



COMMUNITY
BROADCASTING
ASSOCIATION OF
AUSTRALIA

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Committee Secretariat
Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA
Canberra ACT 2600

By email to: communications.reps@aph.gov.au

Inquiry into the Australian music industry

The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) welcomes the Committee's inquiry into the Australian music industry. As the peak body and the national representative organisation for community broadcasting across Australia, we value the opportunity to add our thoughts on the growth and sustainability of a vibrant and world class music industry in both metropolitan and regional Australia.

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 that host them across the country. Further, community broadcasting is an important conduit for skills, training and employment in the music industry and is a launchpad for Australian composers, songwriters, performers, and producers to expand their reach and better compete with overseas artists.

The CBAA champions community broadcasting by building stations' capability and creating a healthy environment for the sector to thrive. We work toward 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 an open society and cultural vibrancy.

We are eager to provide input into this inquiry. In particular, we highlight the wide-reach and listenership of community radio, its unique role within the broader music industry, its important role in regional communities, and some recent examples of related policy and program success from across the country supporting the sector. In doing so we hope to stimulate the Committee's deliberations and offer support for government and other stakeholders from the unique perspective of community broadcasting as it invigorates the music industry across the country.

We also underline the need for greater policy support and funding certainty from government to ensure community broadcasting can operate and plan over the longer term and ensure the sector's public good contributions for all Australians can continue.

In its deliberations and report, we hope the Committee:

- Recognises the role that community radio plays in supporting local music communities in the city / regions / domestic capital cities.
- Recommends that state and local governments partner with community radio to develop collaborative precincts, infrastructure and facilities that support the music industry.



COMMUNITY
RADIO
NETWORK



amrap
AUSTRALIAN MUSIC RADIO AIRPLAY PROJECT

- Recommends that Governments pursue soft diplomacy programs which can support connections not only to promote Australian music overseas, but also as a contribution to Australia's international relationships.
- Recommends that the Commonwealth Government ensures better access to community broadcasting in digital form, online streaming and on a free-to-receive basis.
- Recommends greater funding certainty for the community broadcasting sector.

Australia-wide listenership and unique value of community radio to a vibrant music industry

The size and importance of the community radio sector to the Australian music industry is significant, yet frequently underestimated.¹ Research facilitated by the commercial radio sector in 2016 and 2017, the Share of Audio study, 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.²

Community broadcasting is Australia's largest independent media sector and an important public resource for information and cultural engagement. The 2018 Community Radio National Listener Survey reported the highest listening levels ever for community radio – over a quarter (29%) of Australians aged 15 years and over tuned in to the over 450 not-for-profit, community-owned and operated radio services operating across the country each week (approximately 5.7 million Australians).³ This is up from approximately 3.76 million in 2004.⁴ Of community radio listeners surveyed, 19% listen to community radio exclusively. Amongst the broader Australian population aged 15 years and over, 5% (or 983,000 people) listen exclusively to community radio in an average week.⁵

The level of community radio listening varies by state, with the Northern Territory having the highest proportion of listeners relative to the population – in fact 38% of Territorians listen to community radio in an average week. This is associated with the fact that remote Indigenous community radio stations are the only broadcast radio services in many remote areas.⁶

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. Over one third (34%) of people who regularly speak a language other than English in their household listen to community radio during a typical week. Almost half (44%) of people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander listen to community radio during a typical week.⁷

Amongst the top reasons Australians give for tuning in to community radio are specialist music programs (34%) and Australian music (29%), as well as local news and information shared by local voices and personalities.⁸ 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%.⁹ Recent research indicates that figures this high may not be being achieved by the commercial broadcasting sector.¹⁰ Many community radio stations are leading in ensuring more Australian music is broadcast. For example, 4ZZZ in Brisbane has airplay quotas, and is working to increase these by the end of 2019. Currently the station's Australian music quota is 30% (target 40%), local 15% (target 30%), new music 30% (remains), Indigenous (new target of 5%), and female and non-binary 30% (target 50%).¹¹ The station reports that they are currently hitting all target quotas, and since the beginning of 2018 their Australian music airplay is averaging 60%.

