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## Submission to the consultation on the development of a National Anti-Racism Framework

The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia is the peak body for 450+ community radio broadcasters across Australia – just over 35% of which are First Nations or Ethnic/Multicultural stations. During a typical week, four out of ten of people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (38%) listen to community radio, and one third (30%) of people who regularly speak a language other than English in their household listen to community radio.

Community radio plays a vital role in connecting and informing communities underserved by commercial and public broadcasters – including First Nations Australians, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, communities in regional and remote Australia, faith-based communities, youth and seniors' communities, the LGBTIQ+ community, and people with a disability. As an example, a selection of community radio programs, which prioritise First Nations voices, refugee and asylum seeker voices, women of colour, migrant diaspora communities, and intersectional voices is available here: [www.listeninginproject.org](http://www.listeninginproject.org).

The CBAA supports the development of a National Anti-Racism Framework to guide actions on anti-racism to be undertaken by Government, the Commission, NGOs, business, educators, health professionals, police, other justice authorities, civil society, and the community. We welcome the opportunity to comment on this consultation on the development of the Framework.

Our sector sees the value of a framework-based approach to addressing prejudice and discrimination. The CBAA is currently working on developing a Diversity, Inclusion, Access, and Equity Framework to guide internal operations and to serve as a roadmap for the sector. We are grateful for the opportunity to learn from the Commission as it works towards the development of a Framework, while also sharing our insights.

### Community media is vital to community connectedness and wellbeing

Last year's [Community Radio Listener Survey](#)<sup>1</sup> of more than 16,000 Australians shows that over 5 million listeners aged 15+ across Australia tune in to community radio stations each week (24% of the Australian population). Of these listeners, 690,000 listen exclusively to community radio (that is, they listen to community radio but not commercial radio or ABC/SBS radio). 565,000 tune in to hear

<sup>1</sup> Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2021), Community Radio Listener Survey [online] Available at: <https://www.cbaa.org.au/broadcasters/get-data-national-listener-survey-station-census/national-listener-survey-fact-sheets>

programs in languages other than English, 2 million tune in because of the diversity in programming, and 2.5 million tune in to hear local voices from their communities.

Community media showcases community issues and voices not adequately represented in other media. The community radio sector is powered by the efforts and dedication of approximately 688 full-time equivalent jobs and 22,200 volunteers.<sup>2</sup> The commitment and passion of these volunteers and staff drawn from the community the station serves, drives the production and programming of diverse stories that are self-determined and viewed through the lens of those around whom the stories revolve. By providing a platform for underrepresented voices, community media organisations are uniquely placed to challenge mainstream views and breakdown assumptions that lead to racism and discrimination.

For First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, community media fulfills a strong need for news and information that is in-language and relevant to community interests, concerns and needs. It is well documented that audiences feel they cannot receive community-specific information from other media sources, particularly long-standing local mastheads. Community media provides diverse communities with access to media that caters to the needs and interests of their communities and contributes to the connectedness and wellbeing of those communities.

### A Guiding Principle about the representation of diverse voices in the media

The CBAA notes that the Framework is still in its early conception. With that in mind we feel that the Guiding Principles could benefit from some additional clarity. We would also suggest the need for a principle about diverse voices being meaningfully and significantly represented in the media. The language of this guiding principle could reflect the importance of First Nations communities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities being resourced and supported to self-determine how their experiences, perspectives and stories are shared.

**Recommendation 1:** A National Anti-Racism Framework should include a Guiding Principle about diverse voices being meaningfully and significantly represented in the media.

### A National Outcome about inclusion, participation and access to media

The draft Framework has included a media action/strategy under National Outcome 4 - “The media (including social media) commits to countering and preventing racism and racial discrimination through their operations.” This is an important commitment to encourage, but it suggests a limited focus on the internal operations and decision-making within media organisations (or social media organisation) on, for example, programming and hiring.

The 2012 framework developed by Dr Helen Szoke also includes the media-related Area of Effort “Building collaboration and cooperation through the media” and the Priority “Work with the media industry and regulatory bodies to address reporting of race issues”. This is also an important commitment but also suggests a limited focus on building the relationships between Government and media organisations to ensure news content is not discriminatory.

In addition to these actions/strategies/efforts the National Outcomes should specifically highlight the vital role that Governments and stakeholders play in:

- Encouraging the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culturally and linguistically diverse people in the media;
- Supporting First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse media organisations;

<sup>2</sup> Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (2019) CBAA People and Community Survey Report for the 2018-2019 Financial Year.

- Ensuring First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse communities have access to information and news that is in-language, culturally specific and culturally safe; and
- Committing to digital inclusion, particularly for remote First Nations communities.

**Recommendation 2:** A National Anti-Racism Framework should include a National Outcome about inclusion, participation and access to media, specifically the role of community media.

## Conclusion

In addition to our recommendations the CBAA supports the submission our fellow sector peak body, First Nations Media Australia, has made on the Framework and the suggestions they have contributed on the development of the Framework.

The CBAA commends the Commission for the deeply consultative process it is undertaking in the development of a draft Framework. We thank the Commission for involving the CBAA in the consultation process and for its work on the Framework thus far. We look forward to contributing our ideas, experience and knowledge to this important project as it progresses.

Our sector is uniquely placed to engage with diverse communities and would welcome the opportunity to assist with the future communication and efforts to consult with the wider community regarding the Framework.

Best regards,



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