

**The National Ethnic
and Multicultural
Broadcasters'
Council**

Ethnic Community Broadcasting

Strengthening social cohesion and citizenship

Pre-Budget Submission 2024-25

Investment to drive sector growth for Ethnic Community Broadcasting

Australia is entering a period of considerable change that includes economic, demographic and social challenges associated with shifting migration patterns, an ageing population, slowing population growth, and waning productivity. Australian business and industries across the economy have been grappling with critical skills shortages (particularly because of COVID-19 pandemic), and our economy would benefit from greater diversity and innovation. These are issues mirrored across countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The ethnic and multicultural broadcasting sector provides a unique opportunity for the government to invest in improving media diversity and social cohesion in Australian society over the next ten years. This investment aims to unlock the potential of migrant and new and emerging communities, develop news services, and respond to emergencies for multilingual communities. Additionally, it seeks to create leadership opportunities and employment pathways, driving media innovation while playing a role in stimulating productivity and economic activity.

The sector is already an essential service providing a lifeline to Australia's culturally diverse population, and with the right support, the sector can adapt and respond to growing needs, expansion, and engagement as the sector responds to meet new demands.

Ethnic community broadcasting is a dynamic diverse sector, serving the needs of hundreds of thousands of Australians of all ages in urban and regional areas across Australia. It is highly cost-effective by harnessing the skills, expertise and time of more than 4000 volunteers from 125 distinct cultural groups who create 2,070 hours of content every week in over 110 languages broadcast via almost 100 radio stations.

This Pre-Budget submission demonstrates the role of the NEMBC and this unique multicultural and linguistically diverse media sector, our achievements and substantial contribution community ethnic broadcasting makes to the development of social cohesion and inclusion.

Our submission focuses on areas that demonstrate proof of concept and value. The four key Pre-Budget submission categories offer a significant return on investment and foster sector growth for multicultural and multilingual community broadcasting, providing impactful benefits for Australia.

We estimate a government contribution annually and \$2.6 million would significantly improve our ability to meet long term goals. More details are provided below of these four key areas.

Investment is sought for:

1) Targeted support for refugee and new and emerging communities	\$600,000
2) A multilingual national news service	\$480,000
3) Training	\$320,000
4) Production and Development	\$1,200,000

1) Targeted support for refugee and new and emerging communities

Migration patterns will change over the next ten years, and ethnic community broadcasting is well-positioned to support both established migrant communities and new and emerging communities as population trends evolve. Regional Australia is witnessing the growth of new and emerging communities, and this trend is expected to continue, especially with plans to attract and retain new migrants in regional areas.

The NEMBC and radio stations have a history of supporting new and emerging communities but need to be better equipped to engage and continue providing support, thus giving a voice to new communities. This will unlock the potential of migrant and new and emerging communities, foster enhanced integration, and build social cohesion. Additionally, it plays a role in developing leadership opportunities and employment pathways, stimulating productivity, and boosting economic activity. Creating a platform for migrant communities provides a channel to convey government service, health and emergency information.

Investment is sought for \$600,000 annually

2) A multilingual national news service

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that the ethnic community broadcasting sector is an essential service capable of responding to emergencies and providing reliable and consistent news and health information. In response to the pandemic, the NEMBC operated three multilingual news services to ensure that reliable daily information was available, assisting migrant communities in staying informed and safe during a time of crisis.

This proven concept and value led to the establishment of a national news service funded by Facebook until 2024. The multilingual news service distributes over 120 news bulletins per week, with massive potential for growth.

To maintain this vital service and grow multilingual newsrooms within our sector we require an investment of \$480,000 annually

3) Training

The sheer number and diversity of volunteers within the ethnic community broadcasting sector sets it apart from other forms of community broadcasting. Training needs to meet the cultural and linguistic requests of a wide range of ethnic groups. Radio stations engaging with their local communities need additional support to identify, train and mentor groups to create the sustainability required to support multicultural and multilingual communities.

Investment is sought of \$320,000 annually

4) Production and Development

Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting is Australia's largest language media laboratory, supporting cultural and linguistic diversity it provides information, maintains community connections and promotes cultural development in over 100 languages.

The sector is experiencing significant increase demands of in-language services, investing significant time and money in developing new programming while adapting and responding to new technologies, and dealing with aging technologies. Operating and development cost to stations have been rising for production and transmission. In the past decade funding has failed to keep up with CPI and the cost of power, equipment, wages. The increased need for community radio services has not matched with the increase in Government funding.

Investment is sought of \$1,200,000 annually

The NEMBC's Vision

The NEMBCs vision is:

To enable diverse communities to have a strong voice to make a safer and more inclusive society.

Recent policy development reflects and amplifies the NEMBCs vision and goals.

National Cultural Policy REVIVE

Community broadcasting and its important role is recognised in the **National Cultural Policy**¹ “**radio broadcasting plays a role in promoting social inclusion by broadcasting local news, telling local stories**”, which commits actions to:



- “ Increase support for community broadcasting to deliver local news, tell local stories, and provide a platform for diverse voices”.
- AND
- “Community broadcasting is supported to contribute to the collective responsibility of disaster resilience in line with local needs. ”

Recent Griffith University research ‘Connecting communities in a digital media era’

- ““Research with ethnic and multicultural broadcasters and their audiences around Australia revealed a network of radio stations and media organisations that fulfil a unique place in the Australian media ecosystem. This diverse sector currently carries out an incredibly important role in providing media content and community engagement and participation opportunities for a large number of people from migrant communities”.