1 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/>

2 <http://www.radioalive.com.au/Research-Insights/Share-of-Audio/2017/Share-of-Audio-2017>

3 Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2018). Community Radio National Listener Survey 2018 – Australia Fact Sheet - July 2018 [online] Available at: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/vmjxq3y4q3ygnau/Australia%20-%202018%20-%20Wave%20%231.pdf?dl=0>

4 Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2018). Community Radio National Listener Survey 2018 Summary report of findings May 2018 [online] Available at: <https://www.cbaa.org.au/sites/default/files/media/McNair%20yellowSquares%20-%20NLS%20-%20Main%20Report%202018%20-%20FINAL-nopg13.pdf>

5 Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2018). Community Radio National Listener Survey 2018 – Australia Fact Sheet - July 2018 [online] Available at: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/vmjxq3y4q3ygnau/Australia%20-%202018%20-%20Wave%20%231.pdf?dl=0>

6 ibid

7 Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2018). Community Radio National Listener Survey 2018 Summary report of findings May 2018 [online] Available at: <https://www.cbaa.org.au/sites/default/files/media/McNair%20yellowSquares%20-%20NLS%20-%20Main%20Report%202018%20-%20FINAL-nopg13.pdf>

8 Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2018). Community Radio National Listener Survey 2018 – Australia Fact Sheet - July 2018 [online] Available at: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/vmjxq3y4q3ygnau/Australia%20-%202018%20-%20Wave%20%231.pdf?dl=0>

9 Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2018). CBAA Programming & Technology Survey.

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

11 4ZZZ, Station Policy.

A strong local and domestic music scene supported by governments is vital to ensuring the Australian music industry thrives on the global stage. Community radio performs an important role in Australia's radio-scape by supporting local music and music industries. Community radio, because of its different 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 licence, 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.¹²

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 brings listeners the best in new Australian and New Zealand music, while making links to the past, and is distributed on the Community Radio Network to over 20 stations across the country.

Community stations provide an avenue for Australian musicians to be broadcast on airwaves across the country 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 Indigenous performer whose connection to community radio was so strong he became the first 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 Amrap charts and was played on 112 community radio stations in six months. The EP then amassed over 1 million Spotify streams and was awarded a Queensland Music Award.
- Wolfmother – another Sydney band who were first played on FBi Radio, 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.
- 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.
- Jeff Lang – a blues and roots guitarist who doesn't fit mainstream radio formats, gets a lot of airplay from community radio to build his great fanbase and touring cycle.

In 2016 the CBAA ran a campaign called "#KeepCommunityRadio", created in response to funding concerns for Community Digital Radio. A highly successful national Day of Action was conducted, with an online petition garnering more than 52,000 signatures. The corresponding social media campaign reached 950,000 people and included engagement from Australian artists on why community radio matters to them. We have attached some of these at the end of this submission.

Policy and program success from across the country

In Victoria, community radio outpaces commercial radio significantly, particularly the dedicated music stations. Victoria is the home to some of the most well-known community stations – Triple R, PBS, SYN and 3CR – and has, according to recent analysis, the highest community broadcasting membership per capita in the world. According to the 2017 Melbourne Live Music Census, more music fans in Melbourne listen to community radio stations Triple R, PBS FM and public radio station Triple J than any commercial station – this occurs nowhere else in the world.

¹² 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/>

Victoria serves as a prime example of the importance of community broadcasting to a vibrant music industry – both sectors reinforce each other. Industry professionals have noted that a symbiotic relationship exists between community radio, musicians, music critics, commentators and journalists, live music venues and local music industry (record and instrument stores, rehearsal and recording spaces, record labels, PR and management) that contributes to the vitality and success of the music industry.¹³ The uptake of new online streaming services has had significant implications for the traditional music industry – particularly through distribution – but has not supplanted the need for fostering support and promotion, which, for local artists, is largely carried out by community broadcasting.

Victoria's active support for community radio has allowed more local musicians and artists to be broadcast on its airwaves, which supports the growth of local, diverse and passionate music and arts communities, who in turn support venues and events across the state. In short, community radio underpins and drives a thriving music and arts scene and a thriving music and arts scene delivers significant value to the full diversity of Australian communities and regions. A thriving music industry, supported by strong community broadcasters, is a launchpad for Australian composers, songwriters, performers, and producers to expand their audiences around the world.

