

Your Ref.: CB1/PL/ITB

4 March 2006

Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong

Attention: Ms Debby Yau

Dear Madam,

**Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting
Invitation for submissions**

We refer to your letter of 2 February 2006 on the subject matter.

We are pleased to confirm our attendance to the captioned meeting and the particulars of our representatives are detailed in the enclosed form. Furthermore, we would like to provide our view on the issue of public service broadcasting in Hong Kong as below:

Role of PSB in Hong Kong

1. The core value and role of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) in Hong Kong is to serve the community. The scope of PSB covers all aspects of life including education and information, Government services, social work, as well as arts and culture just to name a few. Furthermore, since Hong Kong is an international city having a population with mixed nationalities and ethnic groups, distinct interests of diverse audiences will need to be catered, e.g. special needs of new immigrants to Hong Kong to adjust to lifestyle and culture of the local society. It is therefore the function and responsibility of the public service broadcaster to fulfil the mission of PSB and facilitate building of a harmonious society of Hong Kong.

2. In practice, the three radio broadcasters have produced and broadcast public service programmes in considerable quantity and variety. The issue of adequacy of PSB in Hong Kong should be subject to public opinion. In the event that the extent of PSB delivery would be increased, the existing radio broadcasters should be utilised for the purpose.

Proposed Institutional Arrangement and Funding for PSB

3. We advocate that PSB should be supported by government funding, as PSB is aimed for the benefit of the community. For the matter of internal governance of PSB, it should be a decision based upon the opinion of the general public.

Mechanism for Monitoring Performance of PSB

4. Performance monitoring of PSB should be subject to the same regulations as those for the commercial broadcasters and the regulatory body overseeing the commercial broadcasters should oversee the performance of the public service broadcasters. There is no obvious need to put the public service broadcasters on separate footing in terms of performance monitoring thereby incurring extra funding from establishment of a separate body for the purpose.

Provision of PSB by Publicly-funded and Commercial Broadcasters

5. We are of the view that PSB should be initiated by the Government and supplemented by the commercial broadcasters. As a commercial broadcaster, a key consideration in our programme production and service is that they are financially viable. This means that we are inclined to cater to the mass market more so than public-funded broadcasters. In the case of Metro Broadcast, we have duly fulfilled all licence conditions stipulating the provision of public service programmes and in fact aired public service programmes in excess of the requirements of our licence (Appendix 1).
6. We are willing to consider provision of PSB outside of our licence requirements subject to fulfilment of two factors: (i) funding needs to be provided, and (ii) the programme itself should be commercially viable.

Impact of Technological Advancement on PSB

7. We envisage that technological advancement towards digitisation will result in increase in availability of audio broadcasting frequencies to be utilised for the purpose of PSB. The resultant additional frequencies from technological advancement should lead to a more comprehensive range of public broadcasting service with more niche interests better served.

Editorial Independence for PSB

8. The editorial policy of PSB should honour editorial independence that is generally understood as the editors being independent of any commercial, political and vested interests in news reporting, commentaries and programme production.

The need for public access channels in Hong Kong

9. In Hong Kong, the existing broadcasters, be it commercial or publicly-funded, have already provided many programmes to facilitate citizens to express and exchange opinions. As such, the need for public access channels in Hong Kong is doubtful. Any proposal for additional public access channels should be subject to further discussion and its value be thoroughly assessed.

In the meantime, should you require further information, please feel free to contact the undersigned. Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours faithfully,

For and on behalf of
Metro Broadcast Corporation Limited

Katherine Kwok
Deputy Director – Compliance & Operations

Encl.

**Programmes Broadcast in Fulfilment of Licence Requirements
Metro Broadcast Corporation Limited**

Month: January		Year : 2006		
1. Current Affairs Programme				
Requirement : minimum 90 mins per week between the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 midnight				
Direction : - current affairs programmes				
Channel	Date	Time	Total	Programme
Metro Showbiz 新城娛樂台	Sat	0800 - 0830	30 mins.	News Weekly 一周新聞
	Sun	0830 - 0900	30 mins.	Sunday News 星期日報
Metro Finance 新城財經台	Sat	0900 - 1000	60 mins.	Ming's Tea House 明茶館
	Sat	0100 - 0200 (re-run)		Ming's Tea House 明茶館
	Sun	1800 - 1830	30 mins.	Global Village News Headquarters 地球村新聞總部
Metro Plus 采訊台	Mon	1700 - 1800	60 mins.	Newsweek On Air
2. Programmes for Young Persons				
Requirement : one half-hour programme per week between the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 midnight in the Chinese language service				
Direction : - education, proper development of young people in Hong Kong aged 16 years to 24 years				
Channel	Date	Time	Total	Programme
Metro Showbiz 新城娛樂台	Mon-Fri	0930 - 1000	30 mins.	增值青雲路
Metro Showbiz 新城娛樂台	Mon-Fri	2100 - 2200	60 mins.	Education Network 教育網
Metro Showbiz 新城娛樂台	Sun	2130 - 2300	90 mins.	Passion Generation 火熱新一代
Metro Showbiz 新城娛樂台	Sun	1900 - 2030	90 mins.	Education Network 教育網
Metro Showbiz 新城娛樂台	Sat	2000 - 2100	60 mins.	The Teenage Community 新新青年互助委員會
3. Programmes for Senior Citizens				
Requirement : two half-hour programmes per week between the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 midnight in one or two services, one of which must be the Chinese language service				
Direction : - health, financial position or recreation of senior citizens in Hong Kong over the age of 60 years				
Channel	Date	Time	Total	Programme
Metro Showbiz 新城娛樂台	Sun	1300 - 1400	60 mins.	Healthy Sunday 星期日. 保健日
Metro Finance 新城財經台	Sun	1900 - 1930	30 mins.	Book Lovers 愛書才會贏
Metro Plus 采訊台	Sat	0800 - 0830	30 mins.	Where did the week go?
4. Arts and Culture Programmes				
Requirement : 30 mins of programmes per week between 8:00am - 12:00 midnight in each of any two services, one of which must be the Chinese language service				
Direction : - promoting the development and appreciation of literary, performing and visual arts and other topics or activities of cultural value				
Channel	Date	Time	Total	Programme
Metro Showbiz 新城娛樂台	Sun	0600 - 0830	150 mins.	Culture Club 小文化社
Metro Finance 新城財經台	Sun	1930 - 2000	30 mins.	Culturium 文化顯像館