

12/2/99 1984



2 August, 1999

Mr Paul Berlin
Broadcasting Inquiry
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2, Collins Street East PO
MELBOURNE VIC 8003



Dear Mr Berlin,

RE: The Productivity Commission's Review into Australian Broadcasting Legislation.

Reference is made to the public inquiry that the Federal Government has instructed the Productivity Commission to conduct into Australian Broadcasting Legislation.

Council at its meeting of 16 June, 1999 considered an urgent item of business on this subject and resolved that:

- "1. Council lodge a submission to the Productivity Commission that in the event of a fourth Commercial Television Station licence being issued, part of the licencing provisions should stipulate that it be established in Western Sydney to service the economic and community needs of Western Sydney Region and highlighting the huge unserved market within this region.*
- 2. Council solicit support for this initiative from the State Minister for Western Sydney, the Federal Minister for Communications, WSROC group of Councils and our Local, State and Federal Members of Parliament".*

In accordance with the above resolution, Council has prepared a submission to the enquiry in relation to the proposed fourth Commercial Television Station. The submission is attached.

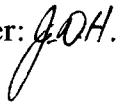
I:\SCDSHARE\HARTMANN\2WSLTR.WPD

Council Chambers • 62 Flushcombe Road • Blacktown NSW 2148
Telephone: (02) 9839 6000 • **Facsimile:** (02) 9831-1961 • DX 8117 Blacktown
Email: council@blacktown.nsw.gov.au • **Website:** www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au
All correspondence to: The General Manager • PO Box 63 • Blacktown NSW 2148

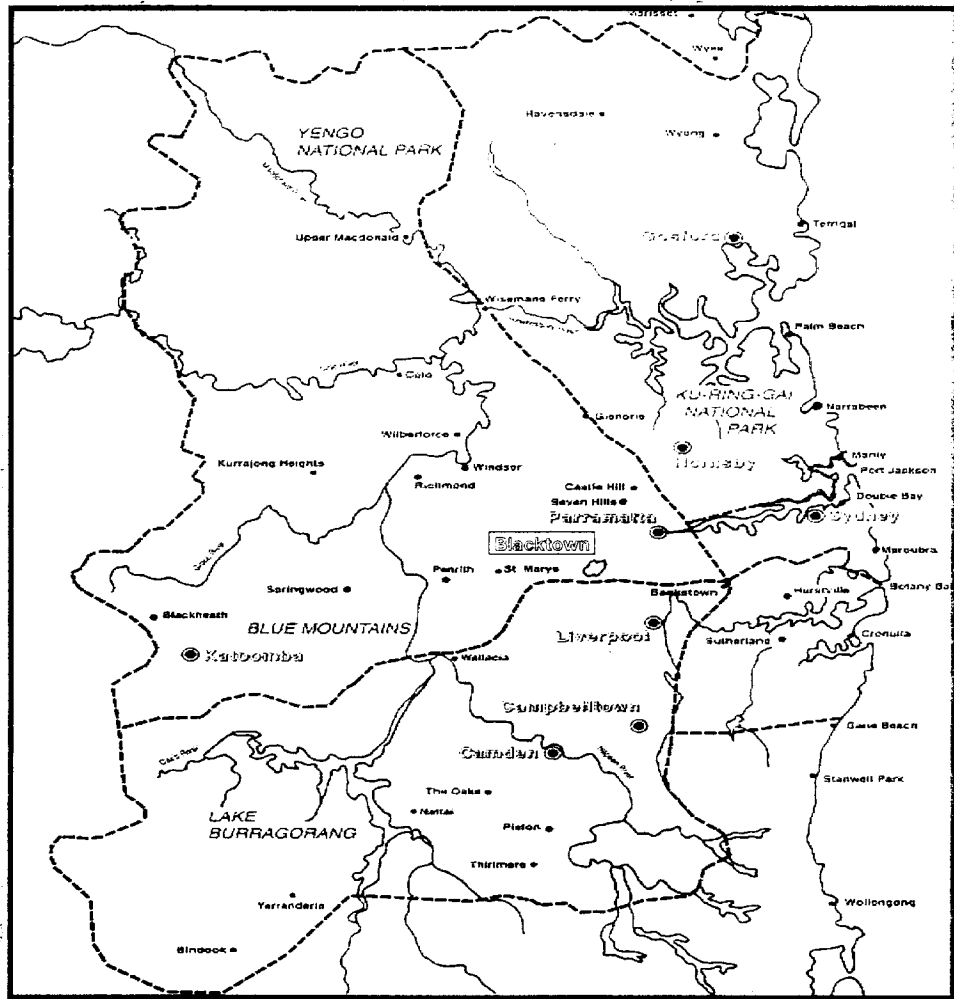
Should you require any clarification regarding Council's submission, please contact the officer nominated below.

Yours faithfully,

TERRY McCORMACK
GENERAL MANAGER

Per:  J.O'H.

Your contact for this matter is: David Hartmann
Phone: 9839 6000 Ext. 6236
File No.: 99-37466C



Submission to the Productivity Commission for the Enquiry into Australia's Broadcasting Legislation

"Proposal for a fourth Commercial Television Station in Western Sydney"



Blacktown City Council

CONTENTS PAGE

SUMMARY

SUMMARY	2
1. Introduction	3
2. News worthy Western Sydney	4-14
3. The public interest	15-16
4. The commercial success of 2WS	17-18
5. Conclusion and recommendations	19
6. Reference list	20

FIGURES

1. Population growth in Western Sydney
2. Business growth in Western Sydney
3. Central Western Sydney Employment Area (SEPP 59)
4. Selected Population Statistics.

