

Appendix R:

The “Same Old Song”
Syndrome, because we couldn’t
care less about the listener.

Appendix R

The Same Old Song Syndrome

Sydney Radio listeners feedback on forums

(the concept of Sydney's current FM commercial stations in a comfort zone)

HOW RELEVANT IS THE CLASS H SUBMISSION?

When putting forward material for the amendment of legislation, it is important to demonstrate that the call for change is not just coming from the submission's author. The author may have some of the best ideas and approaches, but the relevance to the real world would mean nothing without any supporting documentation. This is key to **distinguishing a well sourced submission that would benefit many, over one written for ones personal crusade.**

Though we've often noted the terrible state of Sydney's commercial FM station scene, in this appendix we highlight documented grievances from listeners in the Sydney region. Though all the stations in Sydney suffer this issue from varying degrees, we've deliberately highlighted feedback from WSFM and Smooth FM as:

- a:) These are the stations whose key market's the proposed 2PR FM would be aimed at, and
- b:) Are the stations that are targeted by most of the grievances.

It is true to say that these grievances are expressed on various internet forums. For the sake of simplicity and not trying to absurdly over-push a point, we've have chosen the enclosed replies from one forum board; the mediaspy.org forum.

A STATION THAT CAN FULFILL LISTENERS GRIEVANCES:

It is extremely important to note that when several listeners express common issues in a radio market, that legislation should be amended to shake up the incumbents, who in this case have fallen into a comfort zone. One of the enclosed posts notes how he wrote into a station asking them to expend their rotating playlist. They then told him that he was wrong; a case of take it or leave it. This is interesting as he is not the only one with such sentiments. As the enclosed documentation shows many listeners are echoing the same concerns.

Fig R1 - Mediaspy.org posts on WSFM 101.7

LAW THAT ENFORCES THE CORPORATE NETWORKS COMFORT ZONE:

As noted before, the precious use of the frequency should be reflected on what value it can offer the listener. If listeners are generally unhappy with what is on offer in a given market, a new entity should be able to come in and compete. In a normal market situation a new competitor would analyse the market, then offer a service to fulfill a demand. In normal commerce, a new grocery store may open offering European delicacies, because the owner could see such a need.

In this case the owner of the internet station 2PR FM sees there's a market for an FM station with a playlist of over 20,000 tracks. The generalistic broadcast legislation assumes all new broadcasters use poor equipment, and have a cavalier approach to the technical issues involved. Because of this, the process of obtaining a license may take a lengthy period of time, and in the end is NOT guaranteed. Even if an owner powers up a transmitter without interfering with other services, and demonstrates responsible use, according to current law this still would be illegal until they can get a license. Regardless of how diligent and careful the owner may be, the outlandishly extreme punishments would still apply, as noted in an e-mail communiqué from ACMA. Again it is important to state that this is not the fault of ACMA, but of a previous government who was responsible for passing such legislation.

“Operating or possessing unlicensed transmitters are offences under the **Radiocommunications Act 1992. Penalties for these offences can result in fines of up to \$165,000 or two years imprisonment.** Operating unlicensed stations may cause harmful interference to other licensed services”.

