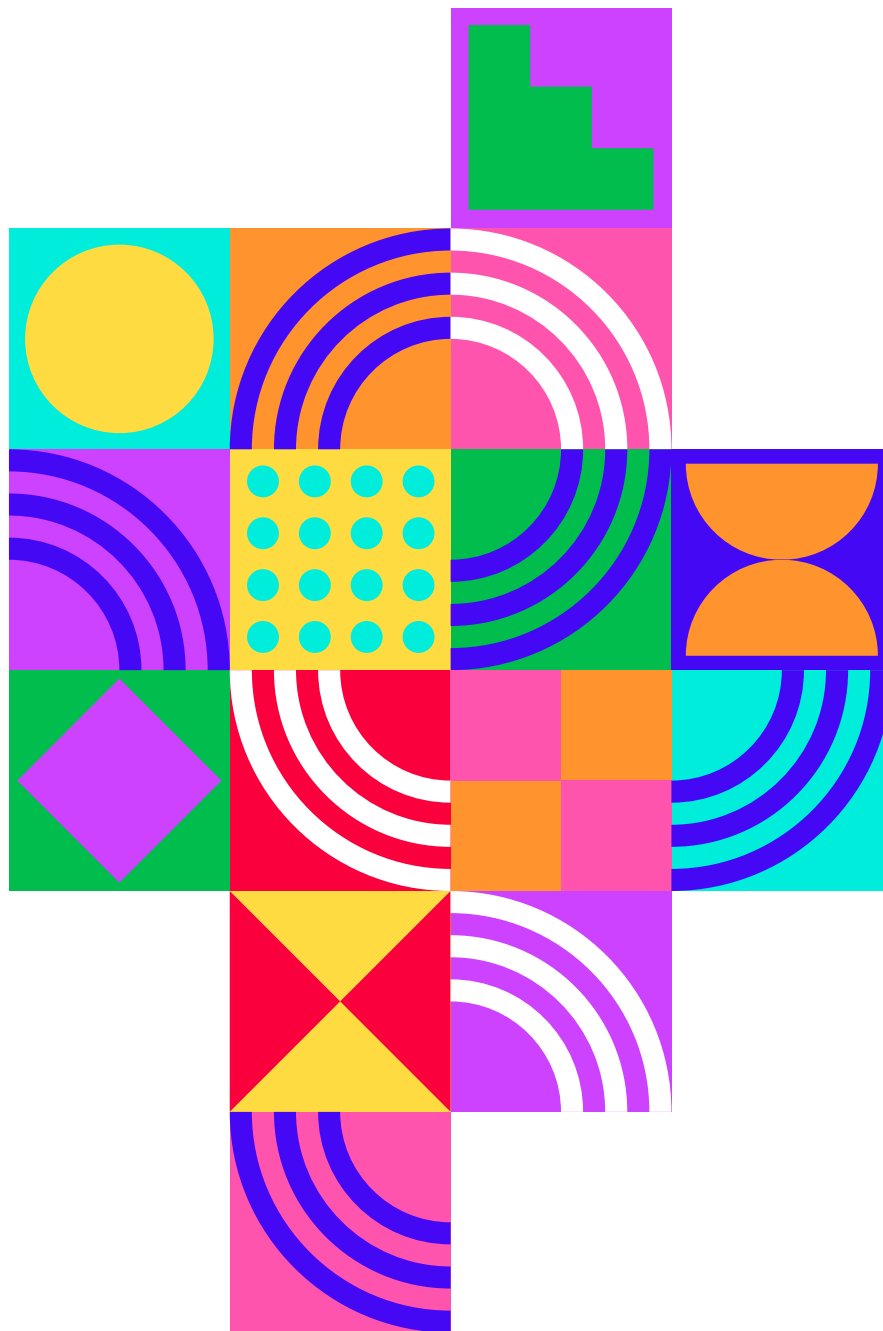


# **Sustainable community broadcasting**

**for informed, connected communities.**



**Federal Pre-Budget Submission 2024-25**



COMMUNITY  
BROADCASTING  
ASSOCIATION OF  
AUSTRALIA

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# Acknowledgement of Country



Image Credit: 'Will Tower' a painting by Koori Artist and 2022 Archibald Winner Blak Douglas

**The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (the CBA) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia.**

We acknowledge First Nations' sovereignty and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past, present and emerging. We support and contribute to the process of reconciliation.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been telling stories for millennia and we continue this rich tradition of sharing, protecting and enhancing culture.

We honour the dedication and expertise of First Nations broadcasters and their work to strengthen and connect communities.

The CBA is based on the lands of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation.

# About the CBAA

**Founded in 1974 and celebrating our 50th anniversary this year, the CBAA is the national peak body for community broadcasting licensees.**

The CBAA is a cultural organisation established for the promotion of community broadcasting including both radio and television.



Caption: Sara Berki performing for 100% Home-Grown at Highland FM in NSW

The CBAA has as members 90 per cent of all community radio licensees. Our members play an important role in providing a voice for communities that aren't adequately serviced by other broadcasting sectors, including:

- First Nations communities
- Culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- Educational services
- Faith-based communities
- People with a print disability
- Music, arts and cultural services and communities
- Youth and seniors' communities
- LGBTQIA+ communities

The CBAA is a company limited by guarantee and is also a large registered not-for-profit entity under the ACNC.

# About Community Broadcasters

Community broadcasters are licensed radio and television broadcasters under the Broadcasting Services Act (1992) which outlines the legal framework for community broadcasting and explains the role the sector plays in delivering diverse media services that reflect a sense of Australian identity,

character and cultural diversity. The broadcasting regulator, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), is responsible for ensuring that community broadcasting stations meet the licence conditions in the Act and requirements outlined in the Community Broadcasting Codes of Practice.

Community radio and television stations provide broadcasting services for the benefit of the community. They are operated as independent, not-for-profit organisations which actively encourage access and participation by members of their communities in all aspects of broadcast operations.



Caption: Linda Burns interviewing beekeeper Peter Davis for Episode 6 of the From the Embers podcast

# Our Impact

Community broadcasters deliver over 500 AM/FM/DAB+ services and 2 dedicated TV services that reach over 4.93 million people across Australia each week – almost one quarter (24%) of Australians.<sup>1</sup>

The sector's social and economic impact is driven by:

- 17,800 volunteers
- 1000 employees
- generating \$1/4 billion in value

Community broadcasting is playing an increasingly important role in connecting Australian communities that are underserved by media. Community broadcasters enrich and strengthen the social and cultural fabric of Australian society and amplify the voices of diverse Australian communities underserved by other media.

## Regional and remote Australia

- 77% of licensees are based in regional and remote areas.
- 62% of regional listeners say their main reason to tune in is for local information and news<sup>2</sup>

## First Nations Australians

- 51 organisations provide 158 services, the great majority in regional and remote areas.
- Australians from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background are 37% more likely than the general population to listen to community radio.<sup>3</sup>

## Multicultural Australia

- 1.35 million Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people listen to community radio (27% of total audience) for an average 16.5 hours per week.<sup>4</sup>
- Community radio broadcasts in-language to over 110 different languages.

## People with disability

- The Radio Reading Network provides 18 AM/FM radio services nationally with 623,000 listeners each month.<sup>5</sup>
- We are now working to increase representation of disability in media, improve how disability is portrayed and improve community attitudes towards people with disability in line with Australia's Disability Strategy.

## Faith-based communities

- Including 36 Christian radio stations and 1 Muslim station. 95% of listeners to Christian community radio say their station has a positive impact in their lives and helps them grow spiritually (88%) and relationally (74%).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Community Radio Listener Survey – Dec | <sup>2</sup> ibid | <sup>3</sup> ibid | <sup>4</sup> ibid

<sup>5</sup> Community Radio Listener Survey – Dec 2023. Total listening for Net RPH and Net Vision Australia

<sup>6</sup> The Social Impact of Christian Radio in Australia survey, McCrindle, 2021

# Introduction

The CBAA is seeking a substantially increased funding allocation for community broadcasters in the 2024/25 Federal Budget to deliver *Roadmap 2033: Community Broadcasting's plan for greater impact in every Australian Community*.

Our plan articulates a ten-year vision for community broadcasting to be at the heart of every community.

Our sector is united behind this plan to achieve even more positive outcomes for our communities. On behalf of all community broadcasters, the CBAA is calling for additional Government support to achieve our vision.

The Australian community broadcasting sector is a unique cultural asset with unrealised potential to contribute substantially and meaningfully to social challenges facing our communities.

Community broadcasting plays a vital role in addressing many policy challenges identified by Government.

**Our plan offers to harness the power of community broadcasters, staff and volunteers to:**

- give more Australians access to trusted, independent, local news and information from diverse sources;
- play a unique, hyperlocal role communicating emergency information and provide more support to build community resilience in times of disaster;
- support self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and close the gap in social and economic outcomes;
- elevate Australian music, arts and cultural industries;
- strengthen social and economic inclusion and cohesion, support settlement of new migrant groups and strengthen multiculturalism; and
- provide more skilled career pathways into the media and communications industry for all communities.



