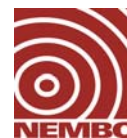


**Have your voice heard! -**



## **Radio tips for the 2013 Election campaign.**

It's election time! It's very important and a great opportunity to talk about issues that are crucial to your community. Create a dialogue about multicultural community broadcasting on your program; interview politicians or even talk with your friends.

Here are some tips, specially prepared for ethnic and multicultural community broadcasters to help plan radio programs about the federal election.

We welcome your input and feedback to help develop this tool-kit.

### **Let's talk politics:**

Firstly, recognise your strengths. As an ethnic and multicultural broadcaster, you are the most experienced person to be talking about multicultural community radio and migrant issues. You already know what to say and you can speak from the *heart*. Politicians really like it when they hear real stories by real people and that is what community radio is all about.

Here are some tips to improve on the many things you already know.

### **1) Types of programs**

**There are different types of programs you can prepare**

- **A one-on-one interview with a politician**

There are two types of interviews you can prepare for a politician, a hard interview or a soft interview.

- In a 'hard' interview you want the politician to answer direct questions about their parties' policies and agendas, and about community issues. You need to do your research and prepare questions you think your audience and community want answered. In this type of interview you really need to pay attention to what they are saying and notice if they are not giving a clear response. If they are not answering a question, you should try asking them again so your audience has an answer. You need to be confident and direct in your approach, but don't be rude or impolite. If a member of the community is running for office, the public has a right to know what they will do if they are elected.
- In a 'soft' interview you might want to take a more relaxed approach and focus on the personal side of the politician. You could ask them about the things they care about and why they got into politics, or you can ask about their personal life and achievements. This type of interview can be very interesting for the listener and give them a different understanding of the



person. But remember, it is an election interview, so don't be afraid to ask a few tough questions.

- **Do a group interview:** Invite a group of people from the community and the politician so that you are able to get a diverse range of views. Think about any tricky topics that might come up and how you will manage it if the conversation turns into an argument. You should have questions to help guide the conversation. Also, don't be afraid to interrupt if the conversation starts to go off topic. You can interrupt politely by saying things like: "that's an interesting point, we can talk about that later but let's stay on this topic ..."
- If political leaders do not come on your show then start your own dialogue. Have a round table discussion with a group of community leaders. The same rules apply for a group interview with a politician; plan how you will manage the conversation.
- **Create a magazine style pre-recorded program:** interview people from your own community about the issues that are important to them. Record some vox-pops (mini-interviews with people from your community/ or on the street) and mix your language with music and politics.
- **Have a talk-back segment on your program:** Managing talk-back can be a little bit tricky; talk to your station about their talk-back policy and make sure you have one or two other people to help you with answering the telephones. All talk-back shows 'screen' their callers, this means they answer the phone, find out what they want to talk about, and then tell the presenter who is on the line and what the issue is. In this way, the presenter knows what the topic will be and is prepared to ask relevant questions to the caller.

## 2) Making the appointment:

- Find out who is running in your local area. The *Tallyroom* is a useful website that lets you search by electorate: <http://www.tallyroom.com.au/aus2013>. If you do not know your electorate, you can look it up on the Australian Electoral Commission site: <http://apps.aec.gov.au/eresearch/Default.aspx>
- Don't be shy to ask for an interview. Candidates like the opportunity to gain media coverage, and as a community radio broadcaster you have an audience they can reach.
- Send them an email or letter, and **definitely follow it up with a phone call**. Don't be deterred, you will probably be put in contact with their media and communications officer who will help you organise the interview. Let them (or their staff) know you are a broadcaster and which station and program you are from. Also, let them know your reach: how many people you speak to in your community, how many people you broadcast to and how far you broadcast to.



The Vietnamese program in Sydney might have a large reach while in a country town. The audience may be small, but multicultural issues can be an important topic.

- The politician or their media officer will probably want to know what sort of program you present, how long the interview will go for, would it be a live or pre-recorded interview and what you will be talking about. Make sure you have this information ready to give them. Don't deceive them by telling them you are doing a 'soft' program when you really mean to ask some very tough questions.
- If they ask for a list of questions, give them a few general dot points on the topics you would like to talk about, but don't feel pressured to give them a detailed list with the exact wording. Providing the exact questions will ruin some of the spontaneity of the interview and will not be as interesting for your listeners.
- If the politician cannot come into the studio to be interviewed, consider booking a phone interview. If you are nervous about a face-to-face interview, organise a pre-recorded interview so there is less pressure. A pre-recorded program can be a good choice.

### 3) Do your Research

- Look into which politicians are in your area and find out what they like: do they play sport, do they have children, what is their background, are they married to someone from an ethnic background? This will allow for some small talk on the program and for a 'softer' interview. It also helps you to develop your discussion and questions.
- Look at the big election issues and the issues that face the ethnic community: refugees and migration, the environment, languages in schools, education, employment, foreign aid etc.
- Look at the NEMBC website in our **Lobby Tool-kit** for background information and we have some quick basic fact sheets for you to consider.

### 2) Prepare

- Create your own fact sheet -- with the key points and questions you want to cover in the interview.
- Develop your questions and try them on friends.
- Think about responses that the political leaders may give and prepare your response. Make sure they stay on track and answer your questions. Politicians tend to use the same slogans over and over again to get out of giving direct answers, so try and keep them on topic and to the point.
- Listen to other radio or TV interviews about the election. Develop your own style.
- Read the newspapers and online news websites in the lead up to your interview so you are up-to-date on the issues; especially on the day of the interview. Something topical that has happened that week might provide a good lead to start your program.