SUMMARY

- Blacktown City Council has prepared a submission in response to the Productivity Commission's enquiry into Australia's broadcasting legislation.
- In particular, Council's submission addresses the need for a fourth licensed commercial television station.
- Council supports the licensing of a fourth commercial television station and is of the opinion that this facility should be located in Western Sydney on the basis of social and economic need.
- Council's submission highlights the growth of Western Sydney in terms of population, employment and infrastructure and identifies the Region as a market hugely under serviced by the broadcast media.
- To further illustrate the potential market within the Region for a commercial television station the submission highlights the ongoing success in Western Sydney of radio station 2WS FM 101.7.
- The submission recommends that a fourth commercial television station licence should be issued and part of the licensing provision should stipulate that it be established in Western Sydney.

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Blacktown is located within Western Sydney which supports a population of nearly 1.5 million people, the vast majority of whom are daily consumers of broadcasting services. However, unlike other major regions of Sydney such as the Illawarra with WIN television and Newcastle with NBN television, Western Sydney does not have access to its own regionally based televised broadcasting services. Comparisons between Blacktown, Wollongong and Newcastle will be explored in this submission as a case study to highlight the potential demand in Western Sydney for a commercial television station.

It is Council's understanding that as part of the Productivity Commission's review into Australia's broadcasting legislation, consideration is being given to licensing a fourth commercial television station. The basis for this proposal and the enquiry into broadcasting services derives from a joint decision by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments in 1995 to broaden the scope of competition policy and extend it to previously exempt areas of the economy, such as broadcasting services. It is understood that the Commission will decide on, amongst other issues, whether a new commercial television station achieves greater competition within the industry and is of benefit to the community as a whole.

Blacktown City Council supports a further licensed commercial television station and will highlight to the Commission, on the basis of social and economic need, that Western Sydney is ideally located for such a facility and should be the focus of that service's program content. The submission will identify Western Sydney as one of the fastest growing economic regions in Australia with a potential market larger than most capital cities in Australia.

Council's submission addresses questions raised in the Commission's Issues Paper concerning the social and economic dimensions of improved competition within the Broadcast Industry. Council will specifically address the issue of public interest, identified by the Commission as a significant factor that must be balanced in terms of its social and economic aspects.

To further illustrate the potential market within the region for a locally based commercial television station the submission highlights the ongoing success in Western Sydney of radio station 2WS. The Commission will be convinced that a fourth commercial television station licence should be issued and Western Sydney is the ideal location and market for this service.

2. NEWS WORTHY WESTERN SYDNEY

2.1 Summary - Western Sydney Statistics

- **Population:** currently 1.4 million and by 2006 expected to be in excess of 1.5 million (the third largest market in Australia after Sydney and Melbourne);
- **Employment:** Western Sydney accounts for 35% of employment in the Sydney Region with greatest representation of industrial and manufacturing jobs (64% of workers in Western Sydney are residents of Western Sydney);
- **Economic Growth:** rapidly growing industrial and manufacturing base with 93 of Australia's top 500 companies represented. A significant contributor to the national export market;
- **Infrastructure:** Multi-million dollar investment in road and rail infrastructure. Ongoing investment in education and health facilities;
- **Government Commitment:** The Office of the Minister for Western Sydney has been established to address the Region's needs. Commitment in policy by the State Government to achieve greater equity for Western Sydney residents;
- **Environment:** Western Sydney's unique environmental assets are increasingly being identified, protected and improved for the benefit of all Sydney's residents; and
- **Human Capital:** Through government and private sponsored training programs and investment in TAFE and University facilities, the skills base of workers in Western Sydney is rapidly changing to meet the needs of employers in a wide variety of industry sectors (the University of Western Sydney is the largest regional University in Australia, and the second largest University in NSW).

(Source Department of Urban Affairs and Planning 1998; - "Shaping Western Sydney")

2.2 FACTS AND FIGURES

2.21 Western Sydney - What is it ?

Geographically, Western Sydney currently accounts for 77% of the Sydney Metropolitan Area. The Region is comprised of 15 local government areas (LGAs) being: Auburn; Bankstown; Baulkham Hills; Blacktown; Hawkesbury; Penrith; Blue Mountains; Parramatta; Holroyd; Fairfield; Liverpool; Campbelltown; Camden and Wollondilly. The extent of Western Sydney is depicted on the front cover of this submission.

Western Sydney combines a mix of densely populated communities, such as Parramatta and Holroyd with population densities in excess of 2000 people per square kilometre, and largely rural areas such as Hawkesbury and Wollondilly, with population densities of between 20 and 13 people per square kilometre respectively.

2.2.1 Population Growth

Western Sydney is one of the fastest growing regions in the country and accounts for 38% of population in Sydney (currently exceeding 1.4 million people). By 2006 Western Sydney's population is expected to have grown by more than 135,000 people to 1,524,700 million (9.7% growth rate), based on projections from the Western Sydney Economic Development Board. By comparison, in the same period the rest of Sydney is expected to grow in population by between 5-6%. The forecast population growth in Western Sydney, by Local Government Area, is detailed in **Figure 1**.

The above rates of population growth may be supplemented by other major urban releases areas such as the Australian Defence Industries at St. Marys (approx. 835ha) and the release area at Riverstone, Vineyard and Schofields (approx. 850 ha). Development of these and other greenfield sites will ensure the growth of Western Sydney well into the next century.