Caption: Journalism Students at 2MCE in Bathurst NSW

# Community Broadcasting's plan for greater impact in every Australian Community

The Community Broadcasting Roadmap 2033 (Roadmap) was developed through extensive consultation with government, stations, staff and volunteers and industry experts as well as research, data analysis and surveys.

**The Roadmap is our sector's contribution to policy development to support the Government's 2022 election commitment to identify a sustainable funding basis for the future of community broadcasting.**

The Roadmap will provide the foundation for our industry to address areas of priority reform identified in the Government's Community Broadcasting Sustainability Review.

It will support, challenge and inspire the community broadcasting sector to elevate our impact through greater collaboration, innovation and maintaining a clear focus on the interests and participation of communities. We will build our capacity and capability to grow our audiences to

reach all communities with quality content on all relevant contemporary platforms.

Increased, long-term and secure funding from the Australian Government is critical to support community broadcasting to deliver positive impact for our communities.

**Current Government programs are underfunded. They have been in real decline and not kept pace with rising costs and increasing need from stations and their communities.**

Underinvestment has negatively impacted program effectiveness as scarce resources provide limited opportunity for funding long-term investment in station sustainability.

A substantially increased investment from Government is required. Our proposal would transform support for community broadcasting into an outcome-led investment in critical social infrastructure, delivering a better return for taxpayers.



For more information on Roadmap 2033: [Community Broadcasting's Plan for Greater Impact in Every Australian Community](#)

# Government Support for Community Broadcasting

The Australian Government has long been a critical partner in supporting the sector through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA) Community Broadcasting Program (CDP) – a grant program administered independently through the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) and through the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program (IBMP).

In the October 2022 Federal Budget, stable funding for the CBP was secured, avoiding a decline in funding uncommitted over the forward estimates. This funding was committed over multiple years and indexed to keep up with rising costs commencing from the 2023/24 year. Funding for the IBMP is not indexed.

## Current funding levels remain insufficient to:

- meet station demand for grants
- meet growing community need for services
- support efficient, multi-year grant-making
- respond to technological, social, environmental and economic trends
- support investment to build station resilience, support innovation, enhance the sector's community impact and deliver a better return on investment to taxpayers
- achieve social and economic outcomes desired by stations as well as community and government stakeholders.



Caption: Shaylee and Rob from 99.9 The Light in Melbourne VIC

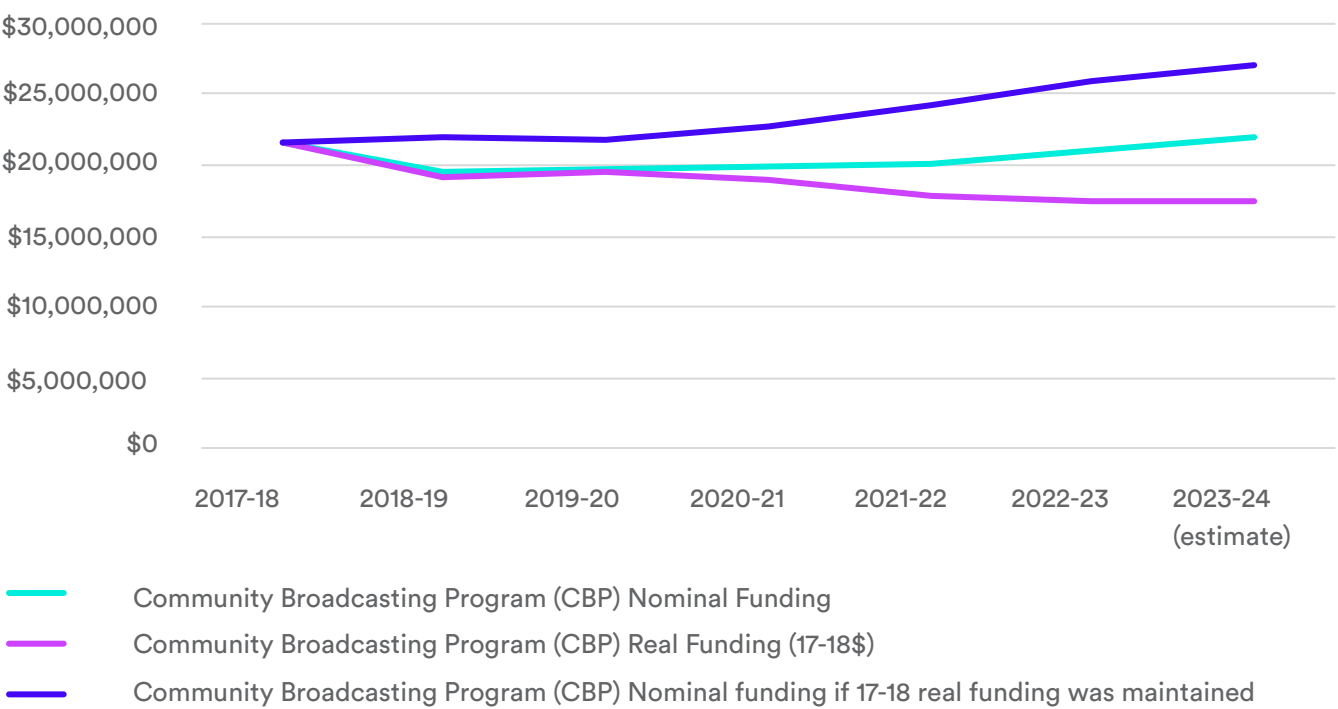
# Community Broadcasting Program (CBP)

Over the past seven years, funding for the CBP has decreased in real terms. The table below shows the nominal and real value of CBP program funding from 2017/18 through to 2023/24. Today, program funding (23/24) is \$5.2 million less than it would have been had real funding been maintained over the period.

Table 1: CBP Nominal vs Real Funding 2017/18-2023/24

Community Broadcasting Program (CBP)				
Year	CPI	Nominal Funding	Real Funding (17-18\$)	Nominal funding if 17-18 real funding was maintained
2017-18	2.0	\$21,590,000	\$21,590,000	\$21,590,000
2018-19	1.5	\$19,492,000	\$19,199,620	\$21,918,782
2019-20	-0.4	\$19,733,000	\$19,515,937	\$21,830,131
2020-21	3.9	\$19,984,000	\$18,984,800	\$22,726,316
2021-22	6	\$20,149,000	\$17,932,610	\$24,258,427
2022-23	5.9	\$20,975,000	\$17,430,225	\$25,980,746
2023-24	3.3	\$21,893,000	\$17,470,614	\$27,055,138

Figure 1: CBP Nominal vs Real Funding 2017/18-2022/23



## Program Oversubscribed

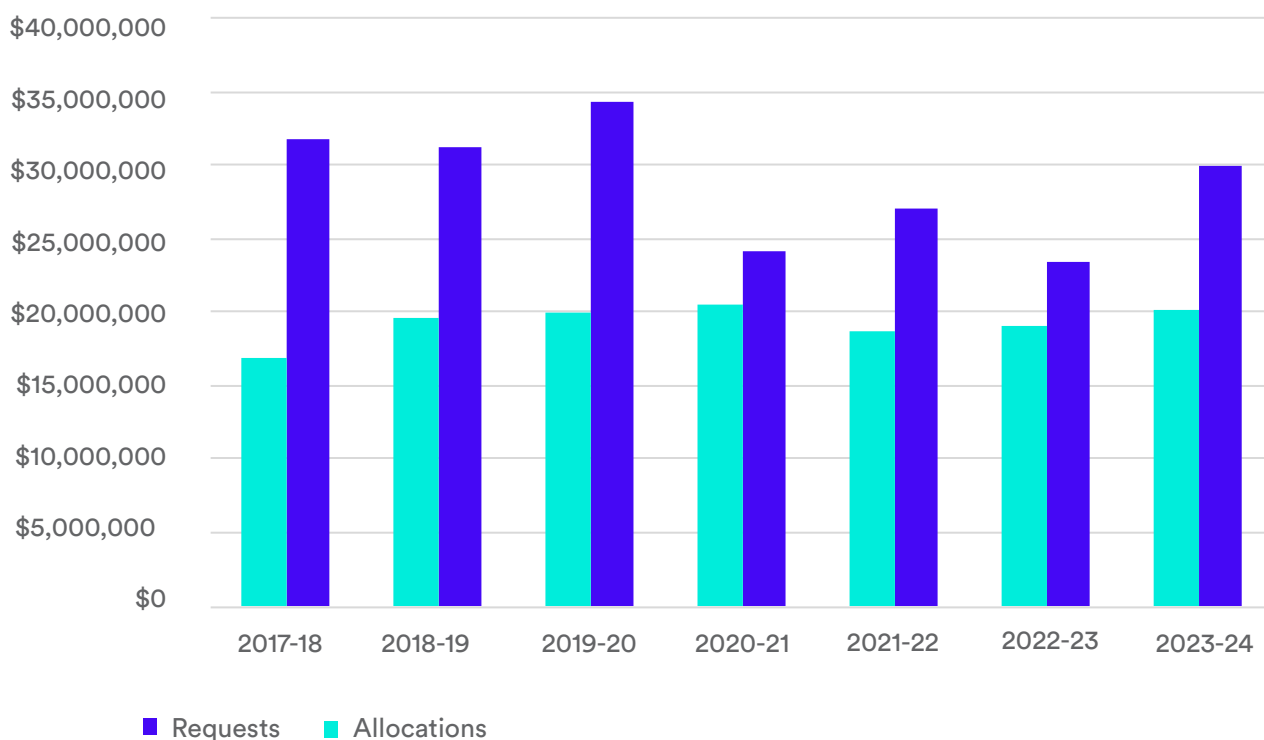
As recognised in the Government's 2023 Program Evaluation, the CBP is a historically oversubscribed program. The funding shortfall in 2023/24 was at least equal to \$9.7 million.

