasting societies, government funding and technical expertise were expected to be needed for all types of public broadcasting stations. Not only would this mean that the government would inevitably exercise a certain amount of control over these stations but they were going to be established in the capital cities, where the government's technical expertise was situated.⁷² Michael Thompson, who was an officer in the Radio Branch of the department at this time, has claimed that the Department of the Media had never seen operating radio stations as part of its brief, as had been suggested in the 'McLean Report'.⁷³ This departmental plan envisaged a Planning Council, made up of representatives of a number of existing government departments and the ABCB, would be established to function as an interim board until an independent body was instituted to allocate government owned facilities to groups who wished to use them.⁷⁴ Peter Manning, Lindsay Foyle and David Dale saw this plan for public broadcasting merely as a combination of effectively government run stations with a few licences being handed out 'to a quite defined middle-class minority: those who like

71. Details were released first: Graham Williams, '88 new radio stations. Public groups to have access, new plan says', *Australian*, 4 July 1974, p.3; then the whole document was published; Peter Manning, Lindsay Foyle, and David Dale, 'A Chance To Start Again', *New Journalist*, no. 15, July-August 1974, pp.9-16. See Chapter Six for the political significance of the leaking of this document.

72. Department of the Media, 'A Plan for the Development of AM and FM Radio Broadcasting Services', 12 June 1974, cited in Manning, Foyle, and Dale, 'A Chance To Start Again', pp.10-15.

73. Michael Thompson, Personal Interview at Bellingen, 17 April 1994.

74. Department of the Media, 'A Plan'.

classical music, those who have tertiary education and those who've "made it" in the Italian and Greek communities'.⁷⁵ This assessment is probably not an exaggeration for while the plan may have enabled the department to avoid running stations itself there was no scope to allow the diversity in station ownership, programming or geographical location that it had been advocating when discussing the matter on a theoretical level. The inescapable conclusion is that the department was not, in practice, prepared to forgo any of the existing government control over broadcasting.

This plan of the Department of the Media was not the only government thinking on broadcasting in the middle of 1974. Whitlam had committed himself to the development of FM in his policy speech for the federal election, in May 1974, after the double dissolution.⁷⁶ Partly due to increasing dissatisfaction with the performance of Minister McClelland and his department Whitlam asked his Priorities Review Staff (PRS) to report 'on all aspects of the allocation of FM and AM channels', shortly after the election.⁷⁷ Document 'J' became the Department of the Media submission to the PRS inquiry.⁷⁸ A senior officer of the PRS, John Enfield, publicly criticised the department's plan saying it was 'immature and incomplete' and failed to account for many needs

75. Manning, Foyle, and Dale, 'A Chance To Start Again', p.9.

76. Gough Whitlam, 'Policy Speech', cited in PRS, *Report on Radio*, Canberra, AGPS, August 1974, p.4.

77. Graham Williams, 'Minister may lose control of radio, TV', *Australian*, 16 December 1974, p.5; Lincoln Hynes, 'Radio at a crucial time', *b and t advertising, marketing and media weekly*, vol.24, no.1002, 17 October 1974, p.34; PRS, *Report on Radio*, p.1.

78. Paul Gardiner, 'First FM broadcasts possible late next year PRS told', *Australian Financial Review*, 5 July 1974, p.17.

leaving the PRS to tie 'a lot of threads together'.⁷⁹ Here again, there were two arms of government vying for control of the decisions for new broadcasting developments.

However, there was a third influence on government policy. Geoff Evans, who was still the secretary of the SSCESA, was concerned that there would be no real development of public broadcasting because current legislation did not allow for the licensing of any stations other than those of the ABC and commercial operators. He was aware that any amendments to broadcasting legislation to legitimise public broadcasting would be blocked by the Opposition, which still had a majority in the Senate after the double dissolution election. Frustrated that the Department of the Media was making little real progress, he wrote a paper which offered a solution to the licensing problem. In his official position Evans was powerless to make suggestions but he gave his paper to Peter Ellyard, whom he knew because they had been science students at Sydney University together, for him to pass on to Moss Cass. Ellyard was now Senior Private Secretary to Cass, who was later Minister for the Media, but was Minister for the Environment at this time. Evans maintained Cass was a critical thinker. Always interested in new concepts Cass was enticed to embrace Evan's ideas. Cass presented the paper to the Caucus Committee on Education, Science and the Arts on 30 July 1974.⁸⁰

The main thrust of the argument in this paper was that 92-94 Mhz had not been allocated to the ABCB for broadcasting services and was still under the control of the PMG's Department as it was classed for fixed and mobile services. The PMG could license FM broadcasting services on this band, which was used internationally for this purpose, as communications stations, under the existing legislation of the *Wireless*

79. John Enfield, cited in Graham Williams, 'Media plan for radio "immature, incomplete"', *Australian*, 5 July 1974, p.2.

80. Moss Cass, 'Proposal to Licence (*sic*) a Limited Number of New Types of FM Stations Immediately Under the Wireless Telegraphy Act', 30 July 1974; Evans Archives, with present writer.

Telegraphy Act. The paper pointed out that similar licences had already been given to the University of New South Wales and the University of Adelaide just off the AM broadcasting band. Licences could be given immediately to the Music Broadcasting Stations of NSW and Victoria and the University of Adelaide Department of Adult Education, which had already applied. Such licences would fit in with a more comprehensive FM service, when the broadcasting legislation was amended to incorporate public broadcasting. The paper expressed a very real concern: 'In the event that this Government did not survive to see a comprehensive system set up, at least some sort of public FM service would have been achieved, and given the nature of the alternative Government's approach to things, it would probably survive simply because it was there.'⁸¹ This fear that the government might not survive was not peculiar to Evans and Cass. As Bolton has pointed out, it had been endemic among Labor parliamentarians since the Whitlam government took office: 'Within the party there was a widespread feeling that it was against the nature of things for Labor to hold office in Canberra, and they must make the most of their opportunity in the three years which were all they could expect.'⁸² After the loss of electoral support during the double dissolution election, with a still hostile Senate, this feeling intensified. This political argument, rather than any formulation of broadcasting policy or any real concern for the people to be provided with the services, persuaded the Caucus Committee to accept the idea.⁸³ The paper added nothing to the debate on what form FM services should take to augment the essential service which broadcasting was accepted as providing for the Australian people. In this situation, no-one seemed at all concerned about what the people needed, the Labor Party in government was preoccupied with being seen to have

81. *ibid.*, p.4.

82. Bolton, *The Middle Way*, p.216.

83. Henry Rosenbloom, who was on Cass's staff at the time, claimed that the Caucus Committee accepted the idea 'enthusiastically'; Henry Rosenbloom, *Politics and the Media*, Melbourne, Scribe, Revised Edition, 1978, p.113.

achieved something for broadcasting reform before its inevitable demise.

The Priorities Review Staff presented its report to government in August 1974, but it was not made public for reasons which will become apparent shortly. This report, which did attempt to address the issue of broadcasting policy and the government's role, is the last one to be considered in this chapter because it was the last one to be presented to government before the decision was taken to start issuing *ad hoc* public broadcasting licences under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*.

The Priorities Review Staff felt that a policy for the development of broadcasting could not be considered in isolation from the government's general social policies and objectives. Particular concerns were felt for the initiatives that had been taken in the devolution of decision making and the encouragement of community participation in the area of urban and regional development. The PRS perceived that the expansion of radio services should be considered as part of this overall project. Rather than being under the control of the Department of the Media, planning would be better co-ordinated by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet or the Department of the Special Minister of State because they were broad policy making departments without sectional interests. These departments were concerned to see that all aspects of government policy were given due weight.⁸⁴ At first sight this looks like a real consideration of the government's role in broadcasting. Unfortunately after taking into consideration the fact that the Priorities Review Staff was under the control of the Special Minister for State and took its direction for this report directly from the Prime Minister it must be inferred that this advice was at least partly influenced by the fact that the PRS was advancing its own cause. Certainly the press had a 'field day' with the idea, the report was not publicly released and Doug McClelland reasserted his authority in parliament: 'despite Press speculation from time to time about certain aspects of the Priorities Review Staff report, particularly reports in the 'Australian' (sic) newspaper, Cabinet authorised me yesterday to say that I am the Minister for the Media, that I am in

84. PRS, *Report on Radio*, p.5.

charge of and ministerially responsible for broadcasting and that there will always be a Department of the Media'.⁸⁵

The report did more than promote infighting between government departments. Examining the social objectives affecting the development of broadcasting the PRS decided that these were undergoing change. Whereas for many years the objective had been 'reaching the maximum number of people with radio broadcasts at least cost' radio was now recognised 'as a means of communication for community development'.⁸⁶ This change in social objective would need a different technical plan. There would continue to be a need for some high powered broad coverage stations, particularly in large cities. But there was also a growing need for two other types of service: small stations covering restricted geographic areas to provide services to local communities and medium coverage stations to provide for sectional needs in metropolitan areas. The report argued: 'The higher costs of these structures of stations would have to be weighed against the higher social benefits. Simple criteria like the number of persons covered are inappropriate.'⁸⁷ This recommendation provided for planning for a coherent policy development which could have outlined a definite role for government.

Government control of public or community stations was not part of the government's role in the PRS plan. The PRS rejected the idea, put forward in the 'McLean Report', that public access stations should be set up under the control of the Department of the Media. 'Regardless of present good intentions, there are political and social objections to control by government, or its departments of radio stations in the broadcast band.'⁸⁸ The PRS recommended the establishment of a number of different types of arrangements: local community stations to serve the whole population in a

85. Douglas McClelland, *CPD*, Senate, vol.61, 24 September 1974, p.1291.

86. PRS, *Report on Radio*, pp.9-10.

87. *ibid.*, p.10.

88. *ibid.*, p.26.

defined geographical area; special interest community stations to serve identifiable concerns; public access broadcasting where either existing stations or stations set up for the purpose, would allow people from the community, either part or all of the time, to use their studios for broadcasting. Support for the government to set up and fund by statute a public broadcasting station or network, which had been championed earlier, had declined as ideas on the other types of public broadcasting possibilities flourished. The PRS report set out a list of some explicit guidelines for these stations:

- Proposals for the establishment of stations should flow from the community and not be imposed by government or commercial planning.
- A Community station should be so legally constituted that the community it purports to serve is entitled to participate in programming, and share of ownership and control.
- Stations might have financial or other support from government, but not be under government control.
- Stations might be permitted to have commercial sponsorship but should be excluded from profit-making.⁸⁹

Financial and other support might come from local, state and federal governments provided they did not acquire an effective veto through their financial power. The PRS suggested many different areas of the federal government, other than the Department of the Media from which funds might be obtained depending on the needs of the stations. These included the Australian Assistance Plan, the Grants Commission, the Education Commissions, the Department of Urban and Regional Development and the Australian Council for the Arts, particularly the Film and Television Board.⁹⁰ Recognition was given to the fact that unions were concerned that members working for these stations received at least award rates. However the PRS conceded that without voluntary efforts the concept was probably unworkable and felt it

89. *ibid.*, p.29.

90. *ibid.*, pp.36-37.

should be possible to negotiate with the unions definitions for who were the award employees and who were the 'hobby' or 'leisure-time' workers.⁹¹

To encompass its earlier recommendations the report urged, under the heading of control of broadcasting, a complete review of technical and program standards by the ABCB both in purpose and content. The existing standards were incompatible with some of the recommendations. The PRS's final suggestion was a comprehensive review of direct government expenditure on broadcasting by a committee set up for this purpose.⁹² Altogether this was a fairly extensive document, and while some of its recommendations were obviously self serving to the PRS, it provided the basis for the beginnings of a coherent government policy on broadcasting, including the establishment of FM and public broadcasting.

It is indicative of the government's inability to concentrate on developing a consistent broadcasting policy,⁹³ that the Prime Minister shelved the report indefinitely and the Minister for the Media found it necessary to defend his own existence in parliament and later on the same day announced an *ad hoc* jumble of new licences. These included some ABC FM stations, an ABC AM 'young-style' station in Sydney, an ABC AM 'access' station in Melbourne,⁹⁴ the first FM public broadcasting licences to go to the Music Broadcasting Societies in Sydney and Melbourne and an AM public licence

91. *ibid.*, pp.42-43.

92. *ibid.*, pp.61-62.

93. Particularly one which would actually force the government to consider reducing its role in controlling broadcasting - its theoretical aim but never its practical application.

94. Minister McClelland had announced in February 1974, just before the 'McLean' Report revealed the same information, that the number of stations on the AM band could be doubled, with judicious use of directional aerials and the reduction of power of some existing stations; ABCB, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report*, pp.15, 32.

for the existing station at the University of Adelaide.⁹⁵ All three public broadcasting licences were issued as experimental licences by the PMG under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*, under fairly stringent conditions, giving the government considerable control.

Although there were six reports, plans or papers produced with advice to government on various aspects of broadcasting development in Australia between 1967, when the political influences in favour of change forced government to accept the need for the expansion of services, and 1974, when the first FM and public stations were licensed, no coherent broadcasting policy emerged. The reason was that the forces for change were pulling in different directions, and broadcasting was not sufficiently electorally important nationally for these sectional interests to be overcome. Many of the reports were produced in competition with one another. Those that projected a possible comprehensive policy for broadcasting and the government's role in it, were never acted upon, because they denied too many other political interests. There emerged a vague government policy for expansion and increased diversity but it lurched from crisis to crisis with a series of expedient decisions. By the time the first FM public station commenced broadcasting the government still retained virtually the same control over broadcasting. The issuing of three public broadcasting licences was only lip service to the idea of increased diversity in either programming or the types of stations broadcasting. The diverse range of influences still in play left government policy and role in broadcasting even less defined than they had been at the beginning of the process, with a suspicion that government continued to try to maintain surreptitious control while purporting to be willing to free up the airwaves.

The next chapter will examine some of the early philosophies of public broadcasting, which were so different from one another that the influence their proponents exerted on government was no more likely to produce a coherent broadcasting policy, than the reports to government just examined.

95. Douglas McClelland, 'Ministerial Statement - Frequency Modulation Radio Broadcasting', *CPD*, Senate, vol.61, 25 September 1974, pp.1387-1388.

CHAPTER FIVE - DIVERGENCE IN PUBLIC BROADCASTING PHILOSOPHIES.

Previous chapters revealed that even when the government accepted that broadcasting services were now going to have to be expanded no coherent broadcasting policy emerged because conflicting ideas buffeted the government in different directions. Chapter Four examined the part official reviews and reports on the future direction of broadcasting played in creating the government's confused attitude. A similar disparity existed in the ideas of those aspirants involved in the introduction of FM and public broadcasting, which further exacerbated the situation. Some people propounded a detailed philosophy which advocated changes in broadcasting policy as part of a drive for social change, while others saw the need for changes in broadcasting policy to meet the needs of the present social order. Still others were concerned to provide excellence and improvement for individuals, an essentially educational function. Many aspirants incorporated a role for government as part of their plans but some of those contemplating the development of public broadcasting were far more pragmatic and parochial in their concerns and did not consider the overall picture. The only thing these people had in common was a belief that current broadcasting services were defective. This chapter examines the divergent ideas and philosophies of some of those aspirant broadcasters, who were trying to influence government policy. Since broadcasting was not a universal electoral issue, it was possible for these sectional interests to affect the political debate at different times as subsequent chapters will detail.

Among the first people to put forward coherent ideas about the need for the expansion of broadcasting services and who sustained an interest in the development of the public broadcasting sector were Neil Runcie and Max Keogh. Runcie was Professor of Economics at the University of NSW. He developed an interest in improvements to broadcasting services both as an educator and as a keen supporter of community development through the Resident Action movement. Keogh was a professional media person, firstly in commercial radio and television and later as publicity officer for Film Australia. Both became very concerned when the government closed

down the experimental FM broadcasts on the ABC in 1961 and later when the reorganisation of the ABC's AM networks into Newrad in 1963 failed to improve services as had been expected.

Keogh's response was to petition the government to re-open the experimental FM stations.¹ Runcie, with the collaboration of Murray Low, founded the Listeners' Society, which pressed for higher standards in Australian broadcasting, especially the development of FM in the VHF band.² Both eventually became involved in the gestation of Australia's first FM station, 2MBS-FM, Sydney's classical music broadcaster. Each also became involved with one local community station, Keogh with 2CT in Campbelltown and Runcie with 2RES-FM in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs.

A comprehensive exposition of Max Keogh's philosophy of broadcasting and its practical application to the expansion of services appeared in his submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts in 1973. He maintained that any worthwhile philosophy of broadcasting should be determined by the federal government for Australia as a whole, and not be left for either the ABC or the commercial broadcasters to determine in their own way. This national philosophy should be based on the continuation of the dual system of broadcasting. The government should manage the allocation of frequencies in such a way as to ensure maximum diversity of ownership and control of broadcasting facilities, program choice and service to minority tastes. The government must accept the concept that non-commercial developments, incorporating the principle of a public right of access should not be confined to the ABC. He argued that this overall philosophy of broadcasting should not be adopted until there

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1. Charles Davidson, PMG, Letter to Max Keogh, 26 September 1961, copy with present writer.
 2. Neil Runcie, Personal Interview at Centennial Park, Sydney, 9 May 1994.

had been ample public debate.³ The government should facilitate this process by appointing a representative commission to prepare a draft. Keogh pointed out that although the media in Australia were predominantly privately owned and commercially operated they carried out an enterprise as basic as formal education to a free and open society. As such they were commonly acknowledged to be taking the public interest into account. Despite these considerations, Keogh saw little if any public debate on broadcasting philosophy or practice. Although he attributed this partly to 'our infamous apathy to public affairs' he also asserted that the patent lack of concern with broadcasting philosophy was caused by 'the early adoption of the present dual system of public and private broadcasting'. Keogh is, in fact, admitting that broadcasting is not an electoral issue of national importance. His comparison with formal education is invalid because formal education was. Bolton has elucidated the electoral importance of education: 'Thus education provided the Labor Party with another opportunity for promising systematic reform in place of the coalition's patchwork'. In fact Whitlam regarded education reform as his most important achievement.⁴ Despite occasional rhetoric broadcasting was not considered in the same way. In contrast, the lack of a dual system in countries like Britain, where the national service was dominated by 'a benevolent dictatorship for the betterment of the people' and the USA where an unregulated private system 'was evaluated from the basis of a utility', provided obviously unbalanced systems. Keogh contended that these situations engendered public debate on basic philosophy which led to modification into more sophisticated systems which better fulfilled their countries' needs. Australia's better basic structure had proved to be an impediment to

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3. For his definition of different types of access and their functions see: Max Keogh, 'Case Study No.4: Challenge to Present Management', G. Major, ed., *Mass Media in Australia*, Sydney, Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, pp.151-155.
 4. Geoffrey Bolton, *The Middle Way, The Oxford History of Australia - Volume 5 1942-1988*, Melbourne, OUP, 1990, pp.209, 220.

philosophical debate and future development.⁵ Keogh had publicly criticised this situation several years earlier when discussing the possible development of FM broadcasting; 'And to the public FM might just as well have been a time of day between AM and PM. In the past ten years it has been kept just as much in the dark'.⁶ Keogh argued that public debate followed by service development was urgently needed.

This philosophy revolved around a combination of government involvement and control and commercial enterprise. Keogh's background in commercial broadcasting, orientated him to see the listening public as consumers.⁷ These consumers were entitled to a diversity of services, including national, commercial and public stations but they should all be regulated by the government. However, he conceded that adequate government funding was looking unlikely. With his commercial inclination, Keogh's solution to this problem was to allow advertising on public broadcasting stations, possibly with a time limit. He felt that commercial sponsors were unlikely to be interested if they were unable to promote their products on air. The stations would remain non-profit, but would combine a service to their listeners with a service to their

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5. Max Keogh, Submission to Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts, Reference on Broadcasting and Television, *CPD*, Senate, vol.2, 4 May 1973, pp.976-979.
 6. Max Keogh, 'B and T's attitude on FM slated', *Your Viewpoint*, *Broadcasting and Television*, 9 November 1967, p.18.
 7. Max Keogh, Personal Interview at St Leonards, Sydney, 28 April. 1994. Keogh even wrote to the Australian Consumers' Association suggesting that they should not concentrate entirely on the quality of consumer goods but should turn their attention to consumer services, such as broadcasting and should make a Submission to the Senate Inquiry. Max Keogh, Letter to Australian Consumers' Association, 7 February 1972, copy with present writer.

advertisers.⁸ Although he would probably be horrified, an assessment of Keogh's ideas must conclude that his approach was basically conservative. He was not trying to change individuals or society, just better fulfil the consumers' existing needs for broadcasting services within the current social structure, where the accepted concept of government regulation and control would be enhanced.

Neil Runcie's philosophical base was rather different. He was an academic, not involved in commercial media, and was interested in excellence and improvement in broadcasting after the BBC mould. While doing his PhD in Britain in the late 1950's he had been most impressed with the high quality of the BBC educational programming and had witnessed the introduction of FM broadcasting under Sir Francis McLean. He advocated the expansion of the use of public broadcasting for educational broadcasting and regretted that this was never properly addressed in Australia.⁹ He was not so much enamoured with diversity as with excellence in programming. To that end he advocated high quality city-wide and, if possible, state-wide public stations, rather than a proliferation of diverse mediocre community stations. He promoted the notion of the expansion of 2MBS-FM as a state-wide classical music station and helped to establish the Sydney Public Affairs Radio Foundation (SPAR) to seek a licence for a professional quality public affairs station to broadcast across the Sydney metropolitan area. Runcie did not really support 'localism' and he found having to deal with the many little local groups seeking licences in Sydney, 'a little wearing, time consuming, tedious and very parochial'. He believed bigger issues were at stake. Even the local group in the

8. Max Keogh, 'Getting on air is One Thing', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.1, October 1975, pp.4-5. It is interesting to note, that although this idea was generally unpopular in the early days of public broadcasting, it was basically incorporated into the changed rules on sponsorship in the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, when much of the early idealism had given way to pragmatism.

9. See Chapter Nine for a detailed analysis of educational broadcasting in all its aspects.

Eastern Suburbs of Sydney he helped to establish, which became 2RES-FM, had grander beginnings. This station was born out of support for the larger idea of the Coalition of Resident Action Groups (CRAG) and CRAG's connection with the Builders' Labourers' Federation (BLF) campaign with 'Green Bans' against local government development plans. Runcie recognised that small community stations could be a boon to local government across the state and regretted that councils did not fully exploit this potential.¹⁰ He was not concerned to give access to every little community interest at 2RES-FM but rather to have a station that would set 'high standards' and aim to reflect the interests and activities of local institutions, groups and individuals. New initiatives could be taken with educational, cultural and community affairs broadcasting. But for Runcie this was the rather elitist notion of handing down to the community for its improvement rather than involving the community in program making, which would jeopardise the quality of the broadcasts.¹¹ Keogh's notion of listeners as consumers was totally foreign to him. Neither was he particularly interested in the extent to which the government actively developed a nation-wide philosophy of broadcasting or controlled or regulated the services. Without wanting to change the overall structure of society Runcie wanted to work towards improving individuals and reforming society. He envisaged the expansion of broadcasting services by the establishment of public broadcasting as one way of achieving this.

Perhaps the best known advocate of this type of philosophy was Dr Peter Pockley. Being primarily involved with broadcasting and communication Pockley's vision of excellence and improvement may have been broader than Runcie's. As the first person to be in charge of ABC Science programs from the mid 1960s, Pockley became very dissatisfied with programming opportunities on the ABC and developed into an advocate of public broadcasting and founded the PBAA. Unlike Runcie and Keogh his motivation was not connected to the closure of the ABC's experimental FM stations but

10. Runcie, Interview.

11. Neil Runcie, Press Release, 5 September 1976, Broadhead Archives.

he had completed his PhD at Oxford so he would have been aware of developments within the BBC at that time. His philosophy and aspirations were more fluid than either Keogh's or Runcie's, developing in tune with the changing situation.

Like Keogh's, Pockley's original ideas were incorporated in a Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts. The outline of his philosophy and practice of broadcasting included three groups of principles: '1. Access by the public to the media. 2. Responsiveness and service by the media to society. 3. Quality, authority, diversity, creativity and experimentation in the programs of the media.'¹² He saw three other factors as vital to sustain these principles: '1. The structure and control of each media organisation must be appropriate to the task. 2. The staff must be of the highest quality in all professional respects. 3. The independence of the media organisations and staff from outside influence must be preserved. (A corollary of (2) and (3) is that finance must be adequate).(sic)'¹³ Pockley proposed three independent groups to provide distinctive services, which taken together would offer a real divergence of choices and would provide a real solution to the current restrictive broadcasting structure. The national broadcasting service would be based on a smaller, cheaper ABC, which would concentrate on its national character. Commercial broadcasting would remain essentially the same except that licensees would be amalgamated to reduce the number of stations in capital cities and would come under tougher control from the Australian Broadcasting Control Board (ABCB). The Board would impose higher standards than those currently in place, and would publicly examine licences for renewal every five years.

An entirely new group of nationally co-ordinated, but essentially local stations, would be established under the auspices of a Public Broadcasting Authority.

12. Peter Pockley, Submission to Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts, Reference on Broadcasting and Television, *CPD*, Senate, vol.2, 4 May 1973, p.1183.

13. *ibid.*

These stations would provide a flexible and experimental set of informative, educative, cultural and community programs not provided by the ABC or the commercial stations. This would include a considerable amount of specifically educational radio, such as secondary high school material, 'open university' and non-formal adult education. But he saw the need for only one channel across the country to provide this diverse programming. For Pockley public participation did not include allowing the public into the studios to make programs, but rather to be involved in the critical assessment of programs and the ongoing development of program policies. Program making was to be the exclusive preserve of permanent professional broadcasting staff in order to ensure the highest quality of output. Pockley thought that if the program quality lapsed the audience would be lost. However, when he was cross-examined by the Senate committee, he was forced to concede that his permanent staffing proposals could stultify one of his most valued aims, creativity, which tends to diminish over time.

The Public Broadcasting Authority would be a relatively small national body. Its function would be to co-ordinate these local stations and administer the distribution of government funding. A substantial capitation grant would be needed to establish the organisation, followed by triennial grants for on-going funding. However, a diversity of funding from other sources, similar to those obtained by public stations in the USA would also be encouraged so the Authority could defend its freedom from pressures from any one group in the community. This would ensure both quality and diversity.¹⁴

By the time Pockley gave a paper at the Department of the Media Conference on Public Broadcasting, in July 1974, he had become aware that many aspirant public broadcasters were not interested in working under a government organised Public Broadcasting Authority. There were a number of groups, including music broadcasting societies and educational institutions, that wanted their own independent stations. Although his ideas on quality and diversity remained unchanged

14. Pockley, pp.1183-1220.

Pockley abandoned the idea of an Authority. He now envisaged public broadcasting being created by a number of independent broadcasters who would work together for the benefit of all. A loose co-operative structure would be set up to lobby government for the necessary legislative and regulatory structure and sufficient funds to make the establishment of this new sector possible. To emphasise how far he had moved away from the notion of a government authority Pockley added, 'we have no desire to be treated as a series of mini-ABCs'.¹⁵ It was following the conference where he presented this paper that Pockley convened the inaugural meeting of the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia (PBAA).¹⁶

Although Pockley's vision changed considerably as public broadcasting evolved, he always saw a substantial role for government. Nevertheless he was absolutely opposed to the suggestion in the 'McLean Report' into FM broadcasting that the Department of the Media should own and operate so-called 'Access Stations'. He described this suggestion by the Commissioners as 'a moment of simultaneous hiccupping'.¹⁷ Although he now felt that; 'Independence also means we value autonomy from ownership control or direction by the government, expressed either through its political or bureaucratic arms',¹⁸ his image of the sector was still a fairly conservative one. When seeking parliamentary support he explained, 'it was absolutely essential to put on a very conservative type of tie. I probably wore my Oxford tie when they came in to show I wasn't a kind of ramshackle raving ratbag who would want to go and fight in the streets with police. I wasn't that sort of person'.¹⁹ Nevertheless, he conceded that

15. Peter Pockley, 'The Concept and Character of Public Broadcasting', Paper presented to the Department of the Media Public Radio Broadcasting Conference, Sydney, 3-4 July 1974, p.2.

16. See Chapter Eight for the development and role of the PBAA.

17. Pockley, 'The Concept and Character of Public Broadcasting', p.6.

18. *ibid.*, p.2.

19. Peter Pockley, Personal Interview, at UTS, Sydney, 9 May 1994.

within the diversity of groups who had licences to run stations there should be such people: 'The "student or underground broadcaster" who unfortunately can't burrow too far underground given our restrictive libel laws but nonetheless will still have a channel of communication open to a generation which we embryonically arthritic types might never touch'.²⁰ Pockley's final plan, then, was for a basically conservative but independent sector providing quality programming for the improvement and entertainment of individuals, allowing a space for the 'ratbag' element within the diversity of interests. All this was to be under the guidance of government legislation, regulation and funding.²¹

The two instigators of the Music Broadcasting Societies in Victoria and NSW, Brian Cabena and Trevor Jarvie had a rather different perspective. Although they both developed philosophies for the sector as a whole, their original motivation was simply to have sufficient access for their beloved classical music on the airwaves. Everything else evolved from that.

Cabena had lived in Canada for a number of years and had appreciated the public broadcasting system there. He was a dour technical man and a music buff. On his return to Australia he ran a small Hi-Fi music store in Melbourne.²² His impetus for change came from the alterations to ABC programming with the introduction of Newrad in July 1963. He moaned that 'the rearranged ABC broadcast programmes are, no

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20. Pockley, 'The Concept and Character of Public Broadcasting', p.3. Pockley probably had this attitude because by now he was in charge of Public Relations at the University of NSW, as well as remembering his own student days.
 21. An idea of the kind of government involvement that was envisaged appeared in a list of eight resolutions that were forwarded to Senator Doug McClelland, Minister for the Media, at the end of the inaugural PBAA Conference. See Peter Pockley, 'Static from the radio buffs', *New Journalist*, no.15, July-August 1974, p.15.
 22. Geoffrey Evans, Personal Interview at Canberra, 5 December 1994; Trevor Jarvie, Personal Interview at Waverley, Sydney, 27 May 1994.

doubt, a gallant attempt to try to retrieve a hopeless situation'.²³ However since the two programme system, one of which was for music, was introduced in the early 1930s, a variety of other interests had arisen. By 1963 there were school broadcasts, parliamentary broadcasts, a wider range of talks broadcasts, cricket commentaries and programs from the BBC. Without a third network, Cabena claimed, no amount of program rearrangement could adequately cater for this situation. His solution to this problem for the government lay either in commandeering one of the commercial channels as a music channel or setting up a VHF FM channel to broadcast serious music. When the government had done nothing by the end of 1966 Cabena called together a small meeting of music lovers²⁴ and by the middle of 1968 had established the Music Broadcasting Society of Victoria to demonstrate the need for and take the necessary steps towards setting up 'a listener-owned co-operative broadcasting station in Melbourne'.²⁵ Trevor Jarvie was one of those who responded enthusiastically to Cabena's call. But, in 1969, Jarvie abandoned his postgraduate studies in Melbourne and returned home to Sydney, where after a very short time, he became so frustrated with the ABC that he established the Music Broadcasting Society of NSW. The ideas of Cabena and Jarvie diverged as they developed their organisations in separate cities.

Cabena's interest never really extended beyond the establishment of a 'serious music' station, preferably on the VHF-FM band.²⁶ He described 'the music lover who finds a need for serious music in his daily life' which cannot be satisfactorily gratified by the limitations of a private record collection. He explained that there had never been

23. Brian Cabena, Letters to the Editor, 'ABC's Newrad Programmes', *Age*, 23 August 1963, p.3.

24. Brian Cabena, Letter to the Editor, *Electronics Australia*, April 1967.

25. B. Cabena, L. Moorehead, W. Ruffley, R. C. Sneddon, M. Carey, and T. D. Jarvie, Letter to the Editor, 'A third programme of serious music', *Age*, 5 July 1968, p.5.

26. Brian Cabena, Letters to the Editor, 'ABC's Newrad Programmes', *Age*, 23 August 1963, p.3.

adequate coverage on radio, on either the ABC or the commercial stations. Since the war the ABC's coverage of classical music had been reduced and the commercial stations played virtually none. Cabena's idea had broadcasts entirely of prerecorded music with no announcements or time calls. Details and times of programmes would be available only to subscribers who would pay \$8 a year. The station would provide more than entertainment, with an additional educational element. 'It is an important element of the Society's policy to encourage the efforts of Australian performers, musical academics, composers, teachers and critics in the preparation and presentation of programmes.'²⁷ The only mention of broadcasting in a larger context was that such a service 'should be an integral part of any democratic and culturally developed community'.²⁸ Cabena conceded that 'there is considerable scope for public access broadcasting for organizations requiring part-time use of this medium, but to suggest that the Music Broadcasting Societies could be accommodated in this manner is unrealistic and shows a lack of understanding of their aims'.²⁹ Overall, Cabena's scheme was narrow and conservative.

Trevor Jarvie's primary motivation was also a love of classical music, but he paid more attention to the possibilities of FM broadcasting generally.³⁰ He also developed an overall philosophy of public and community broadcasting. This was made clear right at the beginning of the Submission of the Music Broadcasting Association of

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- 27. Brian Cabena, Submission to Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts, Reference on Broadcasting and Television, *CPD*, Senate, vol.1, 6 September 1972, p.508.
 - 28. Cabena, Submission to Senate, p.509.
 - 29. Brian Cabena, 'Public Radio Broadcasting', Paper presented to the Department of the Media Public Radio Broadcasting Conference, Sydney, 3-4 July 1974, p.2.
 - 30. Trevor Jarvie, Letters to the Editor, 'VHF FM cost estimates', *Australian Financial Review*, 7 March 1974, p.3; Trevor Jarvie, 'FM RADIO - THE FUTURE', *Current Affairs Bulletin*, vol.50, no.6, November 1973, pp.26-31.

NSW to the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts:

Although the Music Broadcasting Society of N.S.W. is expressly concerned with the broadcasting of serious music, we do not intend in this document to confine ourselves to the musical interests of our members. We wish to offer, by way of explanation, two reasons from among the many that could be given for this policy.

First to confine ourselves to a limited outlook would be to misrepresent even that outlook, since that balance would be lost which comes only from seeing the particular in its relationship to the general wider landscape.

Second, we come before the Committee of Inquiry as representatives of a section of the listening public. Since it is likely that, apart from Submissions by individuals, we will be the only organisation to offer this important perspective on broadcasting, we feel obliged to attempt to examine the subject as any intelligent listener, without any vested interest in the media, might do.³¹

Underpinning Jarvie's overall philosophy of broadcasting in the submission to the Senate were the fundamental principles of two freedoms, the freedom to choose between services and the freedom to provide a service. The latter was considered to be as important as freedom of the press. Therefore it was imperative that technical restraints were removed so that frequencies would become available on both AM and FM. This would allow a plethora of new services, any one of whose commercial failure 'would be no less regrettable, certainly, but similarly no more

31. T. D. Jarvie, D. Keech, and F. M. Law, Submission to Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts, Reference on Broadcasting and Television, *CPD*, Senate, vol.2, 25 July 1973, p.1223. This document has been quoted freely as if it were entirely Jarvie's since he wrote most of what did not deal with technical detail and concurred with that which was not his own. Jarvie revealed when interviewed that it was a political decision to address the interests of all minorities, not just classical music, because this would carry more weight when lobbying politicians. Jarvie, Interview.

disastrous than the failure of a newspaper'.³² These new stations need not aim for comprehensive and balanced programming with wide public appeal throughout the community as existing stations did. The restriction of the bipartite division of broadcasting into 'national' and 'commercial' would no longer be necessary. Licences would be available for stations catering for specialist interests of many types of minorities, including educational interests, independent non-profit interests, ethnic and aboriginal interests. These could be both commercial stations and a new type of service, public broadcasting.

In the paper Jarvie presented to the Department of the Media Conference on Public Broadcasting, his views had expanded to encompass some of the notions fundamental to the philosophies of Runcie and Keogh. In this paper Jarvie combined Runcie's notion of participation with Keogh's concept of listeners as consumers of radio. This is probably not surprising since all were involved in the creation of 2MBS-FM. However, this was by no means a drawing together of different ideas for Jarvie drew a comparison which would have been anathema to both Keogh and Runcie: 'the call by the listener (the 'consumer' of radio) for greater say in what he hears is entirely parallel to the call by the resident for a greater say in what happens to his physical environment'. Jarvie continued by describing three very important elements required in the development of the new sector: 'independence', 'specialism' and 'participatory volunteerism'.³³ In describing the need for 'independence' for public broadcasters, Jarvie failed to mention any role for government, either in legislation or regulation, but he did see government as having a responsibility. He saw public radio stations as 'potentially powerful extensions of Government initiatives in arts, recreation, welfare and education, among others, and the value of this should be reflected in the degree of Government subvention'.³⁴ 'Specialism'

32. Jarvie, Keech, and Law, Submission to Senate, p.1223.

33. Trevor Jarvie, Paper presented to the Department of the Media Public Radio Broadcasting Conference, Sydney, 3-4 July 1974.

34. Trevor Jarvie, '2MBS-FM', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.1, October 1975, p.2.

was necessary if Jarvie's own fine music broadcasting group was to be licensed. But he had abandoned Cabena's idea that program information would only be accessible from a program guide available to subscribers so that programs would make sense to anyone who tuned in. The concept of 'participatory volunteerism' revealed that Jarvie placed a greater emphasis on the need for people to have access to the airwaves than the need for listeners to receive excellent quality programs to educate and inform.³⁵ Jarvie was reformist in his general attitude to broadcasting but had no desire to totally transform society. However, when he discussed public broadcasting Jarvie maintained 'I think it is plain that we are discussing an alternative version of human society'.³⁶ Here he was trying to 'jump on a band wagon' where he really did not belong, in an effort to provide cohesion among public broadcasters. Jarvie actually revealed himself to be a very conservative, if somewhat unusual individual, who loved English literature and classical music.³⁷

By contrast with those dealt with so far, socially radical³⁸ philosophies were more prevalent in Melbourne and Brisbane, exemplified by David Griffiths and Jim Beatson, respectively.

David Griffiths, who was a Social Policy Officer for the Melbourne voluntary agency, the Brotherhood of St Laurence, was interested in broadcasting, any broadcasting, as a possible vehicle for social change. Griffiths was Secretary for Alternative Radio Association (ARA), one of eleven groups that applied for the community licence which was offered in Melbourne in February 1975. This licence was eventually awarded to an umbrella group, Community Radio Federation (CRF), of which

35. Jarvie, Paper presented.

36. Jarvie, Paper presented, p.1.

37. Jarvie Interview.

38. 'radical' is used here in its meaning 'favouring drastic political, social or other reforms', M. A. Delbridge, *et al.* eds, *The Macquarie Dictionary*, Sydney, Macquarie Library, 1981, p.1421.

ARA was a member. CRF set up 3CR, Melbourne's first station owned and controlled by the community.

Underlying Griffiths' philosophy was a desire to see the democratising of decision making in society. He believed vested interests currently controlled decision making. He feared that any change was likely to see one collection of vested interests replaced by another. Society would be no closer to participatory democracy. Within the context of developments in public broadcasting, Griffiths complained that the Department of the Media Conference on Public Broadcasting was fraudulent if it claimed to be 'representative of a mythical true cross-section of opinion'.³⁹ Since a national conference could not be fully accountable and participatory, it was by its very nature 'closed, privileged and elitist [and] it is ironic that a conference about access broadcasting is not accessible'.⁴⁰ Since radio should service the community Griffiths wanted the larger community, beyond the confines of the conference, to be involved in the planning, control and operation. His concern about control by vested interests included not only those vested in-groups, such as businessmen, shareholders and bureaucrats who currently controlled the situation, but also those 'self-styled progressive out-groups', such as academics, educationalists, music buffs, and professional broadcasters, who sought to gain control. For Griffiths it was essentially a struggle between 'two groups within the middle class',⁴¹ in which he saw the latter, that is those at this conference, probably supplanting the former. Griffiths contended that it was this tussle for power that led the Whitlam Labor government into broadcasting policies that were 'ad hoc, manipulative

39. David Griffiths, 'Democratising Radio', Paper presented to the Department of the Media Public Radio Broadcasting Conference, Sydney, 3-4 July 1974, p.2.

40. *ibid.*

41. Griffiths, 'Democratising Radio', p.3.

and pragmatic'.⁴² Griffiths was partly correct in his assessment. But he failed to realise that because broadcasting was not going to become a significant issue among the electors, these sectional interests would continue to fight for influence.

Griffiths continued to plan for change. He maintained that real community control of radio would ultimately depend on the general level of citizen participation in the community. Griffiths maintained people had to stop deferring to professionals and experts as participation was more important than perfection in society at large and in radio.⁴³ 'The democratisation of radio [was] a process as well as an end'⁴⁴ and public, community and access broadcasting were all such nebulous terms. He believed a three to five years period of experimentation was needed while people defined their own needs and demands according to their own criteria, standards and codes. Only then would licences be allocated, on both the AM and FM bands, according to acceptable criteria established during the experimental stage.

Griffiths was soon forced to concede that 'few people are interested in the democratisation of radio',⁴⁵ but maintained that radio is not 'alternative' if it accepts the assumptions of establishment radio about what constitutes good radio and good programming. He was also opposed to the prevailing concept of 'voluntary participation', which he saw as effectively discriminating 'against low-income groups to the advantage of middle-class, affluent groups'⁴⁶ This presented a dilemma for Griffiths

42. David Griffiths, 'Autocracy in the Airwaves', J. Langer, ed., *media centre papers 4*, Bundoora, Centre for the Study of Educational Communications and Media, La Trobe University, 1976, p.1.

43. For a more detailed discussion of Griffiths ideas on participation see David Griffiths, 'Participatory radio and what it means', *Community*, no.11, June 1975, p.19.

44. Griffiths, 'Participatory radio and what it means', p.9.

45. David Griffiths, 'Castrating Community Radio', *Dissent*, vol.32, Spring 1975, p.32.

46. Griffiths, 'Castrating Community Radio', p.35.

for low-income groups were more dependent on professional staff and had less personal resources and opportunities. And yet, for true participatory radio, people needed to be able to distinguish between the professionals' personal judgements about broadcasting and their professional programming and technical advice for the authentic realisation of people's ideas. Hidden manipulation would only be eliminated when community groups decided how and whether they wanted to utilise the professionals' advice.

Having justified a need for professional involvement, at least in the short term, Griffiths conceded that government funding was going to be absolutely essential. He recommended that all technical equipment be owned by a public authority together with all appropriate engineering facilities necessary for compliance with ABCB standards. Without government funding only affluent groups would be able to establish stations.⁴⁷

Griffiths' philosophy of public broadcasting was to the far left of the political spectrum. Although Jim Beatson was part of the radical student movement in Brisbane in the late 1960s and early 1970s, it will be seen that his philosophy of broadcasting was nothing like Griffiths'. Beatson claimed the student movement in Brisbane was very strong and united and not based on 'inappropriate' philosophies such as the movement in Melbourne, which was based around 'Maoism', or the movement in Sydney, which was based around 'Trotskyism'. In Brisbane it was more aligned to the American Society for Democratic Action and its notion of participatory democracy. When the 'Springbok' Rugby team from apartheid dominated South Africa arrived in 1971, the University went on strike. The students found very little coverage in the mainstream media and contemplated a pirate radio station. That idea proved technically impracticable, because the authorities could jam it, and the Department of the Media advised that the only kind of licence available would be a communications licence similar to VL5UV, the adult education station at the University of Adelaide, under the *Wireless*

47. D. Griffiths, P. Wakeham, and B. Walsh, *The Inner Urban Region and Radio - Alternative Radio Association*, Melbourne, 26 February 1975, p.15.

Telegraphy Act. This type of licence was useless because it forbade the transmission of music. However, it led to the germination of the idea of a public broadcasting station once the Whitlam government assumed office.

Nevertheless, although Beatson, as a student radical, formally set about establishing a station for minority interests this was merely a politically astute cover for setting up an entirely different sort of station, which would not particularly serve the needs of either radical minorities or university students. Beatson claimed, publicly, shortly after 4ZZZ-FM was established that it catered for politics, humour, education, community involvement and a number of different music specialist tastes.⁴⁸ In fact this was never his intention,⁴⁹ as his actions were soon to prove, even though he managed to trick such commentators as Caroline Graham that it was.⁵⁰ Soon after broadcasting commenced the Brisbane Women's Media Group, whose members had given large amounts of time to a voluntary effort to establish the station, found themselves, and all other programs involving community participation, being ousted in favour of 'a steady diet of rock music'.⁵¹ Beatson had always intended to provide radio for what he saw as a majority. For Beatson this was radical simply because it was not currently being done. He was aware that the biggest selling albums in the world, *Tubular Bells* and *Dark Side of the Moon*, were not getting any air play, except on one small program on the ABC by Chris Winter, *Room to Move*. Beatson wanted to fill this need. He thought the members

48. Jim Beetson(*sic*), 'Achievements - 4ZZZ-FM' *Broadcasting Australia*, no.2, March 1976, p.4.

49. Jim Beatson, Personal Interview at Monash University, Melbourne, 23 November 1995.

50. Caroline Graham, 'Public Broadcasting, Dissent and the State', *Media Papers no.3*, Sydney, Media Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, NSWIT, June 1980, p.18.

51. Brisbane Women's Media Group, 'Triple Z: "maintaining credibility" or, did homogenised radio turn sour?', *Hecate*, vol.3, no.1, February 1977, p.108.

of the PBAA were misguided in the intention to provide for minority interests when the majority was not being catered for. But a Departmental officer had advised that the only way to obtain a licence was to set up a student station. So he pretended to do just that, changing its format as soon as it went to air. It was, for Beatson, still radical radio because it involved the capabilities of people in the radical movement at that time, 'both as musicians, as dancers, as writers and as actors and as political people'⁵² and was much more interesting than anything that was happening in mainstream media.

When the Fraser government came to power, Beatson justified his change of direction on the grounds that a conservative government would close the station down if it broadcast politically contentious material. In fact the station was almost closed down because it was playing an unmitigated diet of rock music when it was licensed as an experimental educational station. The commercial stations did not like it because he was trying to beat them at their own game. Beatson really did not care for very much government involvement at all. Although he was a student radical and claimed to be providing radical radio because it was different, public broadcasters generally did not regard it as either radical or desirable to try and out do the commercial stations.

In this chapter so far the philosophies of a number of the early aspirant public broadcasters have revealed views which ranged from radical to conservative, constituting a broad spectrum of views manifesting little consistency to guide government in policy development. The listening public as a whole was not committed to any one of these ideas, leaving the government confused as to whether any one of these sectional interests could sway a sufficient number of voters to be considered at all.

As Henry Mayer has pointed out, some radicals perceived themselves and their philosophies to be so far from the mainstream of opinion that they posed a threat to the powerful. But Mayer correctly pointed out that these aspirant public broadcasters

52. Beatson, Interview.

were under an illusion.⁵³ None of them actually wanted to overthrow democracy, only make things more democratic. Even if some of the radical groups had wanted to overthrow democracy, they did not have the support to do so. As a result the diversity of philosophies among public broadcasters did nothing to help determine a coherent broadcasting policy but neither did the government have anything to fear from even the most radical public broadcasting philosophy, as it may have perceived in the earlier Communist broadcasters.

To make the development of broadcasting policy even more confusing for government, not all those who were enthusiastic about public broadcasting had any definite philosophical perspective at all. Many aspirants approached the issue pragmatically from their own particular situation.

After leaving his native Boston in the USA, Stephen Abell travelled around Australia and settled in Bellingen. There was virtually no radio at all in Bellingen when he arrived and Abell saw a need to provide emergency information and simple entertainment.⁵⁴ With experience of Public Radio in the United States and in Brazil, he was familiar with large Public Stations and also the smaller Community Stations. Bellingen needed a Community Station. Abell had been in Brisbane and sat in on the licence hearings for three Public Stations there. Through this experience and his travels he acquired a fairly detailed knowledge of how the system functioned in Australia. Abell shared one thing in common with Peter Pockley in projecting his image. 'Whenever I approached someone of influence for support or addressed one of the community group's (*sic*) meeting, I always wore a necktie to complement one of my "radio costumes"'. Although wishing to project a similar conservative image, there was none of Pockley's

53. Henry Mayer, 'Book Review - ABC and Ethnic Support: A Missed Chance?', *Media Information Australia*, no.15, February 1980, p.43.

54. Stephen Abell, 'Beautiful Bellingen - Part Two - 2BBB-FM to the Rescue', *Simply Living*, vol.2, no.8 1985, pp.48-49. The overall development of 2BBB-FM is dealt with in more detail in Chapter Twelve.

sophisticated conception of a public sector within broadcasting as a whole.⁵⁵ Abell's motivation remained a desire to compensate for the region's very poor existing radio services rather than any grand vision for society in general or broadcasting in particular.⁵⁶

Kent and Dorothy Broadhead's interest in public broadcasting was motivated by Kent's simple love of radio. He had always had a studio in his home since he was a young child. He headed a small group of enthusiasts from the Australian Tape Recorders Association who decided to use their talents to provide taped programs for old people's homes, by setting up Radio DJ Sydney (later 2RDJ-FM). Before this was properly organised the brother of one member of this group was conscripted and sent to fight in the war in Vietnam. The group then redirected its efforts into making taped programmes for the forces in Vietnam. They worked with Defence Forces Radio, which operated stations not only in Vietnam but also place like New Guinea and Malaysia. These stations operated very like many of the later community stations in Australia and provided a model.⁵⁷ Sending taped programs to Vietnam lasted until 1971, when the Broadheads moved from Bondi to Concord. By this time an interest in the concepts of public and community radio was spreading in Australia. Kent and Dorothy Broadhead, and their group of enthusiasts, began working towards setting up a community radio

55. *ibid.*

56. Stephen Abell, Personal Interview at Skillshare Office, Bellingen, 17 June 1993.

57. Information about Defence Forces Radio came from Denise Guest, who was involved as a volunteer at the station at the base in Butterworth Malaysia, where her husband was a pilot in the RAAF. Later Guest helped set up 5PBA-FM in Adelaide, where she is now station manager, and incorporated many of the ideas that had been used at Butterworth. Because of the co-operation between the Defence Forces stations, Butterworth also played some of the tapes the Broadheads prepared for Vietnam. See Denise Guest, Personal Interview, at Bond University, Gold Coast, 22 November 1997.

station in the area around Concord.⁵⁸ They sought to broadcast for the whole of the local community rather than for different minorities within the community and were opposed to providing programs in languages other than English for local ethnic communities, but that was about the extent of their philosophy. The primary motivation remained as it had always been, a love of radio.⁵⁹

Frank Scambary and Joan Killorn came to public radio through their work for their community as members of the local Catholic church. Killorn had also been a general volunteer worker for many years, seeking to provide much needed services for her community as a whole in whatever ways she could. Their area, Liverpool-Green Valley, had earned a reputation in the media for being a newly settled district with no sense of community and no facilities, on the western fringe of the Sydney suburban sprawl. Peter Weir, from Film Australia decided to delve more deeply into this community and shot *Whatever happened to Green Valley*, in which he revealed more substance to the community, using considerable input from some of the local residents, including Scambary and Killorn. Through their involvement with the film they learned that their local federal member, Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, had instigated the Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD) to set up local community video access centres.

In seeking such a centre to serve the communities of Liverpool-Green Valley, Scambary and Killorn further developed their concept of community and discovered a heightened sense of 'community service'. During this time they met Max

58. Ray Jennings who had been associated with Radio RAAF, Vietnam, was part of this group. Guest Interview.

59. Dorothy Broadhead, Personal Interview at Concord, Sydney, 27 August 1994; Dorothy Broadhead, Flyer celebrating 10 years of 2RDJ-FM, November 1993, with present writer; Dorothy Broadhead, 'RDJ-FM Community Radio', NSW PBA, *A Set of Draft Planning Proposals on the Introduction of Category 'C' Public Broadcasting Services in Sydney*, Sydney, 1980, pp.65-67.

Keogh, who was publicity officer for Film Australia. Keogh introduced them to the concept of community radio.

Neither Scambary nor Killorn became deeply philosophically involved in the way Keogh was. However, Killorn, in particular, saw a radio station as an ideal way of coordinating many disjointed community services which had been duplicating one another's efforts. This made better use of both the volunteers' help and the limited financial resources. In order to fight to establish a station for their community both Scambary and Killorn became involved with the promotion of the sector as a whole in its early days, but it was merely a means to an end. They remained essentially local people concerned with providing services to their own community. Radio was merely one means to that end.⁶⁰

There were probably as many different pragmatic motivations for people's involvement in public broadcasting as there were pragmatists involved, and it would be beyond the scope of this work to cover them all. However, one thing became abundantly clear, even from this small selection, that in as much as these people had a philosophy, an ideology or a political leaning at all, it was basically conservative, with possibly a slight touch of reformation around the edges. None of them had any desire to make any basic changes to society or the government, and even the changes they sought to the fundamentals of the broadcasting structure were minimal. The fact that these pragmatists were not seeking to make structural changes led to hostility between them and those who sought fundamental innovation.

60. Information on Scambary and Killorn came from: Frank Scambary, Personal Interview at Liverpool, Sydney, 2 July 1994; Joan Killorn, Personal Interview at Liverpool, Sydney, 2 July 1994; Keogh, Interview; Frank Scambary, 'Liverpool-Green Valley - Achievements', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.2, March 1976, pp.5-6; Joan Killorn, 'Liverpool, Green Valley Community Radio Association', NSW PBA, *A Set of Draft Planning Proposals on the Introduction of Category 'C' Public Broadcasting Services in Sydney*, Sydney, 1980, pp.97-98.

This review of the ideologies and motivations of prospective public broadcasters has revealed there was at least as much conflict among public broadcasters themselves as there was between public broadcasters and the reports to government on broadcasting policy development. This tension was one reason why the government failed to develop a coherent policy for the establishment of the public broadcasting sector and found itself continually pushed in different directions. Not only was it impossible to satisfy everyone, but there was not even a majority view among those wishing to broadcast. Since the population, as a whole, were not taking broadcasting policy into account when deciding their vote, the government bowed to whichever sectional interest appeared the strongest at the time.

The incoming Whitlam government had to deal with this situation. It came under increasing demand, from a combination of these conflicting interests, to act to introduce new services of some kind to compensate for the inadequacies in the system. The ongoing pressures, from broadcasters with different aspirations and tensions within government policy generally, which caused the Labor government's vacillations in its attempt to introduce FM and public broadcasting, will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX - THE WHITLAM YEARS - IDEALS AND REALITIES:

1972 - 1975.