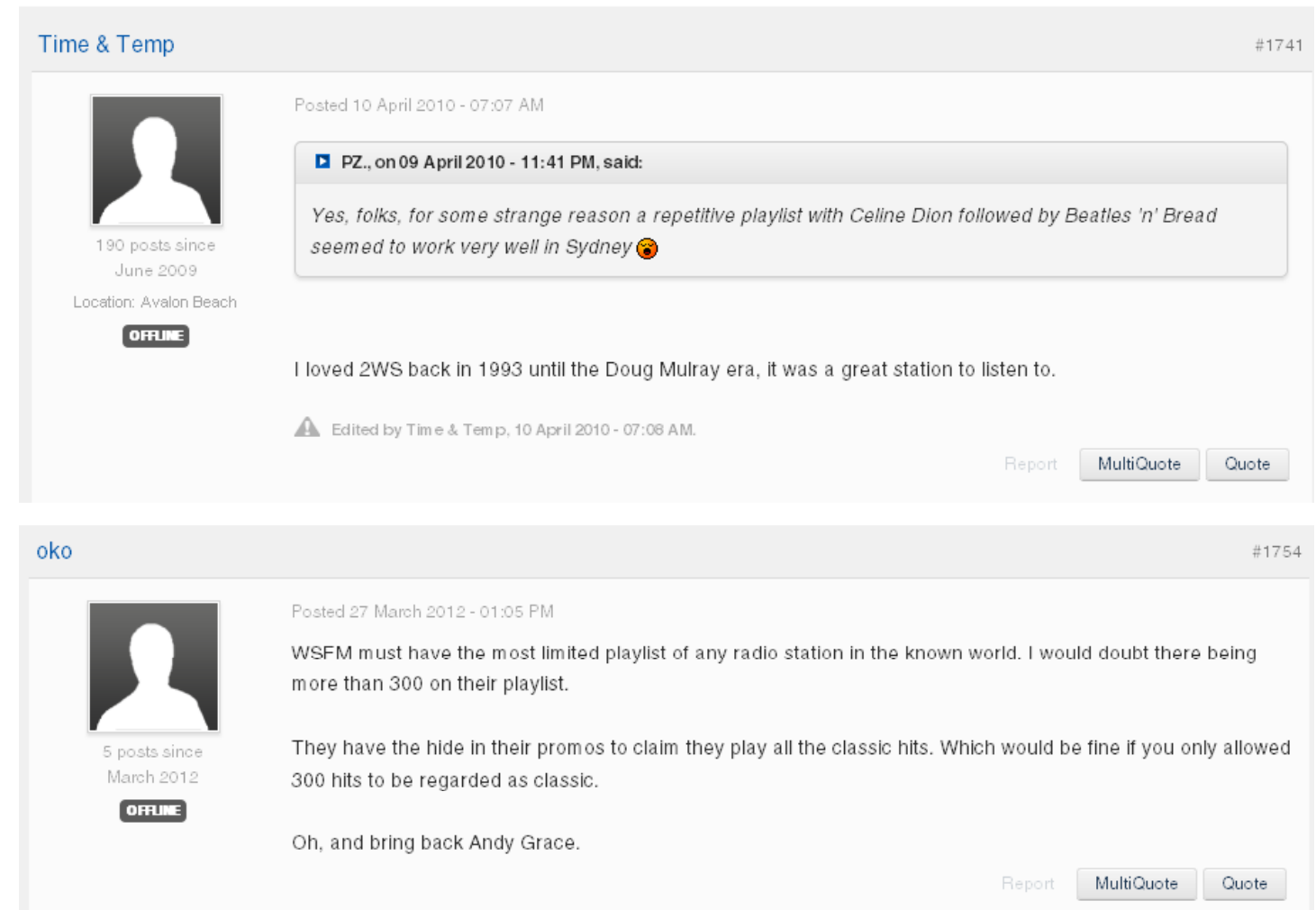
SO HOW BAD IS SYDNEY RADIO?

The following pages note several replies from the mediaspy.org discussion boards. The sentiment often echoed with Smooth 95.3 is why don't they just give the licenses back? The most relevant post comes from the WSFM thread where the participant OKO states in Figure R1;

“WSFM must have the most limited playlist of any radio station in the known world. I would doubt there being more than 300 on their playlist.

They have the hide in their promos to claim they play all the classic hits. Which would be **fine if you only allowed 300 hits to be regarded as classic”**

With such radio stations at such a low standard, again in normal commerce it would only be natural that a new competitor would come along, and offer something far more superior. This would also have the effect of shaking up the incumbents, thus generally improving the entire radio station offerings in a particular market. If radio spectrum is precious, then the law should be amended to allow such a station like 2PR FM to broadcast, which ultimately would give a much more valuable experience back to the listener, the true worth of radio spectrum!





112 posts since
November 2009

Location: Melbourne

OFFLINE

Posted 27 March 2012 - 01:41 PM

oko, on 27 March 2012 - 01:05 PM, said:

WSFM must have the most limited playlist of any radio station in the known world. I would doubt there being more than 300 on their playlist.

They have the hide in their promos to claim they play all the classic hits. Which would be fine if you only allowed 300 hits to be regarded as classic.

Oh, and bring back Andy Grace.

You would be hard pressed to find anyone who would disagree with you - this explains why the Major Radio Networks are contributing to the fragmentation of radio audiences

Their limited playlist has been discussed ad nauseum - okay for those who don't have a love or passion for music or quality radio.....I cant recall who on these forums was saying that at a particular time they tracked all the songs Gold 104 played and Steve Perrys Oh Sherry got played three consecutive days in a row at the same time!

I had a running joke with one of the cafes I frequent locally near my work If I could pick three artists they played in my lunch break the coffee would be on the house! ☹️

Some combination of Elton John, Billy Joel, Cold Chisel, David Bowie, the Rolling Stones, the Eagles, Queen etc...

The people at ARN clearly believe that there is money to be made and a sizeable audience to be had from people who sample radio for short periods - the Jukebox audience....

It is a pretty sad state of affairs from a purists perspective when you can pretty much track for track know which artists and which songs are going to be played, their research I am sure tells them that this is what their audience wants - no surprises, 'songs that you can sing along to', well for alot of listeners familiarity breeds contempt hence the sampling and listening for shorter periods.

Report

MultiQuote

Quote



112 posts since
November 2009

Location: Melbourne

OFFLINE

Posted 28 March 2012 - 10:05 AM

oko, on 28 March 2012 - 09:43 AM, said:

Breeze FM ? I'll certainly give them a listen.