The average funding shortfall is \$9.5 million over the last 7 years but demand is likely much higher. There is evidence from the evaluation that many stations do not consider the exercise of applying for grants to be worthwhile, due to resources required to apply, and the low chances of success.

**Table 2: CBP Grant Funding Shortfall**

Year	Requests	Allocations	Shortfall
2023/24	\$29,975,489	\$20,248,672	\$9,726,817
2022/23	\$23,435,468	\$19,150,504	\$4,284,964
2021/22	\$27,093,024	\$18,709,034	\$8,383,990
2020/21	\$24,195,727	\$20,486,076	\$3,709,651
2019/20	\$34,362,832	\$19,899,561	\$14,463,271
2018/19	\$31,182,816	\$19,703,954	\$11,478,862
2017/18	\$31,798,497	\$16,877,164	\$14,921,333
7 year average			\$9,566,984

**Figure 2: CBP Grant Funding Shortfall**



## Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program (IBMP)

The Australian Government's financial support for First Nations community broadcasting is primarily delivered through the National Indigenous Australians Agency's (NIAA) Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS).

The funding provided through the IBMP to community broadcasters is estimated at \$21.5 million per year. This funding is critical to support indigenous broadcasting operations and programming.

However, as with the CBP, real funding levels for the IBMP have deteriorated significantly over time, as shown in the table below.

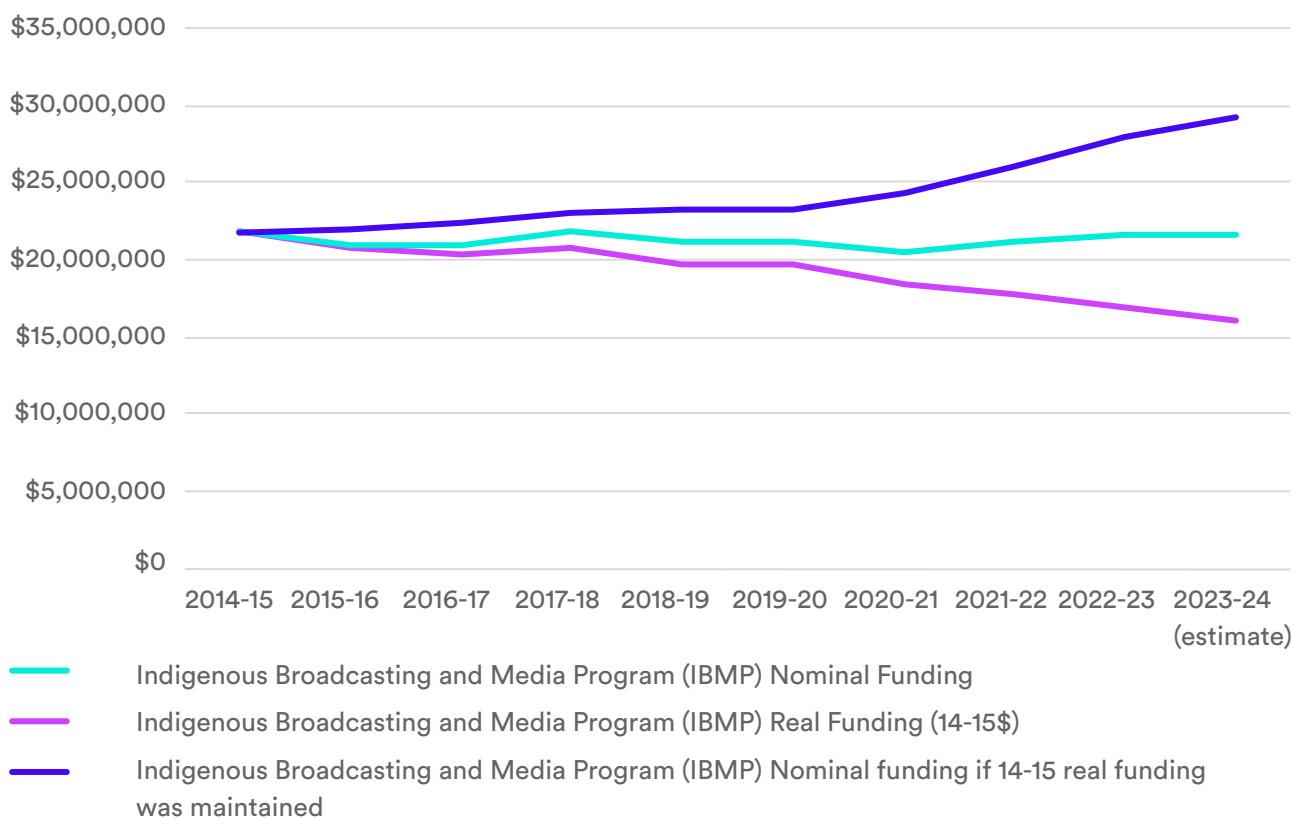
Over the past ten years, funding for the IBMP has decreased in real terms. The table below shows the nominal and real value of IBMP program funding from 2014/15 through to 2023/24. Today, program funding (23/24) is \$7.6 million less than it would have been had real funding been maintained over the period.

**Table 3: IBMP Nominal vs Real Funding 2014/15-2023/24**

Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program (IBMP)				
Year	CPI	Nominal Funding	Real Funding (17-18\$)	Nominal funding if 17-18 real funding was maintained
2013-14	3.1	3.1		
2014-15	1.6	1.6	\$21,817,306	\$21,817,306
2015-16	1.1	1.1	\$20,776,116	\$22,059,966
2016-17	1.9	1.9	\$20,376,979	\$22,492,068
2017-18	2.0	2.0	\$20,699,026	\$22,965,585
2018-19	1.5	1.5	\$19,698,999	\$23,334,017
2019-20	-0.4	-0.4	\$19,783,273	\$23,234,618
2020-21	3.9	3.9	\$18,419,469	\$24,241,451
2021-22	6	6	\$17,721,761	\$25,972,983
2022-23	5.9	5.9	\$16,840,381	\$27,935,091
2023-24	3.3	3.3	\$16,128,816	\$29,167,521

## Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program (IBMP)

**Figure 3: IBMP Nominal vs Real Funding 2014/15-2023/24**



Decreasing real funding has led to stations maintaining high operating costs as a proportion of income. The fine operating margins of stations have numerous potential negative outcomes. It means stations are less able to invest in medium and long-term business activity and the services provided to many of Australia's disadvantaged communities will diminish. At worst, stations may simply fail to sustain their operations.

**Table 4: Community Broadcasting Operating Costs as a percentage of Income, 2019/20-2022/23 <sup>7</sup>**

Community Broadcasting Licensees		
Year	Nominal Operating Costs	Nominal Operating Costs as % of Income
2019-20	\$217,915	84%
2020-21	\$320,409	87%
2021-22	\$321,183	75%
2022-23	\$335,358	91%

<sup>7</sup> Using individual station financial data, operating costs and income levels have been compared from FY20 to FY23 as an average across the two categories of funding.

# Responding to Strategic Issues

**A number of strategic issues have been identified by stations as impacting their operating environment and financial sustainability which require a strategic response.**

**Threats** include increasing costs and pressure on financial sustainability, declining volunteerism<sup>8</sup> and new capability required to respond to audiences changing use of technology to access media.

**Opportunities** relate to social trends that community broadcasting services are increasingly expected to respond to and services that are of great value to communities and governments.

Community broadcasters are increasingly relied upon to support community resilience in the face of climate change, increasing natural disasters and public health challenges.

In the context on increased media consolidation, news desertification and declining trust in media community broadcasters can respond in place, and at scale to provide more Australians access to trusted, independent, local news and information.

