Submission by Combined Multicultural Christian Community on the Draft LAP variation - Sydney radio.

Table of Contents

Purpose of this submission. 2
What is Combined Multicultural Christian Community (CMCC). 2
CMCC's proposed “Voice of Hope” community radio service. 3
Objectives of “Voice of Hope” (in brief). 3
What existing services are available to CMCC's target audience? 4
Who is the target audience for VOH broadcasts? 4
CMCC's Code of Ethics for broadcasters 4
Conclusion 5
Appendix A – Affiliated groups 6
Appendix B – target audience statistics 7
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ACMA reference No 2006 / 823       Draft LAP variation - Sydney radio.

Purpose of this submission.
The Combined Multicultural Christian Community of NSW Inc (CMCC) has noted that in
the ACMA’s Explanatory Paper of August 2006, titled :-

Licence Area Plan – NSW Community Radio &
Variation to Licence Area Plans -- Sydney and Wollongong Radio

it states: "ACMA proposes to make channel capacity available for a NSW community radio
service to operate as follows :-

- 100.5 MHz from Elan Building, Kings Cross with a maximum ERP of 1 kW
  (Directional); and
- "...

Comments are sought from other interested groups.

This submission requests the ACMA to consider the aims and purposes of CMCC, so that it
may be assessed (along with others) as a potentially suitable and worthy recipient of the
"Kings Cross" licence.

What is Combined Multicultural Christian Community (CMCC)?
The CMCC is an association representing a wide range of churches and community
organisations. It was incorporated in 1996, and its mission is to "bring down barriers and
enable Christians to work together". To accomplish this, CMCC strives to :-

- unite, support and represent the many different ethnic cultures of our community
  through their commonality in the Christian Gospel, and
- present the Christian message to all Australians, and in their own language (where
  necessary).

CMCC is supported by various African, Aboriginal, Anglican, Arabic Baptist, Bangladeshi,
Chinese, Coptic, Fijian, Greek Orthodox, Indonesian, Indian, Italian, Korean, Melkite
Catholic, Persian, Portuguese, Salvation Army, Spanish, Tagalog, Tongan, Urdu and
Vietnamese Church groups – to name a few. (See appendix A for full details)

CMCC is run on a totally voluntary and non-profit basis. Each of its projects and events are
financed through the contributions, gifts or annual subscriptions of members and participants.
CMCC’s proposed “Voice of Hope” community radio service.

In 1998, the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) announced that 3 Sydney-wide Community FM licences would be allocated. CMCC indicated its interest, and it participated in 3 separate month-long trial broadcasts under the station name of “Voice of Hope” (VOH).

During these trial broadcasts, over 50 different ethnic groups participated in regular programming presentations for over 30 different language programs. There were also several daily English programs and features. Listener response and support from a potential Sydney audience of over a half million was overwhelming.

Then in August 2000, public hearings for these community FM licence applications were held; but CMCC’s application was not successful.

CMCC is still most desirous of the opportunity to broadcast in the Sydney area on a permanent basis. Although it is acknowledged that the proposed 100.5MHz community licence has limitations placed on it with respect to the power output, signal direction and transmitter’s location in eastern Sydney, CMCC still considers that there will be a significant and worthwhile benefit in broadcasting to this area. (*ACMA’s Explanatory Paper, pp3 & 4*)

Accordingly, it is requested that ACMA vary the Sydney LAP, to permit CMCC to be considered as a serious and suitably worthy applicant for this licence.

Objectives of “Voice of Hope” (in brief).

Throughout the 3 trial broadcasts previously undertaken, VOH programs had the following objectives, and future broadcasts would follow the same programming principles :-

- to present news, current events, topical issues, practical education, inspirational teaching, and family values within a Christian perspective.
- encourage and nurture tolerance, trust, harmony and understanding among individuals and communities of different nationalities, and by respecting and fostering an appreciation of the cultural heritage that each has to offer.
- encourage and assist ethnic groups to integrate into the wider community, to contribute to Australia as their homeland, which is vital for the peaceful and democratic development of Australia’s multicultural society.
- share cultural heritage and life skills with the broader Australian community through a radio schedule coordinated in the English language, but using both English and other languages in the programs.
- encourage and facilitate community groups to participate in station operation and program production; and develop local talent in music, drama, and poetry.
- Share resources and ideas through community networking, and provide information about ethnic and community events.
- represent the various community interests by broadcasting news, current affairs and music from abroad (where appropriate).
- interview community representatives, use talkback radio for listener participation.
- reflect and encourage Christian unity, particularly at Christmas and Easter.
- contribute to Christian evangelism in Australia.
What existing services are available to CMCC’s target audience?

Currently, there are limited opportunities open to the target audience regarding participatory access to the media. Realistically, they are restricted to the following:-

1. **SBS Radio and Television.** Although these channels offer a wide range of languages, the program content is strictly regulated and there is virtually no provision for Christian or religious perspectives. Consequently, they do not meet the needs of ethnic community groups, which are looking for media outlets through which their cultural and religious traditions can be expressed.

2. **Community Radio Stations.** Several of the member groups of CMCC produce customised programs for broadcast on local community radio stations. While this has some value, the station’s charter often limits the Christian content of broadcasts.

3. **Local Ethnic Newspapers.** Several ethnic groups (Indonesian, for example) publish and distribute weekly or monthly newspapers. Others (Arabic, for example) write columns for weekly publications in that language. This is good, but it provides very limited and localised coverage for ethnic communications purposes.

Who is the target audience for VOH broadcasts?

In order to effectively work at its mission, CMCC seeks a community radio licence for ownership and use by its members, to broadcast multi-lingual programs within a Christian perspective. The format of proposed service is outlined above in the section ‘Objectives of Voice of Hope’, and it is anticipated it would generally serve :-

- Major ethnic groups whose first language spoken at home is other-than-English.
- Minority ethnic groups, who are currently disadvantaged regarding regular radio access.
- English speaking Christians with a strong community focus and commitment to multicultural harmony.