The holistic approach to planning for and supporting Victoria's music and arts sector – with the active inclusion of community radio as an important factor – has allowed the music industry to flourish. The 2017 Melbourne Live Music Census reported that Melbourne has more live music venues per capita than any other city in the world, beating out the urban super-powers of New York City and London.¹⁴

The Victorian Music Development Office – which leads a range of programs and projects to strengthen the local music industry – will be co-located in a precinct with community radio stations from 2019. This co-location approach, including the \$22m Music Works project, sees many of its programs run in collaboration with community radio, and ensures natural synergies and efficiencies are maximised – a one-stop shop for local musicians to work, learn, collaborate and do business. The precinct will be home to Music Victoria, community radio station PBS 106.7 FM and youth music organisation The Push. It will include hot desks and office spaces available for other local organisations, and music and arts businesses of all sizes. The co-location approach supports artists to overcome challenges related to accessibility of creative spaces by offering affordable rehearsal, recording and networking spaces in a precinct location. The holistic policy and program design is forward-looking and highly encouraging.

The Victorian approach is a useful starting point for other states and territories in their considerations of how to encourage the growth of their local music industries. Other states and territories are also developing aspects of their music and arts industries along the same lines. Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia are worthy of further investigation.

We note that the NSW Parliament is currently undertaking an inquiry into "The music and arts economy in New South Wales" to which we have provided a complimentary submission and participated in the public hearings. In NSW we will continue our work with local and state governments on the contribution of community radio to the local music industry and pursue the development of cross-industry music hubs and precincts with the inclusion of community radio. Just as in the successful Victorian approach, co-location with community broadcasting through the CBAA, and its related projects and services, such as the Australian Music Radio Airplay Project (Amrap) and the Community Radio Network offers so much potential for the growth of its music industry.

Supporting the music industry across Australia

Since its creation, the CBAA has been committed to giving a space to those otherwise not heard on air with an eye to maintaining and supporting a diverse sector, supported by volunteers and community-minded individuals. In the music and arts ecosystem, we do this collaboratively with diverse partners including not-for-profit associations, community bodies, local governments, and youth, religious and cultural groups.

There are several key areas of broad policy development and programs that align with the strengths of and role played by community radio across Australia:

¹³ 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/>

¹⁴ Bianca Davino, 12 April 2018, "Melbourne is now officially the live music capital of the world", The Industry Observer, Available at: <https://www.theindustryobserver.com.au/melbourne-officially-the-live-music-capital-of-the-world/>

- Supporting sustainable and viable music careers for diverse artists and industry through professional development opportunities.
- 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 artists and industry professionals to ensure the industry pipeline is supplied.
- Supporting audience development through collaborative marketing campaigns and promotional campaigns.
- Ensuring young musicians are celebrated, encouraged and supported through targeted skills and talent development programs.

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 is an example of a dual community radio and music industry initiative facilitated with the support of the federal Department of Communications and the Arts. Through Amrap, the CBAA distributes and promotes contemporary Australian music to community radio stations nationwide and reduces barriers to entry for upcoming artists and producers. To date, Amrap has hosted content from over 9,000 artists via unsigned music providers, record labels, and music business enterprises. To date, over 500,000 music files have been accessed for broadcast by community radio nationwide and Amrap continues to grow its presence in the Australian music scene.

Community Radio Network (CRN)

We also facilitate content sharing and collaboration via the CBAA's CRN, which reaches over 140 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. The sector's flagship breakfast program, Good Morning Country, the most popular program on the CRN, annually collaborates with and broadcasts from both Mildura and Tamworth Country Music Festivals, for example.

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 music and arts economies in metropolitan and regional Australia.

Key examples of this include:

- Eastside Radio produces the Global Rhythms Festival each year in partnership with the City of Sydney and Sydney Fringe Festival.
- Koori Radio presents the annual Yabun Festival, a diverse line-up of music and more from Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander communities and hosts multiple outside broadcasts throughout NAIDOC Week. In 2018, Alice Springs station CAAMA collaborated on the broadcast.
- 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.
- 2SER presents and broadcasts live music events from the UTS venue The Loft (Live At The Loft).
- The CBAA's national Community Radio Network (CRN) partners with LGBTIQ+ station JOY 94.9 to broadcast from the Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras, allowing stations nationally to tap into this content.
- 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 has produced the annual In The Pines festival for the past 25 years to support local artists. The 2018 festival was sponsored by Sorrento Strategic Music.
- 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.
- Youth community radio station, Edge Radio 99.3FM (TAS) in partnership with peak industry body Music Tasmania have put forward the initiative 'Creatively Mental' to raise awareness of mental health within the local creative

community. This unique project aims to support local creatives individually and raise awareness about mental health in their communities.