Stations are responding to demographic and social changes including increasing multicultural diversity and increasing empowerment of people living with disability.

They are contributing to the 'closing the gap' between the expectations and outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians through the work of First Nations media in strengthening communities, language, culture arts and providing information.

They support the Australian music, arts and entertainment industry that is still struggling to emerge from a hard and challenging period. Community broadcasters play a broad and outsized role supporting diverse, new Australian musicians, arts and creative industries that can be further leveraged.

These threats and opportunities are often elevated in regional and remote communities, where 77% of community broadcasting licensees are based.



Caption: Ngurrara canvas being rescued by locals following flooding in Fitzroy Valley WA taken by Andrea Myers from Wangki Radio

<sup>8</sup> National Strategy for Volunteering 2023-2033

# Responding to Strategic Issues

DRIVER	OUTLOOK	ASSESSMENT
Responding to disruption and disasters	To withstand the devastation of public health crises, climate change and natural disasters, community broadcasting should be considered a critical component of community infrastructure.	Threat Opportunity
Responding to disruption and disasters	To 'close the gap' between the expectations and outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, First Nations media needs to flourish within both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and non-Indigenous communities.	Opportunity
Increased media consolidation & news desertification	In the face of collapsing media business models and the rise of misinformation and disinformation around the world, Australia has a community asset it can leverage to counter these global trends.	Opportunity
Increasing pressure on financial sustainability	Increasing collaborative capability and capacity to secure sponsorship, fundraising and other revenue will be critical to shore up financial sustainability.	Threat Opportunity
Audience use of technology	Technological advancements will continue to provide audiences with increased options to receive content. To ensure Australians continue to engage with free, independent media, broadcasters will need continued access to spectrum and the resources and skills to deliver on online and emerging platforms that audiences choose to listen/watch their content on.	Opportunity Threat
Social & demographic changes	As the demographic and social shape of Australia continues to evolve, including increasing multicultural diversity and increasing empowerment of people living with disability, community broadcasting's role to give voice, participation and connection to diverse communities remains paramount. We will need to be responsive to the needs of our 'community interests' but also meet new community needs that emerge.	Opportunity
Changing nature of work & volunteering	With changes in Australian society and in volunteerism, community broadcasters will need to listen to volunteers more but rely on them less, and develop a skilled, sustainable workforce that can adapt to the evolving needs of communities.	Threat Opportunity

## Feature: Community radio supports new Australian music

Online streaming services and social media consumption are making it harder for new Australian music to be uncovered and loved by audiences. The algorithms they use are directing users to listen to established international acts and Australian artists are now featuring less and less each year in the ARIA Charts.

Community radio stations are a powerful ally to Australian artists, often helping them build their first audience. 31% of listeners saying the main reason they listen to community radio is to hear Australian music..

Community broadcasters are passionate about music with 78% of sector volunteers participating to share their love of music, culture and the arts.

On average, community radio stations broadcast 37% Australian music each week, exceeding the 25% quota. 4ZZZ in Brisbane averages 60% Australian music and FBI in Sydney often exceeds its goal of 50% Australian music and 25% local (Sydney) music.

Community radio offers a pathway for artists to monetise their music, enabling them to work

towards sustainable careers. In 2022/23, CBAA members paid over \$420,000 to PPCA in licence fees and community broadcasters paid over \$1,700,000 to APRA AMCOS.

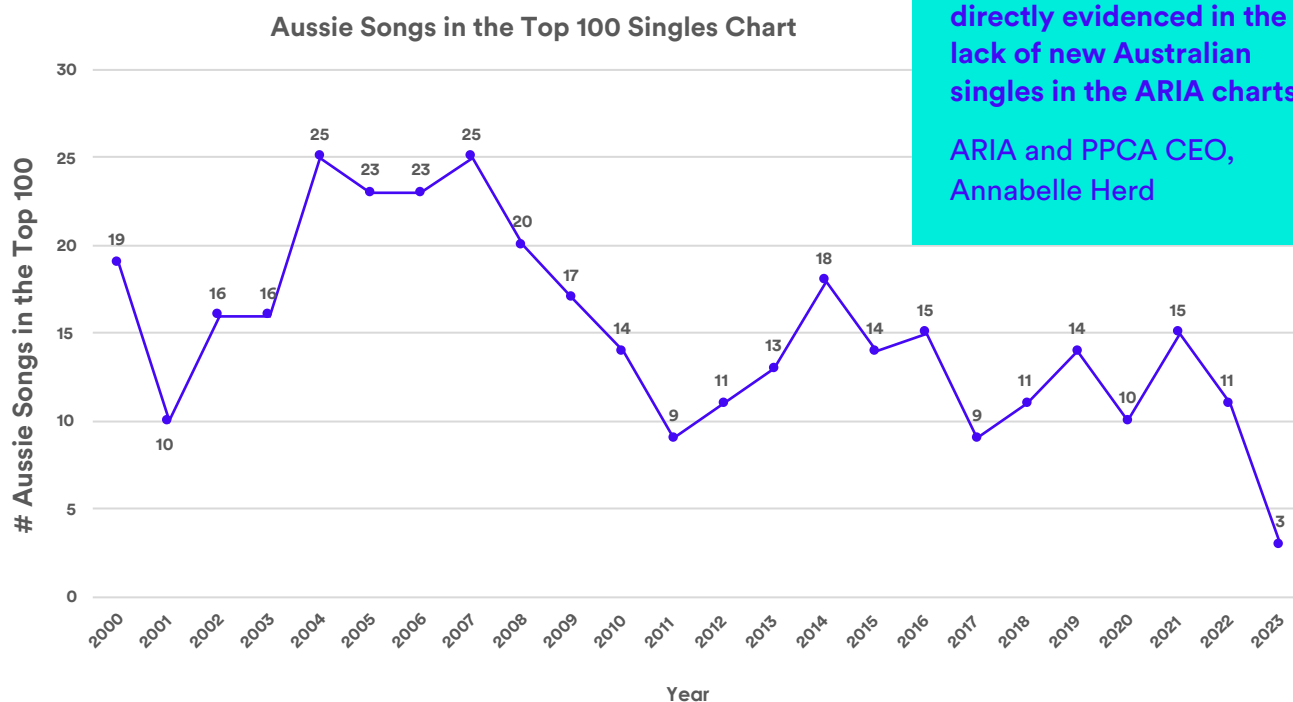
Government support for community broadcasters will increase their capability to play more Australian music across more media platforms and strengthen a pathway for new, diverse artists build their audience and income.

“

**Breaking an artist and finding an audience in Australia has never been more difficult, something we are hearing from all labels operating in this country, and seeing it directly evidenced in the lack of new Australian singles in the ARIA charts.**

ARIA and PPCA CEO,  
Annabelle Herd

Figure 4: ARIA chart data [www.aria.com.au/](http://www.aria.com.au/)



# Priority Outcomes

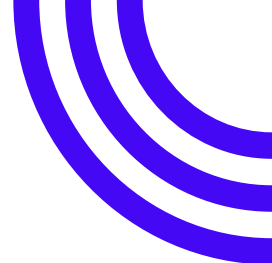
Our ten-year vision is for community broadcasting to be at the heart of every community – where informed, connected communities are strengthened by trusted, creative, independent media.

## Delivering our plan will:

- give more Australians access to trusted, independent, local news and information from diverse sources;
- play a unique, hyperlocal role communicating emergency information and provide more support to build community resilience in times of disaster;
- support self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and close the gap in social and economic outcomes;
- elevate Australian music, arts and cultural industries;
- strengthen social and economic inclusion and cohesion, support settlement of new migrant groups and strengthen multiculturalism; and
- provide more skilled career pathways into the media and communications industry for all communities.



Caption: News - National Radio News  
Federal Political Reporter Amanda Copp with  
the Hon Michelle Rowland MP, Minister for  
Communications at 4EB in Brisbane



# Outcomes Alignment

**The community broadcasting sector is a uniquely Australian cultural asset with unrealised potential to contribute substantially and meaningfully to social challenges facing our communities.**

The impact of community broadcasting serves to address many policy challenges identified by the Government.

---

## National Agreement on Closing the Gap

- Priority Reform 1; partnership and shared decision-making
- Priority Reform 2; community-controlled organisations
- Target 17 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap - Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion by 2026.
- Target 16 – cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.
- First Nations community broadcasting services support many other targets of the Closing the Gap Framework across health, education and economic inclusion.

“

**A strong First Nations broadcasting sector contributes to Priority Reform Two of the National Agreement, which seeks to build the community-controlled sector, whereby there is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country.**

First Nations Digital  
Inclusion Advisory Group,  
Initial Report, December  
2023

## National Cultural Policy Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place

**Revive commits the Government to action to ‘Increase support for community broadcasting to deliver local news, tell local stories and provide a platform for diverse voices and Australian music’.**

The policy also highlights the work of First Nations broadcasters in supporting and strengthening First Nations languages and connections to culture in communities across Australia.