CMCC’s Code of Ethics for broadcasters

CMCC recognises that multi-cultural issues can cause differences and discord within the wider community. Accordingly, VOH’s Code of Ethics for broadcasters makes it quite clear that the promotion of differences (particularly in relation to denominational teaching) is NOT acceptable or permitted. Rather, VOH wishes to build cross-cultural bridges in the wider community, based on the unity of commonality within the Christian Faith.

Accordingly, programs produced and broadcast previously on VOH were “ecumenical” rather than “denominational” in character and content. The production guidelines to which all CMCC broadcasters must subscribe, specifically prohibit teaching of a sectarian or strongly dogmatic nature.

Wherever practical, any items of current interest to listeners would be presented with a Biblical perspective.
Conclusion

The CMCC has the constitutional framework, management structure, membership, wide support, finances and technical expertise available to successfully go “on air”, and stay there.

Initially, CMCC quoted from the ABS’s 1996 census figures to estimate its non-English speaking target audience of greater than 540,000 in the Sydney metropolitan area.

Subsequently, the 2001 Census indicated that updated figures were now greater than 660,000. This is consistent with the 1996 figures, with a growth factor. (See appendix B for full details.)

The statistics stated above refer to the whole of Sydney’s metropolitan area, and as stated previously, it was CMCC’s initial aspiration to gain a Sydney-wide licence. However, should CMCC now be favoured with the lower-powered “Kings Cross” community FM licence, then it will still be able to broadcast successfully to a significant part of its target audience in the inner city area.

(Ps Zahir Ahmed)

President – CMCC.
Appendix A – Affiliated groups

CMCC includes the following church and community organizations in its membership association (*listed alphabetically*):-

- Aboriginal Christian Fellowship, Redfern
- African Christian Fellowship, Sefton
- Anglican Cross-cultural Ministries
- Arabic Baptist Church, Guildford
- Arabic Christian Fellowship
- Armenian Evangelical Church, Willoughby
- Asian Evangelism
- Assemblies of God, Doonside
- Assyrian Church, Fairfield
- Awakening 2000
- Bangladeshi Christian Community
- Bible Society of NSW
- Body of Christ Mission, Arncliffe
- Calvary Chapel, George’s Hall
- Central Baptist Church
- Chinese Baptist Church, Thornleigh
- Chinese Presbyterian Church, Surry Hills
- Christian City Church, Blacktown
- Christian Life Centre, Penrith
- Christians in the Media
- Coptic Church of Australia
- El Shaddai Fellowship, Rooty Hill
- El Shaddai Mission, Pennant Hills
- Ethiopian Christian Fellowship
- Estonian Christian Fellowship
- Family Life Fellowship, Sefton
- Far East Broadcasting Company
- Fijian Christian Association
- Filipino Christian Community
- Fusion Australia
- Gospel Church of Jesus (Filipino), Hassall Grove
- Grace Chinese Church, Kogarah
- Greek Christian Community
- Indonesian Council of Churches
- Inner West Baptist Church, Greenacre
- Iranian Evangelical Church, West Ryde
- Italian Christian Church, Lansvale
- Korean Christian Community
- Lebanese Maronite Missionaries
- Living Water Tabernacle, Ryde
- Malayalam Christian Fellowship
Appendix B – target audience statistics

Detailed research, based on the statistics provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) from the 1996 Census, showed that the top 50 groups who declared a Christian religious affiliation and whose first language spoken in the homes of metropolitan Sydney was a Language-other-than-English (LOTE) totalled 540,784.

Then again in 2001, when the population of the Sydney area was over 3,900,000, the ABS Census figures for the same target group was more than 660,000. (The detailed data supplied by ABS is available for inspection if requested.)

It is emphasised that the above figures refer to a potential Sydney-wide target audience who have indicated a Christian affiliation and whose first language at home is LOTE. It does not include those with a Christian affiliation and whose first language is English. The 2001 ABS figures indicate that this group exceeds 1,900,000.

Based on listener response to CMCC’s Breakfast and Afternoon Drive programs in the 3 trial broadcasts undertaken previously, it is very reasonable to include a significant part of metropolitan Sydney’s 1,900,000 English-speaking residents with a Christian affiliation as a potential audience also.
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**Table of Contents**

Purpose of this submission. ............................ 3
What is Combined Multicultural Christian Community (CMCC). .......... 4
CMCC’s proposed “Voice of Hope” community radio service. .......... 5
Objectives of “Voice of Hope” (in brief). ............... 7
What existing services are available to CMCC’s target audience? .......... 9
Who is the target audience for VOH broadcasts? .................. 10
CMCC’s Code of Ethics for broadcasters .................. 11
Conclusion ........................................ 12
Appendix A – Affiliated groups .......................... 14
Appendix B – target audience statistics ................. 17
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- Living Water Tabernacle, Ryde
- Malayalam Christian Fellowship
• Mosman Baptist Church
• Pacific Islands Fellowship
• Pakistani Christian Community
• Parramatta Christian Outreach Centre
• Polish Evangelical Church, Cabramatta
• Portuguese Pentecostal Church, Earlwood
• Russian Evangelical Church, Cabramatta
• Salvation Army, Australian Eastern Territory
• Samoan Christian Community
• Southern Cross College, Chester Hill
• Spanish Christian Fellowship Centre, Petersham
• Tamil Christian Community
• Tokaikolo Christian Church (Tongan), Granville
• Trans World Radio
• Victory Christian Fellowship, Yagoona
• Vietnamese Evangelical Church, Lakemba

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