2.2.2 Employment and Economic Growth

Western Sydney currently employs 35.3% of the total workforce in Sydney. The Region is an industrial and manufacturing powerhouse and also accounts for 65% of Sydney's fresh food production. Western Sydney makes a significant contribution to the national export market through the operations of 93 of Australia's top 500 companies and numerous other multi-national corporations such as Pepsi Cola Bottlers, Sony Music, Sharp and Arnotts Biscuits. It is estimated that Western Sydney produces more than \$35 billion in products and services or one quarter of the State's GDP. (Source: *Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, 1998, Shaping Western Sydney*). The total estimated business growth for Western Sydney is summarised below in **Figure 2**.

FIGURE 1

Base line 1995 population levels for Western Sydney, and population growth projected to occur by the year 2006, based on the data maintained by the Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board, are as follows:

**Graph No.1
Population Growth 1995-2006**

	POPULATION (1995 ACTUAL)	POPULATION (2006 FORECAST)	POPULATION POPULATION GROWTH (%)
Baulkham Hills	127,700	140,000	9.6
Blacktown	230,000	250,000	8.7
Blue Mountains	73,667	78,500	6.6
Camden	33,500	56,000	67.2
Campbelltown	150,200	154,900	3.1
Fairfield	187,150	202,100	8.0
Hawkesbury	56,900	59,000	3.7
Holroyd	82,100	85,500	4.1
Liverpool	109,900	140,200	27.6
Parramatta	138,250	142,000	2.7
Penrith	166,200	178,300	7.3
Wollondilly	33,750	38,200	13.2
TOTALS - WSA	1,222,517	1,325,500	8.4
TOTALS - GWS	1,389,317	1,524,700	9.7

FIGURE 2

The following estimate of total growth in business turnover has been based on the economic forecast included by the Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board (GWSEDB) in its 1998 Investment Profile.

The GWSEDB forecast provides for a \$12 billion increase in business turnover in Western Sydney between 1995 and 2011. On a proportional basis, this equates to an increase of \$7.5 billion by the year 2006.

Graph No.2
Gross Domestic Product - Growth Rates

	Population	Turnover (\$M) (1995)	Turnover per Capita (\$)
GWS - 1995	1,389,317	39,493	28,426
Projected Turnover Growth		7,500	
Projected Population Growth	135,383		
PROJECTED GWS - 2006	1,524,700	46,993	30,821

Economic investment in Western Sydney is a strong focus for the State Government which recently prepared a State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) No. 59 to rezone 1,685 ha of new employment land in Blacktown, Fairfield and Holroyd LGAs. The Central Western Sydney Employment Area is intended for development as a major industrial and warehousing zone, strategically located adjoining the M4 Motorway, Great Western Highway and the proposed Western Sydney Orbital. The location of this zone is shown in **Figure 3.**

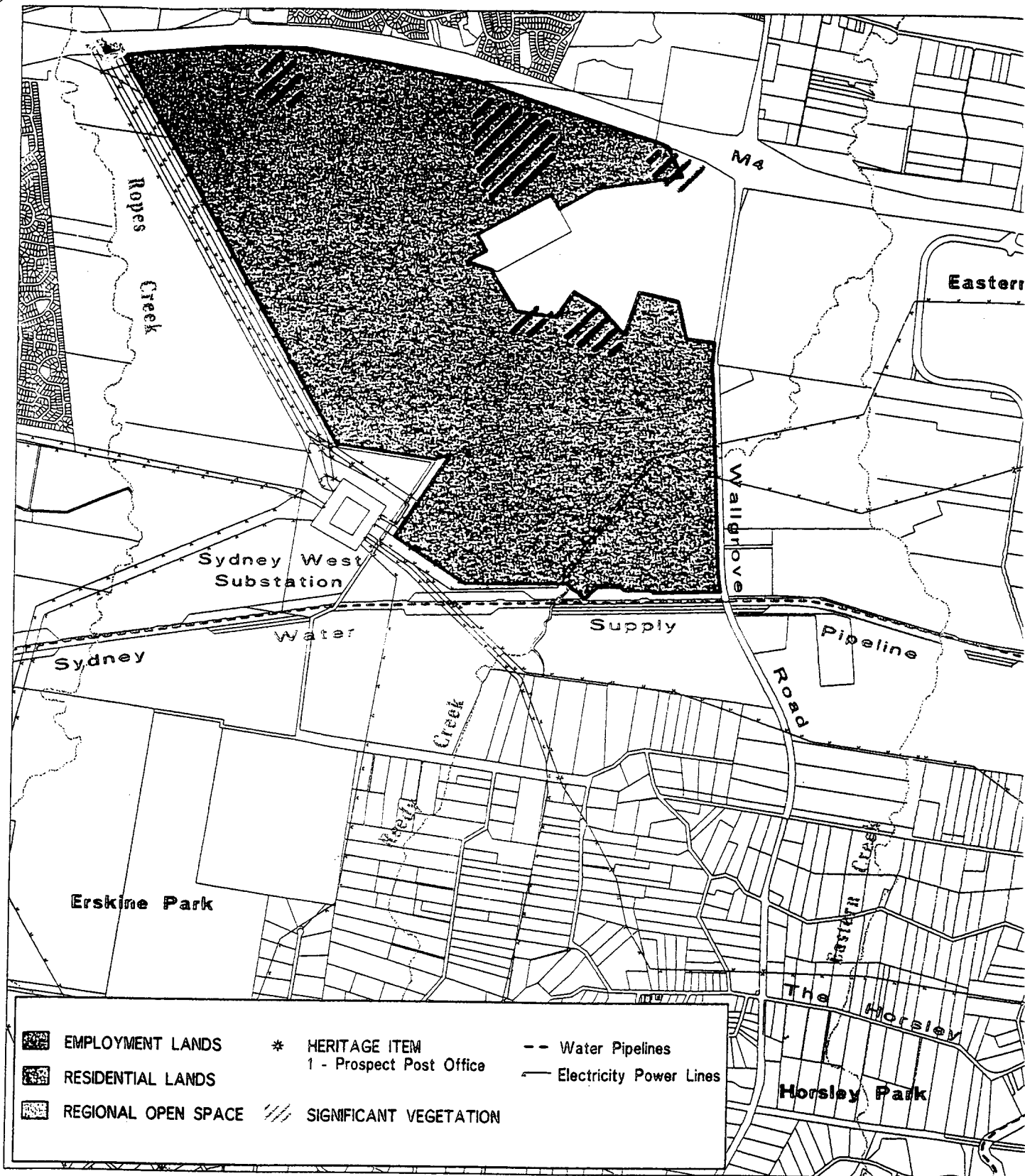
Agriculture is a significant growth industry for Western with a current annual turnover exceeding \$1 billion. The Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment (entirely within Western Sydney) remains one of the most productive agricultural areas in Australia. Although it comprises only 1% of the available agricultural land in NSW, it accounts for 10% of the State's agricultural output in dollar terms. It supplies most of Sydney's poultry and dairy produce, large quantities of vegetables, and approximately one third of the oysters consumed in NSW. (Source: WSROC 1999; TeamWest Regional Priorities Group, Greater Western Sydney 1999 Regional Agenda).