“The sector has significant potential to build on its 40+-year history in working with ethnic and multicultural communities to continue to ensure older migrants, and new and emerging communities, have a sense of belonging and to encourage social cohesion, inclusion, and participation as active citizens”. ”

National Anti-Racism Framework Scoping Report 2022 - Australian Human Rights Commission.

- “ Community-controlled media: It was widely felt by participants that adequate resourcing of the community-controlled media sector would be beneficial in addressing negative media discourse. Further to this, support for community-controlled media was identified as fundamental². ”

The Community Broadcasting Sector Roadmap

The Community broadcasting sector recently finalised a 10-year Sector Roadmap 2033³ that visions:

“Over the next decade, community broadcasting’s leading role in amplifying diverse cultures and languages will increasingly contribute to greater self-determination and social cohesion.

“It’s a future where more Australians choose to listen, watch and engage with community broadcasting for trusted news, information and entertainment. More people discover local content and experience a valuable sense of belonging.”



Key strategies of the Sector Roadmap are to:

“Amplify Diverse Voices” to “Reflect the diverse cultures & languages of Australia, nurturing a strong sense of belonging among all communities”.

“As the demographic and social shape of Australia continues to evolve, including increasing multicultural diversity and increasing empowerment of people living with disability, community broadcasting’s role to give voice, participation and connection to diverse communities remains paramount. We will need to be responsive to the needs of our ‘community interests’ but also meet new community needs that emerge”.

Four key areas of improvement are:

- A sector-wide strategy responding to increased migration and intergenerational change services, engages and embraces multicultural communities, with a particular focus on new and emerging communities.
- Community broadcasting contributes to and becomes a key part of Australia’s multicultural landscape where multicultural communities are better understood, represented and appreciated, delivering greater social cohesion.
- People are empowered to participate as active citizens, to counter stereotypes and are represented in the media, to support them to thrive.
- The broadcasting of linguistically diverse content contributes to an inclusive and vibrant media landscape and a strong sense of belonging.



We deeply understand our communities and create content that reflects, amplifies and enriches the ever-evolving communities of Australia.

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- The broadcasting of linguistically diverse content contributes to an inclusive and vibrant media landscape and a strong sense of belonging.

Celebrate our identity & demonstrate impact:

Community broadcasters are a critical contributor to community wellbeing and resilience

“Broadcasters play a critical role in connecting and celebrating migrant cultures by: supporting people to age-well; reflecting the unique experience of second generation Australians; and, supporting the successful settlement of non-English speaking migrants.”

Royal Commission into Natural Disaster Arrangements 2020

"Community radio stations "offer an important source of information during emergencies, particularly for Australians living in remote communities" and have been able to provide "information to isolated and rural communities when they are unable to receive landline or mobile phone communication, use the internet or watch television 4."

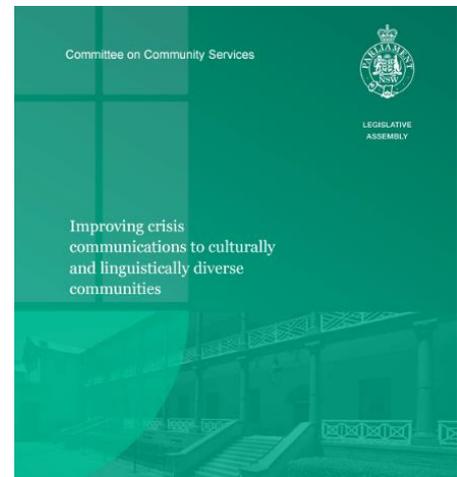


Improving crisis communications to culturally and linguistically diverse communities - NSW Government Inquiry 2023.

Inquiry participants told the committee that it's important to maintain the networks that were established during COVID-19 and natural disasters to ensure that this collaborative approach continues.

The Inquiry's Key recommendations⁵:

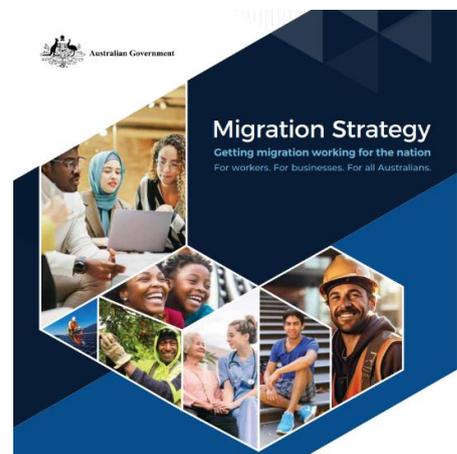
- That the NSW Government consults with CALD community organisations on how it can support the sector to communicate effectively with CALD communities during crises, including through additional funding, consideration of crisis grants, and capacity building.
- Future crisis communications for CALD communities be delivered through a range of channels and formats, including print, video, audio, telephone, social media, and events like public forums.
- The NSW Government should increase funding for community and multilingual broadcast media, to ensure that broadcasters are adequately resourced to provide crisis information to CALD communities.



