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Appendix 1:

Licence Application Hearings 1958 and 1964:

Evidence in Chief of J.E. Macartney:

The first witness to be called was James Edward Macartney of Thomas St., Nedlands who had joined West Australian Newspapers on 23 April 1928. It was surprising that the first question by Ainslie Q.C.'s legal counsel for TVW Limited exposed Macartney's lack of knowledge about television when he asked, 'I understand you are qualified to discuss television equipment?' and Macartney replied 'No, I am not.'¹ Ainslie immediately changed tack and after quoting the numbers in relation to Share and Note Applications, then asked who the three were who applied for numbers of notes in excess of AP5,000. Macartney replied, 'The answer to that is the Roman Catholic Church, the Australian Workers' Union through Radio 6KY in Perth, W.A. and the West Australian Broadcasters Ltd.'²

[in some instances the actual Transcript of Proceedings method of recording question and answer will be used thus:-]

‘Of the funds invested in West Australian Newspapers Ltd., what percentage belongs to people who are resident in Western Australia?---[answer] 83%

And of the applications for shares or notes in TVW Ltd., what percentage are West Australians?---In excess of 99%.³

It became evident that TVW Limited's prime argument was based on the proposition that they were a 'local' company representing the interests of Western Australia and Western Australian investors. The four directors of TVW Ltd. were identified as Mr. Long, a Chartered Accountant of Australia; Chairman of Directors C.G. Friend, a former Director of Posts and Telegraphs in Western Australia and supporter of such 'laudable' activities as Torchbearers

¹ *Transcript of Proceedings, An inquiry into applications received for licences for commercial television stations in the Perth area.*, The Commonwealth Reporting Branch, Melbourne, 1958, p.7

² *Ibid.*, pp.8-9

³ *Ibid.*, p.10.

for Legacy, Boy Scouts and Rotary; M.L. Fry retired manager of The Bank of New South Wales in Perth ‘widely known for his financial wisdom’ and Macartney himself.⁴

Western Television Services Limited lawyers argued that they should be granted the licence because if the board chose the application of TVW Limited it would create a situation where a monopoly controlled the media in Western Australia to an overwhelming extent. James Macartney would be placed in a position of great and potentially unassailable influence. The TVW Limited Lawyer argued that they should be granted the licence because they would be almost totally controlled by West Australian finance and were better positioned to provide a superior service. It was argued that Western Television Services Limited was just a front for the Adelaide based News Limited and its acquisitive owner Rupert Murdoch.

An option from the State Housing Commission to purchase a ten-acre site at Mt. Yokine was tendered as Exhibit 5. Ainslie asked as to the location of the land ‘Is it on the fringe of the developed area and only five miles from Perth?’ and was answered, ‘It is only five miles by road from Perth.’⁵

Cross Examination of Macartney:

Counsel Negus then raised a problem in the fact that although he wished to cross-examine Macartney, his principal witness Sir. Alexander Reid had been summoned to Canberra for a Commonwealth Grants Commission meeting. Apparently he wanted Reid to personally hear Macartney’s answers. However, the Chairman instructed Negus to begin his cross-examination.

After two preliminary questions regarding the participation percentage of West Australian Newspapers in TVW7 Negus asked,

‘That will mean that, on the present issue, the “West” will hold half the capital?---
Ultimately it will hold 3/7ths of the capital.

‘But in the initial stages it will hold approximately one-half of the capital?--- No.

⁴ Ibid., p.11.

⁵ Ibid.,p.12

‘Then what will it hold?--- Approximately 3/7ths. It will hold 300,000 out of 370,000 shares, but it will not hold any notes and there will be about 330,000 of those. It will hold 300,000 out of 370,000 shares?--- My Company is not Western Australian Newspapers Ltd., but TVW Limited.’⁶

After much toing and froing Negus said,

‘...so I put it to you that the West will have substantial and complete control of the TVW Company?--- Yes

We are told that the Press is an organ or medium of communication which has very great power indeed. Do you agree with that?--- Its power is over-rated by most people.

But do you agree it has very great power?... It has considerable power.

Mostly in the formation of opinion?... It has power in the formation of opinion. It has little or no political power.

It has great power in the formation of opinion?--- Yes, in the education of the public – that is its purpose.

And of course the exercise of that power by a newspaper can be linked to good or ill, depending on the responsibility of the people in charge?--- Yes.

Would you agree that television has great power for good or ill?--- Not in quite the same way but certainly great power.

For instance, in the formation of opinion in matters such as music or art or literature, where it presents the sound as well as the sight, it would probably have a very substantial power indeed?--- Yes, obviously.’⁷

It is hard to imagine that J.E. Macartney really believed that the power of the press was not as significant as most people imagine. Although conventions have changed in the past fifty years it is difficult to reconcile such naivety with a person in his position. It appears that he was down-playing this power. Counsel Negus was trying to prove that granting W.A. Newspapers

⁶ Ibid., p.13.

⁷ Ibid.,p.15.

the television licence would place too much of that commodity in the hands of one organization.

There followed many questions as to the circulation penetration of *The West Australian* and *Daily News* and West Australian Newspapers' perceived 'control' of the print media in W.A., then changing tack, Negus asked whether TVW management was to be staffed by employees of W.A. Newspapers. Macartney acknowledged that this was and would be so.

'...perhaps you would place people there who would be amenable to the discipline of Mr. J.E. Macartney?--- I should not imagine so.

Is Mr. Carruthers [sic] one of them?--- He is a former employee of West Australian Newspapers Ltd.

And Mr. Treasure?--- He is also a former employee of West Australian Newspapers Ltd.

They are spoken about in the press world as "Macartney's boys"?--- I don't know.

Well, are they Macartney's boys?--- Certainly not. My boys are at school.

I was not suggesting anything about their parentage, Mr. Macartney...

It can be accepted that in terms of local vernacular Cruthers and Treasure were indeed 'Macartney's Boys' and remained so until West Australian Newspapers no longer had a major financial stake in TVW Limited. In later years Sir James Cruthers acknowledged that he owed a great deal to 'Jim Macartney'.⁸

Macartney had already acknowledged that W.A. Newspapers would have total control of TVW Limited.

Now I put this to you Mr. Macartney: If TVW succeeds in its application here, what chance will there be of any other television station starting in Western Australia in the foreseeable future?--- Our opinion is that there will be room in three, four or five

⁸ Sir James Cruthers, interview, 1999.

He told me in an interview that he was originally employed as an office-boy by Macartney and it was that same mentor, who after World War II, promised him a job in journalism if he achieved Leaving Certificate standard in English, History and Economics.

years for a second TV station – more probably five years than in three – but of course we do think there will ultimately be room for two stations.’⁹

Macartney’s forecast of five years before there would be room for a second commercial television licence in Perth was very close. Swan Television was granted that licence in 1964. By then population density and television penetration were known quantities, as was the degree of advertising money available. These statistics were easily ascertainable by reference to television audience ratings surveys and the published annual accounts of TVW Limited.

The next question from Negus exposed the argument upon which opposition to TVW7’s licence acquisition was based.

‘Do you think that it is a good thing that a newspaper should have control of a television station when there is a combination of power?--- I think there could be no television station in Western Australia financed entirely by Western Australian people unless a company such as our instituted it.

Just think of the question I asked you. I am thinking of the public interest at the moment, and the question I asked was: Do you think that it is a good thing that the power of the press and the power of television should be combined in one or two individuals?--- So long as those powers were exercised in a responsible fashion – yes.’¹⁰

Macartney skirted the first question to amplify the point that West Australian Newspapers Limited and TVW Limited were the only logical contenders for the licence. In answering the same re-phrased question, Macartney acknowledged that media power would indeed be in the hands of ‘one or two individuals’. The belief that ‘The King can do no wrong!’ did not die along with King Charles the Second of England. In the world of commerce it is still a tenet of patriarchy. Old fashioned controllers had (and still have) a tendency to believe in their own infallibility.

⁹ *Transcript of Proceedings, An inquiry into applications received for licences for commercial television stations in the Perth area.*, The Commonwealth Reporting Branch, Melbourne, 1958, pp.18-19

¹⁰ *Ibid.*,p.19.

After some questions regarding News Services Negus said, 'I think I have broken the back of it now.' To which the Chairman, obviously used to a more leisurely pace replied, 'You are going too fast for us: we are not used to this speed.'¹¹

Evidence in Chief of Alexander Reid:

After lunch Alexander James Reid was sworn. He was Chairman of Directors of Western Television Services Ltd. In the preliminary questions he said that he was Under-Treasurer to the Western Australian Government for the 16 years prior to 1954, the Chancellor of the University of Western Australia, recently granted a Knighthood, Chairman of the State Electricity Commission, a member of the Board of Management of Royal Perth Hospital and held three other directorates. When asked who the other directors of W.T.S. Ltd., would be he answered,

'...Mr. Frank Boan...one of our prominent businessmen; he has been very philanthropic; he is chairman of the board of management of the King Edward Memorial Hospital; he is chairman of Torchbearers of Legacy and he has done quite a lot of charitable work...Mr. John Thomson...has been associated with primary industry in this State for many years. I think he was chairman of the Australian Wheat Board. He has done a considerable amount of work for the Commonwealth Bank...he has been on the Commonwealth Bank Board...a lot of public service in this State.'¹²

Negus continued,

'I think it was he who conceived and brought into being the Co-operative Bulk Handling Scheme, which was absolutely unique in the world? --- Yes.

Do you know that he was the founder of 6WF in Western Australia?--- I understand that is so

Mr. Steffanoni?--- [Victor]...Mr. Steffanoni is I think the treasurer. He is associated with the Young Australia League...He is the Chief Valuer for the Taxation

¹¹ Ibid.,p.21.

¹² Ibid.

Department...in an honorary position has given a great deal of time looking after the investments of the University.’¹³

Replying to a question about Mr. [Ernest] Shacklock, of Western press, Reid answered, ‘I believe he was in charge of their advertising...’

It is surprising that Reid was not more familiar with the fact that Shacklock was the Chairman of Western Press Limited and at the *Sunday Times* regarded as ‘The Boss’.¹⁴ Negus continued:

‘I think Mr. Murdoch is described as a temporary director. Will you explain the position? I do not think I need to say who Mr. Murdoch is, except to say that he is from News Limited of Adelaide.

What about his position?--- Mr. Murdoch is the source of much of the information which is contained in this application. He has had considerable experience, or perhaps not experience, but he has observed the operation of television largely in the United States and

in England as well as in Australia. He has promised to give this company all the help that he can until we are able to stand on our own feet, after which he will retire.’¹⁵

It appears that this answer was couched to support the idea that Western Television Services Limited would be an independent company and not susceptible to control by Rupert Murdoch.

Negus then asked about the background of J.F. Ledger¹⁶ and Reid answered,

‘Mr. J.F. Ledger...if the Company gets a licence he will be happy to be a Director...is President of the Employer’s Federation and a former President of the Chamber of Manufacturer.

And he runs one of the largest heavy engineering firms in this State?--- Yes.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Personal knowledge from my period of employment at *Sunday Times* 1956.

¹⁵ *Transcript of Proceedings, An inquiry into applications received for licences for commercial television stations in the Perth area.*, The Commonwealth Reporting Branch, Melbourne, 1958, p.25.

¹⁶ Grandfather of Movie Star Heath Ledger.

The next question from Negus was an enquiry regarding another prominent Perth citizen,

Who is Mr. Howard?---... Mr. Howard who, as the Lord Mayor was able to persuade the responsible body to allot the 1962 Empire Games to Perth...until recently the Managing Director of a large retail electrical supply company here, Wyper Howard Ltd.¹⁷

Counsel Negus was using his main witness Alexander Reid (a man of high public standing in Western Australia) to inform the hearing of the depth of industrial acumen, administrative skill and wealth which was represented by those who would control and direct the Board of Western Television Services. It was indeed an impressive array but in fact those named represented The Establishment in Western Australia as opposed to the broad shareholder base of West Australian Newspapers Limited and potential shareholders of TVW Limited.

It was then established that if Western Television Services Limited was granted the licence, the new TV Station would be situated on ‘...about five acres, close to the banks of the river... about two miles from Perth...when the new bridge is completed...’¹⁸ Questions regarding the ownership of shares followed and it was ascertained that the capital of the company would be £600,000, half subscribed by the community and £300,000 funded by non-interest, non-voting debenture issue taken up by Western Press. Negus then struck his first blow to show that WTS Limited would not be subject to newspaper control.

‘Is there special provision in Article 71 of your Articles of Association that at no time can any shareholder exercise more than 10 per cent. Of the voting power?---Yes.’¹⁹

A special provision in Articles was known as ‘the escalator voting system’ and is mentioned again during further questioning of Macartney. The argument would be that West Australian

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. The site was to be in the South Perth-Como area.

¹⁹ Ibid.,p.26.

Newspapers would hold a 3/7^{ths} voting power in TVW Limited while News Limited through their subsidiary interests would only be able to exercise a 1/10th voting power.²⁰

Cross Examination by Ainslie QC:

With Reid having given his evidence in chief, it was time for the cross-examination by Counsel Ainslie.

‘Can we give you the credit for preparing this document?--- No, I wish you could.

To whom are we indebted for it?--- It is the work of many people, such as Mr. Rupert Murdoch, and I think Mr. Negus had a hand in it, and the Board had discussion on it.

Do you think he would continue to be a driving force in the company?--- I hope so, but he couldn’t be a dominating force. Under the constitution of the company, while he might give it inspiration he could not by way of votes influence the policy of the company.

He would be the dominating voice, if not the dominating force in the company?--- I should think that when the company is established the answer would be, “no.”

But until that time he would be?--- Yes.²¹

In much the same way that Macartney had been portrayed as a potential controller of a new television station, Negus had finally made Reid admit that Murdoch would be in the position to exercise similar power.

Murdoch Portrayed as a Potential Controller of Western Television Services:

A former proprietor of the *Sunday Times*, J.J. Symons bequeathed a large share holding in what was now Western Press (purchased by News Limited in December 1954) to the Young Australia League.²² The League had committed to an investment of £60,000 in WST Limited.

²⁰ See p.20 this chapter.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p.29, ‘...a club which sponsors the welfare of youth and physical-cultural activities, and some educational activities, in the overseas and State trips...’

Ainslie pursued this line of questioning to establish internal links within WTS Limited between two potential major shareholders.

‘Do you know where it is getting the £60,000 from? Is it selling some investments?---

Yes.

What investments are they?--- Shares in Western Press.’²³

The circle had been joined and Ainslie had established that an entity with a tangible relationship to Rupert Murdoch could possibly combine with him to have a voting block of 20%. It was disclosed that undertakings from Perth firms and companies amounted to £50,500 including Aherns Ltd. Western Press agreed to underwrite the WST Ltd., venture with a further 25% (£150,000) by way of non-voting debentures for an agreed number of years, during which time they would be redeemable by monies from ordinary shares in the company being sold to the public. In turn the share issue would be underwritten by News Limited. This percentage of the capital was in addition to the 50% that News Limited had committed to debenture stock. Following more questions by Ainslie regarding the financial position of News Limited, many of which Reid could not answer, he was quizzed on the amount of time that he had available to such a responsible position.

‘Do you feel that you have bitten off a bit more than you can chew in becoming Chairman of Directors of this Company?--- I hope not. I presume you mean the Grants Commission?

And your varied commitments--- [no reply]’²⁴

Ainslie then led Reid through those obligations followed by questions regarding the other members of the WTS Limited Board. He went on to ask if the News Limited commitment would be sub-underwritten,

‘And there would be 50% of the capital of this company possibly held by large Eastern States interests?---Yes.

²³ Ibid.,p.30.

²⁴ Ibid.,p.40.

‘In other words you are not in a position today to say to this board: “This is a Western Australian company, and the majority, or large majority of the shares will be held by West Australians”?’--- No. We can only say we hope they will be.²⁵

‘I think you stated in the application that the original impetus in the formation of Western Television Services came from Western Press?’--- Yes.

‘And the original impetus so far as Western Press was concerned came from The News? And as far as The News was concerned no doubt came from Mr. Rupert Murdoch?...’--- Yes.²⁶

Counsel Negus was consolidating the idea that TVW Limited was to all intents and purposes a Western Australian company, to be run for Western Australians for Western Australians. It was the credo of West Australian Newspapers Limited and subsequently was incorporated into the general philosophy of TVW Limited. It still holds good in 2003 despite changes in corporate structure and dictate. Reid’s final acknowledgement confirmed that Western Television Services Limited could not sustain the same claim. Some pedantic questioning followed, regarding semantic interpretation of certain words in Reid’s replies and whether he was ‘telling the truth’ as sworn.²⁷

The subject of News Services to Radio 6IX was raised. It was established that although West Australian Newspapers had a large holding in that station the only way that the radio could obtain out-of-State news was to purchase a copy of the paper!

‘Why do you suggest that this application by Western Television Services Limited should e [p]referred to that of TVW?’--- I conscientiously and firmly believe it is better for an organisation which is televising information and entertainments to be free from an organisation which has a virtual monopoly on the Press side. The powers for good and evil which a television station has make it essential that it be impartial;

²⁵ Ibid.,p.45.

²⁶ Ibid.,p.48.

²⁷ Ibid, p.49.

not that I say your company would not be impartial, but you already have a virtual monopoly of the advertising medium through your papers and I think it is undesirable that that should extend to television.²⁸

Ainslie suggested that WTS Limited was a 'front' for Murdoch and refuted Reid's conclusions. He then continued to prove by reference to statistics that *The West Australian* and *Daily News* both out-scored on a percentage basis the amount of actual column-inches of space devoted to foreign news, which was printed in every other major Australian newspaper.²⁹ Reid said that these figures surprised him. At this stage Ainslie concluded and the cross-examination was taken up by Mr. Alderman,

Cross-Examination of Reid by Counsel Alderman:

Alderman first asked Reid if he had found Mr. Murdoch reliable. The reply was 'truthful... and reliable'³⁰. Alderman then asked if WTS Ltd., would be willing to let West Australian Newspapers Ltd., come into the Company as shareholders. The answer was 'I should imagine we would be delighted to have them.'³¹

Negus then re-examined Reid and asked if in respect of the last question W.A. News would be subject to the 10% limitation of voting. The answer was yes and then Negus asked, 'Other than that they could take whatever they like. They can have 300,000 shares if they like, provided they take 10 per cent voting power?' to which the answer was again 'Yes.'³² There then followed some banter regarding some 'slight trouble' regarding the fact that *The West Australian* had a falling out with the University of W.A., over the former wishing to raise a charge for printing examination results.

Questions to Reid by the Chairman:

²⁸ Ibid.,p.53.

²⁹ Ibid.,pp.54-55.

³⁰ Ibid.,p.56.

³¹ Ibid.,p.57.

³² Ibid.,p.58.

Reid was then asked several questions by the Chairman. The first was regarding the ability of Perth to support more than one commercial licence, to which Reid answered that it could not. [It should be remembered that TVW Limited was only interested in a licence if it was the only commercial one issued at that time.] He was then asked if the motive of WTS Ltd., was to stop the amalgamation of two forms of Western Australian communications, in the press and television [under W.A. Newspapers.]. His answer was ‘Yes. A company which has almost monopolistic control.’³³ At this point the Chairman asked if it was true that Mr. Murdoch or ‘put more fairly’ Western Press was the promoter of Western Television? The answer again was ‘yes’.³⁴ The Chairman then asked as to the influence of the fourteen country newspapers controlled by Western Press to which Negus replied that their circulation figures were ‘very unimpressive’³⁵ Alderman added, ‘I am wondering if anyone would take them off us.’³⁶ After a lot of discussion regarding the situation with the Y.A.L., the Chairman asked Reid,

Do you know anything about the operations of television stations either in Australia or overseas?--- No.

Do you think that it would be right for a single television station operating in Perth to enter into an exclusive arrangement with a television station in Melbourne or Sydney?--- I would think that is not right.

Do you think that it could properly be a condition of a licence – that no such exclusive arrangement should be entered into?---Do I think it would be fair and proper?

Yes?--- Yes, I do not think the Board in this State would object.’³⁷

The Chairman’s line of questioning covered many aspects which Counsel had not deemed appropriate to raise, either in evidence in chief or cross-examination. Doubtless the reasons lay in the Board’s previous experience at other hearings and covered matters which would be important in the Board’s deliberations. The hearing continued on Tuesday 29 July 1958, when

³³ Ibid.,p.59.

³⁴ Ibid.,p.60.

³⁵ Ibid.,p.62.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.,p.68.

Mr Macartney was recalled to give his evidence. Mr. Negus started by qualifying some information regarding the 3/7ths of capital mentioned the day before, then sought to cast doubt on whether or not the monies which were to be provided were actually anymore Western Australian than those of News Limited,

We have been talking about Eastern States capital. I do not suppose the Bank of New South Wales is providing Eastern States money. I see that most of your £300,000 comes from your overdraft to the Bank of New South Wales?--- Yes our overdraft is established purely on the basis of our assets in [W]estern Australia and so we regard it as local capital.³⁸

Mr. Alderman continued, antagonizing Macartney by inquiring as to whether they had considered an ‘escalator voting system’, (the inclusion in Company Articles of Association of a system which allowed a fixed maximum percentage of voting power, irrespective of actual proportional share ownership.³⁹ In the case of Western Television Services the maximum was to be 10%). In reply Macartney mentioned that such a system which prevailed in Adelaide [presumably between News Limited and their associated television station] was ‘entirely different’⁴⁰. Alderman said.

‘We will come to that in due course. Do not rush your fences. When did you consider this? Before you sent out your note issue applications?--- I have already said three times that we did not consider it.’⁴¹

Mr. Alderman had provoked Macartney into constant declaral that West Australian Newspapers Limited had no intention the idea of limiting their superior voting power compared to other shareholders and continued ,

‘Is it not equally obvious that the company will exercise complete control over the organisation with a 3/7ths block vote?---That it could exercise complete control?’

