



# Australia's Creative and Cultural Industries and Institutions

CBAA Submission

29 October 2020



COMMUNITY  
BROADCASTING  
ASSOCIATION OF  
AUSTRALIA

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# 1. Introduction

The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) – the peak body and national representative organisation for over 450 community radio broadcasters across Australia – welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts' inquiry into Australia's creative and cultural industries and institutions.

Community radio plays a vital enabling role in supporting the creative and cultural industries – promoting and broadcasting creative works to millions of listeners across Australia; creating significant employment, training and pathways opportunities; supporting live shows and events; and, ultimately, enhancing Australia's cultural vibrancy and social wellbeing. Further, community broadcasting is an important conduit for skills, training and employment in the creative and cultural industries and is a launchpad for Australian creatives, arts workers, broadcasters, composers, songwriters, performers, and producers to expand their reach and launch their careers.

Community broadcasting also plays an important role in providing a voice for Australian communities that are underserved by commercial and public broadcasters – including First Nations Australians, communities in regional and remote Australia, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, faith-based communities, youth and seniors' communities, the LGBTQIA+ community, people with a disability, and diverse arts and music communities. In doing so it promotes the diverse identities of Australians that enriches the social and cultural fabric of Australian society.

Like many Australians, community radio services – as intrinsically linked to and part of broad cultural and creative industries – have faced significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic which has impacted significantly on broadcasting resources, staffing and volunteers, and revenue sources in sponsorship, donations and fundraising. Many community radio stations have struggled to maintain operations.

This inquiry provides an opportunity to better understand the community broadcasting sector's role embedded within broad creative and cultural industries; the effect of COVID-19 on our sector; and recommend policy and regulatory reforms that would allow the sector to flourish and enhance its role in supporting Australia's creative and cultural industries.

Our submission focuses on:

- Community radio's unique role and wide listenership across Australia;
- Community radio's role as a connector and nurturer of the creative and cultural industries, particularly the music industry;
- Employment and training across the community broadcasting sector;
- Challenges faced by community radio stations during COVID-19 and the sector's response;
- Recommendations to ensure the community radio sector can be fully resourced and operate in an optimised policy and regulatory environment to grow its role in supporting creative and cultural industries.

In its deliberations and report, we hope the Committee:

- Recognises the role that community radio plays in supporting creative and cultural industries, and local music and arts communities in cities and in the regions.
- Recognises the impact COVID-19 has had on the broad creative industries, including community radio.
- Recommends greater funding certainty and an optimised regulatory environment for the community broadcasting sector.



## 2. CBAA champions community broadcasting across Australia

The CBAA is the peak body for community broadcasting stations in Australia and an internationally recognised, not-for-profit cultural organisation. The CBAA has always prided itself on maintaining a diverse sector, supported by volunteers and other community-minded individuals. Since its inception, the CBAA has strived to uplift the voices of those otherwise not heard on air.

The CBAA champions community broadcasting by building stations' capability and creating a healthy environment for the sector to thrive. We work towards ensuring that community broadcasting is recognised as an excellent, innovative, sustainable, accessible, trusted and diverse industry, and a key pillar in Australian broadcasting that contributes to Australia's democracy, an open society and cultural vibrancy.

The CBAA proudly works with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (DITRDC), and the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), to strengthen and support Australia's community broadcasting sector in delivering on the Government's desired policy outcomes.

As the peak body for the community broadcasting sector, the CBAA consults widely with community broadcasting licensees – representing all community interest types, in all states and territories, broadcasting in the cities, regional Australia and in remote regions. The CBAA also liaises with the five community broadcasting Sector Representative Organisations (SROs) and the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) by convening the Community Broadcasting Sector Roundtable. The Roundtable consists of representatives from:

- The Australian Community Television Alliance (ACTA)
- Christian Media & Arts Australia (CMAA)
- The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA)
- First Nations Media Australia
- The National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council (NEMBC)
- RPH Australia (RPHA), and
- The Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF)

The Roundtable identifies and discusses sector needs, emerging issues, policy positions, funding requirements and joint advocacy initiatives.

The CBAA notes and supports the submission and recommendations made by Christian Media & Arts Australia (CMAA) and welcomes their insight and expertise to this inquiry. Recognising that their submission focuses on the value the Christian media sector brings to the broader community broadcasting sector and creative industries, our submission focuses on highlighting other aspects of our diverse sector. As there is significant crossover in our membership base, the CBAA would welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee alongside the CMAA and diverse station representatives, who can speak first-hand about their roles supporting local creative and cultural industries.