Migration Strategy 2023

Culturally and linguistically diverse community radio can help get migration working for the nation by providing information and support for key objectives of the governments Migration Strategy⁶, including:

- Raising living standards for Australians by boosting productivity, meeting skills shortages and supporting exports.
- Ensuring a fair go in the workplace.
- Building stronger Australian communities and assisting migrants to invest in their lives in Australia through permanent residence and citizenship.
- Strengthening international relationships by building stronger economic and social connections.
- Deepening our people-to-people ties in the Indo-Pacific



Details of the Pre-Budget Submission

I. Targeted Support for Refugee and New and Emerging Communities

Investment \$600,000 annually ongoing

There will be an increased need to support new and emerging communities across Australia as migration patterns change. Migration is a global trend that will have a major impact on Australia, known as the most multicultural country in the world. It is crucial to support established migrant communities and new and emerging communities as population trends change.

Community radio provides newly arrived communities with the necessary media communication and social skills to actively engage with Australian society and other communities. Ethnic radio serves as the perfect vehicle for the dissemination of culturally and linguistically specific information about settlement services, emergencies, and crucial health information.

The NEMBC has a proven track record of supporting new and emerging communities, while radio stations across Australia are developing new engagement strategies to reach out to new arrivals and assist their access to the airwaves.

Settlement and early access to community radio are vital, and the NEMBC supports settlement services to provide the 'seed' for new arrivals to have a voice in their community. The NEMBC has a training 'media kit' for supporting new emerging communities and the next generation of young people.

Investment is sought to build the capacity of new and emerging communities in cities and regional areas, providing information about government services and local programs, education, and media skills training to improve employment opportunities. This investment aims to give leadership opportunities for all ages and strengthen community participation.

Migration will occur in cities and regional areas, and the NEMBC is focused on all areas but has a specific plan to support those in need in regional areas by starting new broadcasting opportunities. Investment in establishing and sustaining Multicultural Community Radio facilities in regional centres is paramount to this plan.

From 2011 to 2018, the NEMBC supported regional centres in Victoria through its ENGAGE project. Research identified a lack of support for migrant communities in regional areas. There has been a significant number of new arrivals to regional areas since 2010; however, those groups do not have a voice on their local radio station. The ENGAGE project established partnerships, organized training, and started new radio programs for a range of culturally diverse communities. This work has been continued in NSW.

The NEMBC identified several significant barriers to new and emerging migrant communities' access to existing radio services, including trying to fit into an established radio station's culture. For example, the historical predominance in some regions of 'Country and Western,' or in other cases, an overcrowded programming grid.

Rather than causing disruption to existing radio services, and possibly creating community tension, it is better to develop a multicultural community radio facility with its own broadcast opportunities, run and operated by the local multicultural communities.



More recently, in 2020, the NEMBC identified Griffith, Tamworth, Wagga Wagga, and Shepparton as sites that require initial attention. Further work will be required in other regions to research and identify additional sites and collaborate with state governments, settlement services, and multicultural organizations.

Services in these areas could re-broadcast full-time Ethnic radio station programs to fill airtime and establish local radio production studios to produce local content broadcast at specific times. The local community could broadcast at peak times to gain maximum listenership in their community.

The benefits of starting a multicultural community radio facility:

- Make the region a sympathetic 'host' for new arrivals
- Promote successful settlement and wellbeing
- Give voice to culturally diverse communities
- Provide information about government services and local programs
- Offer employment opportunities
- Provide education and skills training to enhance employment opportunities
- Empower and provide community participation
- Give leadership opportunities for all ages
- Create multicultural community hubs for cross cultural communication (in English).
- Develop technology and new digital multimedia platforms
- Increase women's participation
- Provide Youth with a vehicle for expression and development
- Build social inclusion and networks

Research shows that social support is one of the most important factors for promoting sustainable resettlement. It is particularly important early in the resettlement process when new arrivals face the practical and emotional challenges of settling in a new country. When new arrivals hear their own language on radio it provides a strong sense of identity and assists integration.

A Sudanese focus group participant said that his language on the radio;

"preserves the culture and the national origins and it keeps people, makes it easier for people, to settle knowing that they are not really total strangers"

A Tongan community participant, an emerging community, highlighted the importance of hearing their language:

*"There is a sense of pride there too, hearing your own language go over the radio"*⁸

Several participants in a Turkish group found the radio had a unifying effect:

*"The radio station is not separating us, it's integrating us to Australia, it's very important. Our children are growing up Australians anyway, maybe they're having difficulty adapting culturally, but through the radio, they will be able to get some help and adapt .."*⁹

The existence of social networks can instil a sense of belonging among new arrivals, provide them with resources and assist them in better access to services such as housing and employment.

The existence of strong ethnic communities, in terms of both formal and informal associations within communities, is critical to a refugee's adjustment in an unfamiliar environment ¹⁰.

A Multicultural radio facility would be a voice to connect and link people together. Connections with one's ethnic community are also important to assist in the maintenance of ethnic identity¹¹ which in turn has been found to influence mental health¹². Ethnic communities have also been found to buffer the

effects of adversity, especially ethnic and race based discrimination¹³. Further, they can help to promote harmonious relations between new arrivals and the wider community by serving as a link between them.

A Multicultural radio facility could create a partnership with a metro full-time Ethnic radio station to rebroadcast and make up air-time. This would create connections between the city and the region and links that help new arrivals feel connected with a wider Australia. This type of partnership also builds wider networks, creates the possibility to share information in languages across the state and to foster economic ties.