³⁸ Ibid.,p.73

³⁹ Bruce Benney, Perth Stockbroker, telephone conversation, 13 May 2003.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

It has the power?--- Yes.⁴²

Alderman had finally made Macartney admit that the parent company West Australian Newspapers Limited would be in a position to actually direct the progress and operations of TVW Limited, should they be granted the licence.

Alderman questioned the contents of a letter and when Macartney answered brusquely said, ‘That is a measure of your candour is it? You need not answer that!’ When the Chairman intervened to ask, ‘Do you wish to answer it?’ Macartney replied ‘No!. Do I have to answer silly questions?’ and Alderman rejoined, ‘You do not have to be rude, Mr. Macartney, whatever your health may be like this morning...’⁴³ Alderman was inferring that at times, Mr. Macartney indulged in the consumption of more than a medicinal amount of alcoholic beverage. As a consequence, on occasion he might not have been particularly ‘well’ first thing in the morning. Cruthers cites this passage as being an important point and indicative of what he saw as low-level tactics by counsel. It was unfair and the incident sticks in his mind after more than forty years.⁴⁴

The matter of 6IX and its News Service was raised again,

‘And as it is, this radio station, of which you own half the shares, has to buy its newspaper in order to get its news?--- A copy of the newspaper.

Yes. Do you by any chance send them around one, or do they go out into the street and get it?--- I think we probably send them round one.

Mr. Negus interjected with, ‘That error will be promptly remedied’ but Alderman added, ‘No. Mr. Macartney can be generous to the extent of a newspaper per day, can’t you Mr. Macartney?’ He replied ‘Certainly!’⁴⁵ In comparison to other matters, this exchange has the proportions of pettiness. It seems to imply that the management of West Australian

⁴² Ibid.,p.75.

⁴³ *Transcript of Proceedings, An inquiry into applications received for licences for commercial television stations in the Perth area.*, The Commonwealth Reporting Branch, Melbourne, 1958,p.76.

⁴⁴ Sir James Cruthers, written communication, 11 December 2003.

⁴⁵ Ibid.,p.79.

Newspapers Limited was not very interested in the affairs of an associated media outlet. The inference was that they might treat a television station in a similar fashion.

A lot of time was spent on arguing the propriety of TVW Limited having put an issue of shares and notes on the market before the Postmaster General had given notice of the Hearing and the possibility of having to return the money if their application was unsuccessful. This was another instance of raising a matter which possibly reflected upon the integrity of the opposition hierarchy.

A Matter of Control of a Television Station — J.E. Macartney

The questions once again turned to control and Macartney provided proof of his personal domination of W.A. Newspapers through the power which was placed in his hands through the Board of Directors. The same degree of control would therefore apply to the proposed TVW Limited. He was asked ‘What do you imagine a director of TVW Ltd., would do if he thought he were subjected to domination?’ and Macartney replied, ‘I suppose he could resign.’⁴⁶ Later in this chapter a similar attitude will later be found to reside with Rupert Murdoch.

At this stage the Chairman asked Macartney various questions including whether TVW Ltd., would form an association with one of the two existing networks in the Eastern States. He said that they would remain independent and provide outlets for both; having heard that WTS Ltd., would welcome TVW Ltd., as a shareholder, why would the opposite not be possible? The answer was to the effect that Western Australian Investment should be financed by Western Australian Capital. Macartney always reinforced the idea that TVW Limited would be a local television station for the benefit of local people.

For the first time Mr. Reilly re-examined Mr. Macartney. He asked if there were a possibility that Western Press would start a daily newspaper and received the answer that it would be most unlikely that they would before 1960. Regarding the diminution of the numbers of newspapers and if it was a local trend, the reply stated that the reduction was worldwide refs.

⁴⁶ Ibid.,p.84.

On whether the existing monopoly here and in Tasmania led to higher advertising rates, Macartney said that ‘One newspaper may have much more value to advertisers than another has. “The London Times” for example, sells about 200,000 copies and the ‘London Daily Mirror’ about 4,500,000 and the advertising rates for the “Times” are in some categories almost as high as those of the “Mirror”.’⁴⁷ It had been suggested that the duopoly system in W.A., was detrimental to a fair approach to the dissemination of the news; was this so? Macartney answered that on the contrary such an organization was best place to provide the best news service to the public. In reply to the query as to whether there was any family or other dominating interest in the shareholding of W.A. Newspapers the answer was ‘None whatever.’⁴⁸ The truth of that answer was to be found in the 31st Annual Report and Balance Sheet of West Australian Newspapers Limited. The authorised capital of the company was two million one pound shares and the report declared the following information:

Our Shareholders

20.1% hold 100 or less shares

26.2% hold between 100 and 250 shares

42.9% hold between 250 and 1000 shares.

10.2% hold between 1000 and 5000 shares

.6% hold more than 5000 shares.

85.3% of our shareholders are West Australians and they hold 83.3% of the total share issue.

The largest individual shareholder, a West Australian, holds 13,524 shares.⁴⁹

In 1957 the shareholders received a dividend of 5.6%.⁵⁰

The Evidence of Keith Rupert Murdoch:

⁴⁷ Ibid.,p.90.

⁴⁸ Ibid.,p.91.

⁴⁹ *West Australian Newspapers Limited 31st Annual Report and Balance Sheet 1957*, Perth, 21 August 1957.

⁵⁰ *Transcript of Proceedings, An inquiry into applications received for licences for commercial television stations in the Perth area.*, The Commonwealth Reporting Branch, Melbourne, 1958, p.91.

Following more general leading questions, asked with the intention of bolstering the TVW Ltd., case, Keith Rupert Murdoch was sworn. After stating that he first considered the possibility of

obtaining a licence in Perth halfway through 1957, Murdoch continually used the Royal pronoun of 'we' and Mr. Reilly enquired,

'Who is the "we" who spoke, is the question I think.' Negus added,

'Who did the speaking?--- I did.'⁵¹ Another question about speaking to Messrs. Boan and Ledger answered in a similar fashion, brought the response,

"When you say "we" you mean "I"?--- I am sorry...'⁵²

Reilly continued,

'When did you first have discussions with Dr. Reid as he then was?--- I looked this up last night. It was on March 22, and the week end following that Dr. Reid and I spent a long week end together on Kangaroo Island in South Australia.'⁵³

He was then asked if the board of WTS Limited would keep on offering the under-written shares by Western Press and News Limited to the public. He said that was so and would apply until all the shares were taken up by the Western Australian public. This was obviously to counter the TVW Ltd., claim that their 'money' was all from local sources.

Possibility of a Combined Macartney-Murdoch Organisation:

Murdoch then volunteered the information that he had discussed the subject of television with Mr. Macartney 'last November' and told him that Western Press would be happy to join W.A. Newspapers in a 50-50 venture but not as a junior partner. Ainslie rose to say it was a pity

⁵¹ Ibid.,p.95

⁵² Ibid..

[Murdoch was used to referring to himself as 'we', possibly a habit acquired from listening to his father, who had of course also been something of a 'press baron'. As a twenty-one year old employee at the Perth *Sunday Times* I had close personal with Rupert Murdoch on several occasions. My personal observation is that privilege of birth and wealth meant that he considered himself to be a few degrees more elevated than 'ordinary' Australians. In light of historical record, this is a view to which he is probably entitled.]

⁵³ Ibid.

that Mr. Macartney had not had the opportunity to comment on this and might have to be recalled.

The Chairman stepped in and after noting that this was very important, Negus asked where the meeting took place. The reply was 'In the board room of West Australian Newspapers.'⁵⁴ When asked about a conversation with Tom Ahern, Murdoch said that he would be willing to contribute '...up to £100,000 as long as he had free advertising and a seat on the board. I said it was pointless talking further.'⁵⁵

Murdoch's Empire Statement:

A question regarding potential 'domination' by Murdoch was answered thus,

I will retire as soon as I possibly can. I only manage as it is to come over here 3 or 4 times a year. I hope I will have even less time to do so in the future. I certainly have not got the power or the inclination. There is no attempt to build an empire or anything like that. It would not interest me.⁵⁶

This must surely be one of the most notable recorded under-estimations of personal ambition and ability in all of history.

When Murdoch was cross examined by Mr. Ainslie as to whether or not he was the person who could claim credit for the application, Murdoch said that he was not, although Alexander Reid had earlier suggested that such was the case. Murdoch informed the hearing that it was the work of a Mr. Macartney, a research officer of News Limited from Adelaide, who had been seconded to Western Television.⁵⁷ Murdoch of course could have claimed much credit for the application as the instigator and formulator. It is apparent that the actual preparation was done

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.,p.100.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.,p.103

by one of his employees but difficult to imagine that the preparation of the contents were not overseen by Murdoch himself.

A Matter of Control of a Television Station:

Asked as to whether he was in control of News Limited, Murdoch said that he was subject to his Board of Directors. Further questioned as to whether or not he had control of them, Murdoch replied, in much the same way as had J.E. Macartney, 'No, they can always resign.'⁵⁸ It can be concluded that both Macartney and Murdoch did indeed have absolute control of their fellow directors.

Relationship of News Limited to Western Television Services Limited:

Much time was spent in delving into the financial affairs of News Limited and its commitment to Southern Television in Adelaide; the position of the Y.A.L.; the expansion of News Limited in Sydney with the success of "TV Week"⁵⁹ The question was then asked 'Do you suggest that Western Television will not be subject to any interference or control from yourself or News Ltd.?' And answered 'Yes, definitely.'⁶⁰ Returning to the meeting between Murdoch and Macartney, Ainslie continued, by asking if he had called to discuss TV and Murdoch said that it was merely a courtesy call. Mr. Alderman interjected that, as it was a personal conversation it should not be subject to cross-examination. This was upheld and the questioning then turned to Murdoch's status as a citizen of South Australia. He agreed that was correct but that he came here spasmodically to attend to his financial interests. Ainslie then attacked his observed stance in that he '...put himself forward as a champion... protecting the people of Western Australia from the domination of its television by a Newspaper Company. Please correct me if I am misrepresenting you?'⁶¹ Murdoch replied that the concern of News Limited was not so much in the possible financial returns, but to protect their not inconsequential investments. In answer to the next question, 'You do not disagree with the proposition put to you that you are, in fact, in the literal meaning of the word, the

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.,p.117.

⁶⁰ Ibid.,p.118.

⁶¹ Ibid.,p.129

promoter of this Company?’ Murdoch said, ‘No, I do not disagree. I am very proud of it.’⁶² It was disclosed that News Limited were the former owners of the *Daily News* in Perth.⁶³

The Hearing was re-convened on Wednesday, 30 July 1958. There was discussion between Counsel and the Chairman regarding errors in the transcript and then J.E. Macartney was recalled. When questioned about the November meeting with Murdoch he said that he recalled it clearly,

‘Mr. Burton [the *West’s* head photographer] ... was showing me pictures we had just taken (I think this is relevant) of a wreck which had been found off Rottneest Island, and certain relics we had recovered from it. We looked at this for some time and had several drinks. Mr. Burton was present through-out the interview.’⁶⁴

Macartney went on to say that he told Murdoch that he would be welcome to invest with local money; that the station would cost £600,000 to £700,000 and that ‘the door was left wide open when he went out...’ in that ‘... We did not say we would insist on having him in on a junior basis, or we would not have him in.’⁶⁵ There followed the closing addresses from both Ainslie, Negus and Alderman. At 2.50 P.M. the Board adjourned sine die and the licence eventually was granted to TVW Limited. As in most other areas in Australia, granting of this licence depended upon how the Board saw the applicants in regard to local ownership and actual control.⁶⁶ They acted in accordance with Government policy, which supposed that,

- (a) local owners are more able and ready to interpret, appreciate and respond to the needs of their own community;
- (b) Local ownership and control means that the station will have a strong local identity;
- (c) Local ownership and control is an effective counter to concentration of media ownership generally;
- (d) Possible financial benefits would accrue to local residents and

⁶² Ibid.,p.130.

⁶³ Ibid.,p.132. The sale to W.A. Newspapers took place in 1935.

⁶⁴ Ibid.,p.142.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ *Localism in Australian Broadcasting A Review of the Policy*, Department of Communications, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1984, p.100-101

(e) Local ownership and control is more likely to facilitate the successful establishment of a station, because of the dedication and willingness expected from a community which wishes to receive a broadcasting service. This is seen to be most important in the initial, more difficult stage of operation, when profitability is not likely to occur for several years. A local community is more likely to persevere in the face of continuing difficulties and unprofitability, because of the social and economic importance attached to a local broadcasting service.⁶⁷

The truth of these concepts was to be ably demonstrated during the time of establishment and consolidation of TVW7 Perth.

Second Licence Hearings Melbourne 1964:

Despite extensive searching for a copy of the transcript of court hearings for the second commercial TV licence for Western Australia, the quest has been fruitless. The following analysis has been gleaned from the official report.⁶⁸ The hearings were held in Melbourne in 1964 with Aitkin Q.C. representing Swan Television and 'Red' Burt [later Chief Justice of Western Australia] appearing for the Murdoch group Western Television Services. Lush Q.C. represented the Australian Broadcasting Control Board. Cullity made the point that 'Murdoch had got a whole series of Knights of the Realm...Harry Howard...Frank Ledger...and they really thought that it was 'The Establishment' against us.'⁶⁹

He remembers that one of the members of 'The Establishment' lectured him (Cullity was only 35 years of age) by saying that '...really should, you know, pull my head in and not keep up this ridiculous attempt to get the licence!'⁷⁰ The architectural firm [responsible for the Perth Council Chambers] was approached to design the new studios. The Swan Television

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Australian Broadcasting Control Board for Year Ended 30th June, 1964*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1964.
[This copy was provided by Sir James Cruthers who retained it after his involvement in the Melbourne Hearings for the second commercial TV licence for W.A. Searches of Government archives for a transcript of the complete proceedings was unsuccessful.]

⁶⁹ Dennis Cullity, personal communication, interview, 1 September 2001.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

directors decided not to share their proposed bonanza with an underwriter and in fact, the issue was oversubscribed several times. This meant a savings in capital subscribed and a rock-solid foundation on which to build their application before the A.B.C. Board.⁷¹

Cullity said that when at university he had the capacity to mentally ‘photograph’ and could ‘produce a chemical equation by turning pages in my mind and in my lecture notes.’⁷² As proof of this, he recalled that after being examined initially by Aitkin and then some pallid questioning by Lush about children’s television, he, ‘...I said that I thought that it was very adequately set out in the Commission Rules and Regulations on page 2, the second and third paragraphs from the top of the page...I had the whole of the Commission’s Regulation of the A.B.C., photographed in my mind at that stage...’⁷³ Colourfully describing the onslaught of Burt, Cullity said, ‘I didn’t see the first ball! The next one whistled close to my ears! If I hadn’t ducked for the third one I might have been knocked out!’⁷⁴ After five hours of questioning Cullity had one of the most sleepless nights of his life, worrying about the next morning, but when Burt rose again he said simply ‘No more question Your Honour! No more questions Chairman!’⁷⁵ Cullity said he thought ‘You bastard!’ and sat down.⁷⁶

Burt then turned his attention to other directors of Swan Television in Bernie Prindiville, Fred Johnson and David Bell. The latter who had been ‘...smiling and grinning at Bernie’s discomfiture...’⁷⁷ was horrified when Burt brought up the fact that his trucks had been charged at least four times with overloading and did he think that a person who flouted the Law could be relied upon.⁷⁸ Fred Johnston was a North Country English migrant who had not lost his accent. Before going to the witness stand he allegedly repeated several times to an

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

old court attendant, who couldn't understand him, 'Have you got any bookets and broooms? ...because there's going to be a lot of blood on the floor!'⁷⁹ Cullity recalls the great embarrassment of Burt when Aitkin produced a Minute Book of the Western Television Services meetings and forced (by examination) Sir Frank Ledger⁸⁰ to admit that the Page 2 had been 'cut and pasted' in the true sense of the word.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Grandfather of Heath Ledger, current Hollywood Movie Star.

Appendix 2: Supportive Evidence for Chapter Three.

Community Responsibility as understood by a cross-section of those involved in local Commercial Television:

Introduction:

This appendix examines the attitudes of respondents to the question ‘What differences do you notice in Community Responsibility by TV Stations to when you were associated with the industry...?’ An overwhelming majority of respondents saw the question as being directed to actual additional provision of service to the Community as against the few who viewed it as regarding actual program content in light of moral censorship.

The following demonstrates that there were those who saw an earlier ‘real’ intention to be of service to the community turned into another method of advertising the television station itself in the pursuit of good public relations. A number of respondents were concurrent in their recognition of the early days personal philosophy of TVW7’s James W. Cruthers in regard society at large. Most agree that his influence maintained standards of community responsibility at both commercial stations, that continued long after his departure from TVW7 in 1981.

There are those who see a co-relationship between lack of responsibility and lack of local content. This chapter draws attention to the fact that events of public participation were recorded and telecast as a major part of general programming. The loss of local ‘live’ production has meant the disappearance of local ‘live’ personalities, except for News and Sports people. The annual *Telethon* relies upon the importation of Soap Opera actors to

present to the general public. [flesh this out some more] The face of television is now national instead of local. Unlike the mainly short responses to the disappearance of local 'live' production in Chapter Nine, the following contributors had much more to say about the subject. Because of the importance of recording the actual way in which some luminaries remembered their involvement with the medium, certain recollections are presented in their extended form.

It is an easily observable truism that much of history is subject to debate and conjecture because of the fact that in many instances, those who personally participated left this world without recording that, which in their eyes, did happen. It is important that the actual recollections of those who were party to the establishment, relatively short life and demise of local 'live' television in Western Australia during the first thirty-two years of its existence, are recorded for posterity. To that end, this chapter is directed.

Individual Comments

As this section of my work is based on responses to questions which I directed to the many television people who were my friends and acquaintances, this material, (supportive of my thesis) is presented in a 'first person' one-on-one context. I can claim to have been in an exceptional position to have carried out this research and believe that my informants would have been more spontaneous in their responses to me because of our mutual industry intimacy. During my nine years studying history at Curtin University, I have found that (especially in the Australian context) contention has been encouraged because participants in various happenings did not have the opportunity (or inclination) to leave behind their recorded knowledge of that which transpired. One of my main intentions in compiling the following record of recollection, was to redress this situation in regard to those who were actually 'there' when television was introduced to Western Australia. Certain answers are presented as absolute replies and occupy extended space so that the reader might appreciate the degree of personal expression which can be associated with the subject person.

I expected that Sir James Cruthers would support the concept that TVW7 (in particular) had always been aware of community responsibility. One interview conducted with Sir James surely reflects the now extinct philosophic intentions of social leadership. I asked this question – ‘Would you say that the philosophy of television being a service to the community (which it obviously was when you started) has disappeared? That ethic has gone?’ and he replied,

I think it’s very much gone! As you’re aware and as most people who have experienced it are aware, TVW and STW between them were involved in almost everything that occurred in Perth. Every charity got assistance. Everything that was done - we had all kinds of funny things like Birdman Rallies; these were all local. The station that’s surviving strongest in this city now is the station that is continuing to be as local as it possibly can, and in my opinion to do that it has to fend off its Eastern States people a lot, and that’s Channel 7. I mean they are involved, they are still community, they are still involved with the community. Channel 9 isn’t and Channel 10 isn’t and it’s my believe that’s why Channel 7 is still so far in front. I mean, you go up to Kings Park and turn on lights in conjunction with the Electricity Department. Glenn flies over and they go and do a live program at 12.30 in the morning from Kings Park and incidentally got a higher rating than any day-time ratings ever got. That’s community involvement.⁸¹

I then asked Sir James if he saw that as continuation of the solid foundation that was laid down in those first twenty-five years and he replied,

I don’t think there’s any doubt! And I’m quite sure, though I can’t speak for Kevin Campbell, I’m quite sure that he, having been brought up in the station, is as well aware of that as anyone else. I only have to assume that the reason he does continue to do community things, involve himself with the community, is because he’s been trained that way and he believes it’s the right way. Net-working, it kills, you know, real live productivity. Baby Boomers now, who wouldn’t remember Carolyn? Children’s programs - an enormous amount we put into it and sport; you know, the

⁸¹ Sir James Cruthers, Personal Communication, Interview, Perth, 1999.

local football, anything and everything that was done in sport. I think we televised the first Sandover Medal for instance and of course we were the first to televise football. We had to go to special lengths to telecast the Empire Games in 1962 and go into outside broadcasting long before we might normally have done, because - no, I don't think News was treated as the Number One but they were all given a priority - they were all very important.⁸²

When I asked if he could place any specific emphasis on why TVW7 was so orientated towards local production, when having come from the newspapers it might have been expected that News would have received preferential treatment Sir James said,

Well, for the very simple reason that I believed that's what people wanted. First. O.K. You had your *Dick Van Dyke* shows and *Lucys* and all of those and they were paramount of course but I believed people wanted the mix. They wanted to be involved locally as well. Local participation. The community station. That's what we tried to do and it wasn't just me.⁸³

Long time former TVW7 News Editor Darcy Farrell was one of those who immediately associated community responsibility with Sir James Cruthers.

Duty to the community? Cruthers always had this. There was never any doubt about it. That was really the forte in his make-up – was that because we'd got the license we have a duty to the public. To do things for the public and that meant if we've got to put on current affairs to explain things to people, we do it. If it the right thing if we're in the entertainment business then let's do things of public note. That's why the Entertainment Centre of course became the major tool in those earlier days. And other people came up with ideas like the Christmas Pageant, like the Beer Can Raft rallies and all those community things. The Red Cross or whatever it might be. He was very, very much dedicated to that.⁸⁴

A towering figure in Western Australia during the formational years of television was former Premier, Sir Charles Court. He was perhaps the first local politician to fully utilize the new

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Darcy Farrell, Personal Communication, Interview, 1999.

medium. Although now a nonagenarian, time has not diminished his remarkable faculties and he was prompted to pay credit to the same person.

