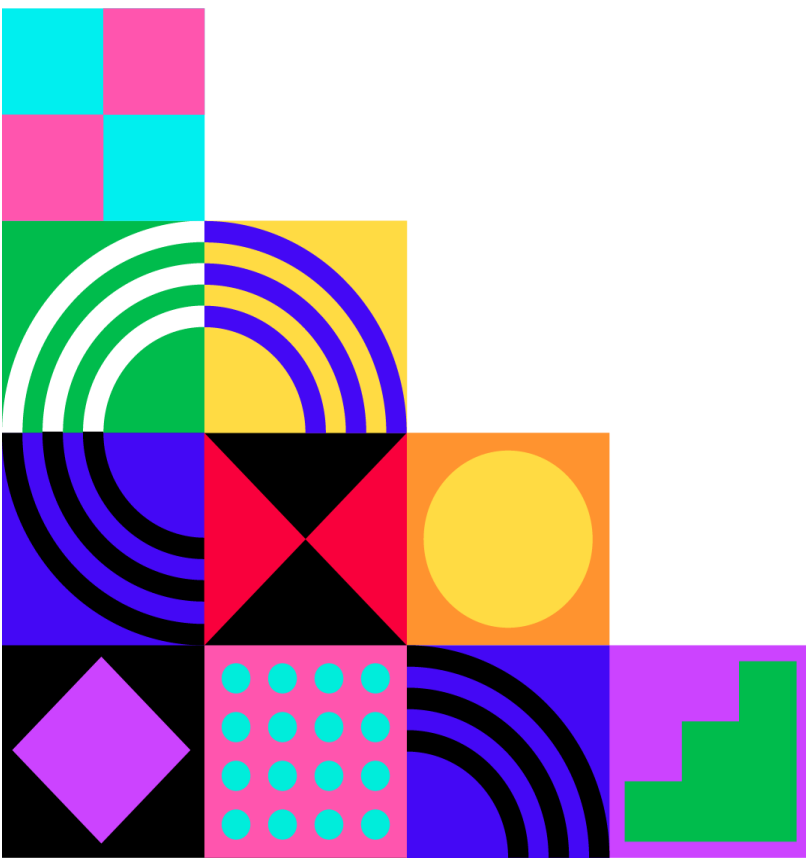


Community Broadcasting Association of Australia

**Submission to the
inquiry into the
challenges and
opportunities within the
Australian live music
industry**



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 CBAA) acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia.

We acknowledge First Nations' sovereignty and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities by Traditional owners of Country throughout Australia.

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 CBAA is based on the lands of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation.

Table of contents

1. Video submission.....	3
2. Introduction.....	3
3. Community radio reaches people!.....	4
4. Paving the way for artists and developing live music audiences.....	4
5. Supporting artist's income	5
6. Deadly First Nations' artists	7
7. Inclusive music programming	9
8. Local music heroes	11
9. Building live music capacity in communities.....	13
10. An integral part of the local and live music ecosystem	15
11. Recommendations.....	17
12. Contact.....	17

1. Video submission

A video accompanies this written submission. The video submission shares just a fraction of the incredible work community broadcasters do to connect their communities through live music. The video captures some of the brilliant examples of the mutually supportive relationship between live and local music and community radio.

[View our video submission here](#)

2. Introduction

Halo of Teeth, Flesh Prison, Streets of Separation, Spacerhead, Zerodent, Hysteria, Lounge Tourist, Gauci, Darcy Baylis, Holliday Howe, Luca Brasi, the Sarah Liz Quartet, Jason Singh, Sienna Skies, Middle Kids, Variable Depth Audit, J McFarlane's Reality Guest, Jess Ribeiro, Bart Willoughby, Canisha, Rona, The Later Romantics, Karin Schaupp, Mirusia, Big Mama and the Charm Offensive, SH! Jazz Quartet, Loki Hines, Screensaver, SLOMO, Hooper Crescent, Scud.

These are just a few of the Australian artists playing live at upcoming gigs and festivals that are being presented and promoted in partnership with community radio.

Community radio stations play a vital role in enabling musicians to develop as artists, share their work and reach their audiences. Australian artists often launch and build their careers via community radio. Community radio helps artists gain exposure to audiences and develop a following for their music. It plays an important role in getting the word out about local gigs and artists to audiences across Australia.

Community broadcasting is powered by 1000 staff and 17,800 volunteers with a passion for live and local music. These broadcasters are key contributors and innovators in Australia's live music industry.

Community radio stations bring live music directly to their communities by organising festivals and events. Some have their own live music spaces where they welcome audiences to regular live music nights. Often stations will extend the reach of live music events by broadcasting them live to homes across the country. Stations are producers, promoters and act as recording labels. The sector offers employment and training pathways in music production, songwriting, tech and event management.