- Take note of what the political leader you will interview has said in other recent interviews; search for them in newspapers, radio and the internet -- even Twitter. Think about what they are *not* saying --- this could lead to some interesting questions.

### 3) Practice

- Repeat your key messages and questions so you know your main goal for the interview.
- Practice the interview with a friend or colleague. Get your friend to divert from the question and try to bring them back on track.

### 4) During the interview

- Before the interview, make sure you have someone to meet the political leader. When they arrive, this is good manners and it creates a good impression. They will be more likely to come back on the show if you are respectful. If they are phoning in, have them on hold let them know for how long they will be on hold and remind them who they will be talking to. This will help put them at ease.
- During the interview, listen carefully so you can respond.
- Ask clarifying questions – if you don't understand it then your audience probably will not understand either.
- Do not be afraid to take it easy; 'small talk' can bring out some interesting responses and it is, after all, community radio and it can go slow and steady.
- If the politician is not answering your question you can interrupt and say something like: "that's an interesting point, but my question was...."
- If the politicians use general responses and you feel they are diverting from the questions because they are saying:

"I don't have all the details, but what I know is ....."

Invite them back on air to explain it later. Ask for the details to be sent to you and you will continue to report on it ...

If they say things like "That is indeed important, but what's even more important is....."

Bring them back on track and try and get them to answer your question.

If they try to answer a question by criticising an opposition party's policy you can say:

"Yes, but we would like to know what your party's policy (or your opinion) is on this matter ..."

### 5) Who to invite

All political parties need to be invited. Once you have a politician on your program, let the other party know that you are speaking to them too. An independent might want more coverage and come on your program first. Then, follow that up with further invitations. Let them know if you have already had or are inviting other candidates on your program; this can be an incentive for them to come on your show. The important



thing is that you give them an opportunity to appear on your show or as a part of your programming.

Tell the politicians you are having a round table discussion about particular topics and name a few people in the program that you have invited and expect to be on the program. Brief them on the issues you will be discussing.

#### **6) How to spread your program further, using social media:**

- Use social media and your community networks to advertise any special programming you are doing. Have someone take some photos during the interview and put them on Facebook. Create a Twitter account for your show and follow local politicians and community groups, tell your Twitter or Facebook followers when you will be having guests on your show. If your show is podcasted, share the link via your social media pages. Encourage discussion of community issues, but you will need to monitor communications to ensure people are being respectful and not defaming anyone. Delete any messages that are defamatory or offensive to a 'reasonable' person.
- Signing up to Facebook and Twitter is free; Facebook and Twitter are very popular social media sites and many people get their news feeds from them
- Encourage listeners to follow your Facebook and Twitter pages while you are on-air
- Even when you are not going on-air yet, start conversations on your program's Facebook page or Twitter page; this will encourage followers to be more engaged with your program and they will also know you are still very active while off-air
- See our *Lobby Tool-Kit* and the Leadership Media Manual for more tips.

#### **7) Election Rules – The Do's and Don't's**

##### **Things to be aware of in covering the election:**

If you are a member of a political party, your listeners have a right to know when you are covering political issues. You should declare to your listeners that you are a member and allow them to make up their own minds about whether you have covered the issue fairly or not. The same applies to any issues that you might have a personal interest in; you should always declare to listeners any conflict of interest.

For example: If you are a member of the Teachers' Union and you are covering a teachers' strike, you should let them know.

Or, if you are involved in an inquiry into police racism and you are talking about it on your show, you should let your audience know that you are involved in the inquiry.



The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance has a very good code of ethics that you should read so that you know what your obligations are to your audience and your community as a broadcaster: <http://www.alliance.org.au/code-of-ethics.html>

Also, read up your station's Media Law handbook in preparation for the election coverage. Make sure you understand defamation law and do not be scared to ask your station management for help in understanding it. People have strong emotions and feelings about politics and you need to be careful about what you say about people on air.

For example, you can't say: "Senator Bloggs is an incompetent, adulterating, nincompoop..." (even if you have evidence that he is it is not go to make these sort of statements).

It is better to focus on the issues and not the person.

But you can say: "The policy that Senator Bloggs supports is a terrible policy and it will not be good for my local community..."

The Australian Communication and Media Authority has strict rules about how and what to broadcast during an election period; these rules are law so all broadcasters need to make sure they do not break any of them. These rules are in place to make sure coverage of the election is fair and balanced.

The following instructions regarding election coverage are from the CBAA website:

### **Political Material**

- The station may broadcast political content (news, statements, commentary or discussion) during the entire election period provided that **"the broadcaster give reasonable opportunities for the broadcasting of election matter to all political parties contesting the election...."**
- Be sure that all broadcast material is logged. Logging is a licence condition. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is entitled to request audio logs/ details of any political or current affairs material that is broadcast on your station.

### **Political Advertising**

- **The broadcast of political advertising must cease three days prior to the polling day.** This applies to state and federal elections. If the election is to take place on a Saturday, advertising must cease at the end of the Wednesday and only re-commence after the polls are closed on Saturday.
- The station must announce the details of the party that has authorised and sponsored the political advertisement.



- The political advertisement must be "tagged" eg. "This political announcement was sponsored and authorised by XXX party".
- If a station broadcasts the political advertising of a political party, the opportunity of advertising must be available to competing political parties.

For more information please see The ACMA fact sheet that covers the broadcasting and communication of political and election matter, [available here:](http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/assets/main/lib310037/fs152_broadcasting_communication_political_election_matter.pdf)  
[http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/assets/main/lib310037/fs152\\_broadcasting\\_communication\\_political\\_election\\_matter.pdf](http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/assets/main/lib310037/fs152_broadcasting_communication_political_election_matter.pdf)