I listen to the radio at work for 12 hours a day. Their repetitive playlist is just abysmal. I hear the same songs every day, some days even twice in 12 hours !! It is pathetic.

I have taken the time to give them my feedback, and in turn received a nice email telling me that basically:

- *They know what they're doing.*
- *Focus groups prove me wrong.*
- *Songs are played until the death*
- *Research says I am out of touch.*
- *Oh, and I am wrong.*

Just who forms these focus groups ? Where do they find people of such limited musical knowledge ?

This is my point about focus groups - A radio station decides it wants to pitch to 35 -54 age group, and engage a research company to establish their musical preferences, but as an American Radio person pointed out to me who has the time to participate in such forums? Most people are busy leading their lives... running families, juggling work/life commitments... so the point is that the people participating in such focus groups would not necessarily be representative sample....More than likely to be people with too much time on their hands!

The other point to note is that if you subscribe to any of the ARN stations they will send you out a musical survey from time to time asking you to rate the music but the catch is that the music they ask you to rate is quite limited...'the usual suspects'. Don't expect them to ask you which artists not currently being played you would like to hear....

ARN do not treat their audience with respect.... its a very safe and cynical approach to radio programming.....

⚠ Edited by far_side_of_crazy, 28 March 2012 - 10:09 AM.

Report

MultiQuote

Quote

Fig R2 - Mediaspy.org posts on Smooth FM 95.3

Nickatnights #539

Posted 08 September 2011 - 09:47 AM

The ratings are out next Tuesday. I am looking forward to seeing how "Sydney's 95.3 Classic Songs Classic Rock" rates.

I listened to the station all day yesterday and I think the station has a few issues:

- 1) Yesterday the music was basically the WSFM playlist but in a different order. Then at 5pm Alice Cooper is on and the playlist changes from classic hits to classic rock. This is either a turn on or turn off factor. Why change the playlist at 5pm? With 6 commercial FM stations it is not the time to send out a confusing music message.
- 2) The station IDs are simply irritating. I reckon you hear the word "classic" around 50 times an hour.
- 3) It is the worst news service in Sydney. The stories are based around chasing car accidents and the grammar is dreadful. A few weekends ago I heard a newsreader say "giving Sydney houses a compulsory green rating could see properties lose their value" Really? Sydney houses will be worth nothing? This statement was repeated every hour all Saturday morning.

Crunch time for the radio station known as "Sydney's 95.3 Classic Songs Classic Rock" - and the web address classicrockfm. Sydney's first radio station with a split personality.

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Nickatnights #552

Posted 17 October 2011 - 06:24 PM

Yesterday I walked past the DMG studios in Pyrmont. I was quite surprised to see all the branding for "Classic Rock 95.3" with the old logo. The station is now called "Sydney's 95.3" but all the branding is for Classic Rock. Confused. Very confusing.

I can only imagine that there is no cash left to replace the signage.

Most radio stations would change the branding even if it was only the logo that was changed. This was also a name change.....find some cash.....the staff must feel there is no confidence from management in the station.....

Edited by Nickatnights, 17 October 2011 - 06:25 PM.

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Nickatnights #557

Posted 28 November 2011 - 01:56 PM

When 2SM used the positioner "More Music" it was a high energy station and it actually rated quite well. I am still amazed that 95.3 / 91.5 has resorted to playing almost the same music as WSFM / Gold. The main focus in a DMG program department meetings appears to be plagiarism!

It is so sad that the extra licenses (953 and 915) that DMG bought for Sydney and Melbourne has ultimately not led to any more diversity on the FM band.

What really surprises me - and I still find this hard to believe - is that DMG appear to be happy with a 3 - 4% share for both these stations.

When Vega then Classic Rock then this new incarnation was launched there was a lot of promo material about how these new formats would catch-on and then each has simply fizzled.

We are talking licences that cost over a \$150 million combined and the overall result are stations that consistently rate last place in Sydney and Melbourne.

Sydney's 95.3 - Classic Songs. Classic Rock. Classic Low Ratings.

Edited by Nickatnights, 28 November 2011 - 03:33 PM.

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Dr. Keats #957

Posted 22 May 2012 - 05:24 PM

First song they played yesterday was "I Haven't Met You Yet" by the Boob. They played it again today. "Big Girls Don't Cry" by Fergie was played in the first hour yesterday. They played it again today.

And I **definitely** heard "Need You Now" by Lady Antebellum twice within about four hours today! Assuming for a sec that it was deliberate, and not just a screw-up, why on Earth?

Bizarre - they're bringing all these "fresh" (ie: not previously in their play-list) tracks on board, yet repeating songs even more often than previously...