Community Broadcasting supports all 5 pillars of Revive.

1. First Nations First: Recognising and respecting the crucial place of First Nations stories at the centre of Australia’s arts and culture.
2. A Place for Every Story: Reflecting the breadth of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.
3. Centrality of the Artist: Supporting the artist as worker and celebrating artists as creators.
4. Strong Cultural Infrastructure: Providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts, culture and heritage.
5. Engaging the Audience: Making sure our stories connect with people at home and abroad.

## Measuring What Matters – Australia’s first wellbeing framework.

**Community Broadcasting supports the wellbeing framework theme “Cohesive: A society that supports connections with family, friends and the community, values diversity, and promotes belonging and culture.”**

The impact of community broadcasting services impact measures under the framework including:

- Valuing diversity, belonging and culture.
- Reducing discrimination across disability, first nations, migrant groups and LGBTIQ+ communities.
- Promoting diversity through linguistic ability.
- Supporting First Nations language and sense of belonging
- Promoting social connections through volunteering.
- Creative and cultural engagement.

## Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031

Community broadcasters with disability are visible and their voices are amplified, creating content by and for the diverse voices of Australia. The Radio Reading Network is powered by 1500 volunteers and provides 18 AM/FM radio services nationally with 950,000 listeners each month.<sup>9</sup> Disability Media Australia is working to increase representation of disability in media, improve how disability is portrayed and improve community attitudes towards people

with disability in line with Australia's Disability Strategy.

The impact of community broadcasting contributes to outcome areas includes:

- Employment and Financial Security
- Education and Learning
- Community Attitudes
- Key professional workforces are able to confidently and positively respond to people with disability
- Inclusive Homes and Communities
  - People with disability are able to fully participate in social, recreational, sporting, religious and cultural life.
  - Information and communication systems are accessible, reliable and responsive.



Caption: Ron and Georgia from Print Radio Tasmania broadcasting live from Kingston Library

<sup>9</sup> Community Radio Listener Survey – Dec 2023. Total listening for Net RPH and Net Vision Australia

## Emergency Response and Disaster Resilience - Various

Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements 2020

Community radio stations “offer an important source of information during emergencies, particularly for Australians living in remote communities” and have been able to provide “information to isolated and rural communities when they are unable to receive landline or mobile phone communication, use the internet or watch television.

*Response to Major Flooding Across New South Wales in 2022, Select Committee*

*NSW Floods Inquiry Report*

*Improving crisis communications to culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services, NSW*

Recommendation: “that the NSW Government increases funding for community and multilingual broadcast media, to ensure that broadcasters are adequately resourced to provide crisis information to CALD communities

“

When the 2020 bushfires blazed through the regions, community radio was a constant. Through the early hours of the morning and into the night, Braidwood FM was a conduit for crucial, urgent, local information.

It broadcast the movements of the fire and helped the community stay safe during this devastating time. It's more than a community broadcaster – during the bushfires, Braidwood FM was a lifeline.

Minister for Communications  
Michelle Rowland MP

## Other policy agendas

Community broadcasting is critical to achieving the outcomes sought from the National Strategy for Volunteering 2023–2033 and the sector expects to be identified as an area of focus in the Department of Home Affairs' Multicultural Framework Review due in March 2024.

Caption: The Hon Michelle Rowland MP, Minister for Communications visiting Braidwood FM with Rod McClure, Gordon Waters and Pete Diskon



# Financial Impact

**The Roadmap is a comprehensive plan and includes detailed strategic priorities for our sector. Achieving our plan will require increased, long-term funding from the Australian Government.**

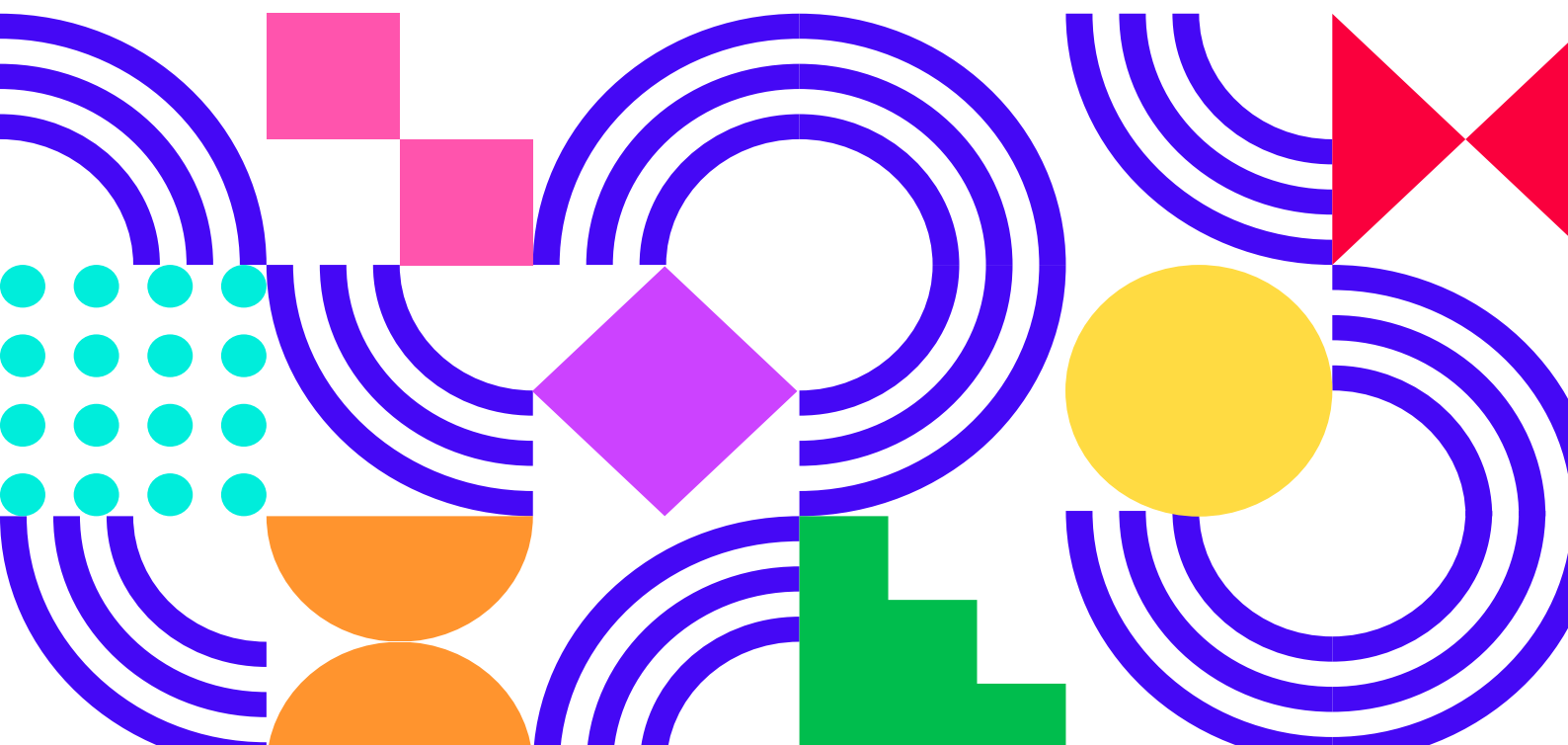
Funding for community broadcasting has been in real decline for over 6 years and is insufficient to support the sustainability and impact of Australia's largest independent media sector into the future.

An increased investment from Government is required to transform the CBP and IMBP into outcome-led investment in critical social infrastructure.

To deliver a sustainable base for the future, total funding for community broadcasting should increase from \$43 million to \$80 million per year, ongoing and indexed funding.

A total of \$36.6 million of new funding includes \$18.1 million for the Community Broadcasting Program and \$18.5 million for the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program.

This will support community broadcasters to maintain and grow their impact to meet community needs and deliver a better return for taxpayers.



# Community Broadcasting Program (CBP)

Funding for the community broadcasting program should be increased to \$40 million annually with indexation applied over the forward estimates. This proposal would result in \$18.1 million of new funding including \$10 million in increased program funding across existing CBP budget lines and \$8.1 million of new initiatives targeted at priority outcomes.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Total	\$21,562,588	\$40,000,000	\$41,025,641	\$42,077,581



Caption: COW FM in Casino NSW

## \$10 million additional program funding

This funding will reverse \$5.2 million of real cuts to the program and lift CBF grant-making capability to meet the \$9 million (2023/24) or more of unmet demand from stations for funding support.

Increasing general program funding will release the pressure the program faces to prioritise small, short-term grants to stations in the most desperate need and enable the program to co-invest in innovation and growth focussed projects.

This funding will be used to support Station Development and Operations, Content and Sector Investment.

