



NEMBC response to the CBF Structure and Governance Nous Report and Recommendations.

Summary

Whilst we agree that there should be some improvements in the CBF structure and funding model, we believe the Nous Group recommendations are a fundamental shift away from the reason why the CBF was established with its present role and purpose. It seems as though the consultants, the Nous Group, has looked through a corporate lens and recommended a CBF with far reaching powers to decide what is best for the community sector, with no understanding of the history of the sector.

The community broadcasting sector is very diverse, political and with a strong representational model based on participation and access. The Nous Group's recommendation that a *self-selecting* CBF board be established by July next year is quite extraordinary. Overall, the Nous Group recommendations are extreme, and ignore the history of community broadcasting sector representation without any reference to anything that works well now and processes that should be maintained.

The NEMBC believes that if the CBF adopts the recommendations, it will create significant division in the community broadcasting sector, especially with the national representative peak-bodies¹. The recommendations disenfranchise the national representative peak-bodies, whereby:

- the peak-bodies lose direct representation on the CBF board
- national representative peak-bodies are treated the same as an individual station
- policy development is handed over to the CBF Secretariat
- the CBF sets the outcomes for the peak-bodies
- an SROI framework is determined by the CBF that defines peak-body and stations outcomes
- the Sector Roundtable is used as the prerogative of the CBF.

Where did the Nous Group get these ideas? There is certainly no evidence provided in the Report that these ideas came from the sector 'consultations.'

The NEMBC strongly disagrees with a self-perpetuating board and with dissolving the present GAC system. The alternatives offered for an assessor pool are based on so called 'like- organisations' that bear no resemblance to the CBF. The trouble is that the Nous Group provided only one model. If we

¹ National representative peak-bodies (or peak-bodies) is the commonly used term and used by the CBAA, NEMBC, RPH and AICA. While it has the same meaning as Sector Representative Organisations (SRO's) —SRO is a government and bureaucratic terminology.

don't agree with the self-perpetuating board or the assessor pools, then there are no other models provided to choose from.

We also do not agree with changes to the CBF Secretariat and the notion of the SROI framework. (The reasons for this are explained in more detail below.)

The NEMBC and the ethnic community broadcasting sector have lobbied hard for funding for at least 30 years, and are a major stakeholder in the government funding provided to the ethnic sector through the CBF. If the ethnic sector's national representative peak-body loses its voice and no longer has an historic participatory process in place, the NEMBC will be forced to seek funds directly from the present government and bypass the CBF.

Other national peak bodies may also go down this path. AICA, for example, is in a situation to receive its funds directly; this is very common knowledge following the Stephens Report.

If the CBF board moves to become a 'sector shaper' or even a strong 'facilitator', this will fracture the community broadcasting sector and undermine the very unique basis of the sector. The NEMBC would see no alternative but to oppose the move and will do so in the strongest possible way. Support for such a move will be sought from the ethnic community broadcasting sector and the larger multicultural sector.

However, the NEMBC would prefer not to take this approach. The present Federal Government is consolidating its finances and cutting administration, and the CBF is one of those bodies it may seek to cut. In face of this, we need to show a united front. We do not want to be forced to campaign for our funding separately, as that creates potential risk. We would prefer the CBF to get on with the job of administering funds and give up the idea that it can manage and create the future for the community broadcasting sector.

We were also very disappointed about the fairness and the lack of meaningful consultation conducted in this review. (This is explained in more detail below.)

While recognising there should be some changes to the CBF, we do not want to use the Nous Groups recommendations as the premise. Their recommendations are far too extreme and we believe that report should be shelved. We do not want to spend the months that it will take to work back from their very extreme standpoint of 'sector shaper', going backwards and forwards with the CBF about them becoming a stronger 'sector facilitator'.

The NEMBC recognises there should be some improvements at the CBF board and administration levels, and has offered some suggestions below. But we don't envisage major changes. We believe that the ethnic sector funding process for EGAC works very well (see more explanation in Appendix 1). The recent Content Review also confirmed the positive ethnic sector funding arrangements and did not recommend any major changes.

The NEMBC also wants to be positive and offer suggestions in a section below called 'Being Positive', and there are some recommendations we could agree with, mentioned below in 'The Recommendations'.

A Unique Sector

The unique aspect of the community broadcasting sector are the national peak-bodies, which are truly representative organisations, elected by their members and the grassroots. These national representative peak-bodies have played an important role in providing policy direction through dialogue, advocacy and submissions. Most importantly, the peak-bodies are **the face and the voice** of their sector, especially when it comes to lobbying and speaking to government or representing the views of their constituents.