Community broadcasters thank the Standing Committee on Communication and the Arts for their work to review the challenges and opportunities within the Australian live music industry. Community broadcasters are key infrastructure for the sustainability and growth of Australia's live music industry domestically and internationally. The sector provides artist and audience development, building capacity and benefiting local economies, events and festivals. This submission will address community broadcasting's impact on:

- sustainability and growth of the industry
- artist development and career pathways
- capacity building in facilitation and promotion of events and festivals
- local economic benefits
- audience development and consumer behaviours
- building sustainability in the industry, domestically and internationally

3. Community radio reaches people!

Community radio plays a pivotal role in Australia's live music ecosystem.

The community broadcasting sector's ten-year plan, *Roadmap 2033*, outlines the significant contributions to promoting Australian music by community radio and television. Community radio is vital infrastructure to support audience discovery and development of arts not typically supported on other stations or by other media outlets.

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.

- 38% of community radio audiences listen to community radio to hear music not available on other stations.
- 30% of community radio audiences tune in to listen to Australian music and local artists supported by their local community station.

Community radio listenership is diverse.

- 24% of Australians living outside metropolitan areas listen each week.
- 1.35 million Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people listen to community radio for an average 16.5 hours per week; that is 27% of community radio's total audience.
- One third of community radio stations are First Nations media organisations. 40% of people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander tune in to community radio each week.

For more stats: [Community Radio National Listener Survey](#)¹

4. Paving the way for artists and developing live music audiences

Online streaming services and social media consumption are making it harder for new Australian music to be uncovered and loved by audiences. Their algorithms often suggest users to listen to established international acts. Australian artists now feature less and less each year in the live ARIA Charts.

Community radio stations are a powerful ally to Australian artists, often helping them build their first audience through airplay. There are thousands of Australian musicians who had their first airplay on community radio. Tune into community radio stations across Australia and you can listen to local artists being interviewed, hear their music played and find out where and when to see them play. For instance, FBi radio has a feature to showcase an, 'Independent Artist of the Week' featuring music and interviews a local artist with the goal of consistently introduce listeners to new local music. Many stations have weekly programs showcasing music and interviews with local artists live from their studios or around town. There's Triple R's *Live At RRR*, PBS' *Studio 5 Live*, *Live at RTRFM*, Edge radio's *The Map Program*, and Radio Adelaide's *ADL LIVE*. There are countless programs profiling local artists like 2BBB Bellingen Shire's *Off the Record*, Bay FM's *Northern Rivers Music Box* and 2SER's *The Band Next Door*.

Artists who had their first airplay on community radio have become valuable Australian music exports. Gotye, Baker Boy and Courtney Barnett all had their first airplay on community radio. 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 featured as album of the week on 2SER before it was widely released through his first record deal. The only interview De Backer did after he won three Grammy Awards in 2013 was with 2SER.

Melbourne artist Courtney Barnett is now one of the world's biggest independent artists. Courtney received strong initial support from community radio and continues to do so as her music gets wider notice. Australian Christian rock band, Newsboys, were played on community radio from early on in their careers and have gone on to international fame with nominations for four Grammy Awards.

¹ Community Radio National Listener Survey, 2023

5. Supporting artists' income

Community radio offers a pathway for artists to monetise their music, enabling them to work towards sustainable careers. In 2022/23 alone, CBAA members paid over \$420,000 to PCCA in licence fees and community broadcasters paid over \$1,700,000 to APRA AMCOS.

CBAA's Australian Music Radio Airplay Project (AMRAP) is a community radio initiative that distributes and promotes contemporary Australian music to community radio stations nationwide through the amrap.org.au website. It promotes Australian music to global markets including the USA. 90% of artists and artist representatives surveyed last year in AMRAP's end of year review agreed that community radio is important for artists' career pathways. [Amrap.org.au](http://amrap.org.au) helps get new Australian music airplay on community radio and supports community radio broadcasters to promote new Australian music on air and online.

Community radio loves Australian music.

- On average, community radio stations broadcast 37% Australian music each week exceeding the 25% required under the *Community Broadcasting Codes of Practice*.
- Nationally 16,166 hours of Australian music is broadcast by community radio stations collectively each week.

Many stations set higher Australian music targets. 4ZZZ averages 60% Australian music and 32% local music. FBI often exceeds its own target to play 50% Australian music with half of that from Sydney, 50% of songs added are by people of colour, 50% by women and gender diverse people and 25% by women and gender non-conforming people of colour.