From the beginning it became obvious Jim Cruthers was going to concentrate on building up a station with a strong community background and involvement. It was clear to me the team he built around him was deliberately oriented towards this policy.

Over the years the number of special community projects TVW initiated or supported became very great indeed and the station became identified in the public mind as a community station – the people’s station. In my opinion this was Jim Cruthers’ strength and as a result the strength of the station.

I knew about projects TVW Channel 7 was involved with, because as a Minister and then as Premier I was invited to launch or open them, or become involved in other ways.⁸⁵

Kevin Campbell, who started as a TVW7 technician and went on head the entire Seven Network, was a protégé of Cruthers, told me that ‘Seven have built on community

⁸⁵ Sir Charles Court, A.K., K.C.M.G., O.B.E. written communication, 29 November 2001.

responsibility.’⁸⁶ He credited both Cruthers and Max Bostock as having been the architects of

⁸⁶ Kevin Campbell, personal communication, interview, 3 July 2001.

PH: Local Live, Kids, Talent Shows, Tonight Shows, why have they gone Kevin?

KC: Ah, they’ve gone, my belief is, well, everything, everything need a refreshing, a refresher and, and probably wears out, a genre does, but, having said that, what’s really happened since ’88, is, a contraction of spending in the, on the Licensees that are licensed to serve the community they are licensed to serve! On one hand, and um, because of, and also you’ve got the Sydney psychology that ‘We control Australia and therefore, if it don’t happen over here, no-one else does it!’ And that’s a shame because there is still a place for local type programs...Because I saw *It’s Academic* as good clean family entertainment. It involves ah children, ah albeit youth, therefore ah, it involves the families that surround them, the grandparents that go around them and also people like a good clean, a good clean challenge between clean-cut type school-children. Um, because they’re our leaders of tomorrow and that’s where people like your Barry Jones and all those kind of people come from. Um, you know, where you start to showcase them. So that was one and the other one I suggested was *Stars of the Future*...Because I saw *It’s Academic* as good clean family entertainment. It involves ah children, ah albeit youth, therefore ah, it involves the families that surround them, the grandparents that go around them and also people like a good clean, a good clean challenge between clean-cut type school-children. Um, because they’re our leaders of tomorrow and that’s where people like your Barry Jones and all those kind of people come from. Um, you know, where you start to showcase them. So that was one and the other one I suggested was *Stars of the Future*. Call it what you like, whether it be *Starstruck* there was that one on Nine, um,

PH: *Entertainers*,

KC: *Entertainers*, um, but a *Stars of the Future* type thing because I have a problem. Being Chairman of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts where I see some of the, some great young talent I worry about where they’re going to go and get their jobs or show how good they are. Now, so something like *Stars of the Future* or *Young Entertainers* or one of those type genre programs gives them a showcase where talent scout can see them and say ‘Oh, I’ll have a look at that kid or that one there!’ So Richard sort of said, Richard Court said at the time ‘Yeah Kevin I think it’s a good idea!’ and I said, ‘But they haven’t got any money, Community Television, they’re not going to get 100% sponsorship would you look at it?’ He said, ‘Yeah well come back with a sort of process [?]’ anyway I rang the Chairman, I spoke to the Chairman of the Community and said, ‘Here’s a couple of genres’ Well maybe they’ve spruiked a bit about it in the town, anyway Seven has revived the *It’s Academic* because Jeff Newman was the original quizmaster and they’ve got that up, So I, I certainly believe that, that certainly programs like that, now I, I wonder whether (it would need a bit of market research) whether there is a base today to revive something like *In Perth Tonight* the old *IMT* you’ve got to find that person who can do it. They’re probably around, you don’t know um, there’s go to be another Graham Kennedy type person or um, who was it? Well, people like the Carvolths and that around who used to work on *In Perth Tonight*. Ah, Garry Meadows who had a certain wit about him. I mean Basil Zempilas I think is, has got a lot of, a ton of personality and, and ah talent. Reined in and pointed in the right direction because he’s very quick, he’s got a good back, good educational background. He’s nice young man. So, whether it would work today I’m not sure, but, we mustn’t forget that we are getting much older as an audience, the young one have got so many other distractions, be it sitting forward at computer screens or other ah, other opportunities for things other than just television. So I think, I mean a lot of the television audience is in fact the forty-fives to sixty-fives anyway that would remember that genre of program and liked them and grew up with them. So I don’t think that it would go amiss for say you know, once a week at 10.30, show your talent, use whoever might be coming into town but also um, build it up with your local, some of your local talent. So, I think the problem here is budgets. They squeeze you for budgets and while you will do one of these things out of Sydney, I mean not even *New Faces* was a way of getting people to come up. O.K., you had the plants in there; some of them were bloody awful but that was part of the genre of the program. I mean you’ve got an equal bad genre at the moment with *Weakest Link*. Good program but look what they’re doing. They’re exploiting people, it’s, it’s the *Double Jeopardy* sort of style of program. So that’s really the key to it. Look, we buy one lot of programs in Australia and we want to centre-ize all this out of one operational centre, which will be Melbourne um in the case of Seven. Nine here of course is still independently owned, Ten out of Ultimo in Sydney um, I think that one that will probably come up and shine and give greater opportunities, not necessarily for Tonight of Live shows, will be the ABC. Because, I know I’ve been doing a bit of work for them to get there, a big studio in part of their new complex because I see these

Telethon and other innovations such as the Young Writers' Awards.⁸⁷ As TVW7 General Manager, Campbell was responsible for the tree illuminations in Kings Park and directly invoked the influence of Cruthers in his decision to inaugurate the project in conjunction with the local power authority.

Former TVW7 Producer Coralie Condon also credited the long-time head of TVW7. In reply to my question she said,

They [TVW7] always had a fairly good approach to the community in that the people at the helm, I must say this again, were newspaper men, and the felt that that gave them an edge. I mean, Jim Cruthers career prior to that...he was really community minded.⁸⁸

When asked if she produced anything along those lines, Condon replied,

No, I really didn't. I was pretty well on entertainment, except for 'Televisit'. We used to have about five interviews with people per week, and it was also your typical magazine programme with a gardening segment, a sewing segment, and a cooking segment and things like that....⁸⁹

This response is more in keeping with those of a production person, as she applied the question more to televised content than to societal obligations.

Floor Manager/Producer (1969-ongoing) Jeff Thomas was made redundant in 2001, but is now working on a casual basis at TVW7. He is another 'Cruthers' disciple and remembers that,

Seven was very good in that way. Yes it definitely has changed. Um, in my day I was lucky because we had a boss like Cruthers. A very good boss, he'd do anything for you and we had a good camaraderie-ship, you know with the crews and nobody mattered what department you worked in, you know, remember them days we were trying new things, you know, different shows, we started the Christmas Pageant of course you know, which is still going today. Ah, it was one of those gamble things because you never know whether it's going to take off or not.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Coralie Condon, personal communication, interview, 1999.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

When asked what he instantly recalled about ‘the good old days’ Thomas said,

Seven would try things. Have a go. I can remember Max [Bostock] said to me once, he said, ‘I’ve worked on a lot of shows. I’ve put a lot of shows together, I’ve never made money for Channel 7 but at least we had a go doing it, you know. I think there’s a lot in that. Today you can’t say that. Unless there’s a dollar in it, you’re not going to anybody to take a chance. You’ve got to have the money virtually up front before they’ll do anything.

I asked Jeff if the feeling of responsibility to the community could be called ‘social capital’ and answered,

Yep, yep. We worked again Pete, you’ve got to remember this, we were a commercial station and what pays our wages and what pays the station’s gains is commercials. So when you talk about doing shows, you’ve got to keep the people on your side you know, and Seven have been very good at that. Their sort of ‘in-house’ stuff like *Telethon*, *The Xmas Pageant*, *The Birdman Rally* we used to do. Anything, which used to involve the local community would help your ratings, because people would say ‘What a good station they are for doing this!’ you know. All these shows now have become very big business. In the embryo stage they were very hard to do because there was no money. You know, I think the first um, like in Bunbury for instance we used to do a show called *Telehelp*. I remember it made about eighty thousand dollars over the 24 hours which in its day, this would have been in the early seventies was a lot of money, you know. Today if you did a *Telethon* and only made eighty thousand dollars you’d say it isn’t worth it you know. Unless you make two million or two and a half million um, and that’s what it’s become, it’s become a big business um, the format of the show hasn’t changed that much, it’s still done the same, um, it’s done by a hell of a lot of volunteers but, without them you can’t do it.⁹⁰

Former STW9 General Manager Eric Fisher, exhibited a more acidic attitude towards the pioneering ‘fathers’ of television in Western Australia and postulates that perhaps the viewing audience will eventually reap that which their apathy has sown.

Community Responsibility? I think Brian Treasure believed in it; I even think Bob Mercer [STW9 General Manager 1965-1970] would liked to have been in a position to believe in it. I think LJK [Laurie Kiernan, STW9 Chief Executive 1979-1984] was interested in what kept the program agreement intact and Jim Cruthers and Brian Treasure from dumping on him if he stepped out of the line that they had established and commanded with such arrogance. [Today]...TV stations are not interested in people as an *audience-to-which-a-service-is-owed*, but rather in people as an *advertising commodity*, to be sold at a profit. However, viewers don’t seem to be aggrieved by their relegation in status. Why? Apathy is one reason; who’s going to

⁹⁰ Jeff Thomas, TVW7 Floor Manager/Producer, personal communication, I interview, 2 April 2001.

listen should they complain? But more disappointingly, “localism” is no longer important. Viewers frankly don’t give a rat’s where their programming is coming from, so long as it is entertaining and doesn’t cost them anything. My belief, however is one day, too late, people here will realise that Western Australia has been marginalised out of any relevance to the social fabric of mainstream Australia, we’ll be a social and cultural outpost. And by that time there will not be a damned thing they can do about it.⁹¹

Former STW9 Executive Bill Bowen at first saw the question as regarding content. He explained that the STW9 Board, which comprised the representatives of ‘third generation money like the Cullitys, the Kiernans and the Prendivilles and the Youngs and the

⁹¹ Eric Fisher, former STW9 General Manager, written communication, 7 February 2002.

Hughes...⁹² belonged to the same social grouping and that there was an understanding

⁹² Bill Bowen, Interview, Doubleview, 7 September 1999.

Yes, that was in May, whenever it was, because there was a period of time when more production people came in but I was the only one who hired them and then Mercer brought in Laurie so it was during that time. Laurie, as I said, was an exceedingly good sponge and he really, he really, he learnt very quickly and you know, totally different. (Indecipherable) of course, and he'd been brought in as he probably told you by Bernie and by Dennis – he doesn't quite recall saying that he was going to stay for the year and try to recover the investors funds. So, that went on for a while. It was fairly tough, it was really tough, because Seven was – I'm jumping ahead – Nine was behind in the ratings. We had no, we had bugger-all revenue. Seven of course had a wad full of money. Whenever we had a moment's inkling that we might have anything that appeared in the dim, dark distance it might be a success, they'd just throw money at it and killed it. Or bought it, or had it aborted at birth. So it was very difficult and that was the reason why we decided to go with live programs and try and make them different. They brought in the, you know, Don Spencer and Bruce ?

PH: Allen.

BB: Bruce Allen. Peter Benardos who took on the N.L.T. job.

PH: Ray Glover.

BB: Ray Glover yes. So that went on for a while, we've talked about small things like induction-loops which was a....

PH: How did that N.L.T. system work as far as the *Tonight Show* was concerned Bill?

BB: Well, we paid them a fee and out that fee they had to pay their that fee was supposed, it was like a package, you know. Here's X number thousands of dollars. It was one and a half hours, three hours, two sessions Tuesday and Thursday if my memory serves me right, plus the *Spotlight* session. So there was four hours of programs of which two were a Tonight show and one was a talent show which you have got to present to us with opening and closing credits and you're responsible cost-wise for everything. We will make the studios and staff, crew available. And of course to a great extent the television industry is highly inventive how you can offset some of your costs. In particular, smart cookies like Jack Neery and Peter Benardos had been around for a long time and of course the Board of Nine was fairly innocent as far as ways and means and they thought that the revenue generated within that one and a half hours belonged to the station, but of course they didn't realize that you could have air time that was to all extents and purposes non-commercial air-time that you still derive a benefit from. Cars, hotels, booze, food, accommodation, call it what you like. It could either be credits or thank-yous on-air 'Gee Peter it was good to see you around at the Parmelia yesterday and didn't we have a fantastic lunch in the Garden Restaurant and George over there gave you the best wine. That was a Seppelts or an Evans and Tate or whatever it was!' and in the meantime you'd virtually (indecipherable). And that was all part and parcel of it of course. Laurie, to his credit thought that the air-time belonged to Channel Nine and that was part of their license, so he and I used to have constant battles about whether or not things could go on the credits, whether things could be talked about, whether people could do free plugs, whether the staff that was employed by Nine, be it News readers like Lloyd Lawson and the like, or the Jenny Clemeshas later, whether those could do a commercial and whether the money paid would belong to them or to Channel Nine. Laurie's logic was that we pay them for whatever they do on our behalf because they are employed here and whatever they earn from that belongs to Channel Nine. I tried to argue the point that they did the job for which they were hired and what they did apart from that time was to expand within reason, I mean Lloyd Lawson didn't do many commercials because we thought that would demean their status as a conveyor of News and it would affect their credibility and it would also take away their believability, next to that, because you'd end up with a commercial with a News reader flogging a car for Paul Enright's Motorola. He of course was a sponsor of *Spotlight* and strange how all the guys drove around in Motorola cars – not Motorola, Motorama. So, we had frequent battles over whether or not those people were entitled to the fee that they could pocket themselves.⁹²

PH: And as everybody knows. It [local production] practically no longer exists except for sport and information. Why is that Bill?

BB: I think cost is one and it's going to get worse before it gets better. I mean you've only got to look at what's happening now. Almost, no, most of the programs are out-sourced. The major changes that you are going to see are already at Channel Seven. Certainly it's going to go through there like a scythe and most of Seven's live programs are going to be out-sourced. I can see the day arriving and if I had my choices now, I would be doing exactly the same thing. In fact I'd sell Channel Nine today, if I had my choice. It's an old building and it's sitting on prime land. I would apply for and build a multi level

between them that the television company would be kept in the family. If anybody wanted to sell their share, it would be to the others as a collective. Bowen said this ‘...meant that there was a very strong community feeling.’⁹³ between them, which sometimes surfaced as a moral directive in regard to that which should be televised. This resulted in programming which was ‘...constrained within a certain ethos of family entertainment.’⁹⁴ While *Number 96* was providing very good ratings figures for TVW7 with its boundary testing, Bowen said that it was doubtful whether a similar show featuring ‘nudity...or even close to nudity’ would have been aired on STW9. Bowen went on to say that the Board was ‘...very conscious of returning something to the community, out of which they had made a great deal of money.’⁹⁵ There were discussions between senior executives and Bowen remembered a Board directive regarding ‘...offering air-time...’⁹⁶ to charitable groups. Current (2003) STW9 General Manager Paul Bowen.⁹⁷

Former STW9 Executive Norman G. Manners was another of the few who correlated Community Responsibility with program content and said,

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Current (2003) STW9 General Manager Paul Bowen

Why have they gone? The standard of television has lifted and lifted and if you’re going to do something locally then it has to be to a Network standard. Viewers aren’t going to make or be considerate and say, ‘Look, I know it’s not to, ah, the program doesn’t look right!’ I’ll give you an example. The, the quality, the amount of work we put into a program like um, *Postcards*, which is a real success story, because you can hold it up next to a program like *Getaway* and you can say, ‘That’s pretty good! It looks pretty good!’, but it comes at considerable cost.

PH: Does the station actually produce *Postcards*?

PB: Oh yes! We produce *Postcards*! And it’s produced at considerable cost because there are no networking cost efficiencies with *Postcards* because *Postcards* is made by West Australians for West Australians. It’s only consumed by West Australians. It’s not relevant to any other market. Its success is very much in the fact that it’s for us. You turn it on and everything in there you can relate to. Or you’ve seen. Or you can understand.

PH: Or you’d like to see.

PB: That’s right. You can see. It’s affordable, where, next week’s program is going to be about Carnac Island or it’s about the, Spring in the Swan Valley or something like that and, and success is local but, but the cost of something like *Postcards*, you’d never make money out of it. But it is important because it does send very strong signals to the market about who we are, what sort of people we are, what sort of television station we are and, and it, and it helps you bond more so I believe with the community.

In the main TV stations today impart more information to the community upon day by day affairs and are not afraid to comment, or support, single persons, or minority groups. My only discontent is on the overall programme content today, filled with mindless American sit-coms and the deregulation of commercial content that has seen selected time zones blow out to ridiculous proportions. Once it was 13 minutes to the hour – now you expect that in a half hour.⁹⁸

Current [2002] Senior Vice President of 20th Century Fox Film Corporation (Aust.) Tom Warne, was a STW9 Program Manager. He also sees community responsibility as relating specifically to program content.

While still in television I have been out of the actual broadcast business for over 10 years so it's a bit hard to comment on the community responsibility aspect. All I can say for a lot of the 25 years I spent as a Program Director we had to go before a public hearing every three years to have our license renewed. The spectre of being confronted with everyone who had a 'beef' with the station along with batteries of lawyers certainly kept you on your toes. However it was a costly business both in executive time and money and we all learnt a lot so that when self regulation came in all stations knew what to do and each TV Network by then had a number of experts who continue to play "mini watchdog" roles to this day. I guess the public hearings was a natural phase in the progression towards self regulation. I am involved in television around the world now and I think Australia is amongst the best in responsibility.⁹⁹

The following excerpts contain a balance of attitudes towards responsibility and content. Starting as an audio technician co-opted from radio, Chief Engineer, STW9 (1967-) Angus (Gus) D. Slater said,

The basic difference today is that the broadcasters to what they are mandated to do by law. Where, in the old days we would have become involved with the community to enhance our standing (i.e. our popularity), today we wouldn't make that investment unless we could predict a commercial return for the effort.¹⁰⁰

Former Chief Engineer STW9 Victor J. Kitney bemoans the lowering of social standards in saying,

⁹⁸ Norm Manners, former STW9 Executive, written communication, 2002.

⁹⁹ Tom Warne, former STW9 Program Manager, current Senior Vice President 20th Century Fox Film Corp. (Aust.), written communication, 1 February 2002.

¹⁰⁰ Gus Slater, written communication 2001.

Move towards cheaper American programmes. Also moral standards are not being maintained, particularly in family styled programmes. Basically in language and constant sexual themes. A constant bombardment of violence seems to be reflected in the younger society of our cities. “Copy Cat behaviour”.¹⁰¹

Two current [2003] Television Engineers, requesting anonymity on the grounds that they wanted to keep their jobs said,

“Community Responsibility” is said to be a top priority by all three commercial stations, provided no money is spent. If money is spent, the ‘flagwaving’ promotion/ publicity exercise has to cover this expense several times over. In short “Community Responsibility” is top priority if it costs nothing!¹⁰²

and,

Our community responsibility has not changed – but our Production Programme has changed with more international influences like “Big Brother” and Soaps etc., I think we should get back to localism and production such as “Postcards WA” “Just Add Water” which have proved without doubt that we need this type of content. – I am concerned for the next generation of TV employees who may have to seek employment on the East Coast – Production and engineering especially.¹⁰³

Current STW9 Engineer Gary McAllister was conciliatory towards his employers but still voiced an industry based concern for future employment prospects,

Our community responsibility has not changed – but our Production programming has changed with more international influences like “Big Brother” and soaps etc. – I think we should get back to localism and production such as “Postcards W.A.” “Just Add Water” which proved without doubt that we need this type of content. I am concerned for the next generation of TV employees who may have to seek employment on the East Coast – productions and engineering especially.¹⁰⁴

I have known Former War Hero and STW9 Presenter Jack Sue since 1965 when he produced a program on skin-diving and under-water activities in general. He was no less critical of the current

¹⁰¹ Vic Kitney, written communication, 2000.

¹⁰² TV Engineer, [request for anonymity] written communication, 18 June 2001.

¹⁰³ TV Engineer [request for anonymity], written communication, 14 June 2001.

¹⁰⁴ Gary McAllister, current STW9 Engineer, written communication, 14 June 2001.

situation,

Responsibility of TV Stations? Excepting the ABC, I believe all commercials are too busy making dough to devote any thought to responsibilities these days Peter. In particular, I feel desperately for the lack of encouragement available – through our TV media – to the tremendous pool of Australian young talent, and I fervently believe that we, the parents and the community, will pay for it by seeing our youth seeking encouragement and outlets overseas. Apart from the film industry, little thought appears to have been given by the responsible authorities to other youth talents and activities.¹⁰⁵

Former STW9 Journalist David Gladwell was asked if he recalled any direction as far as the station being a public forum with community orientation? He saw the question mainly in light of political programs. He recalled the ‘...shoe-string type operation...’¹⁰⁶ that was an attempt to produce relevant current affairs shows and gave credit to Laurie Kiernan for his personal interest in production of those programs and said, ‘Laurie really encouraged documentaries as well...The biggest one I did was ‘Prospects for Peace in the Middle East’...I came back and went to China in ‘73. We went to China before Whitlam...’¹⁰⁷ Gladwell said that Kiernan’s dedication to programming which did not necessarily reflect a financial return to the station was appreciated by the production people because ‘...it really didn’t rate very well and they tend to be expensive in studio time and crews and those sorts of things.’¹⁰⁸

Probably those most affected through personal contributions to community involvement were the on-air personalities. My interview with former Producer and On-Air Presenter Lloyd Lawson explains,

LL: We were supposed to go out as Public Relations Officers and do these things because it was good for the station to get out into the community.

PH: But did you get to do paid work as well?