Recent Griffith University research 'Connecting Communities in a Digital Media Era'

“ There is significant opportunity to leverage the existing licences and networks of ethnic community broadcasting, especially in regional areas, to better support the migrant settlement experience. This can be achieved through greater coherence and connection between the different elements of migrant support.”



2. Multilingual National News Service (MNN)

Investment \$480,000 annually ongoing

The NEMBC’s response to COVID-19 was to start a Multilingual News Service, which played a vital role in providing reliable and immediate information to culturally and linguistically diverse communities during the pandemic.

The NEMBC’s initial concept and the proof of the value of the news were evident by providing consistent messages across states, cities, and into regional areas. The uptake of the news was extraordinary. From its inception on May 1, 2020, and within a two-month period until June, there were over 170 plays per week in seven languages across the country.

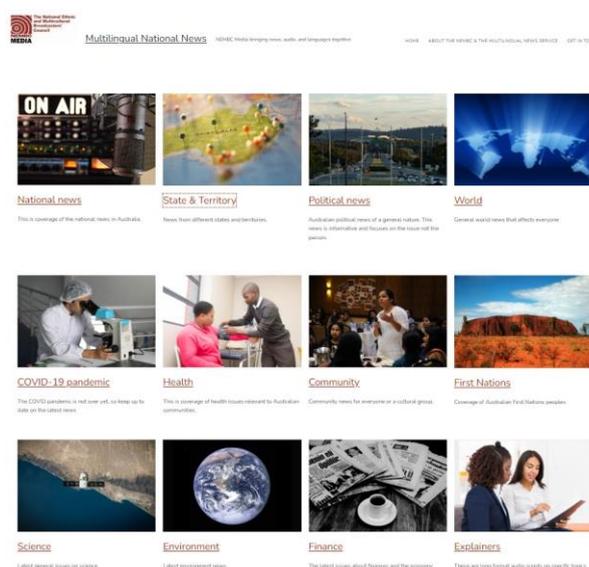
Twenty-nine stations were involved in the on-air plays from every state and territory, including 12 regional stations. Two Internet radio services – Hindi in the ACT and Spanish in Sydney - made for an additional 20 plays a week.

During the 'second wave,' the Victorian Government started funding the Multilingual News Service to produce daily news bulletins for Victorians in 22 languages. The play-out of this news has been equally significant with over 80 language plays a week at 11 radio stations, with 4 in regional Victoria.



The NEMBC is using digital multimedia platforms for distributing news and messages via Facebook pages and WhatsApp groups, and has created an online media player to reach thousands of people daily via online distribution and social media.

The Multilingual News Service created a network of community journalists that could respond quickly to emergencies. When there were outbreaks in the regional Victorian town of Shepperton and the Northern Suburbs of Melbourne, the news team was able to translate and produce audio messages within hours, and the NEMBC distributed them to government, organizations, and communities using their networks.



During the hard lockdown on the residents in the housing estate towers, the NEMBC produced podcasts for the Human Rights Commission and an Alliance of five Legal Networks so they could distribute audio information inside the towers in 16 different languages.

Explainers became part of the remit to explain certain topics or detailed announcements on easing of restrictions. An explainer for the Victorian Government on the difference between isolation and quarantine was produced on the same day and distributed via multiple digital networks and via links with ethnic organizations.

The news bulletins offer a deeper connection than a stand-alone info-advertisement. Creating news in the spoken language of the listener creates a more reliable information source with a stronger narrative, and empowers communities in a time of crisis.

The news service empowered and harnessed the NEMBC volunteer members because they have a distinct and unique cultural and linguistic relationship with their community. They are not considered distant voices, but genuinely local and well-known through local activities and events. They have a large and strong loyalty base, are well-connected, and their information is believable.

The Multilingual News Service (COVID-19) is different in the way it delivers up-to-date news and information. The bulletins are delivered simply without sensationalism so that the information is easily absorbed and connected to people in those communities. The news content is created in a way that is non-threatening, informative, and respectful towards multicultural and multilingual audiences, and mindful of community standards. It was important that the bulletins could connect to the variety of non-English languages.

During the worst phases of the pandemic, ethnic community broadcasting played an important role in keeping information available about the pandemic and providing support to the audiences and communities it serves.

Crucial to Continue a Multilingual News Service

The NEMBC has proven it can successfully produce and distribute a daily radio news bulletin in different languages and believes it is crucial to continue a multilingual news service in a post COVID environment.

Having an ongoing national daily news service means:

- There is a viable network to produce consistent messages on a range of topics and across geographical areas.
- There is a network of multicultural community journalists primed and ready to respond to events and quickly reach CALD communities with reliable information.
- It creates a unified approach and connects linguistic media groups from different parts of the country.
- It offers the opportunity for production, distribution and growth in broadcasting and the digital space.
- It provides employment and meaningful goals for those engaged in the daily production of the news bulletins. This also extends to the broadcasters involved at the stations who present the daily or weekly bulletins.
- It creates a different style of news that is non-confrontational and aims to inform and provide a service to the community.
- It provides reliable information to counter any misinformation dispersed by social media and fake news.
- It connects and enables diverse communities to be better informed, to make good decisions and feel safer during difficult times.



The Sector Roadmap, REVIVE and Griffith University research shows the need for supporting news and health and emergency information.

