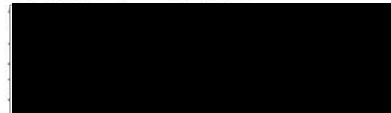


**Before the  
Australian Government  
Committee for Asia Pacific Broadcasting**

In the matter of: )  
Review of Australian Broadcasting )  
Services in the Asia Pacific )  
Terms of Reference – Review )  
)

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Public Comment

Frederick R. Vobbe



I, Frederick R. Vobbe, am a qualified broadcast and communications engineer with fifty years of service in the broadcast industry. I am a licensed and practicing amateur radio operator, (W8H DU). radio/TV/electronics experimenter, and radio listener.

My professional duties include Vice President and Chief Operator of an NTSC and DTV television stations, Communications Officer for the Allen County Office of Homeland Security, Chairman of the Lima/Allen County E.A.S. district, and Chairman of our state amateur repeater coordination body.

I have also published a monthly magazine on tape for blind radio enthusiasts from 1985 to 2015, and operate web sites and E-mail lists on the topic of radio/TV technology and listener support. Along with my positions in engineering I have also been employed as Operations Manager of several radio stations, and have served as an advisor to broadcast stations acting in fields of program and finance.

**HF/Shortwave Service Contact**

It is easy to dismiss the impact of HF/shortwave service a private or government entity provides. Unlike those stations operating in the AM/MW band, or FM/VHF, an HF station receives only a minority of correspondence from the public. The contact a station has with listeners is mostly hobby in nature, reception reports, or requests for a QSL.

Such contact by the public has very little to do with the content or public service a station provides. And in most cases the return correspondence may be a financial struggle. But hobby broadcasters do not make up the bulk of listeners. It's often hard to gauge the audience simply because the number can not be accurately projected by contact from the public, nor an effective rating service.

As commercial stations have found out over the decades, the calls and few letters received from the public is normally a minority of those who benefit from the broadcast. This was proven again and again when the Voice of America closed services on HF, and people in third-world counties lost access to the news from America.

Some of our politicians were quick to mention that the VOA could be heard on the internet. While it sounds like a compromise consider how many people simply don't have access to the internet, let alone a device capable of receiving the signal, and in some cases the money to pay for use of bandwidth.

I would urge you to consider the many people around the world who have not had contact with you, yet enjoy and benefit from your service.

### **Public Need and Necessity**

Our world is going through many changes, ecologically, and politically. We in America have been beaten to death with the term "Fake News." This type of news, (often based on personal opinion and not necessarily the facts), is offered up by individuals as well as large corporations as part of an agenda.

Many people have found that to get the most accurate news it's best to blend news coverage from various "trusted" services, and pulling content from various countries. In doing so an individual often separates the wheat from the chaff, getting the truth.

An example is the March 11, 2011, tsunami which hit Japan. Broadcasters via HF from the Asia – Pacific region were more accurate, and less dramatic with the news. Australian broadcasts factored into this as one of the services most trusted.

Outside of emergencies we must understand that what happens in Australia affects Canada and the United States, and likewise what happens in Washington DC may trickle down to your nation in various ways. Like it or not, we're a connected society.

### **Conclusion**

While I can't say that I listen to each and every hour of your broadcasts, I do listen often. I have never written your stations, or hosts. I've never filed a reception report or asked for a QSL. I have never paid (subscription) to listen to radio. I have never listened via the internet, nor have I listened to any foreign broadcaster via the internet. The closest I've come to an alternative method of reception is when The World Radio Network provided your station on a secondary channel of a local station. (That service ended June 2009).

I have listened at home, and while on vacations in various locations. I have three receivers capable of picking up your transmissions. I value your news, and cultural programs.

It would be a pity for the rest of the world to lose your service.

I would suggest a hybrid style of operation, perhaps working in synergy with a private entity who could underwrite the costs. Or at the least, allow a private group to run the stations with the caveat that Radio Australia would have a certain number of hours for the distribution of programming.

Whatever you decide, I hope we, the people in the United States and the world, do not lose you.

  
Frederick R. Vobbe