GOAL	ACTION	IMPACT
<b>Improve program effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more grants to more stations</li> <li>• Better support station development</li> <li>• Provide larger, more effective, multi-year funding grants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the administrative burden for stations</li> <li>• Make more effective investments in station capability and quality programming</li> </ul>
<b>Working together in partnership to find new ideas to solve common problems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage collaborative grant applications</li> <li>• Support innovation and experimentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared resources improve program effectiveness and efficiency</li> <li>• Community broadcasting is a space for experimentation in media</li> <li>• Sector organisations are strong, effective and collaborative</li> </ul>
<b>All Australians can engage with free, independent media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure the capacity of community broadcasters to provide free services across AM/FM, DAB+, terrestrial TV, online and emerging platforms</li> <li>• Develop a deep understanding of stations and audiences and measure outcomes</li> <li>• Celebrate our sector's identity through shared marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More Australian's engage with community broadcasting</li> <li>• Stations adapt to a changing media landscape</li> <li>• All Australians can access community broadcasting on platforms of their choice</li> <li>• Expand digital radio services to 10 new radio areas</li> <li>• Produce content by and for underrepresented communities in media</li> </ul>

# New Initiatives: Investing in Priority Outcomes

\$8.1 million of new investment is proposed for initiatives focussed on achieving community outcomes identified in the Community Broadcasting Roadmap and aligned with Government policy priorities.

1. Station Capability and Workforce		\$3 million
<p>Formal volunteering is in decline in Australia with 36% of Australians volunteering pre-pandemic, but only 26% of Australians returning to their volunteer roles. The community broadcasting sector has fared better than the average decline of 30%, losing only 17% of its volunteers over the same period.</p> <p>One of the strongest predictors of retention in formal volunteering contexts is support from paid staff, supervisors, and peers. Investment in volunteer management is identified by the National Strategy for Volunteering as “the single most impactful change” that could be achieved for volunteer satisfaction, performance and retention and would deliver a strong return on investment.</p> <p>A decline in formal volunteering and increasingly complex skills requirements means the sector needs to rely more on a skilled, paid workforce. The unmet need for skilled staff is greater in regional areas where a diversity of skilled volunteers is less available.</p> <p>Community radio stations that have paid staff are much better at raising revenue. Indeed, our analysis of the financial performance of community radio stations tells us that for each dollar invested in staff salaries leverages an additional \$1.4 in self-generated revenues, which can be reinvested back into operations.<sup>10</sup></p>		
Goal	Action	Impact
Provide more skilled career pathways into the media and communications industry for all communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide support for small, volunteer-run stations to employ a paid member of staff to increase capacity to manage volunteers, do income planning, meet financial, regulatory and governance requirements or secure technical operations.</li><li>• Workforce Development Strategy</li><li>• Station Capability Program</li><li>• Sector Traineeship Program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide new careers and traineeships</li><li>• Regional job opportunities</li><li>• Improved volunteer retention</li><li>• Improved financial management and income planning</li><li>• Improved governance</li><li>• Media and ICT skills development</li></ul>

<sup>10</sup> 'Self-generating' income refers to income outside of the grants received by community radio stations. Our statistical analysis of the historic financial reports of community radio stations across Australia, found that salary expenses had a strong positive correlation with self-generating income. That is, higher salaries have positive impacts on self-generated income, with an average return of \$1.40 for each additional dollar spent of staff salaries.

2. News Media Diversity and Public Interest Journalism		\$2 million
<p>In the face of collapsing media business models and the rise of misinformation and disinformation around the world, Australia has a unique community-owned asset, preexisting at scale, which can be leveraged to counter these global trends.</p> <p>News and information is the number one ranked reason listeners tune in to community radio. 56% of weekly listeners name news and information as their main reason for listening to community radio. In regional areas, this figure rises to more than 66 %.</p> <p>Community broadcasting is a key contributor to news media diversity indicators: source diversity, content diversity, consumption diversity, level of connection (to a locality), level of originality and level of civic journalism.</p> <p>Every community broadcasting licensee is bound by registered Codes of Practice developed by the sector and the CBAA in conjunction with ACMA, which incorporate ethical standards around news and current affairs.</p> <p>Community media journalism courses are consistently oversubscribed.</p>		
Goal	Action	Impact
Give more Australians access to trusted, independent, local news and information from diverse sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase station capability and capacity for local news and current affairs production</li> <li>• Employ more journalists at stations</li> <li>• Double news and current affairs program grants</li> <li>• Support content-sharing for community broadcasters delivering national through to local news and current affairs for underserved communities.</li> <li>• Online news publication collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 local journalists</li> <li>• New national, state and regional news bulletins and current affairs programming</li> <li>• Online publishing of community radio news and collaboration with local independent news publishers</li> <li>• Increased subsidised journalism training</li> </ul>

3. Emergency Ready Hyperlocal Broadcasters			\$1.5 million
<p>When power, internet and mobile reception go down, a battery powered, or car radio is a lifeline for families and communities.<sup>11</sup></p> <p>Community radio stations play a critical role to distribute emergency response information especially in regional and remote communities.</p> <p>Before, during and after emergencies, local staff and volunteers work tirelessly to support and connect communities.</p> <p>Hyper-local networks and knowledge make community broadcasting stations essential in preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters.</p> <p>Community broadcasting services reach culturally and linguistically diverse communities and people with a print disability with critical information in times of crises.</p>			
Goal	Action	Impact	
Play a unique, hyperlocal role communicating emergency information and building community resilience in times of disaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop station capability to play a clear and well-defined role in emergency preparedness, emergency information and community recovery and resilience</li> <li>Grow communication and collaboration with the Emergency Management Agencies and the ABC</li> <li>An emergency communication map and web portal</li> <li>Emergency Ready Toolkit</li> <li>Emergency Ready Subsidised Training</li> <li>Provide capital investment for safe studios, mobile and remote broadcasting, and network infrastructure</li> <li>Provide feature programming for community preparedness, response, recovery and resilience including multilingual and radio reading content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All community broadcasters know their role as a communication asset in an emergency</li> <li>Stations provide co-ordinated support for emergency management agencies and the ABC during emergencies</li> <li>Better broadcasting capacity and broadcaster safety during emergencies</li> <li>Improved broadcaster capability to broadcast reliable information before, during and after an emergency</li> <li>Stronger focus on emergency information for non-English speakers and people with disability</li> <li>Programming better supports community preparedness, response, recovery and resilience</li> </ul>	

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/storm-resources/before-a-storm/put-together-an-emergency-kit/>

4. Amplify New Australian Music, Arts and Culture			\$1 million
<p>Community radio stations broadcast Australian music above quotas and deliver programs that celebrate new and local music catering to diverse tastes.</p> <p>Supporting community radio to grow audiences across all media platforms can be a game changer for the local music industry that continues to struggle to recover post-pandemic and in response to changing media consumption patterns.</p> <p>Sustainable community broadcasters are a unique asset supporting recording artists' careers and incomes. This asset must be further leveraged with additional support for community radio to promote new, local music that caters to a diversity of tastes and engage and partner more with local organisations, venues and events.</p> <p>With additional support, stations can be supported to further promote local music across all platforms, including social media and streaming. Through improved monitoring, community radio can provide real-time feedback to artists about community radio airplay, meeting artists increasing expectations for data (akin to streaming platforms) and strengthening promotional relationships between artists and stations.</p> <p>By modernising and strengthening community radio – the tried and tested route for artists to build their first audience – our stations can provide a supportive pathway to national and global success.</p>			
Goal	Action	Impact	
Elevate new Australian music and support diverse local arts and cultural industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New programs showcasing new, diverse Australian music and arts</li> <li>• Support greater station engagement and new partnerships with local arts organisations, venues and cultural events</li> <li>• Use ACRCLOUD music monitoring at every station</li> <li>• Provide an online airplay dashboard for artists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased new Australian music programming across community radio</li> <li>• Better promotion of new Australian music to larger local audiences</li> <li>• Community radio music curators are better supported to share new and diverse music on more media platforms</li> <li>• More successful local arts and cultural events</li> <li>• Contribute to APRA AMCOS' goal of Australia being a net exporter of music by 2030</li> <li>• Real-time, centralised monitoring and reporting of artist airplay and more accurate royalty payments</li> </ul>	

5. Nurturing belonging in multicultural communities		\$600,000
<p>Community broadcasting is an extensive, diverse, localised, community-controlled sector of Australian media that is a critical asset supporting multiculturalism.</p> <p>Community broadcasters enable culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups to participate in media and share their culture, perspectives and stories. They promote the diverse identities of Australians that enrich the social, cultural and democratic fabric of Australian society.</p> <p>Stations play a critical role in providing a voice for Australian communities that are underserved by mainstream media and in tackling discriminatory attitudes.</p> <p>Community radio broadcasts in-language to over 110 different languages.</p> <p>1.35 million CALD people listen to community radio (27% of total audience) for an average 16.5 hours per week.</p>		
Goal	Action	Impact
Strengthen social and economic inclusion and cohesion, support settlement of new migrant groups and strengthen multiculturalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted support for refugee and new and emerging communities</li> <li>Training and skills development for ethnic and multicultural broadcasters</li> <li>Mapping and measurement of demographic changes</li> <li>Sector diversity and inclusion training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New programming for new migrant and language groups</li> <li>New programming for second generation migrant groups</li> <li>More multicultural programming across all stations</li> <li>More multicultural and multilingual services in regional areas</li> <li>Multilingual news and information services</li> <li>Growth in multiplatform audiences</li> </ul>

# Indicative Budget

Increased program funding allocations to the CBP is proposed to be allocated against existing funding lines and new funding lines to be created for new initiatives.