LL: Now listen, that’s what I was going to tell you. They used to -eventually they charged, and they took - you only got a small amount of whatever they charged for your appearance. But then we used to do ‘live’ commercials. Now we never got paid

¹⁰⁵ Jack Sue, Written Communication, 2001.

¹⁰⁶ David Gladwell, Interview, Doubleview, 4 May 1999.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

for these and we presume that the station was charging for our services and so-forth, until one day Brian Treasure made the announcement to all the announcers that they didn't think it was fair that we didn't get paid for our commercials. So any commercials that was for a minute or more, we would get, how would you put it? You had to do it after 7 o'clock at night and it had to be for one minute or more and you received an additional pound.

Former Presenter Jim Atkinson, TVW7 could not remember being involved very much with outside projects but recalled attending an Open Day at a boys' home, he said, 'Yes, I went to Clontarf once I think, but that was more a personality thing I think from memory. There was no camera and things like that. It was just go out and meet the kids and the people. Yes, there was a lot of that at that time you know.'¹⁰⁹ Like Lawson, Atkinson was aware of the reasons for community involvement exercises, but former TVW7 and STW9 Lighting Technician Colin Gorey when asked about the station's relationship with the public replied, 'I wasn't aware of Public Relations in those days and being involved in the day to day running of the studios I never got out, but obviously with the type of opening [of TVW7] and everybody was interested in it.'¹¹⁰ As in many other areas of human endeavour, on many occasions, only that which directly affects the participants is remembered. After 27 years in the service of TVW7, Presenter/Producer Keith Geary has been 'offered redundancy' – polite terminology for 'your services are no longer required'. I think that his observations of 2001 are worthy of full texting,

In the case of Channel Seven I don't think the company has significantly reduced its commitment to the wider community. Apart from the obvious things like Telethon and the Christmas Pageant there are other activities that the company has supported on an on-going basis for many years. One example is the Milk Carton regatta which has been running for 14 years. Another is the more recent Crabfest in Mandurah. These are not 'television' as such and while they do maintain the company's profile they are not undertaken lightly or in a half-hearted manner. What has changed is the nature of the events but I think all that reflects is the changing nature of the society we live in the prevailing tastes of the day. Some things stay albeit in a modified form while others are replace. Similarly the pattern in programme production reflects changing tastes but there is still a place for tried and tested formats as the recent re-introduction of It's Academic demonstrates. Not only has it stood the test of time but is winning the ratings, something that has always been important in this game.

In conclusion I'd like to say that the one constant there has been in my twenty-five years in broadcasting is change. Like many other areas in society the thing that is different now is the rate of change, but in that regard the question is as it's always been, are we leading society or merely holding up a mirror?¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ James Atkinson, Interview, Bentley, 12 May 1999.

¹¹⁰ Colin Gorey, Interview, Doubleview, 16 June 2000.
TVW7 1959-1965 STW9 1965-1974

¹¹¹ TVW7 Presenter and Producer Keith Geary, written communication, 12 June 2001.

I had an enlightening interview with former Producer TVW7 (1970s), STW9 (1980s) Keith Woodland and former Producer-Presenter STW9, (1980s). They represented the ‘new’ generation following my involvement in the 1960s and were party to the changes in instant communication systems and the conversion to colour. I asked them this question,

PH: So economic rationality must succeed over duty to the community?

J.D. Absolutely...

PH: There is still an observable ethic at Channel 7 that they have a duty to the community?

KW. Yes. Seven has always been stronger that way. I mean in fact going back to those very first early days, the reason that we were there was two-fold. One, to help with keep, obtaining and keeping the license and you had to have content of Local Production and a lot of our time was actually spent in writing reports for the Tribunal each year to say what we had done in the year. And secondly, to try and bring in the community into the station to ‘feel and touch’ so kids shows with live audiences were considered a ‘good’ community spirited type of thing..¹¹²

Current TVW7 News Secretary Lesley Bradford expressed the differing views of former and present television employees when she commented, ‘No difference. Channel 7 Perth is very community minded and always has been.’¹¹³, and current TVW7 News Presenter (1970-) Alison Fan (Maclaurin) agrees by stating, ‘In News – community responsibility remains as dedicated if not more disciplined and stronger over years – particularly at TVW Channel 7 – where it is the governing factor with all reports.’¹¹⁴ while current Presentation Co-ordinator TVW7 (1976-) Dave Allet thought that,

Community responsibility hasn’t changed from the 1970’s – 2000. We [TVW7] still tell the kids to eat well and go to sleep and healthy living. I feel we watch too much American rubbish compared to really good British shows that are around. I also think that there is too much sport on all the TV channels.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Keith Woodland and Jenny Dunstan, Interview, Subiaco, 18 August 1999.

¹¹³ Lesley Bradford, written communication, 2001.

¹¹⁴ Alison Fan, TVW7 News Presenter, written communication, 1 June 2001.

¹¹⁵ Dave Allet, TVW7 Presentation Co-ordinator, written communication, 29 May 2001.

I consider that these replies fall into the category which covers those contributors who are still within the industry and consequently are more loath to ‘bite the hand that feeds’! Compare their attitudes to a former TVW7 News Cameraman (1969-1999) [who requested anonymity.] who said, ‘There is little difference between stations today. They do the minimum required.’¹¹⁶ And STW9 Studio Cameraman ‘Minnie’ Monad, who also presented the other side of the coin by saying ‘These days they do it to promote themselves. Hence the loss of the fund raising 24 hour shows. TV is only doing it for themselves, like the Banks.’¹¹⁷, and a former TVW7 Studio Cameraman (1967-1971) [request for anonymity.]

I like to think (maybe wrongly through rose coloured hindsight) that TV Execs actually thought about their audience and tried to give them a sense of being a part of their TV station as much as the station being part of the community. Now, I think that the TV stations only pay lip-service to that concept.¹¹⁸

Former STW9 Production Assistant David Carlisle (1976-1980) said, ‘I had a feeling at STW9 that the audience was important only in their numbers (ratings) I moved to the ABC because I felt old at 26 compared to the rest of the crew. (My God!)’¹¹⁹ and another former STW9 Presenter of programs 1968-1982 [request for anonymity], said

An obsequiousness on the part of the stations to “kiss the bottoms” of the local viewers who demand very, very low to poor standards only – i.e. The community is ecstatic when a news report includes 30 seconds of a vested interest. Simply – the community certainly deserves better and should demand it.¹²⁰

Viewer, Mrs. L. Stewart said, ‘ I think my children (now 18 & 14) missed out on local television where they could be involved – go to the studio, enter competitions etc.’¹²¹ while former TVW7 Production Manager Marion Leyer (nee Greiling) recorded that now there was a

¹¹⁶ Former TVW7 Cameraman, anonymity requested, written communication, 2001.

¹¹⁷ ‘Minnie’ Monad, Written Communication, July 2001.

¹¹⁸ Former TVW7 Studio Cameraman, written communication, 2001.

¹¹⁹ David Carlisle, written communication, 2001.

¹²⁰ Written Communication, 24 June 2001

¹²¹ Mrs. L. Stewart, Written Communication, July 2001.

lack of local productions – in the 60’s and 70’s Channel 7 had a very strong commitment to fostering local talent – There seems to be a few attempts lately to revive local production but I don’t think viewers support is evident. Channel Ten’s extensive list of local programs promised during the “License Application” never came to fruition – In fact the whole production department was closed down after 2 years.¹²²

Former TVW7 Presenter Janet Prance (Gill) said, ‘Today, there is a feeling that, unless one can find a sponsor to cover the costs, the stations do seem to be interested, or see the real need to develop local talent, unless it is associated with sport.’¹²³ and former STW9

Technician Gerry Wild saw the situation as,

A great lack of responsibility and lack of local content. One of my main gripes is the “sameness” of News content. Most stations merely download material from satellite feeds to which all have access, and seem to miss out on the local happenings. An exception would be GWN which has an exceptional state-wide News gathering service.¹²⁴

Former TVW7 On-Air Hostess Alison Carroll-Jung made this comment regarding current day self-promotion.

It has gone down hill, Channel 7 is still relatively active nowhere near as much now as in the 80’s. The others have a very low community profile hence different ratings in Perth compared to rest of country. I think they promote their responsibility more than they participate.¹²⁵

Generally speaking this type of general lament for that which has gone has proved to have been in the domain of those who were once (but are no longer) involved in the medium. They could be accused of selective memory and imagining that everything was better in retrospect. However, the preponderance of testimony is based on the reality of today and the indisputable fact that Western Australian commercial television establishments have indeed changed from Production Houses to Relay Stations. Television and general entertainer Max Kay supports

¹²² Marion Leyer, written communication, 2001.

¹²³ Former TVW7 Presenter Janet Prance (Gill) written communication, 29 May 2001.

¹²⁴ Gerry Wild, Written Communication, 21 June 2001.

¹²⁵ Alison Carroll-Jung, written communication, 20 June 2001.

this thesis and feels that a sense of Community Responsibility by current television stations is,

Almost totally lacking. I suppose that we still make those token gestures such as *Telethon*. In regard to local production and the fostering of local talent, this has become totally extinct. Moral content has been forced upon local TV by the actual programs which are produced elsewhere. Once control is relinquished by becoming a relay station nothing can be done about it.¹²⁶

Former ATN7 Sydney office boy, equipment duster, copper pipe cleaner, Telecine, Studios as cameraman (snr[?] crew cameraman in Sydney – rode the big camera crane ex Hollywood, very flashy), and lighting assistant. TVW7 floor manager, senior studio cameraman, station co-ordinator, Program Director, New Program Director and Cine-cameraman Gordon McColl,¹²⁷ gave a considerable amount of thought to his reply in his reply. Because of the broad scope of experience and length of involvement, I consider that his contribution deserves inclusion in full.

I do believe that TV or radio in this country does a lot for the community. Give them bread and give them circuses, it is alleged, a Roman Caesar said. We have lots of circus in football and cricket, but very little bread, except the ABC and SBS, both of which are currently friggged by the Howard Governments approach to public broadcasting, and the insistence on programming soapies, instead of the more intellectual programs us ABC fans are used to.

The commercial channels have done very little over the years to offer any intellectual or educational programs. The emphasis has always been “entertainment”. This being cheap overseas import programs. I did Romper Room for two years which was an internationally syndicated program by Fremantle International. It had reasonable ducational content for pre school kindergarten aged children. I like it because it was the same, with inevitable language differences, wherever it was broadcast around the world. I saw the program being produced in Japan, and was surprised at the cultural differences in the children of both countries.

Another problem when TV first started was that every charity in the country expected them to give some time to promoting charity and its fundraising works. This was attempted and there were just too many charities, and then the complaints were very bitter about discrimination. I believe a certain church was a big shareholder in TVW7 and this was seen by some critics, as receiving favoured treatment...Having a TV license in the first 20 years was having a license to make money. As any shareholder of TV shares can advise you the increased number of

¹²⁶ Max Kay, personal communication, interview, Mt. Lawley, 2003.

¹²⁷ Gordon McColl, written communication, 15 June 2001.

licenses mean they have to work for their money now. There is still no doubt in my mind that they could lift Australian content and have a Tonight Show in each capital City and swap them. Mondays in Sydney you would watch “In Perth Tonight” Friday and Saturday it would be “In Sydney/Melbourne Tonight”.¹²⁸

Former TVW7 and STW9 Film Editor Geoff Wallace said, ‘TV stations now are more interested in ratings and plan their community based programmes to these ends.’¹²⁹, while former TVW7 [1960s] On-Camera Personality David Farr saw the situation thus,

Like any industry, television had to change over the years. However, it’s prime purpose continues to be the provision of entertainment and news to the population whose requirements have changed over the years. It would no longer be acceptable to provided the style of home-grown shows which were avidly consumed by an eager audience all those many years ago.¹³⁰

Former TVW7 [1960s] News-Reader, Susan Saleeba (nee Contos) said,

TV Stations appear to sponsor (though I doubt whether it is true sponsorship) perhaps “if you advertise with us we will discount your buying and call it ‘sponsorship’.

There is no doubt about it...I am a television and movie buff...I also have a life. With the quality of television programmes currently being dished up on commercial television; ‘Big Brother’, Soap Opera, Jerry Springer it’s no doubt I turn to Foxtel for in—house entertainment. Discovery Channel, National Geographic, History Channel, News and Current Affairs. Quality programs that only appear on commercial stations as a ‘Special Presentation’. As for the news now (though I am one to talk, I find it so full of local content that we can almost forget about the rest of the world. The ‘talent’ never changes, they may change over to different channels, the news readers and presenters appear to blasé ...I suppose I am a little bored with commercial stations....perhaps its maturity!¹³¹,

Former TVW7 [1960s] Weathergirl Merryl Bennett said ‘I think there’s an increasing tendency to cater for the lowest common denominator as in all forms of media especially regards sensationalism. ‘Ockerisms’ are often contrived and unattractive. Grammar and

¹²⁸ TV Engineer, written communication, 18 June 2001.

¹²⁹ Geoff Wallace, former Film Editor, written Communication July 2001.

¹³⁰ David Farr, former On-Camera Personality 1959-1994, written communication, 20 June

¹³¹ Susan Saleeba, former News-Reader TVW7 1976-78, written communication, 14 June 2001.

pronunciation (especially “haitch”) are often dreadful.¹³² and former TVW7 now STW9 Sports Presenter Dennis Cometti said, ‘Has virtually disappeared. But this doesn’t only apply to TV. It seems to be business in general’.¹³³ Former TVW7 Presenter Ted Bull said, ‘Bottom line’ [finance] is what it is all about and a reluctance to give young people a go.¹³⁴, former TV Musician Barry Cox said, ‘I think the responsibility of TV stations toward what children are exposed to is questionable at best.’¹³⁵

Former STW9 News Secretary Frances Foster said, ‘People don’t seem to think they have a say any more. Very few “Polls” are conducted on content. Pay TV is now showing adverts. The reason many people took on Austar or similar was to get away from commercials’.¹³⁶; former TVW7 Carpenter Jim Gilbert said, ‘I personally think the apathetic viewers deserve the contempt which with TV stations treat them. An instance is the G-Code system available with almost all VCR’s is rendered useless by stations inability to run programmes to time.’¹³⁷, and former TVW7 News Presenter Bill Gill recalled,

Little has changed over the years. All stations pay lip service to local content. I remember in the early sixties when Seven would take their O.B. camera to Scarborough, televising 3 hours of waves crashing on the beach. This would bring up the required hours of local content. When the ownership of all W.A. commercial stations resides in the Eastern States the future of real local production will remain bleak!¹³⁸

Former TVW7 Presenter and Controversial Political Commentator, W. Robert Maumill,

The industry has abused self regulation. There are still too many American

¹³² Meryl Bennett, former TVW7 Weathergirl, written communication, 11 June 2001.

¹³³ Dennis Cometti, TVW7 Sports Presenter, (1974-) written communication, 29 May 2001.

¹³⁴ Ted Bull, former TVW7 Presenter, written communication, 7 June 2001.

¹³⁵ Barry Cox, former TV Musician, written communication, 14 August 2001.

¹³⁶ Frances Foster, former STW9 News Secretary, written communication, 27 August 2001.

¹³⁷ Former TVW7 Carpenter and Performer Jim Gilbert, written communication, 20 August 2001.

¹³⁸ Former TVW7 News Presenter Bill Gill, written communication, 29 May 2001.

shows promoting American values and views. Too many programming decisions are made from network headquarters in the Eastern States. Too many former sportsmen and women as presenters.¹³⁹

Former STW9 Studio Cameraman Phil May (1969-1970) now “Globe’ Coffee boss said, ‘TV today is not a local community process. It is a global network. It makes money. Has little if no social conscience.’¹⁴⁰ while Former STW9 Studio Cameraman, GWN3 Chief Engineer (1969-2001) Kevin Mohen saw that there had been,

Huge changes, stations felt responsible to have close ties with the community generally in those days. My last move in the industry was to GWN (W.A. regional broadcaster) 15 years ago. What a flashback it was, lots of community involvement, Kids Show on the road etc., Management attending regional town functions, Fairs sponsored etc., Networking and ownership taken over by Eastern States network, result = no more Production and no more Community work!¹⁴¹

An exception to those who requested anonymity for protection from repercussions was current STW9 Producer, Ray Pedretti, who stated, ‘Today they [W.A. TV stations] are owned by East Coast based companies so the ‘localism’ is only a perception. Channel 9 Perth for instance is more local than Channel 7, yet Seven is perceived as more local. A positive note in that management today are far more casual about [around] their employees.’¹⁴² Former TV Musician Peter Piccini said, ‘In the early years we had live TV shows – musicians, entertainers and actors had employment, also there was far less violence.’¹⁴³

I asked former TVW7 On-Air Hostess (1961) and professional singer Maria Gianatti (nee Koomen), ‘Do you think the industry should have more of an acknowledgment towards art and music and drama and talent, as part of society?’ answered ‘Absolutely. Absolutely. Oh

¹³⁹ Former TVW7 Presenter Bob Maumill, written communication, 20 September 2001.

¹⁴⁰ Phil May, former STW9 Studio Cameraman, written communication, 31 August 2001.

¹⁴¹ Former STW9 Studio Cameraman and GWN Chief Engineer Kevin Mohen, written communication, 3 June 2001.

¹⁴² STW9 Producer Ray Pedretti, written communication, 14 June 2001.

¹⁴³ Peter Piccini, former TV Musician, written communication, 6 June 2000.

gosh yes. I mean, what is it without that? What boredom without music. That's part of the exciting part of life. I mean I never watch footie for a start [laughs] I'm not into that but I watch the ABC whenever there's any programs on that I like'.¹⁴⁴

Former Female TVW7 Presenter (1959-198something) [request for anonymity]

There are huge differences again, probably partly due to the networking. I feel most of the TV Stations don't care any more. In the "old days" Telethon really meant something. We also involved the community more with audiences in the studios and various outside broadcasts involving people. Now there seems to be very little in-house productions with almost everything farmed out to production houses/ companies.

In the very early days it seemed that management actually cared about the viewer. At around the time I quit, it was a matter of pleasing management – the viewer was secondary.¹⁴⁵

Former Town Planner, STW9 and current Access 31 Presenter (1959-) Paul Ritter,

The Whitlam Era was followed by an eclipse of the evolution of Democracy in Australia. The inspiration of the people like Dunstan [w]ained. Warship of Hate, freedom to express hate-

To apply 'competition' to TV is just like having a painting competition of proven talents [and] rationing out the paint!!

To combine public communication, like public transport. With profiteering, is being proven stupid all over the world.

Variety is the spice of life and the richness of art (communication) – to get it we need several channels but not profit motivated. Relevance function programming.

Having studied the anatomy of stupidity for some twenty years, competition for public services, so some can make max. profit, is one of the crassest human stupidities that has flourished during the Era of "patriarchal plague" combined with endless power.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Marie Gianatti, Personal Communication, Interviews, August 1999.

¹⁴⁵ Former Female Presenter, [request for anonymity], written communication, 15 June 2001.

¹⁴⁶ Former Perth City Town Planner, TV Host (1959-) Paul Ritter Hon. Member ACI., MCD. B. Arch., formerly Cr., J.P., Ph.D (soc.f.) FRIBA, MRTPI, FRAIA, MRATPI, MACE, DMRPA., written communication, 12 June 2001.

Former STW9 Engineer Richard Staffe observed ‘There seems to be very little control now compared to when TV started with number of commercials and types of programs pertaining to sexual matters and violence particularly during times when children are watching.’¹⁴⁷, and former Newspaper TV Critic Barry Thornton, complained that, ‘There is less commitment or enthusiasm for community service obligations than there were 20-30 years ago. This could be the result of the continuing ratings battle and desire to run only programs that improve ratings and therefore revenue.’¹⁴⁸

Former STW9 Production Assistant (1967-1971) Marina Valmadre,

In the early days of television in Western Australia there was a genuine and shared sense of community; a desire for the wider community to have a ‘local’ connection with its ‘local’ personalities; and a willingness for business, industry and commerce to support the ‘aspirations’ of Western Australians. Today, with the proliferation of communication vehicles (including many glossy magazine) people gain some connection with ‘global personalities’ they “know” through media.¹⁴⁹,

and former STW9 Telecine Operator Wendy Weir said, ‘TV used more these days for community information – eg. Cancer, no smoking etc. I would like to see more local entertainment shows.’¹⁵⁰, and former TVW7 Singer (1960-1964) Ruth Atkinson attested,

There are very few avenues for local talent to explore in the T.V. industry. There is so much talent being produced by the Academy of Performing Arts that we should be able to utilize them in local productions here in Perth. This applies to both drama and music graduates. Remember “Mobil Quest”? Many famous singers were launched here – Joan Sutherland etc.¹⁵¹

I worked with former STW9 Producer/Director Peter Duncan for many years. He exhibits a breadth of knowledge gained from a 35 year association with commercial television in Western Australia,,

¹⁴⁷ Richard Staffe, former STW9 Engineer, written communication, 29 May 2001.

¹⁴⁸ Former Newspaper TV Critic Barry Thornton, written communication, 20 August 2001.

¹⁴⁹ Marina Valmadre, former STW9 Production Assistant, written communication, 7 June 2001.

¹⁵⁰ Wendy Weir, former Telecine Operator, written communication, undated, 2001.

¹⁵¹ Ruth Atkinson-Young, former TVW7 Singer, written communication, 14 June 2001.