Community radio connects artists with their audiences. It ensures that local artists have a supportive platform to reach wider audiences and strengthens the bond between musicians, listeners, and the broader community.

Case study: Triple R 102.7FM (Melbourne)

Triple R is run by 700 volunteers. It speaks to a monthly audience of around 1 million and has a global reach. The station's programming is roughly 70% music and 30% talking content. Triple R's Brunswick East HQ features 6 studios and a live broadcast performance space with a capacity of 150 people.

Triple R's *Live At RRR* is a project that aims to make live music as diverse and accessible as possible by taking it to listeners wherever they are. Broadcast free-to-air and streamed on demand, the project takes live music out of bars, pubs, and clubs and into Australian listeners' cars, lounge rooms and beyond. The participation of First Nations artists and diverse communities in the showcase of music performance is key to Triple R's success.

Musical performances and artist interviews of emerging and established artists are run as events and broadcast live and on demand each week across all Triple R services. Triple R's *Live At RRR* runs early Friday evenings not to compete with other live music options that start later in the evening. This gives the local community of all ages and cultures access to live music. Triple R's *Live At RRR* events are free of charge for subscribers and First Nations people to attend.

Each artist is paired with a presenter who is an expert in their genre and where possible, shares some lived experience with the artist. This point of difference from other live music opportunities allows artists to give greater context to their creative works and to establish rapport with the audience through the intimacy of a small room and community radio broadcasts.

Triple R prides itself on award-winning live broadcasts that are a high quality, isolated live broadcast mix of the performance. Musicians consistently comment on the quality of the live broadcast and the purpose-built performance space which has frequently been quoted to be the best sounding room in Melbourne. Every artist who plays live receives a mixed and mastered audio recording of

their live performance. A video of one song from each performance is also produced. Many of these recordings are later released by the artists.

In addition to making live music as accessible as possible to audiences, Triple R's *Live At RRR* supports the careers of musicians by giving them a platform with an established audience. Triple R featured artists like Courtney Barnett and Amyl and the Sniffers early in their careers prior to receiving airplay from other broadcasters. Artists have returned to Triple R's *Live At RRR* on a voluntary basis in recognition of the critical support the station provided so early in their careers. This early support helped them to establish and maintain careers into the future.

Recent artists featured on Triple R's *Live At RRR*: Cash Savage And The Last Drinks, Party Dozen, CLAMM, HTRK, Izy, The Stroppies, Kylie Auldist, Eggy, Dallas Woods, Freya Josephine Hollick, Allara & Olenka, Amaru Tribe, Jade Imagine, Our Carlson, June Jones, Adalita, Emma Donovan & The Putbacks, Courtney Barnett, NO ZU, Dry Cleaning, Floodlights, Leah Senior, Vintage Crop, Wet Leg, Bumpy, Teether & Kuya Neil, Mo' Ju, Nappy Nina, CIVIC, Amyl & The Sniffers, Martin Frawley, Public Opinion Afro Orchestra, Liz Stringer, Private Function, RVG, King Stingray, Sleaford Mods, Yazmin Lacey, Obongjayar, Close Counters, Cable Ties, No Fixed Address, Simona Castricum, Watty Thompson, The Seven Ups, Geld, Body Type, Magic Dirt, Ausecuma Beats, Genesis Owusu, Sarah Mary Chadwick, Lonnie Holley, Sleep D, Maple Glider, Sorry, Angie McMahon, C.O.F.F.I.N., Lower Plenty, Miss Kaninna, Screensaver, Ali, Mindy Meng Wang & Sui Zhen, Squid Nebula, J Mascis, Split System, bodies of divine infinite and eternal spirit, Margret RoadKnight, Charlotte Adigéry & Bolis Pupul, R.M.F.C., and Barkaa.

Triple R's *Live At RRR* creates a shared listening experience for communities to come together, celebrate and connect which is increasingly rare in the age of streaming services. This quality and free attendance sees a unique live audience each event, which continually expands the reach and impact of the project.



Twang house band: James Ellis and the Jealous Guys onstage on Triple R's *Live At RRR* May 2024.
Image credit: Laura May Grogan



Barkaa audience at their 2 April 2024 performance on Triple R's *Live At RRR*. Image credit: Suzanne Phoenix.

6. Deadly First Nations' artists

First Nations community broadcasters have played an instrumental role in raising the profile of First Nations musicians. They nurture and support First Nations artists and are a conduit for the production and a promotion of their work.