- 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 support composers already actively engaging with audiences, and provides a platform to nurture the future of contemporary jazz composition in Victoria.
- Community ethnic radio station 4EB and 4ZZZ, both Brisbane based stations, collaborate each year to bring listeners live broadcasts from the Woodford Folk Festival.
- 4ZZZ recently also put on the closing event for Valley Fiesta 2018 called '4ZZZ's Rooftop Oasis'. Valley Fiesta is an annual Brisbane City Council festival of music and arts that happens in Fortitude Valley (where 4ZZZ is based). The station partnered with Valley Fiesta, Backbone Youth Arts, BCC's youth team at Visible Ink and Mountain Goat Beer, enabling the station to put on a free all ages gig supporting Brisbane bands.

The above examples demonstrate the significant contribution of community broadcasting and help support the local and domestic music scenes as a bedrock for international success. Australia's music industry, and its ability to compete in international markets, is also strengthened through collaboration and partnerships with international artists both overseas and within Australia. Here, the CBAA believe there is undiscovered potential to promote Australian music on the world stage through partnerships with community radio stations and networks in other countries – particularly those in our region. This could take form in an "exchange" with other stations where Australian artists and their music is shared abroad (for example an "Australian Music Hour"). Soft diplomacy programs can support such connections not only to promote Australian music overseas, but also as a contribution to Australia's international relationships.

Training and Education

Community radio also adds significant value as a conduit for training and education of its participants and employees. Community radio stations operate in towns and cities across Australia with the largest proportion located in regional areas (41%), a further 25% in rural areas and 34% across metropolitan and suburban locations. These stations directly support approximately 766 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs across the country – over 250 of which are in regional and rural communities and 26,000 volunteers.¹⁵

Community radio stations are also well known for running training and mentoring programs for musicians and artists. Such programs include:

- MusicNSW and FBI Radio partner to deliver Women in Electronic Music Masterclasses, aimed at building electronic music skills across songwriting, 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 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.
- Fresh 92.7 in Adelaide's Contemporary Music Program continues to thrive, helping to launch careers through a network of initiatives that develop artists and their access to audiences. This includes songwriting 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 songwriting, audio tech, publicity, DJ-ing, and more for aspiring musicians and people seeking a career in the music industry.

¹⁵ Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2017), Community Broadcasting Sector Financial Health of Community Radio Survey. Available at: <https://www.cbaa.org.au/sites/default/files/media/CBAA%202017%20Financial%20Health%20of%20Community%20Radio%20Survey%20FINAL.pdf>

Supporting music and arts in regional Australia

Community radio's role in regional Australia is particularly important. On average, 140 hours of music programming goes to air each week on a regional or rural/remote station. This includes 60 hours of Australian music programming on average on a rural/remote station. This is more than metropolitan and suburban community radio stations. Furthermore, a rural/remote station records on average per year 132 hours of music performance by Australian musicians. More than half of all music performance recorded for broadcast in 2016-17 was done so by regional, rural and remote stations – 25,000 hours.¹⁶

In regional Australia, community radio helps foster music and arts development by:

- Encouraging community and commercial radio in urban and regional areas to support Australian artists.
- Developing initiatives that foster a viable touring network in regional and remote Australia, for both local and international artists.
- Supporting regional councils in the development of council-specific music plans to stimulate local music economies.
- Assisting in development of online resources and support services to better support regional artists and communities.

For example:

- Bellingen (NSW)'s 2BBB provides a broadcasting stage at the annual Bello Winter Music Festival, presenting performances and interviews with local artists taking part.
- Taree (NSW)'s 2BOB FM is a founding supporter of the Manning Valley region's annual Akoostik music festival.
- Byron Bay (NSW)'s Bay FM's broadcasts live from the Mullum Music Festival each year.
- Blue Mountains Radio (NSW) hosts regular 'Vocal Locals – A Celebration of Blue Mountains Music' live music events.
- Gove FM in Nhulunbuy NT presents the Milk Crate Sessions, showcasing local musicians in the town centre. Sponsors such as Airnorth provide prizes to the open mic winners who play on the night.
- 8CCC who broadcasts to both Alice Spring and Tennant Creek (NT), is famous for its cafe in the front of the studio where locals will find live performances, training workshops, and people listening to new music that has just arrived.
- WA's Radio MAMA (Geraldton, Carnarvon, Mullewa, Mt Magnet) broadcasts live from Tamworth Country Music Festival each year, covering the festival from an Indigenous perspective, as well as from the Boyup Brook Country Music Festival.
- MAIN FM in Castlemaine (VIC) is well known in its local community for presenting local music gigs, music trivia nights and local DJ nights.
- TEABBA, a Remote Indigenous Broadcast Service based in NT is famous for its live broadcasts of the National Indigenous Music Awards and Barunga Festival.
- Radio Metro (QLD) is the Gold Coast's only youth station and partners with many local venues to promote dance music, r'n'b and leftfield music to the region.