Western Sydney has the potential for sustained economic growth yielding a significant per capita increase in business turnover, and the generation of some 200,000 new jobs between 1995 and 2006. An estimated 72,000 of these jobs have already been created, bringing the existing employment density within the Region to 0.23 jobs per person, which converts to slightly less than one job for every four people per head of population. By 2006 the current employment density will be increased to 0.34 (or better than one job for every three people) under a program of sustainable development. (Source: WSROC 1999; TeamWest Regional Priorities Group; Greater Western Sydney 1999 Regional Agenda).

Major expansion of retail and commercial development is proposed in Western Sydney with expansion of existing CBDs in Blacktown and Parramatta. With regard to Parramatta, the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) in conjunction with Parramatta City Council have produced a draft Regional Environmental Plan (REP) to develop Parramatta as the 'City at the Centre of Sydney'. The draft REP together with an accompanying Strategy and Action Plan will direct future investment and development in Parramatta, including a proposed increase in employment of more than 150,000 positions by 2016.

In the same period, retailing and commercial development in Blacktown is expected to grow significantly with provision of more than 120,000m² of commercial floor space by 2016. Blacktown Council is presently assessing a Development Application by the Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC) to expand the existing WestPoint Shopping Centre in Blacktown's CBD by 40,000m² to 105,073m² of retail and commercial floor space.

Future retail and commercial development is also planned at Rouse Hill in the Shire of Baulkham Hills. The Mungerie Park Town Centre, as it will be known, is expected to house more than 2000 residents and provide more than 159,000m² of retail and commercial floor space. The town centre will also include 160,000m² of community facilities and will be serviced by a public transport network with connection to Blacktown and Parramatta CBD's. (Source: Department of Urban Affairs and Planning - Land Management Branch, Mungerie Park Steering Committee).



DEPARTMENT OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND PLANNING
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ACT 1979

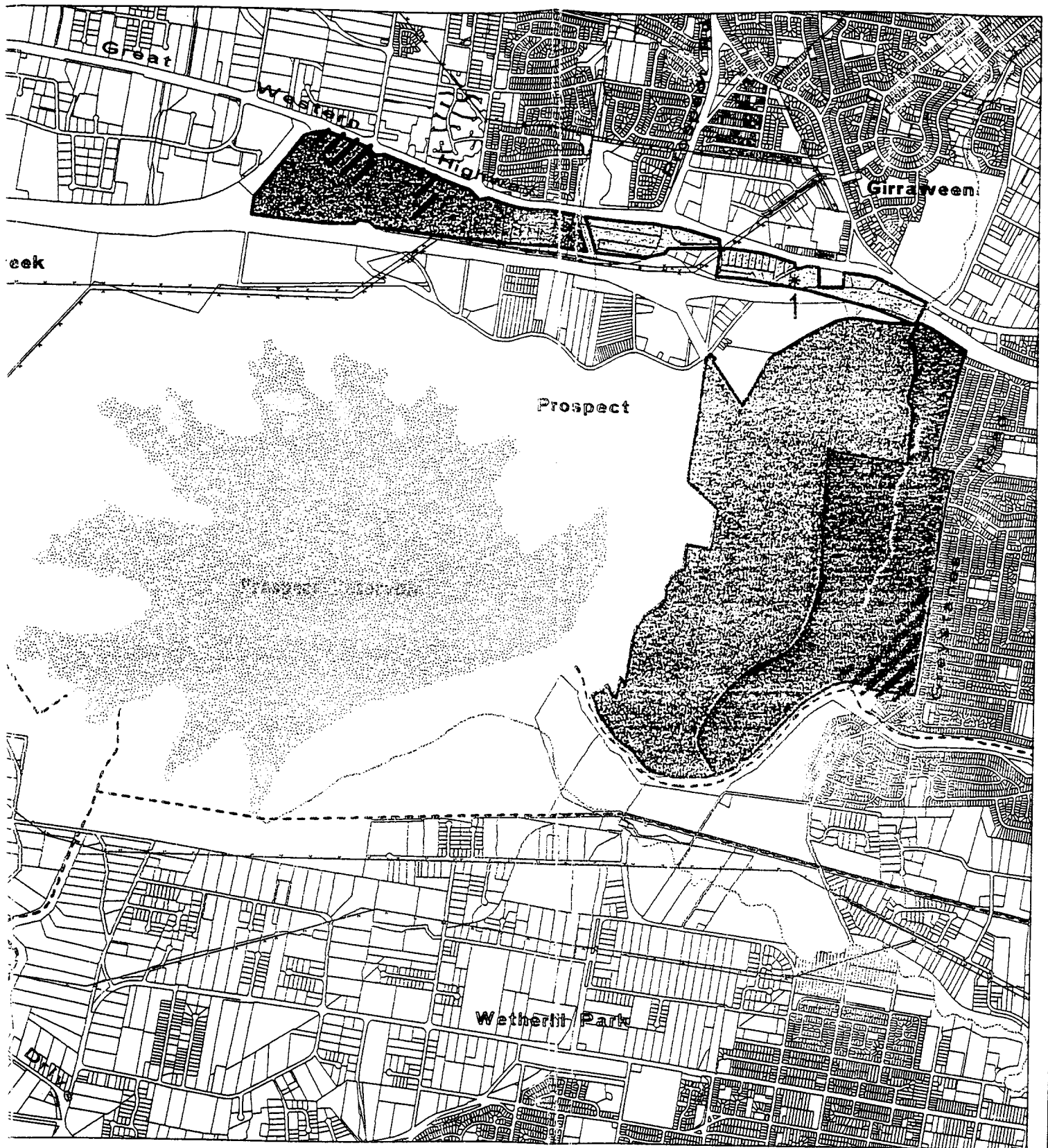
STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY No 59

