



Temporary transmissions by aspirant community broadcasters

The purpose of temporary transmissions is to allow aspirant community broadcasting groups to develop radio operating skills and programming schedules and encourage community support for a permanent community broadcasting licence.

An aspirant community broadcaster may operate for a maximum of 30 days in its first year. After time it must be off-air for at least an equivalent period of time. First-time applicants may broadcast for a maximum of 30 days in its first year. Subsequent transmissions, if approved by the ABA, may

operate for up to 90 days.

The ABA does not reserve channels specifically for temporary transmissions. Their availability therefore depends upon the number of vacant channels in an area, as well as the number of other users of vacant spectrum (including narrowcasters and other aspirant broadcasters).

Permanent community licences will be advertised and allocated by the ABA following completion of the planning process currently being undertaken throughout Australia.

A temporary transmission is consid-

ered an open narrowcast service operating under a class licence. Although the features of community broadcaster and narrowcasters differ (see the table on pages 4-5), an aspirant community broadcaster may fall within the character of a narrowcast service by virtue of the limited duration of its transmission, even though its programming formats may not be of "limited appeal" or appeal to special interest groups. Although putatively operating under the narrowcasting regime, the service must comply with the regulatory regime governing community broadcasters. □

Alasdair Grant

industry code and the commercial industry's Australian Music Performance Committee (AMPCOM). While the old mandatory quota probably had a positive impact when first introduced - for instance, by providing an incentive for record companies to record local acts - the same cannot be said of any of the subsequent attempts to revise or augment the quota. So although the encouragement of Australian identity, cultural diversity and innovative programming remain broadcasting policy objectives, program regulation, whether imposed or industry determined, seems unlikely to assist in achieving these ends. The answer seems to lie with structural regulation, which, in this context, means the licensing of stations programming new music for younger audiences.

HITZ was criticised for not playing the same amount of Australian music as its commercial rivals. But HITZ was dealing with a sector of the record industry in this country that was underdeveloped precisely because of the programming policies of commercial radio. HITZ gave that sector a major boost and provided considerable support to local acts through airplay, performer inter-

views, publicity for venues and independent releases.

Popular music policy

HITZ began transmitting just as the government released its latest report on the music industry. The Music Industry Advisory Council (MIAC) had established an Export Focus Group (EFG) to examine the export potential of the local music industry. Its report identified radio as one of two major problem areas:

'The EFG considers that the majority of commercial radio stations do not back new Australian talent, with many radio stations recycling old Australian and international music in a "classic hits" format. Good airplay and record sales in Australia are a precursor for gaining domestic success, which is an integral component of achieving international success'.

If this sounds familiar it is because it echoes a string of other reports and journalistic accounts, including the Price Waterhouse economic profile of the music industry, the AUSMUSIC *Stayin' Alive* project on the live music scene, and Lesley Sly's interviews with key industry players in *The Power*

and the Passion.

The most simple and effective way to stimulate the musical interests of the young, expose new talent and generate export income is to license HITZ-type stations. This form of government action should not attract criticisms of subsidisation, protectionism or anachronism, since such stations would not distort the market but develop one. Rather than staging nostalgic indulgences with musical archives, these stations would be uniquely hospitable to new genres and technological modes of popular music making.

Conclusion

AUSMUSIC argued that the Minister should either exercise his power under clause 84(1) of the Act and direct the ABA to give priority to the allocation of broadcasting services band licences to community youth/new music stations on the HITZ model, or, if reluctant to do this, advise the ABA that such an allocation would substantially further the range of government policy objectives. AUSMUSIC suggested that the government had a unique opportunity to promote broadcasting diversity, stimulate local