This truly participatory and bottom-up approach of the national representative peak bodies flows into the CBF and gives it a meaningful role in community broadcasting sector.

The community broadcasting structure presently in place has grown from this very grassroots base and is exceptional in representing community broadcasters in Australia; in fact, it is unique in the world.

The NOUS Report

The Nous Group Report and recommendations completely overturn the historical value and importance of how the community broadcasting sector operates.

The Nous Group Report has completely misunderstood the uniqueness of the sector and has recommended a model that is more akin to a corporate agency with an autocratic approach.

Unfortunately, the Nous Group has a poor understanding of the history of the community broadcasting sector, and this is reflected in their Report. The original tender by the CBF requested that the winning consultant have experience in the community broadcasting area. The other CBF Reviews (Content and Training) have involved people from organisations with considerable knowledge and understanding of the sector. The Governance and Structure Review was the most important of the reviews, yet the CBF chose the Nous Group, a consultancy with little or no direct experience of the sector. The only experience on the Nous Group team was a single youth broadcaster.

A major misunderstanding made by the Nous Group was why the CBF was established and the fact that it is not empowered to *shape* outcomes for national representative peak-bodies, or in fact make decisions on how funding can be changed. The CBF was established as a 'clearing-house', as an administrator of funds; not a development agency. The Nous Group misses this point completely, and instead claims that the CBF is 'weak in shaping outcomes'. The purpose of the CBF is not to shape outcomes. There are Government guidelines and *targets* for the CBF to follow, and they distribute funds accordingly.

The Nous Group's organisational model

The Nous Group's recommended model is based on classic management and organisational theory – a 'corporate' model based on the 'values' of decision-making efficiency.

The NEMBC sees major problems with a small self-selecting board that will lose connection to the very community that it serves. There would be no direct accountability to a resilient institutional community setting, and this best resides in the national representative peak-bodies (as it is now). The CBF under this Nous Group model could easily lose contact with the sector it supposedly represents. Even though there is an opportunity for nominations, the selection pool is vast and the boards will be self-selecting.

Alienation is a common problem for a self-selecting board, especially when it sits in a highly diverse and political environment. Here we cite the manual 'Non-Profit Management Principles and Practise' that explains this problem very well:

“ the self-perpetuating board are accompanied by some potential weaknesses as well. One is that the board may come to be unrepresentative of the constituency or community the organization serves. If the existing members of the board do not recognize the importance of diversity, they may continue to select new members who are just like them, drawing on their own business and social circles to fill board openings. Over time, the organization could become out of touch and be unable to adapt sufficiently to changes in its environment. Another risk is that a self-perpetuating board may become too stable in its membership and too complacent. There have been cases in which self-perpetuating boards, without the scrutiny that comes from the broader constituency of the organization, have been too lax in their oversight of their CEOs or even the behaviour of their fellow board members, with disastrous results for the organization.”
Non-Profit Management Principles and Practise, Michael J Worth, Second Edition 2012, Sage Publications, page 78.

The CBF would set itself apart from the community broadcasting sector, at least in terms of distancing itself from the national peak-sector bodies, and it would put itself in a situation where it could be continually at risk. Imagine in the future if a number of peak-bodies and stations were in opposition to the CBF approach, and there was no institutional framework in place for the sector to support the CBF.

The CBF board modelling

Of the so-called 'like organisations' that the Nous Group studied, none provided a model for the CBF board structure. Screen Australia and the Australia Council both have government appointed boards, so there is no relevance for the community sector here. The Foundation for Regional and Rural Renewal (FRRR) is basically a private company representing the primary funding agencies, the Government and the Sidney Myer Fund, so again, no board relevance to the community sector. Why then were these organisations chosen?

Where did the Nous Group get their proposed CBF board model? Their model, although not provided with an explicit rationale, seems to be based on a corporate model, which utilises the values of decision-making efficiency ("the CBF should disperse funds efficiently to maximise the impact of limited resources"), productivity ("CBF to assume a strategic role to maximise the value of

sector investments") and control ("the CBF ought to more tightly define what its purpose represents in a formal operational sense").

Efficiency, productivity and control: should these be used as the organisational drivers for the CBF board? We strongly question this proposition. We were disappointed that the Nous Group did not use a community value system on which to base the CBF board structure, and look to some of the community radio stations and how their boards are structured for inspiration.