CENTRAL WESTERN SYDNEY ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT AREA

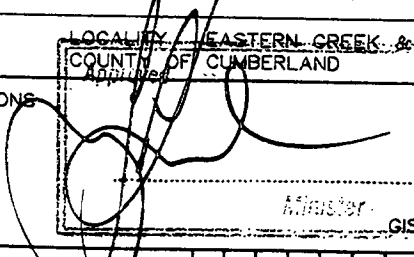
Sheet 2 of 3 Sheets - ZONING MAP



Dep
Urb



nt of
airs and Planning

L.G.A.'s BLACKTOWN, FAIRFIELD AND HOLROYD		LOCALITY EASTERN CREEK & PROSPECT	
PARISH OF VARIOUS		COUNTY OF CUMBERLAND	
DRAWN BY G. PORTELLI DATE 8/1/99		NOTATIONS	
CHECKED	MANAGER G.I.S. <i>[Signature]</i>		
BY	PLANNING OFFICER <i>[Signature]</i>		
DEPT. FILE NO. P98/00236		CATALOGUE NO.	05090007070

2.2.3 Government Policy

The importance of Western Sydney within the Sydney metropolitan area is increasingly being recognised through Government policies directed at creating further employment, economic growth, improved transportation, safer environments and environmentally sustainable development. These policies include:

- The Greater Western Sydney Public Transport Strategy;
- Shaping Western Sydney, 1999;
- Action for 2010: An Integrated Transport Plan for Sydney;
- The Greater Western Sydney Regional Agenda, 1998
- The Strategic Plan for Sustainable Agriculture, 1999;
- The Hawkesbury-Nepean Floodplain Management Strategy, 1998; and
- Action for Air 2000.

Furthermore, to address the needs of Western Sydney and sponsor its growth, the NSW Government recently established the Office of the Minister of Western Sydney. Since the establishment of this portfolio, the Minister for Western Sydney, the Hon. Kim Yeadon, MP has undertaken a variety of important initiatives for the region, including:

- The Western Sydney Industrial Awards - recognising the innovations and achievements of regional industry;
- Corporate Partners for Change - a training based program for youth in the region;
- The Western Sydney Environmental Strategy - presently nearing completion; and
- The Western Sydney Budget Statement - which considers the annual investment by Government in the region across all portfolios.

In cooperation with the Office of the Minister of Western Sydney, other regional development bodies such as the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) and the Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board have established a number of important business programs, including:

- Western Sydney Small Business Development and Growth Program;
- Greater Western Sydney Import Replacement Program;
- Western Sydney Infrastructure Development Program for IT&T Sector;
- Western Sydney Public Transport Program as part of the Urban Infrastructure Management Plan;
- The International Marketing Fund Program; and
- TeamWest.

Each of these initiatives progresses growth and competitive change within the Region.

2.2.4 Infrastructure Development

Western Sydney will receive international attention through the coverage of Olympic events at venues throughout the Region. Major events central to the Olympics will be held in the Region at Blacktown (softball and baseball), Penrith (rowing and canoeing), Fairfield (mountain biking and equestrian events) and Liverpool (shooting events). These facilities will ensure Western Sydney's continued involvement with national and international sports and will promote future sporting champions from Western Sydney.

Aside from Olympic venues, significant infrastructure projects are currently being planned and commenced throughout Western Sydney, including:

- Parramatta - Chatswood rail link
- Liverpool to Parramatta Transit Way
- The Western Sydney Orbital (M2 extension from Seven Hills to Liverpool)
- Duplication of the M5 Motorway, east of the toll booths;
- Parramatta to Homebush Bay Public Transport Link;
- Various Light Rail and transit way proposals including a connection between the proposed Mungerie Park Town Centre and Parramatta and other connections within and to Blacktown;
- Expansion of the University of Western Sydney- Macarthur and Nirimba Campuses;
- Redevelopment of Blacktown and Campbelltown Public Hospitals; and
- Quadruplication of the East Hills Rail Line and connection to Kingsford Smith Airport.
- Amplification of the Blacktown to Richmond railway line.

2.2.5 Human Capital

The diversity of population in Western Sydney is second only to the diversity of the Region's natural environment. The Region has a broad cross-section of cultures, demographics and social groupings.