This chapter will explore the ideals behind the Whitlam Labor government's desire to expand broadcasting services and introduce FM and public broadcasting and the role envisaged for government in this policy. This will be contrasted with the effects of political pressures and conflicts of ideals, power and personalities within the government itself, which thwarted the development and implementation of any coherent plan. It will be demonstrated that the result was a hotch potch of *ad hoc* expedient decisions, which, in some cases, produced the opposite results from some of the original ideals.

When Gough Whitlam came to power he created a Department of the Media. This new department, established on 19 December 1972, was an amalgamation of the Australian Government Publishing Service, the Australian Information Service, Film Australia and broadcasting, the last of which had previously been under the control of the Postmaster-General (PMG).¹ Within a short time the publicity section of the Immigration Department was also moved to the Department of the Media. Whitlam's aim was to bring together the media-related sections of five other departments, Interior, Treasury, Environment, Aborigines and the Arts, Immigration and the Postmaster-General.² The creation of the Department of the Media was in line with the Whitlam government's mandate for change which Bolton has pointed out was circumscribed 'within the current parameters of Australia as a property-owning democracy, most of

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1. Department of the Media, 'Origin, Background, Achievements - A Review of Activities', April 1974, p.2, Evans Archives, with present writer; Richard Harding, *Outside Interference - The Politics of Australian Broadcasting*, Melbourne, Sun Books, 1979, p.24.
 2. Gough Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government 1972-1975*, Melbourne, Penguin, 1985, p.578.

whose voters valued security above experiment'.³

Within this context, Whitlam wished to remove the airwaves from the preserve of a few large commercial operators whose vested interests he saw 'as doggedly entrenched and zealously self-protective as the private health funds'. His aim was 'to end this long era of stagnation by granting more commercial licences, increasing the number of ABC services, introducing FM radio and establishing public access radio as a third level of broadcasting'. This reform was as much about expanding what already existed as introducing something new.⁴

This was not how many commercial broadcasters and Coalition politicians saw it. For them, the Department of the Media epitomised more radical change, being Labor's propaganda department, determined to exercise political control over broadcasting and generate publicity in favour of the Labor government.⁵ This was not a surprising attitude as it had been the blatant attitude of Minister for Information, Arthur Calwell, when Labor had last been in power just after the Second World War. However, as Patricia Edgar has pointed out, those who had welcomed the election of a Labor government, such as the Labor Councils and 'left-wing' journalists were also bitterly

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3. Geoffrey Bolton, *The Middle Way, The Oxford History of Australia - Volume 5 1942-1988*, Melbourne, OUP, 1990, p.213.
 4. Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government*, pp.578-579.
 5. Harding, *Outside Interference*, p.26; Neal Swancott, 'Federal Parliament. Media Dept "becoming propaganda machine"', *Australian Financial Review*, 15 March 1974, p.4; Senator John Carrick was one of many Coalition members of parliament to ask the Minister for the Media a question expressing this concern. 'Does this not mean that the Government intends to assume direct political control over the allocation of broadcasting frequencies with the inevitability of a nationwide Labor propaganda manipulation of the media?' John Carrick, *CPD*, Senate, vol.59, 9 April 1974, p.765.

disappointed.⁶ These people had eagerly awaited measures to remove broadcasting from the domination of commercial considerations and the expected rapid reform did not eventuate. As this chapter will reveal, Government supporters and opponents alike, were left dissatisfied with the performance of the Department of the Media.

The new Minister, Senator Doug McClelland sealed the general direction of broadcasting policy with the staff that headed the Department of the Media.⁷ McClelland appointed Jim Oswin, former general manager of Channel 7 to be the Secretary, Bob Lord, former station manager of Channel 10, Sydney, as the First Assistant Secretary of the broadcasting and film division, Ken Sievers, former media director of an advertising agency and general manager of Anderson Analysis, as the head of the Television Branch and Les McDonald, a Fairfax administrator, as the head of the Planning and Finance Branch.⁸ Neither existing commercial interests nor Coalition politicians were going to have too much to fear from a department headed by staff with these backgrounds. The same was also true of McClelland's appointments to the

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6. Patricia Edgar was Senior Lecturer at the Centre for the Study of Educational Communication and Media at La Trobe University and a Labor Party supporter. For her opinion see Patricia Edgar, 'Radio and Television', A. Patience and B. Head, eds, *From Whitlam to Fraser - Reform and reaction in Australian politics*, Melbourne, OUP, 1979, p.217
 7. Some of McClelland's successors, such as Labor's Moss Cass and the Coalition's Tony Staley, came to the portfolio with a desire to reform broadcasting. Doug McClelland was not committed in the same way. As Patricia Edgar has pointed out, Senator Jim McClelland was the only member of the Labor government, in its early days, who consistently supported media reform policies. See Edgar, 'Radio and Television', p.217.
 8. Edgar, 'Radio and Television', p.217.

Australian Broadcasting Control Board (ABCB).⁹ Richard Harding, who was one of the ABC Commissioners at the end of Whitlam's reign, maintained that Labor's media strategy was to diversify media outlets and create alternatives to the media barons, Packer and Murdoch, who both normally supported Coalition governments.¹⁰ However, Harding conceded that the method used to implement this tactic was 'perhaps authoritarian, anti-democratic'.¹¹ With the government claiming to have reform on the agenda of its broadcasting policy and yet appointing conservative commercially oriented officers to the department and the ABCB, there was a general state of confusion over where broadcasting was going throughout the Whitlam era.

In as much as the Labor government sought to use broadcasting for propaganda purposes it needed to retain political control. It was really not surprising, therefore, that the government supported existing commercial broadcasting interests. These people were also in favour of the political control of broadcasting albeit for a different reason, in order to limit the number of their competitors. When the government set up ethnic stations, under the guise of providing for the needs of ethnic communities, its primary motivation was to publicise the Medibank scheme to people with non-English speaking backgrounds. Commercial ethnic stations could not have been relied upon to publicise Medibank and would have provided competition to existing commercial stations.¹² It therefore suited the government to have commercially oriented Departmental and ABCB staff who would support the government's policy.

However, in spite of this, some ideas about reforming broadcasting policy were being advocated. Minister McClelland made a number of speeches during 1973.

9. Ken Inglis, *This is the ABC - The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983*, Melbourne, MUP, 1983, p.336.

10. Harding, *Outside Interference*, pp.4-5.

11. *ibid.*, p.viii.

12. See Chapter Ten on Ethnic Broadcasting for a detailed analysis of this situation.

These are probably the best indication of his interpretation of what the Whitlam government was putting forward as its attitude to broadcasting when it came to power. McClelland claimed that an adequate broadcasting policy was essential to defend the people's right to know. This entitlement was an elementary safeguard in democracy since democracy involved decisions by the people based on the widest available information. To ensure this 'the public airwaves ought to be available for information and education as well as entertainment'.¹³ The Minister saw a need to re-evaluate the role of broadcasting in Australia in the 1970s and 'develop a cohesive policy, a planned forward-thinking sense of direction of all aspects of broadcasting'.¹⁴ McClelland contrasted this with the attitude of the previous government which, for him, was revealed in its *Broadcasting and Television Act*. He claimed the *Act* had grown 'in a hotch-potch, higgledy-piggledy fashion over 23 years of conservative government'.¹⁵

McClelland saw that the limitation of frequencies distinguished broadcasting from the other aspects of his portfolio because the medium, the airwaves, was a scarce public resource. Technical characteristics would allow stations to broadcast on top of one another and drown one another out. To avoid this meant that the airwaves had to be regulated and that meant that not everyone could be a broadcaster. McClelland maintained the need to strike a balance between keeping traditional media freedoms and regulating in those areas where the public interest needed to be protected. With this in mind he instructed the Department of the Media and the ABCB to conduct a thorough review of the *Broadcasting and Television Act* which

13. Doug McClelland, *The Media, A collection of policy statements made during the period 2 February - 3 June 1973*, Department of the Media, 1973, p.8.

14. *ibid.*

15. *ibid.*

included looking at the possibility of introducing FM and public broadcasting.¹⁶

At this stage McClelland was still under the misapprehension that there was very little room for expansion on the AM band. He saw the introduction of FM as a means of overcoming the problem of shortage of frequencies as well as providing a much improved quality of reception. Since he also embraced the recommendation made in the June 1972 report on Frequency Modulation of the ABCB that FM broadcasting should be in the UHF band, he did not expect the new services to be introduced before 1976.¹⁷ The Board had predicted that it would take three years to develop the appropriate technology.¹⁸

Moreover, McClelland welcomed the proposal in the Board's report that a special type of non-profit FM service, called a 'Public Broadcasting Station' should be established. Initially one such station would be located in every capital city to provide programs of 'an educational, professional, musical, religious or similar nature'.¹⁹ Facilities could be shared by groups who each provided the particular kind of service relevant to their interests. McClelland was wary of the ABCB suggestion that transmitting and studio facilities should be provided by the government to various groups under a rental agreement, providing "'public access" broadcasting' because that would involve the expenditure of public funds.²⁰ If groups provided their own equipment public money need not be involved. Realising that not all groups would be able to afford to pay for their own facilities McClelland thought it might be possible to provide some funding for public broadcasting in conjunction with a number of other government schemes, such

16. *ibid.*, pp.24-25.

17. *ibid.*

18. Alan Hulme, Ministerial Statement on Frequency Modulation Broadcasting by the PMG, *CPD, House of Representatives*, vols.79-81, 10 Oct,1972, pp.2249-2250.

19. McClelland, *The Media*, p.25.

20. McClelland, p.26.

as the establishment of an 'open university', which was currently under investigation.²¹ Whatever the method, he was convinced 'A way must be found to allow responsible community involvement and guaranteed public access to at least one station in each capital city' and that 'a community program can only be a true community event if it is done *by* rather than *for* the people, and it cannot really be done by people unless they have control over its form, content and the time at which it is aired.'²²

This summary of McClelland's ideas on FM and public broadcasting has demonstrated that his focus was on the government setting up and controlling facilities. This would provide a diversity of programming for the capital city elites rather than local community services for ordinary people in the suburbs and rural areas, where there was still often little or no radio of any description. McClelland's priority of the promotion of the expansion of services where they were least needed with the retention of government involvement and control has two probable explanations. Although expanding capital city services was not the area of greatest need, it was where the majority of the people were, and particularly the majority of Labor voters. McClelland was an astute politician and would have taken this into account. The other influence on his attitude was that he would have gained his knowledge and opinion on what changes were desirable from recent reports to government rather than a personal assessment of the situation. The

21. The concept of an 'Open University' came from Britain where it was established by the government in 1969. By the mid 1970s, when the idea was being considered in Australia, there were 64,000 students in Britain and 'Open University' was providing a successful alternative to attending lectures on campus, for the 'middle class elite' but did not attempt to reach the 'educationally disadvantaged'. See Keith Jackson, 'Education, Technology and the Role of Radio', Paper presented to the Educational Radio in Australian Public Broadcasting Conference held by the PBAA 19 May 1984, copy with present writer; and see Chapter Nine for the development of the 'Open University' concept in Australia.

22. McClelland, p.26.

reason for this, as already explained, was that his major interest in his portfolio was in the welfare of actors and other performers, rather than any strong opinions on broadcasting.

Still satisfied with the advice of the ABCB, McClelland's first move on the expansion of broadcasting services had been quietly to table the Board's position paper on the introduction of FM broadcasting on the UHF band, in the House of Representatives in June 1973.²³ Parliament accepted this calmly but the press did not. The *Australian Financial Review's* Paul Gardiner, who was covering the Senate Committee hearings at the time, had a full grasp of the implications of these findings. These ABCB recommendations protected the interests of both the existing commercial stations and the existing local equipment manufacturers with the necessary delay in the introduction of FM broadcasting while the UHF technology was developed.²⁴

In spite of accepting the ABCB recommendations McClelland was aware that many Labor Party supporters were anxious that broadcasting services should be expanded as soon as possible. Therefore he still wished to be seen as retaining the initiative for reform. He managed to persuade the ALP Federal Conference at Surfers' Paradise in July 1973 to adopt "the need to investigate the technical feasibility of establishing public stations and for action to be taken in the light of such investigation."²⁵ McClelland decided that the ABCB should re-examine the allocation of frequencies in

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23. ABCB, *Current Status of Frequency Modulation Broadcasting Plans*, May 1973 - 1973 Parliamentary Paper, no.117; Doug McClelland, *CPD*, Senate, vols.55-56, 6 June 1973, p.2386.
 24. 'But is it radio for the people?' Editorial, *Australian Financial Review*, 8 June 1973, p.2; Paul Gardiner, Series of 5 article on Australia's FM radio plans, *Australian Financial Review*, 21 June 1973, pp.1,11; 22 June 1973, pp.2,3; 26 June 1973, pp.10,11; 27 June,1973, pp.11,12; 28 June 1973, p.7.
 25. Department of the Media, 'Working Paper on Public Broadcasting', 8 November 1974, p.1.

the AM band with view to establishing more stations.²⁶

By trying to please conflicting interests, after twelve months in office, McClelland's achievements for radio were paltry. A progressive ban had been initiated on cigarette advertising, but the motivation was the health rather than the broadcasting aspects of the issue.²⁷ He had established a minimum quota for the air play of Australian music, but again the motivation was not so much a desire for broadcasting reform but rather his leaning to reforms sought by Actors' Equity. The Independent Inquiry into FM Broadcasting under the BBC's Sir Francis McLean had been set up but this owed more to Senator Jim McClelland, Geoff Evans and the second progress report of the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts than it did to Minister McClelland or his department.²⁸ The inquiry was actually recommended to Cabinet by Whitlam himself.²⁹

There was one other minor development during McClelland's first year as Minister. On 10 October 1973 the Salvation Army in Coffs Harbour had received approval from Postmaster-General Lionel Bowen, under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* to operate a cable radio station largely for the benefit of local high school students. This later became a public broadcasting station, 2CHY-FM. The establishment of this operation also seemed to have little or no connection with the Minister or his department. The Salvation Army appeared to have had a good understanding of the delays in the development of public broadcasting. They were aware that there was no radio at all in Coffs Harbour and that the Labor government was hesitant about expanding commercial broadcasting services. This group found a novel way, which was both perfectly legal and compatible with the Labor government's policy, to provide an activity for students and a service to their local community. Very few public

26. Doug McClelland, *CPD*, Senate, vol.59, 5 March 1974, pp.29-30.

27. John Carrick, *CPD*, Senate, vol.69, 24 August 1976, p.221.

28. Edgar, 'Radio and Television', p.217.

29. Lionel Murphy, *CPD*, Senate, vols.57-58, 26 Sep 1973, p.874.

broadcasters seemed aware of this project and no other similar licences were ever applied for.³⁰

In fairness to the Minister, bearing in mind his lack of background in broadcasting, it has to be recognised that, with the advice he was receiving, he was not convinced that there was much immediate scope for expanding services. He did not receive the report from the ABCB acknowledging that the number of AM stations could be doubled until February 1974. McLean's report recommending that FM broadcasting should commence on the technically available VHF band instead of the undeveloped UHF band was not completed until March 1974. Until McClelland received these reports he would not have known what was possible. He could hardly have been expected to have heard of Barry Cole's PhD studies which pointed out that there were no technical restrictions on expanding services in the AM band.³¹ Nor would McClelland have been prepared to accept the opinions of journalists, like Paul Gardiner, when they contradicted the opinions of his own advisers.

When nothing happened even after these official reports were released, aspirant public broadcasters, particularly those from the groups to whom McClelland made promises in his earlier speeches, became agitated and began serious lobbying.³²

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30. E. J. Townsend and R. H. Swansborough, 'Dynamic Radio CHY A Study in Community Media', March 1975, p.2, Department of Communications Library, Canberra; Yolanda Allen, and Susan Spencer, *The Broadcasting Chronology 1809 - 1980*, Sydney, AFTS, 1983, p.1138.
 31. Barry Cole, 'The Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the Regulation of Commercial Radio in Australia since 1948', PhD Thesis, North Western University, Evanston, Illinois, 1966, microfilm by University Microfilms International, 1980, Department of Communications Library, Canberra; Barry Cole, 'What's really preventing the expansion of broadcasting services?', *Australian Quarterly*, vol.38, no.3, September 1966, pp.72-87.
 32. Peter Pockley, Personal Interview, at UTS, Sydney, 9 May 1994.

From this point until the Labor government lost office in November 1975, any semblance of developing a coherent broadcasting policy was completely abandoned in favour of bowing alternatively to clashing political pressures and the conflicting, competing interests of the various arms of government.

During 1974 the Department of the Media expanded from its fledgling beginnings into a bureaucracy which needed to authenticate itself and demonstrate a *raison d'être*.³³ This inevitably led to rivalry for the control of broadcasting. The Department and the pre-existing statutory body, the ABCB, were now in competition to sway the direction of government policy. Moreover Whitlam intervened, only two days after his government was re-elected in May 1974, by asking the Priorities Review Staff (PRS) to conduct its own investigation into the allocation of AM and FM channels.³⁴ The conclusions of the PRS report actually undermined the authority of Minister McClelland, and made the situation still more unstable. Even if the various arms of government could have agreed on a unified policy, legislation to enact change was impossible due to a hostile Senate. But since there was no agreement on policy neither the ABCB nor the Department of the Media seemed anxious to find a way around this legislative problem.³⁵ With the vocal aspirant public broadcasters pulling the government in different directions as well, the inevitable result was a combination of

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33. John Hilvert was a Project Officer in the Planning and Research Section of the Department of the Media in 1974 and perceived this development: John Hilvert, 'What's All This Fuss About Access?', *Australian Journal of Marketing Research*, January 1975, p.47; John Hilvert, 'Recent Developments in Australian Broadcasting', Paper presented to Sydney WEA Conference on the Media 15 June 1975, p.3, Evans Archives, with present writer; see also Harding, *Outside Interference*, p.24.
34. Priorities Review Staff, *Report on Radio*, Canberra, AGPS, August 1974.
35. Michael Thompson, Personal Interview, Bellingen, 17 April 1994. Thompson was part of the Radio Branch of the Department of the Media, in 1974.

inaction and chaos.

After the government had accepted the recommendations of McLean's inquiry, the Department of the Media started developing policy plans for changes to broadcasting which included the introduction of FM on the VHF band and public broadcasting.³⁶ The ABCB had to re-orient its planning completely as it had been working towards FM broadcasting being introduced on the UHF band.³⁷ All this was much too slow and inconclusive for public broadcasters, a majority of whom were increasingly determined to have their own stations licensed rather than operating under some government umbrella. They began to bury their differences and organise themselves. Public broadcasters then lobbied the Minister to be allowed to contribute more directly to the formulation of broadcasting policy.³⁸

By the end of April 1974 the government was embroiled in an election campaign so there were no new initiatives. In his policy speech Prime Minister Whitlam made many promises. Radio would be developed in line with McLean's report.³⁹ The

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36. In February 1974, the Planning and Research Branch of Department of the Media placed advertisements in most papers asking for expressions of interest from anyone who might have a point of view to put to the public on TV and radio. They were not overwhelmed by the response. In April 1974, they prepared a report on the musical needs of under 25 year olds, pointing out that the ABC's Chris Winter's program 'Room to Move' was the only one to cater for this age group. See Hilvert, 'What's All This Fuss About Access?', and Department of the Media, 'Musical Needs for Under 25 Year Olds - Some Preliminary Research', April 1974, Evans Archives, with present writer.
37. The ABCB had only managed the rudiments of this task when the Prime Minister announced that the PRS would also report on the matter. See ABCB, *Twenty Sixth Annual Report 1973-74*, Canberra, AGPS, 1974.
38. See Chapter Eight for the public broadcasters' perspective of these developments.
39. Inglis, *This is the ABC*, p.372.

ABC would be authorised to develop plans for a second network in rural areas.⁴⁰ Other broadcasting services could commence because FM broadcasting would be introduced and additional AM frequencies would be made available. Colour television would begin on 1 March 1975.⁴¹ Except for a definite date for the introduction of colour television, the election promises were not new policies and were so vague they were almost meaningless.

Whitlam had called for a double dissolution and an election for both houses of parliament because the Opposition parties in the Senate had threatened to vote against supply. The Prime Minister was seeking a majority in the Senate to make his government viable. Partly because of the decline in the economy⁴² and a general disillusionment with Whitlam and Labor, a Senate majority eluded the government in the elections of May 1974. For the rest of its existence the Whitlam Labor government was pre-occupied with its very survival and this was the driving force behind its behaviour.⁴³

Immediately the election was over, public broadcasters again applied pressure to Minister McClelland to be included in the planning process for the expansion

40. Doug McClelland, 'Ministerial Statement - Frequency Modulation Radio Broadcasting', *CPD*, Senate, vol.61, 25 September 1974, p.1387.

41. Priorities Review Staff, *Report on Radio*, Canberra, AGPS, August 1974, p.4.

42. The post war economic boom ended rather dramatically in October 1973 when stagflation hit the Western economies as OPEC countries of the Middle East suddenly quadrupled oil prices. This caused economic collapse and recession in all industrialised countries and by the middle of 1974 the Whitlam government was unable to pay for many of its promised reforms. See Judith Brett, 'Ideology', J. Brett, J. Gillespie and M. Goot, eds, *Developments in Australian Politics*, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1994, p.8; F. G. Clarke, *Australia, A Concise Political and Social History*, Sydney, HBJ, 1992, pp.320-321.

43. Randal Stewart, and Ian Ward, *Politics One*, Melbourne, MacMillan, 1992, p.59; Evans, Interview.

of broadcasting services, at least for their own sector.⁴⁴ On 31 May, the Minister announced a Public Broadcasting Conference for 3-4 July.⁴⁵ At this conference a spokesman for the department maintained there was 'an open slate' on proposals for FM broadcasting. Public broadcasting delegates soon learned that this was not true with the department having well developed plans of its own, known as Document 'J'. Furthermore, the delegate from the Western Australian Institute of Technology Duncan Graham revealed, 'it was discovered that the Australian Broadcasting Control Board and the Media Department were competing for control of the new stations, while the ABC and the Post Office had plans and minds of their own'.⁴⁶ Everyone, it seemed, sought political capital from possible developments. Public broadcasters, dismayed by this fiasco, called their own conference and despaired of seeing any developments in the near future.⁴⁷ The department was well enough satisfied, and left the meeting apparently happy with the idea that public broadcasters were determined to run their own stations.⁴⁸

McClelland's next substantial action was to take a concrete proposal to Cabinet, in September, for an immediate expansion of services. This was a smart move politically, for it helped to quell rumours that the Minister was likely to lose control of broadcasting, as recommended by the PRS Report.⁴⁹ McClelland's submission bore a resemblance to the earlier secret departmental plan and was influenced by Dr Moss Cass's paper of 30 July 1974, suggesting public stations could be currently established

44. See Chapter Eight.

45. David Griffiths, 'Autocracy in the Airwaves', J. Langer, ed., *media centre papers 4*, Bundoora, Centre for the Study of Educational Communications and Media, La Trobe University, 1976, p.10.

46. Duncan Graham, 'The battle to get on air', *Bulletin*, 6 September 1975, p.34.

47. *ibid.*

48. Marj Kibby, 'Radio as Communication: Public Broadcasting in Australia', MA (Hons) Thesis, Macquarie, 1988, p.32.

49. Doug McClelland, *CPD*, Senate, vol.61, 24 September 1974, p.1291.

using the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*, which prevented the ABCB having any control. However, its detail tended to confirm the assessment that McClelland was not sincerely interested in broadcasting, but was as a consummate politician, who was able to pick his way through conflicting demands, while still putting the best interests of the government's and his own survival above all else. Any idea of developing a coherent policy had been left behind in his early speech making days as minister.

McClelland's submission contained four proposals, three of which Cabinet endorsed.⁵⁰ The ABC was authorised to develop a second rural network, with AM and FM stations. Cabinet rejected the proposal that the government should set up and fund a number of public broadcasting stations, which had been part of the departmental plan. However, the AM standby transmitters of the ABC in Sydney and Melbourne were to be used for experimental stations. As Ken Inglis has pointed out 'The ABC might not be the best body to entrust with new stations for under-served minorities, but at least it was there'.⁵¹ There were no problems with either licensing or funding these ABC experimental stations as there would have been if the stations had been set up as public broadcasting stations under the Department of the Media. Moreover, this decision helped to quell the disquiet among members of the ABC's Radio Action Movement (RAM), who had sought more innovative programming on the ABC for some time.⁵² The station in Sydney became 2JJ, later 2JJJ, a rock music station for the under 25 age group, and the station in Melbourne became 3ZZ, a 'community access' station which

50. Doug McClelland, 'Ministerial Statement - Frequency Modulation Radio Broadcasting', *CPD*, Senate, vol.61, 25 September 1974, pp.1387-1388.

51. Inglis, *This is the ABC*, p.375.

52. *ibid.*

focused on ethnic programs.⁵³

The other two proposals endorsed by Cabinet involved public broadcasting stations. VL5UV, the adult education station at the University of Adelaide, which had been broadcasting just off the AM band for two years on a communications licence under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*, was moved onto the AM band as 5UV, and allowed to diversify its programming.⁵⁴ The pressure exerted by the station ever since it began transmission, to be allowed to play music, had been rewarded.⁵⁵ FM licences were also given under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* to the public broadcasters, the Music Broadcasting Societies of NSW and Victoria, which became the first stations to broadcast on the FM band in Australia as 2MBS-FM and 3MBS-FM, respectively. This decision to licence just one university and two classical music stations was pure political expediency and not in tune with McClelland's earlier speeches on public broadcasting.

But the Minister was now desperate to issue at least some public broadcasting licences to retrieve his credibility and there were a number of reasons for choosing these three. All of them could be classified as experimental services to specific audiences rather than broadcasting to the general public. This provided justification for the use of the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*.⁵⁶ Furthermore they could be licensed without

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53. *ibid.*, p.377; Joan Dugdale, *Radio Power, A History of 3ZZ Access Radio*, Melbourne, Hyland House, 1979; and see Chapter Ten for this station's part in the development of ethnic broadcasting.
54. The full importance of this station in the development of the sector as a whole is dealt with in Chapter Nine.
55. Dr Richard Gun was one of many who sought permission for 5UV to play music; Richard Gun, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vols.82-84, 8 March 1973, p.354.
56. The *Broadcasting and Television Act* only encompassed commercial broadcasting and a hostile Senate would not pass amendments. McClelland could still have used this *Act*. Myles Wright licensed 2CT and 3CR this way later in McClelland's term as Minister. This ensured that the ABCB would be part of public broadcasting.

the provision of any government funding, which was an important consideration given the economic crisis. 5UV already existed and was funded by the University of Adelaide. The Music Broadcasting Societies' members tended to be from the wealthier sections of the community. Because these people could afford subscriptions these stations were able to be self-funding.⁵⁷

Trevor Jarvie, Secretary of 2MBS-FM, put forward another plausible reason for licences to issued to these particular stations. All three of these groups featured prominently at the Department of the Media Conference on Public Broadcasting and in other efforts to lobby the government for the introduction of public broadcasting. 2MBS-FM had actually applied for a licence under the *Wireless and Telegraphy Act* in a letter to the Postmaster-General Lionel Bowen on 13 April 1974.⁵⁸ For these sorts of reasons, Jarvie was convinced these stations had been licensed to 'get them off

Wright was able to license the public broadcasters, 2CT and 3CR, as commercial stations by restricting the allowed advertising to zero. For more details see Evans, Interview; Myles Wright, 'Dangerous fiddling with the radio rules', *Age*, 21 June 1977. p.8. However the use of this legislation required the ABCB to carry out a public inquiry and make recommendations to the Minister. This was a time consuming process and the Minister wished to issue licences immediately. Furthermore, although the Minister was not bound to act on ABCB advice, it would be politically embarrassing if he and the Board could not agree which aspirants should be licensed. Harding, *Outside Interference*, p127.

57. Trevor Jarvie, Secretary 2MBS-FM, was contacted by phone a few days before the licence was announced, by ABCB Chairman Myles Wright, seeking assurances that if offered a licence, the society did not need government funding to establish itself: Trevor Jarvie, Personal Interview, Waverley, Sydney, 27 May 1994.
58. Chris Tappere, 'What's This Public Broadcasting Anyway?', D. Turbayne, ed., *The Media and Politics on Australia*, Hobart, Department of Political Science, University of Tasmania, 1980, p.41.

McClelland's back'. Certainly Cabinet's whole decision had been a political one to hasten the process of establishing these new services without waiting for proper planning.

As previously mentioned, David Griffiths deplored the government's attitude. Although the government claimed that committing itself to these developments did not pre-empt the basic policy issues, in fact, according to Griffiths, it invariably did. 'In agreeing to these proposals, the Cabinet failed to recognise the policy making consequences and precedents'.⁵⁹ The fact was that Cabinet, and more particularly McClelland, could not afford to recognise them because of the political imperatives which drove the decision. Griffiths was so absorbed in his own political philosophy that he would not condone such pragmatism, even if the result was no development of public broadcasting. But for the government in general and McClelland in particular, philosophical ideals of how public broadcasting should develop had given way to the political realities of the possible ways forward.

The Labor Party's arts and media policy committee, with five members including Senator Jim McClelland, who were all more idealistic than Senator Doug McClelland, Minister for the Media, attempted to redress the situation. This committee had set out a broad broadcasting policy by 7 January 1975 which was to be presented to the ALP National Conference, in Terrigal, the following month. Senator Doug McClelland opposed this plan and managed to sabotage it by taking the initiative himself before the Conference could endorse the policy put forward by the committee. The Minister sanctioned an ABCB proposal for issuing community licences under the *Broadcasting and Television Act* and invited applications for two non-profit 'restricted commercial' licences on 14 January.

This completely thwarted Senator Jim McClelland and his committee as well as those members of the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia (PBAA) who had a genuine interest in the formal development of policy. Furthermore, by this action, Doug McClelland also officially showed his support for the Broadcasting Control Board.

59. Griffiths, *Autocracy in the Airwaves*, p.13.

These new community stations, 2CT in Sydney and 3CR in Melbourne, with legal 'commercial' licences, would be under the control of the ABCB. This was in contrast to the policy which was to have been recommended to the Terrigal Conference for an independent statutory authority to control public broadcasting. Such a policy, of course, would have meant no new stations for the time being as legislation, to set up the authority, would not have passed in the Senate. Senator Doug's action meant there were two invitations for licence applications issued immediately.⁶⁰ But, with two community stations under the control of the ABCB, the policy, in favour of an authority controlling public broadcasting, to be presented to the Terrigal Conference, had to be re-vamped leaving it again vague and almost meaningless.⁶¹

Minister McClelland further revealed his lack of real commitment to the concerns of public broadcasters on 11 November 1974, when he was in Newcastle to address the Annual Federal Conference of Professional Musicians Union of Australia. He was sympathetic to this and other unions' concerns to ensure the protection of wages and working conditions for their members. With the government decision to establish public broadcasting these unions were particularly concerned about the amount of voluntary work anticipated in this new sector. Public broadcasting stations would not survive without volunteers, particularly since the government was providing no funding. And yet McClelland seemed more interested in these fears of the unionists than the financial viability of public broadcasting.⁶²

The Department of the Media continued to dither by wishing to undertake elaborate surveys of demand while still hoping to set up transmitting facilities for public

60. ABCB *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report 1975-1976*, Canberra, AGPS, 1976, pp.15,32. Because of the tortuous licensing procedure the ABCB had to report that neither station was broadcasting by 30 June 1976.

61. Edgar, 'Radio and Television', p.219.

62. Doug McClelland, *CPD*, Senate, vol.61, 12 November 1974, pp.2212-2213.

broadcasters under its control.⁶³ There was a push by Whitlam, through Al Grassby, to establish 2EA and 3EA as government stations under the guise of ethnic public broadcasting, to publicise Medibank. Otherwise there were no further developments while Senator Doug McClelland was Minister for the Media. By the time he left the portfolio to become Special Minister for State, 6 June 1975, he had alienated just about every media reform group in the country in spite of having licensed the first FM and public broadcasting stations in Australia.⁶⁴

The motive for replacing McClelland with Dr Moss Cass as Minister for the Media is unclear. It has been claimed that Whitlam and Cass had clashed when Cass was Minister for the Environment, and that Whitlam had envisaged that Cass and the difficult Department of the Media would 'sink' together.⁶⁵ This is plausible in view of the fact that Whitlam devotes more than two pages, in his memoirs to the work of Doug McClelland as Minister for the Media, and dismisses Moss Cass's contribution in just over two lines.⁶⁶ However, it was Cass's paper to the Caucus Committee which resulted in the first FM licences being offered to the Music Broadcasting Societies while McClelland was Minister. Whitlam, even though personally antagonistic to the man and not prepared to acknowledge his achievements later, may have realised that Cass had developed a positive interest in the expansion of broadcasting services and was more likely to achieve some reform in whatever time the government had left than McClelland. Cass's wild frenzy of activities as Minister for the Media from 6 June 1975 until the Labor government's dismissal by the Governor-General on 11 November, proved that he, at least, was very determined to achieve some reform of broadcasting while he had the

63. Henry Rosenbloom, *Politics and The Media*, Melbourne, Scribe, Revised Edition, 1978, p.113.

64. Edgar, 'Radio and Television', pp.219-220.

65. Edgar, 'Radio and Television', p.220.

66. Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government*, pp.578-580.

opportunity.⁶⁷

Henry Rosenbloom, who was a press secretary to Cass when he was Minister for the Media,⁶⁸ insisted: '(when) Cass surveyed his new portfolio it quickly became clear that radio offered the greatest opportunity for meaningful reform. Only radio, with its unnecessarily restricted development, called for and allowed rapid, deep, and inexpensive reform.'⁶⁹ Cass was helped by two appointments. Jim Spigelman, who had previously been on Whitlam's private staff,⁷⁰ had been chosen by the Prime Minister as the new Secretary of the Department of the Media to replace James Oswin.⁷¹ Cass appointed Geoff Evans to his personal staff as he had acquired a personal knowledge of Evans' approach to the expansion of broadcasting services when Cass presented Evans' paper to the Labor Caucus Committee.

As a way of carrying out some significant reform, Cass sought changes to the ABC, suggesting that since 3EA now provided ethnic programs, 3ZZ should relinquish its ethnic broadcasts to 3EA and alter its program format to be similar to 2JJ. That suggestion was met with horror from all concerned with 3ZZ.⁷² Henceforth, as Inglis has suggested, any other rapid changes to the national broadcaster were unlikely

67. Not only do Cass's actions bear out this analysis but Peter Westerway of the Department of the Media, also drew a similar contrast between the styles of McClelland and Cass as Minister. See Peter Westerway, Personal Interview at Manly, Sydney, 3 February 1997.

68. Henry Rosenbloom, *Politics and The Media*, Melbourne, Scribe, First Edition, 1976, p.3.

69. Rosenbloom, *Politics and The Media*, Revised Edition, 1978, p.114.

70. Evans, Interview.

71. Rosenbloom, *Politics and The Media*, Revised Edition, 1978, p.114.

72. See Chapter Ten for an analysis of the difference in programming and function of 3EA and 3ZZ.

since the 'pachydermatous ABC was slow to budge'.⁷³ Being unsuccessful in his attempts to enrich the ABC and having no wish to promote the expansion of commercial broadcasting either, Cass was left with only one option for reforming radio in Australia. He pursued, expeditiously, the opening up of public broadcasting.⁷⁴

One of Cass's first attempts in this direction was to seek government funding. He presented a plan to Cabinet for funds to assist to public broadcasters and for the establishment of regional training and evaluation centres. When the plan was not approved, the whole idea lapsed and there was no further talk of direct government funding for this sort of activity for the rest of Cass's term as minister.⁷⁵

This exemplified how the development of a coherent broadcasting policy had remained in a comatose state since the early days of McClelland's ministry. Trying another approach on 20 July 1975, Cass took Spigelman's advice and set up a working party to draw up guidelines expressly for public broadcasting in order to hasten some broadcasting reform.⁷⁶ The more radical elements of the public broadcasting movement

73. Inglis, *This is the ABC*, p.379.

74. *ibid.* As well as Cass's personal view on commercial radio in general, commercial FM broadcasting had been specifically forbidden by a motion from the floor at the ALP conference at Terrigal in February 1975, and although the Minister at the time, Doug McClelland disagreed with the notion, he, and the Labor government, were bound by it, for the duration of their term in office. See Doug McClelland, *CPD*, Senate, vol.63, 23 April 1975, pp.1246-1247.

75. Geoffrey Evans, Telephone Interview, 10 September 1995; PBAA, *A Policy for Development in Public Radio - A Proposal to the Minister for Communications* 19 March 1987, pp.23, 25. See Chapter Eleven for a general discussion on funding of public broadcasting, which included funding from the government through agencies such as the Australia Council and the Area Assistance Plan.

76. Rosenbloom, *Politics and The Media*, Revised Edition, 1978, p.114; Edgar, 'Radio and Television', p.221.

were vehemently opposed to this action. To Griffiths, this move 'indicated a blatant pragmatism that was designed to develop a rationalisation for fait accomplis (*sic*) and avoid questioning prevailing assumptions and policies'.⁷⁷

Cass's adviser, and member of the working party, Geoff Evans, viewed the situation in a different light. 'The shadow of an early election was already hanging over the Labor government', and the Coalition was likely to win.⁷⁸ If Labor wanted to be credited with any real broadcasting reform, progress would have to be made sooner than envisaged by the working party, rather than later, as Griffiths sought.⁷⁹ Evans

77. Griffiths, *Autocracy in the Airwaves*, p.15.

78. Rosenbloom, *Politics and The Media*, Revised Edition, 1978, p.115. These were Rosenbloom's words but the sentiment was felt by all connected with the Labor government. Dr Jim Cairns had just been sacked as Treasurer for misleading the House of Representatives about the government's negotiations for a large loan outside the usual international money markets, which became known as the Connor's Loans Affair'; Allan Patience, and Brian Head, 'Notes on Federal politics 1972-1978', A. Patience and B. Head, eds, *From Whitlam to Fraser*, Melbourne, OUP, 1979, before p.1. Evans described the mood of Labor supporters at this time as one of paranoia about the intentions of the Opposition: 'The Liberals were going off their face about the Department of the Media, because, well partly for genuine reasons. They did see it as being a sort of undue excursion, by government, into things government ought to keep out of. But also partly because it was one of the building blocks in the huge case of *madness* that they were building up against the Whitlam Government, like it wasn't as important as things like the 'Connor Affair' and all that, but it was an element of it.' Evans, Interview.

79. The working party was to report in two months. In any case, Evans maintained the working party was partly a political ruse to justify immediate *ad hoc* decisions when questions were asked in parliament. It would seem more regular if the answer was the recommendation of a working party; Evans, Interview.

suggested the experimental period of public broadcasting be extended using the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*.⁸⁰

This suggestion presented a problem. When licences had been offered in September 1974, to 2MBS-FM, 3MBMS-FM and 5UV under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*, Lionel Bowen had been the PMG.⁸¹ Bowen was easily persuaded to overlook the fact that these licences really were not experimental communications licences for restricted audiences, as the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* required, but broadcasting licences to the general public. However, by the time Minister Cass was ready to offer his licences Bowen had been replaced by Reg Bishop as the PMG. Bishop was a far more cautious individual, and was particularly keen not to upset the Opposition, while the government was reeling over the 'Connor's Loans Affair'. Bishop wanted a bipartisan Senate Committee to investigate the situation. Cass felt this would have been the end of the matter as Opposition support was not forthcoming.⁸² He needed to persuade Bishop that licences could be offered so long as they were justified as experimental to restricted audiences. Cass proposed to do this by only issuing licenses to tertiary educational institutions. A July meeting with Cass and Evans, and Bishop and his Private Secretary Chris Schacht eventually persuaded Bishop that it was safe to offer these licences.⁸³

Justification was still needed to act immediately without waiting for the deliberations of the working party. Brian White, heading the working party, was persuaded to write to Cass explaining that a 'legislative program to create and control

80. Rosenbloom, *Politics and The Media*, Revised Edition, 1978, p.115.

81. It was the PMG who issued licences under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* and the Minister for the Media who issued licences under the *Broadcasting and Television Act* on the advice of the ABCB.

82. Rosenbloom, *Politics and The Media*, Revised Edition, 1978, p.116.

83. Rosenbloom, *Politics and The Media*, Revised Edition, 1978, pp.115-117.

public broadcasting in Australia will be a very lengthy procedure' and recommended that 'a number of experimental public broadcasting licences be issued as a matter of urgency'.⁸⁴

Minister Cass certainly perceived the urgency for he scribbled a reply on White's letter: 'I agree. Give me a bloody list of possibilities as soon as possible - by 21.8.75 - or I'll pick them myself'.⁸⁵ The decision to offer licences to tertiary educational institutions had another purpose besides justifying the use of the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* and avoid upsetting the Coalition parties. It sidestepped the question of government funding. Having just committed another \$100,000 and taken direct control of the EA stations which had been set up as ethnic public broadcasting stations, the government was in no position to offer any funding with any further public broadcasting licences, let alone set up stations itself.⁸⁶ It was now in severe financial difficulties.⁸⁷ Cass was very much aware that government funding would not be forthcoming. He also knew that the institutions would accept licences without it. These licences would likewise be acceptable to both political parties. This ruse would allow Cass to create public broadcasting in such a way that a future Coalition government would be unlikely to

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84. Brian White, for the Working Party on Public Broadcasting, letter to Minister for the Media Moss Cass, 12 August 1975; Evans Archives, with present writer.
85. This scribbled note was public knowledge long before White's letter was available in Evans Archives and has been previously quoted: Rosenbloom, *Politics and The Media*, Revised Edition, 1978, p.117.
86. Rosalind Patterson, 'The Ethnic Broadcasting Commission - Almost', *Media Information Australia*, no.34, November 1984, p.77; Thompson, Interview. Thompson was seconded from the Department of the Media to help run the EA stations; and see Chapter Ten.
87. Patience and Head, *From Whitlam to Fraser*, before p.1.

dismantle it.⁸⁸

Accordingly, Evans had the job of drafting a list of suitable tertiary institutions for Minister Cass. This was not an easy task. Many of the institutions had been in communication with the ABCB rather than the Department of the Media. Evans felt the need to keep the information from the department in case it reached the lobby of the commercial broadcasting sector, the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters (FARB).⁸⁹ He was forced to contact those he knew in the institutions to find out who was ready to accept licences.⁹⁰ By Evans' own admission, this was a very irregular way

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88. The paranoia of members of the Labor government that a Coalition government would abolish public broadcasting was totally unjustified as the Coalition had accepted the concept in 1972 and it continued to be part of its policy as will be shown in the next chapter. This contrasted with the broadcasting reforms of the Labor government in New Zealand about the same time. These were not supported by the conservative politicians, who immediately repealed them when regaining power in 1976. This was not the situation in Australia although it was true that the Coalition was not in favour of using the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*, and that Labor, knowing its dubious legality, only used it because they were in a hurry. Evans, Interview.
89. Rosenbloom, *Politics and The Media*, Revised Edition, 1978, p.117. In fact the President of FARB, Don Craig, denounced the government's decision in October at the FARB Annual Convention. See Harding, *Outside Interference*, p.28. The problem of mutual distrust between ministers and their personal staff on the one hand and the departments they headed was endemic in the Whitlam government and not confined to the Department of the Media. For a detailed analysis see Elaine Thompson, 'The public service', A. Patience and B. Head, eds, *From Whitlam to Fraser*, Melbourne, MUP, 1979, pp.70-79.
90. Geoff Evans, Hand written notes of these phone calls, Evans Archives, with present writer.

of proceeding.⁹¹ In fact he did not find twelve institutions who were willing to accept licences. Two of the offers were going to Student Unions and one to a community group, rather than to institutions. The institutions in those areas had refused to be involved. Evans claimed that some concerned members of the government were led to believe these unions were industrial unions at the institutions, when in fact they were unions of students, some of whom Evans believed to be 'radical ratbags'.⁹²

When the list of those willing to accept offers of licences, which became known as 'Cass's Dozen', had been compiled, the Minister secured all the necessary approvals within twenty four hours. The next day, 21 August 1975, Moss Cass announced that experimental public broadcasting licences would be offered to the twelve tertiary institutions on Geoff Evans' list.⁹³

Either PMG Bishop or Fred Green, his Departmental Secretary, was apprehensive for on 26 August, Green wrote to the Attorney-General's Department concerning the legality of this decision. This caused a further delay which realised Cass's fear of not achieving more stations during his term as minister. The Attorney-General's opinion was not received until 2 October. His advice was that some of the licences already issued, and all of those proposed by Cass, under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*, could be challenged in court. This might be avoided if limitations were added to the licence conditions similar to those already existing for the University of NSW, the Australian National University or the University of New England.⁹⁴ A special condition: 'the station shall be used for the purpose of transmitting messages, being messages

91. Evans, Interview, and see Chapter Twelve for the way in which the University of Newcastle came to be included on the list.

92. Evans, Interview.

93. Rosenbloom, *Politics and The Media*, Revised Edition, 1978, pp.118-119.

94. C. W. Harders, Secretary, Attorney-General's Department, letter to F. J. Green, Secretary, PMG's Department, 2 October 1975, Evans Archives, with present writer. See Chapter Nine for licensing arrangements for these two stations.

containing matter of an educational character, intended for aural reception by the staff and students',⁹⁵ was then to be inserted into the licences.

During October, both the Mitchell College of Advanced Education in Bathurst and the Students' Union at the University of Queensland prepared their licence applications. But by the time the Governor-General Sir John Kerr dismissed the Whitlam Labor government and installed a Coalition caretaker government under Malcolm Fraser on 11 November 1975, no licences had been issued. In his short time as Minister, Cass had overseen the government take control of the two ethnic public broadcasting stations, 2EA and 3EA, and offer unfunded licences for experimental public broadcasting stations restricted to broadcasting educational material to twelve tertiary institutions. These politically expedient decisions by a government in crisis, may have helped to set up the sector but this had happened without any clear philosophy or strategic plan for future development. Moss Cass had never seriously addressed the question of overall broadcasting reform, of what kinds of services were really needed, where they were needed and what was the optimum level of government control. Rather than any reduction, government control had actually increased during the time Moss Cass was Minister. The Department of the Media had taken over the EA stations and government regulation had increased with the special conditions imposed on the offers to 'Cass's Dozen'.

The Whitlam government had come to power seeing the need for broadcasting reform. Unfortunately within the Labor Party, as amongst aspirant public broadcasters themselves, there were at least two contradictory sets of ideals. One was the desire to give the people, at public expense, the services the Labor philosophy thought was good for them and further the cause of the government. The other desire

95. Peter Nixon, PMG, Special Licence No. H2586, issued to Mitchell College of Advanced Education 26 November 1975, CBAA Archives, Sydney. This licence was issued by the Coalition Caretaker government but the condition had been inserted by Labor before it lost office.

was to allow the people the freedom to set up services which fulfilled their own perceived needs, with little government interference or financial support. David Griffiths identified four conflicting needs that plagued the Labor Party's media policy. '1. Cultivation need - the need to cultivate the established media and avoid offending and alienating them. 2. Party need - the need for Labor/Socialist controlled newspapers, radio and television stations. 3. Democratisation need - The need to democratise the media by making it more accountable, accessible and participatory. 4. Protection need - the need to protect the Labor movement from radical fringe groups.'⁹⁶

Along with this conflict of ideals and needs was the competition between the Department of the Media and the ABCB to take the credit for introducing and maintaining some control over this new third sector of broadcasting. As the consummate politician, McClelland had tried to steer a course through this situation early in his ministry, which led to relative inertia. By mid-1974, with the Whitlam government suffering from financial and political difficulties, broadcasting reform was seen as some sort of panacea for the government's developing ills. It was in this context that successive ministers sought desperately to overcome all the difficulties; the political imperative was be seen to be doing something, in a frantic effort to shore up the government's stocks with the electorate as a whole.

Overall, during the Whitlam years there had been a little broadcasting reform. There was a messy beginnings to FM and public broadcasting, but increased government control and regulation and no coherent policy development. CHY was a cable radio station which was run like a self-funding non-profit community station. 5UV was an experimental AM university station. 2MBS-FM and 3MBS-FM were self-funding non-profit experimental fine music stations. 2JJ and 3ZZ were two different types of experimental stations set up under ABC control. 2EA and 3EA were set up as government funded, community controlled, ethnic stations designed to publicise Medibank but were put totally under the control of the Department of the Media after

96. Griffiths, *Autocracy in the Airwaves*, p.18.

the first three months. 2CT and 3CR were self-funding, non-profit, community stations initiated by the ABCB as commercial stations under the *Broadcasting and Television Act*, but with their level of advertising restricted to zero. Finally there was 'Cass's Dozen', twelve offers of self-funded, experimental, education licences accepted by a combination of tertiary institutions, their student unions and community committees, none of which had actually received a licence.

Basically McClelland had tried to steer a path through conflicting ideals and needs until the Whitlam government plunged into financial and political difficulties in mid 1974. Future efforts, by McClelland and Cass, were entirely motivated by political expediency. No coherent policy can be gleaned from the conglomeration of stations to which the government offered licences. The Labor government came into power with the intention of freeing up the airwaves to the public and reducing government control. Whitlam has claimed he succeeded with his broadcasting policy.⁹⁷ Few people agree with him. Even Patricia Edgar and Geoff Evans, both of whom Whitlam appointed to the ABCB just before Labor lost office, have disagreed.⁹⁸ Edgar concluded that the Labor government had 'an expedient, ill-informed approach to media reform for the structure it left behind after three years was barely changed'.⁹⁹

It was left to the Fraser Coalition government to issue the licences to the tertiary institutions and develop general guidelines for the formal establishment of the public broadcasting sector. The Coalition government's attitude to public broadcasting will be the subject of the next chapter.

97. Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government*, pp.579-580.

98. ABCB *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report 1975-76*, Canberra, AGPS, 1976, p.3; Evans Interview.

99. Edgar, 'Radio and Television', p.223.

CHAPTER SEVEN - PRINCIPLES AND PRAGMATISM - THE COALITION AND PUBLIC BROADCASTING: 1975 - 1983.

The Coalition government under Malcolm Fraser, which replaced the Whitlam Labor government at the end of 1975 had two distinct advantages over its predecessor. Firstly, it had a majority in the Senate, ensuring its legislation would be enacted.¹ Secondly, partly as a result of this, it was not constantly in fear of being ousted from power before the end of its term of office. This chapter will reveal, however, that these changed circumstances did not produce a coherent policy for the orderly development of public broadcasting with fluctuating political pressures continuing to produce expedient measures and *ad hoc* decisions. Nevertheless, there was more consistency in the decision making, partly due to the government's greater sense of security and partly because of the Coalition's general philosophy. While the Coalition claimed to be committed to the expansion of broadcasting as a public service to a growing and diversifying population it also claimed to be committed to the individual and to small government. This eventually translated into the provision of legislation to make public broadcasting legal.

Evidence will show that where the government felt responsible for the expansion of particular kinds of radio services, such as rural and ethnic services, as vital to the proper functioning of the current Australian society, it favoured licensing public broadcasting radio rather than expanding the expensive government services of the ABC or SBS. Coalition support included relatively small amounts of funding to ensure the viability of these essential services. A myth has emerged within the public broadcasting sector that these developments were really alien to the Coalition philosophy, which basically supported the *status quo*, receiving support from only one special minister, Tony Staley. This view will be challenged, as the Coalition's general commitment to the

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1. Geoffrey Bolton, *The Middle Way, The Oxford History of Australia - Volume 5 1942-1988*, Melbourne, OUP, 1990, p.247.

development of public broadcasting emerges during the chapter.²

While the Coalition was still a caretaker government seeking a mandate in its own right, its activity in the public broadcasting area was, indeed, driven by political expediency. Although it had supported the introduction of public broadcasting when previously in power in 1972, this did not extend to endorsing the Whitlam government's action of introducing experimental radio licences under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*.³ This was not surprising since even Labor's Attorney-General had considered these licenses were probably illegal, as the last chapter has shown. Nevertheless, as Geoffrey Bolton has pointed out, the Fraser government did not, in practice, wish to reverse all of Labor's innovations, even though it professed a different philosophy, stressing individual profit and reward.⁴ Therefore the new government decided existing licensees would be allowed to continue until changes were made to the *Broadcasting and Television Act*. However, the Coalition had no intention of honouring the offers of the previous

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2. Examples of arguments which gave too much credit to Tony Staley are: Trevor Barr, *The Electronic Estate: New Communications Media and Australia*, Melbourne, Penguin, 1985, p.103; Michael Law, 'Media Diplomacy', Proceedings - Ethnic Broadcasting Seminar, hosted by 5EBI-FM under auspices of PBAA, Adelaide, 6-7 October 1979, CBAA Archives, Sydney, p.30; Chris Tappere, 'What's This Public Broadcasting Anyway?', D. Turbayne, ed., *The Media and Politics on Australia*, Hobart, Department of Political Science, University of Tasmania, 1980, p.43; Michael Thompson, Letter to present writer, 18 August 1995. For an extract from the Liberal Party Platform on the media of October 1974, see David Griffiths, 'Autocracy in the Airwaves', J. Langer, ed., *media centre papers 4*, Bundoora, Centre for the Study of Educational Communications and Media, La Trobe University, 1976, p.31.
 3. Alan Hulme, Ministerial Statement on Frequency Modulation Broadcasting by the PMG, CPD, *House of Representatives*, vols.79-81, 10 Oct,1972, pp.2249-2250.
 4. Bolton, *The Middle Way*, pp.247-248.