## 3. Community radio's unique role and wide listenership across Australia

The size and importance of the community radio sector to the Australian creative and cultural industries is significant, yet frequently underestimated.<sup>1</sup> The 2019 Share of Audio research study

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<sup>1</sup> Maddy Macfarlane, 8 June 2018, "Community radio is growing the music industry", The Industry Observer, Available at: <https://www.theindustryobserver.com.au/community-radio-is-growing-the-music-industry/>



shows that radio listening still dominates audio entertainment, sitting well ahead of music streaming, online music videos, and podcasts as the leading audio platform in Australia.<sup>2</sup>

Community stations provide programming that caters to the needs and interests of their communities and contribute to and reflect an Australia that is an open society and a strong democracy, which embraces pluralism.

An annual listenership survey of more than 15,000 Australians shows there are over 5.8 million listeners aged 15+ across Australia tuning in to community radio stations each week (29% of the population).<sup>3</sup> This is up from approximately 3.76 million in 2004. Each year, community radio's listenership grows – up from 24% of the population in 2004 to 29% in 2019.<sup>4</sup> Of these listeners, over 1.5 million do not listen to any commercial radio and, further, 918,000 listen exclusively to community radio (that is, they listen to community radio but not commercial radio or ABC/SBS radio).<sup>5</sup>

Community radio draws its audience from a wide cross section of the community with a reach of at least 20% of most demographic groups – across gender, age, location, employment and income – tuning in to community radio during a typical week. Community radio listeners are more likely to identify as LGBTIQIA+, have a disability or reading difficulty, and/or hold a religious faith.<sup>6</sup> Over one quarter (27%) of people who regularly speak a language other than English in their household listen to community radio during a typical week. Four out of ten of people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (43%) listen to community radio during a typical week.<sup>7</sup>

Amongst the top reasons Australians give for tuning in to community radio are specialist music programs (36%) and to hear Australian music (27%), as well as local news and information shared by local voices and personalities.<sup>8</sup> Across Australia, no less than 37% of music broadcast on community radio is from Australian artists, well surpassing the Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice requirement of 25%.<sup>9</sup>

Recent research indicates that figures this high are not being achieved by the commercial broadcasting sector.<sup>10</sup> Many community radio stations are leading in ensuring more diverse Australian music is broadcast. For example, the 90+ volunteers broadcasting at MAIN FM in Castlemaine, Victoria, are working toward their own enhanced quota of 30% Australian music broadcast, celebrating diverse musicians in their November 2020 “Australian Music Month”. 4ZZZ in Brisbane has implemented advanced airplay quotas in its Station Policy. The station's Australian music quota is 40%; local 30%; new music 30%; First Nations 5%; and female and non-binary artists 50%.<sup>11</sup> The station reports that they are currently hitting all target quotas.

<sup>2</sup> GfK and Commercial Radio Australia, 2019 Share of Audio study. Available at: [www.radioalive.com.au/Research-Insights/Major-Research/Share-of-Audio](http://www.radioalive.com.au/Research-Insights/Major-Research/Share-of-Audio)

<sup>3</sup> Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2019). Community Radio National Listener Survey 2019 – Australia Fact Sheet Wave #2 – December 2019 [online] Available at: [www.cbba.org.au/sites/default/files/media/McNair%20yellowSquares%20-%20NLS%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Australia%20-%202019%20-%20Wave%20%232%20-%20190101.pdf](http://www.cbba.org.au/sites/default/files/media/McNair%20yellowSquares%20-%20NLS%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Australia%20-%202019%20-%20Wave%20%232%20-%20190101.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2020). Community Radio National Listener Survey 2019 – Summary report of findings – February 2020 [online] Available at: [www.cbba.org.au/sites/default/files/media/NLS%20-%20Main%20Report%202020.pdf](http://www.cbba.org.au/sites/default/files/media/NLS%20-%20Main%20Report%202020.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2019). Community Radio National Listener Survey 2019 – Australia Fact Sheet Wave #2 – December 2019 [online] Available at: [www.cbba.org.au/sites/default/files/media/McNair%20yellowSquares%20-%20NLS%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Australia%20-%202019%20-%20Wave%20%232%20-%20190101.pdf](http://www.cbba.org.au/sites/default/files/media/McNair%20yellowSquares%20-%20NLS%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Australia%20-%202019%20-%20Wave%20%232%20-%20190101.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2020). Community Radio National Listener Survey 2019 – Summary report of finding – February 2020 [online] Available at: [www.cbba.org.au/sites/default/files/media/NLS%20-%20Main%20Report%202020.pdf](http://www.cbba.org.au/sites/default/files/media/NLS%20-%20Main%20Report%202020.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2019). Community Radio National Listener Survey 2019 – Australia Fact Sheet – December 2019 [online] Available at: [www.cbba.org.au/sites/default/files/media/McNair%20yellowSquares%20-%20NLS%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Australia%20-%202019%20-%20Wave%20%232%20-%20190101.pdf](http://www.cbba.org.au/sites/default/files/media/McNair%20yellowSquares%20-%20NLS%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Australia%20-%202019%20-%20Wave%20%232%20-%20190101.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2018). CBAA Programming & Technology Survey.

