

N. 10

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OUR REF. SPK.DML.

8th January 1973

YOUR REF.:

The Honourable E. G. Whitlam,
Prime Minister of Australia,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

We have been consulted by the representatives of the Greek, Italian, Maltese and Yugoslavian communities concerned with the continuation of bilingual radio broadcasting in this country. Our clients are Con Zahar of the Greek community, Mumma Lena Gustin and Dino Gustin of the Italian Community, Josephine Zammit of the Maltese community and Ivan Lovric of the Yugoslavian community. They have been largely responsible for and crucially involved in the bilingual programmes broadcasting over radio station 2CH over the past 15 years. These programmes are now to be terminated as from 27th January 1973 following policy changes as set out in a letter from Radio 2CH a copy of which we are enclosing.

These bilingual programmes have been conducted nightly for approximately 2 hours duration in the various national tongues. The programmes have been well received as was borne out by the fact that the Broadcasting Control Board granted to Radio 2CH an increase in the normal time allowance for such programmes. The contents of the programmes are such as to help the assimilation of migrants in their new environment by creating a bridge of understanding between the New World and the Old World through the media. While not denying the need for integration within the Australian community it is impossible for migrants completely to break from their links with their home lands.

continued...

SMK

The Honourable E. G. Whitlam

8th January 1973

By means of these programmes migrants have been helped considerably in ways such as information on Australian laws and customs, advice to settlers on their problems in consultation with the various Commonwealth departments, advice on social services available, types of health schemes, how to complete income tax forms, etc. These services had been appreciated by the various Commonwealth departments who have been most co-operative over the past years. By giving migrants news and music of their home land and other services pertaining purely to migrants the yearnings of many to return home have been greatly reduced. These bilingual programmes are a regular feature in the countries of America, Canada and England.

Letters have been written to all commercial stations in Sydney requesting time for bilingual programmes but all stations have refused on the grounds that they are all fully committed in their programme areas. The news of the discontinuance of these programmes will be broken to the listeners over the next week and the possible replacement has become a matter of some urgency. Our clients have suggested the following alternatives:-

1. The granting of a restricted radio licence for say three hours per evening (the facilities can be obtained for this and we understand that a broadcasting frequency is available in the Sydney network area which would not in any way interfere with present broadcasting frequencies).
2. The granting of Governmental approval and support to an application to the Australian Broadcasting Commission for similar bilingual programmes.
3. The recommendation by the Government of the acceptance by one of the commercial stations of a resubmitted application.

Awaiting your urgent attention.

Yours faithfully,
MCCOY, GROVE & ATKINSON