

November 2023

Submission to the Multicultural Framework Review Panel

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Introduction

Community broadcasters welcome the Government's commitment to support a cohesive multicultural society and advance a vibrant and prosperous future for all Australians.

The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (the CBAA) is the peak body and national representative for community radio and TV broadcasters delivering 500+ radio services across Australia on AM, FM and DAB+ and online. Community radio services reach over 4.7 million people across Australia each week including 1.27 million Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people (27%) who listen to an average 16.8 hours of radio per week.

Community Broadcasters contribute to advancing Australian multiculturalism through:

1. provision of in-language news and information, especially in times of disaster and crises;
2. supporting CALD groups to share their culture, stories, views and perspectives;
3. promoting social and economic inclusion and community connection.

The CBAA welcomes the work of the Multicultural Framework Review Panel (the Panel) to provide advice to Government on how to advance a multicultural Australia. The community broadcasting sector is aligned to this objective.

Our submission shares our sector's plan to continue to advance multiculturalism in Australia and encourages the Panel to recognise our sector's contribution, role and responsibility to advance multiculturalism in Australia. We encourage the Panel to support and advocate for the Government to increase support for sustainable community broadcasters into the future.

Australian multiculturalism advances through community broadcasting

Community broadcasting is an extensive, diverse, community-controlled sector of Australian media that is a critical asset supporting multiculturalism.

Community broadcasting and its important role is recognised in the National Cultural Policy *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*, which commits action to 'Increase support for community broadcasting to deliver local news, tell local stories and provide a platform for diverse voices and Australian music'.¹

Our members are inclusive organisations supported by a strong culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) workforce. They provide CALD broadcast services reflecting multicultural Australian communities and their stories.

Community broadcasters provide critical local information and news to many Australians in their language.

Reflecting Australia's diverse cultures, beliefs and languages; community broadcasting enables genuine social inclusion, building a strong sense of belonging among and between communities, and addressing discrimination in our society.

In-language broadcast services communicate information and news

Community broadcasting services provide critical local information and news to many Australians in their language. Community radio broadcasts in-language to over 110 different languages. Some of the languages broadcast on community radio include:

Afrikaans	Albanian	Amharic	Arabic	Armenian
Assyrian	Austrian	Azerbaijan	Bangla (Bengali)	Bangladeshi
Bosnian	Bulgarian	Burmese	Cambodian	Cantonese
Chilean	Chin Congolese	Coptic	Croatian	Cypriot
Czech	Danish	Dari	Dinka	Dutch
Egyptian	Fijian	Finnish	French	Creole
Hindustani	Hmong	Hungarian	Indonesian (Bahasa)	Iranian Farsi
Irish	Italian	Japanese	Karen	Khmer
Korean	Kurdish	Laotian	Latvian	Lebanese
Arabic	Lithuanian	Macedonian	Malaysian	Maltese
Mandarin	Maori	Mauritian	Mon	Montenegrin
Moroccan	Motu	Nepalese	Niue language	Norwegian

¹ Australian Government (2023) [Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place](#) p 89

Oromo	Pashto	Polish	Portuguese	Pukapukan
Punjabi	Romanian	Romany	Russian	Samoan
Scottish Gaelic	Serbian	Sinhalese	Slovenian	Somali
Spanish	Sri Lankan	Sudanese	Sudanese Arabic	Swahili
Swedish	Swiss	Tagalog/Filipino	Tamil	Telugu
Tetum	Thai	Tibetan	Tigrinya	Tok Pisin
Tokelauan	Tongan	Turkish	Ukrainian	Urdu
Vietnamese	Welsh	Yiddish	Hebrew	

Of the 4.7 million people across Australia that listen to community radio each week, 622,000 people state their main reason to tune in is to hear programs in languages other than English.²

Community broadcasters provide up-to-date, local information in-language and in the appropriate community context. They act as a catalyst for community dialogue, linking people to critical news and information. Community radio showcases local content, news and diverse voices, fulfilling demand for independent, localised news and information in-language.

News and information is the number one ranked reason listeners tune in to community radio with 56% of weekly listeners naming news and information as their main reason for listening. In regional areas, this figure rises to more than 66%. 91% of listeners to community broadcasting feel community radio is an important source of local news and information.³

In-language media services are especially important in times of disaster and crises. In the face of floods, bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, community media organisations work tirelessly to support and connect communities when they need it most. They continue to provide their communities with up-to-date local information that is in-language and in the appropriate local and cultural community context.

² Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2022) Community Radio Listeners Survey [online] available at: cbaa.org.au/broadcasters/get-data-national-listener-survey-station-census/national-listener-survey-fact-sheets

³ Ibid.

CASE STUDY: Radio 4EB (Brisbane, QLD) www.4eb.org.au

Brisbane's multicultural radio service 4EB has been central to the cultural, social and media landscape in Australia for over 40 years – providing vital information to and welcoming people from 50+ language groups.

Through the COVID pandemic, 4EB became an even more critical service for their listeners. Living rooms became radio studios as broadcasters adapted their skills to continue programming remotely and maintain the deep sense of community and cultural connection they share with their listeners.

They broadcast daily COVID-19 updates and in-language community service announcements in every program. They worked with the Queensland Government to create COVID-19 community service announcements in 52 different languages.

CALD groups participate in community media

Community broadcasting is an extensive, diverse, localised, community-controlled sector of Australian media that is a critical asset supporting multiculturalism. Community broadcasters enable CALD groups to participate in media and share their culture, perspectives and stories. Together, they tell the story of Australia's multicultural society.