Yeah, I think, that's what kept Seven in front for so long. They had strong community involvement. They would be everywhere. They would have personalities there and er, it was a very hard thing to break for Nine, But their strength of involvement in the community was their strength on the screen, and you know, in the ratings books. Because they, they were out there. They were committed to that an um, having come from country television it became pretty obvious that that's what their success was, because you know, we were always conscious that even if you covered some small basketball match it was not the people that, that were playing necessarily, it was the family and friends who said 'Watch because we are on!' sort of thing and that was, that was how sort of family television grew and people I think were much more conscious of 'Harries on screen, he was an influence on my kids.' Lawson reading the News you know had a thing on that. There was a lot more contact, I don't think now, I think stations are groping with this. They are trying to get some interaction between their personalities and the viewing public. I think it's a lot harder for them now because um, people know that they're not just an homogenous family that's around there, half of the personalities are coming in from Sydney and it's all just stuff coming out of the Box.¹⁵²

Former STW9 Newsreader and Presenter Cornelia Frances was another who saw the question as involving program content and said, 'Catering drama or 'soaps' to younger viewers, not considering wider spectrum.'¹⁵³, while former STW9 Film and Tape Librarian Olive Barrett saw it as a morality and censorship issue in replying, 'Bad language, nudity and vulgarity which would never have been permitted in my day is now common place.'¹⁵⁴

Former STW9 Producer Director Tony Barrett said,

I remember being on 'Master Control' and having to carefully check the amount of 'commercial content' in each hour, plus no more than 4 commercials in a break and ensuring there were no clashes. Now we have 'self regulation' there doesn't appear to be much control at all.¹⁵⁵

Former TVW7 Dancers Jan Urquhart and Jan Boyd made these replies,

¹⁵² Former STW9 Producer/Director Peter Duncan, personal communication, interview, 22 May 2001.

¹⁵³ Cornelia Frances, former STW9 Newsreader and Presenter, written communication, undated February 2002.

¹⁵⁴ Olive Barrett, former STW9 Film and Tape Librarian, written communication, 16 February 2002.

¹⁵⁵ Tony Barrett, former STW9 Producer/Director, written communication, 16 February 2002.

I didn't give it much thought then but now all stations offer a good variety of programs. I think with the ratings and TV watchdogs the TV stations are more aware of their responsibility and what the viewers want and expect and plus with the new technology of course TV of today is more professional and the training of staff is more hi-tec.¹⁵⁶

and

Television studios offer viewers of all ages a great choice of programs early morning to late at night. Housewives need a lot more intelligent shows to watch during the day, the so called soapies" leave a lot to be desired.¹⁵⁷

Former STW9 Producer and On-air Presenter Ron Blaskett said, 'There has been

less responsibility shown in regard to transmitting violence, language or social mores.'¹⁵⁸

Former journalist, ABC and STW9 Sports Presenter Wally Foreman wrote,

I don't think there is any doubt that networks are a lot more committed to money making now than they were previously. Twenty years ago there was an attitude that a small profit was satisfactory and a strong local identity was also important. The goal now seems to be to maximise the profit. While there is still a lot of "off-air" community programs, the lack of live local programs detracts from their contribution to the community. There is less local sport being covered on television now than previously.¹⁵⁹

One of Foreman's counterparts was John Rogers, a former TVW7 Sports Presenter said,

These days I believe T.V. stations pay lip service to Community Responsibility whereas in our day it was an integral part of our role as T.V. people. Once upon a time all monies raised went to Telethon now "parts proceeds aid Telethon" That is the type of thing I mean.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Jan Urquhart, former TVW7 Dancer, written communication, 12 February 2002.

¹⁵⁷ Jan Boyd, former TVW7 Dancer, written communication, 5 February 2002.

¹⁵⁸ Ron Blaskett, former STW9 Producer and On-air Personality, written communication, 29 August 2002.

¹⁵⁹ Wally Foreman, former Journalist, ABC and STW9 Sports Presenter, written communication, 6 August 2002.

¹⁶⁰ John Rogers, former TVW7 Sports Presenter, written communication, 12 July 2002.

Former TVW7 [1960s] On-air Presenter Katharine Biagi (nee Lavan)’

We were aware of what was appropriate viewing for children. There are more informative & educational progs. Today (particularly on ABC and SBS). Programs on medicine eg. Open heart surgery, used to be shown late at night so as not to disturb viewers!¹⁶¹

Former TVW7 On-air Presenter Dianne Moxham (nee Briggs) said, ‘...more permissive...morally scraping the bottom of the barrel...Telethons etc., bring the community together’.¹⁶², but former On-air Presenter and Performer Bon Maguire minced no words by saying, ‘Stinks!’¹⁶³, while former On-air Performer June Percival said, ‘It is all very American these days. Even in our “news” we don’t get told the interesting small (& sometimes Happy) stories. One has to listen to the Radio – mainly the ABC National – to get the news from around the world as well as Australia.¹⁶⁴, and former TVW7 On-air Personality John K. Watts said that it was the ‘...pace of life – fitting it all in!’¹⁶⁵ that has led to a diminution in Community responsibility. Former STW9 Advertising Executive Milton Francis wrote,

Always considered it sadly lacking. Have not seen any evidence to date that would change my mind.

Commercial content – breaks for too long (used to be 2 mins. Maximum) and frequent.

Same old – same old. – Advertisers still believe that viewers actually watch their commercials.¹⁶⁶

My first co-producer/director of children’s shows in 1965, Phil Booth said, ‘They are more active in charities as Telethon/Appealathon – all year round, plus many other commitments to public life – just another service that stations are committed to – helps with ratings.’¹⁶⁷

Former STW9 administration secretary saw the question in terms of televised content and

¹⁶¹ Katharine Biaggi, former TVW7 On-air Presenter, written communication, 20 July 2002.

¹⁶² Dianne Moxham, former TVW7 On-air Presenter, personal communication, interview, 9 July 2002.

¹⁶³ Bon Maguire, former On-air Presenter and Performer, personal communication, interview, 11 July 2002.

¹⁶⁴ June Percival, former On-air Performer, written communication, 10 July 2002.

¹⁶⁵ John K. Watts, personal communication, interview, 2003.

¹⁶⁶ Milton Francis, former STW9 Advertising Executive, written communication, 29 July 2003.

¹⁶⁷ Phil Booth, former Producer/Director TVW7 & STW9, written communication, July 2003.

said, ‘When TV first began everything was censored and most enjoyable... Today the foul language and violence puts one off, true, we can get videos like this, but it’s our choice, not thrust on one by every channel going.’¹⁶⁸ Former STW9 News Director Gordon Leed wrote,

All these programmes, and their counterparts in other states, went by the board – to be replaced by something out of a can – as managements began preaching the gospel of expense cutting in favour of greater profits for shareholders. “We have to think of our shareholders” became the management catch-cry. I always harboured some suspicion of this as most managements were themselves the hefty shareholders. Frankly I could accept the philosophy of cutting back on genuine waste, but the above was stealing the enjoyment of the folk who **really** made the industry profitable, the viewers who bought the advertiser’s products. No thought was spared for them. One sad result of the programme axing was the loss of employment sustained by people whose only fault had been to pour their heart and soul into television’s welfare. Today’s live shows consist only of News and Current Affairs, some cheap to produce (in comparison with the old Childrens and Tonight Shows) Games shows and renovation and real estate programmes.¹⁶⁹

Finally, this incisive comment was offered by former STW9 Newsreader Valerie Davies,

We live in changed times when there is access to many forms of communication with the community. Television today is only one form of contact with audiences. Responsibility can take many forms, with the public, shareholders, employees, advertisers etc. The climate varies according to dynamics across the board.¹⁷⁰

Current TVW7 Advertising Manager [2003] said that community responsibility was their, ‘... first consideration always.’ And quoted the Greening the Freeways project, *Telethon* and the Christmas Pageant.¹⁷¹ [The ten or now factor was evident in his reply.] Current [2003] NEW10 General Manager also defended his station’s position by quoting the support that they gave to the South Perth Zoo, Neighbourhood Watch and Sci-Tec. He said that their contribution to the community was valued at between three and five million dollars per year.¹⁷² Current STW9 news presenter Dixie Marshall wrote,

¹⁶⁸ Joyce Leigh, former STW9 secretary, written communication, 1 September 2003.

¹⁶⁹ Gordon Leed, former STW9 News Director, written communication, 28 October 2003.

¹⁷⁰ Valerie Davies, former STW9 Newsreader, written communication, 1 July 2002.

¹⁷¹ John Wright, TVW7 Advertising Manager, personal communication, interview, 11 June 2003.

¹⁷² David Fare, General Manager [2003] NEW10, personal communication, interview, 22 September 2003.

We still have a community focus, however, not to the level of the past...it's so hard to put a 'dollar value' on the community involvement, and therefore the accountants who run the television stations dismiss its value...very stupid really...because the good work in Appealathon oozes back into how people perceive our station.¹⁷³

Retired Network Ten CEO Bill McKenzie said that TVW7 had always been community minded having inherited that attitude from *The West Australian*.¹⁷⁴

Former *TV Dentist's* assistant Pamela Neesham wrote, 'Apart from "Appealathon" which benefits the needy of the community, the ordinary public don't get much of a mention do they?'¹⁷⁵ Former STW9 public relations officer, secretary, production assistant Silvia Sillaots said, 'There was always far more advertising and staff involvement out on the road promoting gatherings and fundraisers for the underprivileged etc.'¹⁷⁶ Former STW9 cameraman Bob Finkle wrote,

Once again when stations are controlled by people on the other side of the continent the local feel or community spirit of the Television Station is one of the first casualties. The local station becomes almost sterile with little or no direct contact with fellow West Australians outside of any legal obligations. Therefore children shows, light entertainment, sport & political telecasts are almost non-existent – only a memory.¹⁷⁷

John Hayes, a former security guard and handyman at STW9 said that there are, '...less programs suitable for children, which in turn lowers family values. A greater promotion of sex and violence and the level of acceptance to bad language.'¹⁷⁸ Former TV sports commentator Jimmy Chadwick said that,

...only *Telethon* now has community responsibility. There was much more in the early days...it's probably changes to commercial attitudes and life in general...today it's

¹⁷³ Dixie Marshall, current STW9 News presenter, written communication, 29 October 2003.

¹⁷⁴ Bill McKenzie, former TVW7 General Manager and Network Ten CEO, personal communication, interview, 30 September 2003.

¹⁷⁵ Pamela Neesham, former *TV Dentist's* assistant, written communication, 19 October 2003.

¹⁷⁶ Silvia Sillaots, former STW9 public relations officer etc., written communication, 24 October 2003.

¹⁷⁷ Bob Finkle, former STW9 cameraman, written communication, 31 October 2003.

¹⁷⁸ John Hayes, former STW9 security and handyman the telecine operator, written communication, 30 October 2003.

bigger profits on capital investment...Jim Cruthers was the father of a big value...the good old days are gone forever.¹⁷⁹

Television producer Lyn Hancock wrote, 'There doesn't seem to be enough local programmes to keep the film industry viable in Perth. We need the local TV stations to produce more local shows.'¹⁸⁰ Former telecine and tape operator Bevan Long said,

I also think the Telethons and Appealathons have lost some of their sparkle. Is it the loss of those we knew and loved, the Peter Deans or Stuart Waggers? Perhaps it is the commercials now interspersed with the coverage. Whatever, it is not as uplifting and involved as it seems to have been.¹⁸¹

Former STW9 Engineering Department secretary Helen Mumme said:

Again the 'community' response of TV stations is now much more 'corporate' and seems to be related to the high-profile corporate sponsor more than to something which could be 'community' without having the spin-off which comes with the 'corporate' ties. This may be something which is more common throughout our society and so the TV station is merely keeping up with what society expects, although my own feeling is that the community is very much 'programmed' by the TV station and there is a great deal less of the TV station 'responding' to what the community requires. This applies right across areas of the media (newspapers, radio etc.) and is probably a direct result of the media coming under the control of a very few powerful owners.¹⁸²

Former STW9 high-rating newsreader Russell Goodrick wrote:

I believe there was a time when individuals were happy to help. When it didn't take the company to make you do something. I expected it of myself, no one else had to. In the eighties/nineties there grew an expectation by management for employees to undertake community responsibilities, to an extent that it seems to have back-fired, where employees now want to be paid for most things. MRG [Goodrick's company] still has a strong belief providing community opportunities, however we can only do so much because of the cost. Television stations are in the same position, only instead of having their house on the line, the

¹⁷⁹ James .F. Chadwick, former jockey, TVW7 and STW9 sports commentator, personal communication, interview, 31 October 2003.

¹⁸⁰ Lyn Hancock, TV Producer, written communication, 4 November 2003.

¹⁸¹ Bevan Long, former STW9 telecine and tape operator, written communication, 29 October 2003.

¹⁸² Helen Mumme, former STW9 Chief Engineer's Secretary, written communication, 28 November 2003.

have to answer to the shareholders and the ever increasing demand for higher and higher dividends. This demand has on on going whirlwind effect¹⁸³

The foregoing has demonstrated that while those who participated in local 'live' television have definite opinions regarding the failure of the commercial stations to maintain acceptable levels of community responsibility, there is a resignation to the historic outcome and an attitude that the 'good old days' are gone forever. It can be seen that a certain amount of 'political correctness' was encountered from those who are still in the industry and of necessity might feel it prudent to express support for their employer. Nevertheless, there are exceptions and it is reiterated that most respondents saw Community Responsibility in regard to fund-raising exploits and not as concerns of standards of public morality or program content.

The policy of returning to the public, part of the proceeds of their being the buyers of the goods and services which provide the advertising income has passed. The contraction of scales of economy and the introduction of a third commercial station to Western Australia in 1988, reduced not only the size of the cake, but removed any icing which may have been left over to reward the viewing community for supporting the industry.

¹⁸³ Russell Goodrick, former STW9 newsreader, written communication, 15 December 2003.

Appendix 3: Supportive Evidence for Chapter Four.

Comments on the disappearance of Local ‘Live’ Production:

Introduction:

Following on from Chapter Six, this appendix comprises a selection of answers from respondents to the question ‘To what do you attribute the disappearance of local ‘live’? (Kids- Talent- Tonight Shows etc.)’ The greater number of those associated with the Western Australian television industry answered the question in terms of economics and the introduction of networking. Only a few saw the question in terms of televised content. Once again, an observable tendency is noted in that those not currently engaged in the industry tend to be much more critical of its current systems of management.

Responses from Television Industry Employees:

TVW7 Presentation Co-ordinator Dave Allet was succinct in his reply, blaming ‘Networking. Local talent and popular chat shows rated well in their own community or State but the Big Boys from the East canned them.¹⁸⁴ and a current News-reader who requested anonymity said, ‘Networking – everything is controlled from Sydney so economics mean that everything is now produced on the East Coast. E.g. Channel 10 News. Happy to see

¹⁸⁴ Dave Allet, TVW7 Presentation Co-ordinator, written communication, 29 May 2001.

programmes have come part the way back with local shows like *Postcards* and *Perth at Five*.’ Former TV Actor, producer, weather-man etc., Barrie Barkla blamed,

Economics and networking. When I started in TV, every TV Station was independent and produced its own “live” content – but as the industry rationalized and joined networks, local production disappeared – fewer and bigger shows, with the costs spread over a network. The process continues . e.g. The ABC canned State by State “7.30 Report” years ago. Channel 10’s “Perth” News comes ex Sydney. WIN4 Produces all its Victorian News and Bulletins out of Ballarat.¹⁸⁵

Former ABC TV and now STW9 Presenter John Barnett said, ‘Too costly, too fraught with difficulty (imagined) Perception that can’t compete for audience with Yank crap.¹⁸⁶ While former TVW7 and STW9 Film and Tape Librarian Olive Barrett answered, ‘The headquarters of the TV Networks are in the Eastern States and all major productions are undertaken there.’¹⁸⁷

The other half of this intra-station marriage, former STW9 Producer Director Tony Barrett stated,

Polarisation of major productions to major ‘Eastern State’ Network studios. This trend is continuing with movement of News production too. Ten has already gone and 7 in rumoured to be following. STW9 being privately owned will remain local, but if it too becomes a Network owned station the same will happen.¹⁸⁸

while TVW7 1960s’ Weather-girl Merryl Bennett thought that the fault lay with, ‘Probably “economic rationalism” which is so often disastrous. I think it’s a shame because I’m sure kids would get a kick out of knowing someone or perhaps participating themselves.’¹⁸⁹ All reasons were brought down to one word by former General Manager, Chief Executive TVW7 Max Bostock with ‘Money!’¹⁹⁰ Some respondents answers are so informative that they warrant examination in full. Former STW9 Station Manager Bill Bowen explained that there are complex reasons. He said that primarily ‘cost is one and it’s going to get worse

¹⁸⁵ Barrie Barkla, former TV Actor, producer, weather-man etc., written communication, 17 August 2001.

¹⁸⁶ John Barnett, former ABC and now STW9 Presenter, written communication, 29 May 2001.

¹⁸⁷ Olive Barrett, former Film and Tape Librarian, written communication, 16 February 2002.

¹⁸⁸ Tony Barrett former STW9 Producer Director, written communication, 16 February 2002.

¹⁸⁹ Merryl Bennett, former TVW7 Weather-girl, written communication, 11 June 2001.

¹⁹⁰ Max Bostock, former Chief Executive, TVW7, telephone interview and written communication, 2001.

before it gets better.¹⁹¹ The major changes had already happened at TVW7 with most of their programs being outsourced. Bowen said that if he was still in a managerial position at STW9, he would sell the valuable land and build a multi-level building in South Perth. With the ‘chroma-keying’ facilities now available (the ability to mix and merge people with digitally contrived backgrounds) the studios would be small, with automated pre-programmed cameras and virtually no crew. He would avoid locally produced programs, except for integrating portions which are important for Western Australian consumption. The exception to this would be the production of documentaries, in which the Perth industry excels. Bowen said that ‘Melbourne does the best variety programs (because of the long running *In Melbourne Tonight* factor), Sydney the best Current Affairs programs, ‘Adelaide used to do the best Kids’ programs, Brisbane used to do the best Quiz programs.’¹⁹² To create and maintain a Perth ‘personality’ system, the presenters would be ‘flown in’ for the program productions, meaning that each centre could set-up and specialize in particular productions. ‘So you get the crème-de la-crème producing the local people who are flown over...’¹⁹³ The product would be imported to Western Australia, but the flavour would be local. Bowen said that the Station would only need two or three floors and if Pay-TV eventually triumphed, ‘Whack walls in and sell them off as condominiums!’¹⁹⁴

Another explanation by current [2003] STW9 General Manager Paul Bowen espouses a different understanding, coming from an incumbent executive’s point of view.¹⁹⁵ He said that the standard of television has lifted to the degree that to Perth productions had to be up to Network standard. Which ‘...comes at considerable cost.’¹⁹⁶ Paul Bowen commented on the success of what was virtually their only current local production of *Postcards*. He said that no money was to made from it but, ‘...it is important because it does send very strong signals

¹⁹¹ Bill Bowen, personal communication, interviews, 1999.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Paul Bowen, personal communication, interview, 2001. See Appendices for full text.

David Fare, personal communication, interview 2003. ‘The land occupied by 7, 9 and ourselves is for TV use. It might be difficult to rezone it.’

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

to the market about who we are, what sort of people we are, what sort of television station we are and it helps you bond more so I believe with the community.’¹⁹⁷

TVW7 Current (2002) Production Manager John Crilly said ‘Money! Money! Money!’ and much more.¹⁹⁸ Former TVW7 Dancer Jan Boyd, part of the TVW7 entertainment team in the early 1960s said that she thought that ‘live’ production was ‘Too expensive to run and too small a city to compete with the vast selection of channels and shows that are on offer these days. We have a lot of talent in Perth but nothing to offer them, most talented kids go East/Overseas to further careers.’¹⁹⁹ Current [2003] TVW7 News Room Secretary Lesley Bradford agreed on the expense but differed on ‘talent’, ‘Too expensive and not enough “talent” to have as Perth is so isolated. Staff cuts don’t help either.’²⁰⁰ Former TVW7 Weathergirl Trina Brown (Williams) opted for the cynical approach; ‘Money can be made without the huge effort of live production. So why go to the trouble!!’²⁰¹ and former TVW7 and current ABC Presenter Ted Bull again offered the shortest reason, ‘Money.’²⁰² As might be expected, former TVW7 Journalist and W.A. State Premier Brian Burke introduced an element of politics by stating, ‘Concentration of ownership in the pursuit of profits. Poor

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ John Crilly.

‘live’? Kids, Talent type shows, Tonight Shows?

JC: Money! Money, and Money, and Money! It’s um, to make good quality productions of any sort, let alone variety or a children’s shows in particular. Children’s shows firstly, probably suffer from the fact that they’re only going to be watched by children and I think one of the big and it depends on what range of child, what you’re looking, what you’re aiming at. It’s like these so-called C classified programs which are produced with an educational value to them for children between seven and thirteen from memory. Now I know when my kids were between that age range, they wouldn’t watch any of the stuff because it was made by, dare I say the word, academics, who perhaps didn’t have a very good childhood or something. I don’t know, but, or it might have guide-lines set by government that forced these people to look at a range of things and how they were made and what had to be in the. But they just seemed to me to be totally uninteresting to kids who really want to fanaticize, not have real-life issues in a lot of senses and I think that’s what we try to push on our kids, we try to make them grow up too quick. Anyway, it got back to money. Because these programs are essentially not necessarily popular and you can’t have certain, you can’t have certain types of advertising in them there isn’t an advertising dollar there if you like to warrant the cost of what you outlay.

PH: And why were the Children’s shows on every television channel in the fifties and sixties?

The Tarax Show was good fun, the kids used to scream, we used to have a ball, we used to enjoy working on it as a fifteen, sixteen year old I used to enjoy working on it.

¹⁹⁹ Jan Boyd, former TVW7 Dancer, written communication, 5 February 2002.

²⁰⁰ Lesley Bradford, current TVW7 News Room Secretary, written communication, 1 August 2001.

²⁰¹ Trina Brown (Williams), former TVW7 Weathergirl, written communication, 20 April 2002.