Minister, Moss Cass to twelve tertiary institutions for similar licences while the broadcasting legislation was being amended. ABCB Chairman Myles Wright, who had been appalled at the offers being made, not only because the action was of dubious legality, but also because it deprived the ABCB of control of the stations, delighted in informing the Control Board of the decision not to proceed with 'Cass's Dozen'. Geoff Evans, who had originally advised Cass to make the offers and who was now a member of the Control Board, spent the ensuing lunch time phoning all those who had been promised licences, urging them to lobby their candidates during the coming election.⁵ At least three of the institutions were in country areas where the licences were eagerly awaited as there was a general shortage of radio stations. Ivan Hincks in Lismore, Keith Jackson in Armidale and particularly Robin Mitchell in Bathurst, all lobbied their candidates hard.⁶ Although public broadcasting was only an election issue in these areas and was not significant among voters generally, this proved effective. The caretaker government suddenly found it was able to overlook the dubious legality of using the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*, and agreed to issue licences to 'Cass's Dozen' on the understanding that as soon as possible after the Coalition was re-elected, the government would bring down legislation to make the new stations legal. This about face happened so quickly that two of the groups whose applications were furthest advanced, 2MCE-FM Bathurst and 4ZZZ-FM University of Queensland Student's Union, were issued with

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5. Geoffrey Evans, Personal Interview at Canberra, 5 December 1994; Myles Wright, 'Dangerous fiddling with radio rules', *Age*, 21 June 1977, p.8; ABCB, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report 1975-76*, Canberra, AGPS, 1976, p.37.
 6. Henry Rosenbloom, *Politics and the Media*, Fitzroy, Scribe, Revised Edition, 1978, p.120; Keith Jackson, 'Community Radio in Armidale', unpublished paper, compiled for 2ARM-FM, Armidale, May 1977, p.4, copy with present writer; *Broadcasting Australia*, no.2, March 1976, pp.8-9.

licences in November 1975, before the election took place.⁷

By the time Eric Robinson succeeded Vic Garland as Minister for Post and Telecommunications in February 1976, the Fraser Coalition government had effectively been in office for three months, and was committed to issuing experimental radio licences to the rest of 'Cass's Dozen' and permit test broadcasts by aspirant groups.⁸ Notwithstanding the politically expedient decisions during the election campaign which led to this situation the new government intended to continue with a more orderly development of broadcasting in general and public broadcasting in particular.

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7. The licence for 2MCE-FM was the one that had become a most serious election issue within its own electorate, as it was situated in a marginal Country Party seat and the application for the licence had been formally lodged on 14 October 1975: Robin Mitchell, 'The Realization of an Idea', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.5, April 1977, pp.7,10. The only other station that had lodged a licence application and was ready to start was 4ZZZ-FM. It was licensed about the same time as 2MCE-FM and was, in fact, the first of these stations to start broadcasting on 8 December 1975: Jim Beetson(sic), 'Achievements - 4ZZZ-FM', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.2, March 1976, p.4.
 8. Vic Garland had been the first Coalition Minister for Post and Telecommunications but had been forced to resign 6 February 1976, because of allegations of corrupt election practices. See Caroline Graham, 'Public Broadcasting, Dissent and the State', *Media Papers no.3*, Sydney, Media Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, NSWIT, 1980, p.16; Patricia Edgar, 'Radio and Television', A. Patience and B. Head, eds, *From Whitlam to Fraser - Reform and reaction in Australian politics*, Melbourne, OUP, 1979, p.224; Mark Armstrong, *Broadcasting Law and Policy in Australia*, Sydney, Butterworths, 1982, p.246.

Although it has been claimed that he was more interested in his other portfolio, Minister Assistant to Treasurer, Robinson did have a broadcasting agenda of his own which included lawful licences for public radio broadcasters.⁹ His main concern, which was also central to Coalition media policy, was a desire to remove all broadcasting from the type of political control which, under the Labor government, had led to the offers of public broadcasting licences under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* in the first place.¹⁰ This was also in line with the Coalition policy of small government, which acknowledged broadcasting as an essential service in need of regulation, but that it should be at arm's length from political decisions; the control should be with statutory authorities rather than politicians. It took Robinson the two years he was minister to achieve the changes necessary to the *Broadcasting and Television Act* to reduce political control of broadcasting licensing procedures and make public broadcasting licences legal in principle. For this reason, he left the portfolio having offered just one radio licence under the new legislation and with all the public broadcasters originally operating under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* still doing so. Furthermore, overall power over broadcasting changed little; powers were simply transferred between the Minister and the statutory authority.

Robinson commenced his term as minister with a systematic approach. He requested the Secretary of the Postal and Telecommunications Department, Fred Green, to conduct an inquiry into the Australian broadcasting system, 'with particular regard to the machinery and procedures for the control, planning, licensing, regulation,

9. Graham, 'Public Broadcasting, Dissent', p.17.

10. Even Labor's spokesperson on media matters, John Button, was prepared to concede that Robinson had been genuine in his concern to see broadcasting removed from political control, when speaking after Robinson's untimely death in 1981. See John Button, *CPD*, Senate, vol.88, 24 February 1981, p.2.

funding and administration of the system'.¹¹ The six hundred and twenty one submissions received by the inquiry refute later claims by Patricia Edgar that the inquiry was secret and did not have time to gather evidence.¹² However, it certainly was not an independent inquiry, since it was conducted by the minister's own department. Nevertheless, when Green reported to Robinson 10 September 1976, the result was an extensive range of proposals for improving the broadcasting system in Australia. In the Introduction the report acknowledged that 'Australia has always depended heavily on effective systems of communication as a prerequisite for industrial and resource development, for the collection and dissemination of information and for the expression of shared social and cultural values'.¹³ It went on to recognise that the electronic media affected people's ways of life to such an extent that no government could remain indifferent. However, it sought to examine how the people of Australia could best participate in the collective control of broadcasting while technological changes were necessitating structural, legal and administrative adjustments. It recognised that 'future development of the system will be more consciously directed to the achievement of social and cultural goals than it had been in the first fifty years'.¹⁴ A distinction was made between the structure of the system, which the report deemed to be properly a matter for government, and the regulation and administration of programming which should be removed from the direct influence of government, through the involvement of independent statutory authorities. Such ideals fitted general Coalition policy and

11. Fred Green, *Report to Minister for Post and Telecommunications on structure of the Australian broadcasting system*, ('Green Report'), Canberra, AGPS, 1976, p.2.

12. Green, *Report to Minister*, p.3; Edgar, 'Radio and Television', p.225. Patricia Edgar lost her position on the ABCB when it was disbanded as a result of this inquiry.

13. Green, *Report to Minister*, p.1.

14. *ibid.*, p.4.

determined the nature of the recommendations made in the report.¹⁵ The report proposed: the disbandment of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board; the creation of a Broadcasting Planning Board to carry out the planning involved in the implementation of government policy; the establishment of an Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) to be responsible for licensing and holding public inquires for both commercial and public broadcasting, and to introduce a substantial degree of self regulation in both the commercial and public sectors; and the formation of a Broadcasting Council to represent broadcasters in planning and regulation. The report recommended that the legislative changes required to implement these reforms should be made initially by amending the present legislation to allow for the immediate establishment of the ABT and as soon as possible by replacing the *Broadcasting and Television Act* with a *Broadcasting Act* and the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* with a *Radio Frequency Management Act*.¹⁶ Public broadcasters generally welcomed the report's recommendations.¹⁷

Although the ideals and recommendations expressed in the report were accepted by the government and generally welcomed, political considerations, once more, obstructed their full implementation. Robinson did amend the legislation but did not replace the Acts, and never fully removed broadcasting from political control. His first attempt to alter the legislation was very limited.

Amendments to the *Broadcasting and Television Act* were rushed through parliament by December 1976 so that the ABT could commence operation on

15. Peter Westerway, as the Department's First Assistant Secretary, was largely responsible for actually writing the report, and yet he had been Secretary of the NSW ALP as recently as 1973. Westerway claims that, as a public servant, he adopted the philosophy of his political masters, and was quite able to advise the minister and write this report in line with Coalition policy. See Peter Westerway, Personal Interview, at Manly, Sydney, 3 February 1997.

16. Green, *Report to Minister*, pp.157-172.

17. PBAA, Letter to Minister Robinson, 2 December 1976, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

1 January 1977.¹⁸ The ABT was aware that the whole process was hurried because the government had failed to allow enough time for permanent staff to be appointed before the Tribunal became operational; the ensuing muddle was described in its first report.¹⁹ The problem for public broadcasters was, as the ABT itself later admitted, 'no clear statement of objectives for the public sector was provided' in the legislation.²⁰ Andrew Bear, who was involved with the development of the sector and expressed the view of many public broadcasters, later claimed the delay caused by this omission was the result of deliberate political motivation; 'Characteristic of the cautious approach of the conservative government, and was obviously designed to restrict the development of public broadcasting and keep it under tight control'.²¹ Department Secretary Green denied this, claiming it was simply the result of hastily prepared amendments to the legislation and would be rectified later.²² Since the problem was eventually solved Green's explanation seems to have been correct and Bear was possibly overreacting out of frustration at the lack of progress. Nevertheless, the situation still demonstrates the lack of a coherent broadcasting policy as soon as the government came under political pressure.

In the meantime these hasty amendments left all public broadcasters

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18. The ABCB could not function after 31 December 1976 as the Chairmanship of Myles Wright would expire. Rather than appoint another Chairman, Robinson chose to rush the establishment of the ABT. See ABCB, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report*, p.3; Evans Interview.
 19. ABT, *Annual Report 1 January-30 June 1977*, Canberra, AGPS, 1978, p.4.
 20. ABT, 'Public Broadcasting Sponsorship Announcements', Report to the Minister for Communications, March 1986, p.5.
 21. Andrew Bear, 'The Emergence of Public Broadcasting in Australia', *Australian Journal of Communication*, no.4, July-December 1983, p.24.
 22. PBAA, Minutes of meetings held with Robinson and Green, 1,2 December 1976, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

feeling most dissatisfied. Although the sector was now legally acknowledged, no definitive mission statement had been formulated and public broadcasting licences could not be issued because licensing powers had not been transferred from the minister to the ABT. Considerable hostility had developed between the Public Broadcasting Association (PBAA) and Minister Robinson during the second half of 1976 as these first legislative changes were being prepared. Robinson had refused to negotiate. Green was unable to console public broadcasters with the fact that there would be further amendments in 1977.²³

The public broadcasters' assessment of Robinson as antagonistic to the full development of their sector was incorrect. They just had different priorities. The PBAA was seeking amendments immediately to ensure satisfactory details for the future of the sector. Other pressures on Robinson meant he was determined to have the ABT functioning by 1 January 1977, and he intended to address all the remaining problems once that was achieved.

A number of other incidents reinforced the PBAA's opinion that the minister was antipathetic to their cause. One of the problems was his refusal to renew 4ZZZ-FM's licence for a full twelve months at the end of 1976 due to a breach of licence conditions which involved broadcasting a rock music format under an education licence.²⁴ Secondly, Robinson reversed his decision to issue a 13th institutional experimental public broadcasting radio licence under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* to a

23. PBAA, Minutes of meetings.

24. Eric Robinson, Letter to Manager Radio 4ZZZ, 30 December 1976, CBAA Archives, Sydney; Gaye McLeod, Secretary PBAA, Letter to Senator John Button, 10 January 1977, CBAA Archives, Sydney; PBAA, Committee Meeting Minutes, 15 January and 31 March 1977, CBAA Archives, Sydney; Jim Beatson, Personal Interview at Monash University, Melbourne, 23 November 1995; Brisbane Women's Media Co-operative, 'Triple Z: "maintaining credibility" or did homogeneous radio turn sour?' *Hecate*, vol.3, no.1, February 1977, p108.

consortium in Melbourne after complaints by Myles Wright and the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters (FARB).²⁵ He also refused to meet the PBAA committee regarding the allocation of a definite proportion of the FM band to public radio broadcasting with the quip "'officers of my department have spent some time ascertaining your view, of which I believe they have a fair understanding, and I can see no purpose in a meeting at this stage'".²⁶ Finally he closed the ABC 'access' and ethnic station 3ZZ.²⁷ In fact the minister's actions showed he was as capable as his Labor predecessors of making *ad hoc* decisions and said little of his attitude to public broadcasting as such.

The last of these manoeuvres was more indicative of Robinson's attitude to government broadcasting than public broadcasting. He understood 3ZZ to be a government ethnic station which had originally been set up, as a six months experiment,²⁸ by the previous Labor government in May 1975 and was now duplicating the other government ethnic station in Melbourne, 3EA.²⁹ When negotiations with the ABC to take over all government ethnic broadcasting broke down, Robinson set up the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) to manage the EA stations, the other being 2EA in Sydney, and closed down 3ZZ.³⁰ Apparently quite pleased with his decision he was totally unaware that it would be interpreted as a complete lack of commitment to public

25. Wright, 'Dangerous fiddling with radio rules', p.8

26. Cited in *Nation Review*, 1-7 September 1977, p.8.

27. Joan Dugdale, *Radio Power*, Melbourne, Highland House, 1979. 'Access' was a term used for radio stations where different community groups were allowed access to the studios and the airwaves to produce their own programs without being under the control of station management, except for such matters as defamation, where federal laws applied.

28. Myles Wright, '3ZZ: real issue is forgotten', *Age*, 12 July 1977.

29. Ken Inglis, *This is the ABC - The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983*, Melbourne, MUP, 1983, p.408.

30. *Australian*, 1 July 1977, p.3.

broadcasting. It had eluded Robinson that the 'access' component of 3ZZ had been far more like the public stations than like the EA stations, whose programming was strictly controlled by government regulation forbidding political comment.³¹ Robinson simply saw himself as streamlining the government ethnic broadcasting set up by the previous government.³²

Robinson, evidently unconcerned with the increasingly negative impression he was creating with the PBAA, proceeded with his own agenda and the ABT embarked on its first task of conducting an inquiry into self regulation of broadcasting. The report, presented to parliament on 25 August 1977, dealt with the public accountability of broadcasters. The report recommended that members of the public be allowed to make submissions to licence renewal inquiries, with the responsibility for receiving and responding to complaints resting primarily with the individual broadcaster and secondly with the industry bodies; FARB for commercial radio

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31. Paola Totaro, *Participation* - The Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales Report to the Premier, Sydney, 29 June 1978, p313; Robinson revealed his lack of understanding of the differences between 3ZZ and 3EA when he announced that SBS 'will be capable of providing services to other groups (besides ethnic groups) with special interests in the Australian community'. Cited in 'Clancy', 'Unease at ABC - The Overflow Column', *National Times*, 4-9 July 1977, p.6.
 32. Ethnic broadcasting was soon accepted as an essential service by both sides of politics. When it expanded to Brisbane and Adelaide, the Coalition supported the option of establishing and funding ethnic public stations rather than expanding the SBS EA stations set up by the Labor government. Not only was this a cost saving measure but it was also, conveniently, in line with the Coalition philosophy of small government. See Ada Hulshoff, Personal Interview at Monash University, Melbourne, 25 November 1995; Tony Staley, Personal Interview at Monash University, Melbourne, 25 November 1995 and Chapter Ten which deals with ethnic broadcasting in more detail.

broadcasters, FACTS for commercial television broadcasters and the PBAA for public broadcasters, both radio and later, TV. In their own submissions for licence renewal, stations were to submit to the Tribunal a 'Promise of Performance' which would 'incorporate the applicant's or licensee's policy on major broadcasting issues'. Guidelines were provided by the ABT for the preparation of the 'Promise of Performance' but they were merely suggestions and were not legally enforceable.³³ This expression of self regulation was part of Coalition philosophy and very much part of Robinson's own program for reform. After dealing with the question in general terms, Part V of the ABT report was devoted specifically to self regulation in public broadcasting.³⁴ This, at least, pleased the PBAA's new Chairman, Michael Law, as recommendations would allow further diversification of the sector, once licensing legislation was in place.³⁵ Nevertheless, in spite of these recommendations from his own report, Tribunal Chairman Bruce Gyngell had a narrower concept of public broadcasting than Myles Wright had displayed, for Gyngell revealed; 'I would not be a party to licensing another 3CR'.³⁶ 3CR was a community access station. Whereas Robinson appeared to fail to understand the concept of 'access' radio as part of public radio, Gyngell understood it and rejected it.

Having handed the matter of self regulation to the ABT, Robinson became engrossed in the bigger picture and October 1977, saw parliament pass the *Broadcasting and Television Amendment Bill 1977*, which transferred the power over

33. ABT, *Annual Report 1978-79*, Canberra, AGPS, 1979, p.192; also see Armstrong, *Broadcasting Law*, p.140; ABT, *Annual Report 1977-78*, Canberra, AGPS, 1979, p.181.

34. ABT, *Annual Report 1977-78*, p.185.

35. *Nation Review*, 1-7 September 1977, p.8..

36. Cited in Denis Reinhardt, 'Community Radio's toughest enemy', *Nation Review*, 29 September-5 October 1978, p.5.

licences and ownership and control of stations from the minister to the ABT.³⁷ Now all that was needed, for valid licences to be issued, were guidelines for the regulation of public broadcasting radio. By 9 November 1977, the guidelines were at the draft stage and were expected to be ready in a few weeks.³⁸

However, Robinson was never to introduce those guidelines, leaving him and the Coalition government of his time condemned by public broadcasters as antagonistic to their cause. Fraser called an election for 10 December 1977 and appointed a new Minister for Post and Telecommunications in his second ministry. During the election campaign Robinson undertook one last gesture for public broadcasting by inviting applications for the grant of a public broadcasting licence for Bourke. Since a consortium of local school interests had received a grant of \$144,000 from the Commonwealth Schools Commission to set up a radio station, the matter was urgent if funding was not to be lost. The Departmental planning process was simple and quick since Burke was a remote area, with no competition for a licence. The ABT issued the first public broadcasting licence to 2WEB on 2 January 1978.³⁹ By this time Tony Staley was installed as Minister for Post and Telecommunications. Neither Robinson's final gesture, nor his two sets of amendments to the *Broadcasting and*

37. Armstrong, *Broadcasting Law*, pp.44-45; ABT, *Annual Report 1977-78*, pp.1-2. However these amendments created neither a Broadcasting Planning Board nor a Broadcasting Council, thus leaving the Department, and therefore the Minister, with more power than the 'Green Report' had intended. The licensing powers, which had been with the Minister were now with the ABT and the planning and technical powers, which had been with the ABCB were now with the minister. It could be argued that the minister retained as much political control as before. See Allan Brown, *Commercial Media in Australia*, Brisbane, UQP 1986, p.93.

38. John Carrick, *CPD*, Senate, vol.75, 9 November 1977, pp.2400-2402.

39. ABT, *Bourke Public Broadcasting Station Inquiry*, AGPS, Canberra, February 1978, pp.1-4; Westerway Interview.

Television Act, was either recognised or remembered. Public broadcasters remembered him as an unsympathetic and unavailable minister.

While it is true that Robinson had not tackled the difficult issue of removing television from that part of the VHF band set aside for FM radio broadcasting, he had stuck to his agenda of paving the way for the issuing of all radio and television licences to be removed from political control and for public broadcasting to become a legal identity. But the political realities of the time had led him on a tortuous route. He did not achieve as much as he would have liked, either in removing broadcasting from political control or for the development of public broadcasting. However, he followed a broad plan, which was definitely more than his Labor predecessors, McClelland or Cass, had done.

Tony Staley's policies were not markedly different from those of Eric Robinson, but his attitude, and his desire and ability to communicate with all he worked with, including public broadcasters, were vastly superior. Having endorsed a promise made by Robinson to provide definitive guidelines for the issue of public broadcasting radio licences as soon as possible, the new minister decided he needed first hand knowledge of the situation. He met representatives of the PBAA on 5 January 1978,⁴⁰ and spent almost an hour and a half with the whole committee soon after. A representative from each state and territory provided a report. 4ZZZ-FM and 2XX representatives expressed concerns that their stations, with licences held by student unions, might not be eligible for licences under Robinson's draft guidelines. Student union stations were to be eligible for community licences rather than education licences and no provision was made for the issuing of community licences in capital cities at this

40. Graham, 'Public Broadcasting', *Dissent*, p.17.

stage.⁴¹ Staley had regarded himself from his earliest days in parliament in 1970, as a small 'l' liberal with an interest in communications theory, the media and the introduction of FM broadcasting. He recollects that he came to the portfolio seeing freedom, independence and diversity as essential in the expansion of broadcasting services in his vision of a liberal democratic society. He recalls that he was also an ex-academic with a soft spot for student politics, and as a result he informed his department that he wanted guidelines for public broadcasters which enabled student groups to have licences.⁴²

The meeting with the PBAA had been held at the fine music public station 2MBS-FM in Sydney. Shortly afterwards Staley also visited the community access station 3CR in Melbourne where he was photographed and a little later, 3RMT-FM (later 3RRR-FM), one of 'Cass's Dozen', where he was interviewed on air.⁴³ Public broadcasters were most impressed but in reality the differences from the previous minister were cosmetic rather than substantial.

Staley's desire both to be accessible and to communicate his views also led this new minister to make himself available for a number of public discussions where he further revealed his philosophy of broadcasting. When Mike Richards interviewed

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41. PBAA, Committee Meeting Minutes, 18 February ,1978, CBAA Archives, Sydney, pp.1-4. Peter Westerway claims Secretary of the Department, Fred Green had sought to rescind the licenses of 3ZZ, 4ZZZ-FM and 2XX as being stations that were too radical for the Australian environment. He had succeeded in influencing Robinson to close down 3ZZ and if Robinson's draft guidelines for public stations had come into effect, Green would have succeeded with 4ZZZ-FM and 2XX as well. See Westerway Interview.
 42. Patricia Edgar, 'Media policy a Liberal View - Interview with the Honorable A. A. Staley the Minister for Post and Telecommunications', J. Langer, ed., *Media Centre Papers* 8, Bundoora, La Trobe University, 1978, pp.2-4; Staley, Interview.
 43. PBAA, Committee Meeting Minutes, 18 February 1978; Edgar, 'Radio and Television', p.230.

Staley on the ABC, in March 1978, the minister pointed out that he had been interested in broadcasting reform for a long time, pressuring the previous Coalition government to introduce FM and public broadcasting radio in 1971.⁴⁴

He gave a more substantial interview to Patricia Edgar on 17 May 1978, detailing his political philosophy in general, and his broadcasting philosophy in particular.

There's the question of what democracy is all about. If I had to single out of the whole bundle of my own beliefs one thing with particular relevance to the question of broadcasting, I think I'd be interested in the notion of democracy and the importance of minorities in democracy. It seems to me that, on the whole, the majorities are fairly well catered for in democracies, and that the real quality of a democracy is determined by the way in which minorities are treated I am thinking in terms of encouragement to thrive. In this way you enhance an individual's liberty My thinking, which I might loosely position along sociological, or social psychological, as well as political lines makes me very aware of the problems arising from feelings of alienation, and a sense of powerlessness and helplessness in modern mass societies ...my very strong view is that broadcasting systems should seek increasingly to cater for diversity; to create diversity where it didn't previously exist.⁴⁵

The fears of many public broadcasters during Robinson's term as minister, that the expansion of their sector was somehow contrary to Coalition policy, were put to rest by Staley's clear exposition of his philosophy, together with his availability for personal contact.⁴⁶ By this time too the minister had issued the guidelines, which had

44. Tony Staley, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.73-75, 29 September 1971, p.1619; Mike Richards, Excerpt: ABC radio interview on 'Broadband' program with Tony Staley, *Media Information Australia*, no.9, August 1978, pp.38-39.

45. Edgar, *Media Papers* 8, p.3.

46. This lesson had to be relearned in the 1990s. Public broadcasters feared the Coalition's election in 1993, but the Coalition's Richard Alston was a far more sympathetic minister than Labor's Michael Lee had been. Lee had been absorbed in the expansion of the ABC and SBS at the expense of public broadcasting.

been the last legislative impediment to the granting of legal public broadcasting radio licences.

However Staley's motivation for expediting this matter and releasing the 'Guidelines for the Planning of Public Broadcasting in Phase 1' in a Ministerial Statement on 5 April 1978, was not simply because he wished to please public broadcasters. Some of the existing radio licences under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* were soon to come up for renewal and by having the guidelines in place so early in his term as minister, Staley was able to ensure that the Tribunal had sufficient time to process applications for the new types of licences before the old licences expired.⁴⁷

The guidelines divided public broadcasting radio licences into three types: Category 'E' licences to be issued to educational bodies; Category 'S' licences to be issued to groups providing special interest programmes such as music, sport, religion or student unions; and Category 'C' licences to be issued to community groups intending to cover a particular geographic area. In Phase I a maximum of three medium powered FM licences would be issued in each capital city and would be in Categories 'E' and 'S', with Category 'C' licences being issued elsewhere when frequencies were available. Further licences would be issued later under Phase II.⁴⁸

At first glance the early introduction of these guidelines does not look politically expedient since Staley had inherited a commitment from Robinson. But, apart from the problem of having to re-issue licences under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* if the guidelines were not in place, there was a political advantage in the haste. Since there was only a short time for aspirants to prepare applications, existing stations were assured of being re-licensed, although nine new groups were licensed as well. Since the PBAA,

Public broadcasters were pleasantly surprised to find that Alston's attitude was the reverse, and increased funding became available.

47. Tony Staley, Ministerial Statement, 'Development of Public Broadcasting in Phase 1', *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.108, 5 April 1978, p.998.

48. Staley, Ministerial Statement, pp.998-999.

which was now a well organised lobby group, largely represented the existing stations, it was expedient they were all re-licensed. Furthermore the Tribunal had little time to consider the question of whether the present mix of stations ensured sufficient diversity of programming. These issues, fundamental to both the Coalition policy in general and Staley in particular, were overlooked. In addition, the PBAA was placated with an assurance that 'sponsorship in a form approved by the minister and administered by the Tribunal will be allowed',⁴⁹ which meant that stations could increase their revenue by using a limited form of advertising, without threatening the viability of commercial stations.⁵⁰

The Tribunal's final selection of those to be licensed emerged every bit as *ad hoc* as the Labor government's. Focusing on just three capital cities clearly illustrates this. In Sydney a Category 'E' licence went to a consortium of Macquarie University and NSWIT, 2SER-FM. A Category 'S' licence went to the existing 2MBS-FM, the classical music station. Another Category 'S' licence was issued to the Christian Broadcasting Association, 2CBA-FM. In Melbourne 3RMT-FM at RMIT expanded to include Melbourne University and a number of other educational bodies and became 3RRR-FM with a Category 'E' licence. Category 'S' licences were issued to the existing classical music station 3MBS-FM and the Progressive Broadcasting Service, 3PBS-FM, another specialist music station. In Brisbane Category 'S' licences were issued to the existing student union station 4ZZZ-FM, a classical music station 4MBS-FM and an AM ethnic

49. *ibid*, p.1001.

50. This concept fitted perfectly with Coalition policy for there would be less demand for government money to keep public broadcasters viable without jeopardising the commercial stations, to which the coalition was equally committed. See Chapter Eleven for a detailed discussion of the government's attitude to funding public broadcasting.

station 4EB.⁵¹ By and large, those aspirants, which were well advanced in their planning with an obvious potential audience, were licensed, without consideration of what would be a desirable mix of programming.⁵²

A closer look at the situation in Sydney reveals that the Tribunal faced a dilemma. Four suitable applications had been lodged for the three available licences. No criteria had been established for making a choice. The fourth applicant was Sydney Public Affairs Radio Foundation (SPAR). 'The Tribunal considered that such an innovative access-orientated organisation was worthy of encouragement ... [and] ... was of the opinion that there was a place for a station seeking to "inform" in the broad sense (as opposed to formally educating)'.⁵³ The members of the Tribunal were united in their decision to issue a Category 'E' licence to 2SER-FM and a Category 'S' licence to the existing classical music station 2MBS-FM which meant a decision had to be made between CBA and SPAR. Labor Party connections intended to provide a venue for SPAR if a licence was granted.⁵⁴

Despite this, the Tribunal licensed CBA, while rejecting all the other

51. ABT, *Public Broadcasting Licence Inquires 1978*, Canberra, AGPS, 1979, pp.21-22.

52. Those well advanced with their planning, naturally, included all those groups already broadcasting. It also included an ethnic station in Brisbane where there were no EA station, in line with Coalition policy to establish public stations devoted entirely to ethnic broadcasting rather than expanding SBS. See ABT, *Public Broadcasting Licence Inquires*, p.85; Chris Lawe Davies, 'History of Australian Multicultural Broadcasting', PhD Thesis, Journalism, Queensland, Draft, 1996, p.154; and also see Chapter Ten which deals with ethnic broadcasting in more detail.

53. ABT, *Public Broadcasting Licence Inquires*, p.177.

54. Neil Runcie, Personal Interview at Centennial Park, Sydney, 9 May 1994.

Christian applicants, except Hobart, where there was no suitable viable competition for a Category 'S' licence.⁵⁵ The Sydney decision may have been influenced by the fact that SPAR had the support of some members of the Labor Party but a more likely influence was that the government had used the CBA studio facilities to commence broadcasting on the Sydney ethnic station 2EA.⁵⁶ Whatever the reason, it was clearly a politically motivated determination exacerbated by the fact that the whole licensing procedure was so rushed that no criteria had been established for determining licensing priorities.

Nevertheless, Staley had promulgated guidelines and twenty six valid public broadcasting licences had been issued. The public broadcasting sector was now legally established, to the relief of those who had been operating on licences under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*. However, Phase I was supposed to be followed by Phase II and the introduction of low powered Category 'C' licences.⁵⁷ It was only some years later, when there had been very little further development that public broadcasters began to realise the limitations of the rush to implement the Phase I licensing procedure. Andrew Bear pointed out that this meant there had been a scarcity of applications and a consequent lack of diversity of licences issued. 'Across the whole country there was only one serious application for a public affairs type of station (SPAR in Sydney), and none for a community cooperative station on the model of 3CR. We are now stuck with what

55. Kevin Birks, 'History of CBA', Submission to the Department of Communications on behalf of Australasian Christian Broadcasters for the release of further "Special Interest" Public FM Licences, 22 August 1983; ABT, *Public Broadcasting Licence Inquiries 1978*.

56. SBS, *Ethnic Broadcasting in Australia 1979 - Report at the end of the First Year of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)*, Sydney, SBS, 1979, p.14; CBA, *Australian Radio Times*, February 1976, p.3.

57. Staley, Ministerial Statement, p.999.

we didn't get.'⁵⁸

In fact, having established the sector on a legal footing, Staley seemed to be distracted by other priorities. He expressed a desire to 'hasten slowly' because 'there is a responsibility to control the way in which the enormous potential of FM broadcasting is to be realised. That involves all sectors of broadcasting and requires proper caution in its exercise.'⁵⁹ In line with Coalition policy he now turned his attention to the establishment of commercial FM radio broadcasting with guidelines being issued in July and the first licences granted in December 1979.⁶⁰ Later, the minister became preoccupied with the prospect of setting up an Independent and Multicultural Broadcasting Corporation (IMBC),⁶¹ and holding inquiries into the possibilities of broadcasting satellites and cable and subscriber TV.⁶²

Never again, as minister, did Staley concentrate his attention on the further development of public broadcasting radio. Unlike his predecessor, he refrained from giving aggressive negative responses to increasing pressure for additional action and always replied when queried that invitations for more licences would be issued 'soon' or 'very soon'. Public broadcasters shortly came to realise that their cause was not being further advanced. Michael Law reported in October 1979; 'It is a melancholy fact that not a single licence invitation had been gazetted during the year under review'.⁶³ Opposition leader Bill Hayden had a more colourful way of describing Staley's

58. Andrew Bear, 'Open and Closed Options for Public Broadcasting', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.8, November 1981, p.7.

59. Staley, Ministerial Statement, pp.999-1000.

60. Edgar, *Media Papers* 8, p.4: Trevor Barr, *Reflections of Reality: the Media in Australia*, Adelaide, Rigby, 1980, p.145.

61. This was intended to replace SBS and oversee public broadcasting.

62. Staley, Interview.

63. Michael Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report of Activities, 1978-79, 13 October 1979, p.1, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

enchanting inaction; 'The performance of the Minister for Post and Telecommunications is a catalogue of unfulfilled promises [he] is propelled by a sort of floor walker's charm and a used car salesman's promises. Amplitude modulation public broadcasting stations are operating on less than 10 per cent of the power on which commercial radio stations and ABC radio stations are operating. Stations such as 2XX Canberra and 5UV Adelaide reach only part of the audience they are licensed to reach. Category C low powered community station licences continue in a state of suspense - presumably permanent suspense.'⁶⁴

Aspirants were not only upset because they were not receiving licences. Ever since the Coalition took office in 1975 test broadcasts had allowed them to try out their equipment, practise presenting programs and generally keep their supporters interested while they waited for their licences.⁶⁵ Fred Green, Secretary of the Department of Post and Telecommunications decided that, with the passing of the *Broadcasting and Television Amendment Act 1977*, test broadcasts were no longer necessary or even legal. He notified the New South Wales Public Broadcasting Association (NSWPBA) that they would cease from 31 December 1977.⁶⁶ By 1979 aspirants were becoming extremely concerned as they were losing members rapidly.⁶⁷ They became even more dejected when Duncan Graham of the PBAA committee received confirmation from Peter Westerway that there was still no allocation of

64. Bill Hayden, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.114, 9 May 1979, p.2003.

65. ABCB *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report, June - Dec 1976*, Canberra, AGPS, 1978, pp.67-68.

66. Michael Law, Letter to Fred Green, F. J. 13 December 1977, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

67. Joan Killorn and Frank Scambary, Personal Interviews at Liverpool, Sydney, 2 July 1994; Dorothy Broadhead, Personal Interview at Concord, Sydney, 27 August 1994.

frequencies for Category 'C', community radio stations.⁶⁸ Even licensed public broadcasters were becoming dissatisfied because they wanted the matters of sponsorship announcements, and translator stations to be finalised.⁶⁹

Temporary arrangements were made for the PBAA to coordinate test broadcasts under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* in November 1979.⁷⁰ Shortly before he quit politics Staley incorporated this arrangement and other measures to allow sponsorship and translator stations, in his amendments to the *Broadcasting and Television Amendment Act 1980*. Pressure to issue Category 'C' licences resulted in only three new country stations, 2REM-FM in Albury-Wodonga, 8TOP-FM in Darwin and 8CCC-FM in Alice Springs and, despite the best efforts of the NSWPBA, no suburban stations had been licensed by the time Staley retired in October 1980.

When the members of the NSWPBA heard that Staley was soon to leave politics, they felt sure he would like to leave on a high note by seeing nine suburban radio stations going to air in Sydney. They had difficulty presenting a set of Draft Planning Proposals they had prepared for these stations to Staley personally. They scanned his schedule and, finding the minister was attending a seminar at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) in August, presented their proposals to him at morning tea. Scambary has recalled that Staley was cooperative and charming, as always, and agreed to pass the document to 'the boys' in the Department.⁷¹ With the Department bogged down in internal restructuring and Staley preoccupied with other matters, even the production of Draft Proposals produced no action.

68. PBAA Committee Meeting Minutes, 12 March 1979, p.2, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

69. Translator stations would allow the stations to expand their audiences by reaching into difficult terrain within their service areas.

70. Michael Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report of Activities, p.2.

71. Scambary, Interview; Peter Baume. *CPD*, Senate, vol.92, 27 November 1981, p.2806.

It has been demonstrated that Tony Staley did no more for the development of public broadcasting than Eric Robinson. Robinson provided the legislation so that public broadcasting could become a legal identity. Staley provided the guidelines for the first radio licences to be issued. Although Staley appeared, at first glance, to be the more effective Minister, this was because he was capable of articulating a clear broadcasting policy projecting an extremely sympathetic attitude to public broadcasters' requests. In the final analysis, he merely rushed through guidelines for public broadcasting radio to avoid a problem with stations approaching relicensing, without allowing time for proper planning. Like Robinson, Staley then became preoccupied with other aspects of his portfolio. Both ministers adhered to the Coalition policy of developing the public broadcasting sector but when they became distracted by other aspects of their portfolio they handled the situation differently. Thus, Eric Robinson was remembered as an enemy and Tony Staley as a friend by those involved with this broadcasting innovation. However the combined efforts of these two ministers had provided a legal definition for public broadcasting and working regulations for radio to operate. Neither a cantankerous political opposition of any persuasion nor a disgruntled commercial broadcasting sector could any longer threaten the existence of the new sector which now felt its existence was secure, even with the conservative side of Australian politics in government.

Because public broadcasters now felt their sector was secure they hardly noticed the contribution made by Staley's successor, Ian Sinclair, who headed the renamed Department of Communications.⁷² While Sinclair had no momentous decisions to take or legislation to pass to further the public broadcasting cause, he, like his predecessors, had to choose his priorities. It would appear that the issuing of Category

72. Allan Brown, 'Media Regulation', B. W. Head, and A. Patience, eds, *From Fraser to Hawke*, Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1989, p.464.

'C' community radio licences in country areas was more important to him than it was to Staley. Sinclair was a member of the Country Party and aware of the need for more radio stations in rural areas.⁷³ Coalition policy supported the establishment of public stations rather than expanding the ABC and, during Sinclair's term, as minister licence applications were called eleven stations in regional and rural areas.⁷⁴ There were staff shortages in the Department of Communications while these licences were being processed. This, together with planning difficulties had led to there being 550 outstanding applications for commercial FM licences alone and by the end of 1981 approximately 700 for broadcasting and television licences combined.⁷⁵ Rural public stations were definitely receiving priority treatment irrespective of whether that was due simply to ease of planning or whether it was also influenced by Sinclair's consideration of his Country Party constituents.⁷⁶

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73. Peter Westerway claims that while this was true it would not had much affect on policy. Planning was easier for rural stations than metropolitan stations. Since the question of competition threatening the viability of existing stations, which was a serious issue for new commercial applications, did not affect public stations, it was easier to plan for public stations than commercial stations. Planning was therefore easiest for country public stations, so they were dealt with first. See Westerway Interview.
74. These were 2AAA-FM Wagga Wagga, 2VTR-FM Windsor-Richmond, 4TTT-FM Townsville, 3CCC-FM Bendigo, 3MBR-FM Murrayville, 2BBB-FM Bellingen, 2CHY-FM Coffs Harbour, 5GTR-FM Mt Gambier, 3RPC-FM Portland, 2YOU-FM Tamworth and 5PBA-FM Salisbury-Elizabeth.
75. Ian Sinclair, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vols.124-125, 10 September 1981, p.1162; Baume, P. *CPD*, Senate.
76. Even Westerway was prepared to concede; 'there were political and social pressures for particular areas. You tried to get the ones where the pot was boiling most furiously but mostly it was not political.' See Westerway Interview.

While he was Minister for Communications, Sinclair also had to address a public broadcasting funding problem which arose in June 1981, when the government finally abandoned the notion of replacing the SBS with an IMBC.⁷⁷ Public broadcasters lost their source of government funding because Staley had envisaged the IMBC as a conduit for their general government funding, previously made through the Australian Film Commission.

Since the Coalition was encouraging the development of public stations for the provision of some essential services rather than expanding the ABC or SBS, funding had to continue. Two weeks before the budget in August 1981, Sinclair arranged for the funding to be made temporarily from his department, while a permanent solution was found to the problem.

One of his suggestions to make public broadcasting financially viable was that stations be allowed to advertise. This was anathema to most in the sector and the idea was not pursued.⁷⁸ From the end of 1981 the concept of a Public Broadcasting Foundation (PBF) was developed as the channel for government funding and this organisation eventually distributed government funds for ethnic, aboriginal and Radio for the Print Handicapped (RPH) as well as general public broadcasting stations.⁷⁹

77. Xavier Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia, The Role of Broadcasting, - Synopsis and Summary of Recommendations*, Report of the Committee of Review of the Special Broadcasting Service, Canberra, AGPS, December 1984, Appendix 13.

78. PBF, Grants Advisory Committee Report 1986, p.2, CBAA Archives, Sydney; Michael Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report, 1980-81, 29 August 1981, p.5, CBAA Archives, Sydney; Marj Kibby, 'Radio as Communication: Public Broadcasting in Australia', MA (Hons) Thesis, Macquarie, 1988, p.43.

79. PBAA, Committee Meeting Minutes, 4-5 December 1981, pp.5-6; PBAA 1982; Staley Interview. See Chapter Eleven for a detailed analysis of funding for public broadcasting.

One area of public broadcasting still remained in limbo. There had been no action on low powered suburban Category 'C' community radio licences. Staley has claimed that he had not proceeded with this matter because more planning was required when he left the portfolio.⁸⁰ Westerway corroborated this opinion.⁸¹ Since the NSWPBA had prepared the planning proposals themselves, they claimed the problem was an overworked department and lobbying was their only hope. In November 1981 John Button tried to advance the cause by asking a question in the Senate. He was informed that the matter was in hand.⁸²

A tight by-election for the federal seat of Lowe, in the heartland of aspirant suburban community broadcasting country, along the Parramatta River in Sydney, soon followed. On 14 February 1982, during the election campaign, Minister Sinclair announced that applications would be invited for the nine Sydney suburban stations.⁸³ Those seeking licences at the time were convinced that the announcement during the election period was no coincidence but a direct result of lobbying the minister who was involved in the campaign.⁸⁴ Sinclair certainly conceded that no further planning had been needed for these licences to be issued. He made it clear, when asked about similar licences for the Melbourne suburbs, that Sydney was only considered because the NSWPBA had 'co-ordinated the activities of a number of potential applicants so that there was developed a coherent plan which embraced all the Sydney area based on those community groups' requirements'.⁸⁵ It was some years before a similar coordinated

80. Staley Interview.

81. Westerway Interview.

82. John Button, *CPD*, Senate, vol.92, 27 November 1981, p.2806; Baume, P. *CPD*, Senate.

83. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 February 1982, p.1.

84. Scambary Interview. Since Westerway had conceded political considerations sometimes played a part, this is a plausible explanation.

85. Ian Sinclair, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.126, 23 February 1982, p.422.

approach was developed in Melbourne, but, by granting licences to the suburban stations in Sydney, Sinclair had shown that the Coalition government supported the idea in principle.

Neil Brown took over as minister, in the middle of 1982, for the last few months of the Fraser government. By this time, the basic principles of the Coalition policy for public broadcasting had been carried out, even though the broader policy of completely removing it from political control to control by statutory authority remained unfulfilled. The public broadcasting sector, with some government funding, was now firmly and legally established with many different types of stations, some of whose foundation had been supported by the government as an alternative to expanding its own services. The ABT controlled the licensing procedures and the PBF was soon to channel the government's financial support enabling direct government involvement to be minimised while ensuring these new essential services and forms of cultural expression were nurtured.

The development of public broadcasting, as a means of individual and diverse expression and as an alternative to augmenting existing government essential services had been an integral part of Coalition broadcasting policy when it gained power in 1975. Because there were always political factors, as well as a shortage of Departmental staff, which delayed the implementation of this policy, it took the efforts of three ministers, Eric Robinson, Tony Staley and Ian Sinclair to complete the basic process and issue a range of public broadcasting radio licences. Giving Tony Staley sole credit was a myth which emerged among public broadcasters. In reality the development of public broadcasting was an integral part of the Coalition policy of small government promoting diversity in the development of democracy.⁸⁶

86. The Coalition had a similar attitude to public television, which commenced Test Broadcasts during this period. This thesis is not covering public television in

There were two basic difference between the Coalition and the previous Labor government. The first was the attitude towards direct government involvement. Whereas Labor had oscillated between whether it would provide and control these new services or merely facilitate, legislate and regulate them, Coalition policy was clearly in favour of the interested parties providing the services for themselves, with some government funding where necessary. The government's role was primarily to facilitate, legislate and regulate the sector in the public interest. Even in this role the government encouraged self regulation and by delegating some of its powers to statutory authorities it reduced direct political control. To this extent the Coalition policy was consistent in a way that Labor's had not been. The second difference was that the Labor government's ability to develop public broadcasting was limited by the fact that there was a hostile Senate which refused to pass broadcasting legislation. The Coalition did not face this impediment and was able to make laws to introduce and regulate public broadcasting. Undoubtedly public broadcasting would have been legally established eventually if Labor had remained in power and had a majority in the Senate. How differently the third sector of broadcasting would have emerged under these circumstances remains a matter for speculation.

While the Coalition policy had been more consistent than Labor's, it had not released the reigns of power over broadcasting altogether. Expediency had led to a

depth, but to understand the Coalition's attitude see Peter Morris, Report from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on transport, communications and Infrastructure, *Inquiry into Possible Uses of the Sixth High Power Television Channel*, September 1992, Canberra, AGPS, 1992; P. White, P. Segal and I. Hoad, *Public Television in Melbourne - The preview Broadcasts*, Melbourne, Open Channel, 1982; Peter Milton, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.131, 10 May 1983, p.384; Peter Baume, *CPD*, Senate, vols.88-889, 30 April 1981, p.1559; PBAA Committee Meeting Minutes, 4-5 December 1981, pp.5-6; Kibby, 'Radio as Communication, p.41.

transfer of political control rather than its abolition altogether. *Ad hoc* decisions were also taken in regard to priorities in the allocation and funding of public broadcasting licences depending on which groups had the strongest political influence. To this extent the Fraser government did not pursue a more coherent public broadcasting policy than the Whitlam government, and continued to exercise considerable control. Chapter Eight will examine the development of one of those political influences on fluctuating government policy, the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia, the original lobby group for all public broadcasters.

CHAPTER EIGHT - INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT - THE PUBLIC BROADCASTING ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA: 1974 - 1990.

After the ABCB had conducted its overall review of broadcasting services, and more particularly, following the McMahon Coalition government's acceptance of the recommendations to introduce public and FM broadcasting in October 1972, both sides of politics acknowledged there was a need to expand broadcasting services in Australia to fulfil the needs of a changing society. Confusion remained as to how this should be achieved, and to what extent the Australian people sought the establishment of public broadcasting as the solution to the problem. Government oscillated between the idea of actually running stations and merely facilitating and regulating independent operators. Aspirant public broadcasters, striving to set up their own stations, realised that the best way to convince any government that there was wide support for the development of a third distinct and separate broadcasting sector was to form themselves into a unified lobby group with definite aims. This chapter will show that the emergence of the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia (PBAA) was public broadcasters' response to this situation and that this organisation was, for a few years, successful in focusing government's attention on their model for overcoming Australia's broadcasting deficiencies, just as the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcasters (FARB) did for commercial broadcasters.

Peter Pockley, who had developed a fairly coherent philosophy of public broadcasting of his own through his submissions to the various inquiries into the subject, recognised that the existing practice of individuals circulating press releases and lobbying government was not an effective way of influencing broadcasting policy. Ministers, government departments and statutory authorities could ignore individuals, but were more likely to respond to significant electoral pressure. Pockley realised that the diverse groups, who aspired to be public broadcasters, needed to present a cohesive face to government, if the new sector was to materialise. He initiated the original attempts to do this, early in 1974, with plans to organise all interested parties into an association. This

body could negotiate and discuss with government and be quoted in the media.¹

There was nothing new or peculiar to public broadcasting about the kind of organisation Pockley had in mind. Harmon Zeigler has argued that interest groups develop with the growth of 'industrial democracies'. Such societies, while they may be economically desirable, lead to social and psychological dislocation, which is normally alleviated by formal organisations. Zeigler has data to show that these organisations are more effective in countries where the population is highly concentrated, like Australia, compared to countries where the population is more dispersed, like the United States.² Certainly, these groups have been an effective part of the political landscape, in Australia, for all of this century.

When Robert Menzies was Prime Minister he expressed his disapproval of such groups and denied his government was influenced by them, but he definitely acknowledged they existed: 'It is the age of pressure groups'.³ Peter Westerway, a Lecturer in Government and Public Administration at the time, argued with Menzies' derision of organisations lobbying government to act in their best interests. For Westerway, this activity was essential to democracy, which he has claimed 'is a system which makes the governors highly responsive to the wishes of the governed'.⁴ Certainly, in recent times some interest groups, such as ACOSS, have almost claimed 'Motherhood' status for their causes compared with profit making private sector interest groups, which

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1. Peter Pockley, Personal Interview at UTS, Sydney, 9 May 1994.
 2. Harmon Zeigler, 'Interest Groups and Public Policy: A Comparative, Revisionist Perspective', R. Scott, ed. *Interest Groups and Public Policy*, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1980, pp.4-5.
 3. Robert Menzies, *Daily Telegraph*, Sydney, 3 November, 1962, cited in Peter Westerway, 'Pressure Groups', J. Wilkes, ed., *Forces in Australian Politics*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1963, p.120.
 4. Peter Westerway, 'Pressure Groups', J. Wilkes, ed., *Forces in Australian Politics*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1963, p.121.

they considered unworthy. Bob Browning has made the point that this attitude is undemocratic and the very opposite of what Westerway was advocating.⁵

Without delving too deeply into a definition of democracy it can be said that, in practice in broadcasting up to this time, the 'governed' had not had a voice. As Geoff Evans has pointed out 'an elite or informal college of policymakers exists, drawn from political parties, the bureaucracy, commercial interests, activist groups and individuals, the media and academics'.⁶ The interaction between all these groups could be very complex.⁷ While there was nothing new about interest groups forming into organisations to lobby government for their causes, particularly where the situation was as complicated as it was with broadcasting, there had not been one established for public broadcasting. Pockley displayed an understanding of what was needed during the embryonic phase of the new sector.

He formed an organising committee with Keith Conlon from the existing station VL5UV, at Adelaide University, and Trevor Jarvie, Secretary of the Music Broadcasting Society of NSW and arranged for Cyril Renwick, one of the two commissioners who had conducted the Independent Inquiry into FM Broadcasting earlier in the year, to chair an independent seminar on public broadcasting. A national association of interested parties was to be formed at this seminar.⁸ In choosing his

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5. Bob Browning, '"Interest Groups" and Public Policy', *Australia and World Affairs*, no.12, Autumn 1992, p.15.
 6. Geoff Evans, 'Communications Policy in Australia: Pragmatic Planning and Ad Hoc Decision Making', P. Edgar and S. Rahim, eds, *Communication Policy in Developed Countries*, Melbourne, Kegan Paul International, 1983, p.218.
 7. Elizabeth More, 'Australian Communications Policy: An Interest Group/Organisational Perspective', *Media Information Australia*, no.60, May 1991, p.48.
 8. Peter Pockley, 'Press Statement - Plans for "Public Co-operative" for FM Radio', cited as Attachment 'A' of B. Ramsden, Paper by Community Radio Federation

co-organisers and Chairman, Pockley, who was himself an academic and broadcaster, selected people of some standing in the community, who would command the respect of government. When lobbying members of the government Pockley always dressed conservatively, 'probably wearing my Oxford tie', because he felt the personal impression created was extremely important.⁹ This early attitude set the tone for the type of people who became influential once a national body was founded. Andrew Bear's assessment that public broadcasting was a 'grass roots' movement, a 'push from the people' is certainly not true of the public broadcasters who helped mould the government into accepting public broadcasting as a desirable way of expanding Australia's limited broadcasting services.¹⁰

Unfortunately for Pockley, the date he chose for his seminar was 18 May 1974, the same day Whitlam chose for the federal election after the double dissolution of parliament.¹¹ The seminar was postponed. Pockley maintains that as soon as the Labor government was re-installed, Minister for the Media, Doug McClelland and his department decided they wanted the credit for the establishment of public broadcasting and called their own conference for 3-4 July. Because Pockley remained convinced that individuals at such a conference would not carry the same authority as organisations and he was not involved in an interested organisation, he needed to create a group where he

(Melbourne), Paper presented to the Department of the Media Public Radio Broadcasting Conference, Sydney, 3-4 July 1974.

9. Pockley, Interview.
10. Andrew Bear, 'The Emergence of Public Broadcasting in Australia', *Australian Journal of Communication*, no.4, July-December 1983, p.22. By the time Bear wrote this article he was a Communications lecturer at Flinders University in Adelaide and had been the last editor of the now defunct journal of the public broadcasting sector, *Broadcasting Australia*.
11. Peter Pockley, 'Independent Broadcasters Get Organised', Press Statement, 1 June 1974, copy in Evans' Archives.

qualified as a member. A hastily convened meeting at the end of June saw the formation of the Sydney Public Broadcasting Association (SPBA). Pockley was then able to present his paper to the departmental conference as the Secretary of the SPBA.¹² Other people wishing to attend the conference did not have Pockley's problem of needing to create an organisation. In fact, sixteen organisations with an interest in the establishment of public broadcasting were represented at the department's conference. They all remained for an extra two days to attend an independent conference, convened by Pockley, where a federation of these organisations formed the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia (PBAA). This was to be a national body to represent public broadcasting interests from all over Australia with one voice, providing a substantial lobby aiming to mobilise an inert federal government into action.¹³

Although the ideals and aspirations of public broadcasters were many and varied from the beginning, in these early days the desire to secure licences enabled them to bury their differences and work together. Everyone accepted that an elite group of well educated individuals, representing largely the university and fine music broadcasting interests, was most likely to persuade the government that it should give the introduction of public broadcasting licences a higher priority than it had achieved in the first two years of the Labor government. This left those members who were not part of the accepted elite in the PBAA content to stuff envelopes and lick stamps as their contribution for the time being.¹⁴

Accordingly, the newly formed PBAA retained Pockley, representing an

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12. Pockley, Interview; Peter Pockley, 'The Concept and Character of Public Broadcasting', Paper presented to the Department of the Media Public Radio Broadcasting Conference, Sydney, 3-4 July 1974.
 13. P. Manning, L. Foyle, and D. Dale, 'A Chance to Start Again', *New Journalist*, no.15, July-August 1974, p.15.
 14. Frank Scambary, Chairman of Liverpool suburban station, 2GLF-FM, Personal Interview, at Liverpool, Sydney, 2 July 1994.

elitist 'up-market' specialist form of public broadcasting, as its convener. The most pressing concern facing Pockley was the granting of licences for the two music broadcasting societies and the upgrading of VL5UV to a public station. When interviewed Pockley has taken credit for the offer of these licences in September 1974, due to his lobbying the minister on behalf of the PBAA.

But it was when, eventually, Doug McClelland had me down to Canberra and took me for a walk in the Rose Garden around Parliament House that I knew we'd begun to win. We chatted about things, and that was just plain straight hard nosed political lobbying, with a very assertive use of the media. There were key journalists, of whom Graham Williams can take great credit by being the one who, most consistently, wrote about it, in the *Australian* and made them sit up and take notice. There were others, but our ideas were of high quality and I think our commitment showed through, and eventually, we got somewhere.¹⁵

However, as people often exaggerate their past achievements when they are interviewed later, Pockley may have taken more credit than was warranted for the effect of his walk around the Rose Garden with the Minister. He was definitely not the only member of the PBAA involved. Professor Neil Runcie, Chairman and Michael Law, Board member of the NSW Broadcasting Society also made at least one trip to Canberra to lobby McClelland for these licences.¹⁶ But, even if he has overstated his own contribution, the result was still consistent with Pockley's assumption that for lobbying to be effective it had to be carried out by educated elite members of the PBAA, whom the government would respect.