Online streaming and unmetered data usage

The majority of community radio stations have an online presence (96%), although the amount and quality of content available varies considerably throughout the sector. 85% of stations stream audio live through their website, and 32% podcast their content.¹⁷

There is a notable divide between the online offerings of stations operating in metropolitan and suburban areas, and those in rural and remote Australia. For example, while 68% of metropolitan stations host podcasts on their websites, only 25% of suburban and regional stations, and 21% of rural and remote stations do so.¹⁸

The CBAA website has a 'station lookup' function, which includes the names and websites of community radio stations. However, unlike for commercial radio, where CRA's Radio App and the iHeartRadio website or app provide a central portal for listeners to access over 250 Australian radio stations, there is no central streaming portal for community stations.

¹⁶ Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2018). CBAA Programming & Technology Survey.

¹⁷ Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2018). CBAA Programming & Technology Survey.

¹⁸ *ibid*

The Government has recognised the importance of the digitalisation of community broadcasting. To support the community radio sector's further development and enhancement of their online presence, the Government is providing funding towards the industry's existing CBOOnline Project with a focus on supporting the development of a centralised portal and app for online streaming. This will enable community stations that do not already offer a streaming service to do so, ensuring that they could be aggregated through the portal.

Broadcasting is vital in that it is an activity that underpins cultural and social cohesion, enabling and contributing to democratic dialogue. The Broadcasting Service Act (the Act) has as one of its primary objects 'to ensure the maintenance and, where possible, the development of diversity, including, public, community and indigenous broadcasting, in the Australian broadcasting system in the transition to digital broadcasting'. The Act also sets out that broadcast services must be able to be received by commonly available equipment and be made freely available to the general public.

While it could be argued that online devices, including internet connected 'radios' and 'televisions', are commonly available, reception of services and programs delivered via online is not free. Even if content is made available without barrier or subscription there are significant data charges for radio and television usage patterns.

The CBAA suggests consideration be given to amend the Act, the Radiocommunications Act and other related legislation, to require telecommunications carriers, internet service providers and mobile network operators to treat services provided by holders of Broadcast Service Licences as non-metered data, available within customer plans but also without need for a customer plan. This would ensure equity and be more closely in accord with the need for broadcast services to be made available free to the general public, complementing their traditional broadcast services.

Long-term funding certainty

The CBAA are committed to working with Government to create a more certain funding environment and would welcome a partnership with Government to ensure the sector's public good contributions for all Australians can continue.

Community radio stations are largely self-funded through sponsorship, fundraising and membership contributions. Funding for the Community Broadcasting Program through the Department of Communications and Arts and distributed by the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) is around 7.5% of station income on average, although this varies widely.¹⁹ There is great diversity in community radio licensees, and some sections of the community broadcasting sector who are more heavily reliant on government income. This reflects the greater difficulty of these stations in raising commercial income due to their targeted communities of interest and focus on addressing inequality in our communities.

The current eligibility rules around the CBF's specialist funding pools mean it is increasingly unable to meet the demand from community stations including many regional and remote stations. Recent analysis of grants made by the CBF in the 2017-18 financial year revealed that 65% of all applicants (170 of 261 organisations) were not eligible to draw on the funding allocated for specialist purposes. In the last financial year this cohort sought 47% of all funding support requested in 2017-18 but received only 22% of the funding allocated. These broadcasters must compete with all applicants for the general and transmission support funding available. 60% of the cohort were community broadcasting stations located in rural, regional and remote areas and serving the broad needs of their communities or providing specific faith-based services. Transmission site operating expenses have risen by over \$4.3m for the community radio sector in recent years, accounting on average for 8% of annual expenditure for all stations but up to 20% for rural and remote stations.²⁰ The CBAA recommends that the capacity of the Community Broadcasting Program to support all community broadcasters be expanded, specifically general funding accessible to all community broadcasting stations through its Community Broadcasting General Sustainability and Development Fund allocation.

¹⁹ Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2017), Community Broadcasting Sector Financial Health of Community Radio Survey. Available at: <https://www.cbba.org.au/sites/default/files/media/CBAA%202017%20Financial%20Health%20of%20Community%20Radio%20Survey%20FINAL.pdf>

²⁰ Community Broadcasting Sector Financial Health of Community Radio Survey Report, CBAA October 2017 at p.16.