<sup>10</sup> [www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-22/commercial-radio-missing-australian-music-quotas-researcher-says/9575146](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-22/commercial-radio-missing-australian-music-quotas-researcher-says/9575146)

<sup>11</sup> 4ZZZ, Station Policy. Available at: <http://jeff.4zzz.org.au/sites/default/files/media/4ZZZ%20Station%20Policy%201.5.pdf>



## 4. Community radio's role as a connector and nurturer of the creative and cultural industries

The community broadcasting sector is a vital enabling layer in Australia's creative and cultural industries. This is perhaps best demonstrated through its supporting role for local musicians and music industries. While community radio also plays a vital role in supporting and promoting a vast array of creative pursuits and industries – independent, local and mainstream theatre, comedy, film, literature, and the arts – it is probably championing music in which the sector plays its most obvious role.

Community broadcasting is a vital layer in Australia's music industry. More than 450 community radio stations provide an avenue for local musicians and artists to be broadcast on airwaves across the country and streamed online across the world. They serve as a catalyst for building diverse and passionate music communities that support vibrant live music scenes and the venues and workers that host and nurture them across the country.

Community radio, because of its different, for-purpose business model not only fills gaps that the national broadcasters and commercials cannot, but it actively champions Australian music and contributes to the health and vitality of local music scenes. This dedication and passion for local music and the local music industry is ingrained in its radio licensing framework, which stipulates that community radio shall support local and underrepresented news, perspectives, music and culture. Community radio stations are created with an inherent value being placed on local and Australian music.<sup>12</sup>

When there is a reduction in Australian music programming in other radio sectors, community radio often steps in to fill the gaps. For example, after the 2017 cuts to Radio National music programming, ex-ABC presenter Paul Gough, in partnership with APRA AMCOS, commenced hosting *Playback*. The program broadcast to over 20 community radio stations via the CBAA's Community Radio Network (CRN), bringing listeners the best in new Australian and New Zealand music. Paul now hosts a music program called *Chimes* at Sydney's 2ser, which is also broadcast nationally via the CRN.

Community stations provide an avenue for Australian musicians to be broadcast on airwaves across Australia and streamed online across the world. It is a common story that many internationally successful Australian artists get their first radio play on community radio, which can be the start of long careers with continued support from community broadcasters. Some examples include:

- Dan Sultan – a popular, charting Arrernte/Gurindji artist whose connection to community radio was so strong he became the first CBAA's Australian Music Radio Airplay Project (Amrap) Ambassador in 2014.
- Gotye – as a self-funded, self-recorded artist, Wally De Backer first submitted music to 2SER under the Gotye name in 2002, well before his international success in 2011 with 'Someone That I Used To Know'. His 2002 recording 'Boardface' was subsequently an album of the week on 2SER before the album got wider release through De Backer's first record deal. The only interview De Backer did after he won three Grammy Awards in 2013 was with 2SER.
- The Vines – a Sydney band who received their first airplay on FBi Radio and went on to global success.
- Emily Wurramara – the Brisbane singer-songwriter's first EP 'Black Smoke', sung in both English and her traditional language Anindilyakwa, had 10 weeks in the CBAA's Amrap charts and was played on 112 community radio stations in six months. The EP then amassed over one million Spotify streams and was awarded a Queensland Music Award.
- Courtney Barnett – a Melbourne artist who is now one of the biggest independent artists in the world who received strong initial support from community radio and continues to do so as her music gets wider notice.

<sup>12</sup> Maddy Macfarlane, 8 June 2018, "Community radio is growing the music industry", The Industry Observer, Available at: [www.theindustryobserver.com.au/community-radio-is-growing-the-music-industry](http://www.theindustryobserver.com.au/community-radio-is-growing-the-music-industry)





- Jeff Lang – a blues and roots guitarist who doesn't fit mainstream radio formats, gets a lot of airplay from community radio, which builds his great fanbase and touring cycle.
- Wolfmother – another Sydney band who were first played on FBi Radio and went on to become one of the world's biggest bands after releasing their debut album.
- Hermitude – a Blue Mountains based duo who submitted demo material to 2SER for airplay before recording their first album. They became involved in 2SER's revered 'Freaky Loops' events, known for fostering talent in the Australian hip hop scene. Hermitude went on to have number one albums in Australia and regularly tour the world to huge audiences.

