

**Renewal of the Analogue Sound Broadcasting  
Licences of Hong Kong Commercial Broadcasting  
Company Limited (“CRHK”) and  
Metro Broadcast Corporation Limited (“Metro”)  
Group Discussion with Members of the  
Television and Radio Consultative Group  
(15 October 2014)**

**Summary of Views**

**Programme Diversity**

1. There were too many news programmes, commentaries and phone-in programmes.
2. The licensees should provide more music programmes, arts and culture programmes, infotainment programmes, radio dramas, lifestyle programmes, history programmes, non-horse racing sports programmes and programmes for children, young persons and senior citizens.
3. The licensees should be required to broadcast more positive and educational programmes. However, there were views that the development of broadcasting services should be market-driven, taking into account various factors including the expectation of listeners. While the licensees were obliged to comply with the regulations and codes of practice, being commercial organisations, they should have the editorial freedom to decide on their programme plans and business modes to attract target audience and generate advertising revenue.
4. CRHK broadcast more children’s programmes than Metro, contributing to the positive development of children.
5. Metro had broadcast more arts and culture and sports programmes.

## **Accuracy, Impartiality and Fairness**

6. There were comments that the licensees might be biased towards certain parties or individuals so as to attract more advertising revenue.
7. It appeared that the number of complaints against factual programmes and personal view programmes (“PVPs”) were on the rise. There were concerns about the balance between maintaining freedom of expression and the regulatory standards governing fairness and impartiality of PVPs.
8. Radio broadcasters should be subject to more stringent regulations on fairness and impartiality than web-based commentators, taking into consideration their pervasiveness and degree of influence on the community.
9. CRHK’s programmes used the PVP arrangements to circumvent regulations governing fairness and impartiality in the Radio Code of Practice on Programme Standards. The broadcasters should be made responsible for the remarks made in their programmes.
10. More and more programmes of CRHK had predetermined stances regarding political and social issues, which would promote biased thinking, especially among young persons, and would adversely affect their development. Commentators and hosts of phone-in programmes should stay neutral and present different views to facilitate the audience to make their own judgements.
11. The hosts of some phone-in programmes on the Metro Info channel rejected other hosts and callers who held different views. Their imperious attitude would set bad examples to young persons.

## **Programme Standards**

12. There were concerns whether radio broadcasters were subject to the same set of provisions governing factual programmes as those for television services.

## **Programme Quality**

13. The quality of some programme hosts and disc jockeys (“DJs”) was declining.
14. Some DJs of Metro were popular amongst young listeners.
15. The programme hosts of CRHK’s phone-in programmes were biased and partial that listeners were discouraged to make calls. In addition, the hosts often argued with the callers.
16. Calls made to phone-in programmes of CRHK and Metro were often not answered. Successful callers were not given sufficient time to put forward their views and the calls were frequently interrupted by news and advertisements. The broadcasting time allocated to such programmes appeared to be very little.
17. There were favourable comments on the licensees’ real-time news reports and morning traffic news.
18. The sound quality of music programmes was important. As for other programmes such as talk shows, current affairs programmes and phone-in programmes, the content was more important.

## **Advertising**

19. Most of the advertising slots were allocated to a limited number of advertisers, especially on Metro. The repeat broadcast of similar advertisements bored listeners.

20. The licensees should produce more high quality advertisements to attract more advertising revenue with a view to improving their programme quality.
21. The frequency of advertisements on Metro during certain periods of the day was too high.

### **Other Comments and Suggestions**

22. There were views that the CA should review the current mechanism for considering licence renewal. The licensees' complaint records, programme quality and listenership, the capacity of the market in accommodating different radio channels and the incidence of suspension of licence should be taken into consideration in assessing their licence renewal applications.
23. There were views that the sanctions imposed on the licensees for their breaches might not be effective deterrents as the broadcast of the materials in question could generate a considerable amount of advertising revenue for the licensees.
24. Views of members of the public who were reluctant to lodge complaints against the licensees were underestimated, if not omitted, under the existing complaint-driven regulatory approach. The regulator should consider enhancing the regulatory regime or initiating investigation on a case-by-case basis in regulating the broadcasting standards of the licensees.