There are a number of long-standing and well-governed community radio stations with varying boards of management structures, especially those with institutional representation, which should have been investigated. They may have provided more fruitful data of value to the sector. Philanthropic organisations may have also been of relevance.

We would also have expected that a CBF board structure be based on and reflect the community ideals and values, such as diversity, transparency, flexibility, democracy, accountability, resilience, inclusivity and trustworthiness, and that any proposed model was assessed against this community value system.

SROI Framework

The Nous Group proposed that an SROI framework be established "which would seek to place a monetary value on the social benefits achieved through funding community broadcasting and compare this with the cost incurred in creating that benefit (i.e. Federal Government funding)".

The proposition here is that the SROI would underpin all CBF grant applications from the Government, and presumably will be used to evaluate the funds dispersal to stations and national peak-bodies, although this was not made explicit.

We believe this is stepping into political minefield, especially when we read what the Nous Group suggests are the 'social benefits': "social cohesion, public health, welfare benefits, and criminal justice, and increased tax revenue from individuals that (sic) may no longer be excluded or marginalised within a given society". This set of 'social benefits' is basically nonsensical in that they have no relationship with community broadcasting. How can community broadcasting provide for 'criminal justice'? Surely this is a responsibility of the Courts. Tax revenue collection? Again, this is a role for the Tax Office. Health benefits? Hospitals?

What this proposition reveals is a complete lack of appreciation and understanding of history, function, ideals and responsibilities of community broadcasting. It seems to be some attempt to kowtow to the current concerns and cost cutting strategies of the Abbott Government, as if by compromising our social responsibilities, this will somehow secure our long-term (funding) future.

We would expect that if an SROI framework is used, and we are sceptical that this can work in the current context, it should be based around fundamental social benefits of community broadcasting as they are currently practiced, which include:

- independent cultural and artistic practice
- diversity of information, stories and opinion (vital in an increasingly monopolised media environment)

- skills development and transfer (training) – leading to employment pathways
- multicultural community development; language, culture and identity.
- democratic participation, engagement and critique
- cultural and technical innovation.

The Nous Group recommends that this SROI framework be negotiated between the CBF and the primary funder (i.e. the Government, DOC). What direct input will the sector have in these discussions? It is of great concern that there would be pressure on the participating organisations (the stations) to conform to this new set of “social benefits”, and funding directed accordingly.

‘Like organisations’

How did the Nous Group choose the ‘like organisations’? Although they have some funds dispersal responsibility, two of them have government appointed boards, and in the case of the Australia Council and Screen Australia, they have budgets about 10 times that administered by the CBF. The idea of the selection panels taken from a 'pool' was adopted from these two organisations. Why? There was no analysis made to say that this method of committee selection is effective or worthwhile or appropriate for the community sector. Why is this model of committee selection any better than the current setup? Is the current model not working effectively? No investigation was made about this either - it is just assumed that one is not working, and therefore another model is proposed.

The third organisation looked at, the FRRR, had no relevance to the Nous Report other than it shows "diversification of funding sources". But so what? How many other more relevant community organisations could have been investigated and highlighted that had similar diverse funding sources?

This is a missed opportunity to seriously evaluate the performance of the current grants committees against other relevant organisation’s dispersal models to measure their effectiveness, and if lacking, then restructure them on the community values of diversity, transparency, flexibility, democracy, accountability, resilience, inclusivity and trustworthiness.

The Nous Report leaves more questions than answers

For each of the questions below, there are no articulated justifications for what has been recommended.

- Why the urgency of the decision (‘CBF is facing a ‘moment of truth’)? The whole sector is facing challenges and it’s not just the CBF that is facing this so called ‘moment of truth’.
- Why an ‘expert’ Board rather than representative?
- What are the disadvantages of a self-selecting board? (There is no comment on this)
- Why a 7 member Board structure? (A 7 member board could be more efficient, and less support required, but why this number is selected is not explained?)