Just over 30% of community broadcasters are First Nations media organisations. They provide access to First Nations music and culture to around 320,000 First Nations people, including around 100,000 very hard to reach people in remote Indigenous communities, or nearly 50% of the First Nations population. Four out of ten of people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (38%) listen to community radio during a typical week. Almost half First Nations listeners (46%) have discovered a local or emerging artist by listening to community radio.²

Community media has launched the careers of many well-known First Nations artists. Brisbane singer-songwriter Emily Wurramara's first EP 'Black Smoke', sung in both English and Anindilyakwa had 10 weeks in the amrap.org.au charts. It was played on 112 community radio stations in a six-month period. Arrernte/Gurindji artist Dan Sultan has such a strong connection to community radio, he became the first amrap.org.au Ambassador in 2014. Baker Boy, aka Danzal Baker, is one of the biggest artists in Australian music and a long-time supporter of community radio. In 2022, Baker Boy co-hosted the final episode of *Global Beat: Australia* – a community radio led partnership showcasing Australian music to an American audience. 80 new and emerging First Nations artists and 97 deadly tracks have hit the radio airwaves through *FIRST SOUNDS*, a series of music compilations curated by a panel of eminent First Nations music professionals and distributed to community radio stations via CD, amrap.org.au and indigiTUBE. indigiTUBE is an online media platform made by and for First Nations people.

The sector provides the driving force behind countless initiatives to support First Nations artists. The Koori Radio Music Residency offered six opportunities for NSW based First Nations musicians to access funding for in-kind support and cash toward recording an EP. First Nations media organisation PAW Music has teamed up with MusicNT's Regional Areas Music Program and 8CCC community radio to run remote workshops on PA Setup, mixing, rehearsing for a gig and running a concert. Radio 3KND (KoolINDeadly) annually curates a top 100 Indigenous songs of all time list. The Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) in Alice Springs, the Aboriginal owned and operated media enterprise, is also

² Community Radio National Listener Survey, 2023

Australia's oldest Aboriginal record label recording, supporting and promoting Indigenous Australian music for over 40 years.

Live music events are important opportunities for connection, celebration and sharing. PAKAM's innovative solution to enable remote communities to access live music without live music venues is showcased below. Koori Radio connects its community through live broadcast from Yabun which is also streamed on its Facebook page. The station organises supportive community events. They organised a post-referendum chill-out space that featured local live music from Blanche, Miah Lovelock and Marrumbang.

Case study: PAKAM (Pilbara and Kimberley Aboriginal Media)

PAKAM Radio Network is an association of First Nations community broadcasters and media producers in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions of Western Australia. It provides a satellite-delivered regional service from Broome to 12 Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services and over 8 community broadcast stations in the region.

PAKAM produces and records live music events for broadcast on community radio and Indigenous Community Television (ICTV). Entire sets are recorded and published on ICTVPlay, Indigitube, Vimeo, Soundcloud, Facebook and to the PAKAM community archive. This gives remote local communities and communities across the country the ability to keep connected to culture, access and support live First Nations music.

The PAKAM Music Truck is an outside broadcast production truck that folds out into a concert stage. It is an initiative led by the radio network to produce, broadcast, access and record live music events for local remote communities. PAKAM manager Neil Turner, shares the success of the PAKAM Music Truck at the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the Kiwirrkurra Community held in 2023. The event 'was the ultimate road test and proof of concept for the PAKAM Music Truck. It was a 3,200 km round trip from Broome on 2,000 km of which is corrugated dirt road, to arguably the most remote community in Australia', says Neil.

Live music broadcasting and recording is becoming standard practice for PAKAM. Alongside broadcasting the 40th Anniversary Celebration of Kiwirrkurra Community, PAKAM broadcast live music festivals Stompem Ground in 2022 (Broome) and Yajilarra Festival in 2023 (Kimberley). 'We have four more broadcast events lined up for 2024 in Warmun, Kalumburu, Bidyadanga and Yiyili', says Neil. The radio network also simulcasts live on ICTV, PAKAM Satellite Radio Network, streams on ICTVPlay and via PAKAM and ICTV Facebook receiving thousands of views.

As well as producing live music concerts, PAKAM's music recording engineer Billy Jo Shoveller, produces and records albums with remote community artists and bands in the PAKAM Music Truck, Kimberley recording studios or home studio in Bidyadanga. PAKAM has recently released its latest 20 track album, PAKAM Music Volume 5.



PAKAM Radio Network's PAKAM Music Truck. Image credit: Neil Turner, PAKAM Manager.

7. Inclusive music programming

The community broadcasting sector gives voice to artists from communities that are underrepresented in the Australian cultural landscape – First Nations communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, faith-based communities, people with a disability, youth and seniors' communities, LGBTQIA+ communities, and diverse music sub-cultures. Community radio promotes the diverse and unique identities of Australians that enrich the social and cultural fabric of Australian society.