²⁰² Ted Bull, former TVW7 and current ABC Presenter, written communication, 7 June 2001.

and inefficient government regulation and the transfer of decision-making power to other States.’²⁰³

Another respondent with a vast knowledge of the industry is former TVW7 Chief Executive Kevin Campbell, who also has understanding of the intricacies involved in local production. Campbell’s first reaction to the question was that all ‘genres’ wear out and there is a need for ‘refreshing’, but the continued by stating, ‘...what’s really happened since ’88 is, a contraction of spending in the, on the Licensees that are licensed to serve the community they are licensed to serve!...and also you’ve got the Sydney psychology that “We control Australia and therefore, if it don’t happen over here, no-one else does it!” and that’s a shame because there is still a place for local type programs.’²⁰⁴ In particular Campbell would like to see programs such as *It’s Academic* [which has returned to TVW7, but outsourced for production] and young people’s talent searches, discussion programs etc., because, ‘...they’re our leaders of tomorrow...people like your Barry Jones...’²⁰⁵ [Among many public service positions held, Campbell was at the time, Chairman of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts.] He thinks that there is always another ‘Graham Kennedy’ to be discovered and is trying to promote local production on Community Television. Campbell qualifies the attitudes of Corporate management thus:

And they’re all in to make a huge quid. In their defence, knowing what public company life is like now, you’re always in the hands of, you’ve got to perform for the shareholders, because they’re investing their funds, their deferred savings ...and they’re expecting a return on it. So it’s a bit of a vexed question that one.’²⁰⁶

Former Audio Technician David Carlisle answered the question with one word, ‘Networking.’²⁰⁷, while former ABC and long-time and current [2003] TVW7 Newsreader Susannah Carr, was forthcoming with ‘Financial decisions. Very little local

²⁰³ Brian Burke, former TVW7 Journalist and W.A. State Premier Brian Burke, written communication 24 August 2001.

²⁰⁴ Kevin Campbell, personal communication, interview, 2001.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ David Carlisle, former STW9 Audio Technician, written communication, 13 June 2001.

production now. Apart from Melbourne and Sydney, the other States have very little production work, mainly News and Current Affairs. Variety is making a comeback with people like Rove McManus.²⁰⁸ Former TVW7 Presenter Alison Carroll-Jung, who admits to being a little embittered by the system said, ‘Money! Lack of interest by those involved.’²⁰⁹

One of the original stalwarts of television, former TVW7 Presenter Gary Carvolth is another person with views of multiplicity. He said,

I think what’s happened is, it’s purely business. I think that now the bottom line is saving dollars. Sadly saving jobs...certainly there won’t be and more production type

²⁰⁸ Susannah Carr, former ABC current TVW7 Newsreader, written communication, 28 June 2002.

²⁰⁹ Alison Carroll-Jung, former Children’s Programme Host, written communication, 20 June 2001.

programs here. I think that most of the programs will come out of Sydney and

Melbourne regardless of the Network.²¹⁰
Carvolth commented on the fact that NEW10 News was now coming direct from Sydney, with Perth newsreader Greg Pearce commuting by air. He also considered that TVW7 would

²¹⁰ Gary Carvolth, personal communication, interview, 2000.

PH: Right! Now! That's a pretty good coverage from my point of view, except to ask the inevitable question, what happened to local production?

GC: I was just talking to Jenny Seaton recently. We had Jana Wendt on this week and we were talking about it to her. I think what's happened is, it's purely business. I think that now the bottom line is saving dollars. Sadly, saving jobs. We've already seen mammoth job cuts on television stations across the country including station here in Perth. My information today the 27th is that there is going to be more and gradually we'll see a complete withdrawal of , certainly there won't be any more 'production' type programs here. I think that most of the major programs will come out of Melbourne and Sydney regardless of the network. I think Ten started it over here when they started having there weekend News read in the Eastern States which is now a full-time affair and I don't think I'll be proved wrong when I say that in time, um, the other stations will follow suit and eventually you'll see one newsreader reading out of Sydney and/or Melbourne for Perth.

PH: Do you foresee, as others do, the day when there will be a housing estate on the hill,

GC: Certainly! I don't think there's any question of that. Seven will move into town. I think they'll all move into town that's the [plan. I don't think there's any secret about that. They're all sitting on lucrative properties in high parts of Tuart Hill and Mount Yokine, that will obviously bring a big return of dollars there. And I think we saw, you and I and other who worked with us, the best days of television.

PH: There was a yarn at the weekend that there was going to be a Quiz program at Channel 9. [This happened but was a dismal failure and didn't rate against *Wheel of Fortune*.

GC: Yes, that is going to happen and that starts shortly. Actually Channel 9 locally at the moment are the last bastion of doing live programs. They've been doing these leisure type programs very well and they have pushed ahead which I think is a courageous decision. They're going to be, and that's good. But the others including my own beloved Seven are withdrawing and I think that the day will come when it will just gradually disappear.

PH: You don't think Seven will fight back against this idea of having a local program before their news?

GC: Well they may, but I doubt it. *Wheel of Fortune* has served them well for a long time and I think that now a lot of pressure's going to be on the Channel 9 program. I hope it does [well] because it's local. Whether it can stand up to this and how long they will allow it to run. But, Channel Nine here is really independent being owned elsewhere and it's not really part of the Nine Network. I think if it was part of the Nine Network as such there would be nothing happening.

PH: Yes, it belongs to the Sunraysia lady.

GC: The Sunraysia lady. Had it not been, I think there would have been none of these on. They're putting up the last hurrah and I hope that it's a good one for them, because they deserve it.

PH: So, economic rationalism, is that?

GC: Exactly! All dollars, ratings.

PH: But economic rationalism always has existed in television hasn't it?

GC: It has but,

PH: Very much at Nine. You probably didn't see it at Seven because they always had that powerful position

GC: They had, I think, when I first joined and I hope I'm not exaggerating, it was nearer to five hundred people all up involved in carpentry sections and everything else. Today there's less than a hundred and fifty. And there will be less still. I suppose probably if you look at it from the other side of the track, I guess they don't mean to do these things, it's just sad that it's not there, because this is where we all were given, you know, people learned their craft and that chance to work at what they do, whether they were a carpenter, a singer, an actor, an announcer or whatever. Cameraman.

sell the very valuable real estate at Mount Yokine and move into Perth, [probably to the Entertainment Centre as it is now owned by the Seven Network.] Carvolth said that at the peak of local operations, TVW7 had,

...nearer to 500 people all up involved in carpentry sections and everything else. Today there's less than 150 and there will be less still...it's just sad that it's not there, because this where...people learned their craft and that chance to work at what they do, whether they were a carpenter, a singer, an actor, an announcer or whatever. Cameraman.

Former TVW7, Current Sports Presenter STW9 Dennis Cometti, was direct and to the point when answering, 'Cost. The desire to maximise profits for shareholders.'²¹¹ while a former Female ABC and STW9 Newsreader (request for anonymity) said, 'Network ownership. Economic efficiency of producing one show in Melbourne or Sydney and networking it to all States. This, I fear will be the fate of TV News – Produced nationally with perhaps a 5 minute State 'window' locally.'

Former W.A. State Premier Sir Charles Court, one of the first to recognise the political advantage of being able to handle the medium wrote,

Nothing remains the same and it was to be expected that with changing management, new policies would be introduced from time to time and would influence the way things were done, not only at Channel 77 but also at all the other television stations throughout Australia, including the ABC.²¹²

It's well to remember the wide variety of those who made up the television industry and former TV Musician Barry Cox offered, 'Perhaps cost factors.'²¹³ Another informant who has been associated with television since 1956 is TVW7 and Former STW9 Production Manager John Crilly, whose answer was 'Money! Money, and Money! And Money!'²¹⁴ Crilly said that '...Children's shows suffer from the fact that they are only going to be watched by

²¹¹ Denis Cometti, current STW9 Sports Presenter, written communication, 29 May 2001.

²¹² Sir Charles Court, former W.A. State Premier, written communication, 29 November 2001.

²¹³ Barry Cox, former TV Musician, written communication, 14 August 2001.

²¹⁴ John Crilly, personal communication, interview, 2001.

children...’ He blames the introduction of the ‘C’ Classification²¹⁵, formulated by those not closely associated with the realities of hands-on television. Crilly supposes that those people were well intentioned but out of touch with the children of the day.

...now I know when my kids were between that age range, [7-13] they wouldn’t watch any of that stuff because it was made by, dare I say the word, academics, who perhaps didn’t have a good childhood or something...but they just seemed to me to be totally uninteresting to kids who really want to fantasize, not have real-life issues in a lot of senses...we try to push on our kids, we try to make them grow up too quick.²¹⁶

In comparing the cost of children’s programs in the 1950s and 1960s, (produced on a daily basis ‘in-studio’ with a ‘live’ audience) Crilly said that today [2001] ‘...you’d be talking probably fifteen grand a day per show.’²¹⁷ In regard to a Talent Quest Show, Crilly placed the cost at about \$10,000 per show, which ‘you’ve got to recoup out of your local market.’²¹⁸ Crilly also explained that the locally produced handy-man program *Nuts and Bolts* was completely outsourced with the private company covering all costs, using the TVW7 studios, then working out contra deals for air-time and payment by participating sponsors.

An interview with former TVW Chief Executive Sir James Cruthers recorded,

JC: Networking, it kills, you know, real live productivity.

PH: And you regret its passing obviously!

JC: Yes I think it’s a great pity...particularly in a State like Western Australia. I’m not being isolationist but we are a long way away and although [because of new technology] we don’t have the tyranny of distance, we are still different from the others.²¹⁹

After a career of some twenty-five years, former STW9 and TVW7 Presenter Peter Dean was harshly treated by the system, in being summarily dismissed for no other reason than ‘redundancy. His superannuation and other entitlements had disappeared along with Christopher Skase and the Quintex Group and he was given an ex gratia payment of \$500 for

²¹⁵ Ibid, See Chapter.....

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Sir James Cruthers, former TVW7 Chief Executive, personal interview, 3 June 1999.

each year of the twenty-three that he spent in the service of TVW7.²²⁰ In answer to the question he said,

Greed, money. Money hungry corporations, investors who want a bigger return on their capital that they've invested in television stations...It's all about making money, cutting costs and by cutting costs they are also cutting programs and cutting a lot of production in Australia...I remember talking to Jim [Cruthers] back in the eighties... [and he] reminded us that in the early days of TVW they used to do something like thirty-one hours of 'live' television a week! Thirty-one hours a week! Now they wouldn't do it in a year!

In recollecting the early years of television in Perth, Dean described the advances in techniques which could only come with experience on the job. This experience was for everybody from the technicians to the presenters. He described the gradual improvement in the product and how '...they did show a lot of Perth contemporary life...a lot of opportunity for Perth entertainers and

²²⁰ Peter Dean, personal communication, interview, 2000.

PH: Right. What's the reason for downturn in local production?

PD: Ah, greed, money. Money hungry corporations, investors who want a bigger return on their capital that they've invested in television stations. It's now, it's all about making money, cutting costs and by cutting costs they are also cutting programs and cutting a lot of production in Australia. Um, Jim Cruthers, I can remember talking to Jim back in the, oh, back in the eighties, just before he finished at TVW. No, it would be the mid-eighties, I beg your pardon and he was, reminded us that in the early days of TVW they used to do something like 31 hours of 'live' television a week! Thirty-one hours a week! Now they wouldn't do it in a year. Now the TV, um, the Radio and Television Act, as far as I can remember, still requires television stations, be they network or not, to produce and show a certain percentage of television content and they're not doing that and they're getting away with it.

PH: I think because 'local' is deemed Australian, that's the thing, um, in general consideration of 7 and 9 over those years, what do you see as the presentation of those stations, their orientation towards the public particularly. Do you see them in terms of public support as News, of Entertainment or what do you see?

PD: Yes, it has undergone a transitional stage over the years Peter. I've noticed when television first started, 'live' showing Perth, showing Perth people Perth, showing Perth people, you know, these are the singers and dancers we've got. We're not very good but we're learning and we're getting better and better and there's no more microphones in shot or people out of light. Getting better and better and I think those early days of television especially at TVW, ah, they did get better and better as the months went by. And they did show a lot of Perth, ah, contemporary life, ah, they showed a lot of, ah, there was a lot of opportunity for Perth entertainers and actors. Not so much actors but it was certainly in the variety field, a fantastic time to live through. Now of course there's nothing at all on the entertainment side, in fact I remember, who was it? It might have been Brian Treasure, the late Brian Treasure told me when I, when I'd gone from 9 to 7 after 7 had been, 7 had bought 6IX. He said 'Make up your mind! You're either going to be in variety or you're gonna be on, you're gonna do a newsreader on booth. I said 'Shit, I don't want to be a newsreader!' If you're no good at variety that's what you do, they make you do newsreader Peter. So I've gone 'I'm too bloody good to be a newsreader, I'll go into variety!' Oh, what a terrible bloody decision that turned out to be. ,²²⁰

actors...a fantastic time to live through. Now of course there's nothing on the entertainment side.'²²¹

Current [2003] TVW7 *Today Tonight* Chief of Staff Mario D'Orazio, as a working journalist also had extended views to express on the subject. He described how TVW7 for twenty years was a '...good entrepreneurial company with widespread interests that formed the basis of empires. Today it's only a shadow of what it used to be, now part of an empire, it's an outpost.'²²² D'Orazio pointed out that programs such as *Blue Heelers* costing four or five hundred thousand dollars an episode could not be made here for a small audience and the '... improvement in imported stuff...[has meant that] the sacrifice has been local production.'²²³ The interview with D-Orazio continued thus when I asked, 'So it's economic rationalism? Always has been?' He replied, 'It's commercial TV!' I continued, 'Which is economic rationalism?' and he said, 'Which is pure commerce.'²²⁴

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Mario D'Orazio, personal communication, interview, 2001.

MD: Well for twenty years this was a good entrepreneurial company with widespread interests that formed the basis of ah, of empires. Today it's only a shadow of what it used to be, now part of an empire, it's an outpost. Now that's not such a bad thing because economically you couldn't sustain producing programs like *Blue Heelers* for a small audience like you have in Perth. They cost four or five hundred thousand dollars to make. So you've actually had an improvement in a lot of the imported stuff but the sacrifice has been local production.

PH: So it's economic rationalism? Always has been?

MD: It's commercial TV, ah,

PH: Which is economic rationalism?

MD: Which is pure commerce.

PH: If it doesn't gain viewers, broadcast centre. Um, you seen that. Economic rationalism has always prevailed in commercial

MD: If there's a buck to be made it'll be made and what we've seen since the ah, Keating arrangement of 'Queen of the Screen' or 'Prince of Print' you've actually seen a relocation, a big shift away from the colonies, the outposts. It's like Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth and centralization of production in Sydney and to a lesser extent Melbourne. Although I add in parenthesis there that Seven in Melbourne will be bigger than Seven Sydney simply because of a commercial decision being made. You can't have more than one TV but one of the things that has actually gone by the by is the entrepreneurialism that stations like Swan Television, which was its own listed entity for many years and TVW Enterprises which occupied a spot on the Australian Stock Exchange for many years, in these small cities they're not the entrepreneurs they once were. We used to be property developers. We helped build the Entertainment Centre. They owned drive-ins, cinemas all that kind of stuff. These days we're just a brand, you know, these days we are almost like a Baker's Delight outlet or a Macdonald's franchise. A huge marketing capacity and a huge Seven brand but locally you don't make much anymore. Limited the Sport, News and Current Affairs. So that is economic rationalism and it's born of the decision made in the late eighties.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

Having been in Western Australia and the local industry since 1966, former STW9 Producer/Director Peter Duncan is well qualified to express his experience and said that the loss of local production was initially the fault of the Control Board, who ‘...as you know, ran the industry.’²²⁵ Duncan said that the ‘Points Scoring’ regime STW9 whereby ‘Australian’ meant ‘local’ made it easy for Perth stations to purchase their programs interstate. He also said ...so that is economic rationalism and it’s born of the decision made in the late eighties...when I finished *Americas Cup* when Bond sold out and management actually flipped to Sydney...I realized there was nothing going to happen in television stations here.’²²⁶

Current [2003] Producer/Director Peter Dunn was one person still working in the industry who was unafraid to say, ‘Greed – Take out as much as possible – give back the least possible.’²²⁷ and another respected long-time current [2003] journalist TVW7’s Alison Fan

²²⁵ Peter Duncan, former STW9 Producer/Director, personal communication, interview.

PD: Well, you could, I think it became the, the Control Board ah you know, ran the industry. Um, had a point-scoring which you know, for Australian content but um, as the ‘Nines’ instead of being individuals became sort of a loose, they weren’t a network owned by the same person, but loosely it became a um, quite acceptable to get your Australian content you didn’t actually have to produce it at your station, as long as it was produced in Australia and then you could syndicate it through all the ‘Nines’ or the ‘Sevens’ or whatever it was and that started to happen so there was less being done locally, it was, it was coming in from Sydney or whatever and you could see the focus was moving there. And even when I finished *Americas Cup* when Bond sold out and management actually flipped from Perth to Sydney um, I mean I realized there was nothing going to happen with television here. It would purely just be a support whereas I was used, I’d been to being in television stations where they generated, you know, they had to do their own programs. They didn’t necessarily go anywhere else, you know, they were probably good enough to but they didn’t, and a you know, you were doing them just for your local audience.

PH: What do make of this mini-revival that seems to be going on at the moment with local production.

PD: Which local production?

PH: Well, *It’s Academic*’s come back and a show called *Nuts and Bolts* and there the program that John Barnett and various,

PD: And Russell Goodrick’s stuff um, yes, it’s quite a change but they’re not generated apart from *It’s Academic* I guess, the others are generated by production groups outside, you know, *Nuts and Bolts* has been done independently, er, Barnett’s program is done partly with free-lancers and things, you know, generally um, there are other, the production things gone, whereas the station used to be the centre of all production the one thing that I did when I left the station, um, I started Panacom Productions after working with Gilly for a while, started Panacom Productions which became the biggest producer of television commercials in the State. A position held for a number of years and the other we were the first production company that wasn’t based on film. Brian Williams and people like that were out there but we were based on video-tape and er, initially we used to hire our facilities, we used to hire outside broadcast vans to go out and shoot commercials etc., because as I said my leaning went more towards commercials.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Peter (Pedro) Dunn, STW9 Producer/Director, written communication, 5 June 2001.

added ‘A much more sophisticated and affluent audience who are exposed to a world-wide choice of entertainment via

Foxtel etc.’²²⁸ Former TVW7 Presenter and TV Executive David Farr, who started with the Company in 1959 said, ‘Cost, need to improve profits, and networking.’²²⁹

A former STW9 General Manager Eric Fisher did not pull punches in his criticism of the television industry. He said,

Why the disappearance of live? Simply because it is not an economic proposition, and nobody believes that “localism” defines a local service area. Now, “localism” means Australian. The only reason any local TV was done back in the 1960s and 1970s was because, in those days networking was not allowed, and one had to meet certain local content requirements. But, we didn’t have dedicated broadcasters running our TV stations then (I suppose Bob Mercer was dedicated, but didn’t have the background, nor, I believe, the full confidence and support of his board of directors. Although, I’m not really well

²²⁸ Alison Fan (MacLaurin) TVW7 Journalist, written communication, 1 June 2001.

²²⁹ David Farr, former TVW7 Presenter and TV Executive, written communication, 20 June 2001.

enough informed to state that with any certitude, Anyway, he was at the mercy of the program agreement, and therefore of Cruthers and Treasure).²³⁰

Former STW9 Sales Executive now Drama Teacher John Foote, who was at STW9 with Fisher said,

The disappearance on live programmes was simply because television was seen as a money making business with few obligations to the general public. The “average” viewers were referred to as “Pie Eaters” by [Laurie] Kiernan and his prodigy David Aspinall, who emulated everything Kiernan did or said. The shareholders were far more important than the viewing public and I am sure that this is what motivates commercial television today. It seems to me that local television is far too dominated by material from Sydney and Melbourne. Surely we should expect to see a lot more of our cultural life shown on Perth screens given the size of our city now.²³¹

Former STW9 News Room Secretary Frances Foster, introduced a couple of new elements with, ‘Lack of good people to run them. Video games. Computers.’²³² But former

²³⁰ Eric Fisher, former STW9 General Manager, written communication, 7 February 2002.

Why the disappearance of live? Simply because it is not an economic proposition, and nobody believes that “localism” defines a local service area. Now, “localism” means Australian. The only reason any local TV was done back in the 1960s and 1970s was because, in those days networking was not allowed, and one had to meet certain local content requirements. But, we didn’t have dedicated broadcasters running our TV stations then (I suppose Bob Mercer was dedicated, but didn’t have the background, nor, I believe, the full confidence and support of his board of directors. Although, I’m not really well enough informed to state that with any certitude, Anyway, he was the mercy of the program agreement, and therefore of Cruthers and Treasure).

Brian Treasure was an entrepreneurial spirit, and knew how to press the right buttons to get the public to react, but he also knew on which side his bread was buttered.

In my time at STW9 as GM, David Aspinall, who was then production manager, was responsible for promoting and producing a 26-episode half-hour local drama production called *The Drifter* Shot on a shoestring, it was not brilliant, but I think David deserved congratulations for having the guts to say he could do it and then making it work. For the station, it was good points in the local content book to satisfy the ABCB (as it was then).

I remember I introduced Guy Baskin to Perth when I engaged him to produce a doco called *Outside the Walls*. I had no trouble persuading LJK to come up with the money, because this program was about Dom Salvado and the New Norcia monks. With Cullity as Chairman of STW9 and the papal knight as his deputy, LJK was obviously happy to support this one.

An indication of LJK’s artistic sensibilities is his reaction when I sought money to produce, what turned out to be, and award winning doco *A Speck in the Sky*. This was a story about the Royal Flying Doctors Service. I had been attracted to the idea after reading Robin Miller’s accounts of her flying visits to the North West – *Sugar Bird Lady* (Robin Miller’s Mooney aircraft still sits on a pylon outside the RFDS headquarters at Jandakot). As part of the development of the story, Guy had a need to do some filming in South Australia. When I took him in to meet Kiernan to talk about the budget, Kiernan’s opening remarks were: “Fisher talks about this creative bullshit. I don’t give a fuck about that. All I can say is that the further you go from WA to film this, the less interested I am in giving you the money.” As we can see, his only interest was in racking up local points to satisfy the ABCB. By the time the doco was filmed and aired, I had resigned, but I understand LJK was happy to take the bows when it won local praise. But, hey, That’s show biz!!