Once the first licences were granted and with 2 'restricted commercial' licences being processed and Cass's offer of twelve to tertiary institutions, Pockley saw the three principal tasks of immediate importance for the PBAA as 'the establishment of financial and administrative arrangements, the publication of *Broadcasting Australia*, and

15. Pockley Interview.

16. Neil Runcie, Personal Interview at Centennial Park, Sydney, 9 May 1994.

the establishment of the Broadcasting Legislation Study'.¹⁷ The Broadcasting Legislation Study, headed by Professor Garth Nettheim, a legal expert who was not a member of the PBAA, was constituted in November 1975, to devise credible suggestions for organisational restructuring and legislative amendment to broadcasting generally from the particular point of view of public broadcasters. The aim was to persuade the government to provide basic legal protection for the embryonic new sector, whose stations had been hurriedly licensed under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*. By engaging Nettheim, Pockley was at pains to show that he headed a professional and significant organisation representing public broadcasters. The Study produced notable draft legislation which became part of the PBAA submission to the 'Green' Inquiry.¹⁸

In establishing *Broadcasting Australia* as a journal to publicise the sector's concerns Pockley aimed to do so with the same high standards as Nettheim's Study addressed legislative change. The journal was designed not only to 'develop into a valuable service of information for public broadcasters' but also to convince others of the stature of the new sector.¹⁹ Pockley sent *gratis* copies of the first issue of *Broadcasting Australia*, published in October 1975, to many people he wished to impress.²⁰

17. Peter Pockley, 'Aims of the PBAA', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.1, October 1975, p.2.

18. Peter Pockley, 'Broadcasting Legislation Study - Introductory Notes', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.1, October 1975, p.8; Garth Nettheim, Letter to Fred Green accompanying two papers submitted to the 'Green' Inquiry, 30 June 1976, Evans Archives, with present writer.

19. Peter Pockley, 'Editorial - Public Licences Welcome but More Needed', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.1, October 1975, p.1.

20. See for example, Peter Pockley, Letters to Des Foster, Director of the Federation of Australian Commercial Broadcasters; Jim Spigelman, Secretary, Department of the Media; Myles Wright, Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board,

To accomplish his aim of presenting an elite specialist professional image of an emerging third broadcasting sector that the government would ignore at its peril, Pockley needed money; clearly the PBAA membership fees were insufficient to carry on the class of operation he envisaged. Having worked for the ABC, and believing that a great deal of government money was spent without achieving what he saw as essential ABC functions, Pockley argued that the government should supply funds to public broadcasters to do what the ABC either could not or would not. Initially, he presented submissions to the minister for funds to publish a journal and enable members to travel to national meetings.²¹ In other words, he wanted the government to supply him with enough money to impress the government that he represented a significant organisation. Perhaps Minister McClelland shared this interpretation of Pockley's submissions, for he refused repeated requests for financial assistance. Eventually Pockley persuaded the Film, Television and Radio Board of the Australia Council to grant sufficient funds for administrative and travel purposes and to publish *Broadcasting Australia* in a professional manner.²²

During this time the SPBA set up the Sydney Broadcasting Study Group under Michael Law and Max Keogh to determine the nature and demand for community

6, 22, and 24 October 1975 and Tony Eggleton, Federal Director of the Liberal Party, letter to Peter Pockley, 22 December 1975, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

21. Pockley, 'The Concept and Character of Public Broadcasting', p.6; Peter Pockley, 'Submission to Senate Standing Committee on Education Science and the Arts', July 1973, University of Newcastle Archives A6401, pp.15-16; Peter Pockley, 'Minister for Media Refuses Support for Public Broadcasters', Press Release, 11 August 1974, Evans Archives, with present writer.
22. Government funding is dealt with from the perspective of the sector as a whole in Chapter Eleven.

broadcasting within the Sydney metropolitan area.²³ They identified approximate coverage areas proposed by fourteen locality groups in various stages of preparedness to establish low powered suburban operations in Sydney. This report, finalised in January 1976, was an impressive looking document which added weight to the idea that there was considerable support for the development of public broadcasting.²⁴

Public broadcasters universally championed all these activities, because, with three exceptions, everyone was still waiting for licences and supported any action which could be seen to advance their cause. As a united national lobby group under the leadership of Peter Pockley, the PBAA was, at this stage, still fulfilling its founder's aims of promoting public broadcasting as a specialist professional enterprise capable of overcoming some of the obvious deficiencies in broadcasting in Australia; thus it claimed to be worthy of government attention both for licences and funding. So far, the development of the PBAA had occurred in line with Harmon Zeigler's theory of group leadership. Zeigler has claimed that the power of group leaders is enhanced by the apathy of members and that 'in most cases interest group leaders do not reflect the attitudes of their members'. Members are usually pacified with other benefits, which make their continued membership worthwhile.²⁵ The PBAA membership was content while it appeared that Pockley and his associates had their best interests at heart.

The situation began to change as Cass's offers became licensed stations, and 3CR and 2CT commenced operation. From everyone seeking licences there were now two classes of public broadcasters, those seventeen groups with licences and

23. Michael Law and Max Keogh, with others like Trevor Jarvie who were involved with 2MBS-FM, saw the development of the sector, as a whole, as providing some security for the continued existence of 2MBS-FM. See Trevor Jarvie, Personal Interview at Waverley, Sydney, 27 May 1994.

24. Michael Law, and Max Keogh, *Sydney Broadcasting Study Group: Report on Community Demand for Public Broadcasting within Greater Sydney*, Chatswood, January 1976.

everyone else without. The interests of these two groups did not coincide. Licensed stations became preoccupied with having their experimental licences converted to public broadcasting licences with a proper legislative base to provide them with a secure existence. They were also pushing for translators to increase their coverage areas and sponsorship announcements to increase their revenue. Everyone else was still preoccupied with acquiring a licence of any description.

Furthermore there were many in both these groups who did not subscribe to Pockley's notion of generating an audience among the public by providing a high quality professional product. They were more inclined to support 'access' broadcasting where professionalism was sacrificed to let the community speak. According to Pockley: 'It was a period when the community activists got on top'.²⁶ His assessment is probably correct for, while these ideas were as old as public broadcasting itself. It was only when some of the groups espousing these views became licensed, such as community station 3CR in Melbourne, that the people involved gained enough confidence to push their points of view. The idea of ousting Pockley from the helm because of his specialist minority view of public broadcasting came from Jim Beatson, manager of the first of Cass's stations to commence broadcasting, 4ZZZ-FM in Brisbane. Beatson wanted to broadcast to rock music fans, whom he saw as the uncatered for majority. He was also involved in the 'radical left' of student politics at the University of Queensland in the Bjelke-Petersen era when demonstrations were illegal in Queensland in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Beatson was, therefore, the antithesis of everything Pockley stood for.²⁷ Since the idea was spreading among licensed stations that they should control the PBAA by being its only full members, Beatson was able to eliminate Pockley's influence by supporting a new constitution, defining full members as those groups with licences.

25. Zeigler, 'Interest Groups' pp.11-12.

26. Pockley, Interview.

27. Jarvie, Interview; Jim Beatson, Personal Interview at Monash University, Melbourne, 23 November 1995.

Pockley no longer qualified as a full member.. Furthermore his institution, the University of New South Wales, could not be persuaded to apply to upgrade its station VL2UV in the way the Adelaide University station had done. This would have given him an interest in a licensed station While there were a number of factors which caused Pockley to lose control, Trevor Jarvie laid the blame clearly on Jim Beatson's shoulders. 'It was the game of a "young Turk", who had University political leanings, to do a numbers hatchet game on Peter, most unfairly in my view, picking on certain aspects of what Peter was doing, and not seeing the value that Peter had been.'²⁸

However, the issue was much larger than personal rivalry between Pockley and Beatson. Even though they promoted volunteer participation and community access in their programming, which Pockley had opposed as lacking professionalism, the new University stations all had paid managers. These were highly educated people with a professional interest in the further development of their own stations and the sector as a whole. Previously everyone, whether working towards establishing their own stations, or actively involved in the PBAA at the national level, had given their services voluntarily. Pockley explains his departure from public broadcasting more in terms of the fact that he could not sustain the effort when he did not have the support of his institution, than the particular conflict with Beatson.²⁹ The crucial factor in his demise was probably that Pockley was not even a member, let alone a manager, of any of the licensed stations. Pockley had been a volunteer trying to establish public broadcasting as a professional enterprise; almost a contradictory endeavour. His only official connection with public broadcasting was as a volunteer member with the SPBA and the PBAA. In a sense he became irrelevant once stations started to receive licences and employ paid managers. The first Chairman of the PBAA, elected under the 1976 constitution, was Keith Conlon, one time ABC and commercial

28. Jarvie, Interview.

29. Pockley, Interview.

broadcaster, and now paid manager of 5UV at Adelaide University.³⁰

Although he was not acting in a paid capacity at this stage, Michael Law, who was associated with the licensed station 2MBS-FM, often propounded the rationale behind the new constitution and claimed he had been advised that 'unless licensed stations held the power, the PBAA would not be recognised as a representative of the sector by the Government'.³¹ Aspirants, most of whom had a great deal of respect for Law, were prepared to accept this explanation at the time, even though they felt left out. These avowedly working class volunteers did not feel able to stand up to the confident assertions of Law and the professionals at the University stations.³² There is no evidence that it made any difference to the government whether the PBAA was represented by licensees or aspirants. Pockley had no trouble securing an appointment with Minister McClelland for his walk around the Parliament House Rose Garden, when he did not even represent a particular aspirant. Westerway, who was, by now, Assistant Secretary, Radio, in the Department, has suggested that politicians' decisions are swayed entirely by electoral support, that they dip their 'litmus paper' into people's attitudes, that 'they react to public concerns and they are very good at identifying those public concerns'.³³ If Westerway's observations are correct, whenever the PBAA forced the government to

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30. Marje Prior, 'Public Radio in Australia', draft of uncompleted essay, Bathurst, 5 July 1978, p.50, Evans Archives, with present writer. Personal permission granted to quote from confidential document; Keith Conlon, letter to Lachlan Shaw, Director, Film, Radio and Television Board of the Australia Council, 11 August 1976, CBAA Archives, Sydney.
 31. Michael Law, 'The 1980s-Style PBAA - For Whom?', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.7, April 1980, p.4; see also the PBAA Committee Meeting Minutes, 18 February 1978 p.8, CBAA Archives, Sydney.
 32. Scambary, Interview; Dorothy Broadhead, Secretary, Concord suburban station 2RDJ-FM, Personal Interview at Concord, Sydney, 27 August 1994.
 33. Peter Westerway, Personal Interview at Manly, Sydney, 3 February 1997.

accept that there was sufficient electoral support for the expansion of public broadcasting, public broadcasting would expand whether the individuals making the representations came from licensed stations or aspirant groups.

The licensed stations were determined to overawe the aspirants with their argument because they wanted to retain the power to persuade the government that the most pressing matters to be addressed for public broadcasters were the improvements needed to make existing stations more viable rather than licensing more stations. They justified this on the grounds that licensed stations were contributing over 80% of the PBAA membership fees. To ensure this power balance was enshrined in the new constitution, two votes were given to each licensed station, while aspirant groups received only one vote. Furthermore, if the full members were unanimous in a decision they could not be outvoted by the aspirant groups, no matter how many of them were against it. There was even a suggestion in 1980, put forward by 2MBS-FM, that the PBAA should be exclusively for licensed stations and that aspirants should be excluded and form their own separate association.³⁴ At this stage, common sense prevailed and aspirants remained members of the PBAA for it would have been politically inadvisable to do otherwise as fragmentation of any description would reduce effectiveness.

Nevertheless, a 'them' and 'us' attitude was always just beneath the surface once the 1976 constitution was instituted. Early in 1978, in an effort to have aspirant interests represented on the PBAA committee, the NSW Public Broadcasting Association (NSWPBA)³⁵ unsuccessfully put the case for regional associations to be represented on the PBAA.³⁶ When this suggestion was raised again, at the PBAA

34. Law, 'The 1980's style PBAA - For Whom?', p.4.

35. Previously the SPBA.

36. PBAA, Committee Meeting Minutes, 18 February 1978, p.8, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

Annual Conference in 1981, it was still not adopted.³⁷ The voting arrangements at the conference more or less ensured this result.

The Annual Conference in 1979 was the only occasion when the membership was sufficiently persuaded that more emphasis should be placed on gaining licences for low powered community groups. Frank Scambary, from the Sydney suburban aspirant group at Liverpool, was elected to the PBAA committee.³⁸ However, once there, Scambary was a voice in the wilderness because 'people have their own barrow to push making things a little easier for themselves, relaxing Sponsorship, things like that it wasn't a really successful thing. I never enjoyed it and I never felt that I got anything out of it'.³⁹ Scambary was not re-elected the following year and the PBAA Committee continued to be dominated by licensed full members.⁴⁰ Scambary was prepared to concede that the domination was not only because of the voting arrangements. 'It always seemed to me that the PBAA was heavily slanted towards the University and CAE stations, because they had people that were articulate, they had the means of disseminating information, they had photocopiers, probably even computers, and all the rest of it'.⁴¹ He agreed that this control was made easier by the fact that the licensed stations also had paid staff, while the people involved with the aspirants were mostly working full time, giving their spare time to their own stations and having nothing left to give to the PBAA.

This ascendancy of the licensed stations within the PBAA was reflected in

37. PBAA, Annual Conference, 28-30 August 1981, Final Plenary Resolutions, p.1, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

38. PBAA, Annual General Meeting Minutes, 13 October 1979, p.3, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

39. Scambary, Interview.

40. PBAA, Annual General Meeting Minutes, 30 August 1980, pp.2,5, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

41. Scambary, Interview.

the progress the association made with the government for developments in the sector, particularly during the time Tony Staley was minister. Staley's first task was to finalise the guidelines, begun by his predecessor, to introduce proper public broadcasting licences and regulate the new sector. The final version of the guidelines took into account all the PBAA's original objections, with Michael Law working closely with departmental officers.⁴² Law now filled the role previously performed by Pockley and, like Pockley, was part of the conservative elite. Law also believed that dress was as important as ideas in effective approaches to government. 'If you are going to see Fred Green, who is a very senior bureaucrat, close to retirement, it is a pretty good idea not to go along in blue jeans and sandals. It is quite surprising that the language of dress matters.'⁴³ But unlike Pockley, Law was the Chairman of a licensed station, 2MBS-FM, and from May 1978, the part time paid Executive Director of the PBAA, whose full members were all licensed stations.'⁴⁴ Even when he paid lip service to the interests of aspirants his main thrust in lobbying politicians and bureaucrats was for the benefit of the elite.⁴⁵ Law's continued commitment to the powerful members of the PBAA is clearly demonstrated by what he persuaded the government to accomplish. A batch of proper

42. Caroline Graham, 'Public Broadcasting, Dissent and the State', *Media Papers no.3*, Sydney, Media Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, NSWIT, 1980, p.17; Michael Law, 'Media Diplomacy', Proceedings of the Ethnic Public Broadcasting Seminar, Adelaide, 6-7 October 1979, p.28, copy in CBAA Archives, Sydney.

43. *ibid.*

44. PBAA Committee Meeting Minutes, 21 May 1978, CBAA Archives, Sydney; When Law's term as Chairman of 2MBS-FM ended in 1979 he ceased being officially involved with any individual station. See Margaret Jovanovic interview of Michael Law, Sydney, 16 March 1988, copy of tape with present writer.

45. For an example of this lip service see Law, 'The 1980s-Style PBAA - For Whom?', p.4.

public broadcasting licences was issued under the *Broadcasting and Television Act*, including all those stations that had previously held experimental licences under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*. While Staley was minister hardly any more licences were issued. The only further substantial action for public broadcasters was that, towards the end of Staley's term, regulations were laid down for existing stations to use sponsorship as a means of increasing revenue and stations in difficult terrain were allowed to install translator stations to reach more people in their service areas. Both of these measures benefited licensees and were useless to those still waiting to be licensed. As the government itself had no clear policy on whether it was more important to improve the situation for licensees or licence more stations it accepted the concerns expressed by the PBAA's Michael Law, as being an accurate 'litmus' test of the interests of all public broadcasters. The government had little alternative as it was not aware of how inaccurate this was since no-one was lobbying on behalf of the aspirants' best interests.

Besides, dissension within the membership of the PBAA was sufficiently muted for a number of years that those connected with the controlling elite could convince themselves it did not exist. In 1979, Andrew Bear, lecturer in Communications at Flinders University in Adelaide and later editor of *Broadcasting Australia*, typified this attitude. 'From these modest and rather unpropitious beginnings, the PBAA grew rapidly in strength and influence. It was intended as a national body which could speak for the whole public broadcasting movement - hence the group rather than individual membership. In this it was successful: it soon became the equivalent for public broadcasting of the Federation of Australian Commercial Broadcasters.'⁴⁶ Furthermore support for the conservative elite grew as the PBAA secretariat itself grew. It was when licensed stations started paying substantial membership fees and some monies could be diverted from the Australian Film Commission (AFC) grant that the PBAA was able to

46. Andrew Bear, 'Public Broadcasting in Australia', *Studies in Continuing Education*, no.2, 1979, p.18.

establish a secretariat with Michael Law as part time Executive Director.⁴⁷

Once the secretariat was paid it became a snowballing institution in itself, lobbying the government for more funds for its own activities, eventually having a maximum of eleven full time paid employees by the end of the decade. The professionals of the secretariat and the professionals managing some of the larger stations became quite a power clique, very much looking after their own interests. They could be categorised as part of what Bob Browning has classified as the 'New Class', a 'new middle class' occupied in the production and distribution of symbolic knowledge, in contrast to the 'old middle class', occupied in the production and distribution of material goods and services. Browning has pointed out that many of the organisations controlled by this 'New Class' 'emanate from the Whitlam Time for Change era'. Browning continued: 'During and after that period an increasing number of voluntary organizations(sic) were taken over by similar self-styled reformist groups and new ones created, generally with government financial and other assistance'.⁴⁸ Browning concluded that the members of the 'New Class' who controlled these organisations 'had a monopoly or near monopoly of the organized(sic) public voice to government' on the key issues that the organisations represented.⁴⁹ The fact that what was happening in public broadcasting was part of a trend in the larger community did nothing to re-establish the harmony which had existed in the early days of the PBAA, or give the aspirant groups an avenue to voice their own concerns.

Even by the time Bear was editor of *Broadcasting Australia* he was forced to acknowledge that the early unity within the PBAA had dissipated and that the situation had changed from Pockley's time. Two articles, in particular, elucidated the

47. PBAA, Minutes of Committee telephone Meeting, 13 February 1979, p.3, CBAA Archives, Sydney. The AFC had taken over the government funding initially provided by the Film, Television and Radio Board of the Australia Council.

48. Browning, "Interest Groups", pp.16-17.

49. *ibid.*

problem precisely, but offered no satisfactory solution. In the first article Bear pointed out that an increasing number of special interest public broadcasters were demanding their own conferences and were contemplating breaking away from the PBAA as it was incapable of meeting their needs. He explained that the stations licensed since 1978 had been unable to secure representation on the Executive and some were ignorant of the workings of the organisation. Bear continued: 'One question overheard at the conference was: "How many government appointees are there on the PBAA Executive?" Another, in response to the raised affiliation fees was: "They have got to be joking" - "they" clearly being regarded as distant, irrelevant, suspect.' Bear concluded that the stations and PBAA could not afford a 'them' and 'us' division.⁵⁰ However, he offered no answer to the problem and in a second article, over a year later, he reported that the problem remained:

In a system which is still dominated by personalities, they [the newcomers] have difficulty in knowing who can best represent their interests, or even in knowing what their interests actually are. At the same time, as the PBAA expands its range of activities, established stations with clearly defined interests are beginning to feel that 'their' organisation is letting them down by concentrating on new problems which simply did not exist when they came to air. The recent controversy caused by 2MBS is ample evidence of this.⁵¹

Eventually the inevitable happened and groups with specific philosophies and interests splintered off and formed their own organisations, leaving the elite members still dominating the PBAA, but it was a less effective PBAA because the government was now aware that it no longer represented public broadcasters as a whole.

50. Andrew Bear, and Anne Wildy, 'Broadcasting Australia is Back!', *Broadcasting Australia*, no. 6, October 1980, p.2.

51. Andrew Bear, and Anne Wildy, 'PBAA- Another Year That Was', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.8, November 1981, pp.2-3.

November 1984 saw the first spate of resignations from the PBAA. Ethnic broadcasters generally had become very angry with those in control of the PBAA, who ignored the pleas that a proportion of government funding assigned to ethnic broadcasting should actually be used to produce ethnic programs and not be swallowed up as general funding by the stations who broadcast these programs. It was unwise of the PBAA Committee to maintain their all powerful elitist attitude, for ethnic groups within the community as a whole had discovered they were quite an influential lobby group with government, in their own right. While ethnic public broadcasters were aware of the government's growing attention to ethnic issues and its new policy of 'multiculturalism', the influential members of the PBAA appear to have failed to notice these developments.⁵²

Fed up with the situation, all the state ethnic broadcasting councils and individual ethnic broadcasters resigned from the PBAA. Uri Themal's letter of resignation epitomised the feeling, 'an accumulation of dissatisfaction with the manner in which the PBAA treated ethnic broadcasters and their concerns. On occasion we were treated with utter contempt by individuals on the Executive ... within the PBAA we have really no status at all and can influence no decisions'.⁵³

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52. The Federation of Ethnic Community Councils (FECCA) was another of the voluntary organisations Browning claimed to be dominated by the 'New Class', and pushing interests not necessarily in the best interests of the majority of ethnic communities. See Browning, "Interests Groups", p.21. But, partly through FECCA's influence the government developed an interest in ethnic affairs, which led ethnic public broadcasters to assert themselves. See Chapter Ten for a detailed analysis of the development of ethnic public broadcasting.
53. Uri Themal, Letter of resignation from the PBAA as President of the Ethnic Broadcasters' Council of the ACT, 21 November 1984, cited in C. Lawe-Davies, 'History of Australian Multicultural Broadcasting', PhD Thesis, Journalism, Queensland, Draft, 1996, p.160.

Ethnic public broadcasters then formed their own organisation, the National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council, (NEMBC). Under the leadership of Tony Manicaros and Uri Themal increased government funding was obtained for ethnic broadcasters. Much to the chagrin of the PBAA committee and secretariat, who still tried to cling to their earlier power by claiming to represent all public broadcasters, the NEMBC eventually received administrative funding to set up its own secretariat. This became a powerful lobby in its own right and secured far greater funding for ethnic broadcasters than the PBAA was ever able to secure for general public broadcasters. The ethnic public broadcasting voice was very powerful because funding ethnic public broadcasting was cheaper for the government than expanding SBS and the government was committed to the expansion of ethnic broadcasting by the 1980s. With the ethnic communities now aware of their own political strength no government could afford to ignore the call for the increased funding of broadcasting services for ethnic community groups. This remained true even when the Public Broadcasting Foundation (PBF) became the conduit for government funding for ethnic public broadcasting rather than SBS.⁵⁴ The PBAA power brokers continued to display a total ignorance of the growth of the ethnic lobby and the general acceptance of multiculturalism within the community and therefore failed to take this into account in their dealings either with their ethnic members or with the government. They had failed to realise that the ethnic communities' lobby now carried much more weight than the public broadcasting lobby, and that the government would satisfy the demand for an expansion of ethnic broadcasting services in the simplest and cheapest way it was able with no particular regard for the PBAA style of general public broadcasting.

Another split occurred in the PBAA at the 1986 AGM but this was on ideological lines as well as the practical politics of government funding. Again the

54. Tony Manicaros, Personal Interview at the Gold Coast, 30 November 1996; Westerway, Interview; Lawe-Davies, 'History', pp.150-165.

arrogance of the PBAA committee was apparent as it was not listening to all its members. In 1978 Michael Law had accepted the notion on behalf of PBAA members, that public broadcasting would be 'complementary and supplementary and not seek to compete with existing services'.⁵⁵ Law made this concession in order to appease the commercial stations. But, as Communications scholar John Tebbutt has pointed out, the 'radical elements' of the public broadcasting movement had never been happy with this arrangement.⁵⁶ Amendments to the *Broadcasting and Television Act* as a result of the 'Green' Report, were also seen to describe public broadcasting as 'special purpose' rather than 'access' broadcasting. All this was interpreted as the government's desire to keep public broadcasting under strict control. Five stations, whose members held these sorts of views, wished to change the organisation of the PBAA.⁵⁷ They felt they were not being adequately represented, quit the PBAA and formed the Progressive Radio Association (PRA).⁵⁸ However Tebbutt was wrong to assume that this was the 'grassroots' movement asserting itself. It did not include any of the low powered community stations run by avowedly working class volunteers, like Frank Scamarcy. Three of the stations involved were part of 'Cass's Dozen', stations associated with educational institutions. This split among public broadcasters was caused by an intellectual argument, along political lines, among members of the PBAA elite.⁵⁹ Marj

55. Michael Law, 'Public Broadcasting: Where Is It Going and Will It Get There?', *Media Information Australia*, no.41, August 1986, pp.31-35.

56. John Tebbutt, 'Constructing Broadcasting for the Public', H. Wilson, ed., *Australian Communications and the Public Sphere*, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1989, p.145.

57. They were 2RSR-FM, 2XX, 3CR, 3RRR-FM and 4ZZZ-FM, the last three being among the most widely listened to public stations.

58. *ibid.*, p.143.

59. Steve Brook, 'Public Radio in Context', *PBAA Public Forum*, July 1988, p.8, copy with present writer.

Kibby, who was studying 2XX at the time, summed up the members of the PRA as being 'committed to the counter-hegemonic function of public broadcasting ... [presenting] ... implicitly radical programming'.⁶⁰

Kibby also related this whole controversy to the specific question of who should control funding of aboriginal broadcasting. The latter part of the argument was similar to that about the funding of ethnic broadcasting, except that there was never the same distinct walk-out of aboriginal broadcasters from the PBAA. Aboriginal broadcasters had held their first national conference late in 1981 and formed the National Aboriginal and Islander Broadcasting Association (NAIBA). The conference was organised by the Central Australia Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) in its home town of Alice Springs with representatives from DOC, DAA, the PBAA and the ABC. NAIBA was originally more concerned with programming and the differences with the PBAA only emerged later.⁶¹ By the late 1980s, when aborigines had also discovered they had a significant political voice in the electorate as a whole, there was as much hostility between some aboriginal broadcasters and the PBAA as there was with ethnic broadcasters. The PBF had taken over aboriginal funding from SBS a year before it did for ethnic broadcasting.⁶²

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60. Marj Kibby, 'Radio as Communication: Public Broadcasting in Australia', MA (Hons) Thesis, Macquarie, 1988, p.117.
61. Michael Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report, 1981-1982, 15 August 1982, p.5, CBAA Archives, Sydney; "Good CAAMA: Aboriginal Radio in Alice", *Listening Post*, no.31, April 1982, p.24.
62. Helen Molnar, 'The Democratisation of Communications Technology in Australia and the South Pacific: Media Participation by Indigenous Peoples 1970-1992', PhD Thesis, Monash, 1993, p.426; Xavier Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia, The Role of Broadcasting, - Synopsis and Summary of Recommendations*, Report of the Committee of Review of the Special Broadcasting Service, Canberra, AGPS, December 1984, Appendix p.16.

A rift also developed between the Radio for the Print Handicapped (RPH) services and the PBAA. DOC had asked the Australian Council for Radio for the Print Handicapped to draft criteria for defining these stations. The dispute arose with proposals to locate the stations on the AM band. These stations had previously operated just off the AM band, requiring either a special or an adjusted receiver. The PBAA saw this change as a threat to the viability of existing public stations.⁶³ RPH received its first government funding in 1981 as a grant for the International Year for the Disabled.⁶⁴ Direct RPH funding, through the PBF, became an annual event.

No particular splinter group was pivotal in undermining the effectiveness of the PBAA as the lobby group, which claimed to represent all public broadcasters. Any split induced fragmentation as the PBAA realised and in her 1989 PBAA Executive Director's Report, Ada Hulshoff noted 'the PBAA still regrets this situation and continues reconciliation efforts'.⁶⁵ She was referring to the PRA, but the comment applied equally to the other groups. By the end of the 1980s legislation for the development of the sector was largely in place. The remaining issues were mainly funding based. However, the PBAA no longer spoke for all public broadcasters, with ethnic, aboriginal and RPH broadcasters all seeking and receiving their own government funding allocations. What was worse for the PBAA was that these other organisations were perceived by government to have far more electoral significance than general public broadcasting and received far greater funding.⁶⁶

Thus, the very foundations upon which Peter Pockley established the

63. Michael Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report, 1981-1982, p.5.

64. Thomas King, "Radio stations with a Vision", *Electronics Australia*, Vol.51, no.6, June 1989, p.14.

65. Ada Hulshoff, Executive Director's Report, PBAA Annual Report 1988-1989, p.4, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

66. The government's point of view on these changes in funding allocations is dealt with in Chapter Eleven.

PBAA, as an elite lobby group winning the respect and support of government as representing the whole sector of public broadcasting, eventually became its downfall. That original group who controlled the PBAA failed to notice a number of developments. Albert Moran's explanation for why the government failed to give adequate support to general public broadcasting is deficient. Moran claimed that 'the attitude of the government and its agencies is to ignore such evidence of financial crisis in favour of a rhetoric that because the sector is growing in station numbers, community radio is prospering'.⁶⁷ Moran overlooked a fundamental factor in the situation.

As the sector grew it became more diverse and the diverse groups developed separate identities and effective sophisticated lobbying methods of their own. The government became aware of and began to listen to these groups as they developed electoral significance. It had no particular commitment to the PBAA style of public broadcasting. As Peter Westerway has pointed out, by the late 1980s, ethnic communities, aborigines and disabled people, were 'flavour of the month' with the government.⁶⁸ Funding became available for a wide variety of activities for these groups, including public broadcasting.

The PBAA Executive, which had not kept pace with these general shifts in community attitudes, learnt this to its cost. Once the government became aware of the fragmentation within the sector it was never again persuaded that the PBAA spoke for all, or even the most electorally significant, public broadcasters. Peter Pockley's original vision of a small, conservative educated elite, representing all public broadcasters to government, through the PBAA, was lost. Another area within the sector which was reduced in importance as the government realised it had little electoral significance was educational public broadcasting. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

67. Albert Moran, 'Multiplying Minorities: The Case of Community Radio', J. Craik, J. J. Bailey, and A. Moran, eds, *Public Voices, Private Interests - Australia's Media Policy*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1995, p.157.

68. Westerway, Interview.

CHAPTER NINE - EDUCATIONAL PUBLIC BROADCASTING - A FAILURE?

Education has always been accepted as one of the public service functions of broadcasting. Like motherhood, it has been a highly commendable idea to governments of all political persuasions, both in Australia and elsewhere although it was never defined. As education assumed greater importance for the advancement of the economy and society after the Second World War, both educators and governments explored the possibilities of a larger role for broadcasting, including educational public broadcasting, in this endeavour. However, although education was an important issue from time to time, educational public broadcasting was never going to win votes in elections. As a result the government abandoned the concept when faced with financial difficulties and the failure of the implementation of the idea. This chapter considers the government's ideal of educational broadcasting and how this ideal was thwarted by political realities and the confusion that arose as education came to be accepted more as a whole of life activity rather than a preparation for life.

Some of the earliest broadcasting in the world was from universities in the USA, with the University of Ohio commencing in 1912,¹ and the first broadcast purporting to be educational emanating from the University of Wisconsin in 1917.² However, educational broadcasting in the USA had a chequered existence. Of 202 licences granted to educational radio stations in colleges and public schools only twenty five were still operational by 1944.³ There was a resurgence after the 1967 Public Broadcasting Act when the importance of non-commercial educational radio was finally

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1. Andrew Greig, 'Radio in Education - with particular reference to its use in the education of adults and to the development of Sydney Public Radio Station 2SER FM', MA (Education)(Pass), a long essay, Sydney, 1981, p.5.
 2. Keith Jackson, 'Education, Technology and the Role of Radio', Paper presented to the Educational Radio in Australian Public Broadcasting Conference held by the PBAA 19 May 1984, copy with present writer.
 3. Greig, 'Radio in Education', pp.6, 27.

recognised and some federal government funding became available.⁴ These later developments provided a model for the Australian government.

There was more consistency in Britain. As early as 1924, John Reith, first Director General of the BBC, was committed to what he saw as the educative role of all broadcasting and considered it difficult to draw the line between what was entertaining and what was educational in programming generally. Specifically educational programs, schools broadcasts, commenced experimentally in 1924 and were well established by the end of 1926.⁵ In 1969 Jennie Lee set up the Open University, which replaced an earlier University of the Air. Keith Jackson has argued that this catered not for those working class people who would not normally go to university but rather for the middle class elite who were simply too busy to attend campus. Open University soon expanded to 64,000 students.⁶ This also later provided a model which was considered in Australia.

In New Zealand regulations were introduced in 1923 which required broadcasting to be 'of an educative or entertaining character'.⁷ When the government took over all broadcasting it copied the British model and Professor Shelley who was appointed to run it was imbued with Reith's BBC educational values. Helen Wilson has contended that broadcasting in New Zealand became an arm of the arts and literature in the 1930s.⁸ In spite of the strong general education purpose of broadcasting, formal

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4. Robert Hilliard, 'History and Regulation', R. Hilliard, ed., *Radio Broadcasting - An Introduction to the Sound Medium*, New York, Longman, 1985, p.25.
 5. Asa Briggs, *A History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, vol.1, London, OUP, 1961, pp.7-8, 250-251, 253-256, 262.
 6. Jackson, 'Education, Technology and the Role of Radio', pp.10, 23.
 7. R. J. Gregory, *Politics and Broadcasting - Before and Beyond the NZBC*, Palmerston North, Dunmore Press, 1985, p.16.
 8. Brian Pauling and Helen Wilson, 'Conclusion', H. Wilson, ed., *The Radio Book 1994*, Christchurch, New Zealand Broadcasting School Christchurch Polytechnic, 1994, p.198.

educational broadcasting did not receive a heavy emphasis. Radio New Zealand did develop a Continuing Education Unit in the 1980s.⁹ Six universities received licences but these were used for student associations to run FM music stations rather than broadcasting educational material. They were also Short Term Broadcasting (STB) which meant licences were only authorised for twenty eight days, although consecutive renewals were granted to allow broadcasting throughout the student year.¹⁰ In 1986 the Christchurch Polytechnic successfully applied for a similar licence for its Radio School to use to train students. This was education in as much as the station was used in a laboratory function, rather than the programming being of an educational nature.¹¹ Some stations in tertiary institutions in Australia later took on this function.

In Canada, as early as 1929, the Royal Commission saw broadcasting as having an educational function. Marc Raboy has claimed this was partly to promote nationalism which was seen as essential if Canada was to maintain a separate cultural identity from the USA. It was also partly because the Canadian government sought to follow the British model of public service broadcasting. This was reinforced when the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) was set up on 1932. Because Canada sought to follow the British model broadcasting by educational institutions was not as important in Canada as it was in the USA. Nevertheless, in 1972 the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) licensed radio services in a small number

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9. Brian Pauling, '70 Years of Radio - An Overview', H. Wilson, ed., *The Radio Book 1994*, Christchurch, New Zealand Broadcasting School Christchurch Polytechnic, 1994, p.20.
 10. Helen Wilson, 'The Non-profit Sector', H. Wilson, ed., *The Radio Book 1994*, Christchurch, New Zealand Broadcasting School Christchurch Polytechnic, 1994, p.131; Donald R. Browne, *What's Local About Local Radio? A Cross-National Comparative Study*, London, International Institute of Communications, 1988, pp.78-79.
 11. Wilson, 'The Non-profit Sector', pp.118-119.

of educational institutions, but these were not devoted to educational programming and included material intended for communities in the area.¹²

In Australia, from its inception, broadcasting was inextricably linked to the concept of education. Since it was a combination of the commercial system of the USA and the national system of Britain it was neither as erratic as the former nor as consistent as the latter. When Emil Voigt set up the commercial station, 2KY, on behalf of the NSW Trades and Labor Council in 1925, it was his intention that it should provide 'a programme of working-class education - all delivered to workers in the comfort of their homes'.¹³ A. Bennett and the Theosophical Society, which owned 2GB, claimed their station was devoted to educational work. In speaking to the Royal Commission on Wireless in 1927, Voigt, Bennett and Ernest Fisk of AWA, all emphasised the increased future educational potential of the medium.¹⁴ However, commercial radio needed to attract mass audiences to satisfy its advertisers' demands. To do this it was vital to entertain rather than educate. By 1934 2KY, in a simple desire to survive as a commercial broadcaster, had embraced this type of programming to the extent that it broadcast the races. Lesley Johnson has asserted that it had abandoned the idea of speaking to its listeners as workers in need of education, and was now speaking to them

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12. Marc Raboy, 'Canada: The Hybridization of Public Broadcasting', M. Raboy, ed., *Public Broadcasting for the 21st Century*, Luton, ULP, 1995, pp.104-105; CRTC, *FM radio in Canada: A policy to ensure a varied and comprehensive radio service*, 20 January 1975, p.2; Peter Lewis and Jerry Booth, *The Invisible Medium - Public Commercial and Community Radio*, London, Macmillan Education, 1989, p.124.
 13. Lesley Johnson, *The Unseen Voice, A cultural study of early Australian Radio*, Routledge, London, 1988.
 14. Lesley Johnson, 'Radio as Popular Education', *Labour History*, no.45, November 1983, pp.71-72.

solely as consumers, who purchased the advertisers' products and services.¹⁵

From the beginning the Australian government embraced Reith's notion for national broadcasting. Even before it was taken over by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Australian Broadcasting Company endeavoured to emulate the BBC's educational emphasis in its programming.¹⁶ It appointed a 'lectures manager' who directed talks on a range of subjects. The first openly educational programmes were broadcast in 1930, when the Sydney University Extension Board arranged a six months series of lectures on topics including Aborigines and Australian literature. The first programmes for schools were on 3AR in 1931.¹⁷

When the government set up the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) in 1932, the BBC was embraced as a model and the legislation required the ABC to uplift the educational standards of the community. Similarly to New Zealand, the Chairman in the mid 1930s, W. J. Cleary, was dedicated to Reith's concept.¹⁸ Although there was strong support for this style of broadcasting from the elite in the cities, Johnson has revealed there were also many complaints, particularly from people in regional and rural areas, who could pick up no other stations. These complaints tended to take the form of letters to the *Wireless Weekly* and included the claim that the ABC was encouraging children in 'affectation and snobbery',¹⁹ Many listeners were very hostile to 'education' for either themselves or their children. Johnson cites one letter of complaint which exemplified this attitude:

I, as an Australian, object to having education crammed down

15. *ibid.*, p.78.

16. Ken Inglis, *This is the ABC - The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983*, Melbourne, MUP, 1983, p.12.

17. *ibid.*, pp.14-15.

18. Lesley Johnson, "'SING 'EM MUCK CLARA", High Brow Versus Low Brow On Early Australian Radio', *Meanjin*, vol.41, no.2, June 1982, p.211.

19. Johnson, 'Radio as Popular Education', p.75.

my throat by supercilious committees and art connoisseurs. In plain Australian, I don't want to be educated. I want the news and wireless features that please me.²⁰

Naturally, the Postmaster-General (PMG), who was almost always a member of the Country Party when the Coalition was in government, did not encourage the ABC to follow the BBC model slavishly. In the cities also, the ABC's programming was modified, at least to some extent, by the necessity of competing with all the commercial stations. It could not follow the BBC model entirely because, unlike New Zealand, it did not have what Reith had described as 'the brute force of monopoly'.²¹ Thus the demand, by educators and others, for a third ABC radio network to concentrate on high level cultural and educational programs, ever since the early post war years, did not have sufficient electoral support and was ignored by government.²² Some of the problems in deciding the nature of the ABC's programming had arisen from the fact that the legislation creating the Commission had not defined what educational radio was, nor what it should try to do.

After the Second World War there were two reasons for governments to encourage the development of tertiary education. In the first instance, those coming out of the armed forces needed to be retrained. Furthermore, it was soon realised that if the population was to continue to grow and industry was to expand Australia would need 'a home-grown professional class'.²³ Federal government funding initially provided grants for veterans to attend tertiary institutions but this was soon extended to other students.

20. *ibid.*, p.77.

21. Ken Inglis, *The Beginnings of Radio in Australia - 5th Stirling Memorial Lecture*, Adelaide, Department of Continuing Education, University of Adelaide, 1980.

22. Lascelles Wilson, 'The Mass Media and Adult Education', D. Whitelock, ed., *Adult Education in Australia*, Sydney, Pergamon, 1970, p.150.

23. Geoffrey Bolton, *The Middle Way, The Oxford History of Australia - Volume 5 1942-1988*, Melbourne, OUP, 1990, p.33.

The final act of the Labor government's Department of Postwar Reconstruction was the establishment of the Australian National University (ANU) in 1947.²⁴ Under the following Menzies government a number of new institutions were established, the first of these being the University of NSW, originally set up in 1949 as the NSW Institute of Technology.²⁵ Menzies was personally enthusiastic about tertiary education and, being concerned that the demand for places in institutions could not be met, commissioned an inquiry in 1957. The resultant Murray Report concluded that state government funding to universities had been inadequate. The federal government would have to become increasingly involved in this area.²⁶ It could afford to do this in a buoyant economy. In 1959, the Australian Universities Commission (AUC) was established as a permanent statutory body to advise the federal government on grants to the states for universities on a triennial basis.²⁷ This arrangement, which provided a reasonably secure financial situation, lasted until the Whitlam government suspended triennial funding for the

24. Gough Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government 1972-1975*, Melbourne, Penguin, 1985, p.292.

25. Derek Broadbent, 'Radio and television in universities in New South Wales', D. C. B. Teather, ed., *Towards the Community University*, London, Kogan Page, 1982, pp.123,141.

26. Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government*, p.294; Bolton, *The Middle Way*, pp.117, 161; Bolton has claimed that university education was one of the few issues Menzies was really enthusiastic about and that university administrators were aware of his enthusiasm.

27. Davey, P. 'Financing of Education', Scotton, R. B. and Ferber, H. eds, *Public Expenditure and Social Policy in Australia*, Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1978, vol.1, p.51.

tertiary sector in 1975.²⁸

Encouraged by Menzies' enthusiasm for and encouragement of the expansion and funding of tertiary education and motivated by a desire to enhance the images of their own institutions *vis a vis* the more established universities, some of the educators in these new institutions contemplated diversifying their activities, running innovative courses and introducing broadcasting services.²⁹ Academics, including Neil Runcie, Peter Pockley and Jim Warburton, and politicians, such as Roger Dean, were beginning to bring back ideas from Britain and the USA, where different forms of educational broadcasting were already flourishing.³⁰ Some of these ideas included broader concepts of education and envisaged a larger role for the institutions within their communities.

However the first academic to put a concrete proposal to government had a very narrow and traditional educational purpose in mind. Professor Derek Broadbent sought both a licence and funding on behalf of the Division of Postgraduate Extension Studies at the University of NSW. Broadbent applied to broadcast spoken word course-work programs to postgraduate students. He has claimed that part of the rationale for this proposal was that with an acute shortage of staff, one lecturer could speak to many hundreds of students and with an acute shortage of accommodation, there was no need to provide lecture theatres for very large classes. The government was supportive of this

28. Keith Conlon, 'The Expectations of Tertiary Institutions - A Personal View', paper presented to PBAA Educational Radio Conference 18 May 1984, p.1, copy with present writer.

29. Broadbent, 'Radio and television', p.124.

30. Neil Runcie, Personal Interview at Centennial Park, Sydney 9th May 1994; Peter Pockley, Personal Interview at UTS, Sydney, 9th May 1994; Jim Warburton, *A University Adult Educator Looks Back - 9th Stirling Memorial Lecture*, Adelaide, Department of Continuing Education, University of Adelaide, 1984, pp.9-10; Roger Dean, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol. 37, 6 November 1962, p.2058.

type of educational broadcasting and Broadbent received a Special Grant of £13,500 from the AUC and a special licence issued by the PMG under the *Wireless and Telegraphy Act* just off the AM band which severely restricted both the transmission power and the type of programming allowed. A special receiver was required to pick up these broadcasts. This type of licence was necessary because a licence could not be issued under the *Broadcasting and Television Act*, which only covered commercial broadcasting. Although the use Broadbent proposed for his broadcasts was narrow from the education point of view, the non-ABC, non-commercial licence the government issued under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* was the first of its kind. Such an innovation showed how supportive the government was of this proposal. The University commenced broadcasting in May 1961. Broadbent made no attempt to expand the station into any other form of broadcasting either in program content or audience reach.³¹ It remained educational in the traditional formal sense. However, the issuing of this special purpose educational licence, under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*, set a precedent to be pursued later by educational broadcasters and politicians who wanted to introduce broader ideas, already implemented overseas, both in the concept of educational broadcasting and in the roles their institutions played within their own communities.³²

During the 1960s and early 1970s student bodies, at a number of the newer institutions, set up various broadcasting and broadcasting-like activities. Some of these, like 3ST at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), 3SW at Swinburn College of Technology and 3MU at Monash University were simply a speaker system cabled round the campus from a central studio and required no government approval or licence. They were funded by Student Unions and Student Representative Councils.³³

31. Broadbent, 'Radio and television', pp.123-141.

32. Pockley, Interview; Runcie, Interview.

33. 'Notes on stations attending 1975 ACRN Conference - Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology 3ST', *Radio Newsletter*, no.1, June 1976, p.20; John Hedberg,

Others, like Radio UNE at the University of New England (UNE) in Armidale and Radio ANU at the Australian National University in Canberra, were actually broadcasting music, news and information to students, with restricted licences under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*, which permitted a closed loop system with micro-transmitters which could only be heard in the precincts of the campus and residential colleges.³⁴ By June 1976, there were twenty four student radio groups around the country.³⁵ Although most of these aimed to entertain the students and their only connection with education was that they served the needs of tertiary students, they did give the hierarchies of their institutions some appreciation of the potential of this type of broadcasting. Some of the stations were sufficiently developed that they were offered licences in 1975, when Minister of the Media, Moss Cass was determined to expand public broadcasting.

Another wave of government enthusiasm for the advancement of educational opportunities came with the arrival of the Whitlam Labor government, which had made education a central part of its electoral campaign in 1972.³⁶ In reflection, Whitlam saw, what he described as 'the transformation of education', as 'the most

'Public Radio Broadcasting and Technological Education - A Proposal for an Educational Radio Station', *Department of the Media - Papers presented to Public Broadcasting Conference 3 and 4 July 1974*, p.5.

34. ABCB, *Twenty-Third Annual Report 1970-1971*, Canberra, AGPS, 1971, p.27; Keith Jackson, 'Community Radio in Armidale', unpublished paper, compiled for 2ARM-FM, Armidale, May 1977, copy with present writer; Marj Kibby, 'Radio as Communication: Public Broadcasting in Australia', MA (Hons) Thesis, Macquarie, 1988, p.92.
35. *Radio Newsletter*, (Newsletter of Australian Union of Students and Australian Campus Radio Association) no.1, June 1976, pp.19-20.
36. Andrew Spaul, 'Education', A. Patience, and B. Head, eds, *From Whitlam to Fraser*, Melbourne, O.U.P., 1979, p.125.

enduring single achievement of my government'.³⁷ He then pointed out that the federal government had assumed full responsibility for tertiary education and abolished student fees at all tertiary institutions.³⁸ Financial support through the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme (TEAS) was introduced for needy students. As a result of this renewed government endorsement of education, a number of new tertiary institutions were established and the number of students increased from almost 180,000 to 237,000 in two years.³⁹ Furthermore, as many tertiary educators returned with overseas experiences in the early 1970s, they became forceful and consistent lobbyists. They used their influence to interest the government in the notion of using broadcasting as a tool in tertiary education, after the style of the Open University which had just commenced in Britain. This focus came from the Minister for Education rather than the Minister for the Media. In 1973, he appointed a committee of the AUC to investigate the possibilities of expanding extra-mural degree courses. One of the arenas to be investigated was the use of broadcasting.⁴⁰

By this time too, tertiary institutions accepted that their roles in society must diversify beyond that of simply providing formal education courses. Informal education for society as a whole was being seen as important as institutions sought to become an integral part of their communities. Broadcasting could play a part in these developments. The Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee (AVCC) made a submission to the Independent Inquiry into FM Broadcasting in 1974. The AVCC acknowledged the role of the universities in the expansion of educating and informing society as a

37. Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government*, p.315.

38. *ibid.*

39. *ibid.*, p.323.

40. ABCB, *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report 1972-1973*, Canberra, AGPS, 1973, pp.32-33; Eric Hall, Deputy Vice Chancellor University of Newcastle and member of the AUC in 1974, Letter from Hobart in lieu of Personal Interview, 8 August 1993.

whole. It recognised growing opportunities to use broadcasting as a tool in this regard and bemoaned the fact that the ABC had not been used to greater effect. This submission did attempt to define what it meant by educational broadcasting as it related to the Vice Chancellors' institutions.⁴¹ Educational broadcasting was divided into five distinct categories: firstly, broadly informative, educative and cultural programs, which included ones where academics might share the excitement and challenge of their research with the public;⁴² secondly, further and continuing education programs, providing courses of study to individuals and groups in the community for general, and not for professional, purposes, which was supported particularly by the University of Adelaide, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, the University of Western Australia and the University of Newcastle;⁴³ thirdly, 'Campus Radio' similar to that already operating at UNE and ANU; fourthly, course-oriented radio programs for undergraduates, currently being examined by the AUC committee and claimed to be as effective as teaching by print and much cheaper than adequate lecturers and theatres to house them; finally, course-oriented radio programs for postgraduates, having similar

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41. AVCC, 'Submission to Independent Inquiry into FM Broadcasting', 12 February 1974, pp.5-7, University of Newcastle Archives, File no. A6401.
 42. If the public had been really clamouring for this type of programming the government would have ensured that the ABC provided it. It was because this type of programming attracted at least as much public condemnation as praise that it was such a small part of the ABC's fare. For an account from an officer of the Department of the Media/Posts and Telecommunications/Communications throughout this period, of how the government decided which broadcasting it would support see Peter Westerway, Personal Interview at Manly, Sydney, 3 February 1997.
 43. See Chapter Twelve for the proposals from and origins of broadcasting at the University of Newcastle.

benefits as those for undergraduates and already undertaken by the University of NSW.⁴⁴ Under this umbrella of educational broadcasting, many institutions around the country began developing proposals to suit their own needs.

The University of Adelaide had already realised its plans for a radio station to provide continuing and further education programs. Having recently returned from a trip to Britain, where he had been impressed by the work of the education broadcasters on the BBC and heartened by the fact that the AUC had funded and the government had licensed the postgraduate course-work station at the University of NSW, Jim Warburton, Director of the Department of Adult Education at the University of Adelaide, submitted a Staff Development Proposal for the 1967-1969 triennium which included the establishment of 'a Radio Station similar to that of the Extension Department of the University of NSW'.⁴⁵ The University failed to present the submission to the AUC because the Commission was currently recommending that adult education cease to be a university responsibility. Warburton persisted, on the grounds that institutions are not static bodies and can change their attitudes and the University did submit the proposal in 1969 for the following triennium. The AUC ignored the submission as it was providing no funds in recurrent expenditure that year for adult education.⁴⁶ Funding had been made available to the University of NSW for VL2UV because its postgraduate courses station fitted the AUC view of a university's functions being of a utilitarian, vocational nature.⁴⁷ This attitude would have left the University of Adelaide without a Department of Adult Education, let alone one with a radio station

44. AVCC, 'Submission to Independent Inquiry'.

45. Jim Warburton, 'Staff Development 1967-69 Triennium', Adelaide, 1966, cited in Michael Law, 'Draft History of Public Broadcasting in Australia', Manuscript, circa 1987, p.10, copy in Evans Archives with present writer,.

46. Elaine Lindsay, 'Achievements - 5UV', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.2, March 1976, p.6.

47. Warburton, *Stirling Lecture*, p.1.

except for some shrewd political manoeuvrings by Warburton to save his department.⁴⁸ After the submission failed the second time, an anonymous donor who appreciated the work being done by the Adult Education Department, heard of the situation and gave the University \$100,000 to set up its radio station.⁴⁹

Fortunately for Warburton, the PMG did not differentiate between the kinds of courses different institutions wished to broadcast, and the University of Adelaide was issued with the same kind of restrictive licence under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* as the University of NSW. Perhaps the most significant difference between the two stations was that VL2UV's founder, Derek Broadbent, never wanted to broadcast anything but course-work and was prepared to accept the extreme restrictions imposed on the licence, including low power off the AM band, restricted hours, no music and broadcasting only to enrolled students. Warburton had to accept the same

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48. Warburton learnt in August 1966, that his Vice Chancellor (VC) was accepting an AUC dictum to close his department down. Believing this to be against the wishes of Minister for Education, John Gorton, Warburton arranged for a suitable question to be put to Gorton in parliament, where Gorton claimed he had been misrepresented and the department was saved, although Warburton's insubordination apparently infuriated his VC. See Warburton, *Stirling Lecture*, pp.10-11.
49. The identity of the donor was revealed when he died, shortly afterwards at 38, during a fitness run. He was Ken Stirling, a graduate of the University of Adelaide, who had made a fortune during the Poseidon mining boom. Stirling believed that those who exploit have a special duty to conserve and create and he appreciated the department's efforts to raise public awareness for the need for nature conservation in the countryside and the need to protect human values in the patterning of cities. It was the department's attitude in these matters that led him to donate the foundation sum for the establishment of a radio station. See *ibid.*, pp.1-2.

restrictions initially,⁵⁰ but he always expected that, with political persistence, the station would one day be able to fulfil a much wider role than VL2UV. This was part of his concept of a university as a community educator.⁵¹

Warburton, as head of the department and Keith Conlon, as manager of the new station VL5UV, started lobbying for an expansion of services almost as soon as the station commenced broadcasting in June 1972. Ultimately the aim was to be able to broaden the range of programs to include those of general educational interest to the population as a whole.⁵² Initially, the lobbying of South Australian federal politicians focused merely on lifting the transmission restrictions to improve the broadcast reception and allow music to be played in conjunction with course-work programs. Dr Richard Gun was persuaded to put the question to the PMG, Lionel Bowen: 'Is he aware that the station's transmissions are filtered, which makes reception from that station comparable with that from a primitive crystal set? Is he also aware that the station is forbidden to play music including music, say, as a background to a Shakespearian drama? Will he ensure this station will not have to continue to operate with one hand tied behind its back?'⁵³ By August 1973, the PMG agreed to allow the use of music as bridging for and

50. The information provided to the original enrolling students made it clear that there was no music and that the courses were designed for enrolled students only, but added 'anyone can enrol for any course'. Courses offered included Conversational German, Women Today, Shakespeare's Tragedies, and Coastal Navigation. See 'Introducing RU, Radio University VL5UV', Department of Adult Education, University of Adelaide 1972, included in 'RU Radio University VL5UV, Information Kit', Department of Adult Education, University of Adelaide 1972, Evans Archives, with present writer.