Community radio stations produce live music initiatives that add to the diversity of Australia's live music scene:

- 4EB is Brisbane's ethnic community station. Van Jam re-imagines an outdoor broadcast van as a mobile performance stage for bands. The station supports local artists with diverse backgrounds through projects like Music Masala involving 13 artists with backgrounds ranging from Latvia to Thailand.
- Polyfonix on Victoria's 3ZZZ, is a weekly live music program recorded at live music events and in the 3ZZZ performance studio. The program shines a spotlight on culturally diverse musicians from around Melbourne, providing a platform for diverse music and musicians. It includes interviews with featured artists. Polyfonix is part of the On the Road Again initiative to revitalise live music in Melbourne. On the Road Again is the result of a partnership between amrap.org.au and Creative Victoria. Artists featured include The Public Opinion Afro Orchestra, Queen of Hearts (Mexican Mariachi tradition), Anja & Zlatna (Balkan tradition) Sangeet Mishra, Vinod Prasanna and Pranav Ramji (Indian tradition).
- Vision Australia Radio has supported concerts and festivals by promoting accessible events and providing advice to event organisers about supporting the needs of the blind and low vision community. Vision Australia Radio has supported Midsumma Festival, Perth Festival and KYD-X's Sounds & Vibes – an all ages, accessible music festival celebrating the International day of people with disability. Its goal is to ensure all live music festivals are made accessible and are supported by Australia's best musical talent.
- JOY94.9, a LGBTQIA+ community media organisation, are huge supporters of LGBTQIA+ artists. JOY provides a platform for emerging and established queer and gender diverse artists to have their music heard and events promoted. JOY supports and promotes the Queer Country Pride ChillOut Festival which has grown to become the biggest country queer pride event in regional

Australia. JOY is the official media partner of Midsumma Festival which celebrates queer events that centre around hidden and mainstream queer culture. It's also a media partner for Gaytimes Festival; a music, arts and camping festival which curates an eclectic and diverse lineup representing people from a broad range of identities, backgrounds and musical genres.

- Sydney's Eastside station promotes local musicians via Shout Sister Shout: Motherhood and Music, an interview series with local musicians who are also mothers.
- PBS 106.7FM profiled below promote, supports and creates live performance opportunities for musicians from diverse music subcultures. From Greek-Australian multi-instrumentalist Nikodimos to jazz, Brazilian, soul and funk inspired Don Glori with vocal harmonies, samba rhythms and spiritual overtones. From Melbourne doom metal band Dr Colossus to Chinese-Australian composers Mindy Meng Wang 王萌 and Becky Sui Zhen uniting the acoustics of the Guzheng with ambient sounds.

Case study: PBS 106.7FM (Melbourne)

Community broadcaster PBS 106.7FM is an integral player in Melbourne's diverse music community. With more than 80 specialist music programs across countless genres, PBS amplifies underrepresented music and supports Melbourne's local live music community.

PBS has a long history of hosting great music events. PBS supports Melbourne's vibrant music community - from wild nights at the Prince of Wales in the 1980s, to Radio Fest at the Collingwood studios and hosting Melbourne's favourite soul and funk nights. Just some of PBS' live music events are listed below:

Drive Live is the station's feature program for the station's annual Performer Drive Fundraiser that supports local artists with the opportunity to perform and share live music whether as a band, solo artist or DJ.

Last year's sold-out Drive Live saw two live music acts perform daily over five evenings and was recorded for play on the PBS airwaves. The event showcased Melbourne artists including Don Glori, Press Club, C.O.F.F.I.N, Phil Stroug & Friends, Moody Beaches, Glass Beams, Blonde Revolver, Don't Thank Me, Spank Me and Cong Josie & the Crimes.

The station also hosts an ongoing series of collaborative events that showcase the sounds and creativity of the Melbourne-dedicated Blues community. Blues Rendezvous 2024 was programmed in collaboration with PBS' program, The Juke Joint, to bring together a mix of established and renowned Blues folk alongside new acts. Local sets featured Checkerboard Lounge, Laurel & The Painkillers, and Jarrod Shaw.

The All Ages Afternoon Rock Show! was the station's first youth focused event. It launched in 2023 bringing together Melbourne's finest music makers and giving the chance for gig enthusiasts to connect with local DIY musicians who are at the forefront of independent music. This event was sponsored by City of Darebin's Community Grants Program.



The Rookies - Vultures at PBS Drive Live 2 February 2024. Image credit: Kristen Paterson, PBS 106.7FM

8. Local music heroes

You have to be in the same place as an artist to watch them perform live. It is a simple, but significant fact and it is one of the reasons why community radio is such a powerful force for live music promotion.