Through the Ministry of Western Sydney, the State Government has increasingly allocated funds to provide greater access to training and support services such as child care. There is also a growing emphasis on increasing the number of people entering University from Western Sydney and correspondingly the various university campuses in Western Sydney have been upgraded, in particular the campuses of Macarthur and Nirimba.

The Nirimba Education Precinct is of particular note, being the first facility of its kind in Australia. The Precinct includes the Blacktown campus of the University of Western Sydney/ Hawkesbury, Nirimba TAFE College and two senior high schools: Terra Sancta (private) opened in 1998 and Wyndham College (state) opened in 1999. The precinct supports a valuable portfolio of full-time undergraduate and graduate degrees designed to meet the professional and educational needs of north western Sydney.

The University of Western Sydney (UWS) is the largest regional university in Australia

and the second largest university in NSW. Student information compiled by the University of Western Sydney indicates that 68% of students attending UWS campuses live in Western Sydney. The development of UWS campuses has resulted in the highest 1st time university attendance (per family) in Australia. (Source: University Western Sydney, Nepean, development and Information Management Planning Services).

2.2.6 Environmental Importance

Western Sydney has a rich diversity of flora and fauna much of which is considered rare, endangered or vulnerable. The Region's natural assets are spread across a large area and various local government boundaries including the Blue Mountains National Park, Wollondilly Shire and the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley. It is also important to note that Sydney's water supply is derived from the Hawkesbury-Nepean River system, which is a major ecological feature of Western Sydney.

Recent government initiatives to conserve and improving Western Sydney's environmental assets, include:

- Regional Environmental Plan (REP) No.1- The Georges River;
- The Hawkesbury-Nepean Floodplain Management Strategy and Plan;
- Fish Habitat Protection Plan No.3 - the Hawkesbury River;
- Revegetation of the South Creek River Corridor;
- Action for Air; and
- Sustainable Agriculture in Sydney Strategy;

2.2.7 Regional Comparison - Wollongong, Newcastle and Blacktown.

Western Sydney has the potential market to support a commercial television station. This fact is most clearly shown in a comparison of Blacktown with areas, which are currently serviced by regional television stations. As a measure of the potential demand in Western Sydney, Blacktown is compared with the Wollongong region (serviced by WIN television) and the Newcastle region (serviced by NBN television) on the basis of population growth and economic development.

The Blacktown Market - A Measure of Western Sydney

The City of Blacktown is a rapidly expanding Local Government Area (LGA) located on the fringe of the Sydney metropolitan area. It is the largest LGA in NSW with a current population of about 240,000. At the heart of the Greater Western Sydney Region, Blacktown has been identified by the State Government as a prime development area and for many years has been the focus of the State Government's Residential Urban Development Program and Employment Lands Development Program. This situation will continue into the foreseeable future with major additions to residential and industrial development areas announced by the State Government.

Population Growth

The City of Blacktown is the most dominant region within Western Sydney both in terms of population growth and economic development. It is the largest LGA in NSW with a current population of more than 240,000. Blacktown City has a population density of approximately 972 persons per sq. km. This is 53% greater than that of Newcastle (636 persons per sq.km) and almost 4 times that of Wollongong (257 persons per sq.km).

Approximately 75% of the City is zoned for urban and support uses. The remaining 25% is zoned for agricultural use but almost all of this has either been earmarked for future urban development by the State Government under Sydney Regional Environmental Plan i.e. Rouse Hill Development Area or is under investigation for urban use as a preliminary to the State's Employment Lands Development Program.

The ultimate population potential of the City of Blacktown under the above plans would be in excess of 400,000.

The latest statistics available from the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning show that in absolute terms, Blacktown's population has grown by 17,000 or 7.79% in the past 5 years. By comparison, Wollongong has grown by 4400 or 2.44%, and Newcastle has grown by only 1,500 or 1.10%.

By comparison, the population in Newcastle is projected to rise by only 20 in the next 25 years, Wollongong's is projected to rise by 9,040 or 4.95%, whereas Blacktown's is projected to accelerate by 29,700 or 12.64%. The projected populations for Blacktown, Wollongong and Newcastle are provided in **Figure 4**. The ranking of LGA's in NSW by population, is also provided.

Economic Development

The number of applications for development is an important measure of economic activity within a region. In the period 1997/98 Blacktown Council processed more than 5,061 applications, valued at \$496 million. By comparison, the value of applications processed in Wollongong was \$206 million whilst Newcastle processed applications valued at \$209m. The residential development in Blacktown (1997-1998 financial year) outstripped the combined total of Newcastle and Wollongong. In the period Blacktown approved 1,754 residential development applications, whilst Wollongong approved 679 and Newcastle approved 467 (1146 applications combined).

The growth of industrial and commercial development in Blacktown is typical of the Region as a whole. The growth rates of industrial development in Blacktown are outstripping those achieved in Wollongong and Newcastle. With recent gazettal by the State Government of additional industrial land in Blacktown under the auspices of State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) No.59 (refer to Section 2.2.2 of this submission) Blacktown has the largest stock of zoned and serviced employment lands in NSW.