The CBAA is committed to supporting diverse voices to access the airwaves and does this by championing a varied sector, supported by volunteers and community-minded individuals. In the music and arts ecosystem, the CBAA and stations across the sector do this collaboratively with diverse partners including not-for-profit associations, community bodies, local governments, and youth, religious and cultural groups.

Several broad policy areas and programs align with the strengths of and role played by community radio across Australia:

- Supporting sustainable and viable music careers for diverse artists and industry through professional development opportunities.
- Ensuring young musicians and broadcasters are celebrated, encouraged and supported through targeted skills and talent development programs.
- Stimulating industry development to ensure increased performance opportunities for local, young, emerging and early-career artists across the country.
- Supporting independent artists in their efforts to tour, record and promote their music both domestically and internationally.
- Nurturing emerging broadcasters, artists and industry professionals to ensure the industry pipeline is supplied.
- Supporting audience development through collaborative marketing campaigns and promotional campaigns.

## Partnership and Sponsorship

Sponsorship and partnerships are a core part of community radio station operations, including events in both metropolitan and regional Australia. Partnering with venues, small businesses, and other community broadcasters contributes meaningfully to the vibrancy of cultural industries, and music and arts economies in metropolitan and regional Australia.

Key examples of this include:

- Koori Radio presents the annual Yabun Festival, a diverse line-up of music and more from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and hosts multiple outside broadcasts throughout NAIDOC Week. From time to time, Alice Springs station CAAMA also collaborates on the broadcast.
- 2XX and Artsound in Canberra, 3CR in Melbourne and 2MCE in Bathurst have all partnered with the National Folk Festival over the years to provide audiences with live broadcasts.
- RTR FM in Perth – in partnership with diverse sponsors – has produced the annual In The Pines festival for the past 26 years to support local artists.
- As part of Fresh 92.7 in Adelaide's Contemporary Music Program, the station collaborates with numerous partners to provide live performance opportunities for local musicians at events such as Adelaide's New Year's Eve, OH YES Festival and WOMADelaide.
- Hobart's youth community radio station, Edge Radio 99.3FM has partnered with peak industry body Music Tasmania on an initiative 'Creatively Mental' to raise awareness of mental health within the local creative community.
- Triple R in Melbourne presents a plethora of live music events with partners, from the likes of Meredith Music Festival to Out on the Weekend Festival, Kyneton Music Festival and more.



- The CBAA's national Community Radio Network (CRN) partners with LGBTIQ+ station JOY 94.9 to broadcast from the annual Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras, allowing stations nationally to tap into this content.
- PBS 106.7FM, in association with the Melbourne International Jazz Festival, presents the annual PBS Young Elder of Jazz Commission. The Commission is open to Victorian jazz composers under the age of 36. Each year the Commission awards \$10,000 for the creation and presentation of an innovative new work to be broadcast on PBS and premiered at the Melbourne International Jazz Festival (MIJF). The Commission aims to provide a platform to nurture the future of contemporary jazz composition in Victoria.
- Community multicultural radio station 4EB and alternative station 4ZZZ, both Brisbane based, collaborate each year to bring listeners live broadcasts from the Woodford Folk Festival.
- Eastside Radio produces the Global Rhythms Festival each year in partnership with the City of Sydney and Sydney Fringe Festival.

## CBAA's Australian Music Radio Airplay Project (Amrap)

As part of our commitment to creating an environment where the Australian music industry can thrive, the CBAA's Amrap initiative (supported by the Federal Government via the Community Broadcasting Program) is an example of a collaborative community radio and music industry initiative. Through Amrap, the CBAA distributes and promotes contemporary Australian music to community radio stations nationwide and reduces barriers to entry for up-and-coming artists and producers. To date, Amrap has hosted content from over 10,500 artists via unsigned music providers, record labels, and music business enterprises. To date, over 650,000 music files have been accessed for broadcast by community radio stations nationwide.

In May 2020, CBAA revamped and improved the Amrap website ([amrap.org.au](http://amrap.org.au)). The new website provides artists with an easier way to distribute their music to hundreds of stations and provides community radio program makers with seamless access to Australian music for broadcast. Since launching, program makers have already downloaded over 22,000 tracks with more than 8,000 new releases uploaded by artists. Amrap continues to grow its presence in the Australian music scene and plays its role as a connector across the industry.

## CBAA's Community Radio Network (CRN)

The CBAA also facilitates content sharing and collaboration via the CBAA's CRN, which reaches over 160 stations across the country. The network allows community radio stations to share some of the sector's best news, talk, music and entertainment programs – including from special music events and festivals. For example, the sector's flagship breakfast program, *Good Morning Country* – the most popular program on the CRN and one of Australia's most popular country music programs – annually collaborates with and broadcasts from both Mildura and Tamworth country music festivals.