Community radio's hyperlocal broadcasting means that if you are listening to 4ZZZ, you're probably in Brisbane. Audiences also have a much higher chance of hearing a band from Brisbane on the airwaves than if they were listening to a commercial broadcaster. And because it's live and local, 4ZZZ listeners are in the right part of the world, at the right time to go watch local bands and local gigs at local venues.

In regional and remote areas, local community radio stations are hubs of information about what is happening in the area. MainFM in Castlemaine hosts The Low Down program made to share and inform about what's happening weekly around Mount Alexander Shire. The station has a comprehensive Goldfields Gig Guide with local gigs including Christy Gordon-Smith at the Taproom and the Maine-ly Ukes at the Northern Arts Hotel.

Stations are deeply embedded in their communities and have strong ties with the live music venues in their area. Three D Radio in Adelaide is currently campaigning to save the Crown and Anchor – a 171-year-old Adelaide pub and long-standing live music venue which helped to launch Australian bands like Superjesus and many others – from redevelopment.

Community radio nurtures local artists, for instance, in the case study of Live FM below where the visit of an international artist to Townsville was used to create opportunities for local artists. Community radio also plays an important role for audiences to discover local talent. Today's Country 94One in Gosford provides one of the few opportunities for Australian country music performers, aspiring local singers and musicians to receive airplay. The station hosts Brand New Star, the Central Coast's premier talent quest for young aspiring country music artists. Local music organisations are supported by community radio that create opportunities for artists like the Canberra Blues Society which promote International Blues Music Day featuring nine acts on two stages on Canberra's ArtSound FM.

Case study: 99.9 Live FM (Townsville)

99.9 Live FM is a local Christian-based community radio station for the North Queensland community. The station has a strong focus on positive uplifting music and providing information about family friendly events around North Queensland.

A brilliant example of Live FM's commitment to live music was its role in bringing the community together to celebrate local live music surrounding a visit to Townsville by American Christian pop musician, Riley Clemmons. Because of the incredible passion and dedication of staff and volunteers, Live FM was able to hold an event to leverage Riley Clemmons' visit to raise the profile of local musicians and create music education opportunities for young people.

The day started with a Rising Stars music workshop for young people (aged 12-25) where Riley spoke to participants about her experiences and then participants broke into groups to learn about drumming, strings, dance and vocals, songwriting, worship leading, performance and stage presence. All workshops were facilitated and presented by local, professional musicians volunteering their time to invest in young people.

The participants had the unique opportunity to attend the sound check for Clemmons' concert, see the professional live music event behind the scenes, attend the concert and be part of a Q&A. Workshop participants and other young, aspiring musicians had the chance to gain performance skills and showcase their musical talent at a pre-concert event with local young musicians featured as buskers.

The opening act for Riley Clemmons was a local Pacific Island band, Melanesian Pride. Melanesian Pride do a lot of local gigging and have a great social media following. Their exposure at the concert was a level up and helped the band raise their profile and build their following.

The event was extremely well received by the local community. Live FM's Rebekah Hoover says, "Having a family-friendly concert event that empowered both young and local musicians hit a real felt need in our community and something we would love to see more of." She explained that, "Funding for the regional cities is an absolute challenge. We are hoping that Live FM can leverage the partnership with YWAM and the venue to build a more sustainable option for local and international artists to perform here, and to develop the local music scene here in Townsville as well."



99.9 Live FM's YWAM Precinct live performance. Image credit: Rebekah Hoover, 99.9 Live FM

9. Building live music capacity in communities

Community radio stations are cultural hubs for local activity, are embedded in the live music community and already have transferable tech and sound skills. This allows community radio to play a big role in delivering live music events and building live music capacity in their communities.

This drove Creative Victoria to partner with the CBAA for On The Road Again, an initiative to bring live music back to regional Victoria. The projects have seen ten Victorian community radio stations curate live music events. The events feature a range of local and established acts, provide opportunities for audiences and artists to broaden their reach to diverse and under-represented communities, and create paid opportunities for artists, venues, hotels, sound operators, designers and photographers.

As part of On the Road Again, Triple R, PBS FM, 3KND, SYN FM, 3CR, JOY, 3MBS, 3ZZZ, 3MDR, 3WAY, 3MGB, 3 HOT FM and Main FM took part in sharing music industry knowledge and experience. The stations with less experience at live music producing gained experience in the process of creating live music events and were empowered to help shape local live music culture.

Community radio stations form a network around the country providing opportunities to grow Australia's music ecosystem. Its focus is diversity, emerging talent and fluid programming to elevate the visibility of Australia's vibrant music scene and talent. Community radio stations already have a strong base of shared knowledge and skills to enable them to support and deliver events that actively engage both the community and the station, to foster mutual growth and the advancement of live music in their area.