- Why is a seven board member more effective than a ten member board? Why is this a more 'effective' or valuable model than a larger, more diverse representative model?
- Why was only *one* model for CBF Board and Grants Committees recommended? (The NEMBC nominated a number of options.)
- Why split the Grants funding committees from the Board structure?
- Why should the CBF seek to ensure at least one Board member identifies as Indigenous? (Other than it being a current CBF objective, this position is not argued for. Why not also a refugee? Women? Handicapped? Disadvantaged? Youth? We are not saying that Indigenous shouldn't be represented, but there is no argument provided by the Report as to 'why'?)
- How can the Roundtable be used for CBF purposes to feedback into the grant process? (This is not even a Roundtable agreement or the job of the Roundtable? Isn't this presumptuous?)
- Why are the full risks of this fundamental change to the sector not identified and explored? (Such as the move of CBF to an autocratic approach would create disagreement within the sector; the model would isolate the CBF and put them at long term risk, or; the risks of using an SROI framework in a community context.)

The Nous Group Recommendations

The Nous Group has made 34 recommendations. However, they all lead to the same outcome - a fundamental change in how the CBF operates.

It is very difficult to pick and choose recommendations because they are all interlinked. It's one model and the only choice is to take it or leave it. The Nous Group did not offer a number of models or options to choose from, nor have they provided a performance review to show where the CBF is working well or is not working well. The ethnic grants process works very well as is explained in Appendix 1.

We trust that this is not an ambit claim with the CBF working backwards from this model, and therefore be seen to be less extreme than the Nous Recommendation but still moving towards a 'sector shaper'. While there is reason to make changes to the CBF board, and there certainly needs some administration improvement, we don't want to be spending time on a major re-shape of the CBF. The NEMBC does not want to spend another year wrangling with outcomes of the CBF Reviews.

In regards to the specific recommendations: The NEMBC is strongly opposed to the recommendations for the '**CBF board**' and the '**Grant assessment**', which really flow into not being able to accept the '**CBF Secretariat**' recommendations.

In regards to '**Grant categories**', we cannot agree with the term 'Public Good Subsidy', and while there may be merit in grants being 'platform neutral', we don't agree with the CBF as a 'sector shaper' taking control of the funds this way. We also don't agree with fixing an hourly rate and the remainder going into a 'Content Innovation pool' for the new CF board to decide on its categories and distribution.

In regards to **'Sector Projects'**, the NEMBC does not agree with the CBF Secretariat 'monitoring' sector projects. It should be the opposite; the projects should be tendered out and the winning tender runs the project and reports accordingly, providing a progress report and a final acquittal.

In regards to recommendations **'Seeking funding'**, the NEMBC will strongly oppose the SROI framework.

While the NEMBC in-principle supports the idea that the CBF receives DGR status and potentially looks at large donations or bequest options, we would like more information and we would like to understand the governance approach and how the CBF thinks it will manage this DGR status so that there are safeguards to stop competition with stations or national peak-bodies. As you are aware, the national peak-bodies are also at this moment seeking DGR status. There are a number of things that need consideration, such as:

- There is a potential problem with drawing funds from 'state' governments because that is where the stations turn for their funding. It is important not be in competition with or at the expense of established and potential station sponsorship arrangements or projects.
- The NEMBC would be interested to know how Philanthropic Trust Funds would be involved. Most Philanthropic Trust funds work on a project basis and how would the CBF go about developing project ideas?
- If the CBF develops project ideas, they could be in direct competition with the different national sector bodies.

The NEMBC could agree to the following recommendations:

- The NEMBC could agree with Recommendations 17 to 'commission sector projects'.
- In regards to **'Seeking funding'**, the NEMBC could agree with changing to a 'three year funding deed' but all the present Targeted clauses and earmarked funding should remain in place.
- The NEMBC could support Recommendations 5 and 6.

The consultancy selection process

The NEMBC has concerns about the selection of the consultancy. The CBF was the contractor, wrote the tender brief and employed the consultant. The Nous Group responded to the CBF and their main brief was to develop a new funding model for the CBF. The Nous Group are an independent consultancy group, but their employer is the CBF and the Nous Group is compelled to deliver what the employer wants. If the employer was the community broadcasting sector — the peak sector-bodies for example — or the Government, the outcome may have been completely different.

Of concern was the communication the CBF had with the consultants to try and enforce a half-an-hour phone interview for the Governance and Structural Review. Once the Nous Group was appointed, they are independent and they should not have to go back and speak with the CBF Executive Director about how long or how the sector peak-bodies conduct an interview. The CBF's letter announcing the successful applicant for Governance and Structural Review stipulated that there would be a half an hour phone interview. Other letters announcing successful review

applicants was an introduction with no limitation specified. This further puts into question the independence of the process.

