



N 11

MINISTER FOR THE MEDIA
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

5 MAR 1973

Dear Mr. Klinger,

The Prime Minister has asked me to reply to your letter of 8th January, 1973, concerning the broadcasting of foreign language programmes.

I have discussed with the Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board the matter you raise insofar as it concerns commercial broadcasting stations and I am informed that station 2KY Sydney recently obtained the approval of the Board to broadcast this type of bi-lingual programme to an extent in excess of the maximum of 2½ per cent of transmission time specified in the Board's Broadcasting Programme Standards. Station 2KY now, in fact, broadcasts some of the foreign language programming which was discontinued by station 2CH.

Although this new arrangement appears to provide a satisfactory solution to the particular problem in Sydney mentioned in your approach to the Prime Minister, I intend following up with the Board the wider implications of the matter.

The matter of bi-lingual programming on national stations operated by the Australian Broadcasting Commission is the subject of a separate reply to you.

Yours sincerely,

(Douglas McClelland)
Minister for the Media

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N 12

MINISTER FOR THE MEDIA
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Parliament House,
CANBERRA ACT 2600

4 MAY 1973

Dear Mr. Klinger,

Following my Private Secretary's letter to you on the 14th February, which referred to your letter concerning bi-lingual radio programmes, I have now had the opportunity of discussing the problem posed with Sir Robert Madgwick, Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

The ABC fully recognises its obligation to consider in its programmes the specific needs of new settlers, and it does this through its daily radio programme "Learning English" and the weekly radio programme "Contact" (every Sunday at 1.30 pm from Radio 2), which in turn discusses problems of all linguistic groups.

Sir Robert Madgwick has pointed out to me that it is impracticable to supply regular bi-lingual programmes for all these groups in addition to the ABC's normal commitments. To single out some ethnic communities would lead, Sir Robert felt, to justified dissatisfaction among others.

After a thorough investigation of the present situation, the ABC regretted that it cannot extend its efforts in this field.

I trust you will be appreciative of the complexity of this situation, in that there are many national groups now resident in Australia and it would be almost physically impossible to afford all of them equal time on the ABC. At the same time, I should emphasise it is the Government's policy to guarantee complete political and programming independence to the Commission.

Yours sincerely,

Douglas McClelland
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