Some stations offer technical production services. This directly contributes to employment in the music industry. JOY Media's JOY Gigs and 8CCC's social enterprise showcased below are examples of this. JOY Media's event production arm for events called JOY Gigs hosts events at the Victorian Pride Centre and other locations. JOY Gigs draws on the station's 29 years of audio production experience and its talented broadcasters to provide accessible audio/visual services up to industry standard for all events.

Many stations already utilise their in-house skills to create live performance opportunities for local artists by hosting their own events. Often these performances take place in accessible spaces like theatres, dedicated live music venues and the outdoors, beyond bars and pubs.

Case study: 8CCC Community Radio 102.1 FM (Alice Springs and Tennant Creek)

8CCC is an outback community radio station that provides Alice Springs and Tennant Creek communities content and music not readily available through commercial broadcasters. The station broadcasts, produces and hosts live music events in partnership with local sponsors for the Central Australia region.

When the community's only live music event production company folded, 8CCC started their own event production social enterprise to fill the gap. 8CCC AV Event Production provides technical and consultation services, live sound, staging and lighting, event production and promotion in Alice Springs and the Barkley. Services are used at events like the Parrtjima Festival held in Alice Springs Desert Park where audio-visual production for the live music program of regional and national First Nations acts are delivered. Live music at Parrtjima Festival included Troy Cassar-Daley, Dr Shellie Morris, Jeremy Whiskey, Miiesha, Casii Williams and Mulga Bore Hard Rock Band.

The social enterprise now employs 12 casual staff and one full-time production manager under the live performance award. It is a fee for service program that generates revenue to support the station and reinvest into building the capacity of the enterprise such as by purchasing assets like a disability access ramp.

8CCC is currently partnering with Music NT on their Tech 1,2 Mentorship program to host three trainees to gain job ready skills behind the scenes and at live events such as lighting, sound and tech requirements.

Benjamin Erin, 8CCC's Station manager is passionate about developing live music capacity and looks for opportunities to build training into any event they do. He says, 'community radio is uniquely placed to champion and foster live music performance both on air and by developing live music capacity in our community.'

Ghost Gum Rhythm & Blues is a music event that celebrates Central Australia's community and music. The festival is held in Arrente Country every May amongst the silver ghost gums of Mpwaltye Artaye, Honeymoon Gap, in the West McDonnell Ranges near Alice Springs. 8CCC has been instrumental in the success of the festival.

The festival's managers celebrate the station: '8CCC Community Radio 102.1FM - Alice Springs & Tennant Creek have been with us from the very beginning... They provide all our sound AND they live broadcast the event AND they help our tiny little team promote this event and get it out to you every step of the way. From little things big things grow, super cool to be growing up alongside some local champions of community spirit and good music 8CCC.'

8CCC also produces live music events of its own. In April 2024 8CCC hosted the Many Voices Block Party in partnership with the Alice Street Art Festival. The live music event featured Australian bands including rock band C.O.F.I.N who provided content and interviews on the importance of connecting with rural communities through their music. The event was sponsored by the Northern Territory Government, Activate Alice, Red Hot Arts and Mparntwe Street Art Festival.

In 2023, 8CCC produced the inaugural One Frequency Festival. With a chock-a-block line-up of live original music from across the Territory including Abiabi Richboi, Alice Sings, Amata Band, Bambadino, Casil Williams, Ceenah, Catherine Satour, Gleny Rae Virus, Jessie May, Karnage N Darknis, Katanga Junior, Kirra Voller, Tumi Radebe +Singchronicity, Kodivine, Tutup Mulut, Wilful Mischief, Stuart Joel Nuggett, Midnight Rangers, Resin Moon, Stellar Sea Donovan, Newboys and The Wanted Gems. The festival featured two days of live music, art and activities. One Frequency was supported by Live Music Australia and 8CCC broadcast the festival nationally in partnership with the Community Radio Network.



8CCC One Frequency Festival 2023. Image credit: Martina Capurso and 8CCC Community Radio.

10. An integral part of the local and live music ecosystem

The community radio sector collectively helps artist access millions of people who tune in specifically to get their culture-fix or hear what's happening in their local community.

- Almost one-third of community radio listeners found out about a cultural or music event in their area from a community radio station.³

When a band books a gig, the organisers will generally reach out to their community radio station to ask for publicity which comes in many forms like interviews, the opportunity to play live on air and inclusion in event listings like RTR's Gig Guide, FBI's Soundcheck Week and Cairns FM's Gig Guide.