Funding Line	Proposed funding 2024/25
Ethnic	\$4,718,526
Multicultural (new)	\$600,000
First Nations	\$1,435,323
Radio Reading	\$1,535,715
General and Transmission	\$14,273,247
Workforce Capability (New)	\$3,000,000
AMRAP	\$710,602
Music, Arts and Culture (New)	\$1,000,000
Capacity	
Community Broadcasting Online	\$730,995
National Training	\$779,624
DAB+ Digital Radio	\$5,600,311
Multiplatform Distribution	\$634,697
Industry Capacity and Skills Training	\$634,697
Enhanced National News Programming	\$846,262
News and Journalism (New)	\$2,000,000
Emergency Preparedness (New)	\$1,500,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$40,000,000</b>

# Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program (IBMP)

**First Nations Community Broadcasters play a central role in telling First Nations stories.**

First Nations community broadcasters are community-controlled producers of media that tell stories from First Nations perspective.

They connect First Nations community across the country and are a critical source of information in remote communities. They sustain and strengthen First Nations’ diverse culture and language.

They tell stories that foster greater understanding and appreciation for Australia’s unique First Nations cultural assets.

Their work is critical to ‘closing the gap’ between the expectations and outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Strong First Nations community broadcasters enhance self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and close the gap in social and economic outcomes.

In order to close the gap in outcomes, funding targeted for First Nations community broadcasters must increase in line with funding for general community broadcasting services.

Increasing funding Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program (IBMP) would:

- Close the Gap through strong communities, cultures, and languages, in digital inclusion, training, skills and employment as well as providing a platform for communications fundamental to achieving health and education outcomes.

- Respond to recommendations from the Government’s First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group
- Address the priority for First Nations stories to be at the centre of Australian arts and culture as expressed in Australia’s cultural policy Revive.

Funding for First Nations community broadcasting should be increased to \$40 million annually with indexation applied over the forward estimates. This proposal would result in \$30 million of operational and employment funding and \$10 million to deliver priority reforms requested by First Nations media representatives in First Nations Media Australia’s (FNMA) 9 Calls to Action (2018)<sup>12</sup> and an additional action developed to close the gap in digital inclusion.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
<b>Total</b>	\$21,562,588	\$40,000,000	\$41,025,641	\$42,077,581

Our Media Matters: 9 Calls for action renewing Australian Government Policy for First Nations Broadcasting and Media, First Nations Media Australia (2018)

## Priority Reforms

First Nations Media Australia’s (FNMA) 10 Calls for Action to support the provision of First Nation’s community radio services.



Caption: Torres Strait Islander Media Association and 4MW collaborate to cover the Island of Origin Rugby tournament 2023

FNMA CALL TO ACTION/ GOAL	ACTION	IMPACT	BUDGET INCREASE (\$ PER ANNUM)
#1 Reform Broadcasting Act for First Nations Broadcasting	Recognise First Nations broadcasting as a separate category of broadcasting under the Broadcasting Services Act 1992	Achieve self-determination and community control of First Nations community media	\$ Nil  Under consideration of the DITRCDA Review of Community Broadcasting Sustainability

## Priority Reforms CONT.

<p><b>#2 Increase in Operational and Employment Funding</b></p> <p>Every FN media organisation has the workforce capability and funding to cover operations and meet community obligations</p>	<p>Funding increase to \$30 million per annum, indexed annually for CPI, for operational and employment costs of First Nations broadcasting organisations</p>	<p>Return funding to a sustainable level after a decade of real funding cuts.</p> <p>For every dollar invested in First Nations broadcasting and media, \$2.87 of cultural, social and economic value is returned</p> <p>Strengthen Communication</p> <p>Provide an effective, trusted and accessible communications medium for First Nations people.</p> <p>Provide a voice for First Nations communities.</p> <p>Strengthen culture and preserve it for future generations through their broadcasts, archiving and film productions.</p> <p>Provide employment through flexible working arrangements in culturally safe environments and providing work opportunities that are aligned with the interests of individuals and communities.</p>	<p>\$9.5m</p>
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## Priority Reforms CONT.

<b>#3 Expand Live and Local Radio Program</b>  Expand service capacity to reach unserved communities	Deliver an innovative First Nations radio broadcasting expansion program into those First Nations communities without a primary First Nations radio service	Provide services to fifty-three percent (53%) of First Nations people without access to a First Nations radio service	\$1.5m
<b>#4 Strengthen First Nations News Services</b>  Provide positive, balanced and culturally appropriate news services and increase local community representation in news	<p>A targeted funding program to:</p> <p>Provide training and mentoring in journalism to First Nations media workers</p> <p>Support national First Nations news and current affairs services, including support for gathering news from First Nations community journalists</p> <p>Develop a news sharing platform, with editorial staff</p>	<p>Increase the news and current affairs capacity of First Nations broadcasters</p> <p>Enhance collaboration and improve news service quality through sharing news among First Nations broadcasters and media outlets</p> <p>Promote first nations stories and perspectives well through sharing content with mainstream media</p>	\$1m

## Priority Reforms CONT.

<b>#5 Expand Training and Career Pathway Programs</b>	<p>Implement a workforce action plan including:</p> <p>Expanding formal and informal training programs will build much needed capacity within the sector, enable succession and career pathways, and help close the gap on Indigenous employment</p> <p>Reviewing employment funding levels is needed to bring salaries in line with Industry award rates</p> <p>Enabling a direct employment to increase youth engagement and employment throughout the remote, regional and urban sector</p> <p>Build capacity and skills in specific areas such as management, production and coordination (Many of these roles are currently filled by non-Indigenous staff)</p> <p>Support accredited training</p> <p>Provide culturally appropriate employment environments</p>	<p>More First Nations staff at stations</p> <p>Broaden the range of training significantly to upskill the workforce in higher level duties</p> <p>More First Nations people in senior management roles</p> <p>Address high unemployment rates</p> <p>Increased and improved training and employment opportunities in regional and remote areas</p> <p>Builds the culture and language skills already held by First Nations peoples</p>	<p>\$3.5m</p>
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## Priority Reforms CONT.

<p><b>#6 Upgrade Infrastructure and Digital Networks</b></p> <p>Infrastructure and digital network upgrade program is needed to bring First Nations radio services up to industry standard.</p> <p>A number of remote radio studios (Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services (RIBS)) fail to meet workplace health and standards requirements.</p>	<p>Upgrade broadcasting and digital infrastructure to meet current industry standards and work health and safety requirements</p> <p>Fund broadcasting and digital infrastructure and equipment upgrade program.</p> <p>Fund of a facilities upgrade program</p> <p>Provide R&amp;M program, through remote housing, for VAST DTH installations in remote communities</p>	<p>Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services (RIBS) to meet workplace health and standards requirements</p> <p>Remote Indigenous communities have stable and secure access to Direct-to-Home satellite TV and radio services delivered through VAST</p> <p>Smart technologies provide for cost-effective network management and monitoring of remote broadcast facilities saving R&amp;M and travel costs for remote Indigenous media organisations</p>	<p>\$1m</p>
<p><b>#7 Recognise First Nations Broadcasters as the Preferred Channel for Government Messaging</b></p> <p>Solidify First Nations broadcasters and media organisations as the government's provider of choice</p>	<p>Government to establish a policy identifying First Nations broadcasters and media organisations as the provider of choice for First Nations focused information campaigns, including production, customisation and distribution.</p>	<p>Increased financial sustainability of First Nations media organisations</p> <p>Increased reach, engagement for Government public information campaigns</p> <p>More effective communication with First Nations communities and greater impact through trusted, culturally appropriate channels</p>	<p>\$ Nil</p> <p>Under consideration of the DITRC-DA Review of Community Broadcasting Sustainability consideration of the DITRC-DA Review of Community Broadcasting Sustainability</p>

