



media release

The Community Radio Station That Could: 3UGE Takes Top CBAA Award for Bushfire Broadcasts

21 November 2009, Brisbane: The CBAA's prestigious Tony Staley Award for Excellence in Community Broadcasting has gone to 3UGE in Marysville, which battled the Victorian Bushfires and continues to play an important role in the recovery process for local communities.

As the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) celebrates innovation at its National Conference in Brisbane, 70 community radio nominees have battled for a gong among the 14 CBAA Award categories.

For the last 37 years the CBAA Awards have sought to recognise achievement across the diverse fields of Community Broadcasting. Now in its 14th year, the Tony Staley Award for Excellence in Community Broadcasting recognises activities that promote the values of community broadcasting: 'democracy, diversity and independence.'

Caught in the midst of the Black Saturday bushfires, the Tony Staley Award winner 3UGE (UGFM) had a tough year in 2009. The community station lost two of its transmitters to the fires but continued broadcasting to the Shire of Murrindindi during the emergency.


Prior to the loss of the Marysville and Flowerdale transmitters, UGFM was able to alert residents in advance of the fire front, using good local knowledge and information from the fire incident control centre.

The Murrindindi Shire lost 130 people, 25 public buildings and 1200 of the 1400 houses lost in Victoria to the fires. Since the devastation of Black Saturday, UGFM has not only rebuilt its own transmitters but also opened a new studio in Marysville in May and established a translator service in Kinglake in September.

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Since the fires, 3UGE has been providing regular daily roundups with interviews and news from government, support agencies and community groups. The station has trained additional presenters for Marysville, broadcasts fire recovery programs and streams its service via the internet, providing links to local and emergency services.

The Award honours the support of former Government Minister and former President of the Community Broadcasting Foundation, the Hon. Tony Staley, who will present the Award at the CBAA's Gala Dinner.

Congratulating 3UGE on its momentous achievement, CBAA President Deborah Welch said, "UGFM not only played a key role as an emergency broadcaster during the fires, but has been instrumental in the recovery process for local communities. The station, its staff and volunteers truly embody the spirit of community broadcasting."

The diversity of Community Broadcasting is reflected across the other CBAA Awards finalists: ethnic and religious stations, those catering for youth and seniors, gay and lesbian audiences and stations covering all types of music and the arts. CBAA stations reach out to communities through Indigenous and educational stations, radio for the print handicapped and news and current affairs.

Deborah Welch said, "The CBAA congratulates each and every one of the winners and finalists for their outstanding contribution over the year. We encourage all those nominated to keep pushing the boundaries of their work."

"The CBAA Awards are not just about the biggest and brightest, but also about those who encourage the aims and objectives of Community Broadcasting, not only the stations but also their staff and volunteers, both on and off the air."

THE CBAA AWARD WINNERS FOR EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY BROADCASTING

Tony Staley Award for Excellence in Community Broadcasting^{^^^}: 3UGE (Alexandra, VIC)

Michael Law Award for Individual Contribution to the Sector: Stephen Jolley (Vision Australia)

Best Initiative to Build Station Capacity: 2FBI – Ask Richard (Sydney, NSW)

Excellence in Digital Media: 3CR for www.3cr.org.au (Melbourne, VIC)

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Outstanding Youth Contribution: 4ZZZ – News Department (Brisbane, QLD)

Best New Program or Content Initiative*: 3MBS FM – Musical Portraits (Melbourne, VIC)

Excellence in Community Participation: Edge Radio – School of Rock Youth Engagement (Hobart, TAS)

Excellence in Training: Radio Adelaide – Radio Adelaide Training Partnership with Ausmusic SA (Adelaide, SA)

Excellence in Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasting: Joint winners:

- Radio Adelaide – Radio Adelaide & Neo Voices (Adelaide, SA)
- 4EBFM – 4EBFM (Brisbane, QLD)

Contribution to Local Music:** 2SER – We Come From Garageland (Sydney, NSW)

Contribution to Indigenous Broadcasting: 3CR – Beyond the Bars 5 (Melbourne, VIC) (General)

Excellence in Spoken Word, News and Current Affairs Programming^: 2SER–Final Draft: Books and Writing (Sydney, NSW)

Most Innovative Outside Broadcasting or Special Event Broadcasting^^: 2MCE – Sounds Live (Bathurst, NSW)

Troy Garner Excellence in Sport Programming: 3WBC – VFL Match of the Day (Melbourne, VIC)

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:

- The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) is the national peak body for 270 community radio and television stations around the country.
- Australia has a unique and highly developed community broadcasting sector, with over 300 licensed community broadcasting stations and the involvement of almost 20,000 volunteers.

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- Licences were first issued in 1972 to not-for-profit organisations to provide alternative and complementary broadcast services to those provided by the commercial and national sectors, as well as access for communities to generate their own local media content.
 - The sector is very diverse, with licences allocated both geographically and according to specific communities of interest. Approximately 70 per cent of stations are located in regional and remote areas.
 - Communities of interest include Indigenous, ethnic and multicultural, educational, youth, religious, specialist music, print handicapped and a broad range of general community radio services which support local communities.
 - Community radio stations are not-for-profit and are funded primarily through fundraising, sponsorship, subscription, program access and limited federal funding support (via the Community Broadcasting Foundation).
 - **www.cbaa.org.au**

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