The support goes both ways. Community radio stations often survive on very little revenue because they are powered by volunteers, but every bit of revenue they do receive is vitally important to their survival and sustainability. It goes towards important things like keeping the power on. During COVID when the live music industry was placed on hold, PBS FM's sponsorship revenue was reduced by 90 per cent. Similarly, when a big music festival is cancelled, there can be a flow-on impact for community broadcasters.

The CBAA in partnership with the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) and APRA AMCOS supported by Creative Australia is currently undertaking research into Community Music Radio: Building the music-media ecosystem, a 3-year project funded by the Australian Research Council and based at Monash University. The project works to understand the economic and socio-cultural contributions of community radio and how stations help make Australian music more visible and discoverable on global digital platforms.

Case study: RTRFM 92.1 (Perth)

RTRFM is an independent, non-profit community radio station that provides an alternative voice for Perth through innovative music and talks programming. Their programs range from talk programs to specialist, genre-specific, music programs covering jazz to hip-hop, punk, rock, metal, pop, ambient, avant-garde compositions and everything in between. These programs are presented by over 350 passionate, dedicated volunteers, and supported by eight core staff members.

RTRFM produces Perth's only comprehensive gig guide in partnership with localista.com.au. It is a searchable directory of gigs, music festivals, live music bars, jazz bars and music events across Perth.

RTRFM's annual fundraising event, In the Pines, showcases more than two dozen bands. It highlights an array of local acts doing incredible things across Western Australia.

RTRFM also organises, Neon Picnic, an all-day event in Hyde Park which showcases local music like Helen Townsend, Mongeeya, Skyuka, Storefront and Tina Zando and the Situation. The environmentally friendly and free family event supports local music and businesses.

³ Community Radio National Listener Survey, 2023



RTRFM's annual event, In the Pines 2023. Image credit: Mark Francesca and RTRFM.

You'd be hard pressed to find a musician in Perth who isn't a big fan of RTRFM. It's an uphill battle for local bands to build a presence without enough venues, particularly small venues to host live music. The venues that do exist are now struggling to support bands due to sinking bar sales. A major issue for local bands is generating an audience. That's why RTRFM is so significant to Perth's live music industry who are played fleetingly, if at all, on commercial and public broadcasters. RTRFM keeps local music and musicians at the heart of its everyday work by promoting and raising their profile.

RTRFM's station manager Simon Miraldo says, "without community radio, there would be no grassroots support for artists and therefore no replenishment of a music scene that is vital to the Australian way of life!"



RTRFM's In the Pines 2023. Image credit: Mark Francesca and RTRFM.

11. Recommendations

Community radio is an important part of Australia's live music industry.

Australia's network of community radio stations is the critical infrastructure to reach geographically and socially diverse audiences with local music and the promotion of local gigs, festivals and events.

A sustainable community radio sector is integral to grow the live music industry.

Community radio stations:

- Have a close and co-operative relationship with local artists, live music venues, concert promoters and organisers.
- Manage programs, events and initiatives that are vital for artist development and career pathways.
- Support artist income with music licensing fees and event bookings and promotions.
- Host events and undertake activities that support skills development in music production, sound engineering, AV, promotions and event management that build local capacity in event and festival production.

The Revive cultural policy 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 sustainability of community broadcasters is currently being reviewed by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts (DITRDCA) including consideration of the adequacy of Federal Government funding for the Community Broadcasting Program and Indigenous Media and Broadcasting Program.

The CBAA encourages the Government to conclude its review process (commenced November 2022) and deliver on its commitment under Revive (launched January 2023) to increase support for community broadcasting.

CBAA argues that securing the financial sustainability of community broadcasters is a vital part any meaningful plan for the future of Australia's live music industry and CBAA is urgently seeking a responsible, yet substantial increase to Commonwealth funding support for community broadcasting.

Increased funding for the community broadcasting sector will be an investment in the broad promotion of local music and events to growing audiences from all Australian communities. It will also be a direct investment in live music event production, the live music economy and industry capacity building.

Recommendation 1. Recognise the important role that community broadcasters play in Australia's live music industry.

Recommendation 2. Support strong and sustainable community broadcasters to increase their ability to nurture emerging talent, help artists build their audience and income, promote events and festivals, develop local live music capacity and innovate to bring more live music to their communities.

Recommendation 3. Government to conclude its review of Community Broadcasting Sustainability and deliver on its commitment under Revive (launched January 2023) to increase support for community broadcasting.

12. Contact

We would welcome any further opportunity to assist with this inquiry. Please contact Frieda Lee 02 9318 9600 or frieda.lee@cbaa.org.au for more information.