The community broadcasting sector promotes the diverse identities of Australians that enrich the social, cultural and democratic fabric of Australian society. It plays a critical role in providing a voice for Australian communities that are underserved by mainstream media.

Every community broadcasting licensee is bound by registered Codes of Practice (the Codes) developed by the sector and CBA in conjunction with the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). The Codes incorporate ethical standards that promote diversity and encourage community participation under Code 2 – Principles of Diversity and Independence. The purpose of Code 2 is to make sure that community radio stations have written policies and procedures in place that promote diversity and encourage community participation. Codes 2.1 and 2.5 of the Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice.⁴

⁴ Community Broadcasting Codes of Practice – Code 2: Principles of Diversity and Independence at <https://www.cbaa.org.au/resource/codes-practice-code-2-principles-diversity-and-independence>

The participation of the CALD workforce (including 21% of our sector's staff and 22% of volunteers) in the provision of broadcast media services, supports the language and cultural accessibility of our services.

The sector supports social and economic inclusion and community connection

Community broadcasting supports listeners to stay in touch and connected with their communities. Through their strong base of local volunteers, stations strengthen social connections in their local area. Volunteers get a strong sense of purpose from their contributions with 99% of staff and volunteers find value working in the sector.⁵

Stations are a hub for community activity. During time of crises they provide a focal point for community information sharing, fundraising for local emergency relief efforts, may co-ordinate volunteers, and provide a collaborative partner for emergency and health authorities looking to reach diverse audiences with life-saving messages.

Community broadcasting services keep isolated people company. They support aging people to remain connected to their community and supporting the successful settlement of non-English speaking migrants through sharing local news and information and contributing to their sense of community.

With a large and diverse volunteer workforce, community broadcasting also provides unique opportunities for training and skills development and employment pathways. These include English language and translation skills, business and governance skills and training across journalism, production, broadcasting and information technology and event management.

Recommendations and community broadcasting's role to advance multiculturalism

Our sector has recently launched *Roadmap 2033: Community Broadcasting's Plan for Greater Impact in every Australian Community* (Roadmap 2033).⁶ This plan prioritises our work to “amplify diverse voices” and “to reflect the diverse cultures, beliefs and languages of Australia, nurturing a strong sense of belonging among all communities.”

Roadmap 2033 prioritises our sector's goals, recognises our common values and identifies the steps the sector will take to better support our communities in the future.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Community Broadcasting Association of Australia and Community Broadcasting Foundation, Roadmap 2033 [online] available at <https://www.cbaa.org.au/sites/default/files/Roadmap%202033.pdf>

The plan strategically prioritises the amplification of diverse voices in media to advance a multicultural Australia. Key future focused outcomes for our sector's work include:

- responding to increased migration and intergenerational change by engaging more multicultural communities, with a particular focus on new and emerging communities.
- Supporting multicultural communities to be better understood, represented and appreciated, delivering greater social cohesion.
- Empowering people to participate as active citizens, to counter stereotypes and are represented in the media, supporting them to thrive.
- Broadcast linguistically diverse content which contributes to an inclusive and vibrant media landscape and a strong sense of belonging.

We recommend the Roadmap 2033 document to the Panel and ask you to recognise and reflect our sector's role and responsibilities for advancing multiculturalism as articulated in Roadmap 2033, in your report.

The CBAA commends the Panel to provide advice to Government about how to advance a multicultural Australia. The community broadcasting sector is aligned to this objective. There is a clear role for Government to support sustainable community broadcasters in recognition of their broad and valuable public good, including their important role in advancing multiculturalism.

The Multicultural Framework Review Report should include full and proper recognition of the contribution made by community broadcasters including their;

1. provision of in-language news and information, especially in times of disaster and crises;
2. supporting CALD groups to share their culture, stories, views and perspectives;
3. promoting social and economic inclusion and community connection

There is widespread recognition across Government of community broadcasting's important role.

This role is reflected by the Australian arts and culture sector and recognised by Government in the National Cultural Policy *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*, which commits Government action to "Increase support for community broadcasting to deliver local news, tell local stories and provide a platform for diverse voices and Australian music".⁷

⁷ Australian Government (2023) [Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place](#) p 89

Communications matters are a Commonwealth responsibility which include the funding, legislative framework and regulation of community broadcasting. The Government has a long record of supporting community broadcasting, with financial support provided through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts' (the Department) Community Broadcasting Program (CBP) administered by the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF). Regulation of the sector is managed by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).

Currently, the CBAA is contributing to the Department's [Sustainability Review of the Community Broadcasting Sector](#) about all aspects of the sector's sustainability including financial capacity. The CBAA supports this process which aims to secure sustainable community broadcasters with a positive impact for communities. It aims to promote "the diverse identities of – and provide a voice for – Australian communities that are underserved by other media sources."⁸ An increase in Government grant funding is within scope of this review which would be available to community broadcasters through the CBP. As is an opportunity to ensure a fairer spend of Government advertising through community broadcasters so that important messages better reach CALD communities.

The CBAA encourages the Review Panel to recognise the valuable role of community broadcasting in advancing multiculturalism in your report to Government.

Specifically, The CBAA encourages the Panel to support and advocate for increased financial support for community broadcasters from the Commonwealth Government as an important action to meet the current and future needs of multicultural Australia.

Please contact Reece Kinnane, CBAA's Head of Advocacy and Communications (02 9318 9632; 0420 525 526; reece.kinnane@cbaa.org.au) for more information.

Sincerely,



Jon Bisset
Chief Executive Officer

⁸ Australian Government (DITRCDA), Community Broadcasting Program Evaluation and Sustainability Review Terms of Reference, November 2022