51. Jim Warburton, Letter to Michael Law 15 April 1986, cited in Law, Untitled manuscript.

52. Law, Untitled manuscript.

53. Richard Gun, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vols.82-84, 8 March 1973, p.354.

background to lecture programs and to permit an increase in the bandwidth to improve transmission quality but VL5UV was still officially a station licensed only to broadcast course-work to enrolled students.⁵⁴

Although consulted over the issuing of the licences to VL2UV and VL5UV, the Australian Broadcasting Control Board (ABCB), which administered the *Broadcasting and Television Act*, had no direct control over them, as they were issued by the PMG under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*. Despite the fact that a number of similar proposals had been put to the ABCB, it was of the view that 'before these proposals are considered the likely requirements of other university and educational institutions in the areas concerned for similar services should be ascertained[and]could not be divorced from the consideration being given by the Board to the desirability or otherwise of the introduction of frequency modulation broadcasting into Australia'.⁵⁵ In other words, the Board, although it was a statutory body under the Whitlam government, still largely reflected the interests of commercial broadcasters.⁵⁶ To protect those interests it was in no hurry to develop any kind of educational broadcasting, even though the government it served had accepted the desirability of the concept as the demand from tertiary educators increased.

In order to overcome this conflict of interest between the government and the Board, educational broadcasters saw a possible solution by working with public broadcasters. The Public Broadcasting Association of Australia (PBAA) was persistently lobbying the government for general public broadcasting licences. The government yielded in September 1974 and started to issue these licences under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*. Warburton and Conlon, being determined that the expansion of the scope of their station, was part of any such development, had put their case to the

54. Lindsay, 'Achievements - 5UV'.

55. ABCB, *Twenty-Third Annual Report 1970-1971*, Canberra, AGPS, 1971, pp.26-27.

56. Westerway, Interview.

Department of the Media Conference on Public Broadcasting in July.⁵⁷ Their efforts were successful. When the first FM experimental public broadcasting licences were offered to 2MBS-FM and 3MBS-FM under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*, the Adelaide University education station was offered a full AM experimental public broadcasting licence and a new call sign 5UV, allowing it to broadcast educational and community programs to the general public, together with its existing course-work programs.⁵⁸

This change in programming led to a change in station structure. The station was originally solely part of the Department of Adult Education, with manager Conlon a member of the academic staff, paid for and under the control of the university. Once programming was expanded, two community representatives were added to the Programming Sub-Committee. Since the new licence came with no direct government funding some of the station's access groups were asked to pay for the hire of the station's studio, and subscriptions, sponsorship and other government grants, were sought to help cover the running costs of the station now that it was no longer broadcasting merely course-work programs, which were funded by the University.⁵⁹

The establishment of 5UV really set a precedent both for the government and broadcasters as far as educational public broadcasting was concerned. Although the original justification for the government to issue a licence had been that the station had been conceived of as an organ of formal adult education, by early in 1975 much of its output was indistinguishable from Dynamic Radio CHY, the cable station in Coffs Harbour. CHY had commenced in December 1973, the first station to specialise in community programming. The Coffs Harbour Salvation Army had applied to the PMG for a licence for a cable station to broadcast community programs because they were aware that amendments to the legislation were needed before such a licence could be

57. Jim Warburton, and Keith Conlon, 'Public Radio Broadcasting', Department of the Media - Papers Presented to Public Broadcasting Conference 3 and 4 July 1974.

58. Lindsay, 'Achievements - 5UV', pp.7-8.

59. ABT, *Public Broadcasting Licence Inquires 1978*, Canberra, AGPS, 1979, p.30.

issued under the *Broadcasting and Television Act*.⁶⁰ 5UV was now providing much of that sort of content under the guise of a restricted, experimental, educational public broadcasting licence. It could be argued that already it could not really justify the claim of being an educational broadcaster. But, complaints were few because it still broadcast its course-work and general educational programs. Government funding to universities had not yet been cut so academics from other disciplines did not protest about the University funding the station's recurrent expenditure. This experimental educational broadcasting was accepted as beneficial to the community, particularly as no-one was forced to listen to it as it was never the only station in the area. Even with its community programming 5UV was only one station among a conglomeration of ABC and commercial stations and direct commercial advertising was forbidden. It therefore did not provide an enormous threat to the viability of commercial broadcasting in Adelaide.

Minister for the Media, Moss Cass, who, Peter Westerway has claimed, came into the portfolio mid 1975 'full of ideological fervour', was determined to implement a rapid expansion of public broadcasting as soon as possible.⁶¹ Since there was no adequate broadcasting legislation by which to achieve his ambition, the example of 5UV was the obvious solution to his problem. The previous minister, Doug McClelland had little trouble persuading the sympathetic PMG, Bowen, to issue experimental licences under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*, not only to education station 5UV but to the experimental fine music stations 2MBS-FM and 3MBS-FM, as well. By the time Cass wanted to issue a whole spate of licences to community groups, both the PMG and the situation had changed. Reg Bishop, the new PMG, was not prepared to issue the licences. Such licences would be blatantly illegal if they were offered as

60. E. J. Townsend, and R. H. Swansborough, 'Dynamic Radio CHY ... A Study in Community Media', Coffs Harbour, CHY, March 1975, p.2, Department of Communications Library, Canberra.

61. Westerway, Interview.

broadcasting licences to community groups, because they would not be educational, experimental or to restricted audiences. Bishop was further deterred by the fact that the government was reeling from Opposition attack over the 'Connor's Loans Affair'. The PMG wanted a bipartisan Senate Committee to investigate the situation. Cass felt sure this would not have received Opposition support and he needed a way to convince Bishop to change his mind if the Labor government was going to leave any real mark on the development of public broadcasting.⁶² Cass's adviser, Geoff Evans, suggested that while community stations of the kind suggested would have definitely been illegal under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*, experimental education licences, with apparently restricted audiences, like that issued to 5UV, would be almost legal. They would be even less likely to incur the wrath of the Opposition if they were granted only to conservative tertiary education institutions, which were able to provide their own funding.⁶³ Bishop was eventually persuaded. Despite protests from the ABCB about the *ad hoc* nature of the decision, offers were made to 'Cass's Dozen', twelve tertiary institutions, whom Evans had been able to rustle up in a matter of days, as being ready to embark on the experiment of educational broadcasting.⁶⁴ Political lobbying after the Whitlam government lost power ensured that the incoming Coalition government honoured Cass's offers. As a result, a substantial amount of supposedly educational broadcasting came into existence almost by mistake.⁶⁵

Reg Bishop had thought he was offering licences to tertiary institutions solely for education purposes, particularly after he received the Attorney-General's opinion that they would be legal only if subject to special conditions. 'These conditions

62. Henry Rosenbloom, *Politics and The Media*, Melbourne, Scribe, Revised Edition, 1978, p.116.

63. Graham, C. 'Public Broadcasting, Dissent and the State', *Media Papers No.3*, NSWIT, June 1980, p.10.

64. ABCB, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report 1975-1976*, Canberra, AGPS, 1976, p.37.

65. Evans, Interview.

would be along the lines that the stations should transmit matter of an educational character intended for the aural reception of staff and students of the institution'.⁶⁶ The Attorney-General was sceptical that the existing 5UV complied. 'I do not think that any assurance can be given that, in the event of a legal challenge, a court would hold that the station has been validly licensed under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*.'⁶⁷

Licences were not accepted by three of the tertiary institutions who received the offers. 4ZZZ-FM in Brisbane was operated by the university's Students' Union and made no pretence of providing educational programming for a restricted audience. Its aim was to provide for a mass audience that was uncatered for. The original manager, Jim Beatson, claimed publicly at the time: 'the station broadcasts politics, humour, education, community involvement - all around a rock music not dissimilar to 2JJ's'.⁶⁹ However, when confronted with an article in *Hecate* which showed this not to be the case, he later confessed that everything except the rock music was just a ruse to get a licence and was dropped as soon as the station was established.⁷⁰ Henceforth programming had nothing to do with education in any sense of the word.

66. Bishop, R. *CPD*, Senate, vol.66, 5 November 1975, pp.1810-1811.

67. C. W. Harders, Secretary, Attorney-General's Department, Letter to F. J. Green, Secretary, PMG's Department, 2 October 1975, Evans Archives, with present writer.

68. Beetson(sic), J. 'Achievements - 4ZZZ-FM' *Broadcasting Australia*, no.2, March 1976, pp.4-5.

69. Brisbane Women's Media Group, "Triple Z: 'maintaining credibility' or did homogeneous radio turn sour?", *Hecate*, vol.3, no.1, February 1977, pp108-114; Jim Beatson, Personal Interview, at Monash University, Melbourne, 23 November 1995.

Neither the ANU in Canberra nor UNE in Armidale took up the offers and it was left to community committees to take up the licences on behalf of the institutions. Both these groups were committed to general community broadcasting, which could only be considered educational in the very broadest definition of the word.⁷⁰ The government soon realised that some of the stations licensed as educational were openly flouting these conditions. Minister Eric Robinson tried to force them to comply.⁷¹ Peter Westerway has affirmed that Fred Green, the current Secretary of the Postal and Telecommunications Department, was a career public servant close to retirement and was a very conservative individual. Green wanted to close down 4ZZZ-FM and 2XX. He perceived both stations not only to be broadcasting illegally under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* but also to be hotbeds of student radicalism.⁷²

Even those stations set up by their institutions did not broadcast only formal education programs and their schedules tended to be similar to 5UV. This caused problems for 2MCE-FM in Bathurst/Orange, not so much with the government as with the Federation of Radio Broadcasters (FARB), representing the interests of one of the local commercial stations. 2BS in Bathurst complained that 2MCE-FM was in direct competition and wanted the station restricted to strictly educational programs.⁷³ However, even the commercial stations did not agree on their attitude to the educational component of these stations, for 2GZ in Orange, which was a much more popular

70. Jackson, 'Community Radio in Armidale', p.3; Jay, W. 'Achievements - Armidale, NSW', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.3, May 1976, p.8; ABCB, *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report*, pp.30, 88; G. Gerard, 'Campus Radio reports - ANU/2ZZ: History', *Radio Newsletter*, no.1, June 1976, pp.9-10.

71. Eric Robinson, Minister for Post and Telecommunications, Letter to the Manager, 4ZZZ, 30 December 1976.

72. Westerway, Interview.

73. 'Mitchell FM Radio Station Denies Charge', *Western Advocate*, 30.7.76 cited *Media Information Australia*, Oct 1976, p.16.

station, did not feel at all threatened by 2MCE-FM and supported its programming.⁷⁴

All these problems led to a review by some of these broadcasters themselves, as to what they were trying to do and who they were attempting to reach. Moss Cass had been struggling to establish public broadcasting and found himself forced into the education sector only because of legal difficulties. Many of those offered licences by Cass knew his intention was to offer public licences. Michael Law took a long hard look at the situation from a public broadcaster's perspective. Not only did he point out that it was never Cass's intention that the stations in educational institutions should be merely for formal education but that it was inappropriate to take that position. 'The view stems from an appreciation of the changes which are occurring in the nature of education, in the roles of educational bodies, and in the relationships between them and both their students and the public - which, increasingly, are tending to become indistinguishable as education develops towards a whole-life activity.'⁷⁵ With the changing concept of education Law drew an analogy between the effects on educational institutions and the effects on libraries. 'Not long ago, libraries were bookstores tended by severe ladies decorated with notices saying SILENCE! Today there is less silence the library has become a vital element in the society, a busy clearing house of ideas and enlightenment about the possibilities of society and our civilization (sic).'⁷⁶ As with libraries, educational bodies would develop whole-life relationships with their citizen-students. Law saw all public broadcasting stations as playing a part in maintaining these links but he detected three particular services which stations with direct links to educational institutions could provide: formal course material for students; service material for staff and students; general information and cultural material for the

74. Mitchell, R. 'The Realisation of an Idea', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.5, April 1977, p.8.

75. Law, M. 'Public Broadcasting by Educational Bodies', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.5, April 1977, p.11.

76. *ibid.*

community'.⁷⁷ Neither of the first two points were at all controversial but Law pointed out that the third raised the question of whether public broadcasters were in competition with commercial broadcasters. It was the third which could also be construed as violating the conditions of the licences under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*. Law maintained that once the government started re-drafting the *Broadcasting and Television Act* to incorporate public broadcasting these restrictions should be overlooked, and the distinction between educational public broadcasting and other public broadcasting would disappear.

The current quiet revolution in notions of education, particularly education as a whole-life activity, makes it unfruitful (and probably impracticable) to set artificial boundaries to what is "educational" programming and what is not. It is also unnecessary, as the American experience shows. There is no case for a special category of "educational" broadcaster, and everything to be said against it. A single category of public broadcasting licence - with terms of reference defined by the proposals of the licence applicants, against which their performances will be judged - can deal with all needs with the minimum of difficulty, and will avoid putting artificial constraints on the development of public broadcasting along lines flowing from expressed public demand.⁷⁸

Law's words were not heeded. The government, public broadcasters and scholars continued to view educational broadcasting as a separate identity. When Minister for Post and Telecommunications, Tony Staley, introduced guidelines for public broadcasters in April 1978, there were three classifications: 'E' for Education, 'S' for special Interest and 'C' for Community. There were two problems with this. Firstly, Education was not defined and secondly, the government determined that, irrespective of the applicant's wishes, the first licence in a regional area would be a 'C' licence. This led to a situation where institutions, like the University of Newcastle, which originally applied to broadcast fairly formal educational programming, were forced into providing

77. *ibid.*

78. *ibid.*, p.13.

community programming for the general public. In Sydney, on the other hand, where the 'E' licence went to 2SER-FM, a consortium of the NSW Institute of Technology and Macquarie University, there was no available licence to be given to the broadly educational and informative group, Sydney Public Affairs Radio (SPAR) as it had to apply for an 'S' licence and that had been granted to a Christian group.

Nevertheless, scholars continued to treat educational public broadcasting as an identifiable unit and sought to establish its audience. Two surveys of sorts were carried out at 5UV. The first, in the early years of the station before there was any community programming, revealed that those enrolling in and completing the adult education programs tended to be professional, managerial or self employed tertiary educated people rather than workers seeking an educational experience for the first time. 'It would seem we were educating those sections of the community which were already well educated and which could afford to pay for further education.'⁷⁹ This was to be expected because they were probably the same sorts of people who used libraries extensively, a fairly limited section of the population. The second survey was a pilot study for a comprehensive survey after 5UV had expanded its programming to include community and ethnic components. The results, while meaningful in terms of public broadcasting, were rather meaningless in terms of educational public broadcasting as the authors did not define the term.⁸⁰ Now that the station's programming was so much broader, a definition was really needed for the findings to reflect reality.

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79. Gerry Mullins, Keith Conlon, and Gaye McLeod, 'Paper no.46: The Evaluation of Structured Non-Credit Radio Courses at the University of Adelaide', T. Bates, and J. Robinson, eds, *Evaluating Educational Television and Radio - Proceedings of the International Conference on Evaluation and Research in Educational Television and Radio, The Open University, United Kingdom, 9-13 April 1976*, Milton Keynes, The Open University Press, 1977, p.153.
80. Keith Conlon, and Gerry Mullins, 'Who listens to Educational Public Radio?', *Studies in Continuing Education*, no.3, December 1979, pp.78-97.

Keith Jackson, as he commenced as manager of 2SER-FM in 1980, did concede Law's point that education is 'a continuing process that accompanies our lifespan'.⁸¹ However, he did not see that as reason for failing to distinguish educational radio services as distinct identities with special properties. Jackson claimed it had a number of possible functions; it could instruct, enrich, supplement or consolidate, either to a general or a particular audience. It could do this through formal, semi-formal or informal educational programs. To clarify the situation Jackson cited Sue Matthews four models; the formal, the eclectic, the image-based and the populist approaches. The formal approach might lead to course credits being offered. The eclectic approach was designed to appeal to as many sections of the community as possible. The image-based approach focused on a particular educational and cultural style. The populist approach pursued high ratings and included educational material only when it was appropriate. Jackson saw 2SER-FM conforming to the eclectic model of educational broadcasting.⁸² These models are undoubtedly useful, but they do not prove that educational public broadcasting can be distinguished as a separate entity from other types of public broadcasting.

In 1980, Andrew Greig completed a review of radio in education as he examined the gestation of 2SER-FM.⁸³ Unlike Jackson, Greig did not need a clear definition of an educational program as he was not trying to justify the existence of the genre in quite the same way nor was he trying to determine the audience for programs of this description. He concluded that radio stations in all educational institutions, including 2WEB, the station at Bourke High School, were complex creatures still trying to

81. Keith Jackson, 'Developing an Educational Radio Service' *Communique*, April 1980, un-numbered, 1st page of article.

82. *ibid.*, 2nd page.

83. Andrew Greig was on the Program Committee at 2SER-FM, while he completed his MA at Sydney University.

determine their proper roles.⁸⁴ About the same time Greig was writing his piece Nicholas Partridge resigned as manager of the Western Australian and Murdoch Universities' combined station 6UVS, because he doubted the worth of radio stations attached to tertiary institutions. 'It is useless spending enormous amounts of money broadcasting to a handful of people when it might be cheaper to arrange a seminar for them. Similarly, it is useless to multiply tenth-rate broadcasting outlets when the hard grind of getting things to sound good and getting people to write well isn't possible. It's a fact of life that nobody listens to bad programs.'⁸⁵ Although this opinion related more to the under resourced nature of Partridge's station rather the type of programming, this tirade clarified Greig's view. He responded that Partridge's perception was 'a little jaundiced'.⁸⁶ Greig's experiences at 2SER-FM left him with a far more optimistic picture of broadcasting by stations situated in tertiary educational institutions. He felt that both the stations and the institutions in which they were located had a 'commitment to the communication of ideas and the pursuit of truth', and in a broadly educative way, were able to be more creative and innovative than the ABC.⁸⁷

Whereas Conlon and Mullins' study was flawed because they had failed to define their subject when surveying educational public radio, Michael Evans directed his attention to definition in his thesis in which he looked at the adult education role of public broadcasting. He saw the need to divide adult educational programs into categories when considering to what extent adult educators had used radio 'in their attempts to provide knowledge and information to either specific or general portions of

84. Greig, 'Radio in Education', p.91.

85. Nicholas Partridge,. cited in Hal Colebatch, 'Broadcasting - More static in store for public radio', *Bulletin*, 11 November 1980, p.32.

86. Andrew Greig, 'More creative radio', Letter to the editor, *Bulletin*, 16 December 1980, p.6.

87. *ibid.*, p.7.

the community'.⁸⁸ Evans maintained that without this, the amount of adult education on public radio was vastly under reported. As an example of the discrepancies that could occur in people's definition of adult education he quoted the case of 6UVS-FM. The station manager had considered music appreciation to be adult education and the Vice Chancellor had not. 'His most profound comment up to this point was a suggestion that we drop all our music appreciation programming and present eight hours of "direct" educational broadcasting a day'.⁸⁹ Evans' own categories divided adult education radio into sub-categories that were similar to those devised by the AVCC. He gave examples of programs from a number of different stations which fitted into these categories. Evans concluded that his proposed categories showed that adult education broadcasting was a significant part of the overall programming of all public broadcasting.⁹⁰ This inference was the opposite of what Jackson had been trying to show with his categories, which identified educational broadcasting as a separate entity. If Evans' conclusions had been available in the late 1970s it would not have helped the stations in tertiary institutions, which claimed to be educational broadcasters, when triennial funding was suspended.

The post war economic boom had ended in October 1973, when the OPEC countries of the Middle East started to increase oil prices dramatically.⁹¹ As Bolton has pointed out, this did not impact fully on Australia until the middle of the following year, because Australia had alternate fuel sources, and even then Whitlam failed to persuade his ministers of the gravity of the situation during the preparation of

88. Michael Evans, 'The Adult Education Role of Public Radio in Australia', MEd Thesis, New England, 1990, p.iii.

89. *ibid.*, p.55.

90. *ibid.*, p.89.

91. F. G. Clarke, *Australia, A Concise Political and Social History*, Sydney, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992, pp.320-321.

the budget. It was not until Bill Hayden's budget mid 1975 that public sector spending was cut.⁹² Since Labor had chosen to favour school and technical education over universities and colleges, the latter were hit hardest in the changes to education spending. Although funding was not actually cut, the system of triennial funding was abolished and, as Andrew Spauld has pointed out, this disturbed planning arrangements and expected increases in expenditure, which were necessary with the growth in the number of institutions and increase in enrolments. Special projects, like the Open University, were abandoned altogether.⁹³

The situation worsened under the following Fraser and Hawke governments. Education lost not only the unusually exalted position it had enjoyed with government under Whitlam, but it also lost popular support. From the election which returned the Fraser Coalition government in December 1975, education was no longer a vote catching issue. Having been seen, in the 1960s and early 1970s, as a panacea for society's ills, it was now treated with suspicion. Don Smart has suggested that, together with the declining demographic projections, this was partly because the previous expectations of education had been unrealistically high. The proportion of Commonwealth expenditure allocated to tertiary education fell from 4.6% in 1976 to 3% in 1986.⁹⁴

Universities, no longer receiving the expected increases in funding, found themselves in very difficult financial situations and academics whose budgets had been cut resented allocations continuing to radio stations. The situation was exacerbated, in regional areas, where the institutions had been forced to accept 'C' licences, and provide general community programming. Securing continuing funding allocations from their institutions became extremely difficult for station managers. Except for individual

92. Bolton, *The Middle Way*, pp.227, 232, 234.

93. Spauld, 'Education', pp.132-133.

94. Don Smart, 'Education', B. W. Head, and A. Patience, eds, *From Fraser to Hawke*, Sydney, Longman Cheshire, 1989, pp.304-306.

disgruntled academics, there was no great push to close stations down, but there was pressure for them to find a larger proportion of their funding away from the institution.⁹⁵ Keith Jackson, still committed to a distinct identity for educational broadcasting, felt they were expected to function on budgets that were far too small 'to operate an effective educational station.The more the performance of the station deteriorates, the worse the programs get, the greater will be the pressure to further reduce funding'.⁹⁶ Jackson feared the programs would get so bad the stations could no longer be considered to be 'educating' the people in any sense of that word. He continued: 'it would be both outrageous and inaccurate to suggest that we have effective educational broadcasting in Australia at this time'.⁹⁷ In fact, by the time Jackson made these remarks, his station, 2SER-FM had 'promised its backers, Macquarie University and the NSW Institute of Technology, that it will become self sufficient by 1982 using a system of selling air time for use by community groups'.⁹⁸ Murray Green, manager of 6NR at the Western Australian Institute of Technology, felt it was the perception of the audience that was the driving force in the change in programming. 'The broadcasters [in tertiary institutions] became increasingly persuaded that their listening community was non-specialist and that a populist approach to educational radio was necessary for survival as a relevant and non-electic (sic) media form.'⁹⁹

Furthermore, there was also a lack of interest by academics to use these

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- 95. Helen O'Neil, 'Educational broadcasters face their biggest battle', *National Times*, 10-16 February 1980, p.48.
 - 96. Keith Jackson, 'Educational Radio: Bright Idea, Bleak Future?', B. O'Dwyer, ed. *Broadcasting in Australia: Today's Issues and the Future*, proceedings of the National Conference held in July 1980, at the ANU, Canberra, ANU, 1981, p.163.
 - 97. *ibid.*, p.164.
 - 98. O'Neil, 'Educational broadcasters'.
 - 99. Murray Green, 'Radio 6NR Western Australia', *Media in Education and Development*, vol.19, no.2, 2 June 1986, p.72.

stations for formal education purposes or even for the dissemination of their own research information, as advocated by the AVCC. Jackson bemoaned this fact when he managed 2ARM-FM. 'It is disappointing that the station is not being used at all by the university (irrespective of any further financial commitment) for extension purposes. Despite the station being located under the same roof as the University's Department of Continuing Education, there has been no effort by the department to exploit the opportunities offered by the station for communicating with a wider audience.'¹⁰⁰ As a later chapter will show, a similar situation existed at 2NUR-FM in Newcastle. This further dissipated the notion of educational broadcasting as a specific genre.

In the early 1980s low powered community radio stations proliferated in both suburban and rural areas. Some of them were more enthusiastic about what they perceived to be educational programming, including formal course-work programs, than those in educational institutions. 2BBB-FM Bellingen rebroadcast 'Norwaves', the radio component of a social history course at Lismore College of Advanced Education, produced by its station 2NCR-FM.¹⁰¹ Any clarity in the distinction of programming between those supposedly involved in educational public broadcasting and those emphatically engaged in general public broadcasting was fast disappearing.

However, the institutional stations had not abandoned the concept and a conference on educational public radio was held in May 1984 to reflect on the predicament. The atmosphere was, at times, quite pessimistic. Jackson admitted being disappointed with the quantity, the quality, the audience impact and the effectiveness of educational programming.¹⁰² He saw the possibilities for the future of educational broadcasting as resting more with lifelong education of adults rather than as an adjunct to orthodox teaching, though he conceded that adult Australians are not generally

100. Jackson, 'Community Radio in Armidale', p.30.

101. *Bellinger Courier-Sun*, 24 February 1988; see Chapter Twelve for more details on 2BBB-FM and its aims and objectives.

102. Jackson, 'Education, Technology and the Role of Radio', p.18.

motivated in this direction and that 'the educationally disadvantaged tend to switch off anything that talks for more than a couple of minutes'.¹⁰³ Jackson had discovered, as the ABC had discovered in its early years, that many people did not like having education thrust down their throats.¹⁰⁴ Yet accepting that formal course-work programs would not be a large part of the programming of an educational station, and still seeking to justify his own existence, Jackson maintained 'I am arguing for radio now as a useful means of meeting the needs of the educationally disadvantaged'.¹⁰⁵ He intended to do this by taking his programming down market to attract the desired audience, and then sneaking in little snippets of his educational fare, with directions to another parallel station which would broadcast his desired material in its entirety.¹⁰⁶ With educational institutions battling to keep one radio station going, this was a rather idealistic solution, which was never implemented. This explains Jackson's depression.

Conlon's paper at the same conference was far more realistic. Like Jackson, he accepted that 'Educational radio, or public radio, has had to fit within vague concepts of continuing education and community service within tertiary funding guidelines and reports'.¹⁰⁷ However, Conlon was far less dissatisfied with what the stations were presently broadcasting. His main concern was to ensure that funding would continue for stations to pursue their existing activities. The conference concluded that educational public broadcasting had not developed to the extent envisaged by the

103. *ibid.*, pp.21-22.

104. Until recent years this was a basic difference between Australian radio and British radio, where there was no choice. There was more than one channel in Britain but the BBC culture of being 'uplifting' was all pervasive.

105. *ibid.*, p.23.

106. *ibid.*, p.29-30.

107. Keith Conlon, 'The Expectations of Tertiary Institutions - A Personal View'.

AVCC in 1974, when triennial funding was still in place for tertiary institutions.¹⁰⁸

The government also recognised that those early expectations of educational public broadcasting had not been fulfilled. In 1985, the Department of Communications issued new guidelines for public broadcasters replacing those of Staley in 1978.¹⁰⁹ While the new guidelines were primarily concerned with streamlining the existing policies and practices they also abolished the 'E' (educational) category of licences.¹¹⁰

This was in line with the views earlier put forward by Michael Law, who was still a Policy Consultant for the PBAA. Educational public broadcasters had accepted that they had not been able to develop a large formal education component, and that programming was largely only educational, in the sense that any informative broadcasting is educational. This made it much easier to convince everyone that devising

108. An example of how the newer institutions had been more interested than the older universities can be seen when an educational licence was on offer in Sydney. The NSWIT approached both the University of Sydney and the University of NSW about a joint project. When neither showed sufficient interest Macquarie University accepted an invitation to join. See NSWIT, Executive Committee (Council), 'The Establishment of a F. M., Broadcasting Station', Agenda Item no.12, Meeting no. 76/6, 27 July 1976, p.1, Broadhead Archives, copy with present writer. Greig has pointed out that both Sydney and NSW Universities were affected by financial constraints due to their tight funding structure. The NSWIT and Macquarie University were still operating under a financial structure, put in place when they were established, which allowed for funding for resources development making their financial arrangements more flexible than the older institutions. See Greig, 'Radio in Education', pp.98-99.

109. DOC, Broadcasting Division, 'Review of Public Broadcasting Guidelines' a draft Ministerial Statement for Michael Duffy, 1984 copy in DOC Library, Canberra.

110. Kibby, 'Radio as Communication', p.47.

a separate category of licence for educational public broadcasting was largely a false delineation. Licences were now to be divided into two categories, 'S' for special interest and 'C' for community. Minister for Communications, Michael Duffy declared that it was 'important to give some formal recognition to the differences between a broad-based community service and a more specialised one so that the various needs of a community can be met through an appropriate "mix" of public radio services'.¹¹¹ In the cities, institutional stations could be classified as 'S' if they were not providing sufficient broad-based community programming to apply for a 'C' licence. However in regional and country areas, where it was unlikely there would be sufficient support for two public stations, it remained government policy that the first station must be a community type station. A number of regional stations were in institutions. Duffy insisted the previous system of three categories, 'E', 'S' and 'C,' made planning and licensing unnecessarily complicated in these situations giving further impetus to the abolition of the 'E' licences.¹¹²

Public broadcasters in educational institutions continued to feign a distinct identity and held further conferences but with no separate licence category, no distinct type of programming, and reduced institutional funding, the only distinguishing feature remaining was that they were physically situated in seats of higher learning.¹¹³

With the proliferation of Departments of Communications and the introduction of journalism and broadcasting courses in the late 1980s some of the stations in tertiary institutions gave much greater emphasis to providing a laboratory function for students to acquire practical vocational skills in these courses. When the

111. Michael Duffy, Speech to PBAA National Conference 16 August 1985, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

112. Michael Duffy, 'Draft Ministerial Statement', p.5, in DOC, 'Review'.

113. The next educational public broadcasting conference was held in May 1987, in Adelaide. See 5UV, *Annual Report 1987*, Adelaide 1987, p.12, with present writer.

economic rationalist policies of the government hit universities hard, 2NUR-FM in Newcastle broadened the scope of this function to include drama and music students as well, in an attempt to further justify its educational role within its institution and ensure its continued funding.¹¹⁴

This concept of stations providing students with practical work, similar to that provided by hospitals for medical students and schools for trainee teachers, had been of relatively minor importance both to those who had worked so hard to establish educational public broadcasting in the first place and to the politicians who supported them. The laboratory function did little more than enhance the training of students already enrolled. Two stations, 2NUR-FM and 2MCE-FM, combined to use this function to produce news and current affairs programs, which other stations were unable to do. These programs were educational in the sense that they were more informative than many others. However, they reached stations all over Australia via satellite, so there was still little to distinguish the programming on these stations from public broadcasting generally.

Therefore, in spite of early support from the federal government, when there was adequate funding available for education generally and the AVCC put forward a case for broadcasting as an activity appropriate for tertiary institutions, and strenuous advocacy by some managers of stations later established, educational public broadcasting never became a separate broadcasting genre in Australia. Formal course-work programming failed to excite enough interest, academics were shy of sharing their research results orally, and educational broadcasting of a more informal nature was never sufficiently defined to acquire a distinct identity before the abolition of triennial funding stymied institutional interest. In fact, if Moss Cass had not needed to offer licences to stations in educational institutions as a way of establishing public broadcasting, generally, just before the triennial funding for tertiary education was abolished, it is doubtful whether many of these stations would have ever existed at all.

114. Personal Knowledge as a volunteer member of 2NUR-FM's Program Committee.

The government had always been in favour of educational radio, both in the early days of the ABC and when educational public broadcasting was first proposed, probably because many politicians came from the elite section of the population that enjoyed that kind of programming and those who had been overseas had seen it working. However, the government stopped pushing these ideas, when it realised that although there was a vocal elitist lobby in its favour, education generally had lost its appeal as an election issue and neither kind of educational broadcasting would win many votes. When it was also realised that the early expectations of educational public broadcasting had not been fulfilled, the government lost interest in the concept altogether, and removed it from the regulations, leaving those educational public broadcasting stations which had been established to find new roles within their institutions.

By contrast, the definition of ethnic broadcasting was much clearer, the lobbying much more effective and ethnic public broadcasting did develop into a separate genre within public broadcasting, with considerable continuing support from government. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

**CHAPTER TEN - ETHNIC BROADCASTING - GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC OR
COMMERCIAL? 1952 - 1992.**

The Australian government's attitude to broadcasting in languages other than English (LOTE) has been influenced as much by its attitudes to migrants generally as by its policy on the expansion of broadcasting services. There have been waves of migrants with a non-English speaking background (NESB) ever since the British first occupied Australia more than two hundred years ago.¹ For most of that time the government required them to assimilate as soon as possible.² The sociologist, Donald Edgar, has claimed that the term 'New Australian' reflected the expectation 'that migrants would learn and adopt our culture in the way that babies do'.³ The majority of newcomers who arrived before the Second World War were happy to comply. Osvaldo Bonutto, who arrived from Italy in 1924, described his attitude: 'I have come to Australia as a migrant to seek a new home [engaging in] the process of assimilation, that gradual

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1. Giuseppe Tuzo, the first Italian arrived with the First Fleet in 1788. A group of Greek families arrived in 1830 and worked on the MacArthur Vineyards, Camden, NSW. In the 1840s thousands of German migrants from Bremen and Hamburg came to South Australia. By 1855 there were 17,000 Chinese working the Victorian goldfields. Between 1922-1940 significant numbers of immigrants arrived from Italy, Germany and Eastern Europe. A sizable proportion of these were Jewish settlers from Poland and Nazi Germany escaping persecution. For more information see Clare Dunne, 'A brief history of ethnic broadcasting in Australia', *Contact*, no.3, September 1977, p.11; Naomi White, and Peter White, *Immigrants and the Media*, Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1983, pp.21-24.
 2. Andrew Markus, 'History of Post-War Immigration', G. Osborne, and W. F. Mandle, eds, *New History, Studying Australia Today*, Sydney, George Allen and Unwin, 1982, p.107.
 3. Donald Edgar, *Introduction to Australian Sociology*, Sydney, Prentice-Hall, 1980, pp.281-282.

process of forgetting one's native country and learning to love one's adopted country'.⁴

Minister for Information and Immigration Arthur Calwell commenced a post war drive for migrants in 1947. This program was motivated by the fact that, with the threat of invasion by Japan in 1942 and the prospect of a declining workforce with the reduced birthrate during the Depression, a rapid increase in population was needed for both defence and development.⁵ As a result, the basic attitude of the Australian government remained the same, with the major concern being the benefits that would accrue to Australia from the additional population, rather than any real consideration for the welfare of the immigrants themselves.⁶ These people were electorally insignificant and could be ignored. However, by the late 1960s political parties began to realise that the situation had changed. Many dissatisfied migrants were returning to their homelands.⁷ Those who remained were becoming politically vocal.⁸ Furthermore, of the more than two million post-war migrants who had arrived by 1970, only 40% were

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4. Osvaldo Bonutto, *A Migrant's Story*, Brisbane, UQP, 1994, p.45.
 5. Charles Price, 'Immigration and ethnic affairs', A. Patience and B. Head, eds, *From Whitlam to Fraser - Reform and reaction in Australian politics*, Melbourne, OUP, 1979, p.202.
 6. Arthur Calwell, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.189, 22 November 1946, pp.502-513; Raymond Sestito, *The Politics of Multiculturalism - CIS Policy Monographs: 3*, Centre for Independent Studies, 1982, p.16.
 7. In 1965 the Vernon Committee pointed out that the rate of departure of migrants was much higher than the 6% official figure. See Jean Martin, *The Migrant Presence, Australian Responses 1947-77*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1981, p.30.
 8. Ethnic Communities Councils, both at the state and federal level began to emerge to espouse the migrants' cause. See Xavier Connor, *et al.*, *Serving Multicultural Australia, The Role of Broadcasting, - Synopsis and Summary of Recommendations*, Report of the Committee of Review of the Special Broadcasting Service, Canberra, AGPS, December 1984, p.100.

British leaving a significant number for whom English was not their first language.⁹ Realising this, politicians were giving increasing attention to capturing what was perceived to be the 'ethnic vote'.¹⁰ This change in the attitude of governments of both political persuasions, as ethnic communities began to organise themselves into effective lobby groups, led to the development of a multiculturalism policy which manifested itself in the development of a range of services for migrants, including a vast expansion of broadcasting services in LOTE. This chapter traces the development of the government's attitude to these services, which became known as ethnic broadcasting, and analyses the role that developed for ethnic public broadcasting.¹¹

Although there were radio stations in other comparable parts of the world which broadcast in foreign languages there were none that provided a model for Australia. When Peter Westerway embarked on a fact finding tour of the USA, Canada and the UK as late as 1977, he found stations in the USA which broadcast in one foreign language, Spanish or Italian. In Toronto, Canada, he discovered one station which

9. Donald Horne, *The Australian People*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1972, p.235.

10. In 1965 the government dropped the English dictation test for intending migrants. See Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, p.91. The changes made by Whitlam and the Labor Party to their political platform which resulted in a massive swing in the 1969 federal election and a decisive win in 1972, included a new policy on migrant welfare. See Martin, *The Migrant Presence*, p.34.

11. At the time of writing there was another PhD in progress which also covered ethnic public broadcasting. However, this work examined the subject from the perspective of broadcasters and audiences rather than government's attitudes and motivations, making the analysis substantially different. See Chris Lawe Davies, 'History of Australian Multicultural Broadcasting', PhD thesis, Journalism, University of Queensland, Draft, 1996.

broadcast in Chinese, but none broadcast in many different languages.¹² Canada, being a bi-lingual country, had always had some stations which broadcast in English and some stations which broadcast in French, but it was not until the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) issued its policy on FM Radio in 1975, that any serious provision was made for multilingual broadcasting.¹³ This had not developed by the time of Westerway's visit. Similarly in Britain, broadcasting for minority groups was not given any consideration until the Annan Committee report in 1977. Where it was most needed in London, Afro-Caribbean, Asian and other minority ethnic groups were still involved in the debate over the funding and introduction of such services in 1982.¹⁴ In New Zealand it was not until 1989, when the Broadcasting Commission, also known as New Zealand on Air, was created that the need to cater for the needs of 'minorities in the community including ethnic minorities' was recognised.¹⁵ Westerway's claim: 'There were no multi-language stations anywhere in the world. We were the only ones.' may have been an exaggeration, but there were certainly none in any of the countries Australia looked to as a model for the expansion of its own broadcasting services. The development of multilingual ethnic broadcasting was a unique response to the conditions which existed in Australian society as a result of the post-war immigration policy, which led to large, often dissatisfied, ethnic communities realising they had considerable political power.

12. Peter Westerway, Personal Interview, at Manly, Sydney, 3 February 1997.

13. CRTC, *FM radio in Canada: A policy to ensure a varied and comprehensive radio service*, 20 January 1975, p.11.

14. Peter Lewis and Jerry Booth, *The Invisible Medium - Public, Commercial and Community Radio*, London, Macmillan Education, 1989, pp.8, 98, 106.

15. NZ on Air, 'NZ on Air', *the NZONAIR study guide*, p.1, URL: <http://www.nzonair.govt.nz/guide/nzonair.htm>; Brian Pauling and Helen Wilson, 'Conclusion', H. Wilson, ed., *The Radio Book 1994*, Christchurch, New Zealand Broadcasting School Christchurch Polytechnic, 1994, p.200.

Nevertheless, these forces did not initiate the process. In Australia, radio programs began in LOTE, on commercial radio in 1948, soon after Calwell's immigration policy was introduced.¹⁶ These programs were mainly designed to provide basic farming and emergency information for migrants who could not speak English. But the government still adhered to its policy of assimilating migrants expeditiously into the general Australian population and was also fearful that politically subversive material might go undetected if broadcast in languages unknown to the authorities during the height of the Cold War. Therefore regulations were introduced in 1952, restricting these programs to the spoken word accompanied by an English translation and limited to 2.5% of a station's programming.¹⁷

One of the earliest of these bilingual programs on commercial radio was broadcast on 2RG in Griffith in NSW, as a result of a proposal by Al Grassby, who had moved to Griffith in 1950, working for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). Grassby became aware that the monolingual Agricultural Advisory Service in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area had not been able to contact many of those farmers it was meant to serve because of language difficulties. He set up a Broadcast Club which sponsored up to three bilingual programs, starting with Italian and Spanish, on the Griffith radio station, to provide the local NESB farmers with much needed information.¹⁸

16. Lawe Davies, 'History', p.66.

17. ABCB Minute no.1118, 30 June 1952, p.366, Australian Archives Series C1993/2; ABCB Appendix "A" Circular No. 11, 23 July 1952, cited in ABCB Meeting Agendum no. 1955/6 Appendix A, January 1955, Australian Archives NSW Series C1992/1; SBS, *Ethnic Broadcasting in Australia 1979 - Report at the end of the First Year of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)*, Sydney, SBS, 1979, p.10; ABCB, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report 1973-74*, Canberra, AGPS, 1974, p.81.

18. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Appendix 1, p.1; Al Grassby, 'Griffith and the Origins of Australian Multiculturalism', *Multicultural Australia Papers*,

Gradually other commercial stations introduced similar bilingual programs and by the beginning of 1972, 24 out of 118 commercial stations were broadcasting some material in foreign languages.¹⁹ A handful of stations, including 2CH in Sydney, had been allowed to increase their proportion of foreign language broadcasts to 10% of total programming in 1965²⁰ and the ABCB had twice lifted restrictions on announcements made in foreign languages by the Immigration Department in 1967.²¹ Apart from these exceptions the restrictions were still in force when Al Grassby became Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam Labor government at the end of 1972.²² By this time two significant changes had taken place which led the government to re-assess the situation: a substantial drop in foreign language broadcasts on commercial radio was occurring and, in response to the realisation of the increasing electoral significance of the migrant population, the government had adopted a policy of multiculturalism, with migrants encouraged to retain their original languages and cultures with pride, instead of the migrant assimilation policy.

Once television was introduced into Australia in 1956, the nature of commercial broadcasting gradually began to change and many programs including those broadcast in foreign languages, ceased to be economically viable. By the end of 1973, the number of stations broadcasting LOTE programs had dropped from 24 to 19. 2CH in Sydney, which had broadcast more of these programs than any other station was one of those to cease broadcasting foreign language programs.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s Whitlam developed a new immigration

no.46, Clearing House on Migration Issues, Richmond Victoria, 1985, pp.1-5,8; Dunne, 'A brief history', pp.12-13; White, and White, *ibid.*, p.149.

19. ABCB, *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report 1972-72*, Canberra, AGPS, 1973, p.74.
20. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Appendix 1, p.3.
21. Yollanda Allen, and Susan Spencer, *The Broadcasting Chronology 1809 - 1980*, Sydney, AFTS, 1983, p.H123.
22. Sestito, *The Politics of Multiculturalism*, p.17.

policy which he took to the elections of 1969 and 1972. Whitlam has pointed out that Grassby won the seat of Riverina, as a result of these new policies, with a record swing of 22 percent, at the 1969 election.²³ George Zangalis and Geoff Evans have expressed a view that was common at the time, that there was an 'ethnic vote' to be won and that with a huge effort Labor cornered that vote in the 1972 election, which saw Labor attain office.²⁴

As the new Labor Minister for Immigration, Grassby was active in all areas of migrant welfare. He developed the interpreter service, expanded the teaching of English to migrant children, encouraged the grant-in-aid system, expanded counselling services for intending migrants and planned for migrant access to housing.²⁵ He also had a more realistic attitude to their ability to learn English than previous ministers. Through his earlier work in Griffith, Grassby had shared the real life situations of uneducated middle aged migrants trying to grapple with new concepts in a language they did not understand.

We recognise that for many of the newcomers, any demand that they gain more than a rudimentary knowledge of the English language must be doomed to failure. Of course, the young migrants will learn our language and adapt to a greater or lesser extent to the ways they encounter in this country, but if people choose to retain their own values, and if they see the necessity for maintaining as a cohesive force in their own family the common bond of language and thought, then we do not seek to weaken that bond. Rather, I believe we should enable the second generation to appreciate the full beauty of their parents' mother tongue and to see it not as something to be ashamed of, but rather to be proud of. Such a concern could not fail to contribute to the

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23. Gough Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government 1972-1975*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1985, p.499.
 24. George Zangalis, Paper presented to PBAA Ethnic Broadcasting Conference, Brisbane, 10 June, 1982, Evans Archives, with present writer; Geoff Evans, Personal Interview at Canberra, 5 December 1994.
 25. Price, 'Immigration and ethnic affairs', p.206.

mental health of ethnic communities and so reduce that generation gap which, for these communities, threatens to become even wider.²⁶

From the moment he became minister, as part of his general concern for migrant welfare, Grassby began to urge the government to lift the restrictions on broadcasts in foreign languages.²⁷ The Australian Broadcasting Control Board (ABCB) eventually removed them in November 1973.²⁸ Grassby announced with pride in mid-1973 that, as a result of his efforts to address the problems of migrant welfare, fewer immigrants were returning to their homelands.²⁹ Notwithstanding this achievement, which was almost certainly partly due to the fact that fewer migrants were arriving, Grassby's efforts to have broadcasting restrictions lifted did not bring any immediate improvement in the number of foreign language broadcasts. Commercial foreign language broadcasts were ceasing because they were no longer commercially viable not because of the restrictions. It also became apparent at the Migrant Workers' Conference in Melbourne in 1972 and again the following year at the Migrant Education Action Conference, that some migrant communities were not happy with commercial broadcasts. They were demanding government funded ethnic broadcasting.³⁰ At least, with the restrictive regulations repealed, the way was now open for the government to address the issue of ethnic broadcasting as it examined possible solutions to problems

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26. Al Grassby, 'Foreign Languages in Australia', *Immigration Reference Paper* presented at the State Conference of Modern Language Teachers' Association of Queensland, in Brisbane, 3 August 1973, Canberra, AGPS, 1974, p.4.
 27. Al Grassby, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vols.82-84, 1 May 1973, p.1481.
 28. ABCB, *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report*, p.74; Brian Connolly, circular letter, reprinted in ABCB, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report 1973-74*, *op. cit.* pp.81, 216-217.
 29. Price, 'Immigration and ethnic affairs', p.206.
 30. Lawe Davies, 'History', p.67.

faced by migrants generally. Task forces were set up to investigate the situation.³¹ A Subcommittee of the NSW Migrant Task Force, headed by Brendan Freedman, was established to investigate the need for ethnic broadcasting throughout Australia, not just in NSW.³²

If those NESB migrants seeking broadcasts in their own languages and of their own culture had all agreed on how this should be implemented, or even if only one government department had been involved, then the situation would have been relatively simple. But neither was the case. Disarray was inevitable with two government departments, the Department of the Media and the Department of Immigration, looking at the problem from different perspectives and with various migrant groups lobbying strongly for commercial, government and public ethnic broadcasting, to suit the different groups' particular needs. George Kateb has identified these sorts of problems with all salient cultural groups in our society. He has claimed that these sorts of groups 'insist on their group identity assertively and often with a sense of superiority'.³³ For Kateb, serious social vices are intrinsic in these groups and he has cast doubts on whether democratic individuality can be reconciled with this kind of group identity.³⁴ Certainly different groups were urging the government in divergent directions regarding the development of ethnic broadcasting. There were some conservative Greek and Italian business interests who were very keen to set up a commercial station as they felt their

31. Sestito, *The Politics of Multiculturalism*.

32. Bernard Freedman, 'A Proposal for Ethnic Broadcasting in Australia', Paper presented to the Department of the Media Public Radio Broadcasting Conference, Sydney, 3-4 July 1974, p.1.

33. George Kateb, 'Notes on Pluralism', *Social Research*, vol.61, no.3, Fall 1994, p.512.

34. *ibid*, p.513.

communities were large enough to support a station from advertising revenue.³⁵ Freedman and the NSW Migrant Task Force recommended the establishment of a government funded station on the model of the new public stations, but with the licence held by a statutory body. The Task Force felt that smaller ethnic groups would be disadvantaged on a commercial station, where larger wealthier migrant communities would be able to afford to buy more air time.³⁶ Others, including groups such as the Ethnic Communities Council (ECC)³⁷ and individuals like Franca Arena, an early presenter on 2EA, strongly favoured government run stations, on the grounds that migrants paid their taxes like all other citizens, and were entitled to their own stations comparable with the ABC.³⁸

The Minister for the Media, Doug McClelland, and his department, looked at the establishment of ethnic broadcasting from the point of view of providing a service to those who required it. He was advised that Freedman's public station option could not be accomplished because it would be illegal to license it under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act*, as the early public stations had been.³⁹ The Department of the Media

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35. Michael Thompson, Personal Interview at Bellingen, 17 April 1994; SBS, *Ethnic Broadcasting*, p.13; Peter Heldorf, and John Mowatt, 'Ethnic Broadcasting', *Media Papers no.7*, Sydney, Media Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, NSWIT, August 1980, p.3.
 36. Freedman, 'A Proposal for Ethnic Broadcasting', pp.3,9.
 37. Paulo Totaro, *Participation - The Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales Report to the Premier*, Sydney, 29 June 1978, p.312.
 38. Franca Arena, 'The ethnic media: issues and problems. A consumer's point of view', I. Burnley, S. Encel, and G. McCall, eds, *Immigration and Ethnicity in the 1980s*, Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1985, pp.97-98.
 39. Thompson, Interview.

continued to cogitate over the relative virtues of the various alternatives while Whitlam and his colleagues were distracted from any policy implementation by a double dissolution and general election. Al Grassby lost his seat at the election, and therefore, ceased to be Minister for Immigration. The Department of Immigration was subsequently dismembered, losing its most important functions to other departments. Migrant welfare passed to the Department of Social Security.⁴⁰ The remnants of the Department were combined with the Department of Labour.⁴¹ Consequently, while the government was now strongly in favour of ethnic broadcasting in principle, the issue had become too difficult and, by the end of 1974, when Labor had been in office for two years, there was still no action.

An unrelated consequence of the double dissolution election saw Whitlam reconsider ethnic broadcasting with renewed vigour early in 1975, even though the government seemed less concerned with migrants' right and migrant welfare, generally.⁴² During the first half of 1974, the Senate had obstructed the passage of legislation to create Medibank, a government health insurance scheme. A joint sitting of parliament was held in August 1974, as a result of the double dissolution election, and amongst other legislation passed was that to create the Medibank scheme.⁴³ Some of those who would benefit most from Medibank were poor migrants of NESB. A Health Insurance Commission survey, about the same time, revealed that over 2.5 million people in Sydney and Melbourne alone were beyond the reach of regular media and information services.⁴⁴ As Xavier Connor later pointed out in his report on the Special Broadcasting

40. Price, 'Immigration and ethnic affairs', p.209.

41. Martin, *The Migrant Presence*, pp.69-70.

42. Price, 'Immigration and ethnic affairs', p.210.

43. Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government*, p.347; Allan Patience, and Brian Head, 'Notes', Patience, A. and Head, B. eds, *From Whitlam to Fraser*, Melbourne, OUP, 1979.

44. Arena, 'The ethnic media', p.97.

Service (SBS), although there was a lively ethnic press at the end of 1974, this served only the larger communities and those who were literate.⁴⁵ By early 1975, it was realised that the best way to publicise the benefits of Medibank to NESB communities was by radio. Grassby may have lost his seat in parliament, but he had lost none of his enthusiasm for ethnic broadcasting, which he believed could 'reach the unreachable'.⁴⁶ Michael Thompson, who was an officer in the Department of the Media at the time, has reported that, as the Commissioner designate for Community Relations, Grassby visited the officers of the Department of the Media declaring that he had a message from his Prime Minister that they find a way round the legal problems in setting up ethnic public radio stations. Thompson may have given rather a colourful account of how Grassby communicated with the Department of the Media, but SBS has acknowledged that the need to publicise Medibank was the immediate impetus for consideration to be given to ethnic broadcasting.⁴⁷

To avoid further procrastination Grassby arranged an inter-departmental committee meeting, 25 February 1975, with the ABCB, the Department of the Media, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Department of Labour and Immigration, the Department of Social Security and the Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD).⁴⁸ He presented that meeting with a letter from Treasurer, Jim Cairns, saying there was \$49,000 available through the

45. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, p.99.

46. Al Grassby, cited in Arena, 'The ethnic media'.

47. Thompson, Interview; SBS, *Ethnic Broadcasting*, p.15; Grassby was acting in the capacity of Commissioner designate for Community Relations throughout the year, although his appointment, attached to the Attorney-General's Department, only officially came into effect on 31 October 1975. See Al Grassby, 'Racial Discrimination Act - The First Two Years', *Ethnic Studies*, vol.1, no.3 1977, p.52.

48. The last three of these were now responsible for aspects of what had previously been covered by the Department of Immigration.

Attorney-General's Department to set the stations up.⁴⁹ The meeting was held in the Department of the Media's offices. Even though Grassby had more or less presented Minister McClelland with a *fait accompli*, this venue enabled the Minister, always the consummate politician, to claim the meeting had been his idea.⁵⁰ In reality McClelland and his department would have allowed the question of what was the most suitable method of broadcasting to ethnic communities to languish in limbo for months. Without the political necessity for action brought about by the Medibank issue, combined with Grassby's enthusiasm to provide NESB migrant communities with access to their own languages and cultures through the medium of radio, nothing would have happened.

Although the deadlock for action had been overcome there was still a great deal of confusion for a number of years as to exactly what form these new ethnic stations, one in Sydney and one in Melbourne, should take. This was largely because the decision was not one resulting from careful planning and policy making. There was no policy and the decision was of the most *ad hoc*, politically expedient kind, with many of the factors influencing it being contradictory. The only certainty was that, by the mid 1970s, there had been considerable changes in the nature of the population of Australia. The result was that ethnic broadcasting of some sort was almost universally accepted as both an essential public utility and a political advantage. With no prior planning, it is not surprising that the arrangement that appeared convenient in the beginning, with the stations being envisaged as part of the public broadcasting sector, did not suit the government for long.

Initiated by Grassby through the Attorney-General's Department a national committee with representatives from ethnic communities, the Ethnic Radio

49. SBS, *Ethnic Broadcasting*, p.14; Andrew Jakubowicz, 'Speaking in Tongues: Multicultural Media and the Constitution of the Socially Homogeneous Australian', H. Wilson, ed., *Australian Communication and the Public Sphere*, Melbourne, MacMillan, 1989, p.109.