The above examples demonstrate the significant contribution community broadcasting makes not just to supporting local music scenes, but also demonstrates the interconnectedness of community broadcasting and Australia's creative industries.

## 5. Employment and training across the community broadcasting sector

Community radio also adds significant value as a conduit for training and education of its participants and employees across the creative and cultural industries. This includes in-station training opportunities, and accredited and non-accredited training, as well as through conferences, partnerships, mentorships and scholarships. Community radio stations operate in towns and cities across Australia with the largest proportion located in regional and remote areas (76%) and 24% across metropolitan locations.<sup>13</sup> These stations directly support thousands of workers (paid and

<sup>13</sup> 2019 CBAA State of the Community Sector Report. Available at: <http://www.cbba.org.au/article/state-community-radio-sector-repor>





volunteer) across the country, including approximately 766 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs – over 250 of which are in regional and rural communities – and 26,000 volunteers.<sup>14</sup>

Community broadcasting stations are incubators for creative talent and diverse skills. Training, mentoring, partnerships and employment opportunities develop and nurture media and cultural professionals, with many volunteers and employees gaining skills in broadcasting, management, marketing, media, networking, community building, governance and more.

It is not uncommon for community broadcasters to go on to have long careers in the media, arts and cultural industries, or other related (and non-related) fields. For example, the National Radio News (NRN), which is run by the CBAA in collaboration with Bathurst's Charles Sturt University has launched the careers of many journalists – including Hamish McDonald, the current host of ABC's popular program Q&A. In the past few years, the CBAA has been able to enhance and evolve the NRN by building a collaborative news network; appointing a National News Director; increasing the number of stations that can access news for their region; and appointing a Federal Press Gallery journalist. All of this has been possible with enhanced funding announced in August 2017 and delivered by the Federal Government through the Community Broadcasting Program – the 2020/21 Budget marks the final year of targeted Government funding for enhanced community sector news.

The First Nations media sector is another key example of part of the community sector that nurtures and supports aspiring media and cultural professionals. First Nations media organisations offer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people culturally-safe environments in which to develop 'work ready' skills; a place to continually upgrade those skills; and the opportunity to define their own career paths. Through the training, mentoring and continued professional development that First Nations media organisations invest in their people, these organisations often launch the careers of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander journalists. But it's not only journalists. Many First Nations media organisations operate school-based programming opportunities to engage and provide skills to young people, and deliver or facilitate the delivery of pathways and accredited training. Through their commitment to training and education, the sector sees employees within the industry transition into communication roles in other industries, such as the mining and resources industry, politics and the public service.<sup>15</sup>

Alongside the training offered in-house for broadcasters, managers and operations personnel, community radio stations are also well known for running training and mentoring programs for creatives, musicians and artists. Prior to the disruption of COVID-19, such programs have included:

- 8CCC in Alice Springs runs 'A Song Like Alice' – song-writing workshops in partnership with Music NT, NT Writers and The Sandbox, supported by APRA AMCOS. Over five free workshops, a small group of songwriters are provided with an opportunity to develop writing technique and share new material.
- MusicNSW and FBi Radio partner to deliver Women in Electronic Music Masterclasses, aimed at building electronic music skills across song-writing, production and more.
- Fine Music Sydney has an annual Artist-in-Residence program for NSW classical artists, which is valued at \$10,000 and gives artists access to studios for recording, sound engineers, rehearsal facilities and promotional and marketing support.
- 3MBS in Melbourne facilitates 'The Talent' – a live performance program highlighting the abilities of young and upcoming fine music performers. Each week there are recitals from two performers, as well as an interview with professional industry mentors who offer feedback on their performances. Three performers will then be selected for the finals. The winner receives a concert at Kew Court House and \$1,000 artist fee, plus professional development.
- Adelaide's Fresh 92.7 runs the Contemporary Music Program, helping to launch careers through a network of initiatives that develop artists and their access to audiences. This

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> First Nations Media Australia submission to the House Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs 'inquiry into pathways and participation opportunities for Indigenous Australians in employment and business', January 2020 [online]. Available at: [firstnationsmedia.org.au/sites/default/files/files/Submissions/First%20Nations%20Media%20Australia%20submission%20on%20Employment%20and%20Economic%20Development%20for%20Indigenous%20Australians.pdf](https://firstnationsmedia.org.au/sites/default/files/files/Submissions/First%20Nations%20Media%20Australia%20submission%20on%20Employment%20and%20Economic%20Development%20for%20Indigenous%20Australians.pdf)



includes song-writing development programs, a monthly residency program and open house forums hosting conversations with established musicians.

- For 2018 Queensland Women's Week, 4ZZZ received a grant from the State Government and partnered with QMusic to run a day of music industry workshops called 'Put Us First Fest' for young women and non-binary people. The workshops covered song-writing, audio tech, publicity, DJ-ing, and more for aspiring musicians and people seeking a career in the music industry.

