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Jason Potkins  
Broadcasting Policy Branch  
Department of Communications  
GPO Box 2154  
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Dear Sir

### **Submission to the Digital Radio reviews**

Please accept this submission to the Digital Radio reviews being conducted under section 215B of the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 and section 313B of the Radiocommunications Act 1992. My submission is as an individual aged 65 years and the data that I cite to support these views are my own personal usage patterns.

I am responding primarily to Question 11 of Part 3, namely:

11. *What are your views about the impacts of smartphone and other streamed audio services on the future of 'traditional' radio listening? What data do you have to support these views?*

There is also some overlap with Questions 12 and 13 of Part 3, namely:

12. *Given its importance in the radio listening environment, what digital radio technologies are likely to be adopted by car manufacturers in the short to medium term?*
13. *What impact, if any, will the intent of several car manufacturers to install internet-connected entertainment systems have on the future of digital radio?*

I listen mainly to the ABC local radio network (702 in Sydney) in the following situations:

- \* 50% of usage: At home in the house or garden on Sydney's Lower North Shore.
- \* 30% of usage: Either walking or travelling by public transport in the metropolitan area.
- \* Remainder of usage:
  - \*\* In the car in the metropolitan area.
  - \*\* In the house or garden in the Upper Hunter area.
  - \*\* In the car in a rural area.
  - \*\* Walking or travelling by public transport in the Hunter and Upper Hunter area.

The default and preferred method of listening is to use a DAB+ pocket size radio with some back-up using a pocket size AM receiver or an AM receiver in a 10 year old car. DAB+ (and smartphone

apps) provide a greater choice of programs and generally better reception compared with AM and FM radio.

The DAB+ pocket size radio is more than adequate for most of the above mentioned situations in the metropolitan area. It does have trouble deep inside some shopping centres, in railway tunnels and away from the Sydney metropolitan area, in which case I may revert to using a smartphone app or an AM radio if one is available and reception is adequate.

A minor annoyance of DAB+ is when listening to two or more receivers close to each other: They can all have slightly different time delays in processing the signal, creating irritating echoes.

The disadvantages of using a smartphone to listen to radio are, in order:

1. It is not free to air — It eats in to the monthly data allowance.
2. It is “fiddly” to set up and change stations, particularly in a car. Integration with the car sound system in an older car is unsatisfactory.
3. The stream jumps around quite a lot although the severity of this depends, to some extent, on the app being used.
4. The delay between a DAB+ radio and the same program on a smartphone can be up to about 2 minutes.

The following is frustrating in regard to digital radio and may drive customers to use smartphone apps:

- \* Digital radio is not available in rural areas. For my preferred programs, the alternative is AM radio and, as a last resort, a smartphone app.
- \* Pocket size receivers that can receive AM, FM and DAB+ are non-existent. Pocket size AM / FM and FM / DAB+ receivers are available but no pocket size radios have all three bands in the one unit. This means that it is necessary to carry two radios to have the choice of AM and DAB+, in which case it is often easier to just use a smartphone in areas where digital reception is poor or where digital radio is not available.
- \* It is disappointing that cheaper model cars do not yet have DAB+ radios factory fitted. They have AM, FM and Bluetooth that can integrate smartphones into the car sound system but not DAB+. As noted above, radio on a smartphone is not free to air and is “fiddly”. Whilst it is possible to plug a portable digital radio into the sound system, this is also “fiddly” and second best. Given that digital radio is reasonably well established in metropolitan areas and receivers can cost less than \$40, if I am purchasing a new car that will, hopefully, last 10 years or more, it ought to be “future proof” by at least having digital radio integrated into the sound system. I am holding off the purchase of a new car, in part, until digital radio is available as a factory fitted option in cheaper model cars at a reasonable price.

The above listed disadvantages of listening to radio on smartphones could be alleviated by the following and make smartphones a more attractive alternative to digital and analog radio:

1. Regulate the telcos so that streaming Australian radio stations on a smartphone over a mobile network is free of data charges for the indefinite future. Depending on mobile phone coverage in rural areas, this may obviate the need to establish free-to-air digital radio services in rural areas.
2. Reduce the “fiddliness” of smartphone radio apps in cars so that it is just as easy to tune a radio station and change stations on a smartphone as it is to tune a radio station on AM, FM and DAB+ radios.
3. Eliminate the “jumping around” of the stream.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Digital Radio reviews.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colin Parrott." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Colin Parrott