19 August, 2009

Ms Nicole Brown
Project officer
Broadcast Planning Section

Dear Ms Brown

Re- Application for Community Broadcast Licence - World Music Radio Inc,
Launceston, Tasmania

Our organization is extremely concerned that after seven years of complying with all the
conditions required for setting up a community radio station we are being told that the
decision is NO, however still open to discussion.

In 2002 the ABA suggested that we find a frequency ourselves in order to speed up the
process. This was done with a frequency professional from a group suggested by the
ABA. Actually, the task was done twice as the first frequency was deemed unsuitable by
the ABA.

Much fund-raising was carried out to meet the great expense of paying for this task: Over
$1000.00 each time.

Our organisation has the University and Polytechnic actively involved in the project; we
have the premises and most of the expenses covered and we have had over 200 letters of
support over the years, including the Launceston council members and the Mayor, as well
as a member of the Legislative Council, (Ivan Dean) who is our patron. Members of the
general public also wrote letters of support.

We are an incorporated organisation run entirely by volunteers and anxious to contribute
to the cultural life and well-being of our community.

Human nature being what it is, the two other community stations were not keen for us to
obtain a licence. So, that is nothing new as the second community station had a major
fight and debate with the first one at the time when WAYFM wanted to start a religious-
based station.

Again, we say we are offering a different sort of programming entirely, so what is the
problem? The answers we continue to receive read like the writers have never read our
proposals in their entirety and have held on to one idea for years to which they keep
replying. One of our supporters, Richard Letts, of the Music Council of Australia was
able grasp the concept and wrote in 2004:
‘One of the objectives with which the ABA is charged by government is to promote the role of broadcasting in developing and reflecting a sense of Australian identity character and cultural diversity.

This objective is achieved hardly at all through the local content requirements of commercial radio music broadcasting, especially with regard to the reflection and development of cultural diversity.’

Specifically, there is no commercial radio station which is remotely interested in broadcasting world music.

The ABA's objective is achieved to a much greater degree through the local content requirements in the community broadcasting sector.

Nevertheless, while there are ethnic stations in the community sector that collectively present a diversity of musical cultures, there is no station which commits itself to fulltime broadcast of a diversity of musical styles from across the world -- i.e. to fulltime broadcast of world music.

The Launceston applicant undertakes to do this.

Furthermore, whereas SBS radio broadcasts a variety of cultures, it is not a music station, and in its broadcasts of music does not have a strong or quantified policy of broadcast of Australian performers of world music.

The Launceston applicant makes a commitment to the broadcast of Australian performers of world music. This supports the development of a diversity of practice in Australia; we then not only are encouraged to listen to world music sourced overseas but also to create it ourselves.

The Launceston station would bring world music not only to ethnic audiences but to a mainstream audience, broadening its appreciation and acceptance of cultural diversity. This contributes to the development of cultural identity and character and cultural diversity.

It goes without saying that in a country in which 40% of the populace are immigrants or children of immigrants, a radio station programming world music serves a community for which the programs could have a deep resonance. Many in the non-immigrant population also are interested in this music.

For all that, the current audience for world music is a small minority. In part this must depend on the paucity of opportunities for the type of exposure that the proposed broadcaster would provide in its community.
While this station will broadcast only to a northern Tasmanian audience, we would hope that its success might be emulated elsewhere. The opportunity is strong for the ABA to support a new sort of format which others might emulate.

Although there is some minor local opposition to the granting of this licence, we suggest that the criteria for the decision on this licence should look beyond narrow self-interest to the greater benefit of the local community and the potential significance of this model nationally.

The Music Council of Australia believes that the case for this radio station is extremely powerful, and strongly commends to the Australian Broadcasting Authority the granting of a community FM licence to World Music Broadcasting Inc of Launceston.

We look forward to the Australian Communications and Media Authority’s response.

Thank You

[Signature]

Professor Vincent McGrath
President
World Music Radio Inc