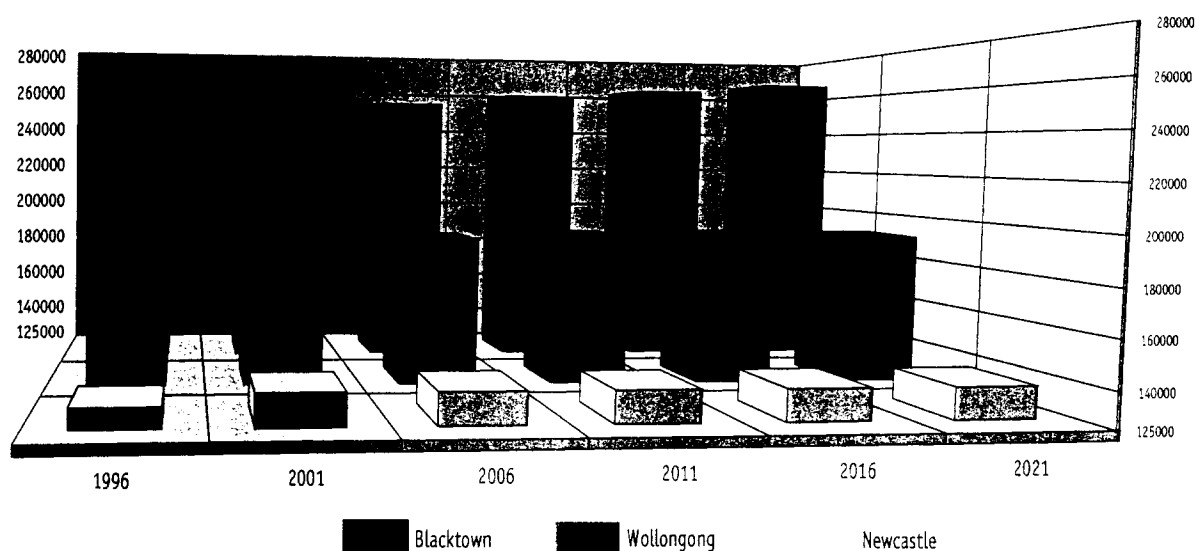
In the financial year 1996/97, 40% of the available serviced employment land in Blacktown was developed. This take-up rate has also resulted in strengthening labour force

Figure 4 - Selected Population Statistics

Table 1 - Ranking of LGA's in NSW by size of population.

NSW LGA	POPULATION	RANK
BLACKTOWN	240,000	1
Sutherland	206,483	2
Fairfield	190,132	3
WOLLONGONG	183,530	4
Lake Macquarie	179,000	5
Penrith	169,709	6
Bankstown	157,735	7
Campbelltown	154,000	8
Gosford	144,800	9
Parramatta	139,157	10
Hornsby	135,000	11
NEWCASTLE	133,686	12
Canterbury	132,360	13
Warringah	131,070	14
Baulkham Hills	125,000	15

Table 2 - Projected Population



participation rates and unemployment rates that have significantly fallen in the last two years from 9% in 1996 to 6% in 1998. (Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics - Monthly Labour Force Survey).

Conclusion

The growth of the City of Blacktown alone outstrips the current development occurring in Wollongong and Newcastle. As a region, Western Sydney continually out performs the Wollongong/Illawarra and Newcastle Regions across all major economic and social performance indicators. The above comparison clearly demonstrates that Western Sydney has a potential market more than sufficient to support a commercial television station of the type currently operating in Wollongong and Newcastle. In fact, Western Sydney as represented in this case study by the City of Blacktown, has greater potential than the Wollongong and Newcastle regions to sustain a commercial television station.

3. THE PUBLIC INTEREST

3.1 Introduction

Western Sydney is rapidly becoming one of the most populated and economically progressive regions in Australia. The consequences of this growth for business, the community, the environment and a myriad of other stakeholders is newsworthy information of interest to people throughout Sydney. Debate concerning the Second Sydney Airport is a prime example. More importantly, however, a balanced view of Western Sydney should prevail to assist in its future growth and development.

More often Western Sydney's economic and social problems receive greater coverage from the media than its achievements. Supporters of Western Sydney, particularly local Councils, have consciously worked to achieve greater opportunities for their communities and break traditional socio-economic stereotypes that have unfairly worked to undermine and marginalise the importance of the Region. Aside from coverage in local newspapers and radio reports, much of Western Sydney's achievements have gone unreported. A commercial television station would redress this imbalance and better represent the Region.

3.2 Economic and Social Dimensions

It is recognised by the Commission in its Issues Paper that broadcasting is a heavily regulated industry. It is equally recognised that these regulations have been relaxed on occasion to pursue social and cultural public interest objectives (ie promoting multi-multiculturalism).

For this enquiry, the Commission's terms of reference identify 'public interest' as an issue of significance, against which increased levels of competition can be measured. The Commission's terms of reference regarding public interest are, as follows:

- *report on practical courses of action to improve competition, efficiency and the interests of consumers in broadcasting services; and*
- *focus particular attention on balancing the social and economic dimensions of the public interest.*

As previously outlined, Western Sydney has the potential audience to support a commercial television station and would benefit economically and socially through provision of this service. The Commission's terms of reference define public interest as being comprised of social and economic dimensions. In regard to each of these aspects, Western Sydney has a definable need:

- **Economics:** One of the most important aspects of Western Sydney's growth is the provision of local employment. Unemployment is a major issue in the region with many areas experiencing high levels of long term unemployment, particularly amongst young people. The genuine reasons for unemployment and its effects on people in Western Sydney are frequently overlooked by the mainstream media.

Unfortunately generalisations by the media concerning the unemployed in Western Sydney have created damaging stereotypes.

A commercial television station in Western Sydney could achieve greater equity for the Region by broadcasting positive news of economic developments and business opportunities. Job training programs and other business development initiatives should be regular broadcast topics. Highlighting Council initiatives to improve local area such as Blacktown Council's Mount Druitt Area Action Plan can also work to break down negative stereotypes about an area and encourage public and private investment. There are many good news stories occurring in Western Sydney which are rarely appreciated or heard by the wider community due to selective reporting.