## CMTO's National Training Project

The Community Media Training Organisation (CMTO) is responsible for the delivery of the National Training Program, and enhanced targeted funding (via the Government's Community Broadcasting Program) has enabled them to deliver a new program of activity that focuses on the development of business, leadership, management and social enterprise skills for participants in the community broadcasting sector.

In 2019/2020 the CMTO delivered training to 2,487 community media workers (paid and volunteers) across 270 community media stations and organisations. 60% of stations that received training were in rural, regional and remote locations.

CMTO's 2019/2020 Pathways and Accredited training had a strong emphasis on leadership training for the sector, with 1,654 training places delivered in leadership and enterprise courses. CMTO's 2019/2020 training round also allocated 180 training places in accredited courses, including Certificate III and IV in Screen and Media, 380 in technical training, 410 in broadcast training and 310 in RPH Radio Reading specialised training (e.g. radio reading for people with a print disability).

Several larger scale leadership and enterprise projects are also underway and in development, including:

- Leadership and Enterprise Training project – 710 training places at 58 stations allocated in June 2020 for courses in business, leadership and management skills.
- The Think Big Mentorship – a three-year online learning and mentorship program for targeted station managers/coordinators to develop their stations as successful social enterprises, which commenced early 2020.
- Delivery of the nationally recognised qualification 'CUASS00043 – Community Broadcasting Marketing Skill Set' in 2021.
- 'Secrets of Successful Community Broadcasting Boards' delivered in partnership with Our Community – a one-day workshop covering the unique opportunities and challenges for community broadcasting organisations.
- 'Community Broadcasting Fundraising Campaigns' delivered in partnership with the CBAA and Start Some Good – a one-day workshop covering digital fundraising campaigns for community broadcasting organisations.
- 'Community Media as Social Enterprise' delivered in partnership with Centre for Social Impact, Swinburne – a workshop about developing community broadcasting organisations as social enterprises.
- The development of leadership projects for youth, women, gender non-binary, culturally and linguistically diverse and First Nations volunteers and workers in community media. Recent workshops have been conducted at the 2019 National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council Youth Conference in Brisbane, the 2019 First Nations Media Conference in Alice Springs and the SYN Media Bootcamp in Melbourne for over 70 youth leaders and station managers from across Australia.
- Professional development forums for trainers and mentors in the sector to increase the number of trainers with business, leadership and management skills in community media. Recent forums have been conducted at the Brisbane Indigenous Media Association for trainers in the south-east Queensland region, RTR FM and Harvey Community Radio for trainers in Perth and South West WA and at the South Australian Community Broadcasting Conference for trainers across SA.
- Nationwide virtual and face-to-face leadership summits planned for years two and three of the project.



Community radio is often lauded as a skills developer, an incubator and a pathway for many creatives that go on to work in diverse industries – creative, cultural and beyond. The CMTO's 2020 Graduate Destination Survey surveyed 28 graduates who completed training more than 12 months prior to December 2019. Of these respondents, 40% had engaged in paid work since completing a CMTO course in broad industries including media, music, education and finance. Many respondents in the 2020 and 2019 versions of this survey reported being able to transfer skills to similar creative pursuits, including voice-over work, radio documentaries, radio management and governance roles.

The National Training Program has been supported by additional targeted funding announced in August 2017 of \$0.6 million per annum over four years. The 2020/21 Budget marks the final year of targeted Government funding to enhance leadership and small business skills in the community broadcasting sector. Many of the enhanced leadership skills programs outlined above will cease or be curtailed without a commitment to continuing the sector's existing levels of funding beyond June 2021.

## 6. Challenges faced by community radio stations during COVID-19 and the sector's response

Community radio stations act as catalysts for community dialogue and resilience through tough times, helping to combat social isolation and, importantly, connecting people to the critical services and information they need. As Australia continues to stop the spread of COVID-19, especially in more vulnerable communities and regions of the nation, community radio has never been more important.

