

File Note

Subject	Meeting with Wellington Access Radio re EOI – 106.1FM at Mt Kaukau
Date	26 November 2015
Attachments	

Discussion

I today met with Don Carson (Chair) and Kristen Paterson (Station Manager) of Wellington Access Radio to discuss the upcoming process for the allocation of the 106.1FM frequency.

Don Carson indicated that WAR would be definitely lodging an application for the licence. He has had discussions with James Scott (Chair, Hutt Community Radio Trust) and with former HCRT Chair, John Terris about their respective interests in the frequency.

S9(2)(b)(ii)

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Our discussions then centred on the AM frequency currently held by WAR. Don said that the board had resolved that it should continue to have access for programme makers to AM broadcasting. I said that it was unusual for broadcasters to be able to hold on to an AM frequency if they had been granted an FM one so having both was unlikely to be agreed to. Don said that WAR didn't want to hold on to the AM frequency, as such, with Kristen confirming it would probably cost them ^{S9(2)(b)(i)} to run both, but that some of their programme makers wanted to be able to continue on AM, even though the licence might be held by some other party. This suggests that WAR would like to ultimately enter into an agreement with the AM licensee about access to time (14 hours per week?) on the AM frequency but not continue to hold the licence themselves.

It was clear that we all understood that the National Pacific Radio Trust has indicated it would like to get its hands on the AM frequency to enable it to broadcast its Radio531pi programming into Wellington 24/7. ^{S9(2)(b)(ii)}

WAR's clear expectation was that Samoa Capital Radio would move its programming from WAR to the new licensee. This was clearly in WAR's interests as it would not have Samoa Capital taking up 34 hours per week of WAR's airtime, airtime WAR would obviously have to fill itself but which would give it much more flexibility in potentially accepting programming from HCRT, and others.

I said that MCH would want to first sort out the FM allocation and that, if WAR was successful in securing the FM frequency, we would leave the AM frequency with them in the meantime, pending further consideration of longer term scenarios.

It is likely to take WAR a while to be able to get their FM operation up and running (they would have a year from the granting of the licence) and they will want to continue broadcasting on AM in the meantime. However, there will be a limit to the time WAR can keep both the FM and AM frequencies simulcasting so a decision on the disposal of the latter will probably need to be made quite soon.

I suggested that the best solution will probably be for MCH to call a roundtable meeting of all the interested parties with a view to knocking together the best possible future scenario for the use of the frequency. This might then be put in front of Ministers for sign-off, particularly if it involves one operator having two or more frequencies in the same locality.

Don suggested that the best possible outcome would be a new trust,

[§9\(2\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#)

I told him

that such an approach might make a lot of sense and that I would pass it on to my

colleagues in MCH as I was, personally, unlikely to be around when the next steps were being contemplated.

Rick Julian

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