- *Social:* The motto of Blacktown City Council is 'Growing With Pride', Fairfield Council is 'Celebrating Diversity', Holroyd Council is 'Built Around People' and Parramatta Council is 'The Centre of Sydney'. Councils in Western Sydney actively promote their communities and are working to make people proud of their Region. Unfortunately, one of the main barriers for people living in Western Sydney is the stigma, perpetuated through the media, that their communities are undesirable. A television service within the Region would assist organisations to present a balanced view of Western Sydney and further encourage people to view their communities with pride.

4. THE COMMERCIAL SUCCESS OF 2WS

2WS FM 101.7 has been serving Western Sydney with news and community information since 1978. 2WS is often referred to as the voice of Western Sydney and is presently considered to be the main communications medium for Sydney's Greater West. The success of 2WS is directly related to the extensive market that is Western Sydney and the attractiveness of this market to advertisers. The committed support of Western Sydney listeners to 2WS also indicates that the community is interested in its Region and appreciates the local content which 2WS presents.

4.1 History of the Station.

Radio Station 2WS commenced broadcasting on 23rd November, 1978 from a dwelling in Seven Hills on the AM band. Within 15 years the station had achieved such outstanding broadcasting success that a switch to FM 101.7 was approved and broadcasts on the FM band commenced on June 1st, 1993.

Since its inception, 2WS has had a high level of involvement with Western Sydney. There are regular broadcasts from schools within the Region each month. Community announcements, advertisements and local news are important elements of the Station's program content. The Station employs a full-time community affairs coordinator enabling daily broadcasts of local events including school carnivals and fund raising activities.

4.2 The Western Sydney Market

Western Sydney has limited access to community broadcasting services. In terms of general media representation, Western Sydney relies heavily on the print media in the form of local newspapers. As previously outlined in this submission, Western Sydney (unlike the Illawarra and Newcastle regions) is without a local television station. With regard to the broadcast media, Radio Station 2WS 101.7 represents the only live source of news and local information for the Region.

Western Sydney relies almost exclusively on the established commercial television stations, print media and radio stations for presentation of local issues, views and debate to the wider community. When considering the population base of Western Sydney, its diversity of land uses and range of community issues, the average percentage of air time dedicated to the region by established commercial television and radio stations significantly under represents the Region.

As an example, Western Sydney's protest against construction of the 2nd Sydney Airport at Badgery's Creek has received little or no metropolitan media attention. Most recently, a protest rally against the Badgery's Creek Airport held in Penrith on the 25 July, 1999 received less than 1 hour of metropolitan radio broadcasting, 30 seconds of television news and less than 10 paragraphs in metropolitan newspapers. It should be noted that the proposed airport is one of the most important issues for Western Sydney this decade.

2WS markets to Western Sydney listeners because their surveys indicate that Western Sydney is one of the largest markets of families and large households in Australia. Recent surveys commissioned by 2WS have further indicated that in Western Sydney, shoppers spend more than the national weekly average (\$150) on groceries and have greater purchasing power greater than any other comparable region in Australia. These facts have contributed to Western Sydney becoming a growth market for all advertisers.

Marketing to Western Sydney makes good economic sense to 2WS. Survey information obtained by the Station from 'Geospend' indicates why:

- The Region has a larger concentration of families, large households and buying power than anywhere else in Australia;
- Covering 77% of Sydney's metropolitan area, Western Sydney is the largest natural growth area in Australia;
- More people live in the Western Sydney than Adelaide, Brisbane or Perth and the combined populations of Tasmania, ACT and the Northern Territory;
- Grocery expenditure in Western Sydney is high :37% spend more than the national average of \$150 each week;
- On average, households in the Greater West spend more on food & groceries, fashion, homeware and leisure activities than households in the rest of Sydney;
- A greater percentage of the population is involved in all activities including gardening, team sports, aerobics & handicrafts than the rest of Sydney; and
- The Region has 9% higher disposable household income, mortgages 16% lower and rents 30% lower, allowing for a better lifestyle and luxury items expenditure.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

Western Sydney is currently under represented by the existing commercial television and radio stations. The issues affecting Western Sydney and the role which the Region plays in the economic success of the Sydney Metropolitan Area necessitates greater media representation. A commercial television station could achieve greater equity for Western Sydney in terms of addressing its economic and social needs.

The aim of this submission is to highlight to the Commission that a fourth commercial television station license should be issued, and Western Sydney is the appropriate recipient of this service. In justifying this position Council has elaborated on two main issues:

- Western Sydney is the largest under-served market in Australia with regard to broadcasting services; and
- Western Sydney requires further broadcasting services on the basis of social and economic need.

In addressing the above key issues the submission has highlighted the ongoing success of Radio Station 2WS 101.7 which has served Western Sydney for over 21 years. Research conducted by 2WS has proven to advertisers that Western Sydney is the largest single market in Australia with the greatest consumer spending power. The success of 2WS is also heavily related to the continued support from listeners in Western Sydney.

Based on details provided in this submission Council recommends that the Commission should decide to issue a fourth commercial television station license and that part of the licensing provisions should stipulate that it be established in Western Sydney to service the economic and community needs of the Region.

REFERENCE LIST

1. Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, 1998, *Shaping western Sydney*.
2. TeamWest Regional Priorities Group, February, 1999, *Greater Western Sydney 1999 Regional Agenda*.
3. TeamWest Regional Priorities Group, February, 1999, *Greater Western Sydney 1999 Regional Agenda*.
4. Department of Urban Affairs and Planning - Land Management Branch, *Mungerie Park Steering Committee*, 1998.
5. TeamWest Regional Priorities Group, February, 1999, *Greater Western Sydney 1999 Regional Agenda*.