

# Regional and remote communities need local radio

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The commercial radio industry and media union are concerned that a proposed change to the Copyright Act could harm the sustainability of local radio in regional and remote communities and result in a further reduction of local media content.

The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) and Commercial Radio & Audio (CRA) have each made submissions to the Senate inquiry into the Private Member's Bill *Fair Pay for Radio Play* ahead of public hearings next month.

The Bill would result in the removal of the cap on fees radio stations pay to the Phonographic Performance Company of Australia (PPCA) to play music. PPCA's shareholders are three multinational record labels.

"If multinational record labels are allowed to hike up radio's music fees it would harm the sustainability of stations – particularly in regional and remote communities where local media has already diminished," said CRA chief executive officer Ford Ennals.

"Radio is already paying almost \$40 million a year in fees – any increase to this would hurt radio, which in turn hurts music. Radio plays an important role in promoting and supporting Australian artists and music and we want this to continue."

MEAA Campaigns Director Paul Davies said the real imbalance of power does not lie with radio, but with record labels and performers: "Record labels have historically wielded their commercial power over artists – and the performer rarely comes out on top," Mr Davies said.

"The MEAA represents musicians and songwriters, but our members also include people working in radio and journalists, and the impact of any fee increase should be weighed up against the effect it would have on local and regional radio.

"We need to look at the bigger picture – the vast majority of musicians are cut out of payment for broadcasted music by the record companies under the current system, so we are concerned about any potential of entrenching and expanding an unfair system," he said.

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## About Commercial Radio & Audio

CRA is the peak industry body representing the interests of commercial radio broadcasters throughout Australia. CRA promotes the effectiveness of radio and audio to advertisers, manages audio research and insights, metropolitan and regional audience measurement surveys, the Australian Podcast Ranker, revenue reporting, industry innovation, industry codes and standards, and regulatory and legislative matters. CRA hosts the ACRA Awards and the Siren Creative Awards.

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