

File note

File note of	File note of video meeting with Lofty Community Media
Author	Robin Christie
File number	CBSL-2019-00164
Date	13 May 2020
Subject	Video meeting with Lofty Community Media to discuss application for Mt Barker RA1 community broadcasting licence allocation

Video meeting conducted via Skype on 9 April 2020.

Attendees were as follows:

ACMA

1. Creina Chapman, Deputy Chair and CEO **(CC)**
2. Hugh Clapin, Manager, Community Broadcasting and Safeguards Section **(HC)**
3. Robin Christie, Senior Licensing and Compliance Officer (acting), Community Broadcasting and Safeguards Section

Lofty Community Media

1. Tanya Lyons, Secretary **(TL)**
2. Robert Brabec, Board member **(RB)**
3. Claudine Burgess, Chair **(CB)**
4. Lindsay Campbell, technical and marketing (also station manager of 5RRR in Woomera and a former Mt Barker Councillor) **(LC)**
5. Alan Thorne, Treasurer **(AT)**
6. Benjamin Goldfinch, Vice Chair **(BG)**
7. Geoffrey Cleggett, Board member **(GC)**
8. Bridie Campbell, Board member **(BC)**

Apologies from Tony Sander, technical **(TS)**.

South Australian Community Broadcasters Association (SACBA)

1. Charlotte Bedford, President **(CB)**
2. Tim Borgas, Treasurer **(TB)**

Questions and answers

HC: Lofty's application states that it has 28 financial members and 25 volunteers (p.8, question 13), but that it proposes to have 45 presenters on air in a typical week (p.5, question 9). Administration/Programming/Technical member numbers add only to 11. How does Lofty propose to increase to 45 presenters?

LC: Focusing on the three days Lofty is on-air. Uncertainty means Lofty is not pushing too hard for volunteers. Lofty believes 45 presenters would be needed to sustain full-time broadcasting. This is a high number to allow for contingencies. 25 reliable presenters would be enough. Lofty has other presenters for football. Lofty does not have enough airtime for proposed shows.

TB: Based on SACBA's experience, announcers from the unsuccessful applicant are likely to join the successful applicant.

LC: Lofty plans to include as many of the announcers from the unsuccessful applicant as possible if it is allocated the licence.

HC: What if Lofty is allocated the licence and none of the Hills presenters join Lofty?

AT: There has been lots of interest from people with no radio experience, e.g. members of the local historical association.

CB: Working with the historical association shows the collaboration that Lofty has a representation for. The last meeting showed lots of interest in presenting for Lofty.

LC: A group that plans to do a four-hour show works with lots of organisations who could provide volunteers. Lofty's plan is not reliant on Hills presenters joining Lofty.

BC: Local high school principal is working with Lofty to create an ongoing program for school children.

TL: About six presenters are lined up for training after coronavirus social distancing measures finish. New shows will include a cooking show.

HC: Please explain how certain examples of third-party content on its proposed schedule relate to the licence area. For example, how do the following CRN programs relate to a social, economic, political or cultural issue as it affects the Mount Barker RA1 licence area: Women on the Line; A Jazz Hour; All the Best; Arts Alive?

LC: Third party programming relates to uncertainty. Lofty has a second studio for training. Risk management about the allocation decision has impacted outside broadcast capacity.

AT: Some CRN programs represent music with a strong following in the area that's not catered for. These programs also set the standards for volunteers. But they're also placeholder programs.

HC: Please clarify how 65 hours of programming on Lofty's proposed schedule is classified as produced but not hosted in licence area (question 10 in the application).

LC & TL: Agreed to take this question on notice but noted that it was probably a typo.

HC: Is Lofty's answer to question 9 on the application accurate?

LC: Some uncertainty. Aiming for 50% of the 168-hour per week schedule to be Australian – mostly local. New local shows are on the way. A good amount of local content is broadcast during waking hours, during Lofty's three days on air.

HC: Where do Lofty's overseas shows come from?

AT: Need to ask TS. There could be some confusion about Australian produced music.

TL: Some international news during the day, from Deutsche Welle and a UK news source.

CB: States she is Belgian and speaks five languages. Lofty could collaborate with the local German and Dutch populations. They plan to do so, but there is uncertainty.

A number of the programs on Lofty's proposed schedule are identified as complementing or supplementing programs available on other broadcasting services in the licence area, especially Radio National, but also SBS and Triple J and others. Can you explain the differences in a bit more detail? For example, *Inside Europe* is described as "Complements/supplements all other Broadcasters in Mount Barker RA1" while *It's a Chick Thing* is described as "Different to all other broadcasters licenced to service Mount Barker RA1 due to exclusive focus on female artists and diverse genres". Do these descriptions amount to the same thing? (e.g. that the program is not very similar to any other program available in the same licence area?) Other examples (from Appendix 10) where the 'complements/supplements' description could be clearer: *All the Best* (via CRN); *CBA National Feature and Documentary Series* (via CRN); *Democracy Now!*; *The German Show*; *Lofty: the Fresh Tune People*; *Lofty Health and Wellbeing Hour*.