²³¹ John Foote, former STW9 Sales Executive, written communication, undated February 2002.

²³² Frances Foster, former STW9 News Room Secretary, written communication, 27 August 2001.

STW9 Newsreader and Presenter Cornelia Frances, said ‘Hadn’t noticed at all!’²³³ [This respondent lives and works in Sydney and Melbourne.] John Fryer, long-time radio and TVW7 television presenter said,

The lack of ‘live’ TV Shows, particularly in WA, is in a word money. Networking from the Eastern States has virtually spelt the end of our live shows. It is impossible to match the production, prizes, sets etc of these shows that are networked to so many stations around Australia. Stations buy these programs at a fraction of the money required for a local ‘live’ show.²³⁴

TVW7 Presenter and Producer Keith Geary, (made redundant in June 2003 after thirty years service) displayed an amount of bitterness regarding policy,

Money, and the pursuit thereof. My own experience is not unique but it shows how the power of a network and the will to please of it’s underlings can bugger your career. After the collapse of Quintex, Christopher Skase’s holding company, and his hasty departure to foreign climes, there were a lot of changes. At the end of 1989 I went on holiday and on my return I was walking up the corridor when one of the floor managers told me they’d axed the kids show. After ten years on air they didn’t have the decency to let me know before hand. Some of these people have probably moved into managing football clubs. Essentially once control of the station had moved east it was far easier for the management to make decisions based solely on a narrow economic basis, when the people working for the company have been reduced to numbers on a spread sheet. These days you need a business plan to make a programme. It’s tougher now than it was but we’re still here and currently making as much product as we ever have.²³⁵

Former TVW7 Presenter and Singer (1961) Marie Gianatti (nee Koomen), was another who saw the problem simply in terms of, ‘Money. Or lack of it I suppose. The greed of – even for a while the musicians priced themselves out of the market.’²³⁶ and former TVW7 Carpenter Jimmy Gilbert added, ‘Greed. Local productions cost more than cheap American rubbish with the same end results.’²³⁷ [presumably for the station].

²³³ Cornelia Frances, former STW9 Newsreader and Presenter, written communication, undated February 2002.

²³⁴ John Fryer, former TVW7 Presenter, written communication, 6 June 2001.

²³⁵ Keith Geary, current TVW7 Presenter and Producer, written communication, 12 June 2001.

[In June 2003 Geary became ‘redundant’ and ‘let go’ by TVW7.]

²³⁶ Marie Gianatti, former TVW7 Presenter and Singer, personal interview, 24 August 1999.

²³⁷ Jimmy Gilbert, former TVW7 Carpenter Set-maker, written communication, 20 August 2001.

Bill Gill, is another former [1960s] TVW7 Newsreader and Presenter, who considers that the decline of local 'live' production can be sheeted home to,

Networking and small budgets. Unless programs can be made for national audiences there is little interest by local stations. Our track record in W.A. is not good in producing highly rating programs. It is difficult to persuade sponsors to support local production when ratings do not support their investment. Unfortunately. ²³⁸

Current [2003] TVW7 News Head Cameraman Mike Goodall agreed that it was, Cost. Television in the new century is quite different. Programmes are no longer transported across the Nullabor via in aircraft. Programmes are recorded live off air via Satellite or optical fibre from Sydney and replayed two hours later in Perth. The only programmes that are different are the news and a few locally made programmes. ²³⁹

Current [2003] TVW7 News Chief of Staff Bob Goodall, simply said, 'Dollars!' ²⁴⁰ as did

former STW9 Audio Engineer Graeme Greenwood with, 'Money!' ²⁴¹ Denzil Howson, who has been associated with television since it first went to air in Melbourne in 1956 provided such a worthwhile answer that it should not be relegated to a footnote. He wrote,

Local variety, quiz programmes, children's programmes and sporting panels. I remember those. With the exception of sporting panels which are cheap to produce, technically undemanding and personnel-wise require no more than a group of three or four alleged experts all suffering from verbal diarrhoea, many other programme formats seem to have disappeared, or become just a shadow of their former selves. So people like Gary Carvolth, Jenny Clemesha, Sandra McNab, John Cousins, Bon Maguire, Peter Harries, Max Kay, Veronica Overton, Gerry Gibson, Peter Piccini and his Group, Lloyd Lawson, Carolyn Noble, Johnny Rohan, Cornelia Francis, Ron Blaskett and Gerry Gee are no longer working, well not in Perth television anyway. Those people were all performers but what about the back-stage crew who backed the up? The producers, the directors, the graphic artists, the designers? None of those are now needed nor employed any longer, or anyhow not many of them. The same situation, with a few notable exceptions exists all over Australia. It doesn't take long for Phase 2 'The Dawning' in the television station to emerge and take over control. Initially even top management were under the misapprehension that they were in

²³⁸ Bill Gill, former TVW7 Newsreader and :Presenter, written communication, 29 May 2001.

²³⁹ Mike Goodall, former STW9 Station Photographer, TVW7 News Head Cameraman, written communication, 28 August 2001.

²⁴⁰ Bob Goodall, current TVW7 News Chief of Staff, written communication, 11 July 2001.

²⁴¹ Graeme Greenwood, former STW9 Audio Technician, personal interview, 26 June 2002.

charge of an enterprise devoted to the production and presentation of entertainment for the masses. Then they realised just how wrong they could be. Their sole purpose in life, obviously, was to make money for their shareholders. To make sure that their Company lives up to the much quoted aphorism, ‘A station licence is a licence to print money!’. Television, despite the glamorous public relations hype is a business, like any other business, it is a ruthless money making juggernaut. Above all, you must not allow any local programme production to get in the way of that. There is of course an annoying set of rules concerning a percentage of Australian content that must be followed, but I think that rule is honoured more in the breach than in the observance. (Thanks William Shakespeare, I couldn’t have said it better myself!) Sport of course is manna for heaven, or manna from heaven for television programmers. You see it counts as Australian content and there’s a lot of it. It costs virtually nothing to produce. It happens at somebody else’s expense and there is a lot of it, enough to satisfy the demands of several television networks. Above all, it’s popular with a large percentage of the viewers, so it rates well, and TV stations can up their advertising rates, because sponsors will be willing to pay more to advertise their wares on a high-rating programme. Of course there are TV rights which must be paid to the sporting bodies, but with no performers or staff to pay the TV stations still come out on the right side of the ledger, or so I believe.²⁴²

Former STW9 Presenter of religious programs and current [2003] journalist John Hudson said, ‘Expense and the fear of creating performers who would ask for too much money and stardom. i.e. local Seven and Nine slaughtered many first class TV people for fear of their popularity.’ Entertainer and former TV On Air Personality Max Kay offered,

We have become satellite stations of the big Eastern States conglomerates. It is probably much cheaper to bring in American series – re-runs particularly – than to locally produce shows. Despite this the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts has supplied much talent to the Global TV industry – Heath Ledger, Hugh Jackman, Rove McManus etc. ,²⁴³

and former TVW7 and STW9 Production Assistant Liz Kirkham recalled,

Since returning to work (after kids) in 1978, I have been involved in advertising, local production (with Taimac, Barron Films etc.) plus many features and mini-series, which have been produced locally. Apart from “Fortunate Life” I can’t think of one that returned investment, or was a commercial success. So therein lies the problem. It is far cheaper and safer to buy product in.²⁴⁴

²⁴² Denzil Howson, former STW9 Production Manager, written communication, May 1999.

²⁴³ Max Kay, former TV On Air Personality, personal interview, 27 June 2002.

²⁴⁴ Liz Kirkham, TVW7 and STW9 Production Assistant, written communication, undated 2001.

Former and original STW9 Chief Engineer Victor J. Kitney, saw the problem in much the same way as most and offered, ‘Economics, plus domination by larger production companies.’²⁴⁵ while former TVW7 Production Manager Marion Leyer, also agreed with ‘Cost – Producing “good” local productions is very expensive and unfortunately it is very difficult to sell local programs interstate. Nowadays with “networking” all major production companies are located in E.S.’²⁴⁶, Former STW9 and ABC Set Designer and Graphic Artist George Liddle concurred. ‘I guess it all boils down to money and market.’²⁴⁷

Former TVW7 Lighting Technician Steve Lumsdaine, still working in the industry [2003] at Community Television Access 31 said, ‘Changes in technology, public taste, economic rationalisation, globalisation?’²⁴⁸ And former STW9 Production Manager Norm Manners wrote,

Production cost – including talent, crews, studio, set, lighting, etc. etc. I is less costly for a station to simply buy product on the market. This gives a better dollar return

²⁴⁵ Victor J. Kitney, former STW9 Chief Engineer, written communication, 20 June 2001.

²⁴⁶ Marion Leyer (nee Greiling), former TVW7 Production Manager, written communication, 21 June 2001.

²⁴⁷ George Liddle, personal communication, interview, Sydney, September 2000.

Even the ABC, they’re struggling. When I went to the ABC after Videotape Corporation, probably was the Golden Era of television for ABC. There was sufficient money and talent to do a lot of things. For instance, ah, in Sydney at Gore Hill, there were ten designers working consistently, ten assistants. There were probably forty, thirty or forty carpenters, permanently. Ten painters. Ah, so there was this vast array of facilities available. There was a fantastic system which was based on the BBC system where there was, the thing about the ABC in those days was that although there was money to make productions, there was an efficient way of making productions. We cycled sets which is a thing you don’t do now and there would be ‘stock’ flattage, there would be ‘stock’ windows, ‘stock’ doors, so if you were doing a drama you’d pull out ‘stock’ book and if it was a Victorian era house, sometimes we had period plays, you picked out the correct period windows, doors and assembled the flattage, you know you built pieces, special pieces you needed for that particular production but the bulk of that set was drawn from ‘stock’ and after the show was finished the flattage would be stripped and whatever treatment had been put on, wallpaper, whatever, paint. And those flats would go back into ‘stock’ and so it was a really efficient way of doing things and, and we’d, you’d do a drama, a drama or a drama series or a light entertainment show, doesn’t matter what it was, because studio time was really valuable, all the bumping of sets was done at night. So the designer was ‘king’ really at that stage because it’s because what he or she did in terms of the set that decided so many other things. You know, obviously the Director would ask for specific angles and everything was planned on paper so when you went into the studio, you were bumping the sets, which had been constructed, in the workshop. They’d be in sections, assembled in the studio. Ah before that, the lighting guys would come in and drop all the light. Because they’re working off the designer’s plan, they know where to point their lights. They’d drop all their lights, point all their lights, turn off the lights on the hoists and then the staging guys would come in, put up the sets. Ah, painters would come in, touch up the sets, paint the floors where necessary, then the set dressers would come in, put all the furniture, props, whatever in for that particular show and it was all done in one night. At eight o’clock in the morning we’d be turning over the cameras and shooting all day or two days whatever it was. It was very efficient.

²⁴⁸ Steve Lumsdaine, former TVW7 Lighting Technician, written communication, 14 June 2001.

from advertisers. Production money is very difficult to obtain from sponsors, especially in this State, unless syndicated for network release.²⁴⁹

Former controversial TV and current radio Presenter Robert Maumill said that ‘Stations buy packages of American trash and re runs. It’s cheap and it’s easy.’²⁵⁰ Former STW9 Studio Cameraman [21st Century Coffee King] Phil May, acknowledges the inevitable with, ‘It’s all to do with “Globalisation” of the medium – Networks – easier to buy than produce. – By the way, we will watch what you give us “Big Brother”, “Pop Stars” – I suspect we will see more!’²⁵¹ May’s contemporaries, former STW9 Studio Cameraman and GWN3 Chief Engineer Kevin Mohen and former STW9 Studio Cameraman ‘Minnie’ Monad, both concluded that the problem was “Networking’ it’s killed the local stations period! ‘Downsizing Production is first to go in this area. ‘Cheap imported programs’ creates no incentive or economic rational for networks to locally produce – even worse for smaller stations.²⁵² and ‘Basically the stations are run from the east coast and they got rid of the (25% or thereabouts) policy of locally produced programs.’²⁵³

Former TVW7 Secretary Frank Moss answered the question thus,

FM: Well I guess that the stations take everything on-line from Sydney. The equipment has been established which means we don’t have to produce programmes in Perth. The main reason for that is cost savings which had been [considerable?]

PH: For which today they use the catch phrase ‘economic rationalism’...but economic rationalism is not a new thing is it?

FM: No. No, we were as economical as we could be right from the start. But we produced, we built the best studios. We had our own workshop, our own facilities for producing.²⁵⁴

and current TV Engineer Gary McAllister said,

²⁴⁹ Norman G. Manners, former STW9 Program Manager, written communication, 4 August 2001.

²⁵⁰ Robert Maumill, former TV Presenter, written communication, 20 September 2001.

²⁵¹ Phil May, former STW9 Cameraman, written communication, 31 August 2001.

²⁵² Kevin Mohen, former STW9 Studio Cameraman and GWN3 Chief Engineer, written communication, 3 June 2001.

²⁵³ ‘Minnie’ Monad, former STW9 Studio Cameraman, written communication, undated 2001.

²⁵⁴ Frank Moss, former TVW7 Secretary, personal interview, 28 July 1999.

Costs – The networking of Australian television started the demise of many local productions – It was seen to be more cost effective to produce one show for networking via the economy of scale. I think then we lost a lot of localism and production/engineering creativeness – usually to the East Coast Sydney or Melbourne.²⁵⁵

Former TVW7 Producer etc., Gordon McColl said,

I think it is to do with cost, and 2) the acceptance by the community that if it is the economically rationale then it must be obeyed i.e. the new religion.. Early on it could be seen that if each new station in the corporate circuits in Australia produced one program and swapped it with one other station in the circuit they would go a long way towards meeting their “Live” Australian content at greatly reduced costs. Each station produces a program and sells it to several others, priced just to regain costs of production. Profits are made from the advertising revenue, and maybe the advertiser foot some of the bill for the program but basically it costs the station nothing to produce it. It is cheaper to buy from someone else, using this type of economic pattern. With the growth of the world market it is far cheaper to buy from overseas. You can buy reruns from elsewhere for virtually nothing.

When TV started in this country, each station in each city did their own programs. It was lucky for us that the original legislation required news programs, or they would have been cut. As corporate links developed between the capital city TV stations they did swaps on programs. In Sydney ATN7 co-operated with a Melbourne station to produce the Shell Dramas. They did one, one month, we did one the next month. Shell footed the bill for 1-2 years.

In the 1980’s I tried to re-enter TV by applying for a job with the ABC in Perth. My original TV boss, John O-Callaghan was hiring at the ABC and interviewed me. He told me, at that interview, after I had sworn secrecy that he could not offer me a job, because the satellite communication was going to be fully operational in a few months time and all ABC TV stations would be reducing staff in vast numbers and most programs would come live out of Sydney and Melbourne, direct, and that would be the local Australian content for each station in each city.²⁵⁶

Former STW9 and Current [2003] TVW7 Presenter Jeff Newman offered, ‘Costs.

Budgets. Networks. All of these! The networks now, there is no room, it’s all networked.’²⁵⁷

The interview continued thus:

PH: And of course the immediate satellite communications?

JN: That had a heck of lot to do with it didn’t it? You know, stuff used to come across the broad-band and it was pretty expensive; and the satellites now are so inexpensive. Those two down there, they come from London. They pick up all our stuff out of

²⁵⁵ Gary McAllister, current STW9 Engineer, written communication, 14 June 2001.

²⁵⁶ Gordon McColl, former TVW7 Producer etc., written communication 15 June 2001.

²⁵⁷ Jeff Newman, former STW9 and current TVW7 Presenter, personal interview, 3 June 1999.

London and then go across to the network... I have no doubt that in future it will be world-wide and we won't operate at all.

PH: Yes, do you regret that Jeff?

JN: I would if I was as young as I was then!

PH: But what about the point of view of today. There must be lots of talented people available, who have no opportunity of becoming?

JN: Well they do. They go to the Eastern States and that's where it all happens. They get parts in *Home and Away* or they end up compering [other] shows.

PH: So it's part of the Global Village?

JN: But you see. With satellites and everything like that it's sport. It's an incredibly vital part of television. Like it or not, sport is very important.

PH: What is Australian content percentage today, do you know?

JN: No, I don't. When you think about it you'd have to say that sport employs local people. You'd have to say that.

PH: So there are still camera-men, and audio-men and lighting-men.

JN: In my day it costs ten thousand dollars to drive the O.B. Van outside the building. Now I don't know. The Grand Final that we televise, there's thirty-five cameras! The M.C.G., 7's coverage of the Grand Final with thirty-five cameras! That's quite – well, you

know! A lot of those are slaved into their own V.C.R's so you've got that instant replay. There are seven or eight cameras into their own V.C.R' so you've got that straight replay. That's huge money!²⁵⁸

In 2002 Jeff Newman remained as 'the anchor' of *Telethon* and in 2003 still presented the nightly Weather bulletins.

Current STW9 Station Manager Ric Nicholas, restricted his answer to 'Legislation change to ownership.'²⁵⁹ and former TVW7 Children's Show Presenter Colm O'Doherty said 'Money!'²⁶⁰ A not much longer answer came from STW9 Producer Michael Padgett, who stated, 'Economics pure and simple.'²⁶¹ Former TVW7 Studio Cameraman Ernie Oxwell said,

Money! I guess and my 'Pet Hobby Horse' – When it is all boiled down to it, the viewing public were just basically stupid, they would rather have crap served up than have to think! Also, our basic production skills were not as

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ric Nicholas, TV Accountant, written communication, 26 September 2001.

²⁶⁰ Colm O'Dougherty, former TVW7 Children's Show Presenter, written communication, undated 2001.

²⁶¹ Michael Padgett, STW9 Producer, Current Director of Appealathon, written communication, 7 June 2001.

‘slick’ as imported TV.²⁶²

Current [2003] STW9 Producer/Director Ray Pedretti, had some hopeful thoughts in saying,

As I produce Postcards and Just Add Water I see local TV as essential. Would love to do ‘live’ but now it is a “global” world. We see ‘live’ everyday. No longer a mystique to it. I can see a future for it – a new generation will tire of globalization.²⁶³

One of the few television workers who requested anonymity was a Current [2003] TV Engineer and it is understandable, in view of his reply, that he would not want to be identified by management! He said, ‘People want American produced crap. (Ratings tell us this). This crap comes cheap, if it rates what’ the point of spending money on local productions?’

Current [June 2003] NEW10 Newsreader Greg Pearce seems to have been mindful of his present job in saying,

Technology and the cost of producing good quality programmes, have been the death knell for local programmes. With satellite, immediate link-ups now available, people have become used to slick, expensive productions, and won’t put up with “perceived” inferior local programmes. [Greg Pearce commutes between Perth and Sydney to present the daily News on Channel 10 in Western Australia.]²⁶⁴

Another ‘short answer’ came from former STW9 Musical Director Peter Piccini, who saw that it was “Money”²⁶⁵ and former TVW7 Presenter Janet Prance (Gill) said the same, ‘Money = the cost of running them today – it would be ratings and money.’²⁶⁶ A former TVW7 female Presenter, with a request for anonymity said, ‘Networking mainly and perhaps a change in the attitudes of audiences who want a lot of action in their TV (USA?) or the intrusive ‘reality’ TV which is currently so popular.’ Always willing to contribute to the

²⁶² Ernie Owell, former TVW7 Studio Cameraman, written communication, 26 June 2001.

²⁶³ Ray Pedretti, STW9 Producer/Director, written communication, 14 June 2001.

²⁶⁴ Greg Pearce, current Channel 10 Newsreader, written communication, 11 September 2001. [To retire from his position in October 2003 and replaced by Ron Wilson, a Sydney newsreader, now familiar to Western Australian audiences through weekend and occasional exposure.]

²⁶⁵ Peter Piccini, former STW9 Musical Director, written communication, 6 June 2001.

²⁶⁶ Janet Prance (Gill), former TVW7 Presenter, written communication 29 May 2001.

public forum, former STW9 and current Access 31 Presenter Paul Ritter maintained that, ‘Economic Rationalism as introduced by Keating, centralization and the subsequent virtual disfunctional Local Govt. by E. Rationalism as it is continuing today, destroying “The Sensitive Future” see my next series on TV31 starting August, my books etc.’²⁶⁷ and former [1960s] TVW7 Newsreader Susan Saleeba said, ‘Lack of known talent in Perth. Budgetary constraints.’²⁶⁸

Former STW9 and TVW7 Presenter Jenny Seaton (formerly Clemesha) contributed, It was just huge and you’d have performers on. You’d pay; you couldn’t afford to do that today. That’s why there’s a demise of programmes like that...

P.H: Today the catch-cry is ‘economic rationalism’.

J.S: That’s right! And that’s fair enough because there are shareholders involved.²⁶⁹

Former TVW7 Cafeteria Manager Lorraine Shaw bemoaned the passing of ‘live’ television with, ‘We should still have them. I suppose gone to[o] commercial so doesn’t pay.’²⁷⁰ Former TVW7 Football Presenter Jack Sheedy agreed that it was ‘Probably production costs.’²⁷¹ And current [2003] STW9 Chief Engineer Gus Slater said,

Simply cost. The cost of labour to manufacture material for one market will always be more per station than shows produced for national distribution. If we could make something that no-one else could do and it had national appeal, WA might have a chance but even selling our exclusive tourism (e.g. “Postcards”) is difficult in our national market.²⁷²

Former TVW7 and STW9 Makeup Artist Nola Smith maintained the consensus with ‘Mainly expense – cost of local production incorporates high costs in equipment, production resources and qualified talent. “Live To Air” Production although risky is also the most challenging and the most fun.’²⁷³ and former STW9 Engineer Richard Staffe also agreed in

²⁶⁷ Paul Ritter, former STW9 and current Channel 31 Presenter, written communication, 12 June 2001.