50. Doug McClelland, *CPD*, Senate, vol.64, 27 May 1975, pp.1825-1826.

Experimental Committee, was formed. under the chairmanship of Giacomo Bayutti.⁵¹ The experimental licences for 2EA in Sydney and 3EA in Melbourne were issued in Bayutti's name by Postmaster-General Reg Bishop, under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* for three months from June to September 1975.⁵² Grassby secured Clare Dunne on a contract as Foundation Director of Radio Ethnic Australia with overall control of the two stations⁵³ and Jenny Looman, in charge of publicity, as the only other paid employee.⁵⁴ These contracts only lasted until 23 July 1975, well before the end of the experiment.⁵⁵ All program presenters were volunteers.⁵⁶ Neither time nor money existed for proper planning and there was a great deal of confusion. 2EA began broadcasting in Sydney on 9 June 1975, using studio facilities provided by the Christian Broadcasting Association (CBA) and transmission facilities provided by AWA.⁵⁷ 3EA commenced in Melbourne on 23 June 1975, using the studio facilities of Studio Sound and the second standby transmitter at commercial station 3UZ. At the end of three months Bayutti was to report back to government on the success of this experiment in government funded ethnic public broadcasting.

Political considerations, a new minister and personality conflicts led the government to make decisions on the future of the stations well before it received Bayutti's report. The popularity of the government was dwindling rapidly and it was looking for ways to shore up its support. In spite of the chaos and confusion these new

51. Also known as James 'Jim' Bayutti.

52. Reg Bishop, *CPD*, Senate, vol.64, 27 May 1975, pp.1829-1839.

53. Clare Dunne, 'Pioneering Radio Ethnic Australia', *Contact*, no.3, 1977, p.6.

54. Arena, 'The ethnic media', p.97.

55. James Bayutti, Letter to Minister for the Media Moss Cass, 2 July 1975, Evans Archives, with present writer.

56. SBS, *Ethnic Broadcasting*, p.15.

57. ABCB, *Twenty-Seventh Annual Report 1974-75*, Canberra, AGPS, 1975, pp.28, 50.

ethnic stations were immediately well received. However, by the beginning of July Bayutti was complaining of Grassby's interference in a number of ways and that the employees contracts were soon to expire.⁵⁸ Moss Cass, the new minister, shared none of the previous minister's political caution, and, on the recommendation of his Personal Adviser, Geoff Evans,⁵⁹ presented a proposal to continue funding the stations and solve the other problems. On 25 July, Cabinet decided to grant a further \$100,000 to carry on the experiment for another six months.⁶⁰ Furthermore some organisational changes were made which fundamentally altered the nature of the stations. The stations were no longer controlled by a community committee, with independent staff, under the auspices of the Attorney-General's Department. They were placed under the authority of the Department of the Media.⁶¹ The Department was now able to enforce tight control over the nature of the material to be broadcast. Clare Dunne resigned as national director and was replaced by Brian White,⁶² who seconded Michael Thompson for support. Both these men were officers of the Department of the Media. Despite the formation of two additional local committees whose chairmen officially held the licences, Takis 'Jim' Kaldis in Sydney and Tony Toumbourou in Melbourne, the stations had lost any semblance of being public stations in all but licence name. They were owned, funded, controlled and staffed by the government; they were really government stations. Michael Thompson found himself reinforcing this distinction by having to impose the government's will on those involved with the stations who attempted to make independent

58. Bayutti, Letter to Minister.

59. Geoff Evans, Note to Moss Cass, 24 July 1975, Evans Archives, with present writer.

60. Rosalind Patterson, 'The Ethnic Broadcasting Commission - Almost', *Media Information Australia*, no.34, November 1984, p.77.

61. G. A. Sklovsky, 'Special Broadcasting Service and Ethnic Radio Broadcasting in Australia', *Media Information Australia*, no.15, February 1980, p.17.

62. Dunne, 'Pioneering Radio', p.9.

decisions.⁶³

2EA and 3EA had never really been public broadcasting stations and this last pretence was removed altogether at the end of the second experimental period. In March 1976, the Coalition government abandoned the committees and issued one licence for the two stations to the Secretary of the Postal and Telecommunications Department,⁶⁴ Fred Green.⁶⁵ It became the responsibility of Post and Telecommunications Minister, Eric Robinson, to determine what was to happen to the EA stations, now accepted as government ethnic broadcasting. In his report on the structure of the broadcasting system, Green recommended that to inject some order into this chaotic situation and limit the ballooning costs,⁶⁶ which had led to disputes between his department and Treasury,⁶⁷ the EA stations should be handed over to the ABC.⁶⁸

Rather by default than by design, the ABC was already involved in ethnic broadcasting, but of a very different kind from that on the EA Stations. When offering the first three public radio licences in September 1974, Cabinet had also made provision for the expansion of the ABC. The decision resulted in a rock music station in Sydney and an 'access' station in Melbourne to provide air time to groups and individuals judged

63. Thompson, Interview.

64. The Postal and Telecommunications Department replaced the Department of the Media soon after the Coalition took over government.

65. SBS, *Ethnic Broadcasting*, pp.20-21.

66. 'During the third experimental period of the EA stations (May - November 1976), the Fraser government increased the budget by 260%'. Lawe Davies, 'History', p.77.

67. *Nation Review*, 9.4.76, cited in Rita Sjoberg, 'Ethnic Radio: Rumours and Inquiry, March-July 1976', *Media Information Australia*, no.2, October 1976, pp.17-18.

68. Fred Green, *Report to Minister for Post and Telecommunications on structure of the Australian broadcasting system*, ('Green Report'), Canberra, AGPS, 1976, p.A27.

to be at a media disadvantage. Joan Dugdale, who worked for this new station 3ZZ, reveals there was an outcry from community groups waiting for licences of their own,⁶⁹ particularly since three public licences had just been approved. Although there was a community committee set up to plan and negotiate with the ABC for the establishment of this new station, the Commission ignored its proposals and decided policy for 3ZZ itself.⁷⁰ The station started broadcasting in May 1975 at night. Four days of the week were reserved for ethnic programs, because that was the area of greatest demand. Although the station had been set up as an 'access' station it developed a large ethnic component, eventually broadcasting in thirty six languages.⁷¹ The broadcast of political material was not restricted on 3ZZ as it was on 3EA, which had never really been an 'access' station, although the presenters were volunteers.⁷²

For the ABC to take over the EA stations would have been an expedient and cost cutting way out of the existing muddle for the government, which was now under considerable political pressure to continue providing some ethnic broadcasting. After months of procrastination the ABC did not take over the EA stations, instead the government closed 3ZZ and created the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) to run its ethnic stations and establish other like services.

Every person who was in any way involved with any part of the unfolding

69. Joan Dugdale, *Radio Power, A History of 3ZZ Access Radio*, Melbourne, Hyland House, 1979, pp.2-3.

70. David Griffiths, 'Autocracy in the Airwaves', J. Langer, ed., *media centre papers 4*, Bundoora, Centre for the Study of Educational Communications and Media, La Trobe University, 1976, pp.63-64.

71. Dugdale, *Radio Power*, p.39.

72. Marj Prior, 'Public Radio in Australia', draft of uncompleted essay, Bathurst, 5 July 1978, p.40, Evans Archives, with present writer. Personal permission granted to quote from confidential document.

of these events seemed to have a different explanation for why it happened. Michael Thompson claimed the ABC put in an excessive operational budget to take over the EA stations because it did not want them.⁷³ Paolo Totaro, Chairman of the NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission, in his report to the Premier, claimed the ABC had a number of concerns about accepting the stations including staffing levels, establishing a policy on overseas news gathering and the allocation of time to the various ethnic groups.⁷⁴ Ted Innes, Shadow Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, maintained that ethnic communities did not want the stations under the ABC umbrella either because they were fearful 3ZZ would lose its 'access' component.⁷⁵

Peter Westerway claimed the ABC wanted the stations, but with other funding cut backs, needed the extra money to run them.⁷⁶ With the SBS set to take over the EA stations, Minister Robinson claimed he closed down 3ZZ because it was duplicating 3EA. Westerway maintained that the government investigated a number of possibilities to find the best method for ethnic broadcasting. 3ZZ, as an 'access' station had just been one of the government's experiments and when the station was closed 'it was purely that was a discarded model'.⁷⁷ There had been considerable opposition to the way 3ZZ was run, exemplified by a letter from eight of Victoria's ethnic organisations to ABC Chairman, Sir Henry Bland, which claimed that 'They provide "access"(sic) but the time available to most groups is very limited and prime time is kept for the communist

73. Thompson, Interview.

74. Totaro, *Participation*, p.313.

75. Ted Innes, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vols.100-102 19 Oct 1976, p.1980.

76. Westerway, Interview; Peter Westerway was Assistant Secretary, Radio, in the Postal and Telecommunications Department, at the time, and had assumed overall control of the EA stations when Brian White left the department.

77. *ibid.*

clique with their propaganda being aimed mainly at the Greek, Italian, Yugoslav and Australian communities'.⁷⁸ Milliken contended that many in the government now opposed 3ZZ because it had been intended as a station for community groups to access. However it was now seen to have been taken over by extreme left-wing migrant groups, led by George Zangalis, 'a member of the station's Greek programming committee, an organiser with the Australian Railwaymen's Union and a member of the Communist Party'.⁷⁹

Joan Dugdale, in her detailed if partisan account of the life of the station, revealed that other political and religious sensibilities were also leading to calls for the station's closure. Pro and anti-Zionist Jews upset one another, Jews and Arabs upset one another and Croats and Yugoslavs upset one another.⁸⁰ She contended that 'Ethnic groups ought to have the same right as other Australians to manifest, explore and discuss differences'.⁸¹ Furthermore, she was convinced that the government's resolve to firmly control ethnic broadcasting was 'a determination to suppress the growth and assertion of ethnic identity and the corresponding politicisation of ethnic demands'.⁸² As Chris Lawe Davies has emphasised in his thesis on multicultural broadcasting, this was a bi-partisan attitude. Although 3ZZ had been set up under a Labor government and was closed down by a Coalition minister, both parties were seriously disturbed by some of the programs and wanted to exert control over the broadcasters who 'as new arrivals, diaspora, absentees from home cultures, strangers in strange lands and without a voice, they were understandably experimenting with radio and their own lives'.⁸³

78. cited in '3ZZ "bias" attacked by ethnic groups', *Age*, 21 September 1976.

79. Robert Milliken, 'Robinson misjudges ethnic reaction to 3ZZ closure', *National Times*, 11-16 July, 1977, p.24.

80. Dugdale, *ibid.*, p.156. These sorts of upsets also beset ethnic public broadcasting.

81. *ibid.*, p.157.

82. *ibid.*

83. Lawe Davies, 'History', p.73.

Dugdale's views were obviously coloured by her role in the whole saga and Peter Westerway's present memories of those events are undoubtedly influenced by his other role in the situation. Westerway was also Chairman of the Consultative Committee on Ethnic Broadcasting, set up in April 1976 to make recommendations to the government on the future of ethnic broadcasting. This committee recommended that the ABC take over the EA stations and that the 'cessation of access broadcasting in ethnic languages would be to the advantage of Melbourne's ethnic communities in particular, and of Australian society in general ... Access radio is likely to be divisive, to exacerbate intra and inter-group tensions and, in the case of ethnic language programs, to fail to make optimal use of air time.'⁸⁴ Having made that recommendation it is not surprising that Westerway now remembers the ABC as wanting the EA stations, but finding them too expensive.

For all that, three stations broadcast ethnic programs in Melbourne in the first half of 1977, 3EA, 3ZZ and the community station 3CR. Irrespective of whether Minister Robinson was aware of all the political nuances of his decision to establish SBS to run the EA stations and then close down 3ZZ, from the government's point of view it was a reasonable rationalisation of the situation. In fact Robinson is reported to have been rather pleased with his whole decision and expected it to be popular.⁸⁵ However, the announcement was so unpopular with those ethnic communities who were not happy with the government control of programming on 3EA that they, eventually, called for the establishment of an ethnic public broadcasting station in Melbourne.⁸⁶

If anything, the demand by communities and support by governments, for

84. cited in Robert Milliken, 'Keeping Politics off the Air', *National Times*, 22-27 August 1977, p.19.

85. 'Clancy', 'Unease at ABC - The Overflow Column', *National Times*, 4-9 July 1977, p.6.

86. Thompson, Interview; Gaetano Rando, 'Multilingual Programs on Victorian Radio', *Media Information Australia*, no.30, November 1983, p.42.

ethnic public broadcasting on general public broadcasting stations and the establishment of ethnic public broadcasting stations was enhanced by the EA stations becoming government stations. Although there was still some support for the expansion of government run ethnic broadcasting an increasing number of migrants championed the establishment of ethnic public broadcasting. They saw the opportunity to regain the control of their broadcasts which they lost with the closure of 3ZZ and to provide local content in programming for the different regions. The Coalition government's attitude was also favourable because it saw public broadcasting as a much cheaper way to develop ethnic broadcasting than to expand the EA network.⁸⁷

This approach certainly undermines a hypothesis put forward by Andrew Jakubowicz. Probably influenced by the fact that Labor had been seen to corner the 'ethnic vote' in the early 1970s, Jakubowicz developed a theory that the basis for the Fraser government's establishment of SBS was to create a social cohesion through ethnic pluralism which would undermine any broad working class solidarity by appealing to other forms of allegiance.⁸⁸ According to Jakubowicz: 'The public domain had to be opened up to them [the ethnic middle class], for their allegiance to the state and the social cohesion it sought to ensure increasingly depended on reciprocal recognition of their social and political legitimacy'.⁸⁹ If Jakubowicz's analysis had been correct, then the Fraser government could have been expected to increase the number of EA stations. Instead it supported the spread of ethnic public broadcasting, which more resembled the programming of 3ZZ. This tended to emphasise division rather than cohesiveness.

Charles Price and Allan Patience have pointed out that, like the Whitlam government in its early years, the Fraser government, through Minister for Immigration

87. Hulshoff, Interview, Tony Staley, Personal Interview, at Monash University, Melbourne, 25 November 1995.

88. Andrew Jakubowicz (sometimes spelt Jacubowicz) was an academic who was appointed to the SBS Board by the Labor government in 1983.

89. Jakubowicz, 'Speaking in Tongues', p.110.

Michael MacKellar, courted what was perceived to be the 'ethnic vote', which included growing numbers of 'upwardly mobile' immigrants. This attitude contrasted with that of the Labor government in the second half of its period in office when Minister Clyde Cameron had shown none of Grassby's early enthusiasm for the issues affecting the migrant communities.⁹⁰ MacKellar reinstated ethnic welfare as an issue of concern and created the Ethnic Affairs Council, under Jerzy Zubrzycki, with committees to advise on settlement problems, multicultural education, community relations and ethnic media. This led the Fraser government to facilitate ethnic broadcasting as a public utility, but the situation was far more complicated than Jakubowicz suggested. It has generally been accepted that conservative middle class migrants influenced Fraser in his approach to the question.⁹¹ However, such people would have had absolutely no influence over George Zangalis, and his left wing working-class supporters, who sought something entirely different from ethnic broadcasting. These migrants were also electorally significant. Zangalis and his cohorts were not removed from ethnic broadcasting with the closure of 3ZZ; they simply moved to the community station, 3CR. The Fraser government had to engage in a fine juggling act between what was politically palatable for it and what was electorally necessary for survival.

In fact, ethnic broadcasting on public radio stations was already well established by the time Minister Robinson created SBS. It had begun, without any fuss or fanfare on public stations when they commenced broadcasting before the commencement of either the EA stations or 3ZZ and provided a clear example of what could be achieved by the time SBS was created. Ethnic Broadcasters Incorporated (EBI) was formed in Adelaide in March 1975 with the Dutch and Italian communities

90. Price, 'Immigration and ethnic affairs', p.210; Allan Patience, 'Immigration Policies', A. Patience and B. Head, *From Fraser to Hawke*, Melbourne, Longman Cheshire, 1989, p.411.

91. Evans, Interview; see page 298 for the relevance of the 'Galbally Report'.

gaining access to 5UV as soon as the station moved to the AM band and broadcast restrictions were removed. Broadcasts by Greek, Polish and Ukrainian communities soon followed.⁹² During 1976 2ARM-FM Armidale, 2MCE-FM Bathurst, 2NCR-FM Lismore, 2XX Canberra, 3CR Melbourne, and 6NR Perth had all commenced some sort of ethnic broadcasting. Programs were produced on these stations in anything between six and thirty different languages. 5UV charged ethnic groups their standard \$15 per hour community access fee. Some stations had an ethnic council or committee which controlled ethnic broadcasting and at others individual groups negotiated with the station for air time. By August 1979 there were 13 public stations broadcasting some ethnic programs.⁹⁴³

However, development was patchy. In Brisbane, by April 1977, the only broadcast in a LOTE, a program in Italian on commercial radio, had been taken off air.⁹⁴ 4ZZZ-FM, the new public station, did not broadcast in any foreign languages and there was no EA station. So, whereas Melbourne had three stations broadcasting ethnic programs, Brisbane had none. Ethnic communities in Brisbane were well aware of this contrast but were also cognisant of the limitations of the EA stations. In May 1977 they formed an informal group, the Ethnic Radio Association. This was followed by a public

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92. Irenej Mykyta, 'Multi-Cultural Broadcasting', *Broadcasting in Australia: Today's issues and the Future*, Proceedings of the National Conference of the Centre for Continuing Education, ANU, Canberra, July 1980, p.123; Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Appendix 1, p.5; Gaetano Rando, 'Multi-Lingual Radio in South Australia', *Media Information Australia*, no.35, February/March 1985, p.42; Kerry Braslin, 'Public Radio: The Lost Dimension in Australian Broadcasting', BA (Hons) Thesis, Tasmania, 1977, Appendix 1.
 93. Postal and Telecommunications Department, 'Ethnic Programs on Public Broadcasting Stations', 27 August 1979.
 94. Gaetano Rando, 'The Founding of 4EB: an issue of ethno-cultural control in Queensland', *Social Alternatives*, vol.3, no.3 1983, p.33.

meeting in Brisbane on 30 September with over two hundred participants, presided over by Al Grassby. The meeting decided that they would work towards the establishment of an AM ethnic public station. This move was not approved by all aspirant public broadcasters in Brisbane. The Brisbane Public Broadcasting Society was aware that the government would only issue a limited number of licences in any one area. Supported by some of those who had worked for the closure of 3ZZ in Melbourne, the Society felt sufficiently threatened by the push for an ethnic station to write to the Minister for Post and Telecommunications Eric Robinson claiming there was no need for a full time ethnic station in Brisbane, that two hours per day on a general public broadcasting station would be sufficient.⁹⁵

During the first half of 1978, circumstances led the government to support the establishment of ethnic public broadcasting stations in Brisbane and Adelaide, the two capital cities without EA stations which had groups ready to apply for licences. Adelaide already had some ethnic public broadcasting on 5UV but the University station could not satisfy the demand and fulfil its other programming obligations leading EBI to seek its own licence. In April, the government received the report of the Review of Post-Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants under the Chairmanship of Frank Galbally (the 'Galbally Report'), which concluded that it was 'necessary for the Commonwealth government to change the direction of its involvement in the provision of programs and services for migrants and to take further steps to encourage multiculturalism'.⁹⁶ The report recommended that everyone should have equal access to programs and services and should be able to maintain his or her culture. Where migrant needs could not be met by general community programs and services special ones should be established in full consultation with the clients. Consistent with these general recommendations the report urged the upgrading and extending of existing

95. *ibid.*, pp.33-34; Hulshoff, Interview.

96. cited in Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, 'Evaluation of Post-Arrival Programs and Services - A Summary', May 1982, p.1.

government ethnic broadcasting services.⁹⁷ It also pressed for the subsidising of the production and transmission of ethnic public programs in all capital cities and provincial centres while this was taking place.⁹⁸ Since Fraser had publicly supported 'a policy of multiculturalism rather than the older policy of assimilation for immigrants', while Minister for Education and Science under the Gorton Coalition government, he was anxious that this idea should become more than an aspiration.⁹⁹ He claims to have 'warmly welcomed the [Galbally] report [and] accepted its recommendations in toto'.¹⁰⁰ In fact, as will be demonstrated later, the recommendations on ethnic public broadcasting were not carried out in their entirety, but the government certainly embraced the concept in principle.

Minister for Post and Telecommunications, Tony Staley, had introduced the Guidelines for Public Broadcasting legitimising ethnic public broadcasting, with Special 'S' class licences, a mere two weeks earlier, leaving the way clear for the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) to offer licences to ethnic public stations which would receive some government funding. Since SBS was proving very costly with its funding for the two radio stations in 1978-79 to exceed \$2¼million¹⁰¹ Minister Staley supported the establishment and funding of ethnic public stations as an alternative to the expansion of the EA stations.¹⁰² This contrasted with the report's recommendation that they be a temporary measure while the development of more government stations took

97. *ibid.*, p.40.

98. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, p.209.

99. Malcolm Fraser, cited in Patience, 'Immigration Policies', p.411.

100. Malcolm Fraser, 'Inaugural Address on Multiculturalism', Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, 30 November 1981, Canberra, AGPS, 1981.

101. Heldorf, and Mowatt, 'Ethnic Broadcasting', p.3; G. A. Sklovsky, 'Special Broadcasting Service and Australian Ethnic Broadcasting', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol.1, no.2 1980, p.68.

102. Staley, Interview.

place. Accordingly, for the same financial year SBS received an additional \$75,000, which would not only fund the establishment of ethnic public stations in Brisbane and Adelaide but would also, for the first time, subsidise the production and transmission of ethnic programs on emerging public radio stations around the country where EA broadcasts were not available.¹⁰³ 4EB in Brisbane commenced as the first self run ethnic station in Australia on 1 December 1979, with 5EBI following soon after.¹⁰⁴

Two problems emerged with the SBS funding. The first, discussed at the Ethnic Public Broadcasting Conference in October 1979, was the fact that programs and stations which received the SBS subsidy were bound by the SBS guidelines as applied to the EA stations which included avoiding political partisanship. As Marj Kibby has pointed out with particular reference to 2XX, this caused tensions between some stations and their ethnic broadcasters, where the ethnic broadcasters could see other programs on the station containing political comment and objected to restrictions on their ethnic programs.¹⁰⁵ SBS agreed to seek the removal of this constraint.¹⁰⁶ In the meantime public broadcasters with ethnic programs agonised over whether they were 'selling out their freedom for a handful of sticky lollies'.¹⁰⁷ By the end of 1980 it was realised that, although the restrictions had not been lifted, they had not been enforced either. Public broadcasters began to feel more comfortable about accepting the subsidies.¹⁰⁸

103. Fred Chaney, *CPD*, Senate, vol.80, 20 February 1979, p.62.

104. ABT, *Annual Report 1979-80*, Canberra, AGPS, 1981, p.33.

105. Marj Kibby, 'Radio as Communication: Public Broadcasting in Australia', MA (Hons) Thesis, Macquarie University, 1988, p.43.

106. G. A. Sklovsky, 'Special Broadcasting Service and Ethnic Radio Broadcasting in Australia', *Media Information Australia*, no.15, February 1980, pp.16-17.

107. Chris Tappere, 'What's This Public Broadcasting Anyway?', D. Turbayne, ed., *The Media and Politics on Australia*, Hobart, Department of Political Science, University of Tasmania, 1980, p.46.

108. *ibid.*

The other problem concerned the fact that SBS subsidies for ethnic programs on public broadcasting stations were granted on the understanding that these were a substitute by the government for increasing the scope of the EA stations. The PBAA had accepted this proposition and had formed a liaison committee with the SBS to work out the best methods for distributing these monies.¹⁰⁹ However in August 1979 2EA started transmitting to translator stations in Newcastle and Wollongong. Having accepted subsidies for its ethnic programs at the rate of \$20 per hour for transmission costs and sometimes a further \$20 per hour for production costs, on the understanding that these were provided for stations out of the range of EA transmissions, Newcastle's 2NUR-FM became very concerned that the funding would cease. While they accepted the value of having 2EA rebroadcast in the area, Newcastle ethnic communities argued that they provided programs with local content on 2NUR-FM serving the needs of their own communities, which the Sydney EA station was not in a position to provide. Not only was 2NUR-FM allowed to keep its subsidies but for the following year 1980-81, the rate was increased to \$45 per hour, with a total annual subsidy of \$7020.¹¹⁰

Although this was still much cheaper for the government than setting up local SBS radio stations in Newcastle and Wollongong it meant an almost immediate break with the new policy which was designed to provide subsidies for ethnic public broadcasters where there was no direct SBS service. Thus confusion continued on exactly what the government's policy was towards the nature and funding of ethnic broadcasting, since 2SER-FM in Sydney and 3CR in Melbourne were still refused funding on the grounds that there were EA stations in their cities.

109. Michael Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report of Activities 1978-79, 13 October 1979, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

110. URSC, Meeting Minutes, 9 August 1979, University of Newcastle Archives A6401; URSC, Agreement between SBS and 2NUR-FM, 30 September 1980, University of Newcastle Archives A6401; Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Appendix 1, p.10.

Tony Staley, as Minister, attempted to sort out this mess as he planned to rationalise the structure of all non-ABC and non-commercial broadcasting services in the middle of 1980. Changes were necessary pending the introduction of ethnic television which had been promised before the end of the Fraser government's second term in office.¹¹¹ The proposed innovations were largely a result of advice, in December 1979, from the Ethnic Television Review Panel in its second report, *The Structure and Funding of the Interim Multicultural/Multilingual Television Service*. The Panel recommended 'that the SBS, NEBAC and SEBACs be replaced by a statutory authority, the Independent and Multicultural Broadcasting Corporation (IMBC)'.¹¹²

Staley envisaged a larger role for this authority which would include facilitating new initiatives such as Aboriginal broadcasting and provide a single acceptable vehicle for Cabinet for the funding of all public broadcasting.¹¹³ The previous arrangement had public broadcasters seeking general funding from the Australian Film Commission (AFC), ethnic public programs and stations being funded by SBS and the embryonic Aboriginal broadcasting being funded by a combination of the Department of

111. Trevor Barr, *The Electronic Estate: New Communications Media and Australia*, Melbourne, Penguin, 1985, p.102.

112. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*. The National Ethnic Broadcasting Advisory Council (NEBAC) and the State Ethnic Broadcasting Advisory Councils (SEBACs) were set up during 1977, to advise the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, the Minister for Posts and Telecommunications and SBS and to provide a link between ethnic communities and SBS, respectively. See Arvi Parbo, 'National Ethnic Advisory Council', Proceedings of the Ethnic Public Broadcasting Seminar, Adelaide, 6-7 October 1979, p.14, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

113. Helen Molnar, 'The Democratisation of Communications Technology in Australia and the South Pacific: Media Participation by Indigenous Peoples 1970-1992', PhD Thesis, Monash, 1993, pp.126, 426.

Aboriginal Affairs (DAA) and SBS.¹¹⁴ The PBAA was wary of the IMBC because the proposal did not expressly include the fact the new authority would support ethnic public broadcasting services as well as providing services itself. Furthermore, the PBAA advocated that the IMBC funding powers should be greater than those of SBS, which had only given subsidies, to include 'subsidise, make grants or loans to ethnic public broadcasting services'.¹¹⁵

There was substantial opposition to the IMBC proposal from other quarters. Commercial broadcasters and the ethnic press felt threatened by the whole idea leading four Liberal senators to cross the floor and vote against the legislation to create the body. The Opposition, headed by Moss Cass and Susan Ryan, also opposed the Bill on the grounds that Bruce Gyngell and his former Channel 9 colleagues, were unsuitable people to run a public service broadcaster.¹¹⁶ As a result Staley's legislation was referred in May 1980, by the Senate to its Standing Committee on Education and the Arts, chaired by Senator Gordon Davidson.¹¹⁷

Once there, Myles Wright, former Chairman of the ABCB, made a submission strongly opposing the formation of yet another broadcasting bureaucracy. The ABC's submission claimed that if it were given a second national channel, it was in

114. Michael Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report of Activities 1979-80, 30 August 1980, p.5, CBAA Archives, Sydney; P. B. White, P. Segal, and I. Hoad, *Public Television in Melbourne - The Preview Broadcasts and Beyond*, Melbourne, Open Channel, 1982, p.3.

115. PBAA, 'A Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts', 'Submission on the Relationship Between the I.M.B.C. and Ethnic Public Broadcasting', June 1980, p.7, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

116. Lawe Davies, 'History', p.89.

117. Kibby, 'Radio as Communication', p.9.

the best position to run multicultural television.¹¹⁸ Consequently the committee concluded the matter had been 'insufficiently considered',¹¹⁹ and the government deferred the implementation of the IMBC. Fred Chaney was left to advise the Senate that the 'matter of public broadcasting will remain a matter for the Australian Film Commission and for the Special Broadcasting Service in so far as it relates to ethnic broadcasting, but there will be a continuance of the existing situation until the final position is sorted out at a later time'.¹²⁰ In June 1981, the government abandoned the IMBC concept altogether, the Minister for Communications, Ian Sinclair announced a restructuring of the SBS Board and the NEBAC and SEBACs were dissolved in favour of a new SBS Advisory Council.¹²¹

Fraser had wanted to honour his commitment, made in his Policy Speech before the election at the end of 1977, to have multicultural television established by the next election in October, 1980.¹²² Shortly after Fraser made this commitment the 'Galbally Report' also recommended this action. Patience has claimed multicultural television was probably one of the most publicised consequences of the 'Galbally Report'.¹²³ Since Staley's plan for the rationalisation of ethnic broadcasting and public broadcasting, by the establishment of the IMBC would not have been finalised by the time of the election, it was forsaken. Multicultural television was established under the

118. Susan Woods, 'Myles Wright fears another broadcasting bureaucracy', *Australian Financial Review*, 8 July 1980, p.5.

119. Gordon Davidson, Report tabling speech, cited by M. E. Lajovic, *CPD*, Senate, vol. 86, 15 September 1980, p.999.

120. Fred Chaney, *CPD*, Senate, vol. 86, 15-16 September 1980, p.1130.

121. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Appendix 1, p.13; Peter Durack, *CPD*, Senate, vol.92, 21 October 1981, p.1501; Lawe Davies, 'History', p.89.

122. John Carrick, *CPD*, Senate, vol.78, 16 August 1978, p.116; Sestito, *The Politics of Multiculturalism*, p.32.

123. Patience, 'Immigration Policies', p.414.

existing SBS in October, 1980, shortly after the election.¹²⁴ Sestito has claimed that: 'Throughout the whole episode the action by the government appears merely as a public relations exercise with the specific purpose of attracting the ethnic vote'.¹²⁵ Zangalis has expressed the view that Fraser was convinced that multicultural television would win him back the 'ethnic vote' lost to Labor in the late 1960s and early 1970s.¹²⁶ The result was that Staley left the situation for ethnic public broadcasting in even worse shape than he found it. Fine tuning ethnic public radio had become a politically expendable consideration, since Fraser had been determined to establish multicultural television.¹²⁷

Although there was no coherent government policy on ethnic public radio or its funding, the concept was completely accepted as part of the government's multiculturalism policy. The idea was reinforced in 1981, when Fraser told leaders of Australia's ethnic communities that multiculturalism was necessary to prevent repeats of the British summer revolts.¹²⁸ The two ethnic public stations, 4EB and 5EBI consolidated their positions and SBS subsidies for ethnic programs on public radio stations continued to grow. The government still found it cheaper to subsidise the expanding ethnic public radio sector than extend the EA services, while it procrastinated over reviewing ethnic broadcasting overall. The following chart shows the growth of SBS funding for ethnic public broadcasting throughout the period when SBS was the conduit for such government funding.

124. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Appendix 1, p.8.

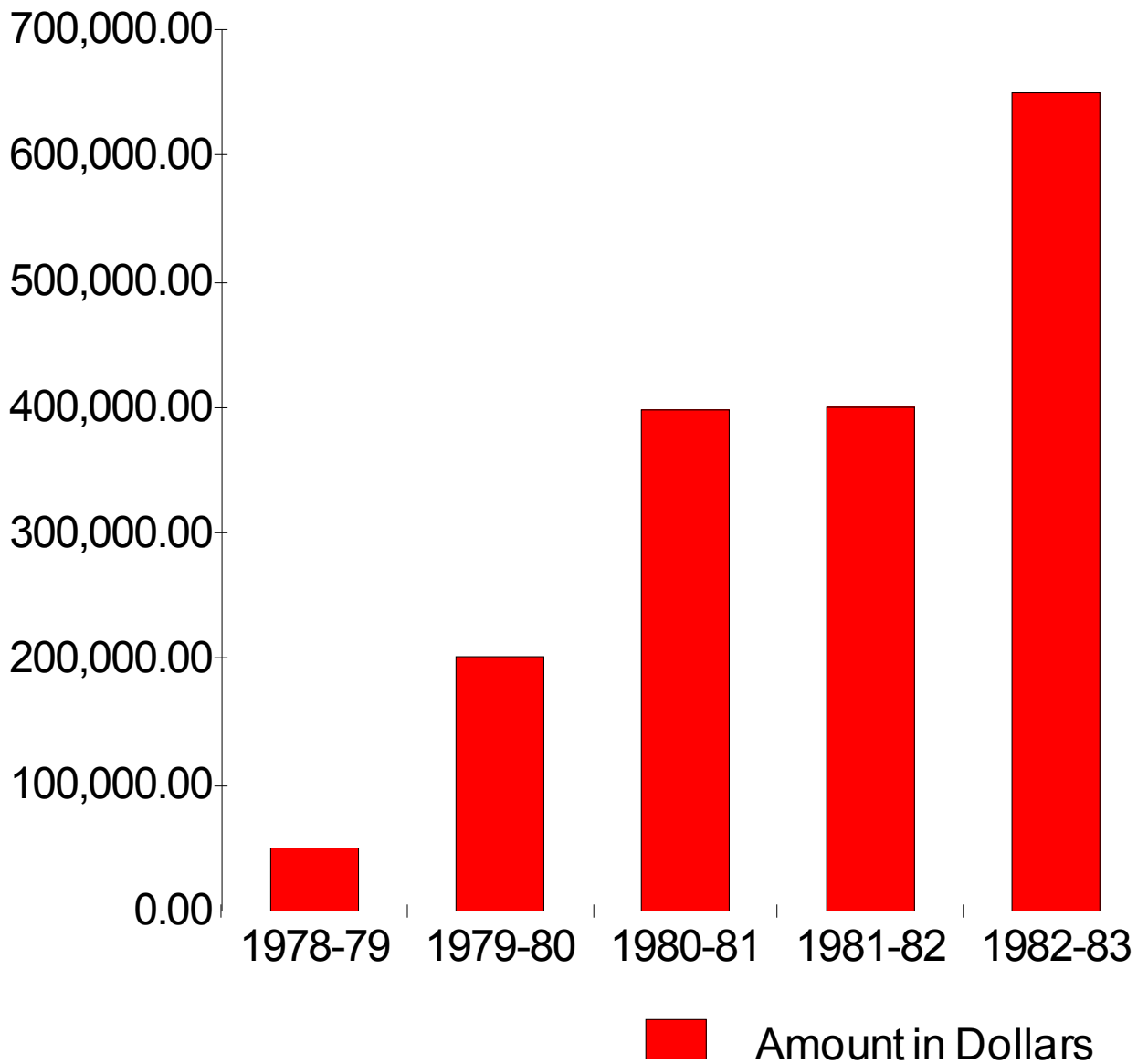
125. Sestito, *The Politics of Multiculturalism*, p.33.

126. Zangalis, Paper, p.7.

127. *ibid.*

128. Jakubowicz, 'Speaking in Tongues', p.107.

Growth of SBS Funding for Ethnic Public Broadcasting¹²⁹



Nevertheless, once the IMBC proposal was finally abandoned both the PBAA and the government realised that procedures were needed to determine the future of all aspects of ethnic broadcasting. In August 1981, the PBAA set up an Ethnic Broadcasting Subcommittee, which was later renamed the Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasting Standing Subcommittee (EMBSC) and was expected to hold a National Conference each year. The motions from this conference were to be ratified by the

129. Chart developed from figures in Law, Report of Activities 1979-80, p.4; Michael Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report, 1980-81, 29 August 1980, p.6, CBAA Archives, Sydney;

Michael Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report 1981-1982, 15 August 1982, p.4, CBAA Archives, Sydney; Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Appendix 1, p.16 and Department of Communications, *The Extension and Development of Ethnic Radio*, Canberra, AGPS, 1982, p.5.

following PBAA Conference.¹³⁰ By the end of 1981 the government had established an Interdepartmental Working Party to Examine Options for the Long Term Extension and Development of Ethnic Radio.¹³¹ This impressively named group achieved little by the time it was disbanded by the Hawke Labor government in May 1983.¹³² Concurrently the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (AIMA) was engaged in an evaluation of the implementation of the 'Galbally Report', which it completed in May 1982. The government accepted its recommendations that subsidies to ethnic public broadcasting services be increased to \$650,000 over three years with an additional \$90,000 for training courses for public broadcasters involved on the production and presentation of ethnic programs.¹³³

Actually, all this committee activity was a political smoke-screen to pacify those seeking the expansion of SBS radio. Both Minister for Communications, Ian Sinclair and Labor's Shadow Minister John Button, felt the government had bitten off too much in establishing 2EA and 3EA in the first place. As it would be wasteful and too expensive to extend the services, both men chose the public broadcasting sector as a more appropriate way of extending ethnic broadcasting.¹³⁴ Unfortunately, some

130. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Appendix 1, p.13; PBAA Annual Conference, 28-30 August 1981, Final Plenary Resolutions, p.7, CBAA Archives, Sydney; Lawe Davies, 'History', p.155.

131. Department of Communications, *The Extension and Development of Ethnic Radio*, p.17.

132. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Appendix 1, p.14.

133. Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, 'Evaluation', pp.2,53-54, in Department of Communications Library, Canberra; Michael Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report 1981-1982, 15 August 1982, p.4, CBAA Archives, Sydney; Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Appendix 1, p.14.

134. John Button reported to the PBAA Ethnic Conference that the ALP Conference in Canberra had resolved to expand ethnic radio through the public broadcasting

members of the Ethnic Affairs Commission were in favour of the expansion of a government ethnic broadcasting service and were angry and noisy that neither political party supported this position.¹³⁵ The Working Party was really a way of justifying a bipartisan political decision already taken. The majority of those in the ethnic communities were quite happy with the government's cheaper option of giving substantial financial support, with little regulatory interference, to ethnic public broadcasting. Thus, by the end of the Fraser government, ethnic public broadcasting seemed assured of its future despite the fact that the current arrangements had derived from a series of *ad hoc* decisions over a number of years as different factions within the ethnic communities gained varying degrees of political influence.

However, some of those expedient determinations came back to haunt the situation about the time that Michael Duffy, Minister for Communications when the Hawke Labor government, took office in March 1983. This was within the context of the fact that there was a shift in government attitude to multiculturalism generally. Patience has pointed out that even though he was aware of the demands of ethnic groups, Hawke was not an outspoken advocate of multiculturalism. Furthermore Labor still viewed Fraser's attitude as influenced by and supporting ideas of elitist, conservative ethnic groups.¹³⁶ This influenced the government's attitude to both the AIMA and SBS. Not surprisingly, when Duffy spelled out his policy, it included continuing the expansion of ethnic broadcasting through public broadcasting.¹³⁷ The three most important issues causing friction were that recipients of SBS subsidies were still officially expected to comply with the SBS Code of Principles, that SBS subsidies were only officially available

system: see John Button, 'PBAA Ethnic Conference', 10 June 1982, p.1, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

135. Hulshoff, Interview.

136. Patience, 'Immigration Policies', pp.418-419.

137. Michael Duffy, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.132, 13 September 1983, pp.722-723.

to ethnic public broadcasters where the EA stations were not available and that there were moves to transfer the responsibility for distributing government funding to ethnic public broadcasters from the SBS to the newly formed Public Broadcasting Foundation (PBF).

The SBS Code of Principles became a problem because ethnic public broadcasting was now also covered by the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) regulations which were different. When the Minister for Communications had directed SBS to investigate 2XX in 1982 for a breach of the Code in its Arabic language program, these two bodies produced divergent findings.¹³⁸ Feelings at the PBAA National Conference in August 1983, and particularly those of George Zangalis, ran so high that a motion was passed that these criteria no longer apply to public broadcasters.¹³⁹ Stewart West of Labor's Left faction was Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs when the Hawke government took office.¹⁴⁰ Zangalis may have felt he would now have more influence with the new government than he had under Fraser. This was not the only issue he was vocal about.

Zangalis was also behind the discontent over subsidies not being available where EA stations penetrated. He felt his own station in Melbourne and 2SER-FM and the eight of the nine local stations in Sydney who broadcast ethnic programs, should not be prevented from receiving SBS subsidies as these stations better served the needs of their communities than the EA stations. Since he was also behind the push for an ethnic

138. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, pp.252-253. As well as being one of those ethnic broadcasters to move from 3ZZ to 3CR Zangalis was also Chairman of the Media Committee of the Victorian Ethnic Communities Council.

139. PBAA, 'Resolutions Carried From The Final Plenary Session', PBAA National Conference 19-21 August 1983, Resolution 27, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

140. Patience, 'Immigration Policies', p.419.

public station in Melbourne, he lobbied hard for these conditions to be lifted.¹⁴¹

Ethnic public broadcasters were becoming dissatisfied with the way SBS subsidies were being used within the stations which received them. The subsidies often went to the stations which broadcast ethnic programs. These stations could use the funds as they saw fit. Many chose to use them for the general running of the station, rather than distributing them to the ethnic broadcasters for their own programs.¹⁴² At the Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters Conference, in Canberra in August 1983, it was resolved to put a motion to the PBAA Conference that some 'ethnic' monies be channelled towards their own state broadcasting councils.¹⁴³ This motion was voted 'not to be put' to the PBAA Conference as the PBAA Executive feared loss of overall control of public broadcasting.¹⁴⁴ Ethnic public broadcasters became very angry.¹⁴⁵ Their anger grew when the PBAA sought SBS subsidies to ethnic public broadcasting to be redirected through the new PBF.

Concurrently with this agitation the PBAA had set up the PBF to be the vehicle for the government's subsidies for general public broadcasting. When the IMBC proposal had failed the Minister for Communications had replaced the Australian Film Commission as the source for these funds. On coming to office the Labor government had led the PBAA to believe that if it set up its own body the government would endow

141. Ada De Lacy, 'Ethnic Radio - Where to next?', *Listening Post*, February 1983, p.23; Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, p.249.

142. Tony Manicaros, Personal Interview, at the Gold Coast, 30 November 1996. Manicaros was a broadcaster with 4EB and the first President of the NEMBC.

143. Michael Law, Memo 19 July 1983, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

144. Lawe Davies, 'History', p.156.

145. Manicaros, Interview.

it with \$15m to invest to provide ongoing general funding for public broadcasters.¹⁴⁶ With the endowment failing to materialise the PBAA was looking for other functions for this body it had created. An arrangement was made for subsidies for Aboriginal broadcasting to be distributed through the PBF rather than SBS.¹⁴⁷ It was expected that the number of public stations broadcasting ethnic programs would probably rise substantially with the Labor government's avowed support for ethnic public broadcasting. For this reason, there was strong support on the PBAA Committee for the government subsidies for ethnic public broadcasting also to be transferred from SBS to the PBF. In the light of their other experiences this idea was bitterly opposed by ethnic public broadcasters.¹⁴⁸

With all these issues unresolved the new Labor government was unclear as to the type of broadcasting services most suited to the needs of ethnic communities. Minister Duffy set up a Committee of Review of SBS on 6 December 1983.¹⁴⁹ The Chairman Xavier Connor, QC, was assisted by Clare Dunne and Walter Lippman,¹⁵⁰ with Michael Thompson as Special Consultant.¹⁵¹ This review, whose recommendations were

146. Hulshoff, Interview; Staley, Interview; Evans, Interview. This quite public verbal assurance which was never incorporated into written policy, will be dealt with in more detail in the next chapter on public broadcasting funding.

147. Molnar, 'The Democratisation of Communications Technology', p.426. In fact, of the \$500,000 received by the PBF in 1984-85, \$150,000 was specified for Aboriginal broadcasting. See Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Appendix 1, p.16.

148. Hulshoff, Interview; Manicaros Interview.

149. Michael Duffy, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.134, 6 December 1983, p.3302.

150. Walter Lippman was also the Chairman of the Victorian Ethnic Communities Council.

151. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, p.ix.

largely accepted by the government, evaluated not only SBS but all multicultural and multilingual services. As a result it deliberated on all those contentious issues facing ethnic public broadcasters at this time.

The committee agreed with those ethnic public broadcasters who felt they should be allowed to apply for their own licences wherever there was sufficient demand irrespective of the presence on an EA station, further proposing a new 'ethnic' category of public broadcasting licence.¹⁵² Surveys in Victoria in November 1981 and March 1982 had shown that there was unfulfilled demand for ethnic broadcasting, particularly in Melbourne.¹⁵³ While Connor's committee was conducting its review a further report was being prepared by Penny Phillippou for the Victorian Ethnic Communities Council recommending the feasibility of a public ethnic station in Melbourne.¹⁵⁴ Not surprisingly, particularly in view of Lippman's position on both organisations, Connor's committee recommended that the government call for applications for a licence in Melbourne as soon as possible. It supported similar licences in Sydney, Perth and Canberra once demand was established.¹⁵⁵ However, although the recommendations included the extension of government funding to ethnic public broadcasters in Melbourne and Sydney

152. This was one recommendation which the government did not follow. Rather than increase the number of categories of public broadcasting licences Minister for Communications, Michael Duffy told the PBAA in August 1985, that the number of categories would be reduced from three to two, abolishing the old Education "E" class and categorising all licensees as either Community "C" or Special "S". See Michael Duffy, M., Speech to PBAA National Conference 16 August 1985, p.2, CBAA Archives, Sydney; Kibby, 'Radio as Communication', pp.46-47.

153. Gaetano Rando, 'Multilingual Programs on Victorian Radio', pp.52-53.

154. Penny Phillippou, 'A Report on the Feasibility of Establishing a Public Ethnic Radio Station in Melbourne', Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, June 1984, copy in Department of Communications Library, Canberra.

155. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Synopsis, p.24; Thompson, Interview.

this was only to the large city-wide stations and did not include the low powered community stations in Sydney.

Connor's committee also agreed with ethnic public broadcasters about the SBS Code of Principles. On the grounds that ethnic public broadcasters were required to abide by the ABT program standards the report recommended that ethnic public broadcasters SBS funding subsidies should be no longer dependent on abiding by the Code.¹⁵⁶

The review was being conducted at a time when real conflict was developing about the best way to channel government funding to ethnic public broadcasters which led to the final breakdown in relations between the ethnic public broadcasters and the PBAA. This was significant because thirty one out of the fifty six public broadcasting stations carried ethnic programs¹⁵⁷ and a majority of these were entitled to subsidies. The report acknowledged receiving 'voluminous correspondence from both sides making claims and counterclaims'.¹⁵⁸ The question of whether the SBS should relinquish funding of ethnic broadcasting was a contentious one. Some ethnic public broadcasters felt they were in a client relationship with SBS while ever it was providing a substantial part of their income and sought some other source of funding than the national ethnic broadcaster. On the other hand most ethnic public broadcasters were very suspicious of the PBAA and its suggestion that the PBF would be a suitable funding source for ethnic public broadcasting, having already taken over the SBS role of funding Aboriginal broadcasting.¹⁵⁹ These broadcasters felt that the PBAA was trying to take over the ethnic subsidies and that they would disappear into the melting-pot of

156. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Synopsis, p.26.

157. *ibid.*, Appendix 1, p.15.

158. *ibid.*, p.244.

159. Molnar, 'The Democratisation of Communications Technology'.

general funds never to be seen again by those for whom they were intended.¹⁶⁰

The conflict came to a head, in October 1984, at the ethnic public broadcasting conference in Brisbane. Many participants believed that the PBAA executive connived with some station managers, as distinct from volunteer ethnic broadcasters, to stack the meeting and pass a resolution handing over all funding responsibility to the PBF. It was claimed that this was an attempt to guarantee the already *de facto* arrangement of general stations having a claim on ethnic funding.¹⁶¹ Manicaros claimed ethnic public broadcasters and their state councils resigned *en masse* from the PBAA, leaving it without any further ethnic committees. However, there is evidence that a much reduced EMBSC remained.¹⁶² Nevertheless those who had left the PBAA formed their own group which eventually became the National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council (NEMBC), with Manicaros as its first President,

160. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, p.244. Manicaros, Tony, Personal Interview; Ada de Lacy found herself in an invidious position for, as President of the PBAA, she was bound to support publicly her committee's decision to recommend the PBF take over the funding of ethnic public broadcasting. However, as an ethnic broadcaster from the same station as Manicaros, 4EB, she understood the concerns of those ethnic public broadcasters who felt their funding threatened by such a move and argued caution at the PBAA committee meetings. Nevertheless some ethnic public broadcasters, led by Manicaros, have regarded her as a traitor to the cause ever since. See Hulshoff, Interview.

161. Lawe Davies, 'History', p.159.

162. Effie Sfrantzis, as Convener of the EMBSC, reported to the PBAA Conference in August 1986, that the EMBSC had held a National Conference of Ethnic Public Broadcasters in July 1985 and that a joint conference of the EMBSC and the NEMBC was to be held in September 1986. See Effie Sfrantzis, 'Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters Standing Committee', in PBAA Annual Report 1985-86, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

despite the fact that the PBAA fought hard against the idea.¹⁶³ Walter Lippman was a strong supporter of these developments.¹⁶⁴

Since these problems erupted while Connor and his committee were compiling their report, there was some dissension in its final recommendations on this matter. Although the committee members were unanimous in recommending that the government increase its funding for ethnic public broadcasting from \$650,000 to \$1m for 1985-86,¹⁶⁵ the members failed to reach agreement on how the funding distribution situation should be resolved. Lippman was in favour of SBS or its successor continuing as the permanent funding source for ethnic public radio, keeping the money away from the PBF and the grasp of general public broadcasters. Connor and Dunne were in favour of this only as a temporary measure. They felt that ultimately some other organisation should carry out this function.¹⁶⁶ Although they were aware that the PBAA committee felt the PBF was the most suitable body, Connor and Dunne were fully conscious that many ethnic public broadcasters were violently opposed to this move, and did not recommend it as a satisfactory solution.¹⁶⁷

Early in 1985 the government found itself in a position where it was forced to accede to the PBAA proposition that the PBF was the most suitable conduit for government ethnic public broadcasting funding. SBS wrote to the minister saying it no longer wanted to distribute the money to ethnic broadcasters.¹⁶⁸ It was obviously

163. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*; Hulshoff, Interview; Manicaros, Interview.

164. Lawe Davies, 'History', p.160.

165. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia*, Synopsis, p.26.

166. *ibid.*, Synopsis, p.25.

167. *ibid.*, Synopsis, p.244.

168. Lawe Davies, 'History', p.161. Manicaros was convinced that Ada Hulshoff, who was both President of the PBAA and a member of the SBS Board when the letter was written, was behind this move and this further convinced him that she was a

more convenient for the government to have general, ethnic and aboriginal public broadcasting subsidies delivered through the one body if it was not politically suicidal. The objections from ethnic public broadcasters did not create sufficient impact to deter Minister Duffy from announcing at the PBAA Conference that for the 1985-86 financial year, the PBF would take on the responsibility 'for commonwealth funding to encourage ethnic programming on public stations'.¹⁶⁹

Manicaros and the NEMBC realised that they had lost the fight to keep ethnic funding distribution away from the PBF. They turned their attention to reforming the PBF to ensure that ethnic public broadcasting subsidies reached those for whom they

traitor to the cause. Hulshoff, on the other hand claimed that she was surprised by the letter, which would indicate that it came from management rather than the Board. However, she did understand that SBS felt that ethnic public broadcasters were competitors and was embarrassed at having to fund an activity that it felt threatened by and hostile to. She sensed that SBS felt the creation of the PBF gave it a way out of a difficult situation. See Manicaros, Interview; Hulshoff Interview; Lawe Davies, 'History'. It is difficult to ascertain exactly how much influence the SBS Board had in such initiatives but head of SBS radio, Stepan Kerkyasharian, made it clear that he felt that as the expanding community ethnic broadcasting sector stifled the development of SBS radio it was a rival to his enterprise. See Stepan Kerkyasharian 'Ethnic Broadcasting in the Nineties', Keynote Address at the NEMBC Tenth National Public Ethnic Broadcasting Conference, Sydney, August 1990, p.4, cited in Lawe Davies, 'History', p.144. Jakubowicz seemed to assume a considerable amount of power when he was acting Chairman of SBS, so Manicaros' accusations may not be absurd, even though they appear tinged with self-interest and paranoia. See Jakubowicz, 'Speaking in Tongues', pp.116-117.

169. Michael Duffy, Speech to PBAA National Conference, 16 August 1985, p.5, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

were intended. They succeeded in establishing a PBF Ethnic Grants Advisory Committee (EGAC) which consisted of two members from the NEMBC, two members from the PBAA's EMBSC and a member of the PBF Board.¹⁷⁰ However, the EGAC could only advise the PBF Board, which still made the decisions. Manicaros remained unhappy because there was no ethnic representation on the PBF Board,¹⁷¹ and that the real decision making seemed to be in the hands of Executive Director, Brendan O'Dwyer. When a financial crisis occurred in the PBF, which led the PBAA to lose confidence in the managerial ability of Brendan O'Dwyer in 1988, there was a complete restructuring of the PBF, which to Manicaros' satisfaction, now had a member of the EGAC on the Board, namely Manicaros himself.¹⁷²

With the question of the funding of ethnic public broadcasting being resolved, and the government having accepted Connor's recommendations, it was now possible to establish more ethnic public radio stations, even where EA services existed. Although the most obvious ethnic community support for such a station came from Melbourne, the first licence granted was to 6EBA-FM in Perth on 27 July 1988, followed by 3ZZZ-FM in Melbourne on 15 August 1988.

170. The first member of the PBF Board on the EGAC was Moss Cass, Minister for the Media in the previous Whitlam Labor Government. Cass became Chairman of the EGAC. See Manicaros, Interview and Lawe Davies, 'History', p.162.