The Sector Roadmap recognises the need for news:

“Community broadcasting is supported to contribute to the collective responsibility of disaster resilience in line with local needs Broadcasters are connected and resourced to produce trusted, independent, locally relevant news and current affairs particularly for underserved communities”.



Griffith University Connecting communities in a digital media era recommends:

“Given the permanent nature of crisis and an ongoing need for disaster management – especially for natural disasters and health crises – the Multilingual News Service should be funded on an ongoing basis and expanded to all states, with the necessary support and personnel to operate it.”



The Australian Governments National Cultural Policy REVIVE recommends:

“Increase support for community broadcasting to deliver local news, tell local stories, and provide a platform for diverse voices.”

Community broadcasting is supported to contribute to the collective responsibility of disaster resilience in line with local needs Broadcasters are connected and resourced to produce trusted, independent, locally relevant news and current affairs particularly for underserved communities.



3. Training and Skills Development for Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters

Investment \$320,000 annually ongoing

Given the large volunteer base in ethnic broadcasting, training and skills development are vital. Training is a highly specialized service for language maintenance and, therefore, needs to be customized to meet the diverse needs of broadcasters.

Public investment is sought to build on our successful youth media training, Next Generation Media¹³, conducted in 2017 and 2019 by rolling the program out across regional Australia. With a volunteer base of 4,000 broadcasters, the training funding sought is less than \$100 for every person in the ethnic broadcasting sector.

As communities produce ethnic community radio programs, they need to meet a certain quality standard to be successful. Media training and skill development for broadcasters and content producers are critical.

The sheer number and diversity of volunteers within the ethnic community broadcasting sector set it apart from other forms of community broadcasting. In this sector, training needs to meet the cultural and linguistic requirements of a wide range of ethnic groups. Training in ethnic community broadcasting must incorporate familiarization with Australian laws, civic, and social attitudes, which often differ from those of some recent arrival communities.

Investment in training and skill development will:

- Help new and emerging communities transition more smoothly into Australian society.
- Support young people and women to become community leaders through their involvement in the community broadcasting sector.
- Advance the skills needed to assist seniors in maintaining their language and culture.
- Provide the skills needed to keep up with the ever-changing world of new media platforms, media law, and globalization.

New digital platforms are a prominent part of the media landscape, and training in this area is crucial for the many language groups in ethnic community broadcasting.

There have been a number of innovative training programs run by the NEMBC which illustrate how targeted funding can improve skills development.

4. Content and Program Production

Investment \$1,200,000 annually ongoing

Multilingual Production

Maintenance and development of languages within the ethnic media sector mean that *creating program content* is the backbone of local community-produced ethnic broadcasting.

Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting is Australia's largest language media laboratory, supporting cultural and linguistic diversity. It provides information, maintains community connections, and promotes cultural development in over 100 languages. The radio and TV listenership for culturally and linguistically diverse communities is drawn from almost 30 percent (5 million) of the Australian population that speaks a language other than English.

Ethnic programming is different from normal English radio programs. Ethnic broadcasters are required to produce between 30 to 50% of their program in spoken language. This means a lot of work is required in developing and producing the spoken word element of the program, much more than in a regular music program.

Spoken language is fundamental to the communities' cultures, and it's an old saying: if you lose your language, you lose your culture¹⁴.

A fundamental challenge to the sector would be the loss of languages from established communities such as Greek, German, Dutch or Italian or no up-take of new language programs of new and emerging communities.

However, output has increased by 53% in the last decade with no commensurate increase in public investment. This has led to a decline in the rate paid a decade ago, from \$50 to less than \$40 for each hour of content produced, with no significant increase in the amount of funding to match the growth. This has resulted in a considerable loss of funding for the majority of stations. There is substantial pressure on the sector's capacity to develop quality content across a diverse number of cultural groups. Public investment is therefore sought to restore and increase the average hourly rate for content production to \$60 per hour.

The community broadcasting sector has grown rapidly over the past ten years. Station size and operational models have grown as well as the size of the sector itself. Since 2011-12, the community broadcasting sector has grown from 285 permanently licensed broadcasters to 358 as of 3 February 2022 – a 26% increase¹⁵.

Operating costs for community radio stations have been rising, particularly for core costs such as transmission expenses. In the past decade, funding has failed to keep up with CPI as the cost of power, equipment, wages, copyright license fees, and other operational expenses has increased. For example, the operating costs of transmission sites (electricity and lease expenses) increased by 49.6 per cent between 2011-12 and 2015-16 across the community broadcasting sector and continue to increase¹⁶.

There continues to be an increased demand to keep up with the changing digital environment, to develop studio modifications, and to adapt to the new demands of distribution.

Listenership has grown by over a million weekly listeners, from 3.7 million in 2002 to over 5 million in 2022. The increased demand and need for community radio services have not been matched with an increase in government funding. The sector's core funding is being stretched to meet the needs of more stations¹⁷.

The community Broadcasting Foundation specialist funding has not received an increase in government funding since 2011.

Maintaining program quality and community support are key priorities for the ethnic community broadcasting sector.

The two key factors influencing program quality are:

- the high proportion of locally produced, talk-based content in ethnic community radio programs; and
- the high number of volunteers involved in ethnic broadcasting program production.