AT: *It's a Chick Thing* is entirely female artists. Don't know of anything similar in the area. Programs can both complement and supplement.

LC: All community stations sound the same – music from 60s to 80s. Lofty has Hip Hop, the Bibe Lab, etc. Trying to focus on different genres of music. Mentions 'the Lofty sound'. Australian artists that are not heard elsewhere. Lofty is not very savvy regarding 'complements' vs 'supplements'.

TL: *Monday Mornings on Lofty* and *We've Got News for You* are examples of news analysis presented by Lofty. Lofty has a unique local connection with a local live music venue – the Cheese Factory and plays music not available anywhere else.

BC: The three *It's a Chick Thing* presenters have very different tastes.

TL: Live youth shows include *Cool Beans*. Another local school comes to do a program with special needs children, which is streaming online at the moment. Mentions representing the Hills community spirit.

LC: Lofty embraces the CBA guidelines regarding diversity. In contrast to commercial radio, they don't tell people what to play. The show belongs to the presenter. The last survey found the community wants the local community station to sound like them.

HC: Please provide further explanation about how Lofty intends to commission its own surveys, run focus groups, and adopt additional mechanisms to facilitate audience and community feedback in the future, particularly noting its minimal finances. Can Lofty provide greater assurance that it has the financial capacity to cover its expenses over the five-year period of a long-term community broadcasting licence, and should some of the key assumptions fail? For example:

- > Can Lofty provide greater assurance that it has adequate cash reserves to provide the service. Lofty's (unaudited) balance sheet shows total assets of [REDACTED] as at 30 June 2019, of which only [REDACTED]. This suggests that, based on average expenses of [REDACTED] per week for the year to 30

June 2019, Lofty as at 30 June 2019 had [REDACTED] . (Page 3 of Appendix 14.)

- > **SACBA's letter of support states that it is providing, free of charge, all of the basic equipment Lofty needs to get through its formative years (Page 58 of Appendix 14). Does Lofty have a contingency plan to raise the funds to purchase or rent equipment should SACBA decide to retrieve its equipment at short notice?**

AT: Lofty is self-funded (by people with more money than sense) and can maintain this funding. They have sponsors ready to go. They don't want to sign up sponsors if they are going to lose the licence. They can function on very little if they lose sponsors. They have a low-cost model. Sponsors are offering substantial money. Lofty is not beholden to sponsors. Mentions sponsors being more like 'patrons'.

TL: Lofty has a sponsorship sub-committee meeting local businesses. If Lofty broadcast full-time, sponsors would come on board. Mentions Hills Football League.

CB: Mentions running a photography business and building local community relationships and trust.

LC: A [REDACTED] Another potential sponsor is willing to give a substantial amount of money, but Lofty doesn't want to take this money while the future of the licence is uncertain. The Lofty group will always keep going. They are working with trusted community stations.

HC: If we understand Appendix 16 correctly, you are considering an alternative transmitter site. What, in summary, are the advantages of the alternative site. It appears Lofty is proposing an omnidirectional antenna pattern at the alternative/preferred site. Have you considered any form of directionality?

LC: Wanted to be on the same tower as Hills Radio, but not interested in changing now.

GC: Offering current permanently without charge. Wants to create a new renewable transmitter, which would reduce costs. Line of sight to studio and direct access to NanoBeams.

AT: Alternative site proposal could be left over from previous application. Lofty couldn't get on to that tower, but is glad to be at GC's site.

TL: Agreed to take the ACMA's questions about Appendix 16 on notice.

HC: Question about the SACBA equipment loan.

TB: In eight to 10 months Lofty can apply for a grant under the new rules. The grant application scores more highly if collaborating with other community stations. SACBA has enough equipment for four or five stations, and normally only loans equipment to two or three stations in emergencies. SACBA has no hesitation to take equipment away if stations don't comply with the codes of practice.

HC: Why did Lofty start?

AT: Met about half of Lofty's members at Hills Radio. Discusses reasons for splitting from Hills.

CB: Mentioned having been on several boards. Wanted to be part of the community and was encouraged by TS to join community radio. Lofty is the best board she's been on. Lofty is a team with no chief – collaboration is key.

TL: Big things growing. Lofty is a safe, healthy positive place. No one wants to give up. Lofty is a safe place to share stories.

LC: Mentions reasons for leaving Hills and joining Lofty. Lofty is safe and inclusive.

AT: Helping people to realise their dreams – young (e.g. BC's show), old, etc.

BG: Lots of mentoring young people.

TB: SACBA was working with Hills, but was excluded. Disturbed at the direction Hills went in. Told ACMA it couldn't give a licence to a proprietary limited company.

HC: Any final comments?

GC: Asked if licence would be allocated before the current TCBL expires.

HC: Said we couldn't guarantee that due to the coronavirus situation, but that we hoped so.

Robin Christie
Senior Licensing and Compliance Officer (acting)
Community Broadcasting and Safeguards