171. Again there was conflict between Manicaros and Hulshoff (previously known as De Lacy) for Manicaros believed that without direct ethnic representation the PBF Board was unbalanced. Hulshoff, now Executive Director of the PBAA, believed that with Tony Staley and Moss Cass, two previous minister from opposite sides of politics, Susan Horowitz, formerly of the US Public Broadcasting Service, Stella Cornelli of the peace movement and Peter Westerway, former academic and departmental officer and now member of the ABT, the Board was balanced. See Manicaros, Interview.; Lawe Davies, 'History'.

172. Manicaros, Interview; Lawe Davies, 'History', p.164.

In Sydney the situation was more confused. There was already substantial ethnic programming on 2SER-FM and the local suburban stations. Sydney was the only capital city to have low powered suburban stations when this became an issue.¹⁷³ Not only was there not the obvious demand that had existed in both Perth and Melbourne, but there was apprehension, particularly from 2SER-FM where it was feared the station would lose its ethnic subsidies, that an ethnic public broadcasting station would dissipate the efforts of those already broadcasting on existing public stations. While the government had approved the possibility of these stations only where there was an obvious demand, some members of the Department of Communications had their own agenda and pushed for applications to be called for one in Sydney even though there was no pressure for such a station.¹⁷⁴ A licence was granted to 2000-FM in Sydney 14 March 1991.¹⁷⁵

In the meantime the SBS service had expanded to many more centres, so that by the early 1990s both government run and public broadcasting ethnic programming substantially satisfied the needs of Australia's diverse communities and was supported by both sides of politics. If there was an 'ethnic vote' to be enticed, it was no longer going to be influenced by the supply of suitable broadcasting services. By the mid-1990s, however, people were beginning to question whether in fact there was an

173. Both Michael Thompson and Ada Hulshoff were against the idea. The irony of that was that Thompson later became the first manager of the station when it was established. See Thompson, Interview and Hulshoff, Interview.

174. Thompson, Interview.

175. ABT, *Annual Report 1990-91*, Canberra, AGPS, 1991, p.26. As manager, Thompson found the fighting between the ethnic groups very difficult and feeling he had left the station in a financially sound state, departed to become Executive Director and later, General Manager of the CBAA in August 1993. By the time he was interviewed in April 1994, Thompson reported that 'They are all fighting and its kinda falling apart. There's all this positioning for power and they threw out the

'ethnic vote' to be captured at all. It was now being suggested that migrants did not determine their vote on ethnic issues, but rather on education, employment, taxes and health; the questions that determined the votes of the Australian population as a whole.¹⁷⁶ Murray Goot has questioned the concept of 'issue voting' as being the predominant determinant of the Australian electorate, and has put forward a case that 'class voting' or occupational based voting is still an important influence. He has suggested that certain dubious data gathering techniques have led to the recent emphasis on the importance of issues in determining the way people vote.¹⁷⁷ Whether 'issue voting' or 'class voting' is more prevalent, it is doubtful whether ethnicity is the most important issue for enough issue-determined voters for it to be meaningful to talk of an 'ethnic vote'.

However, all governments in the 1970s had believed there was an 'ethnic vote' and had spent millions of dollars on setting up a government ethnic broadcasting service as part of an effort to win that vote. It was the realisation that this could be done

ECC and there's all kinds of stuff going on.' See Thompson, Interview and CBAA, 'Annual Report 1993-1994', 1994, p.25, CBAA Archives, Sydney. The situation deteriorated and in December 1996, 2000-FM was ordered by the NSW Supreme Court to be liquidated, after unresolvable internal disputes. It appeared the matters were brought to court by people within the station. See Matthew Arnison's, posting on the CBAA email discussion group <matthewa@Physics.usyd.edu.au> email discussion group: camp-l@peg.apc.org, 21 January 1997. This was only the second time a public broadcasting station had been closed down, the other was 2CT, in 1981, again after internal disputes and financial mismanagement. See ABT, *Annual Report 1980-81*, Canberra, AGPS, 1981, p.37.

176. SBS TV program *Vox Populi*, 16 April 1995.

177. Murray Goot, 'Class Voting, Issue Voting and Electoral Volatility', J. Brett, J. Gillespie and M. Goot, eds, *Developments in Australian Politics*, Melbourne, Macmillan, 1994, pp.180-181.

with far less expense, and the support of many of the ethnic communities which led to government support for the expansion of ethnic public broadcasting rather than immediately expanding its own service. However with such conflicts of interest within the ethnic communities, it was inevitable that the government services would be expanded as well. Neither side of politics doubted, at that time, that the 'ethnic vote' was there to be seduced and that ethnic broadcasting was a significant issue, it was just a question of trying to establish the best way of doing it, bearing in mind that the ethnic community was not a cohesive whole, but a series of mini often conflicting communities.

Funding ethnic public broadcasting was tied to the question of funding for public broadcasting generally. The development of government policy on funding for public broadcasting will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER ELEVEN - FUNDING PUBLIC BROADCASTING.

It has already been shown that early recommendations to government for the introduction of public broadcasting included government run and government funded stations. Governments of both political persuasions were prepared to consider this possibility since public broadcasting was envisaged as largely providing necessary public utility type services which were not viable for the commercial sector. The concept was feasible at the time because the economy was buoyant. Unlike the USA, where broadcasting stations were issued with licences irrespective of whether they could survive financially, the Australian government had been committed, since the early 1930s, to issuing licences only where economic viability was expected. With non-commercial stations this meant that it had to be anticipated that they would be able to function on the available funds, and not run at a loss. Before the idea of public broadcasting was developed into a significant reality, world oil prices exploded, the economy collapsed and the government found itself in financial difficulties. Even those of its members, who were particularly in favour of the proposition, were forced to re-examine the whole question of the government's ability to run and fund these new stations. This chapter details the government's attitude towards funding public broadcasting from its inception to the early 1990s. In the process it examines the factors that influenced the government in determining to what extent and by what method it would channel financial support to public broadcasting.¹ Some problems arose which

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1. Broadcasters received government funding for other reasons. VL2UV was funded by the AUC. 2WEB received a special disadvantaged grant from the Schools Commission. 2REM-FM applied for an innovative grant from the Schools Commission. See Donald Tynan, 'A Feasibility Study on the Establishment of a Public Broadcasting Station in Albury-Wodonga', 27 February 1977, Department of Communications Library, Canberra. 4MBS-FM, received funding from the Music Board of the Australia Council. See Elaine Darling, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vol.127, 21 April 1982, p.1625. Here 'government funding'

had to be solved, even though the funding was always insignificant in the context of the total government budget and the problems arose at a time when public broadcasting was losing the little influence it had once had over government.

Even if the government's financial situation had remained in a healthier state, the decisions on funding public broadcasting would not have been clear cut, because potential public broadcasters were by no means unanimous about wanting government money. Those in favour saw it as a government responsibility to ensure that the financially disadvantaged members of the community had equal access to the new form of communication with wealthy members who could afford to self-fund. Others feared such funding as a means by which government could gain control of program output. Only groups with large numbers of enthusiastic and dedicated members, such as the music broadcasting societies and the Christian groups, could anticipate funding their activities primarily from listener subscriptions combined with volunteer labour. Other groups, wishing to run their own stations, passionately favoured often conflicting mixes of government funding, listener subscriptions, sponsorship, volunteer labour, the use of local government buildings, other fundraising activities and in the case of the university stations, funding from their own institutions. The costs of operating any station were significant and it would have been impossible for the government to make arrangements to please everyone's different desired funding methods.²

describes federal government funding to public broadcasters, as broadcasters, rather than funding received because of other specific factors.

2. Costs of running even a small FM station, which are much less than a comparable AM station for technical reasons, have always been substantial. Even when capital costs were kept to a minimum by using second hand or homemade equipment and accommodation was provided free of charge, some running costs, including telephone landlines, electricity and archival recording tapes could not be avoided. In 1980, Michael Law claimed 'It's been estimated that even the smallest station needs 1½ paid staff as a rock bottom minimum, also around \$45,000 is currently

Officers of the Department of the Media had their own agenda. In the 'Working Paper on Public Broadcasting', produced in October 1974, they recommended that the government spend approximately \$8.5m in the first three years of public broadcasting operations on experimental stations, and on a secretariat and research facilities.³ The government did not accept this proposal. The only time it directly fully funded any public stations was when it perceived it to be in the government's own best interests. On this occasion the express aim was to publicise the government's Medibank health insurance scheme to non-English speaking migrants. The EA stations in Sydney and Melbourne were set up as public broadcasting stations run by community committees but fully funded by the government. This hybrid arrangement proved unsatisfactory and in a few months these became government stations, in every sense of the word. However, for the duration it proved that the government could find money to fund public broadcasting, even in financially difficult times, if it seemed to be sufficiently advantageous. Probably because of this model, the Department of the Media still saw government funding as an option for public broadcasting and, in May 1975, prepared a draft Cabinet submission for the Minister, Senator Doug McClelland, requesting \$2.23 million. McClelland was replaced by Dr Moss Cass as Minister before this submission reached Cabinet. Cabinet refused to meet Cass's submission for a much smaller amount.⁴ With the early funding of the EA stations but the rejection of Cass's submissions as

the minimum revenue on which you can hope to run a small community station at all effectively'. Michael Law, 'Executive Director's Column', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.6, October 1980, p.3. See Chapter Twelve for an example of what happened when one station, 2BBB-FM tried to operate without any paid staff.

3. Department of the Media, 'Working Paper on Public Broadcasting', 16 October 1974, p.11.
4. Geoff Evans, Telephone Interview 10 September 1995; PBAA, 'A Policy for Development in Public Radio - A Proposal to the Minister for Communications' 19 March 1987, pp.23, 25.

examples, public broadcasters were provided with a guide as to how the government would react. In spite of the government's commitment to their sector in principle, and the obvious support from some officers in the Department of the Media, public broadcasters realised that, if they wanted any government funding, they would have to present a unified voice with considerable electoral significance.

Once the government acknowledged that it did not want to incur the cost of running stations itself and accepted that the majority of public broadcasters wanted to run their own stations, it became clear that it was in everyone's best interests if government monies, provided specifically for broadcasting, were allocated by indirect funding.⁵ This method not only removed public broadcasters' fear of government control, it also removed the blame for unpopular decisions directly on the government. The Prime Minister's Priorities Review Staff (PRS) found further reasons why indirect funding was more suitable. Their report claimed that if the licensing and funding body were the same organisation this would undermine both functions. Funding should come from 'sources concerned about radio as a means to social and cultural objectives [and] should be seen by the local community as the forgoing of other opportunities available to it for social investment'.⁶ In order that this process could take place government funds had to be channelled through a statutory authority, which determined distribution, rather than funding coming directly through the government department.

Relevant officers recommended a variety of conduits for the distribution of this financial assistance. Myles Wright, Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board (ABCB) was in favour of using the existing government funding source,

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5. Most funding recommendations recognised that funds provided by other government departments or agencies, like the Schools Commission, the Australian Universities Commission, the Department of Labor and Immigration and the Department of Urban and Regional Development, for specific purposes would be given directly.
 6. PRS, *Report on Radio*, Canberra, AGPS, 1974, pp.34-35.

the Australian Assistance Plan (AAP).⁷ Minister McClelland suggested that the Regional Councils for Social Development established under the AAP would be appropriate. He reasoned that community broadcasting stations could be considered as a community service, an integral part of community development generally, the cost of which could be born by the overall community budget.⁸ Having been unsuccessful in their recommendations for direct departmental funding, officers of the Department of the Media recommended in October 1975, that a primary funding body called the Public Broadcasting Funding Committee should be created to distribute government funds to public broadcasters. Although acknowledging that some funding had already been made available through the Film, Radio and Television Board of the Australia Council, they felt this was limited in scope, applying specifically to the creative artistic aspects of radio. The proposed committee was intended to cover the funding of all aspects of public broadcasting.⁹

While all these deliberations were underway the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia (PBAA) had been established to fight for the public broadcasting cause, including funding. The Association was formed as licences were being offered to two music broadcasting societies, the existing restricted station at the University of Adelaide, twelve other tertiary institutions and two community groups. These offers came from the government with the special condition that there would be

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7. Myles Wright, Memorandum for the Honorable the Minister for the Media, 'Provision of Funds for Community Broadcasting Stations', undated, probably early 1975, and never presented to the Minister because of new policy development, Evans Archives, with present writer.
 8. Doug McClelland, Draft letter to Minister for Social Security, Bill Hayden, 'Provision of Funds for Community Broadcasting Stations', undated, probably the end of 1974, Evans Archives, with present writer.
 9. Working Party on Public Broadcasting, *Report to the Minister for the Media*, Canberra, AGPS, 1975, pp.51-52.

no direct government funding. This was a political possibility because the government was in severe financial difficulties and these groups were desperate for licences. Furthermore all these aspirants had other avenues as viable funding options. They were able to function without direct government funding.

However, the PBAA was finding it very difficult to function without government funding. Furthermore, the Convener, Peter Pockley, was accustomed to government funded enterprises, being an ex-ABC man and currently at the University of NSW. He was philosophically in favour of government monies being re-apportioned to include his enterprise. 'The galling thing is that the financial momentum of established taxpayers' broadcasting, the ABC, rolls on simply because it is so big. There is now a strong case which public broadcasters must pursue with united energy, for a slice of the government's financial cake for broadcasting, now that a chunk of the frequencies resources has been handed over. Which new licensee wouldn't give his (*sic*!) eye teeth for the total cost of a single ABC-Television documentary - some \$20-25,000?'¹⁰ With this attitude Pockley applied to Minister McClelland four times between March and July 1974 for \$30,000 'to finance the planning of cooperative services to assist autonomous and locally controlled broadcasting groups'.¹¹ When this failed, with the Prime Minister welcoming preliminary details from the PRS report, Pockley redirected his request directly to Gough Whitlam.¹² He assumed that, since the government clearly supported

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10. Peter Pockley, 'Editorial - Public Licences Welcome But More Needed', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.1, October 1975, p.1.
 11. PBAA, 'Application for Initiating Grant from Australian Government', 2 September 1974, Evans Archives, with present writer; Peter Pockley, Press Release, 'Minister for Media Refuses Support for Public Broadcasters', 11 August 1974, Evans Archives, with present writer.
 12. Peter Pockley, Telegram to Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, 11 August 1974, Evans Archives, with present writer; Peter Pockley, Letter to Prime Minister E. G.,

the establishment of public broadcasting in principle, the ministerial refusals indicated that the department had its own agenda. Having recently seen Document 'J', the Department of the Media's secret plan for public broadcasting, Pockley concluded that the department was determined to keep complete control of public broadcasting itself.¹³ There is a sense in which this is true, in as much as the government managed to find the money to set up the EA stations, over which it had complete control, early the following year. However, Pockley was not requesting money to set up a station. Basically he was seeking funds to make the PBAA a more effective lobby group. When his funding application is seen in this light, it becomes clear that the continued refusals may have had little bearing on the government's attitude to funding public broadcasting itself. In any case all the advice the government was receiving pointed to indirect funding, not grants directly from the Minister for the Media and his Department. There was even less chance that funds would be forthcoming from the Prime Minister himself, no matter how much Whitlam may have been personally in favour of both the informative and creatively artistic aspects of the concept of public broadcasting. Certainly, Whitlam has not claimed that funding public broadcasting was an important issue for him.¹⁴ However, McClelland denied that his decision was influenced by the advice he had been given either, claiming that he was solely influenced by the fact that 'no votes for grants are provided by the Treasury funds for my Department to make for that purpose'.¹⁵ That, of course was true, but may not have been the whole explanation.

The government's early attitude to funding was clarified late in 1974, when the Film and Television Board of the Australian Council for the Arts, under the

Whitlam, 2 September 1974, copy in Bednall Archives, Colin Blore Bednall, MS5546, Box 1, Folder 2, National Library Manuscript Room, Canberra.

13. Pockley, Press Release, 11 August 1974.
14. Gough Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government 1972-1975*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1985, pp.579-580.
15. Doug McClelland, *CPD*, Senate, vol.60, 14 August 1974, p.877.

Chairmanship of Philip Adams, sought the inclusion of radio in its function and title¹⁶ while the Council was being reconstituted as the statutory body, the Australia Council.¹⁷ Whitlam personally selected members of the council boards from lists submitted to him and Pockley was chosen as the radio representative on Adams' board.¹⁸

Subsequently Pockley and the PBAA received a grant in May 1975, for \$15,500 from the Film, Radio and Television Board of the Australia Council, which was the first government monies ever received by public broadcasters as broadcasters. Pockley claimed that the Department of the Media and Minister McClelland were opposed to the inclusion of radio in the board's functions and opposed to the PBAA's particular application, as this would entail a loss of power and control over public broadcasting.¹⁹ This explanation is unlikely as both the department and the minister had accepted that relevant reports had recommended indirect financial assistance, rather than full direct funding, and had put forward their own proposals for such by particular statutory bodies.

However, the *ad hoc* nature of these developments did lead to a protest, from the one public broadcaster actually on air at this time. 5UV was upset that its

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16. In notes Geoff Evans made for himself, late October 1974, Evans Archives, with present writer, he recorded that the 'Film & T.V. Board of the Australian Council for the Arts is seeking to include "Radio" in its title and become the funding body for public radio'.
 17. The Australia Council was created as a statutory body by the *Australia Council Act* in March 1975.
 18. Peter Pockley, Personal Interview at UTS, Sydney, 9 May 1994. Whitlam's personal interest in the promotion of funding for the arts is detailed in two works, Joan Rydon and Diane Mackay, 'Federalism and the Arts', *Australian Cultural History*, no.3, 1984, pp.91-92; Jim Davidson, 'Mr Whitlam's Cultural Revolution', *Journal of Australian Studies*, no.20, 1987, pp.88-89.
 19. Pockley, 'Editorial - Public Licences Welcome but More Needed'.

application for a minimal grant to trial access broadcasting had been refused on the grounds that the board had no funds for access radio. This, when the PBAA received \$15,500 for research into access radio and the government was totally funding the EA stations, which 5UV saw as access radio.²⁰ By the following year, the situation had changed, with Adams' resignation from the board.²¹ Under the new Chairman, Tom Jeffrey, the allocation to public broadcasting was increased to \$73,600 divided between ten different public radio groups as 'seeding' grants. Some of these groups had been among those who had recently received offers of licences on the proviso that there would be no direct government funding. 5UV received \$10,000 and Jeffrey gave details of the board's policy for assistance to public radio.²²

From this time, governments of both political persuasions accepted responsibility for financial assistance to public broadcasters through some kind of independent body but neither reconsidered the concept of full direct funding. Public broadcasters had to come to grips with this reality as Michael Law and Max Keogh conceded when reporting that 'the prospect of significant financial assistance seems remote. Only a small vote has been earmarked in the budget of the Film, Radio and Television Board of the Australia Council.'²³ After recommendations from McKinsey and Co. in 1975, the functions of the board were transferred to the Australian Film

20. 5UV took their complaint to South Australian Senator Harold Young. See Harold Young, *CPD*, Senate, vol.64, 14 May 1975, p.1415.

21. Michael MacKellar revealed Adam's resignation in his speech on the *Appropriation Bill*. See Michael MacKellar, *CPD*, House of Representative, vol.97, 8 October 1975, p.1859.

22. Tom Jeffrey, 'Film, Radio and TV Board Policy', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.2, March 1976, p.12-13.

23. Michael Law and Max Keogh, 'Report on Community Demand', Sydney Broadcasting Study Group, 1975, p.13.

Commission (AFC)²⁴ but the principles remained the same. Claims by the PBAA many years later that the Labor government would have fully funded public broadcasting if it had been longer in office cannot be substantiated.²⁵ Officers of the Department of the Media had strongly supported direct full funding, but the government as a whole had not. Even Moss Cass, Minister when Labor lost power, favoured only limited financial assistance.²⁶

When the Coalition took over, at the end of 1975, it basically accepted the funding arrangements of the previous government. The AFC remained the conduit for general public broadcasting grants until 1980 and advertising was banned. A number of stations used sponsorship, which had only been officially defined for the two community stations with 'restricted commercial' licences, 3CR and 2CT. These arrangements had emerged as the government confronted immediate problems with political expediency. Being committed to the economic viability of public broadcasting while only being willing to provide some financial assistance, the government was forced to allow all public broadcasters to generate revenue by means of sponsorship announcements as a restricted form of advertising, similar to that of 3CR and 2CT.

Actual advertising was banned for two, almost contradictory reasons. The government and commercial broadcasters feared, that by diverting revenue from

24. Rydon and Mackay, p.93.

25. PBAA, 'A Policy for Development in Public Radio - a Proposal to the Minister for Communications' 19 March 1987, pp.23,25.

26. Geoff Evans, who was Cass's secretary at the time, revealed his minister's attitude in a telephone interview 10 September 1995. This claim by the PBAA is another example of the 'Whitlam Myth', whereby the Whitlam government was given undue recognition for developments in public broadcasting after it was dismissed in November 1975. See Phoebe Thornley, 'Debunking the "Whitlam" Myth: the Annals of Public Broadcasting Revisited', *Media International Australia*, no.77, August 1995, pp.155-164.

commercial stations, advertising on public stations could threaten the economic viability of the commercial stations.²⁷ On the other hand, most public broadcasters were themselves opposed to advertising as they did not want to be tainted with the tag of commercial enterprise. They feared the advertisers would seek to influence programming.²⁸ Some stations, like the cable station 2CHY, in Coffs Harbour, where there was no commercial station, seized on sponsorship as a means of raising substantial funds.²⁹ The majority used a mixture of government grants, sponsorship and other forms of fundraising as ways of generating the necessary revenue to keep them operational. The following graph of 2XX income in 1983-1984 is fairly typical of the sources used by stations that did not have an ideological commitment to a particular type of funding.

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27. Mark Armstrong, *Broadcasting Law and Policy in Australia*, Sydney, Butterworths, 1982, p.73. In fact, in some areas, such as Bathurst, a commercial broadcaster felt generally threatened by the very arrival of a public station.
 28. One exception was Max Keogh, who was a rare early public broadcaster. He actually advocated advertisements on public radio. Later in this chapter it will be shown that it was the 1990s before Keogh's views became more acceptable.
 29. Towards the end of 1975, 2CHY had raised \$15,000 altogether by sponsorship, expected to raise \$20,000 in 1976 alone and believed the level of sponsorship reflected the community's pride in the station. See 'Radio ANU, Canberra', *Broadcasting Australia*, no.1, October 1975, p.12; Department of the Media, *Report to the Minister for the Media by the op.cit.*, p.123; E. J. Townsend, and R. H. Swansborough, 'Dynamic Radio CHY . . . A Study in Community Media', March 1975, p.40, Department of Communications Library, Canberra.

These arrangements had no legislative base in the early days of public broadcasting. Coalition Minister for Post and Telecommunications, Tony Staley, decided to rectify that situation. By his own admission, Staley held a basic small 'l' liberal view of government, encouraging individual initiatives and keeping government as small as possible. Consequently, he supported the idea of avoiding direct government funding and was in favour of a system of indirect financial support combined with giving stations permission to engage sponsors. In his 'Guidelines for the Planning of Public Broadcasting in Phase 1', 5 April 1978, which covered all aspects of public broadcasting, Staley stated both that 'Government financial support will be limited to indirect funding [and] Sponsorship in a form approved by the Minister and administered by the Tribunal will be

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30. Simon Barry, Sharon Daws and Marguerette Heding, 'Public Broadcasting in Canberra: a survey', Independent Video, *circa* 1984, p.3, copy in Department of Communications Library, Canberra.

permitted, but not advertising of the "spot advertisement" type'.³¹

As Chris Tappere, a member of the PBAA committee at the time, pointed out, this pattern of funding public broadcasting had become enshrined in government policy almost by default, and future efforts by the PBAA to have the system changed, by the introduction of substantial direct funding, proved fruitless.³² The figures for the AFC grants show a continued increase with \$100,000 in 1977 and \$160,000 in 1978³³ but they did not satisfy the PBAA which sought \$450,000 for 1979 and \$650,000 for 1980.³⁴ These requests were ignored for a number of reasons.

By 1978 new forces were at work which led the government to believe that general public broadcasting no longer had the political significance it had once enjoyed. Moreover the PBAA was no longer seen as representing all public broadcasters. As has been seen earlier, special interest groups of public broadcasters were forming, with increasing political clout which they derived from their other special interests, rather than their connections with public broadcasting. These groups started

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31. Tony Staley, Ministerial Statement - 'Development of Public Broadcasting', from the 'Parliamentary Debates', 5 April 1978, AGPS, Canberra, p.6. It was at the end of Staley's term as minister in 1980 before legislation detailing arrangements for sponsorship announcements was actually passed by parliament, but the principle of indirect financial support supplemented by sponsorship was legalised with Staley's statement.
 32. Chris Tappere, 'What's This Public Broadcasting Anyway?' D. Turbayne, ed., *The Media and Politics on Australia*, Hobart, Department of Political Science, University of Tasmania, 1980, p.46.
 33. Michael Law, 'Public Broadcasting Association of Australia Newsletter', no.1, June 1979, p.1, CBAA Archives, Sydney; Michael Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report of Activities 1979-80, 30 August 1980, p.4, CBAA Archives, Sydney.
 34. Law, Report of Activities 1979-80; PBAA, 'Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts', June 1980, p.12, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

lobbying government directly, bypassing the PBAA. In 1978 1979 and 1981, the government began to give encouragement and support to ethnic and aboriginal broadcasting and radio for the print handicapped (RPH) respectively.³⁵ However, although these monies were still specifically for broadcasting, the motivation was now the electoral significance of issues relevant to ethnic, aboriginal and disabled people, rather than the importance of public broadcasting. It has already been demonstrated that the ethnic public broadcasting lobby influenced government because it was seen as part of the 'ethnic vote' which led to the government's multiculturalism policy. In the 1980s aboriginal interests generally came to have a similar impact on government. This led to comparable demands from aboriginal broadcasters.³⁶ As a result, the funding for ethnic and aboriginal broadcasting was channelled through the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) rather than the AFC. 2RPH received its initial capitation grant of \$28,000 in 1981-82 as part of the government's funding of the International Year of the Disabled.³⁷ Again, the source of the funding demonstrated that it was the fact that the government saw votes in providing services for the disabled which prompted this funding. The fact that it was a new and necessary expansion of broadcasting services, was incidental.

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35. Xavier Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia, The Role of Broadcasting, - Synopsis and Summary of Recommendations*, Report of the Committee of Review of the Special Broadcasting Service, Canberra, AGPS, December 1984, p.251 and Appendix p.8; Bryon Quigley, 'Radio Training is No Luxury', *Media Information Australia*, no.27, February 1983, p.29; Helen Molnar, 'The Democratisation of Communications Technology in Australia and the South Pacific: Media Participation by Indigenous Peoples 1970-1992', PhD Thesis, Monash, 1993, pp.126, 438; Thomas King, 'Radio stations with a Vision', *Electronics Australia*, vol.51, no.6, June 1989, p.14.
 36. For the development of aboriginal broadcasting see Molnar, 'The Democratisation of Communications Technology'.
 37. King, 'Radio stations with a Vision', p.14.

In November 1979 a report by Peat Marwick Mitchell on the Australian Film Commission was tabled in parliament. The report recommended that the AFC give up all funding not related to film and that public broadcasting be moved back to the Australia Council, possibly to the Community Arts Board. Members of the PBAA were horrified.³⁸ However, there was no time for the PBAA to take any action because, less than a month later, Minister Staley received the second report from the Ethnic Television Review Panel. This report recommended that SBS should be replaced by an Independent and Multicultural Broadcasting Corporation (IMBC). Minister Staley decided he could simplify the whole system of funding public broadcasting by channelling ethnic, aboriginal and general public broadcasting monies through the IMBC. Consequently the AFC ceased funding public broadcasters after 1980. When the concept of the IMBC was abandoned by the government, Staley's successor, Ian Sinclair, found himself with the problem of having no conduit for the government's general public broadcasting funding, while SBS continued to handle ethnic and aboriginal grants.

Two weeks before the 1981-82 budget Sinclair had little alternative but to take over the funding of general public broadcasting himself through the Department of Communications. Such direct funding was contrary to current government policy and was seen as an emergency stop gap measure. But it also made public broadcasters uneasy about losing their independence. Furthermore the amount was pegged to the previous year's expenditure of \$139,000, while the PBAA had sought an increase to \$376,000.³⁹ The deterioration in the influence the PBAA had on the government's policy on public broadcasting can be seen from the fact that, for the same period, through SBS,

38. PBAA, 'Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts', pp.12-13.

39. Michael Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report 1980-81, 29 August 1981, p.5, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

ethnic broadcasters received nearly three times as much with \$400,000.⁴⁰ The situation remained unchanged the following year and while the PBAA's plea for an increase to \$390,000 received some sympathy in the Department of Communications, it received none at all in the Department of Finance, where the relative merits of all applications were decided.⁴¹ Public broadcasting, as such, had little influence on government, but, still, a solution to this funding problem had to be found. Minister Sinclair's suggestion to the PBAA conference that public broadcasters be allowed to advertise to help in revenue generation, was greeted with alarm by most public broadcasters who still saw this proposal as swapping possible government control for possible advertiser control. As Marj Kibby has suggested, they continued to feel that 'the freedom of the public broadcasting movement depended upon its being insulated from its funding sources'.⁴²

At the end of 1981, the idea of a Public Broadcasting Foundation (PBF) with a large endowment, which was to be invested to produce an income for continuing funding, began to re-emerge as a possible resolution of the predicament.⁴³ Geoff Evans, a member of the Working Party on Public Broadcasting in 1975, has recalled that the concept was first discussed at that time. He had encountered this type of foundation

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40. PBAA, 'A Proposal for the Establishment of a Public Broadcasting Foundation in Australia', Third Draft, June 1982, copy in Department of Communications Library, Canberra.
 41. Keith Jackson, 'The Government Funding of Public Broadcasting: 1982-83', Treasurer PBAA, Submission to the Secretary of the Department of Communications, 27 January 1982, CBAA Archives, Sydney; Keith Jackson, 'Important Notice for All Manager/Co-ordinators', Treasurer PBAA, 2 February 1982, CBAA Archives, Sydney.
 42. Marj Kibby, 'Radio as Communication: Public Broadcasting in Australia', MA (Hons) Thesis, Macquarie, 1988, p.43.
 43. PBAA, Committee Meeting Minutes, 4-5 December 1981, pp.5-6, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

when studying in the USA. Evans has disclosed that he supported the PBAA proposal in 1982 when he was working for Shadow Minister for Communications, Senator John Button.⁴⁴ Button also recommended the establishment of a foundation.⁴⁵ The PBAA set up the PBF on the understanding that a Labor government would endow it with a one off figure of \$15m, distributed as \$5m over three years. Whether that was 'pie in the sky pre-election hype' or a misunderstanding is not clear for the Labor government did not finally rule out the possibility until it's second budget when it had been in office nearly eighteen months.⁴⁶

Ada Hulshoff has described the whole PBF incident as the biggest frustration in her time as PBAA Executive Director:

'[The PBAA had] an enormous amount of encouragement from the then opposition, the Labor Party in opposition, to establish the Public Broadcasting Foundation, with very clear promises of a substantial endowment to kick this off [and] for us to have gone through all of that and spend a considerable amount of resources to then find that we set up the body, but what it ended up doing, without an endowment, is actually take over an enormous amount of bureaucratic work that the government was paying for itself prior to that. And I think it is one of the most Pyrrhic victories this organisation has ever seen.'⁴⁷

In retrospect, Evans has asserted, that although he supported the idea at the time, he never really expected it to happen in Australia because the government only works out its budget from year to year. Even when it makes provision for triennial funding, as it did for a time with universities, this is for monies to be expended.

44. Geoff Evans, Personal Interview, at Canberra, 5 December 1994.

45. John Button, Speech to PBAA Ethnic Broadcasting Conference, Brisbane, 10 June 1982, p.16, Evans Archives, with present writer.

46. Linda Marson, 'Public Sector funding of Broadcasting . . . A PBAA Perspective', PBAA Conference Paper, August 1985, p.6, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

47. Ada Hulshoff, Personal Interview, at Monash University, Melbourne, 25 November 1995.

Australian governments have never allowed for the provision of endowments, monies to be invested to provide a future income. Evans pointed out also that private enterprise does not have a history of making endowments to worthy causes in Australia, as it does in the USA.⁴⁸

Furthermore existing documentation that was submitted to the government regarding the establishment of the PBF, says nothing about a government endowment of \$15m. Quite the reverse is true. In his submission for funds to set up the PBF, PBAA Treasurer, Keith Jackson, talks more of diverse sources. 'The foundation will solicit grants, donations, bequests and awards from all tiers of government, the private sector, institutions, unions, groups and individuals. In short, it will seek to broaden the base of the financing of public broadcasting.'⁴⁹ The proposal for the establishment of the foundation itself also contained nothing about a large government endowment: 'The freedom of public broadcasting depends upon its insulation from domination by any single source of income. A recent survey of Australian public radio stations indicated that, in general, they saw themselves as not wanting to derive more than 35 percent of their total revenue from any single source.'⁵⁰ This evidence makes it difficult to determine who was responsible for the ensuing fiasco. In reality, to start with, the PBF merely replaced the AFC and the Department of Communications by becoming the conduit for the paltry \$171,000 which the government allocated for the financial support of the general public broadcasting sector.⁵¹ For the same period, the

48. Evans, Interview.

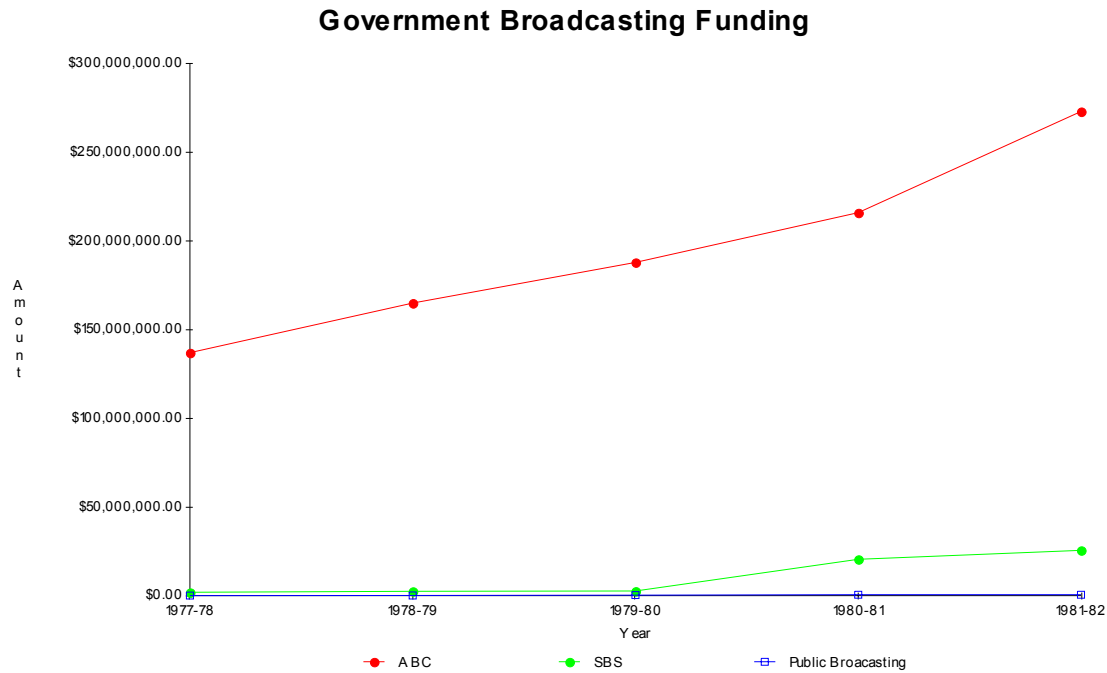
49. Jackson, 'The Government Funding of Public Broadcasting: 1982-83', p.3.

50. PBAA, 'A Proposal for the Establishment of a Public Broadcasting Foundation in Australia', Chapter 8, Paragraph 7.

51. The term 'general' has always been used by the PBF for the funding category not covered by one of the special interest categories. The funding categories are defined: 'The PBF distributes grants to public broadcasters for Aboriginal, ethnic and RPH programming and for general station establishment and development

PBF had received grant applications from public broadcasters worth \$920,000,⁵² illustrating just how much revenue was going to have to be found from other sources or, alternatively, just how much of their plans public broadcasters were going to have to abandon.

By the 1980s governments of both side of politics completely accepted public broadcasting as a necessary service to the public. Their attitudes to various aspects of broadcasting, for the benefit of the public, can be best illustrated graphically. Funding to public broadcasters increased over this period but funding to both the ABC and SBS increased, not only in real terms, but proportionally as well. This is illustrated in GRAPH ONE:



GRAPH ONE

purposes', PBF, *A Sound Investment - The Case for Funding Public Broadcasting*, Collingwood, PBF, 1992, p.12.

52. Susan Horwitz, 'The Public Broadcasting Foundation - Grant Disbursements 1983/84', *PBAA Newsletter*, no.13, November 1983, p.2.

Public broadcasting funding, which includes the allocation to ethnic public broadcasting, is so small by comparison, that it appears merely as a line across the bottom of the graph. When this is divided into its components, it can be seen that although funding to general public broadcasters did grow over the years, its importance, in the eyes of government, in comparison to special interest public broadcasting, shrank. This can be seen in GRAPH TWO.

Relating the information in GRAPH ONE to GRAPH TWO shows that the government, although in favour of public broadcasting, really regarded it as insignificant, when it had to consider the multiple demands on its restricted resources. This was emphasised by the Secretary of the Department of Communications at the 1986 PBAA Conference. He pointed out that 'economic times are tough and there is no immediate relief in sight. The Public Broadcasting sector is competing for public funding dollars which are becoming more scarce (in real terms) and for which there are many priorities which could be seen as higher than yours. Some might say that the level of community support is a fair reflection of the demand for, appreciation,(sic) of the services provided by the public broadcaster in that community.'⁵³

From the 1985-86 financial year all government funding to public broadcasters of every description was channelled through the PBF. This presented a distorted view of the funding the government was providing to public broadcasting *per se*, as an increasing proportion was being distributed for other aspects of the sector's existence. GRAPH TWO shows that the 'ethnic lobby', although not a homogeneous whole as previously illustrated, had particular political clout for there were times when funds were not only provided for ethnic broadcasters but there was a separate allocation for training ethnic broadcasters as well. The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) produced comprehensive financial reports on the operation of all public radio stations from the 1986-87 financial year. In its first report the ABT noted that the overall deficit incurred by public broadcasters had risen from \$0.36m the previous year to \$0.64m and that the only portion of the sector not running at a loss was religious broadcasting.⁵⁴

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53. Charles Halton, Secretary, Department of Communications, 'Opening Speech', PBAA 14th National Conference, 15, 16, 17 August 1986, Conference Report, pp.10-11, CBAA Archives, Sydney.
54. ABT, 'Public Radio Financial Results 1986-87', p.2, copy in 2NUR-FM station file 4/04 in Newcastle University Archives. Apart from having dedicated followers prepared to make financial contributions, Christian broadcasters had been

Although the government was still officially committed to the viability of all broadcasters, it remained unmoved by this revelation.

From time to time the PBAA proposed country-wide remedies for revenue short falls other than the fruitless one of lobbying government for more money. These included a National Sponsorship Scheme in 1982 and a National Marketing Scheme in 1988. These were not successful. The 1982 scheme of Anton Donker, manager of 2NUR-FM, never commenced and the 1988 scheme, under National Marketing Director Graham Forsaith, made a nett operational loss of \$20,059 in its first year.⁵⁵

The only compensation the government was ever prepared to contemplate for not increasing its own funding was to review the legislation on sponsorship to make it easier for revenue to be raised in a different form. In a report to the Minister in March, 1986, the ABT exposed some significant deficiencies in the current legislation including:

- (a) the absence of a clear rationale underlying the current legislation relating to public broadcasting sponsorship;

operating successfully on commercial radio for twenty years before they embraced public broadcasting, which may help to explain their achievement in the new sector. See B. Whitnall and V. Turner, 'Comments on the Report to the Minister for the Media by the Working Party on Public Broadcasting Submitted by Christian Broadcasting Association Ltd', unpublished, 8 November 1975, p.1, Evans Archives, with present writer.

55. Anton Donker, 'Public Broadcasting Association of Australia - National Sponsorship Scheme - Draft Proposal', 8 March 1982; John Martin, 'President's Report', PBAA Annual Report 1988-89; Brett Gleeson, 'Finance Director's Report', PBAA Annual Report 1988-89; three documents in the CBAA Archives, Sydney; Phoebe Thornley, 'PBAA Conference Report', 28.9.88, p.2, copy with present writer.

- (b) the absence of a clear definition of what matter is intended to be covered by the word "advertisement";
- (c) the absence of a clear legislative statement of objectives for the public broadcasting sector to assist the interpretation of the provisions governing sponsorship announcements.⁵⁶

The problems of distinguishing between sponsorship announcements and advertisements had arisen after a Federal Court decision in 1984 defined 'advertisement' in such a way that it meant that public broadcasters were breaking the law with any sort of announcement.⁵⁷ The government accepted the ABT recommendations which included definitions for sponsorship announcements, community service announcements and station promotions and amended the legislation at the end of 1987.⁵⁸ This cleared up the problem of defining sponsorship, so public broadcasters were less likely to be in legal difficulties for misinterpreting the law. However, the definition was still very restrictive. Sponsorship announcements had a 40 word limit. The wording was restricted to the name and address of the business with no attempt allowed to sell the product. There was a further limitation that announcements were confined to four minutes in the hour. The amendments to the legislation had merely clarified the situation, without actually changing the rules. So it really did not help public broadcasters overcome their financial difficulties since government was not prepared to increase its financial help.

The original broadcasting legislation, passed in 1942, had had layer upon layer of amendments added as broadcasting requirements had changed over the years. As more changes were contemplated it became obvious to many of those in and close to

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- 56. ABT, 'Public Broadcasting Sponsorship Announcements', Report to the Minister for Communications, March 1986, p.24.
 - 57. Michael Law, PBAA Policy Papers, 'New Public Broadcasting Legislation', November 1977, p.2, CBAA Archives, Sydney.
 - 58. Ada Hulshoff, 'Executive Director's Report 1985-86', PBAA Annual Report 1985-86, p.2, copy in CBAA Archives; Ada Hulshoff, 'Sponsorship', PBAA Policy Papers, August 1988, p.2, CBAA Archives, Sydney.

government, including ABT Chairman Peter Westerway, that the whole *Act* needed scrapping and rewriting.⁵⁹ In line with changing political philosophies of many governments both nationally and world wide, the federal government was adopting a more economic rationalist approach to its policy making generally. In broadcasting this was manifested in the fact that the government abandoned the notion of ensuring the commercial viability of commercial and public stations. It now adopted a *laissez-faire* attitude of allowing market forces to determine whether a station continued or not, as the USA had always done. This allowed the government to make a fundamental change in its attitude to public broadcasting sponsorship and funding. From the government's point of view the restrictions on sponsorship had been in place to ensure that public broadcasters were no threat to the economic viability of commercial stations. Most of these were now removed except for the restriction of four minutes in the hour. Many public broadcasters, now often second generation, had lost the pioneers' idealism and enthusiasm for altruistic practices such as abhorring anything that resembled commercialism. They embraced the concept of being able to advertise and compete with local commercial stations, if government funding was to remain so restricted.⁶⁰ Max Keogh's early heretical idea that advertising would not necessarily destroy the nature of public broadcasting programming, was, at last, more acceptable.

By the same token, the government no longer felt any obligation to ensure that licensed public broadcasters remained economically viable; if they ran out of funds they would have to close down. Along with these changes in attitude the

59. Peter Westerway, Personal Interview, at Manly, Sydney, 3 February 1997.

60. Colin Jones, who had been a broadcasting administrator, claimed that for 2WEB these changes just confirmed that it was operating as a commercial enterprise; 2HAY-FM actually squeezed the commercial stations out of town. See Colin Jones, *Something in the Air - A History of Radio in Australia*, Sydney, Kangaroo Press, 1995, p.127.

government decided that 'public broadcasters' were not really 'public broadcasters', that the ABC and SBS were the real 'public broadcasters'. The other non-profit stations, whether in large educational institutions, broadcasting city-wide to specialised audiences or broadcasting to small local communities, were all to be known as 'community broadcasters'. This change of name was very much part of the government's change in attitude to the sector, which was enshrined in the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, replacing that much amended old work horse, the *Broadcasting and Television Act*, on 5 October 1992.⁶¹

All these changes did not mean that government funding to public broadcasting overall, decreased. Indeed, as GRAPH TWO has shown, it has continued to increase substantially over the years, but this was not because of any real government commitment to financing public broadcasting as such. The bulk of this increase has been to public broadcasters representing specific special interest groups, which were seen by government to have considerable electoral significance.

The early idea that government might give significant direct funding to public broadcasting, providing an essential public service, as an important new development in national communications, emerged at a time when the government could afford to be idealistic because the economy was buoyant. This situation changed and the proposal evaporated even before the public broadcasting sector was properly established. The only stations to be set up as public broadcasters with direct government funding were the experimental ethnic stations, 2EA in Sydney and 3EA in Melbourne.

Once the government found this arrangement unsatisfactory and took over these stations completely, there was no more direct government funding for public broadcasters. There were a number of reasons for this. Some public broadcasters did not seek funding. More crucial causes for the this change, however, were the economic down turn, funds were in short supply, and the government realised the sector was, in its

61. For the new definition of sponsorship see Attorney-General's Department, *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, Canberra, AGPS, 1993, p.105.

own right, politically of little significance. This was exacerbated by the fact that the government's change in political philosophy to incorporate economic rationalism, meant it was more inclined to privatise existing public service utilities than provide sustaining funding for general public broadcasters. These were now seen more as community interest groups, attracting funding only according to the electoral significance of the interests they represented.

Minuscule indirect funding combined with permission to broadcast severely restricted sponsorship announcements was the government's only offering to financially beleaguered public broadcasters. Ethnic, aboriginal and RPH groups managed to convince Coalition and Labor governments that their causes were more significant and secured comparatively large grants for their public broadcasting efforts. Nevertheless, all sections of the sector were still short of money and some general public broadcasters were in dire straits.

When the government rewrote the *Act* in 1992 it abandoned the long held notion of ensuring the viability of all licensed commercial and public broadcasters. This led to the removal of most of the restrictions to sponsorship regulations which was of financial benefit to the public broadcasting sector as a whole. These changes, supported by ethnic, aboriginal and RPH public broadcasters, who still had the ear of government, cost the government nothing and aided the ailing general public broadcasters as a side benefit. However, with this shift in attitude, the government now squarely placed the responsibility for ensuring the viability of public broadcasting with the broadcasters themselves. They might still be providing some essential public services, but with their electoral insignificance and the government's economic rationalist attitudes to public services generally, the government would no longer even contemplate ensuring their survival with large amounts of direct funding. Such funding as was provided was indirectly through the funding body, the PBF, and was only substantial where an electorally significant pressure group with a specific interest was involved in public broadcasting.

CHAPTER TWELVE - POLICY IN PRACTICE - A COMPARISON BETWEEN 2NUR-FM NEWCASTLE AND 2BBB-FM BELLINGEN

The development of 2NUR-FM in Newcastle and 2BBB-FM in Bellingen were originally chosen for detailed examination as examples of public broadcasting stations in Australia because they were different types of stations serving different types of communities. These stations would highlight the range of services which were encompassed in the concept of public broadcasting. 2NUR-FM was a station established by a university in a large regional area while 2BBB-FM was a station set up by local residents to serve a small rural community. However, as the thesis has evolved another important difference has emerged. 2NUR-FM was offered a licence as one of 'Cass's Dozen' under the Whitlam Labor government in a mood of political panic before the sector was legitimately established. 2BBB-FM, on the other hand, was licensed by the Fraser Coalition government, after the sector was firmly established, with the minister, a member of the Country Party, anxious to expand broadcasting in rural areas expeditiously. Thus a study of these two stations accents the changes in political influences and the federal government's attitude to public broadcasting as the sector expanded. This chapter will study the emergence of these two very different types of public broadcasting stations, and will show how they related to the divergent political atmospheres at the times when the government issued each station with a licence.

The original motivation for establishing a radio station at the University of Newcastle was not connected with the government's acceptance in October 1972, of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board's (ABCB's) 'Red Report' which recommended the introduction of FM and public broadcasting in Australia. However the report emerged about the same time and undoubtedly provided additional inspiration. Professors Laurie Short and Eric Hall¹ had transferred from the University of NSW, where there had been a campus station broadcasting student lecture material since 1961. They sought to establish a similar station at Newcastle. Hall was further influenced by the fact that he had been in England during most of the 1950s and 1960s and had watched the development of the Open University where the context had been rather

broad than that at the station established at the University of NSW. Hall's vision for a station was more comprehensive than Short's. Whereas Short was only interested in providing course work programs and other items of academic interest, Hall was happy for the programming to have a community component, providing a link between the University and the region in which it was situated.²

A concurrent development on campus was to provide Short and Hall with the vehicle to bring their proposal to fruition. In 1973 the University of Newcastle took over the Adult Tutorial Classes from the University of Sydney. These became the embryo for the Department of Community Programmes. In his report to the Senate from the Adult Education Committee, which was set up to oversee the establishment of this new department, Short put forward a proposal for a radio station as an integral part of the scheme. He intended it to be used for the 'broadcasting of a range of material associated with adult education, in-service courses, "refresher" courses, and even standard university courses for part time students'.³ As the university was about to introduce a medical faculty it was also envisaged that some post-graduate medical courses could be conducted over the radio for busy doctors unable to attend the

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1. Laurie Short was Convener of the University Adult Education Committee, Professor of Education and Deputy Chairman of the University Senate; from 1976-1981 he was a Deputy Vice Chancellor. Eric Hall was Professor of Metallurgy and a Deputy Vice Chancellor. Through these positions both men had considerable influence over university policy.
 2. Laurie Short, Personal Interview at University of Newcastle, 9 August 1993; Eric Hall, Letter from Hobart in lieu of Personal Interview, 8 August 1993.
 3. L. N. Short, 'Adult Education Committee Report' (S37:72), 8 August 1972, Council Papers, 15 September 1972, University of Newcastle Archives, AB 8997, p.4.

campus.⁴

By the end of 1973 the Department of Community Programmes was well established and the federal government had initiated the Independent Inquiry into FM Broadcasting, with Professor Cyril Renwick, who was associated with the University of Newcastle, assisting Sir Francis McLean in the investigation.⁵ In these circumstances Hall felt it appropriate to approach the ABCB with a proposal for an FM radio station. John Turner, Acting Director of Community Programmes, secured the agreement of other local tertiary institutions to share the radio licence if the application was successful. Hall forwarded these letters of support to the ABCB to reinforce his proposal.⁶

In spite of Renwick's connections with the University of Newcastle, Hall was not aware of the political conflicts and difficulties among those connected with the federal government's policy development on broadcasting. His letters of support were of no help in securing a radio licence for the University from the ABCB because the ABCB, which was involved only with commercial broadcasting, was not in a position to issue such a licence. The only licence Hall could have obtained was one similar to that held by the University of NSW, which had been issued by the Postmaster-General. However, as it was hoping to acquire licensing powers for public broadcasting when the sector was formally established, the ABCB did not forward Hall's proposal either to the Postmaster-General or the new Department of the Media, which was also deliberating on the issue. Instead the Board replied to Hall saying that the Independent Inquiry into FM

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4. J. J. Auchmuty, Vice Chancellor, University of Newcastle, Letter to the 'Independent Inquiry into FM Broadcasting', 4 February 1974, University of Newcastle Archives A6401.
 5. A. C. Howie, ed., *Who's Who in Australia*, Melbourne, Information Australia 1992, p.538.
 6. E. O. Hall, Letters to ABCB, 6, 29 November 1973; J. W. Turner, Letters to WEA, Newcastle Technical College and Newcastle Teachers' College, 8 November 1973; University of Newcastle Archives, A6401.

Broadcasting had been notified of his application.⁷ Hall then approached Renwick, who assured him that the 'application from this University will be formally laid before the Inquiry'.⁸ What Renwick did not clarify for Hall was that although his report would recommend that eventually there be four community and education licences in Newcastle, he was only involved in an inquiry which would report its findings to government and was no more in a position to issue a licence than the ABCB.⁹ This incident was typical of the vying for power that was occurring in government circles amongst those concerned with the reform of broadcasting policy and the introduction of public broadcasting early in 1974.

In July 1974, falsely under the impression that it would soon be in the position to run a radio station, the Department of Community Programmes employed John Hill, who had a background in both broadcasting and adult education.¹⁰ One of Hill's first tasks was to attend the Department of the Media Conference on Public Broadcasting in Sydney. Hill was not aware that there was no connection between this conference and the applications for a licence the University had made to the ABCB. Fortunately he met Geoff Evans at the conference. Evans, as a member of the minister's personal staff, was later to be instrumental in obtaining a licence for the University of

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7. ABCB, Letter to E. O. Hall, 15 January 1974, copy in University of Newcastle Archives A6401.
 8. Hall quoted this conversation in letter to the ABCB; see E. O. Hall, Letter to ABCB, 29 January 1974, University of Newcastle Archives A6401.
 9. Brian Smith, Director of Community Programmes, communicated this recommendation in a letter to Vice Chancellor Auchmuty; see B. Smith, Letter to J. J. Auchmuty, 15 August 1974, University of Newcastle Archives A6401.
 10. John Hill, Personal Interview at University of Newcastle, 30 July 1993; J. Hill, 'The Early Days of 2NUR-FM', *The Newcastle and Hunter District Historical Society Bulletin*, vol.7, no.1, March 1979, p.3.

Newcastle.¹¹ Late in 1974 Evans informed Hill that Newcastle seemed to have been overlooked in the correspondence and that Hill should advise the university to apply again to the minister. While Hill did pass on this information to the Vice Chancellor, he was not aware of the distinction between applying to the minister rather than the ABCB for a licence.

The new Vice Chancellor, Don George, who was further encouraged by the enthusiasm of both Brian Smith, Director of Community Programmes, and John Hill for the idea of establishing a radio station within the University, also was not aware that when he applied to the ABCB for a licence his application would not reach the minister. Accordingly George made another submission to the ABCB in January 1975, for a radio licence to commence in 1976.¹² Myles Wright, Chairman of the ABCB, replied personally with 'You will be aware that the Board is awaiting a number of policy decisions from the Government in the whole area of non-commercial broadcasting, and though in the meantime some experimental stations have been authorised, it will be difficult to make any further allocations before some questions have been answered'.¹³ Again there was no suggestion that anyone else connected with the government might be in a better position to provide a licence. Wright did not forward this application either to the Department or the Minister for the Media or to the Postmaster General. When Geoff Evans was assisting the new Minister for the Media, Moss Cass, a few months later, there was nothing in the correspondence available to him to suggest that the University of Newcastle was seeking a licence.¹⁴

11. Hill, Interview.

12. Don, George, Personal Interview at Berkeley Vale, 12 August 1993; D. W. George, Submission to ABCB, 9 January 1975, University of Newcastle Archives A6401.