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Mike #963

Posted 22 May 2012 - 08:49 PM

Snooze 91.5 more like it. The Carpenters more than twice a day? My mum said they played a track of theirs yesterday, I tuned in the arvo, they were playing one again. So dull and lifeless, you need some bounce.

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Posted 22 May 2012 - 08:58 PM

Yep, they need more variety. There are plenty of songs to choose from, why play the same song multiple times per day.

60 posts since
March 2011

Location: Sydney

OFFLINE

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Posted 23 May 2012 - 09:42 AM

Snooze 95.3 - I spat my flat white out!! Hilarious.

SENIOR MEMBER

387 posts since
May 2010

Location: Sydney, Surry Hills

OFFLINE

Some people on this forum are suggesting DMG simply copy an overseas radio station's playlist. I have never liked that idea. Each playlist should be based upon the local market's listeners and also take into account the competition.

The music this week on 95.3 is rather sleep-inducing. I can no longer listen to it at work. 2 days were enough.

Why take a Xanax when you can listen to 95.3 for free?

Snooze 95.3 Sydney's New Place to Fall Asleep

⚠ Edited by Nickatnights, 23 May 2012 - 09:53 AM.

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Posted 23 May 2012 - 06:11 PM

▶ Nickatnights, on 23 May 2012 - 09:42 AM, said:

Snooze 95.3 - I spat my flat white out!! Hilarious.

905 posts since
April 2009

Location: Melbourne

OFFLINE

Yes, I quite liked that myself...

▶ Dr. Keats, on 14 May 2012 - 10:06 PM, said:

"Snooze FM" may have been more appropriate...

Mmmkay, so "Haven't Met You Yet" by Buble got run twice in the space of four hours today, and "Need You Now" by Lady Antebellum was run again. Several others popping up every day, too. This is just plain idiotic - is there an actual music director there, or just a play-out program on "random shuffle"?

As to market research... a friend participated in one for (I think) Gold a while back. Part of it was a "What songs would you like to hear?" question - with a check-list of songs supplied. So, **not** "What songs would you like to hear?", but "Which of the short-list of songs we've already decided on would you like to hear?".

The first question (with appropriate spaces for you to write or type the tracks of *your own choice*) is market research. The second is deliberately skewing the data to validate the decision you've already made... Wonder which one Smooth went for - wanna take bets it was the second?

As to the whole "Just copy an overseas playlist" argument.. umm, ACMA? Local content requirements? Not that they're achieving the quota at present...

⚠ Edited by Dr. Keats, 23 May 2012 - 06:20 PM.

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Posted 23 May 2012 - 07:42 PM

And they've repeated Jealous Guy by Roxy Music which was played between 10-11pm WST last night

⚠ Edited by Frank Calabrese, 23 May 2012 - 07:43 PM.

9 posts since
December 2006

OFFLINE

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214 posts since
April 2008

Location: Lake
Macquarie/Sydney, NSW

ONLINE

Posted 24 May 2012 - 02:40 PM

I was reading comments on Smooth 95.3's Facebook page awhile ago & out of 17 comments only 3 were positive, unfortunately I've just gone back & can only find 10 comments now, but this reply from Smooth is there: "[smoothfm 95.3](#) Hey guys, thanks for all the feedback. Glad to hear people are enjoying smoothfm. We love getting all your feedback but try to steer clear of anything aggressive or offensive so we don't have to delete it."

There's obviously been some far from glowing comments about the format/playlist & they've deleted them. All the negative comments on Facebook are the same as here, too sleepy, & boring, one says "smooth as wet soap on glass & sounds like elevator music". They all said go back to what it was a couple of weeks ago.

Funny how DMG can't see what's right in front of them, & keep screwing it up. The holding pattern music & format that was Sydney's 95.3 was the best thing that's been on this frequency, & was starting to gain traction & head upwards in the ratings. Then DMG screw that with 12 months of "market research & planning", & launch Smooth FM, to an overwhelming negative response from listeners & can only assume other industry colleagues.

I have to say, if they don't arrest this problem before next week & let this continue, they may pick up 1% point worth of listeners, but will lose another 3 - 4% points, leaving them floundering between 1.5 & 2%.

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905 posts since
April 2009

Location: Melbourne

OFFLINE

Posted 25 May 2012 - 06:39 PM

roosterboy60, on 25 May 2012 - 04:27 PM, said:

Also, three times I've tuned in the past few days and the first song I've heard is Haven't Met You Yet. Twice in the space of three hours today.

Yep. "Need You Now" by Lady Antebellum also got its daily airing, as did "Jar Of Hearts" by Christina Perri, and "Kiss From A Rose" by Seal. Every damned day.

I like to propose that we here at MediaSpy take up a collection, and maybe purchase a \$100 iTunes voucher with which the music director at Snooze can increase the station's pitifully small music library... Given their current repeat rate, \$100 worth of tracks should provide them with almost an entire month of content...

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