The pandemic has undoubtedly highlighted community radio's role as a creative connector and trusted informer. The sector has risen to the challenge of continuing its work, commencing several innovative, creative projects and programs to continue empowering artists and informing communities throughout this changing time. Some highlights include:

- Sydney's FBi Radio started an online 'In It Together: A COVID-19 Community Relief Directory' outlining activities and initiatives by Australian creative communities. This directory shares information about online events, digital content, mental health support, online resources, online community groups and more.
- Melbourne 3CR's *Beyond the Bars* is a prison radio show connecting people in prison with their wider communities. While this year their usual live broadcasts could not take place, 3CR continued broadcasting the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women from the inside – sharing their poems, stories, songs and voices.
- Sydney's Eastside Radio created *For the Duration* – a live and local program covering COVID-19 from that community's perspective. Including interviews with local politicians, businesses and community organisations to help make sense of the developments.
- The CBAA's CRN partnered with the annual Victorian Seniors Festival – presented by the Victorian State Government – to deliver Radio Reimagined. Produced for senior audiences and stations across Australia, programs include a monthly selection of high-quality radio plays, spoken word, poetry and music features from the 40s to the current day, including interviews with performers and presenters.
- CBAA's Amrap has collaborated with the music industry through a new Australian music radio show, *Aussie Music Is Bloody Great*. Broadcast across the CBAA's Community Radio Network, the program showcases the incredible range of Aussie acts, many of whom have lost their livelihoods due to the cancellation of concerts, festivals, tours and shows.
- The CBAA's Community Radio Network also partnered with JOY FM (Melbourne and Australia's only LGBTQIA+ station) to bring national listeners *The Informer Daily* – a daily current affair show covering news and information about COVID-19 with a focus on its impact on the LGBTQIA+ community.

Despite these efforts community radio services have faced, and continue to face, significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



The severity of the impact of COVID-19 has accelerated pressure on local community radio stations to find ways to deliver key broadcast services efficiently and economically, while transitioning to an entirely or partially remote content-production and broadcast model. It is impacting significantly on broadcasting resources, staffing and volunteers, and revenue sources in sponsorship, donations and fundraising.

The economic impact of the pandemic as well as the necessary social distancing measures have had serious and ongoing impacts on the community radio sector and have left many stations struggling to maintain operations. Station revenues, which are particularly reliant on sponsorship from local small businesses and the music and arts industries, are down in many cases over 80%. Events-based fundraising opportunities have understandably been cancelled. In some cases, larger metropolitan stations have secured significantly higher donations than previous years through their annual fundraising drives. While this shows the value listeners place on these community assets, stations report that these increased donations do not fill the gap left by dwindling sponsorship income. Further, due to the sector's seasonal nature of these large fundraising campaigns, many of these same stations are now ineligible for JobKeeper 2.0. Many volunteer workers, particularly in vulnerable groups, are understandably staying home.

The Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) was set up in the 1980s to distribute Federal Government funding to the community broadcasting sector via the Government's Community Broadcasting Program. In response to COVID-19, the CBAA, along with the other Sector Representative Organisations and the CBF, have been consulting widely with stations across the country. Together, the sector responded immediately by establishing a Crisis Taskforce to understand the challenges faced; consider the best way the sector can respond using the available resources; and identify where gaps exist and where Government assistance is required. Measures taken by the sector to date include:

- Providing an automatic six-month extension on reporting requirements for all current CBF Development & Operations and Content grants.
- Allowing CBF grant applicants time to re-evaluate and recast their applications to accord with operation under crisis conditions.
- Establishing a new COVID-19 Crisis Fund with existing sector funds and pursuing contributions from Government and the private sector to provide stations with targeted financial support to maintain operations. Our intention is to build on the initial \$2.2 million investment – towards the \$8 million target – through government and philanthropic support.
- Establishing a CBF COVID-19 Quick Response Grant Fund to ensure that volunteer-only stations can apply for a grant up to \$2,000 to assist with maintaining operations under social distancing requirements.
- Securing a partnership with the Judith Neilson Institute to increase the amount of news reaching Australians via community radio. This has allowed the CBAA's National Radio News service to be free for all member stations for the next six months. The number of stations broadcasting National Radio News across the country has increased to 118 (up from 83) with an estimated audience of 1.7m listeners per week.
- Sharing Department of Health Community Service Announcements through the CBAA's Community Radio Network, including in First Nations languages and a variety of languages other than English.

The CBAA is working with the Government on appropriate funding support measures for the sector and on establishing a fit-for-purpose regulatory environment through much-needed reform. We outline the sector's priorities below.

## 7. Optimised funding arrangements for the community broadcasting sector

The 2020/21 Budget marks the final year of targeted funding, supporting sector projects and initiatives across community digital radio, enhanced news programming, online streaming and skills development. To provide the required certainty for planning and expanding these successful



projects, the CBAA had sought early notice of a funding renewal in the October Budget at an appropriate and ongoing level per annum beyond 2020/21.

Early notice of funding renewal would still be extremely valuable. Without a commitment to providing this funding ongoing the sector will face an annual shortfall of around \$3.7 million, as from July 2021. On top of the severe impact of COVID-19, this drop in Federal funding support will be a further and critical blow to key projects and the sustainability of community radio services across the country.