## Priority Reforms CONT.

<p><b>#8 Preserve Archives</b></p> <p>Media assets urgently require digitisation to preserve critical archives of First Nations culture, storytelling and language</p>	<p>Conserve, preserve and maintain First Nations archives to sustain culture and language and create meaningful employment</p> <p>Maintain a digitisation program, including collection management support, training and digitisation equipment, to enable the digitisation of significant media in the collections</p>	<p>Conserve audio and video recordings from First Nations communities</p> <p>Safeguard content in magnetic tape format in digital archives</p> <p>Maintain culturally important and sensitive content in collections on-country under the custodianship of cultural law keepers</p>	<p>\$0.5m</p>
<p><b>#9 Establish an Annual Content Production Fund</b></p> <p>Content production is vital to the preservation and maintenance of First Nations language and culture</p>	<p>Establish an annual, competitive First Nations content development fund open only to First Nations broadcasters and media producers</p>	<p>Increase First Nations storytelling and program production</p> <p>Increased production outputs</p> <p>Improved production values</p> <p>Integrated training of First Nations media producers and industry placements</p>	<p>\$1m /annum</p>

## Priority Reforms CONT.

<p><b>#10 Improve Access to Digital Services</b></p> <p>Work collaboratively with the First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group (the Advisory Group) tasked to investigate the digital inclusions issues and address them at national and community level</p> <p>Digital access, mentoring training programs to close the gap on digital inclusion</p>	<p>Facilitate access to media services and online platforms</p> <p>Provide training and mentoring programs in digital literacy</p> <p>Training ‘community digital champions’ who live and work in the community and can be at call when there are issues of access and digital</p> <p>E-safety programs to accompany the technical rollout of new services, and with content providers (such as Facebook, TikTok, etc) taking more responsibility for the provision unsavoury content</p>	<p>Increased digital inclusion.</p> <p>Improved digital literacy and safety among First Nations communities</p> <p>Increased and improved training and employment opportunities in regional and remote areas</p>	<p>\$0.5 / annum</p> <p>(Initial funding proposed for 2024/25 to be reviewed following the Final Report of the Government’s Advisory Group)</p>
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$18.5m</b>

Further Info: [Calls for Action | First Nations Media Australia](#)

# Return on Investment

**Our modelling highlights that additional funding for community broadcasting would generate significant social and economic benefits, as targeted audiences would be better engaged.**

The Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of increased funding of \$36.5 million per annum is conservatively estimated to be between 1.3 to 2.2, meaning for each additional dollar spent in the community broadcasting sector, between \$1.3 and \$2.2 of additional community benefits are generated.

The above results are very conservative because they do not include significant benefits values for:

- supporting Australian music and artists
- providing media skills and employment opportunities
- supporting community resilience through disasters

Appendix A summarises the cost benefit analysis conducted by SGS Economics and Planning.



Caption; Netta Finney, Dr Eduardo Jordan and Vavineh Jordan at 4EB in Brisbane

# Contact

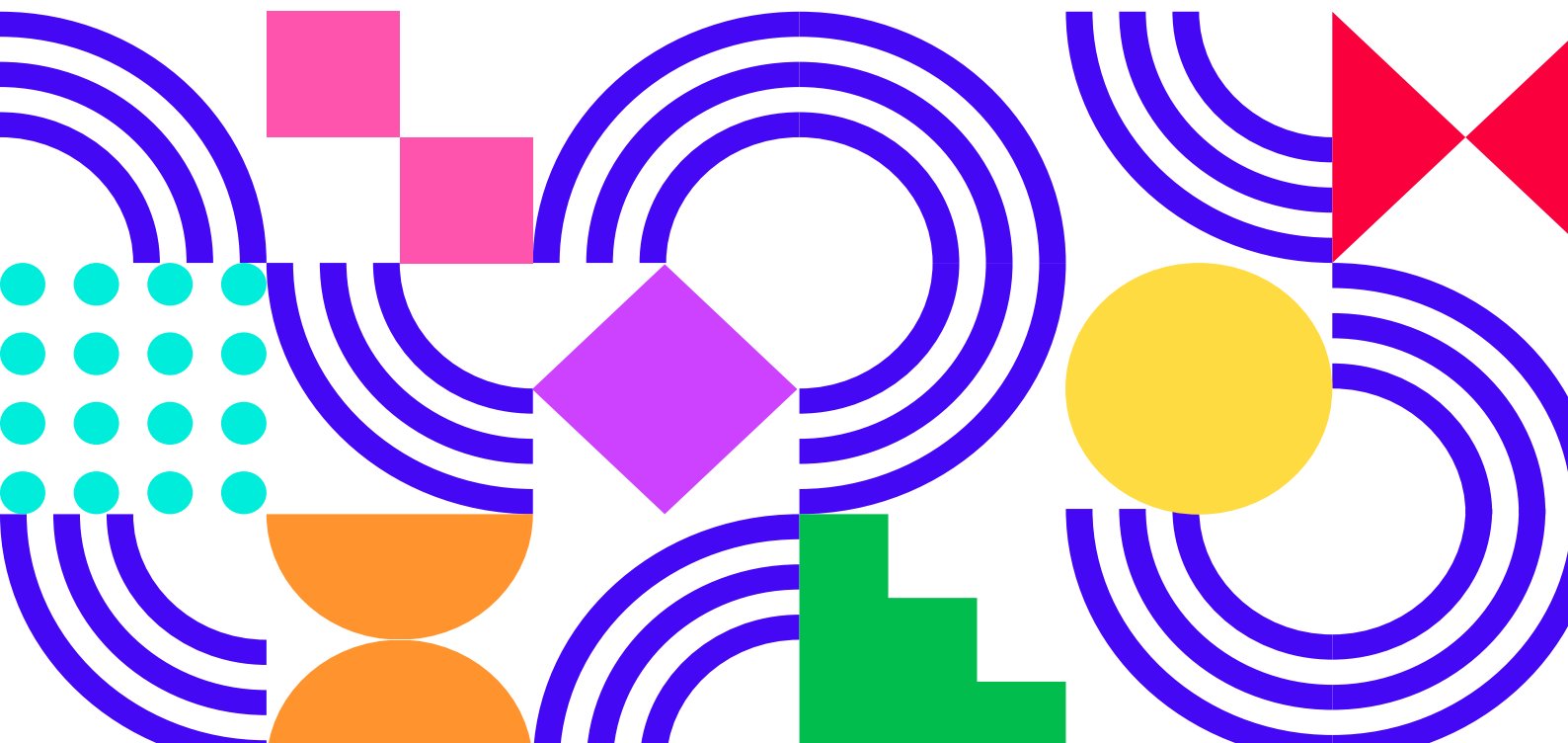
Community Broadcasting Association of Australia  
(CBAA)

3/44-54 Botany Road, Alexandria NSW 2015

ABN 92 003 108 030

[www.cbaa.org.au](http://www.cbaa.org.au)

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



## Appendix A: Community Benefits of Community Radio

Community broadcasters generate a wide range of community benefits by providing a platform for regional journalism, community connection and cultural exchange. Based on a literature review, SGS Economics and Planning identified the following benefits generated by community broadcasting:

- Providing access to local news and information
- Maintaining culture and language for culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- Improving community wellbeing through volunteering
- Improving literacy skills for people with non-English speaking backgrounds
- Supporting Australian music and artists
- Providing media skills, training and employment opportunities, and
- Supporting community resilience in times of emergency.

These benefits are underpinned primarily by listener engagement levels in targeted audiences, as well as volunteering at community broadcasters.

### Social and economic benefits of increased funding

The literature suggests that community engagement and local relevance is the key contributor to the success of community broadcasters. Factors that enable better engagement and a better understanding of community need include achieving financial stability, employing full-time staff, investment in professional training, and developing alternative income streams.

Additional funding will help stations remain financially stable, hire additional staff and invest in better infrastructure, all of which will enable them to reach more listeners, and/ or better engage with existing listeners.

SGS modelled the additional benefits generated by community radio through increased funding. On an annual basis, an additional \$36.5 million of grants will generate:

- Between \$105 and \$182 million of additional benefits relative to Business as usual (BaU), as more listeners and volunteers are engaged, and
- \$84 million of additional costs relative to BaU, as increased funding leverages self-generated income which also is invested in operations.

A net benefit of between \$21 and \$98 million results each year. The merit of this investment is reflected in a benefit cost ratio of between 1.3 and 2.2.

**Table A1: Cost Benefit Analysis Results, Annual Estimates**

Additional benefit relative to BaU	\$105.3m - \$182.2m <sup>13</sup>
Additional costs relative to BaU	\$83.9m
Net annual benefit	\$21.5m - \$98.3m
Benefit Cost Ratio	1.3 – 2.2

Note that the above results are considered conservative because they do not include benefits values for supporting Australian music and artists, providing media skills and employment opportunities, and supporting community resilience through disasters.

<sup>13</sup> The wide benefit range reflects the level of attribution that community radio plays in enabling cultural expression.