Talk-based and information-rich content: Content production is the backbone of ethnic community broadcasting; the majority of program content being locally produced is talk-based and rich in locally specific information. Ethnic community broadcasting is rich in content for a number of reasons:

- There is a strong emphasis in ethnic broadcasting on maintenance and development of community languages.
- Almost 5 million Australians speak a language other than English at home¹⁸.

- Almost 5 million people listen to community radio each week with over 1.35 million culturally and linguistically diverse people listening to community radio every week, for an average of 16.5 hours a week per person¹⁹. These *National Listener* surveys are held in English and the number would be much higher if it was conducted in languages other than English.
- There is a high language spoken word content requirement (50%) maintained by stations. The Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) ethnic grant guidelines have been very specific in relation to language content programs to maintain multilingualism.
- Ethnic stations and broadcasters devote a large proportion of their broadcast time (86%) to spoken word programming; this has been above 80% since 2003²⁰ – according to the Community Broadcasting Sector Census²¹.
- Ethnic stations broadcast an average of 117 hours of spoken word or talkback, each week²².

Large number of volunteer ethnic broadcasters: An ethnic radio program is not a single individual but is owned by an entire community, comprising dozens of members and representatives of a language group. As such, each hour of program content may involve a number of community members.

For example, at station 1CMS in Canberra each program has to show proof of connection to the language community. 1CMS has 30 multilingual programs but has 130 registered broadcasters – averaging 4.3 people per program.

The Stations Census, commissioned by the CBAA and carried out by McNair, showed that ethnic community radio stations have a high number of volunteers compared with other subsectors (see graph below). The 6 full-time ethnic stations make up a large proportion of volunteers (on average 285) and the total 80 stations that broadcast ethnic programs provides a total of 4,000 volunteers.

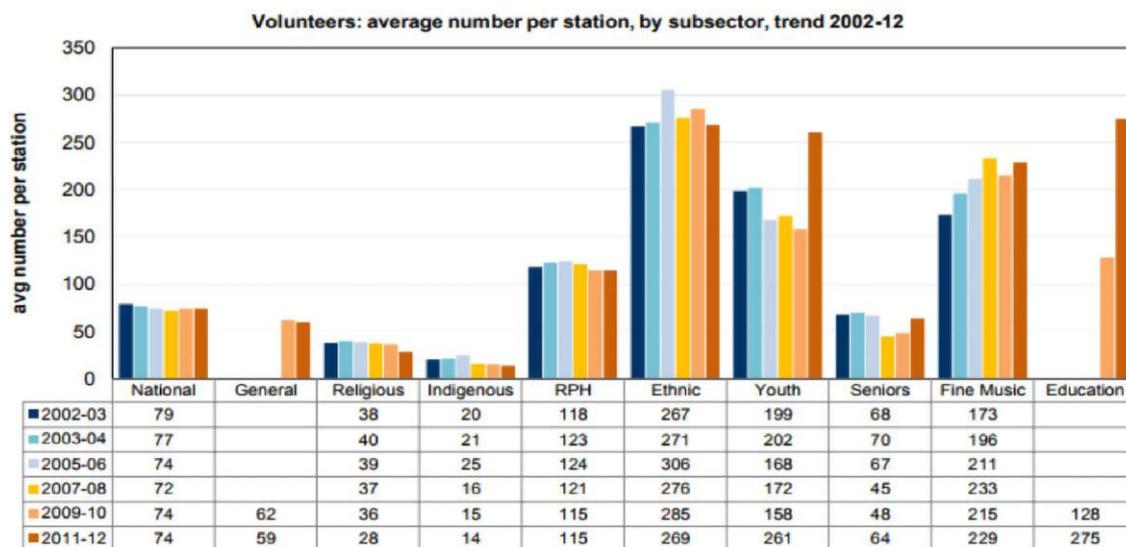


Figure 1. Volunteers: average number per station by subsector

Russell Anderson
Chief Executive Officer

National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council (NEMBC)

Enabling diverse communities to have a strong voice to make a safer and more inclusive society

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The Case for Ethnic Community Broadcasting



The National Ethnic
and Multicultural
Broadcasters'
Council

Ethnic community broadcasting makes a highly valuable contribution to Australian society and promotes civic and cultural participation, the lifeblood of a healthy democracy.

Australia's rich ethnic diversity and proud history of multiculturalism is a central part of who we are as a nation. Migration has delivered enormous social and economic benefits in terms of small business development, industry development and international engagement; and has strengthened the identity, history and character of the nation.

Ethnic community broadcasting has played a critical role in the Australian migration success story and has long been a vital part of the Australian social and cultural landscape. Ethnic community broadcasting is grounded in the values, diversity and ethos of community radio while adding richness to Australia's cultural agenda through its contribution to social cohesion and maintenance of language, culture and identity.

Australia's multilingual and multicultural audience is vast and varied comprising of almost 5 million Australians who speak a language other than English at home. This is almost a 1 million increase since 2011. While 50.7% of the population was born in Australia, the total number of migrants from non-English heritage makes up the vast majority of the Australian population. Migration continues to grow and become more diverse as the Australian Government's migration program continues to support Australia's high level of cultural and linguistic diversity.

The size and reach of ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting:

- 2,070 hours of ethnic community broadcasting each week.
- Broadcasts in 110 languages across metropolitan, regional and country Australia.
- 80 radio stations (including 6 full-time ethnic stations).
- Over 4,000 volunteers from 125 cultural groups.

