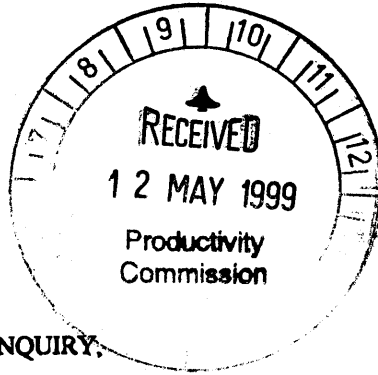


Sub No - 38



BATHURST CHRISTIAN
BROADCASTERS
PO BOX 615

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ENQUIRY,

WE ARE AN ASPIRANT COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN BROADCASTER, WHOSE LICENCE APPLICATION IS CURRENTLY BEING DECIDED.

WE WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THE INDUSTRY WITH REGARDS TO COMMUNITY BROADCASTING, THAT HAVE BEEN AREAS OF CONCERN FOR US.

THE FIRST AREA IS THE LONG DRAWN OUT ALLOCATION PROCESS AND THE DIFFICULTIES IT PRESENTS.

WE PUT OUR FIRST APPLICATION FOR A LICENCE , INTO THE ABA IN 1993, JUST AFTER THE NEW BROADCASTING SERVICES ACT AND THE POSSIBILITY OF MANY NEW COMMUNITY LICENCES AROUND THE COUNTRY BEING AVAILABLE .BATHURST WAS ONE OF THESE PLACES WHERE A NEW COMMUNITY LICENCE WAS BEING OFFERED.

IN 1994 WE HAD OUR FIRST TEST BROADCAST, AND CONTINUED WITH THESE TESTS OVER THE NEXT SIX YEARS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME CONSTANTLY UPDATING OUR SUBMISSIONS UNTIL DECEMBER 1997, WHEN THE FINAL APPLICATION WAS LODGED.

AT THE SAME TIME , ANOTHER GROUP, WHO HAD NOT DONE ANY TEST BROADCASTS, WERE NOT INCORPORATED, AND WERE BEING BACKED TO THE TUNE OF SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS BY THE LOCAL COMMERCIAL OPERATOR WAS GRANTED AN EXTENSION OF TIME TO GET THEIR APPLICATION IN.

THIS MEANT THAT THE TWELVE MONTHS FULL-TIME TEMPORARY LICENCE WE WERE OFFERED COULD NOT BE TAKEN UP AS WE HAD TO SHARE AIR TIME MONTH ABOUT WITH THIS GROUP.

THE DIFFICULTY WE HAVE HAD IN BROADCASTING FOR OVER SIX YEARS ON TEMPORARY LICENCES WAS THAT THE MAIN SOURCE OF REVENUE (MEMBERSHIP AND SPONSORSHIP)AVAILABLE TO COMMUNITY BROADCASTERS WAS DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN IN AN ON-AIR, OFF-AIR SITUATION.

WE HAVE RAISED MONEY TO BUY OUR EQUIPMENT AND OVER THE SIX YEARS HAVE TRAINED OVER FIFTY NEW VOLUNTEER ANNOUNCERS, BUT NONETHELESS IT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT IN A COUNTRY TOWN FEELING THE EFFECTS OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE.

IT IS ALSO EXTREMELY HARD FOR GROUPS LIKE US WITH A TARGET AUDIENCE OF 83 PERCENT(CENSUS STATISTICS SHOW 83 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION OF BATHURST ARE CHRISTIAN) TO OBTAIN ANY KIND OF GRANT, WHILE SOME OF THE GROUPS WITH SMALLER ETHNIC OR INDIGENOUS AUDIENCES DO NOT HAVE THE SAME DIFFICULTY.

WHILE WE BELIEVE THAT ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY NEED TO BE ENCOURAGED TO HAVE ACCESS TO BROADCASTING SERVICES THERE SEEMS TO BE AN IMBALANCE IN THAT LARGER GROUPS LIKE CHRISTIANS ARE DIS-ADVANTAGED IN A GRANT SITUATION.

WE FEEL WE CAN BRING A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND "HARNESS ITS POWER TO DO GOOD" (Page 2. of Issues Paper) FOR OUR COMMUNITY IN BATHURST. PERHAPS THE PROCESS OF LICENCING AND FUNDING NEEDS TO ADDRESSED SO GROUPS LIKE OURS WILL BE ENCOURAGED RATHER THAN DISCOURAGED IN EFFORTS TO HAVE A VOICE IN BROADCASTING.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT OUR VIEWS.

YOURS SINCERELY,
M.S.MARTIN.

MS Martin

Chairperson