13. M. F. E. Wright, Letter to George, D. W. 22 January 1975, University of Newcastle Archives A6401.

14. Geoffrey Evans, Personal Interview at Canberra, 5 December 1994.

This complete lack of communication between different arms of government nearly cost the university an offer of a licence when Cass resolved to proceed with the issuing of further licences in August 1975. Since Cass had been advised that there would be less protest about issuing licences by the Postmaster-General under the *Wireless Telegraphy Act* if they were issued to tertiary institutions as experimental education licences, rather than general licences to community groups, he asked Evans to draw up a list of suitable institutions. The list, compiled from information that was directly available to Evans as a member of Minister Cass's staff, consisted of ten institutions. Another member of Cass's staff pointed out that no institution from Melbourne had been included and that this was a political blunder. When Evans added Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) to the list making eleven in all, this was seen as an untidy number. Evans went in search of one more institution to complete 'Cass's Dozen'. Although he had not seen any of the applications that had been made by the University of Newcastle he remembered John Hill from the Department of the Media Conference and phoned him to ascertain the preparedness of the university for a radio station. Hill, on no authority but his own, assured Evans that his university would accept a licence if offered one. Henry Rosenbloom, another member of Cass's staff, has revealed that Evans belatedly added Newcastle to his list, even though he had no official communication with the institution.¹⁵ The offer to the University of Newcastle was such a hurried after thought, in the 'pre-dismissal' period of flurry in the Whitlam government, that Evans sent the official offer personally to John Hill, the only person he knew, rather than to the University of Newcastle.¹⁶

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15. Henry Rosenbloom, *Politics and the Media*, Melbourne, Scribe, Second Edition 1978, p.118; Hill, Interview; Evans, Interview.
 16. M. Cass, Minister for the Media, Letter to John Hill, 28 August 1975, copy in University of Newcastle Archives A6401; Hill, Interview; Evans, Interview. It was clear from interviewing Hill that he had no conception of the fact that the offer was sheer chance, due to the fact that Geoff Evans, when he desperately needed

This licence offer epitomised the confusion both in government circles and within the institutions receiving Cass's licence offers about the relative importance of the educational component and the community component, of both the programs offered and those who produced them. From the University of Newcastle's point of view, Hall and George were both interested in involving the community, both as broadcasters and listeners, as part of their 'town and gown' commitment. They did not share Short's view that the university should have a radio station solely for education purposes.¹⁷ However, the application lodged by the university was for a licence for education purposes only. This type of application was perceived to be most likely to succeed. From the government's perspective, while Cass found his political options restricted to issuing experimental educational licences, he had coveted the expansion of public broadcasting generally, particularly its community aspects. He managed to incorporate this in the offer by insisting the 'licence will be issued subject to satisfactory provision for participation by all interests associated with the educational licensee, as well as by any outside community interests known to be interested in joining in'.¹⁸ Furthermore, Cass had failed to secure any direct government funding and was compelled to offer the licence with 'no financial assistance'.¹⁹ However, since his offers went only to tertiary institutions, which had some limited resources to apply to the projects, he assumed that none of the stations would not fail due to financial restraints.

However, the situation changed and all stations in educational institutions came under financial pressure when Coalition Minister for Education, Senator John Carrick, announced drastic cuts to university funding across Australia at the beginning of

another institution for his list, remembered meeting Hill, and was totally unrelated to any of the University's applications for a licence.

17. Hall, Letter from Hobart; George, Interview; Short, Interview.

18. Cass, Letter to John Hill, p.1.

19. *ibid.*

June 1977.²⁰ For the University of Newcastle it became questionable whether the station would open at all. There were many at the university, particularly academics, such as Professor Michael Carter, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, who felt that the university had higher priorities once its overall funding had been cut and the staffing levels of his departments were under threat.²¹ If Deputy Vice Chancellor Hall had not been so enthusiastic about the possibilities of a university radio station and Vice Chancellor George had not been philosophically opposed to abandoning any concept solely because of a shortage of funds, the station may not have gone ahead.²²

One of the saving graces for the station was that the government had made it mandatory to include a community component. At the time, the NBN Channel 3 television station was locally owned and community minded. It also wanted to get into

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20. M. P. Carter, Letter to D. George, 8 June 1977, University of Newcastle Archives A6401; Hill, 'The Early Days of 2NUR-FM', p.4. Carrick was actually involved in the government's foray into broadcasting policy, being both a member of the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts, which had recommended the introduction of FM and public broadcasting and as the minister representing the Minister for Post and Telecommunications in the Senate in the Fraser government. It is not clear whether he was cognisant of the effect on some educational public broadcasters of his decision to slash university funding.
 21. Carter, Letter to George. Furthermore, Carter felt that volunteers were indulging in a hobby at the university's expense and he disapproved of that in times of economic stringency. See Michael Carter, Personal Interview at University of Newcastle, 30th July 1993.
 22. George, Interview. George would rather keep something going in a reduced state than abandon the idea, particularly where staff were as enthusiastic as Smith and Hill. George had more of a problem with staff who showed no enthusiasm for anything. Short, on the other hand wanted to do things very well or not at all. If it had been his decision the concept would have been dropped. See Short, Interview.

FM radio and saw an avenue for gaining experience by supporting the university radio station. Alex Forsythe was both NBN Chairman and a member of the university Council. He arranged for NBN to supply the radio transmitter, to be sited at its own tower on Mt. Sugarloaf, and provide technical support. Russell Thornton, an NBN employee later seconded to 2NUR-FM, has explained that this offer eased the pressure on the university's financial resources.²³ Accordingly plans for the station went ahead, with a \$25,000 grant from the Universities' Commission to convert existing accommodation in the Mathematics Building into broadcasting studios and offices.

The university financed the rest of the project, with no thought to seeking further contributions from the community.²⁴ At this stage the university saw the station as basically its responsibility. John Hill, relinquished by the Department of Community Programmes for two years to run the station full time,²⁵ was joined by assistant manager Martin Hadlow. Hadlow, who had been manager at 2ARM-FM in Armidale, left to join the larger organisation in Newcastle.²⁶ The recently established University Radio Station Committee (URSC), with Professor Laurie Short in the chair, set a target date for the

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23. George, Interview; Russell Thornton, Personal Interview at 2NUR-FM, Newcastle, 14 August 1993.
 24. D. W. George, Letter to Universities' Commission, 1 December 1976 and University Senate Minutes, 1 December 1976, University of Newcastle Archives A6401.
 25. University Council Meeting Resolution 188/77 from meeting July 1977, cited in C. C. Renwick, M. P. Carter, and P. I. A. Hendry, University of Newcastle, 'Report on 2NUR/FM', September 1984, C114:84, p.2, University Council Meeting Minutes 19 October 1984, with University of Newcastle Secretary; URSC Meeting Minutes, 27 September 1977, University of Newcastle Archives A6401.
 26. Martin Hadlow, Letter from Brisbane in lieu of Interview, 20 June 1997.

first transmission for 1 November 1977.²⁷ The official opening of 2NUR-FM on 17 March 1978, became a combined university and community affair, attended by the university Chancellor Sir Bede Callaghan, Newcastle Lord Mayor Joy Cummings and NBN Chairman Alex Forsythe, with John Hill presenting the program.²⁸

As 2NUR-FM was being established Coalition Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser replaced Minister for Post and Telecommunications, Eric Robinson with Tony Staley. who embraced public broadcasting with relish as epitomising his small 'l' liberal philosophy.²⁹ Robinson had legislated for legitimate public broadcasting licences and it was left to Staley to provide the guidelines for their operation. These guidelines provided for Category 'E' education licences in the capital cities, where three types of licences were available but merely Category 'C' community licences in regional areas, where only one licence was to be issued, even where the licensee was to be a tertiary institution. Staley was committed to the community component of public broadcasting.

Four of 'Cass's Dozen' stations which were compelled to accept a Category 'C' licence as a result of this change, were in regional NSW, 2ARM-FM Armidale, 2NCR-FM Lismore, 2MCE-FM Bathurst and 2NUR-FM Newcastle. 2NUR-FM had been on air less than two months when the URSC was informed that the licence in the Newcastle region would change from an educational licence with a community component to a community licence which could include educational broadcasting. The change was to take place on 31 August 1978, when the university's

27. URSC, Meeting Minutes, 13 September 1977, University of Newcastle Archives A6401.

28. *University News, Newsletter for The University of Newcastle*, vol.4, no.3, 23 March 1978, p.2, University of Newcastle Archives A5441, Michael Barr student papers.

29. Tony Staley, Personal Interview at Monash University, Melbourne, 25 November 1995.

current licence expired.³⁰ Since George and Hall had always been in favour of the university station being part of the university's connection with the community it served, they accepted this innovation willingly. In fact George was aware that in a regional area as large as the Hunter Valley, where his university was situated, the population could not really be considered as a single community with a commonality of interests, but rather a series of different communities with diverse interests. He was happy for the university radio station to serve the range of interests of the minorities within the region. The station would now be encouraged to do so. Accordingly an application for the new type of licence was lodged with a promise to the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) that the university would finance the station's operating costs from its general recurrent funding for the next three years.

This change did not occur without protests from Short. He pointed out that a 'Category C licence would seem to carry with it considerably wider obligations with respect to the service to be provided than was the case for either the existing licence or Category E licences. The University's intentions in entering the radio field were clearly associated with educational rather than community broadcasting as defined by the minister's statement'.³¹ The only redeeming feature for Short was the station's broadcasts to some of the minorities within the community as a whole, namely the local ethnic communities.

Ethnic broadcasting was an integral part of 2NUR-FM's programming from the planning days. Karl Schomburg, from the Ethnic Communities Council, became involved before the end of 1977, and arranged a seminar for all ethnic communities interested in participating, in January 1978. Indeed, Schomburg presented the first radio program in Newcastle to be heard in German just a few days after the station's official

30. URSC, Meeting Minutes, 2 May 1978, Item 6, University of Newcastle Archives A6401.

31. L. N. Short, 'Review of Recent Developments', 6 June 1978, University of Newcastle Archives A6401.

opening.³² The federal government's attitude to ethnic broadcasting had changed when the Coalition took over from Labor. Labor had run ethnic stations in Sydney and Melbourne, which the Coalition put under the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) umbrella. However, this service was very expensive and the Coalition professed a philosophy of people doing things for themselves. Except on issues where this attitude would loose substantial electoral support, and ethnic broadcasting was not such an issue, it encouraged people to do so. With the establishment of SBS in 1978, the Coalition used it as a conduit for providing funding for ethnic public stations and ethnic programs on public stations, rather than the very much more expensive option of expanding the SBS stations themselves throughout the country. 2NUR-FM was able to take advantage of this new arrangement when it considered doubling its ethnic programming in July 1978.³³

By February 1979, 2NUR-FM had received its first payment of \$200 as subsidy for production and transmission costs of its ethnic programs and this was expected to increase to \$320 per month.³⁴ Since the station was battling to manage on its current funding and the university as a whole was getting into serious financial difficulties this money was very welcome.³⁵ As later station manager, Anton Donker has admitted, 2NUR-FM, like many other stations, used this funding for general station purposes rather than specifically for ethnic programs. Although it has already been shown that this caused a great deal of resentment among ethnic broadcasters across Australia, Donker has claimed that there was no real trouble at 2NUR-FM because all

32. Karl Schomburg, Personal Interview at 2NUR-FM, Newcastle, 13 August 1993.

33. URSC, Meeting Minutes, July 1978, University of Newcastle Archives A6401.

34. URSC, Meeting Minutes, 20 February 1979, University of Newcastle Archives A6401; SBS, *Ethnic Broadcasting in Australia 1979 - Report at the end of the First Year of the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)*, Sydney, SBS, 1979, p.25.

35. L. N. Short, Confidential memorandum to URSC, 24 August 1979, University of Newcastle Archives A6401.

specific funding grants received by the station had always been used in that way.³⁶ Since the grant to 2NUR-FM had originally been received because SBS itself was not broadcasting in Newcastle, it almost came under threat when the Sydney SBS station 2EA began relaying to Newcastle in the middle of 1979.³⁷ However, 2NUR-FM managed to persuade the government that its programs provided local content not available on SBS. Ethnic broadcasting became a significant feature of 2NUR-FM's connection with the community and by August 1979 there were thirteen language groups broadcasting on the station for five hours per week.³⁸

2NUR-FM had been forced to change its orientation from an educational station to a community station by the government's decision to offer only a community licence. However, the station's original plans for educational broadcasts were not coming to fruition anyway. Manager Hill offered the Department of Community Programmes Open Foundation course on the radio, but most students preferred to attend campus lectures for the interaction with lecturers and other students. The radio option was soon dropped.³⁹ Station Chairman Short ran a program reporting on university research. This was abandoned after a very short time, because few academics were interested in participating and some of those who were proved incompetent as radio speakers.⁴⁰ Only gradually, during the 1980s, was a small, consistent group of programs, related to the fact that the station was situated on a university campus, introduced.

36. Anton Donker, Personal Interview at Carindale, Brisbane, 23 November 1997.

37. URSC, Meeting Minutes, 9 August 1979, University of Newcastle Archives A6401.

38. These were: Croation, Dutch, German, Greek, Hungarian, Indian, Italian, Macedonian, Polish, Serbian, Slovak, Spanish and Ukrainian. See Postal and Telecommunications Department, 'Ethnic Programs on Public Broadcasting Stations', 27 August 1979.

39. Hill, Interview.

40. Short, Interview.

Drama, English and History were the only departments who were keen supporters of the station's programming.⁴¹ 'Campus Week' and 'On Campus' were two programs introduced to provide university news and views.⁴² In 1987-1988 the Drama Department combined with 2NUR-FM to produce some radio theatre.⁴³ About the same time, the Visual Arts and Media Studies Department began using 2NUR-FM's studios for their students' practical training.⁴⁴ None of these were course work programs. The only course work program broadcast, starting in 1978, was 'Norwaves' which was produced at the Northern Rivers College of Advanced Education Lismore, through their station, 2NCR-FM. 2NUR-FM was one of a number of public stations which took a relay of this 'college of the air', which ran adult education radio courses such as 'Introduction to Alternate Lifestyles', a history course based on Manning Clark's work and a guide to business and law for professional musicians.⁴⁵

This small educational component aside, the station developed largely as the community station the government planned it to be when it issued a Category 'C'

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41. Associate Professor of English, Norman Talbot, presented 'The Word This Week'. See Phil Bates, Personal Interview at 2NUR-FM, Newcastle, 3 August 1993 and Iris Nichols, Personal Interview at 2NUR-FM, Newcastle, 16 August 1993. History's Associate Professor Lionel Fredman, won an award for a dramatised series 'Notable Trials' in 1983. See A. Donker, 'Manager's Report', August-October 1983, 2NUR-FM Station File 1/4.
 42. 2NUR-FM, 'Program Guide', November 1988, with present writer; 2NUR-FM 'Annual Report' 1988, p.6, with present writer.
 43. Bates, Interview and 2NUR-FM 'Program Guide', December 1986, with present writer.
 44. 2NUR-FM 'Annual Report' 1989, p.14, with present writer.
 45. R. Bass, *Teachers College to University - Higher Education on the North Coast of NSW 1970-1992*, Lismore, University of New England-Northern Rivers 1992, pp.392-395; 2NUR-FM 'Program Guides', March 1988, March 1989.

community licence in 1978. Since the university was in severe financial trouble, as Minister Carrick's funding cutbacks to tertiary education were now being felt, and the station was costing the institution \$75,000 per annum station Chairman Short again called for the station to be closed down.⁴⁶ A university legal adviser pointed out various difficulties with this idea.⁴⁷ Short altered his approach and called for changes to the structure and funding of the station, to bring it more into line with the government's insistence on a community licence. Short secured the university Council's approval for returning Hill to the Department of Community Programmes at the end of his two year contract and for not renewing Hadlow's contract beyond its original three years. Short's rationale was that, as a community station, 2NUR-FM should seek support from its community.⁴⁸ When Short revealed this decision there was uproar from that community. The ethnic groups were particularly upset that they had not been consulted before the decision was made.⁴⁹ This situation would not have arisen if the government had clearly defined and maintained a particular kind of licence for all those stations first licensed as 'Cass's Dozen'.

46. Short, Interview.

47. L. Farrell, Assistant Secretary-Legal, University of Newcastle, Letter to L. Short, 4 September 1979, University of Newcastle Archives, A6401; The problems lay with the licence itself, where the university had committed itself to finance and run the station for a further three years, with an agreement with APRA concerning royalty payments and with the lease of plant from NBN.

48. Short, Confidential memorandum.

49. URSC Meeting Minutes, 11 September 1979; Letters of protest were received from: The Australian Collieries' Staff Association, Contemporary Jazz Society, Serbian Orthodox Community in Newcastle, H. J. Jong 2NUR ethnic presenter, Hunter Valley WEA, Frank and Hanna Burnog 2NUR ethnic presenters, Faculty Board of Faculty of Engineering, University Staff Association, Cardiff Branch of ALP; University of Newcastle Archives A6402.

The intent of this resolution was to reduce the station's paid staff from three to two in 1980, with Hadlow as Acting Manager, with no paid staff from 1981. Once more demonstrating a community minded spirit, NBN offered to provide 'a suitable employee to assist in the operations of 2NUR-FM for a period of twelve months'.⁵⁰ Russell Thornton was NBN's nominee to support Hadlow during 1980, before the university completely abandoned staffing the station. During that time the station was increasing its revenue from other sources, with the enlargement of SBS subsidies for ethnic programs and the development of sponsorship.⁵¹ There were now sixty volunteer presenters from the community.⁵²

When the university recognised that it had made a legal commitment to maintain the station, at least until the end of the licence period, the decision to cease funding paid staff was reversed after Hadlow had announced his resignation to take up a position with the Solomon Islands national broadcasting network, in the middle of 1980.⁵³ Anton Donker became the new station manager in October 1980.⁵⁴ The university now basically accepted 2NUR-FM as a community station, with a legally binding substantial financial commitment from the institution in which it was situated. On his arrival, Donker saw the station as primarily an education station with a small

50. G. Brown, General Manager NBN, Letter to L. Short, 3 October 1979, University of Newcastle Archives, A6401.

51. In February 1980, BHP agreed to sponsor 2NUR-FM for \$1,000 for one year and by March that year the station had twenty sponsors; see BHP, Letter to L. Short, 25 February 1980, University of Newcastle Archives, A6401 and Hadlow, M., 'Manager's Report', March 1980, 2NUR-FM Station File 1/4.

52. M. Hadlow, 'Station Manager's Report', 11 March 1980, University of Newcastle Archives, A6401.

53. L. N. Short, Memorandum to Staff Review Committee, 29 July 1979, University of Newcastle Archives, A6401; Hadlow, Letter from Brisbane.

54. A. Donker, 'Manager's Report', 22 October 1980, 2NUR-FM Station File 1/4.

community component, which contrasted with 2MCE-FM, at the Mitchell College of Advanced Education in Bathurst, his previous employer, where the education and community components were equally important. Donker felt he had been employed until the university could close the station down: 'It was very clear to me that they were engaging a station manager to oversee the period that remained of its licence, because they felt that was an obligation, from which they would then withdraw.'⁵⁵ Donker saw the situation as a challenge:

I could not believe that the only community educational station for a three hundred odd thousand population base, and people could possibly contemplate closing this thing down and it could not be successful, when we could make it successful in Bathurst for twenty thousand odd population. And I thought to myself, this should be very easy to turn round within the two years such that it is not possible for the University to contemplate its closure without an enormous backlash from what should be a regional University.⁵⁶

Donker knew that to be successful he had to build up both the education and community aspects of the station. In 1981, under his guidance, the Society of Friends was established as a community fund raising body, and he convinced the university to commit itself to providing the station with 0.22% of the annual general recurrent fund as the time for the licence renewal was approaching.⁵⁷ At the end of that year Hall replaced Short as Chairman of the URSC, removing one source of agitation for the station's closure.⁵⁸

In 1984 and 1988 Vice Chancellor George instructed a Committee of Review to conduct investigations and make recommendations on restructuring the

55. Donker, Interview.

56. *ibid.*

57. A. Donker, 'Manager's Report', August - October 1981, 2NUR-FM Station File 1/4.

58. 2NUR-FM, 'Annual Report' 1984, with present writer.

station. It was never George's intention to close down 2NUR-FM and the concept was not in the terms of reference of the reviews. However, Donker has admitted that he did nothing to calm the fears of volunteers, who saw the reviews as more threats to close the station down. For Donker, the volunteers' fears provided a rallying point to demonstrate community support.⁵⁹

When government funding to tertiary institutions increased in the mid 1980s, the university was able to maintain a considerable financial input. As a result of the reviews the number of paid staff was enlarged. Brett Gleeson has reported that just after he arrived as manager, 2NUR-FM was made a separate identity from the Department of Community Programmes in line with its community function. The station was given a small Board of Directors and the manager reported directly to the Vice-Chancellor.⁶⁰ The community contribution to the station was accepted to such an extent that when it was decided, in 1988, that the accommodation in the Mathematics building was too small, a Building Appeal was set up within the community to raise money for a new building.⁶¹ Over the previous ten years, the change in attitude to the station, both by the university and the community was such that it would now have been inconceivable that the university would provide such a building. The appeal was suspended after the

59. Donker, Interview, Bates, Interview; Nichols, Interview; George, Interview.

60. Brett Gleeson, Personal Interview at WEA, Newcastle, 11 November 1997; C. C. Renwick, M. P. Carter, and P. I. A. Hendry, University of Newcastle Report on 2NUR/FM, September 1984, (C114:84) Council Meeting Minutes 19th October 1984, p.2053, with the Secretary of the University of Newcastle; C. C. Renwick, M. P. Carter, and P. I. A. Hendry, University of Newcastle Report on 2NUR/FM, June 1987, (C80:87) Council Meeting Minutes 14th August 1987, p.2354, with the Secretary of the University of Newcastle.

61. 2NUR-FM, 'The University of Newcastle 2NUR Building Appeal 1988', booklet, with present writer.

earthquake of 29 December 1989, to support the Lord Mayor's Appeal for its victims.⁶² \$209,000 had already been raised.⁶³ This demonstrated the fact that the community accepted its shared responsibility, with the university, for the station.

Serious attempts to establish a community radio station in Bellingen, in the late 1970s, were made in an entirely different political climate from those existing when 2NUR-FM was conceived. The Fraser Coalition government had been in power for a number of years with a substantial majority and felt under no threat. Ministers Robinson and Staley had already defined and legitimised the public broadcasting sector with the establishment of three categories of licences. There was never any question about whether a station would be possible in Bellingen, nor about the type of licence or the type of station that would be established. The legislation made it clear that it would be a public broadcasting station, with a Category 'C' community licence, to serve the small rural communities of Bellingen and Dorrigo, the area covered by the Bellingen Shire Council.

The area had two problems in the late 1970s which provided the impetus for the establishment of a community radio station. There was very little radio of any description. The nearest stations were at Kempsey and Grafton and the reception was often poor to non-existent.⁶⁴ Bellingen needed radio, any radio, particularly for local

62. 2NUR-FM 'Annual Report' 1990, p.5.

63. C. C. Renwick, 'Chairman's Report', 2NUR-FM, 'Annual Report' 1989, with present writer.

64. The poor radio reception was due to two factors: the area was mountainous, with heavy concentrations of magnetic materials and was subject to violent thunderstorms. Usually it was possible to receive something from the 2 stations in Kempsey but it was almost impossible to pick up the ABC in Grafton. Grahame Steel, then manager of ABC Kempsey, has revealed that the ABC regarded Grafton as its local station for Bellingen and provided no local news for the people of Bellingen from its Kempsey station. See 'Belligen people want own FM', *Coffs*

news. This was in stark contrast to the situation in Newcastle when the university was contemplating setting up a station with the intention of supplying additional educational and community services not already provided by existing services.⁶⁵

The other problem in Bellingen was that it was a community divided against itself. A local radio station for everyone could help in the healing process. A remedy was needed because tremendous conflict existed between the earlier residents, mainly dairy farmers and loggers, and the newcomers of the 1970s, often highly educated people, 'alternative lifestylers' who wanted to escape the pressures of city living.⁶⁶ Geoffrey Bolton has claimed that the friction between these two groups where the newcomers settled in areas of northern NSW was generally less than might have been expected.⁶⁷ If that was the case Bellingen in the mid 1970s must have been one of the exceptions. The contrast between these two groups in the community was exemplified by two buildings in the main street of the town. The RSL club, on one corner, was frequented by the earlier residents and the Community Centre, on the opposite corner, by the recent arrivals.⁶⁸ Phil Wood, the Centre Co-ordinator, was the first to see the need for a community radio station in Bellingen and wrote to the Postal and

Harbour Advocate, 25 May 1979; S. M. Abell, 'Beautiful Bellingen - Part Two - 2BBB-FM To The Rescue', *Simply Living*, vol.2, no.8, 1985, pp.48, 49; Grahame Steel, Personal Interview at 2NUR-FM, Newcastle, July 1993.

65. Newcastle had two ABC and three commercial radio stations of its own.

66. A. Horin, 'Bellingen '78: A Clash of Cultures', *National Times*, 4 November 1978, pp.12-13; Stephen Abell, Personal Interview at Skill Share Office, Bellingen, 17 June 1993.

67. Geoffrey Bolton, *The Middle Way, The Oxford History of Australia - Volume 5 1942-1988*, Melbourne, OUP, 1990, p.202.

68. P. Geddes, 'Beautiful Bellingen' - Part One, *Simply Living*, vol.2, no.8, 1985, p.46.

Telecommunications Department asking for a licence in 1977.⁶⁹ If Wood had been aware of developments in Canberra, he would not have been surprised when he received no reply. Minister Robinson was still preparing legislative details for the establishment of public broadcasting at this time. Wood did not pursue the matter because his Centre was threatened when the 'old timers' at the Chamber of Commerce managed to persuade Bellingen Shire Council to sack the Centre's management committee at the end of the year.⁷⁰

Nothing more was done towards establishing a community radio station until Stephen Abell arrived in Bellingen in September 1978. Abell came from Boston and had experience of public radio in both the USA and Brazil. He saw the need for a radio station in the area and felt strongly that a community station, providing a service for everyone, would help to bind this divided community together. Abell had toured round Australia before settling in Bellingen and had visited stations which already existed. More importantly, he visited Brisbane early October 1978 when the ABT was holding the hearings for the three licences to be issued there as a result of Staley's Guidelines. While attending these hearings Abell learned exactly what to do to apply for a licence and set up a station in Bellingen.⁷¹ He had already called a public meeting to elect a steering committee to investigate the possibilities. In the process, he achieved the first step in the community healing process by persuading Shire President Patricia Oakman and Councillors Norman Braithwaite and Mary Anderson to attend and part

69. D. B. Mow, *Radio - Be on it. The 2BBB-FM Self Drive Manual*, Bellingen, 1987, p.1.

70. Geddes, 'Beautiful Bellingen'.

71. Abell, Interview; X. Connor, *Serving Multicultural Australia, The Role of Broadcasting, - Synopsis and Summary of Recommendations*, Report of the Committee of Review of the Special Broadcasting Service, Canberra, AGPS, December 1984, Appendix, p.8.

with \$10 to enable the group to join the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia (PBAA) and send Abell to its conference. Members of council were attracted by the fact that a radio station could be used to publicise council's achievements and disseminate important community information.⁷² Abell has explained that he had donned a conservative image and set out to persuade people that the radio station would be for everyone, providing a much needed service, and not just a 'hippie radio'.⁷³ Having received a seeding grant from the Australian Film Commission (AFC) to purchase of some basic equipment, a formal meeting on 1 February 1979 established Community Radio Bellinghen and the organisation 'was up and away!'⁷⁴ With no connection to a university and no organisation like NBN to lend a hand, the group was dependent on individuals within the community to set up the station. Fortunately, there were some talented members with specific expertise, including Bob Phillips, an ex-ABC broadcasting engineering officer, Peter Geddes, an ex-journalist and Seth Bendersky, who had been involved in similar stations in the USA and had a talent for making promotional cartridges and persuading record companies to donate copies of new releases.⁷⁵

During 1979, temporary premises were obtained in a shop front in Bellinghen to publicise the group's activities. This was essential because, like so many other aspirant groups they were battling to keep a profile in the community since the government had forbidden test broadcasts when public broadcasting licences were legalised. After considerable lobbying by the PBAA the government relented at the end of 1979, and test broadcasts were carried out in Bellinghen, in premises, variously

72. None of this had been a large consideration at 2NUR-FM as existing stations were already providing these time consuming and expensive services.

73. Abell, Interview; 'The Norm - Who Owns the Airwaves? Public Access Radio', *RAM*, 23 November 1984, p.9.

74. Abell, 'Beautiful Bellinghen', p.49.

75. Dorin Hart, Personal Interview at 2BBB-FM, Bellinghen, 17 June 1993.

provided by local businesses and the shire council, during February 1980, May 1981 and May 1983.⁷⁶ These test broadcasts not only advanced the station's profile within the community and taught presenters how to use the equipment and prepare programs, but kept up the enthusiasm of members while they waited for a licence.

Since the co-operative was not fully established until after Minister Staley had issued the first round of licences following the proclamation of his Guidelines Bellinghen had not been ready to receive one of these licences. Staley was in no hurry to offer more licences and was distracted by other aspects of his portfolio, leaving his overworked staff without any time to contemplate the expansion of the public broadcasting sector. This was frustrating for aspirant groups, like the one in Bellinghen, which were having trouble retaining members, when it was unclear when broadcasting would commence.

Abell and his colleagues kept their members' interest with test broadcasts and the setting up of a formal structure to hold the licence. A formal structure had to be formulated because the situation in Bellinghen was quite different from that at the University of Newcastle. In spite of Geoff Evans' gaffe, the licence for 2NUR-FM always belonged to the University of Newcastle, and, despite the fact that the licence was a Category 'C' community licence, all decisions about the station were ultimately the responsibility of the university Council. In Bellinghen the station really did belong to the community, and an arrangement had to be put in place to legalise this idea so that there was an entity to receive a licence. A co-operative was chosen rather than a company, in

76. The first test broadcast was held in Carl Foster's motor garage, the second in a small council transmission equipment storage hut, and the third at the rear of Don Adams Electronics in Wheatley St, North Bellinghen, next door to where the station's permanent home was built. See Mow, *Radio - Be on it*, p.1; Seth Jordon Bendersky, Personal Interview at 2BBB-FM, Bellinghen, 17 June 1993.

view of the non-profit nature of the organisation.⁷⁷ Bellinger Community Communications Co-operative was registered in January 1982.⁷⁸ The Co-operative applied for and still holds the licence.⁷⁹ Members of the community could become shareholders for as little as ten dollars, but irrespective of the size of the shareholding, no individual could have more than one vote. Shareholders elected a Board of Directors. The Board has always been the ultimate decision making body of the Co-operative, although the actual management of the station has varied with circumstances.⁸⁰ Community radio in Bellingen was to be a truly community affair.

The registration of the Co-operative came just in time because new Minister for Communications, Ian Sinclair, called for applications for a public broadcasting Category 'C' community licence for Bellingen/Urunga on 2 February 1982.⁸¹ Sinclair had taken over the portfolio from Staley after the federal election in October 1980 and, as a member of the Country Party, demonstrated more concern for the development of radio services in regional and rural areas than Staley had. Where areas were lacking sufficient populations to make commercial radio an economically viable proposition, the Coalition supported the development of public broadcasting rather than the expansion of the ABC, and the north coast of NSW was obviously in

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77. Many later stations, in NSW chose to become incorporated associations, but the NSW government did not pass the *Associations Incorporation Act* until 1985, so this option was not available to the group in Bellingen.
78. D. Hart, 2BBB-FM Bellinger Community Communications Co-operative - policy decisions of the Board, originally compiled 31st December 1986, with updates, p.1, 2BBB-FM Station Archives.
79. 2BBB-FM Licence Renewal Application 1987, p.1, 2BBB-FM Station Archives.
80. Mow, *Radio - Be on it*, p.1.
81. I. Sinclair, 'Notice by Minister for Communications', Parliament House, Canberra, 2 February 1982, 2BBB-FM Archives.

need of more radio services.⁸² Almost as soon as he became minister, Sinclair instructed his department to survey the North Coast of NSW and determine whether a broadcasting service was needed in Bellingen and Dorrigo.⁸³ Staff shortages in the Department for Communications in 1981 meant this process took some time even though Sinclair was prepared to give priority to country community radio. The priority is illustrated by the fact, while this was taking place, that there were 550 outstanding applications for commercial FM licences alone and approximately 700 for broadcasting and television licences altogether.⁸⁴ Sinclair would have been aware that, although the 'old timers' in Bellingen supported the Country Party, the newcomers tended to support the Labor Party. He needed to show these newcomers, like those proposing a community radio station for Bellingen, that the Country Party had something to offer them, too.

However, issuing a licence to Bellingen posed a technical problem, which was apparent from the beginning. Because of the terrain, one transmitter would not cover the whole area. Licences, at this time, were for transmitters not for service areas. The *Broadcasting and Television Act* had been amended in 1976 to allow for the provision of radio and TV translator stations, but this was before public broadcasting had been incorporated in the *Act*.⁸⁵ Legislation was needed for public broadcasting translator stations, to enable one transmitter to broadcast from Bellingen and another from the Dorrigo plateau. Staley had no problem with this and incorporated the necessary

82. Bellingen and Coffs Harbour were dealt with at the same time.

83. 'Applications for Radio Stations', unidentified clipping of local paper article on same photocopy as the ministerial statement, 1982, 2BBB-FM Archives.

84. I. Sinclair, *CPD*, House of Representatives, vols.124-125, 10 September 1981, p.1162; Baume, P. *CPD*, Senate, vol.92, 27 November 1981, p.2806.

85. ABCB, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report 1975-76*, Canberra, AGPS, 1976, p.1; ABCB, *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report, June - Dec 1976*, Canberra, AGPS, 1978, p.1.

changes in his Bill to create the Independent and Multicultural Broadcasting Corporation (IMBC) in June 1980. When the Senate delayed that Bill, the legalisation of public broadcasting translator stations was also delayed.⁸⁶ Fortunately for Bellingen, Bathurst, another area involving vital Country Party seats in parliament, had a similar problem, with 2MCE-FM needing a translator station to reach Orange. As a result, the government was persuaded to incorporate public broadcasting translator stations in other amendments to the *Broadcasting and Television Act* in September 1980.⁸⁷ When 2BBB-FM, the Bellinger Community Communications Co-operative station, commenced broadcasting on 9 September 1983, it did so with the first public broadcasting translator licence issued in Australia.⁸⁸

2BBB-FM had conducted its test broadcasts in temporary accommodation, but it needed a permanent home. The community co-operated to secure this goal. Shire Councillor Braithwaite provided a block of land at cost, and long-time station supporter, Clover Wade, assisted with funds to erect the building from an inheritance from her feminist great-aunt. The government made no direct contribution but some tradesmen were hired with funding from a Wage Pause Grant. The world's first mud brick radio station was then built with the help of 120 volunteers who organised themselves in regular shifts and some bricklaying apprentices from Coffs Harbour TAFE, who were persuaded that making mud bricks was essential to their

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86. F. M. Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report of Activities 1978-79, 13 October 1979, p.2, CBAA Archives, Sydney; F. M. Law, PBAA Executive Director's Report of Activities 1979-80, 30 August 1980, p.3, CBAA Archives, Sydney.
87. M., Armstrong, *Broadcasting Law and Policy in Australia*, Sydney, Butterworths, 1982, p.47; ABT, *Annual Report 1980-81*, Canberra, AGPS, 1981, p.1.
88. Hart, 'Policy Decisions of the Board', p.2; 2BBB-FM Licence Renewal Application 1987, 2BBB-FM Archives.

course.⁸⁹ When the building was completed, the station was able to raise a loan to purchase it from Clover Wade.⁹⁰ This enabled the community to own its own radio station building and all the equipment in it, in a way that was never going to be possible at 2NUR-FM.

However 2BBB-FM was unable to raise enough money to pay any staff, even with sponsorship and fundraising events. In the very early days, the Board of Directors appointed Stephen Abell as volunteer manager. Abell was prepared to do the job and everyone was ready to accept his authority.⁹¹ Although there was no direct government funding available to public broadcasters for this purpose, from time to time other government grants were received for this end. In 1984 two separate Commonwealth Employment Programme (CEP) grants were received: one for five general staff to be employed full time for nine months, a station manager, and production, administration, technician and promotions managers; the other for one journalist, two cadets, a telephone recorder and two tape recorders to set up a news team for six months full time. For this short period of time 2BBB-FM had eight paid staff.⁹²

The staff and equipment paid for with these grants were important not only for setting administrative and technical practices in place which could be continued

89. Mow, *Radio - Be on it*, p.2; Abell, 'Beautiful Bellinghen', p.50; P. Thornley, Chronology 2BBB-FM', corrected by long-time 2BBB-FM members, Dorin Hart and Ralph Martin, September 1993, p.2.

90. Mow, *Radio - Be on it*, p.2; Hart, 'Policy decisions of the Board', p.6.

91. Hart, Interview.

92. Abell, Interview. Thereafter the station went through periods with no paid staff and a small committee to manage the station, and never had more than one employee, usually a manager, who was often officially employed only part time. When Brian Goddard was manager, he was supposed to finish work at 1pm, but could often be found still working at the station after 3pm. See Hart, Interview.

by volunteers later, but particularly for the establishment of a local news service. While local news was not considered at 2NUR-FM, until very recently, because it was provided by other media outlets and was very expensive to produce, it was one of the main reasons for establishing a station in Bellingham and led to the station becoming so much part of the community. The inundation of the town with one of the worst floods on record in July 1985, emphasised the importance of the station. Six people were flooded in at the station and provided continuous updates of SES information, until the situation eased. This service made 2BBB-FM a vital part of the community of Bellingham at this time,⁹³ in a way 2NUR-FM never has been in Newcastle, not even after the earthquake in 1989, which the station did not cover.⁹⁴ News type programs were important to 2BBB-FM in much the same way as ethnic community programs were to 2NUR-FM, catering to the particular needs of the communities they served. Whereas 2BBB-FM's speciality helped to bind the community together and portray the station as providing a service for everyone, 2NUR-FM's speciality catered separately for minority interests within the community. Having overcome the problems between the farming pioneers and the educated city newcomers, Bellingham was a more homogeneous community. 2BBB-FM did not provide ethnic programs, because there were fewer and much smaller

93. 2BBB-FM, 'Licence Renewal Application 1987', Appendix 20; and illustrated in a letter to a local paper at the time. 'I wish to congratulate all the people involved in our wonderful community Radio 2BBB, who helped the many of us get through the trying days of the recent flood. To those of us trapped between flooded bridges and cut off by out-of-action telephones, 2BBB kept our spirits up with information news flashes, weather updates, information on bridges and cancellations, along with a cheery programme, I sincerely do thank them.' S., Kelly, 'Local Radio a comfort during flood', Letter to Editor, *Bellingham Courier Sun*, 15 July 1985, 2BBB-FM Scrap-book in 2BBB-FM Archives.

94. Gleeson, Interview.

ethnic groups, within the community.⁹⁵

Nearly all the other programs on the two stations were similar, satisfying needs that are common to most communities. These included those for other minority interests and a wide range of music programs, which were usually neglected by main stream media, and which befitted the new sector as the government had envisaged it.. Although 2BBB-FM was a community station, education was seen as an important community need and the station also presented 'Norwaves', the adult education course work programs produced by 2NCR-FM. 2BBB-FM not only broadcast these programs but promoted them in the local press.⁹⁶

Apart from a certain resemblance of community interest in program types, 2NUR-FM and 2BBB-FM had something else in common, a shortage of money. Although 2NUR-FM appeared to be a relatively rich station, housed in a university building with staff paid for by the institution, it had to rely, like 2BBB-FM, for much of its income on sponsorship and other fundraising activities. The government never provided more than small capitation grants for general public broadcasters leaving a shortfall of money to meet necessary expenditure, which was not experienced, to the same extent, by either the commercial or the national stations. This led both stations to take cost cutting measures, like leaving cables uncovered, which proved disastrous. Some cackling cockatoos on the roof of the University's Mathematics Building had the last laugh when they chewed through the coaxial cable leading to the microwave transmitter link silencing 2NUR-FM for most of the weekend of 27-28 February 1983.⁹⁷ The press reported a similar problem at 2BBB-FM in May 1988. Cows had chewed through the coaxial cable on the edge of the Dorrigo escarpment at Francis Lookout, putting 2BBB-FM's translator transmitter off the air.⁹⁸ These types of incidents also

95. Brian Goddard, Personal Interview at 2BBB-FM, Bellingen, 17 June 1993.

96. *Bellinger Courier-Sun*, 24 February 1988 and 22 February 1989.

97. *Newcastle Herald*, 1st March 1983, p.1.

98. *Sawtell-Toormina Advertiser*, 17 May 1988.

provided the basis for a certain camaraderie which existed among those involved in public broadcasting, often lacking in commercial and national stations. This feeling was a distinctive feature of this new third sector of broadcasting, was one factor which drew people to 2NUR-FM, 2BBB-FM and public broadcasting stations generally, and was the envy of some professional broadcasters.⁹⁹

2NUR-FM and 2BBB-FM emerged at different times in the public broadcasting sector's development under governments with diverse agenda, to serve distinct purposes. This study has provided an example of how the changes in government policy towards the sector affected particular stations and how these stations were able to affect government policy to meet their requirements. The investigation of these stations has shown the way they have developed to satisfy the divergent needs of those they served, within the context of changing government policy. 2NUR-FM was established in the very early days of the public broadcasting sector, when broadcasters and the Labor government alike, were still imbued with idealism. This idealism soon died as harsh political realities were faced. The station survived for two reasons. It was able to work with other similar stations to lobby government to legitimise the sector and develop policy that would enable stations to operate in the reality of harsh economic times. The station also adapted to the changing needs of the regional community and the institution, of which it was a part. 2BBB-FM developed in a more stable, though less

99. An example of this feeling towards public broadcasting, in this case 2MBS-FM. 'I must ... confess to having a deep-seated feeling of unworthiness that you began as amateurs, whereas we began as professionals, for I am old fashioned enough to believe that most things worth doing should be done for their own sake and here we are, actually being paid to put a new station on the air. Oh! the pristine altruism of 2MBS-FM, the venal self-seeking of ABC-FM!' C. Symonds, First Director of ABC-FM in a letter to Trevor Jarvie, April 1976, cited in Trevor Jarvie, "'THE BOOK" a draft outline of a history of 2mbs-fm from its origins to 1997', Manuscript, May Day 1997, p.21, copy with present writer.

idealistic, environment. Public broadcasting was already a legal identity. Once the Country Party's Ian Sinclair became minister, the Coalition government, to ensure electoral support in rural areas, encouraged community groups to apply for public broadcasting licences where radio services were in short supply. Lobbying was still needed to refine government policy to meet the needs of these rural broadcasters but 2BBB-FM survived because it was providing an essential service for the whole community.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN - CONCLUSION.

This thesis has provided the first empirical analysis of political influences on the development of the federal government's policy on public broadcasting. An analysis has also been carried out of the changing role the government has played in the establishment of this third sector as it was superimposed on the previous dual system of broadcasting in Australia. Early in the investigation it became clear that practical broadcasting policy has never developed as a consistent whole nor has it been clearly defined along party lines. The influences on policy have always been too complicated for that. Even when Labor had a distinctive policy of the nationalisation of all broadcasting services, immediately after the Second World War, practical politics prevented its implementation.

Public communication, like public health and public education, has been a concern of government in all modern Western democracies. Public communication was considered so important in Australia that the founding fathers included it in the constitution as a federal government responsibility, with the Post Office being the largest department when the new government was formed.

Broadcasting, which developed as part of that public communication shortly after Australia became a nation, needed government regulation and control if it was to be heard at all simply because of the technical nature of the radio waves in which it operated. If stations had been allowed to broadcast on top of one another on the same frequency, none of them could have been distinguished. Such technical considerations applied equally whether stations were established as commercial operations by private enterprise or as a public service by government. This thesis has shown that although small vigorous lobby groups seeking particular developments have existed since the beginning of broadcasting, the issue has never become a topic of national public debate which influenced elections, in the way public health and public education have. It has only rarely become an issue in localised electorates. Nevertheless, while public broadcasting produced little national controversy in Australia, it is a significant issue not only because so many Australians are 'consumers' of the medium, but also because broadcasting came to be regarded as an essential services in all modern Western societies, and did become an election issue from time to time in other comparable countries.

This research has suggested that the reason broadcasting has not become a national election issue, in Australia, may have been that the unique dual system of commercial stations and a

national service funded and operated by the federal government, the ABC, which developed prior to the Second World War, was more satisfactory than the systems which emerged in other comparable countries, where public debate became more vigorous. The dual system developed in Australia because radio was seen as a public service for everyone, as it was in Britain, and yet the original commercial system, based on the United States model, did not provide services to the sparse and scattered population in rural and regional areas as such services would not have been not economically viable. The various political philosophies of governments in comparable countries, together with the pressure exerted by a variety of interest groups, have been examined in relation to the extent to which those governments have actually participated in broadcasting as a public service or have merely regulated the medium. With the establishment of the dual system in Australia, the lack of general public debate led to the stagnation of development of broadcasting once progress had been halted because of the Second World War. It became clear that the sole serious political pressure, in the early post-war years, came from those conservative forces involved in broadcasting, in both government and business, whose interests lay in preserving the *status quo*. The only expansion of services in the 1950s and early 1960s was increasing the power of existing commercial stations to extend their coverage areas and the widening of the ABC networks. Neither of these developments addressed the issue of services relevant to local communities or particular interest groups.

The stagnation remained even while technical advances, including FM, were being implemented in other countries. In the late sixties and early seventies, with a rapidly expanding population the influence of groups lobbying for the augmentation of broadcasting services grew and an increasing pressure for general social and political change emerged. These forces were intensified as an interest in broadcasting developed among arising ethnic community groups and academics and students in the proliferating tertiary institutions. Furthermore, manufacturers and importers began to see FM radio as a way of reversing falling profits after the market was saturated with television receivers. It has been a major argument of this thesis that this combination of circumstances led governments of both political persuasions in Australia to realise that it was prudent to expand broadcasting services generally and include the development of FM and a third sector, public broadcasting, in their policies, even though broadcasting was not a significant election issue in its own right. The first government to accept the implementation of these developments as part of its broadcasting policy was the McMahon Coalition government in 1972, just before it lost

office.

The ensuing Whitlam Labor government also embraced the concepts of FM and public broadcasting. However, while the new government tackled its concerns over public health with the creation of a comprehensive policy in the introduction of Medibank, an analysis of Labor's efforts to establish public broadcasting have revealed them to have consisted of *ad hoc* policy and politically expedient decisions. This was consistent with the appearance of a public broadcasting lobby, which, although it could not be ignored, failed to grow strong enough to make public broadcasting a general election issue. In this environment the government made individual decisions when strong pressure was applied but failed to develop an overall policy; at times it was trying to follow opposing policies simultaneously. In spite of pre-election rhetoric, the Whitlam government favoured the expansion of government services over the development public broadcasting. This was demonstrated when the government took over the ethnic stations, 2EA and 3EA, which had been set up as public broadcasting stations. Minister Moss Cass treated his attempt at creating a public broadcasting sector as a method of expanding broadcasting services with a greater sense of urgency than his predecessor. This study has revealed that Cass's attitude was motivated, at least in part, by a foreboding that the government could be ousted at any time. Cass wanted to achieve something as Minister before this happened. Although it could take the credit for introducing FM broadcasting the Whitlam government left office still having issued only a jumble of licences and offers of dubious legality to public broadcasters. Having professed support for government funding of public broadcasting as it came to power the Labor government was not in the financial position to do so when licences were issued. An analysis of the developments that occurred under the Whitlam Labor government verified that it had no clear public broadcasting policy, not even as far as its own participation was concerned.

This thesis has shown that the fears many public broadcasters held that the incoming Fraser Coalition government would abolish public broadcasting were totally unfounded. An analysis of Coalition philosophy, particularly that of Minister Tony Staley, concluded that in fact the aspirations of most public broadcasters were more in tune with the Coalition's policy of promoting individual initiative in the provision of services. A comparison was made with the Labor philosophy of the government providing necessary public services to ensure they were available to all the people. In fact, Staley did issue the first legitimate public broadcasting licences and provided a clear set of guidelines for the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal to regulate and control the sector.

Evidence has suggested that Country Party Minister Ian Sinclair was cognisant of the shortage of essential radio services to his constituents in regional and rural areas, where Country Party support predominated. Because services in these areas would not be viable to commercial operators, Sinclair worked with the Tribunal to ensure these districts received public radio licences. By the time the Coalition lost power to the Hawke Labor government in 1983, the public broadcasting sector was securely established but it had been an *ad hoc* affair. As had been the case with the Whitlam Labor government, the Fraser Coalition government had no coherent policy. Broadcasting still failed to motivate the electorate.

Interviews with many of those involved in creation of the public broadcasting sector have revealed that, because broadcasting was not a significant election issue among the Australian population, lobbying was necessary to ensure various governments carried out their promises. However, further investigation led to the conclusion that the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia, the original representative of the sector to government, was not fully aware of the implications of this situation.

Once public broadcasting was legalised and licences were granted, in the late 1970s, the real issue was establishing and maintaining financial viability. Although the stations were not allowed to make a profit, they could not continue to broadcast if they operated with sustained losses either. Inquiries have revealed that not all public broadcasters favoured sponsorship as an important way to raise revenue to cover costs but those who did were able to work together to persuade the government to legislate a satisfactory set of regulations for the sector. However, when it came to the issue of government funding, this thesis has exposed the fact that, by the 1980s, specialists, such as ethnic public broadcasters, aboriginal public broadcasters, and Radio for the Print Handicapped, acquired a greater understanding of the political process and their place in it than general public broadcasters. From the granting of the first experimental public broadcasting licences governments of both sides of politics were able to avoid a commitment to direct funding of the sector. Small, indirect capitation grants were available firstly through the Film, Television and Radio Board of the Australia Council and then through the Australian Film Commission. By the early 1980s the government recognised that voters were considering ethnic and aboriginal issues, but it was anxious to avoid the expense of developing its own network of ethnic and aboriginal radio stations. As a result, the government began providing substantial funding for ethnic and aboriginal public broadcasting through SBS. Some station managers appropriated these monies for general station

purposes and not for the programs for which they were allocated.

Realising they were being discriminated against by the sector as a whole these specialist broadcasters became aware that their particular interests were more electorally significant than the concept of public broadcasting. Ethnic issues, aboriginal issues and disabled persons issues did become vote winners. As the Public Broadcasting Foundation (PBF) became the conduit, in the mid 1980s, for government funding for all public broadcasting these specialist public broadcasting groups formed their own organisations which successfully obtained far more financial help specifically and directly from government through the PBF than those applying simply as public broadcasters. The political awareness, in the early 1970s, of the original public broadcasters in lobbying the government to institute public broadcasting at a time of broadcasting stagnation in a climate of social and political change, had been lost in unwarranted complacency as the sector grew. Moreover, educational public broadcasting, the specialty which had been common to many of the early participants and had attracted considerable government support, failed to develop as governments of both political persuasions had expected. The government soon realised that, while public education was still an election issue, educational public broadcasting never attracted a significant number of votes. Eventually it abolished the category of educational public broadcasting licence as an insignificant delineation.

Particularly with the loss of government support for educational public broadcasters, the sector could not afford the fragmentation of political influence that was brought about by the splitting into a number of different lobby groups. Although all governments had originally considered funding public broadcasting as the idea had evolved and there appeared to be growing public support, financial difficulties made this impossible when the first licences were issued. Once the government realised the splits within the sector and that the special interest groups had more electoral clout, this was where it concentrated its attention. Public broadcasting became just another community service competing for the government's meagre funding that such organisations attracted. Many stations faced grave financial difficulties.

However, particularly in rural and regional areas where local public radio provided vital links within communities, maintaining the financial viability of the public broadcasting service was essential. Broadcasting would almost certainly have become an election issue if these stations had been forced to close. Commercial stations were not interested in taking over the services since the population did not exist to sustain their operations economically. An expansion of the ABC

would not only have incurred considerable government expense but the ABC did not provide such localised services. Having come to embrace radio as an essential service which was expected to continue, people in these areas would not have accepted the loss of radio altogether. This study has established that, in order to ensure that public broadcasting did not become a general election issue, the government found it necessary to find a way to facilitate its viability without increasing funding, except to specialist services.

The changes to sponsorship regulations in the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, ensured that public broadcasters could now fund their operations almost entirely from sponsorship if they chose to do so. With the idealism that had drawn many to the sector in the early 1970s now lost with the second generation of participants, many relied on sponsorship revenue to cover the cost of running their stations. Thus, by the early 1990s, public broadcasting took two basic forms. There were general stations which received little or no government funding, often operated in a very similar fashion to the commercial stations and provided community services which commercial operators were unable or unwilling to provide. On the other hand there were specialist stations, such as ethnic, aboriginal and Radio for the Print Handicapped, which provided services, which were previously largely unavailable, to particular sections of the population attracting considerable government funding while ever their concerns attracted significant electoral support. The concept of the station run largely by the funds raised from listener-subscribers, one of the notions floated in the early idealist days of public broadcasting, survived only in a few Fine Music and Christian stations.

Although the concept of public broadcasting emanated from an ideal, conceived in the early 1970s as the need for the expansion of broadcasting services became imperative, which could have involved serious government participation and funding, ideals soon gave way to realities. Public broadcasting never caught the imagination of the electorate nor forced the government to devise or carry out a coherent policy. The expedient decisions which led to the establishment and development of the sector, which was run entirely by independent operators and involved no government participation, were made as the result of particular pressures. By the early 1990s, when public broadcasters generally had lost what political influence they once had to the special interest groups in the sector, the government perceived its role as little more than a regulator, the minimum role necessitated by the technical nature of broadcasting as a means of public communication and very similar to its relationship with commercial broadcasters. Funding

for the public broadcasting sector that was provided was minimal and only occurred where this enabled the government to ensure that essential non-commercially viable broadcasting services, catering for particular special interest groups, could continue as this was far cheaper for the government than providing the services itself.

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