Ethnic community radio programs operate very differently from general radio programs and have extensive production involvement from community members. More detailed evidence is provided in the Brief overview and Appendices.

Ethnic Community Broadcasting – A Brief Overview

1 Participation and Democracy

Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting is Australia's largest multilingual media institution. It is crucial in supporting cultural and linguistic diversity, providing information and services, creating skills and training, maintaining community cohesion and promoting cultural development in over 100 languages. National and international research shows that ethnic community media promotes participation and citizenship²⁵. This participatory media model gives a voice to the 300 multicultural communities in the world's most multicultural nation.

2 Economic Benefits

Community media strengthens national and local economies by:

- Providing information about small and local businesses through the tens of thousands of sponsorship messages broadcast each week.
- Building partnerships with business and not-for-profit organisations to deliver projects and services.
- Helping community members identify employment pathways.
- Engaging and training multicultural and multilingual volunteers, worth \$61 million annually.
- Developing transferable skills increasing employability.

3 Transferable Skills

Community radio develops transferable skills in media, ICT, broadcast technology, management capability and spoken and written communication, across all parts of the community:

- Over 7,500 people receive training each year.
- Many vulnerable groups re-engage with practical learning in an accessible and engaging environment.

4 Cost Effective

The community broadcasting sector continues to be the most cost effective and efficient means of providing multilingual and multicultural radio for Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse communities. It is also by far the most prodigious producer of such programs, providing almost five times as many hours of individual programs as SBS Radio at one-eighth of the cost.

5 Government and Settlement Service

Ethnic community radio assists the work of government and performs an essential service to the Australian community by:

- Providing a communication channel about government services and initiatives, including training and education, small business, migration and settlement programs.
- Working with emergency service providers to provide local and current information to communities facing crises.

6 Audience

There are now 4.9 million people that speak a Language other than English at home; this is a massive increase of almost 1 million since 2011. Over half the population (56%) of Australians listen to community radio and every week 1.6 million people listen to ethnic community radio²⁶ and 2.8 million LOTE speakers are occasional listeners to community radio²⁷. These *National Listener* surveys are very broad and conducted in English. Other targeted research shows that on average 50% of the language group will listen to ethnic radio and some groups as high as 80% listen to Ethnic radio therefore listenership assessment is much higher when surveys are held targeting ethnic communities.

7 Volunteers

Community radio engages 23,000 volunteers nationwide in production, station governance, management and administration, over 4,000 of these volunteers work exclusively in community language programming at a value of \$61 million.

8 Social Cohesion

Multilingual community broadcasting makes a substantial contribution to social cohesion, community engagement and regeneration by:

- Building active citizenship and increasing social inclusion.
- Providing unique opportunities for self-representation in the public sphere, particularly for under- or mis-represented minority groups.
- Creating a unique public space for dialogue that encourages mutual understanding, breaks down stereotypes and counters racism.

9 New and Emerging Communities

For new immigrants and refugees early access to ethnic community radio makes a profound difference to their settlement outcomes. It provides a sense of belonging and inclusion and empowers people by hearing their language on-air. Community radio provides a vital source of information and contact in rural and remote areas, particularly as immigration levels continue to grow.

10 An Essential Service

The Ethnic sector is the most diverse sector within community broadcasting. Ethnic community broadcasting not only provides “an essential service for new migrants ... it is doing far more than this – when a community becomes more established in Australia, ethnic language programs act as an important link to other members of the same community in their local area through maintenance of languages, and links to home which other information and media sources cannot provide.”

11 Established Communities: maintenance and connection

The ethnic sector services a large population of older generation; seniors and mature age make-up a large part of the established communities. Established communities have a strong connection to language retention and to social connection – these seniors have maintained the continuity of their language community, and functions to maintain continuity of culture and identity. The example is given of the Greek established communities; however, a similar experience exists for all the larger established communities.

Second Generation

Ethnic radio assists in intergenerational cultural cohesion. Many communities, especially established communities, reveal concerns on how to encourage young people to become more involved in community based multilingual programs. The experience of young people born from a migrant community can be very different from that of their parents; many young people are familiar with two languages and two cultures.

12 Promotes Media Literacy

Ethnic community media provides many people, including students and young people, with their first experience of media production. Australia’s media industry acknowledges the vital role community radio plays as an industry training ground.

13 Rich local content and talk based information

Ethnic community broadcasting is rich in content for a number of reasons, including the strong emphasis on maintenance and development of language. There is a high level of language content – and 50%, requirement of spoken word for each program. The recent Station Census shows that ethnic community

radio devote a large proportion of their broadcast time (86%) to spoken word programming; this has been above 80% since 2003²⁹. 'Maintaining community support and engagement' was ranked very highly by the ethnic sector³⁰.