The Nous Group has made a rather bold statement when it claims that most of the stakeholders want significant change. On page 57 of their Report the 'stakeholders' are listed. The majority of the stakeholders are the CBF (CBF Board members, CBF Staff or GAC members). Community stakeholders were originally offered a 30-minute phone consultation, but how much time was spent with the CBF compared to the overall consultation process?

The Tender document also shows how close the CBF was to the process. On page 11, it states:

"The CBF Secretariat will be the principal administrative reference point for the consultant and will provide regular reports to the CBF Board on the consultant's progress. The CBF Board has appointed a Sub-Committee that will provide advice to the Board throughout the Structural and Governance Review process".

Similarly in the Nous Groups report on the CBOOnline Review shows how closely the CBF and the Nous Group worked together:

"Throughout the review, Nous met regularly with CBF – Ian Stanistreet (Executive Director), Jo Curtin (Senior Grants Administrator), Jon King (Online Grants Administrator) and Nathaniel Garvin (OGAC Chair) – to circulate and test and refine the review findings and recommendations" page 65.

To say that the Nous Group report is an independent report and is not the CBF's report is like the Federal Government saying the Commission of Audit to cut government expenditure was not their Report or their views, even though they commissioned it, set the terms of reference and chose the panel.

We therefore question the independence of the review.

Meaningful consultation

The consultation process has not been fair or meaningful and did not follow best practice.

The CBF is conducting a series of reviews, mostly for funding allocations. In the middle of these reviews comes the Structure and Governance Review. And the Structure and Governance Review is treated the same way as the other reviews, with similar amounts of time and funding. The CBOOnline Review is about a project worth \$600,000, while the Structure and Governance Review is about an organisation that oversees \$17 million. The differences are enormous, yet they are treated the same. National peak-bodies were offered a half hour phone interview for the CBOOnline review, the same as the Structure and Governance Review!. There was a workshop for the Structure and Governance Review, but this well-managed event was hardly meaningful.

The Structure and governance issue is so much bigger and the CBF is so interlinked with the community broadcasting sector that a different consultation process was needed.

Being positive

The NEMBC recognises that the CBF board has grown in an ad-hoc fashion by simply just adding people to the board as a new GAC is formed and recognised there could be some changes needed.

Problems with the CBF Board - it has grown without proper consideration.

When the CBF commenced there were only the main 'original' GACS: EGAC, RPH, General GAC and Indigenous GAC, However the CBF board has grown each time there is new funding from government — for music or training — and the CBF has allowed for a new board member to have a voice and a vote. So it has grown in an ad-hoc fashion.

The 'other' GAC's are all cross-sectoral. For example music is played on ethnic, Indigenous and general and RPH. Each of the main GAC's can speak to music needs, training needs or technology needs. The problem with having these 'other' GAC's on the board is that they have no idea of the main sector's needs, as identified by the main GAC's. Someone in music for example may know nothing about the needs of the ethnic sector and simply see that the ethnic sector has the majority of money (\$3.8 million) while music has only \$600,000.

Therefore the importance of the ethnic sector to develop the maintenance of language, culture and identity within the sector can be lost on the 'other' GAC's. The original reason why the CBF was established has now become more generalised and lost its original meaning and direction.

Possible new board models.

Below are three possible models.

MODEL 1)

Original Model:

The CBF board could return to original format, with main GACs represented on the board but add community television (CTV). This is five board members, plus a President and Vice President. Total 7 members.

MODEL 2) The NEMBC could elaborate on this model if requested.

Composite Model: combining the old and the new. The main GACS maintaining their seat on the board and include CTV and have two to four skills based members; that's 7 to 9 members and a President would be 10. Choose a vice president from the existing members or elect another Vice President.

Note: the two recommendations above do not include the cross-sectoral members (music, training, online or digital) on the board. Cross sector issues can be dealt with by the main GACs. They all have music, training and online issues, in their sector i.e. ethnic programs play music and have training needs and similarly with all the main GACs. {The problems with a music board member is that they may not know anything about the ethnic sector, so how can they vote accordingly on issues that affect ethnic grants or any of the 'specialist' areas, whereas the main GAC rep on the board understands these issues as it effects their sector. The present EGAC member on the board not only has skills but has experience and knowledge of the community broadcasting sector; and is a broadcaster.

MODEL3)

Decentralised Model: Funding would go from government to AICA, NEMBC, RPH and these peak bodies would report to government on expenditure. The CBF would focus on general issues (GGAC) online, digital etc. and would therefore be free to move to a development model. This however could pitch each of the organisations against each other in lobbying for funding.