Community radio stations are able to achieve their significantly low-cost/high output radio production, with strict regulations limiting their commercial fundraising capacity²¹, because of the efforts and commitment of over 26,000 volunteers supporting around 766 EFT employed staff, and the support and goodwill of their communities.²²

Given the demonstrable importance of community broadcasting and its vital role in Australia's music industry and the greater public interest, it is crucial that current and future Governments provide ongoing funding certainty to support and invest in Australia's community broadcasting service. The current arrangement of having the sector rely on yearly budget decisions is unsustainable in the long-term.

We were extremely appreciative of the government's decision to reinstate previous funding cuts to community radio funding in the previous 2017-18 Budget (\$6.1m over two years) and for the provision of additional funding during this year for digital radio rollout, enhanced news programming, improved online presence and industry skills development. These additional resources have been vital to the continued growth of the sector.

We note that in its 5 February Report, the Select Committee on the Future of Public Interest Journalism recommended that "the Commonwealth provide additional surety in future funding for the community broadcasting sector beyond the forward estimates, in particular what component will be set aside for training and education, and ensure that the sector is fully consulted in the national rollout of digital services." (Recommendation 2)

In its response the Government noted this recommendation and stated its support and recognition of the valuable service community broadcasting brings to groups in the community that are not specifically served by commercial, subscription or national broadcasters and its contribution to the diversity of the media landscape.

To ensure community broadcasting remains viable and can operate in an environment of certainty, we request that the Commonwealth Government makes our funding ongoing, rather than an allocation which happens according to the annual Budget.

Policy support for community broadcasting

Community broadcasting provides a vital layer in Australia's music industry and broader arts ecosystem. It is an important tool and offers a unique, already-established business model for developing the music industry at the grassroots.

The CBAA are committed to working closely with the Commonwealth Government and this Committee to further share our ideas, experience and knowledge on this important topic. We would welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee at its upcoming hearings.

Further, we believe input from our regional community radio stations and from musicians with personal experience of the importance of community radio would be invaluable to the Committee to gain a first-hand understanding of community broadcasting's role in supporting regional and global music industries. We would be pleased to assist the Committee in organising this.

As the peak body for the sector, and an active participant in research, policy and planning in broadcasting reform, the CBAA is well placed to provide further advice to the committee. We offer our further assistance and look forward to the opportunity to speak to the Committee during hearings.

Kind regards,

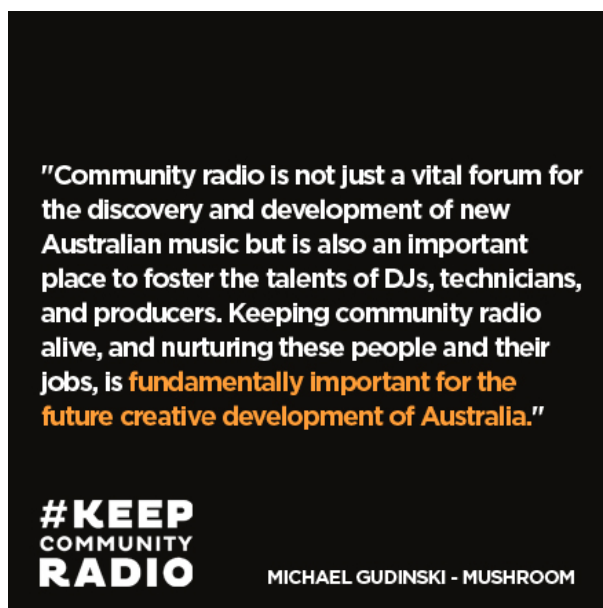


Jon Bisset
Chief Executive Officer

²¹ The Broadcasting Services Act (1992) places limits on the amount of advertising, in the form of sponsorship, that community broadcasters are permitted to put to air.

²² Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2017), Community Broadcasting Sector Financial Health of Community Radio Survey. Available at: <https://www.cbba.org.au/sites/default/files/media/CBAA%202017%20Financial%20Health%20of%20Community%20Radio%20Survey%20FINAL.pdf>

Attachment: #KeepCommunityRadio campaign



Clockwise: Wil Wagner of Melbourne band The Smith Street Band; Peter Garrett; lead singer of Midnight Oil; Sydney singer-songwriter Josh Pyke; Members of Sydney's True Vibration with Sydney's L-Fresh the Lion, Mirrah and DJ MK 1; and Melbourne artist Courtney Barnett.