14 Large Numbers of Ethnic Community Broadcasters

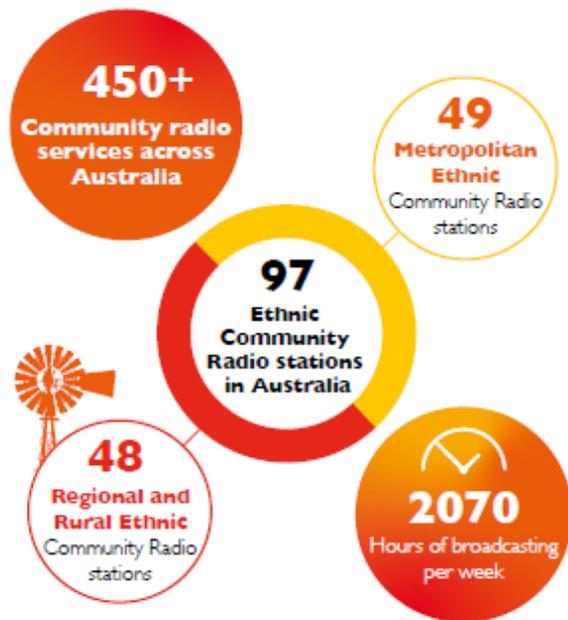
The Ethnic sector is the most diverse sector within community broadcasting³¹. An ethnic radio program is made-up of dozens of members and representatives of a language group, it is not given to individuals but is owned by a language community. There are at least 4,000 ethnic volunteer broadcasters involved in radio production.

Ethnic Community Radio Stations Australia wide

Australian population born overseas or have a parent born overseas.

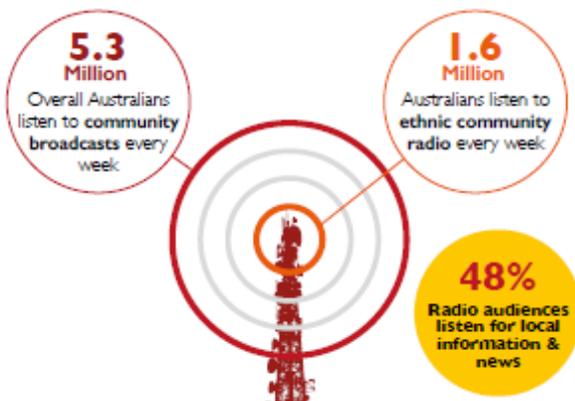


Rich local content and talk based information.



Listeners

Ethnic Community Broadcasting is a key pillar of media in Australia and unique in the world.



Languages



Volunteers



4000

Volunteers involved

\$61 Million²⁴

Economic value of volunteer effort



Endnotes

- ¹ The Australian Government's National Cultural Policy is a five-year plan to revive the arts in Australia. <https://www.arts.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/national-culturalpolicy-8february2023.pdf>
- ² National Anti-Racism Framework Scoping Report 2022: https://humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/document/publication/narf_scoping_report_2022_-_final_word_layout_1.pdf
- ³ Read the Community Broadcasting Sector Roadmap <https://cbf.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/FINAL-Roadmap-2033-digital-viewing.pdf>
- ⁴ A National Approach to national disasters. The Commonwealth Government Response to the Royal Commission into national Natural Disasters, page 308, November 2020. <https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/resource/download/national-approach-national-disasters.pdf>
- ⁵ Improving crisis communications to culturally and linguistically diverse communities - NSW Government Inquiry 2023. <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/ladocs/inquiries/2870/Report%20-%20improving%20crisis%20communications%20to%20culturally%20and%20linguistically%20diverse%20communities.pdf>
- ⁶ Migration Strategy 2023 Getting migration working for the nation - For workers. For businesses. For all Australians. <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/programs-subsite/migration-strategy/Documents/migration-strategy.pdf>
- ⁷ Community Media Matters: An Audience study of the Australian community broadcasting sector, Meadows, Forde, Eart and Foxwell, March 2007 pg 77
- ⁸ Ibid
- ⁹ Ibid
- ¹⁰ 'Community work and exile politics: Kurdish refugee associations in London', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Wahlbeck, O 1998: vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 215–230.
- ¹¹ Kurrien 2003, cited in Mahalingham 2006: Mahalingham, R 2006, 'Cultural psychology of immigrants: an introduction', in R Mahalingham (ed), *Cultural psychology of immigrants*, Lawrence Erlbaum, New Jersey, pp. 1–12.
- ¹² 'Coping with perceived discrimination: does ethnic identity protect mental health?', *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, Mossakowski, KN 2003 vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 318–331.
- ¹³ Next Generation Media aims to ensure that Australian media represents the true diversity of the Australian community. The project seeks community minded young people to engage in free radio training in media, leadership and radio broadcast skills <https://www.nembc.org.au/youth/next-generation-media-training/>
- ¹⁴ What Do You Lose When You Lose Your Language? Joshua Fishman, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED395732>
- ¹⁵ CBAА 2022-23 Pre-Budget Submission Page 4 <https://www.cbaa.org.au/sites/default/files/media/CBAА%20-%202022-23%20Pre-Budget%20Submission.pdf>
- ¹⁶ Ibid
- ¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics. "Census reveals a fast changing, culturally diverse nation from the 2016 Census, 27 June 2017". *The Australian Bureau of Statistics*. (2012). [www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/Media%20 Release3](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/Media%20Release3)

¹⁹ Community Radio National Listener Survey

<https://www.cbaa.org.au/broadcasters/get-data-national-listener-survey-station-census>

²⁰ Community Broadcasting Association of Australia. *Community Broadcasting Station Census: Survey of the Community Radio Sector 2009–10 – Abridged Report 2012*. (2012). cbonline.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Station_Census_2011_abridged_report.pdf. Website.

²¹ Community Broadcasting Sector Programming and Community Development Census, Reported on Behalf of the CBAA by Survey Matters, June 2017 page 17.

²² Ibid