Administration improvements for the CBF Secretariat

The NEMBC recognise the GAC process could be improved. The NEMBC could, through discussion with the CBF, find ways that the ethnic funding could be streamlined.

The NEMBC realises there is a problem with the grants process and there is room for improvement; however we believe that this is an administration problem and can be sorted out without a complete overhaul of the CBF. We believe the problem is in the GGAC and we think this needs to be looked at in more detail and the NEMBC and the peak-bodies could be used to try and assist in ways to agree to improve this process.

EGAC does not have the same bureaucratic problems and is a much simpler process than some of the other GACs. However, the NEMBC could, through discussion with the CBF, find ways that the ethnic funding processes could be streamlined.

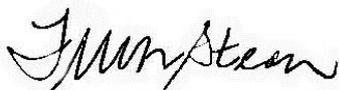
Conclusion

The NEMBC strongly recommends that the CBF board not accept the recommendations of the Nous Group Report. If accepted the NEMBC would see this as a dismantling of the present system and the CBF moving to become a 'sector shaper' and towards a development agency. This is a fundamental shift from the unique process that we have in place and the reason why the CBF was initially established. This fundamental shift will lead to division within the sector that could last for many years.

As mentioned in the Nous Group Report, the NEMBC would oppose this change and seek to have funding distributed to the ethnic sector via the NEMBC. If the CBF moves to a skills based board selected by the outgoing board and we lose the GAC process of representation, than the NEMBC would no longer see the CBF as being an independent agency to distribute funds.

The NEMBC disagrees with a Community Broadcasting Foundation that is no longer connected to the sector in the unique way that presently exists.

Regards



Dr Tangi Steen
NEMBC President

Appendix 1.

A Proven Model

The ethnic sector funding is a proven model that works:

The present system of funding to the ethnic sector has proven itself to support the maintenance and development of language, culture and identity, and shows that the ethnic sector knows best on how to manage those issues that require change. The Program content funding framework of supporting an hourly-rate is advantageous because it services a large group of programs with very little administration. One staff member at the CBF can administer to hundreds of ethnic radio programs and very little time and energy is needed by EGAC considering it oversees thousands of ethnic volunteers. This model is still successful in creating a streamlined approach to reach a large number of broadcasters.

Ethnic funding has been extremely successful for regional and rural stations; many stations have said they would not have survived if it were not for the reliability and assistance that ethnic funding has provided. It has also given reliability and identity to those ethnic radio broadcasters; working effectively to break down stereotypes and to combat racism. Ethnic radio programs have a better chance of getting on-air with the present funding model and it provides an avenue for social cohesion and a vehicle for multicultural and multilingual broadcasters and for them to be involved and interact and be heard in their local community.

Sub-Metro areas have also received similar reliability and support from the ethnic funding model. The system has also supported metropolitan ethnic full time stations to support an extraordinary large numbers of broadcasters and languages, giving them a strong voice in the capitals cities.

The Program content model of supporting an hourly rate has meant that the core business of community broadcasting for multiculturalism and multilingualism has been supported; that is support for new arrivals to go on-air and supporting established communities with language and cultural maintenance.

Criticism may be aimed at those larger stations that benefit the most from the hourly rate but those stations also manage their stations well with receiving sponsorship announcements, they have a large membership, run projects and organise successful radioathons, should they be punished for good management?

The NEMBC has been proactive and made recent guideline improvements. This is how changes should occur and consultation work for ethnic funding guidelines.

In regards to the additional content ‘restoration’ funding that the ethnic sector received, there has been already been positive developments. The NEMBC has been proactive and gone to some lengths to show how a ‘bottom-up’ effective community consultation can provide appropriate improvements to ethnic sector guidelines. This occurred through a survey, early this year, held by the NEMBC of its members and the information provided and discussed with EGAC which will result (in February 2014) in changes with more Programming content funding made available to regional and rural areas and to new and emerging communities.

There have been other improvements due to this restoration and stimulation of additional funds for the ethnic sector. There has been an increase in funding applications to Special Projects; as can be seen in comparing previous CBF Annual Reports. The NEMBC has also been developing

ways to use these projects grants more effectively for youth, women and new emerging communities. The NEMBC Secretariat is always very prudent in its operations however the stimulation of new funds has led to improvements in Sector Coordination including a restructure of the Secretariat.