

# What, me worry?

702'S ANGELA CATTERNS FACES RENEWED COMPETITION WHEN MIKE CARLTON STARTS HIS 2UE BREAKFAST SHOW TODAY. BUT IF SHE'S CONCERNED SHE'S NOT LETTING ON, WRITES **SUE JAVES**.

**P**erhaps it's her unassuming nature, or the fact she appears on the ABC rather than a big-spending commercial station, but Angela Catterns must be the most overlooked success story in Sydney radio. She may not have the influence of 2GB's Alan Jones, the sharp wit of 2UE's Mike Carlton or the news background of his predecessor, Steve Price, but when it comes to bums on seats, more Sydney people opt to spend breakfast with the warm, bubbly 702 host.

Jones consistently wins the radio surveys because his listeners tune in for longer each morning, but when it comes to a measure of total weekly listeners, Catterns is ahead. And they are the sort of listeners 2GB and 2UE would love to claim.

Nearly half of 2UE's audience is over 60 and almost a third of 2GB's is over 70. Most of Catterns's listeners fall into the 30-59 bracket, a highly attractive demographic for advertisers on commercial stations. In fact, if you remove the over-70s from the ACNielsen breakfast figures, Catterns has 360,000 weekly listeners at the ABC, Jones has 270,000 at 2GB and Carlton inherits 224,000 people from Price at 2UE.

Which explains why Carlton has all but given up on Jones's older, more conservative audience, setting his sights instead on Catterns's audience to boost his 2UE breakfast ratings. If Catterns is worried, she's hiding it well.

"Weren't 2UE trying to do that when they got Price in the first place?" she asks dryly. "They can keep trying, and some ABC listeners will probably wander over for a taste, but I think, by and large, they'll come back to the ABC."

702's mix of warm, intelligent Sydney talk and good music, uninterrupted by advertising and wrapped around a solid digest of ABC news and current affairs, is a hard combination to beat. "Jones and Carlton are very good at what they do," Catterns says. "It's just not what I do. I'm not a big boofy bloke for a start. I'm a caring, sharing kinda gal. People actually hear me cry on the radio, which I can't help and feel terrible about, but it happens and it's real."

The ABC gets good value from Catterns. Jones earns at least \$4 million a year and Carlton is believed to get close to \$1.5 million but Catterns would be lucky to earn more than \$120,000 and has



"A caring, sharing kinda gal" ... Angela Catterns. Photo: George Fetting

to deal with the insecurity of a yearly contract. She says her husband is more rankled by the anomaly than she is.

"Christiaan reads your articles about how much money all my competitors make and he goes, 'That's outrageous. What's your boss's name again? Give me the phone. You need me to go in there for negotiations.'"

One has to wonder why the ABC doesn't tie up such a hot property in a long-term contract. "Perhaps they don't think I'd go anywhere else," Catterns suggests.

Years ago the former Triple J announcer left the ABC to work at 2SM but was sacked eight months later. She says executives decided women didn't like listening to a woman and that she was too intelligent for the audience. "If someone in commercial radio was to experiment with a different format I might fit in," she says, "but I can't see it at the moment."