In addition, due to the required response to COVID-19 through new grants (as well as support for stations impacted by bushfires earlier in the year) the Community Broadcasting Foundation is facing a funding gap that will impact the sector's capacity to continue delivering community impact into the future. The effect of the pandemic has meant that stations who were previously less reliant on Government funding via the CBF now need greater funding to support core operations. Requests for the recent CBF grants, which included the first 2020/21 Content and Development & Operations grants, the COVID-19 Crisis Grant and COVID-19 Quick Response Grant, far surpassed the available funding.

The CBF's initial COVID Crisis Grant fund was created with \$2.2 million using repurposed 2019/20 and 2020/21 funding, as well as drawing on CBF reserves. In April, the CBAA initially estimated the sector would need an additional \$5-\$7 million investment to meet the sector's need as impacted by the pandemic. The past CBF grants rounds indicate the unmet need is closer to \$10 million.

Before the pandemic, the CBAA had requested that public funding to the CBF be increased by \$5.1 million annually to allow a larger and more adaptable grants pool to meet the growing needs of the sector, particularly those in regional and remote areas. With ongoing uncertainty around COVID-19 and public restrictions, it is hard to forecast what the sector's need is for the next 12-24 months, and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss with Government the amount of additional funding that could be provided through the Community Broadcasting Program to assist the sector's recovery and future sustainability.

## 8. Regulatory reform to enhance the sector's impact

For community radio stations to continue best serving communities (including the creative and cultural industries) in a time of intense digital and physical disruption, stations need to be appropriately regulated and empowered as not-for-profits. They also need a regulatory environment that supports, not hampers, diverse operational and income generation models. A regulatory framework that embeds and reflects best practice not-for-profit governance will ensure sustainability and viability.

Broadly, the CBAA and the community broadcasting sector recommends that the Commonwealth Government undertake a review of the regulatory environment for the community broadcasting sector in partnership with the CBAA.

There are four key aspects of regulation we would like to review and reform with Government:

1. Regulatory instruments
  - a. Codes of Practice (in progress)
  - b. Community Broadcasting Guidelines, specifically the Participation Guidelines and the Not-For-Profit Guidelines
  - c. Licence renewal and application process
  - d. Co-designing a set of guiding principles to drive the ACMA's approach to regulating the community broadcasting sector.
2. Standardise not-for-profit regulation
  - a. The CBAA wishes to bring consistency to the way not-for-profit community broadcasting licensees are regulated by the ACMA in terms of their structures and operations.
  - b. The CBAA contends that the meaning of the terms not-for-profit and profit-making enterprise should be entirely consistent with the extensive definitions prescribed





and regulated by the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC) and assessed by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

3. Encourage risk-based and outcomes-focused regulation
  - a. Regulation should be sufficient to ensure that community broadcasting services:
    - i. represent a community interest and serve that community,
    - ii. operate in accordance with a community 'charter' or public good purpose,
    - iii. serve that purpose as a charitable organisation or social enterprise,
    - iv. contribute to media diversity, and
    - v. meet relevant standards as a non-profit organisation.
4. Community interest and community participation
  - a. ACMA currently places a restrictively narrow definition on the dual considerations in the Broadcasting Services Act to both *represent the community interest* and to *encourage members of the community to participate in the operations and selection and provisions of programs*.
  - b. Stations should be able to demonstrate the participation of their community interest (and the related notion of engagement) in a greater variety of ways, referring, among other things, to:
    - i. levels of support through donors, subscribers, members and volunteering,
    - ii. social media engagement,
    - iii. correspondence (letters, emails, texts, voicemail),
    - iv. listener surveys,
    - v. audience (quantity) research, and
    - vi. participation in community events, etc.

## 9. Conclusion

Community radio plays a vital enabling role in supporting the creative and cultural industries.

Across the country community radio stations have faced significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic which has impacted significantly on broadcasting resources, staffing and volunteers, and revenue sources in sponsorship, donations and fundraising.

Greater public funding certainty and an optimised regulatory environment for the community broadcasting sector will enable local stations to flourish and grow their mechanisms for supporting Australia's creative and cultural industries.

As demonstrated, community broadcasters are vital parts of the wide-ranging creative and cultural ecosystems – stations are key enablers, supporters and champions of music and arts industries. Increased and ongoing Federal Government support will ensure that community stations can continue to support diverse creative industries to rebound and remain resilient through COVID-19 and long after. Throughout our shared challenges, community radio will continue to support and present arts and music events and initiatives; broadcast Australian music; and build and train the next wave of Australian creatives and storytellers.

As the peak body for the community broadcasting sector, and an active participant in research, policy and planning, the CBAA is committed to further sharing our ideas, experience and knowledge with this Committee.

We thank you for opening this important inquiry and welcome any opportunity to appear before the Committee or assist in other ways in its reporting.

