Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to the ACMA's proposed Draft Variation to Licence Area Plans for Bourke and Maryborough radio.

Tiarno Community Radio

We have no objection to making a community radio service available in Tiarno. We ask the ACMA to ensure that the proposed frequency of 107.1 MHz does not cause interference to the existing second adjacent channel 106.7 MHz Rebel FM (4RBL) Mt Goonaneman 1kw OD service, nor to the proposed upgraded 4RBL Mt Goonaneman service. 4RBL has isolated fringe/sub standard coverage in parts of that region which listeners rely on.

Far West NSW Community Radio

We have no objection to the idea of Wilcannia having access to genuine local community radio, but we object to a planning outcome that places Wilcannia within the licence area of three community radio services. Wilcannia is already within the licence area of 2WEB (Bourke RA1) and 2CUZ (Bourke RA2). The ACMA proposal will add a third community service to a town with a declining population of only 596 people (ABS 2006 Census). That's an unprecedented 198 people (and declining) per community radio station.

Rebel FM has served Wilcannia with a local commercial FM repeater since 1996. We can not guarantee this repeater will continue with three community services in the market. Saturation licensing of community services in small rural towns has a direct impact on a commercial radio stations ability to sustain the cost of operating small repeater services. For example, we unsuccessfully argued against the ABA licencing a 2nd community radio station in Coonamble (also part of the Bourke RA1 licence area and Rebel FM licence area) in addition to the pseudo commercial 2WEB service. Consequently Coonamble today has two community radio stations operational but no commercial radio services.

We suggest the ACMA consider rationalising the Bourke RA1 licence area to foster an environment that delivers a more balanced and sustainable mix of commercial radio services and local community radio services across the region. This could be achieved by licensing a new local community radio service in Wilcannia, but excising Wilcannia and Coonamble from the Bourke RA1 licence area. This provides one local community radio service for both towns and provides a more conducive environment for the provision of commercial radio repeaters in both small towns.

regards

Aaron Jowitt
Director

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Aaron Jowitt| Rebel Media | T 07 5541 4222 | F 07 5541 4444| “Reach your customers at home, work or in the car. Radio – there’s a time and place for everything”