²⁶⁸ Susan Saleeba, former TVW7 Newsreader, written communication, 14 June 2001.

²⁶⁹ Jenny Seaton (formerly Clemesha), former STW9 and TVW7 Presenter, personal interview, 27 March 2001.

²⁷⁰ Lorraine Shaw, former TVW7 Cafeteria Manager, written communication, undated 2001.

²⁷¹ Jack C. Sheedy, former TVW7 Football Presenter, written communication, 11 September 2001.

²⁷² Angus Douglas Slater, STW9 Chief Engineer, written communication, 2 July 2001.

²⁷³ Nola Smith, former TVW7 and STW9 Makeup Artist, written communication, 5 June 2001.

his reply of ‘Mainly the cost of productions for the size of the audience reached.’²⁷⁴ STW9 Film Assistant Dawn Stocker viewed the changes from the children’s point of view and said, ‘We should still have them. The kids are the world’s future.’²⁷⁵ War Hero, Journalist, Author and former STW9 Presenter Jack Sue offered his thoughts on that which had gone, ‘Live? Soapies, liberalization of sex shows and sexuality, and shows with emphasis on female bodies, boobs etc., plus the endless saga of the rates race.

Rightly or wrongly, these I believe, are the reasons for lack of live shows on our stations.’²⁷⁶, while former TVW7 Presenter Carolyn Noble (Tannock) saw it simply as ‘American programs.’²⁷⁷

The background to TVW7 Floor Manager (1969-current [2003]) Jeff Thomas’ television knowledge is extensive. He nominates ‘networking’ as the prime cause. Thomas no longer works for TVW7 full-time, but said that he is regularly ‘called’ in to work on various

²⁷⁴ Richard Staffe, former STW9 Engineer, written communication 29 May 2001.

²⁷⁵ Dawn Stocker, STW9 Film Assistant, written communication, 25 May 2001.

²⁷⁶ Jack Sue, former STW9 Presenter, written communication, 22 July 2001.

²⁷⁷ Carolyn Nobel (Tannock), former TVW7 Children’s Show Hostess, personal interview, 7 August 2001.

shows and earns more money now free-lance, than he did previously.²⁷⁸ Former Newspaper

²⁷⁸ Jeff Thomas, personal communication, interview, 2000.

JT: Well again, because it became the network. Why make four situations when you can make one? I mean, it's easier to make one production in Sydney and send it over here, than to make two. The turnaround time situation, remember there's a time difference, um, why make it here when we can make it over there, send it here and show it. So the studios at Seven sort of became really quiet. We pushed for some local production of course and we've proved many times at Seven that there's nothing that we can't do over here that they can do over there. In fact, a lot of times people say we do it a lot better. Um, but maybe that's only blowing one's own trumpet.

PH: Yeah, just, just recently there was a show *Nuts and Bolts*, has that gone on?

JT: That's a, once again that was made by a private company outside of Seven. Made for Seven but it was outside of Seven and once again this is how television has gone now you see because it's, because you haven't got the, the experience, the professionals like you used to have in, in the industry because they've all gone out on their own, it's cheaper now to have a pot of programs made privately by independent stations. This is happening throughout the world. It's just not just here; television stations basically as such make very few television programs. They farm it out and buy it back. A show like *Nuts and Bolts* I think made one series, they made about thirteen shows and as far as I know it was fairly successful. It rated fairly well and it's this sort of show that you can replay because it's an interesting, the interest is still there you know, to the people who haven't seen it before. It's, it's a learning program and any program where you're learning from you can replay, replay, replay, because people who haven't seen it can learn from it.

PH: And *It's Academic* is returning.

JT: Well, *It's Academic* was done twenty odd years ago. In its day very basic it was sponsored by the R and I Bank, all local production. It was one of the shows I enjoyed working on. I think I did every one of them in its day. I think I worked eight years with it.

PH: Eight years?

JT: I think eight years *It's Academic* went for and I think, you know, when you reflect back on some of the shows you've worked on, people say 'I wonder why we don't do that again?' And fortunately this was one of the shows that was heard, somebody saying 'Why don't we do it again?' Could have been me, I don't know! Because, you know, the format of the show is very simple. Basically it's three lots of schools, compete with each other. Whether it be States Schools or Government Schools and you've always got the under-dog situation if you like. And I must say in my experience the under-dog always come out in front, you know, you do thirty-eight shows for the first series and we have a, obviously winning school ah, which ends up going to England for a little holiday.

PH: That's at the moment, first prize?

JT: Yes, that's first prize, thirty-eight thousand dollars. Yes, this time it's being basically done by the Education Department, in other words a lot of the, not the stress but a lot of the worry about putting it together, you know, like getting the questions, um, picking the schools. I think they advertised initially for um, I think fifty schools. They had about three hundred and fifty applicants applied to be on the show, Because some of the big schools don't get a look-in, um, because the response has been so great that it's given a big wide choice of schools and out of, as I say, the three hundred or the three hundred and fifty, only fifty have got in. So there's always going to be another series when maybe another fifty schools can have a go.

PH: So the people who are producing the, when I say producing I mean physically producing the show, if they don't work at Channel Seven now, where do they come from?

JT: The producers, the series is being done in association with Channel Seven, Jeff Newman, who is say the Executive Producer but the Education Department is actually paying I suppose. The Government for this series. The Government is involved fairly heavily with it; they see it as being a good thing.

PH: The cameramen?

JT: Basically it's all local. Local cameramen, everything from the production side,

PH: Freelance?

JT: No. Oh, there are a couple of freelancers like myself. They've called me back in to floor manage it.

PH: So the others do work at Channel Seven?

JT: The other do work at Channel Seven. Most of the cameramen. Occasionally, because of the, you have to remember we've gone down from about thirteen camera, men, to four! But I think we've just

TV Critic Barry Thornton considered that the demise of local ‘live’ programming was due to ‘Cost to networks and reluctance by ABT [Australian Broadcasting Tribunal] to regulate for stations to comply with local production requirements.’²⁷⁹ while former TV Talent Show Judge and Theatrical Entrepreneur John Thornton wrote,

I think the loss of local ‘live’ shows can be equated with the gradual loss of the TV Imperative. Remember the Mavis Bramston Show when you could not run anything against it on Thursday evenings? The whole town stopped. There is nothing on TV that can do that now. Not even the Olympics. Local TV can’t justify the costs when put up against the overwhelmingly addictive internet/games/computer age not to mention the endless quantities of Elephant Dung Beetle doco’s on cable. And then there’s video, Mega movie screens, Playstation II, and a handful of cult TV shows – all from overseas; e.g. South Park, Buffy, Sex and The City have any chance with the younger generations and even they battle the ratings against each other.²⁸⁰

Former STW9 Presentation Co-ordinator (Master Control) Eddie Townsend said,

It’s all Eastern States now. The Perth station is just a little sub-station for the Network. What’s live out at Channel 9? There’s only the News. In the old days they had a Midday Show and that [Don] Spencer night-time show. They were going to have it every night of the week. Busy times then. They had the big artists. Yes it was quite good, Well, I went back there Peter. It’s the same building – just computerised. It isn’t the same place at all.²⁸¹

Former TV Clerical employee John Toyne did not hold back with, ‘If they have vanished it would be a matter of cost-savings by companies and replacement by syndicated “rubbish” mass produced to fill vacuums. Out with nurturing local talent and intelligence – in with the Big Mac fix!’²⁸² while former TVW7 Dancer [1960s] Jan Urquhart argued, ‘I really think it is too expensive to have live shows. We don’t have the volume of people (viewers) to keep a show going for any length of time. But we do have talent in our State to be proud of, but viewers are drawn to big names and overseas shows and artists.’²⁸³ and former Production Assistant and Personal Assistant to Managing Director, Marina Valmadre said,

²⁷⁹ Barry Thornton, former Newspaper TV Critic, written communication, 20 August 2001.
[no relation to]

²⁸⁰ John Thornton, former TV Talent Show Judge, written communication, 22 August 2001.

²⁸¹ Eddie Townsend, former STW9 Presentation Co-ordinator, personal interview, 14 June 2000.

²⁸² John Toyne, former TV Clerical Employee, written communication, 21 August 2001.

²⁸³ Jan Urquhart, former TVW7 Dancer

A changing community focus; increased entertainment avenues; Tired formats and lack of creativity in producing new responses to meet our segmented markets. New opportunities lie in crafting entertainment to speak to the aspirations of the viewers (e.g. Seniors being seen as multifaceted personalities rather than an age group; mother/parents being understood for all their roles – not just one etc.²⁸⁴

Former TVW7 and STW9 Film Room Assistant Carol Wallace and former TVW7 and STW9 Film Editor Geoff Wallace, (still together after a Company in 1966 romance which ended Carol's career) said separately, 'I would think it would be cost.'²⁸⁵ and 'Money/National programmes.'²⁸⁶

Former TVW7 and STW9 Newsreader Peter Waltham said 'The true buzz-word of the nineties is 'relay stations' ...I mean if you want to be truthful about the media that' it. They are repeater stations.'²⁸⁷ He first noted economic rationalism '...within two days of Eva Presser buying Channel 9.'²⁸⁸ Waltham also contends that all of the News services will

²⁸⁴ Marina Valmadre, former Production Assistant, written communication, 7 June 2001.

²⁸⁵ Carol Wallace, former Film Room Girl [her description], written communication, 25 July 2001.

²⁸⁶ Geoff Wallace, former Film Room Editor, written communication, 31 July 2001.

²⁸⁷ Peter Waltham, personal communication, interview, Curtin Radio 6NR, 2000.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

eventually be sourced from Melbourne or Sydney.²⁸⁹ Former STW9 Program Manager now Senior Vice President 20th Century Fox Film Corporation (Aust.) Tom Warne, written communication, 1 February 2002.

Live kids shows – well, you are talking to an old kids man here. It is sad to see these programs disappear. The reason of course is ratings and central networking. I was talking to a senior executive in our group about this very matter. He had spent a lot of time in the TV business in the US and his observation was that in America there are no kids. There are only big adults and little adults. And you know I think he's right. Maybe Australia has caught up with the US. Sad, because what a wonderful platform it was for kids to express themselves and learn the basics of TV. I recall we had a sensational local children's program at STW9 which fostered young talent and rated well. Then there were other more expensive National shows particularly programs like Young Talent Time which gave Australia some of its greatest performers.

In many ways then television was more personal with the ability to program for local school holidays, people arriving home early in the smaller cities like Perth and late in the larger cities like Melbourne and Sydney, along with tailored programming to fit

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

But the phrase 'economic rationalism' in regard to television, when did you first notice that?

PW: I first noticed it, probably within two days of Eva Presser buying Channel 9.

PH: Right. You never noticed it at Channel 7?

PW: Oh no, no.

PH: As a feature?

PW: No. At Seven I never saw evidence at Seven of cutting corners or cost cutting. Never, ever.

PH: So that would translate as being loyalty to staff and vice versa?

PW: Absolutely. Absolutely.

PH: Relay stations. Satellites?

PW: Well ultimately I think that Perth will be – the television stations in Perth, I think that is inevitable that there will be a national News that will come out of Sydney or Melbourne or whatever. It will run for half an hour. You'll get a half an hour local News...Newsroom in Perth I wouldn't be surprised to see it end up being three journalists and two cameramen. Your sporting programmes, your commentators will fly in and fly out. I have seen for

example the Channel 7 staff when I suppose at the peak probably numbered better than 200. I would think that given five years Channel & staff will probably be fifty, maybe less. I think it is inevitable.

PH: I was told that as a fact Channel 10 News is about to go to the Eastern States, definitely at the weekend. Very soon. [this proved to be correct.]

PW: Yes I think it is inevitable...I think it is a disaster for Western Australia, but it's brought about – it's caused by a number of reasons. One is the fact that, here, I think there's a mistake made in this country that isn't made in the United States for example and the best example in that is probably sport. Like in the United States, the major television networks in the United States all cover the same sport so that like here you would have Channel 10, Channel 9, Channel 7 and the ABC all doing AFL Football. Now they do different games,

the same as they all do cricket so you are not alienating one audience for six months of the year. Over there it's a mix and match. And over there what's on NBC, NBC will say CBS has a good programme on. You know, don't hide it as we're not enemies, sort of thing. That's what's lacking here. Because what you find here, is that all the football commentators gravitate to one station. All the cricket commentators gravitate to the other station and then once they start to bargain for big salaries, I think what's killing the Seven Network at the moment is probably their wage bill for their sporting commentators and what they're paid for television rights. Because instead of sharing, if you want the rights for yourself, you are going to pay probably three times as much as if you're sharing the rights with Channel 9. [The recent 2002 changes in Australian AFL rights bears out the correctness of this theory.]

PH: But I mean, the cutback in local 'live'?

with various daylight savings requirements in each state. That's all gone now – programmes go out at set times and to hell with local requirements. Sadly things change, usually forced by economics. Networking saw the demise of most of the local children's production and other shows as well. It also eliminated a great training ground which is only just now being replaced by the various Pay TV channels. However, these are mainly not the same, they are mainly niche and not broad enough to give proper training. However, it's all we have got.²⁹⁰

Former STW9 Telecine Operator Wendy Weir thoughts that the reason for the absence of 'live' programming was due to, 'Financial expenditure! It is a pity there aren't more of these shows. There are very few shows where our local talent can be seen or heard. Where can they get a start?'²⁹¹ and former Electronics Engineer Gerry Wild noted that, 'The development of video tape as opposed to 16mm film use and networking, especially when the broadband microwave system became operative throughout Australia. It became cheaper to put on American "sit-coms"'.²⁹²

Considered by his contemporaries as an 'icon' of the industry, former TVW7 Producer/Director Brian K. Williams observed the passing of local 'live' production as being caused by,

Network consolidation and the consequent "national" or network programme decision making. In the '80's television channels were seen to be high-flyers of the period to be almost limitless cash cows which could finance their entrepreneurial exuberance – hence the take-overs. The subsequent demise of these latter day robber barons left network management in the hands of economic rationalist accountants with little or no interest in the original "show business" culture of the industry and an all-consuming passion for "bottom lines". The original promises made in respect of local production development and exposure of local talent, in Television licence applications were reiterated at licence renewal hearings – but alas, ignored by the licencees once the rubber stamp had been applied to the renewal – and the relentless cost cutting regimes were applied again. The succeeding Federal Government agencies responsible for policing the industry shrank from any confrontation with the media heavyweights because their political masters depended on media support for re-election. Thus, less and less local output was produced and centralisation of programme decision making and therefore production, increased unabated. This, together with self regulation through the Federation of Commercial Television Stations made regional production wither on the vine. Unfortunately for the industry and the viewing public the term

²⁹⁰ Tom Warne, former STW9 Program Manager, written communication, 1 February 2002.

²⁹¹ Wendy Weir, former Telecine Operator, written communication, 12 June 2001.

²⁹² Gerry Wild, former Electronics Engineer, written communication, 21 June 2001.

“local” has all but disappeared from the vocabulary. The demise began in the “80’s so the current station managements were but children in the days of an active local industry. After hearing some weeks ago a brief media exchange about which W.A. Channel had the current superior “local” content record, I felt only pity for the participant spokespeople; they are perhaps either too young and inexperienced to know, or too determined to toe the line of their Eastern States commissars in order to climb an executive ladder, rather than take up the cause of local production. Allowing for inflation a comparison between the distribution of revenue and ratings in the 50’s, 60’s and 70’s and today might make interesting reading and the negative results cannot be blamed entirely on video, electronic games and the Internet. I think the truth is that while an emaciated body exists, the soul departed some 20 years odd ago.²⁹³

Pioneer cameraman, producer/director at both TVW7 and STW9 Phil Booth listed these three reasons,

- 1) Cost of production – too expensive.
- 2) National Shows stop locals doing programs as all stations are networked now.
- 3) Local stations cutting down on staff.²⁹⁴

Former TVW7 [1960s] Singers Ruth and Eric Young, All policies seem to be made in the Eastern States and anything local seems to be “not good enough”. Do we need more assertive management to show confidence in local productions? ²⁹⁵

Journalist Rex Haw wrote, ‘Production costs, and the increasingly important ‘bottom line’, advertising profits with lowest overheads. Talent costs money. These days network bosses don’t want quality on the screen, they just want images, preferably paid advertising. They openly admit this.’²⁹⁶ Former STW9 cameraman Bob Finkle said that it’s due to, ‘... National Network Stations, satellite relay status not allowing local “windows” for local productions.’²⁹⁷ Producer Lyn Hancock said ‘Cost!’²⁹⁸ and retired sports commentator Jimmy

²⁹³ Brian K. Williams, former TVW7 Producer/Director, written communication, 20 July 2001.

²⁹⁴ Phil Booth, written communication, July 2003.

²⁹⁵ Ruth and Eric Young, former TVW7 Singers, written communication, 14 June 2001.

²⁹⁶ Rex F. Haw, TV Journalist, written communication, 30 October 2003.

²⁹⁷ Bob Finkle, former STW9 cameraman, written communication, 31 October 2003.

²⁹⁸ Lyn Hancock, TV producer, written communication, 3 November 2003.

Chadwick said ‘Networking!’ Current [2003] NEW10 General Manager David Fare replied with one word, ‘Cost!’²⁹⁹ Former STW9 interstate advertising manager Milton Francis who has lived in Victoria since 1967 said ‘...not really aware of the situation.’³⁰⁰

Current [2003] TVW7 Advertising Manager John Wright said that it was cost. When *Good Morning Perth* was being put to air in the mid-nineties it cost \$10,000 per week and only had 20,000 viewers. Advertising could not sustain the production.³⁰¹ Former TVW7 continuity assistant in 1959 finished as CEO of Network Ten in 1987 and then was General Manager of NEW10 Perth for seven years, said that ‘Networking’ was to blame. He bemoaned the passing of local ‘live’ production as they were essential training grounds.³⁰² Former STW9 *Channel Niners Club TV Dentist’s* assistant Pam Neesham (nee Kidd) listed:

*Lack of faith in the general public by management.

*Cost of production of local ‘live’ shows.

*So many overseas and interstate programs have taken over – to the detriment of local content –W.A.

Former STW9 Security and handy-man John Hayes, who became a telecine operator said, ‘Lack of local sponsorship. Centralizing of programming on a national basis to minimize costs. Globalization. Current [2003] STW9 News presenter Dixie Marshall offered that, ‘The argument is that they are not cost effective...although that seems to be very short sighted, given that the local programs we do have – *Postcards*, gardening gurus etc. rate extremely well.’³⁰³ Former STW9 telecine and tape operator Bevan Long said, ‘Possibly cost

²⁹⁹ David Fare, personal communication, interview, Dianella, 22 September 2003.

³⁰⁰ Milton Francis, former STW9 Melbourne advertising manager, written communication, 29 July 2003.

³⁰¹ John Wright, TVW7 Advertising Manager, personal communication, interview, 11 June 2003.

³⁰² Bill McKenzie, for TV Executive, personal communication, interview, 30 September 2003.

³⁰³ Dixie Marshall, current STW9 News presenter, written communication, 29 October 2003.

motivated, but not within the inner circle so could not say.³⁰⁴ Former Chief Engineer's

Secretary Helen Mumme wrote:

Production of 'live' shows requires creative, organisational and technical expertise. Staff who are good at their job and equipped to carry out these functions are expensive and can be difficult to manage from a corporate point of view. Television seems to have moved very much from the 'creative' to the 'corporate'. The business of 'live' shows also requires the company to be a 'risk-taker' because the opportunity for things to go wrong is always there. Everything pre-recorded gives a more 'dependable out-put in a more timely fashion'. Unfortunately the opportunity is also lost for that chance of brilliance which often rises in 'live' production.³⁰⁵

Former STW9 newsreader Russell Goodrick wrote:

In regard to television programmes, with more and more product bought as part of network or overseas packages there has been a significant impact on local product. Nationally in general the commercial networks are not interested in interstate product even if it's of similar quality, but cheaper. Locally, programmers have to decide on showing no more cost pre-paid programmes or initiating local ones at an additional cost. The only reason our company has been so successful for so long is that we have a major client paying large fees for air space and production facilities. [Goodrick's company's main product is a Western Australian real estate sales vehicle.] I sincerely believe that we have underwritten other local productions and that competing programmes on other stations have been given more support in that they counter our influence on perceived local content and opportunities.

One of my lines for many years was: When the accountants move in, the creatives move out. And that's basically it/. There's no room for local production if it's going to cost the stations money without the ratings and generally the perception is "That no one wants to gamble their job away".³⁰⁶

The short answer to why local 'live' production practically disappeared from the television studios of Western Australia has been 'money'. 'Money' as in the lack of it to sustain a viable local industry. 'Money' as in the dictum that it has to be preserved as dividends to shareholders. 'Money' as in the belief that expenditure in the interests of Community, which does not return a dividend, is a redundant concept. 'Money' as in the reality that networking from centralised production units is cheaper than 'local' production. No matter the classification, reiteration cements the theory that local 'live' production was a

³⁰⁴ Bevan Long, former STW9 telecine and tape operator, written communication, 29 October.

³⁰⁵ Helen Mumme, former STW9 Chief Engineer's Secretary, written communication, 28 November 2003.

³⁰⁶ Russell Goodrick, former STW9 newsreader, written communication, 15 December 2003.

victim of technological advances, networking misplaced Federal Government regulation and corporate greed.

Appendix 4:

STW9 Production 'Running Sheets' from the 1960's and 1970's

The relevant photographs, are in the main the creative work of former Station Photographer Michael Goodall, and reproduced with his kind permission.

Appendix 5:

**Photographic reproductions mainly sourced from the Annual
Reports of TVW7 and STW9 1958 - 1990**

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