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# The Natal Witness Printing & Publishing Company

Proprietary Limited  
Registration 88-02702-07  
362 Pietermaritzburg 3200

0331-942011  
Advertising 0331-942021  
244 Longmarket Street

IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE ALL THE PAGES CLEARLY, PLEASE TELEPHONE OR FAX US

TO ..... MELODY EMMETT .....

FAX NO. .... 011 397 2211 .....

COMPANY ..... THE INDEPENDENT MEDIA COMMISSION .....

FROM ..... STUART CRAIB .....

OUR FAX. NO. .... 0331 94 0468 .....

OUR REF. .... DATE ..... 12/7/93 .....

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MESSAGE:

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## The Natal Witness

### Printing & Publishing Company

JSC/cb

12 July 1993

The Independent Media Commission  
ATTENTION: MELODY IMMETT

re: BROADCAST ACT

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As proprietors of one of the few independent newspapers in South Africa, we appreciate and sympathise with the underlying concerns of the Broadcast Act. As we read it, the Bill wishes to protect independence and a diversity of ownership in media, which in turn should guarantee a more diverse media.

However, in seeking to ensure diversity, the Act contains provisions which will harm and perhaps destroy the media overall. Economic reality is such that, to have a regional radio and regional print medium in a market the size of Pietermaritzburg, could lead to neither being able to sustain a healthy business resulting in the demise of one or the other or both.

The above concern is based on the assumption that Pietermaritzburg would be a licence area of a private broadcasting licence in terms of Section 47. As the only newspaper, as defined, in the Pietermaritzburg area we would not be able to be represented on the board of any company that is in a position to control a private broadcasting licence for the area in terms of paragraphs (4), (5) and (6) of Section 47.

In the worst case scenario for us this could lead to an opposition Durban newspaper, which also circulates in Pietermaritzburg, getting a private broadcasting licence for the Pietermaritzburg area with the specific (although obviously unannounced) intention of destroying The Natal Witness, by offering very cheap advertising rates on their radio station.

The Natal Witness has existing experience and long-standing relationships with local advertisers and would like to become partners with others in our community in a local radio. Unless we are allowed to become partners with local radio licence holders, we will be increasingly marginalised.

This is not in the best interests of strong, independent media, the cornerstone of democracy.

Yours sincerely

J S CRAIB  
MANAGING DIRECTOR

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