

The Ethnic Broadcaster

Autumn/Winter 2001 Edition
National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council



Ethnic Broadcasting and The Election

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Emerging Communities: Emerging Broadcasters

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2001 NEMBC Conference

Getting Beyond Stereotypes

PRESIDENT'S PEN

FEDERAL BUDGET

The 2001/02 Federal budget did not deliver the additional funds needed to allow ethnic and other community broadcasters to address pressing needs and plan for the future. It re-affirmed the status quo, with a 2.6% CPI adjustment, and put an end to expectations that the Australian Music Radio Airplay Project would be re-funded.

The responses of the Coalition, ALP and Democrats to our policy and funding issues, as published in this issue, make it all the more essential that we campaign, as never before, to ensure that our demands for fair and adequate funding are pushed into the centre of debate in the run up to this year's election. In other pages of the this issue, you will find comprehensive articles on the policies and campaigning positions agreed to by all sectors of community broadcasting, to which the NEMBC has made a major contribution.

In the knowledge that billions of dollars are being expended on worthwhile, and sometimes not so worthwhile projects, our demand for \$12.5 million for the unique enterprise that is community broadcasting is incredibly reasonable.

2001 CONFERENCE

With the understandable difficulties faced by Hobart and Darwin in hosting this year's NEMBC conference, Melbourne will now be the venue in November 2001. Ethnic broadcasters from most of Melbourne's community radio stations met recently and enthusiastically endorsed the proposal. Arrangements for accommodation and conference venues, a public opening and concert, are in full swing.

We are clearly going to have an exceptionally busy 5-6 months ahead of us, what with the federal election and our conference. I hope we will all be fit and well to do the best we can for ethnic broadcasting and the good of our communities.

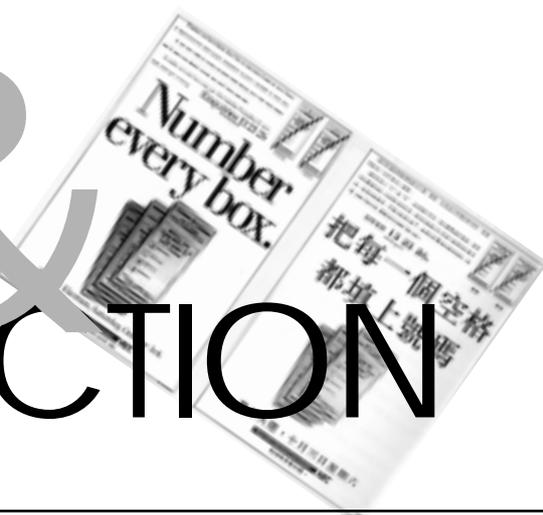
George Zangalis
NEMBC President

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The cover photo and others in this edition of The Ethnic Broadcaster come from an exhibition Living Australia: Celebrating Ethnic Community Participation – a project of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria. The Exhibition mixed historical and contemporary photographs to examine the changing nature of identity in Australia. The Exhibition will be on show at the NEMBC Conference 2001 in Melbourne later this year.

FUNDING & THE ELECTION



Later this year there will be a federal election that will determine the future levels of funding provided to ethnic community broadcasting. It is important that we make all the political parties appreciate the importance of the work we do and the need for them to increase funding to ethnic broadcasting.

Currently funding for ethnic community broadcasting is provided as core ethnic funding (\$1.5 million) and additional multicultural broadcasting funds (\$1 million). The AERTP training project is currently funded out of a \$1.4 million one off fund that was provided in 1992 and that will be fully spent by the end of 2002.

Our requests to government and all political parties are:

- Continuation of core funding at increased levels that reflect the growth in the sector
- Continuation of the multicultural broadcasting funds and its integration into core funding for ethnic community broadcasting
- Funding for the continuation of AERTP training (\$250,000 per year)

As ethnic community broadcasters, you need to be active in putting these claims to politicians on air, personally and in writing. If you are interviewing a local politician about issues make sure you ask them about their party's commitment to ethnic community broadcasting. If

Later in this edition of the Ethnic Broadcaster are articles written by Senator Richard Alston (Liberal) Minister for Communications, Stephen Smith (ALP) Shadow Minister for Communications, Vicki Bourne (Australian Democrats) Communications Spokesperson

they are not specific at the time, then follow them up to get more detail on their policies.

BENEFITS OF FUNDING

A review just completed by the NEMBC demonstrates that the government's additional multicultural funding has had very positive benefits for ethnic broadcasters, their communities, and for Australia as a whole. These benefits included:

- an increase in young people's involvement in ethnic community broadcasting
- an increase in the hours of broadcasting – 40% increase between 1996 & 2000
- an increase in the number of stations broadcasting ethnic programming especially in regional and rural Australia – a 25% increase since 1996
- an increase in the number of languages that are broadcast – up to 98 languages
- an increase in broadcasting by emerging communities – more than 40 languages being broadcast for the first time in various areas around Australia
- accredited training for around 400-500 broadcasters each year

- special training and funding for young people to broadcast
- training in the new technologies
- better quality programming
- more resources for broadcasting
- the establishment of Australia's first multilingual internet based Australian news service
- greater variety in programming including oral histories and documentaries
- funding for projects like music recording, sector surveys and establishment of a national women's programme
- 4000 Australians involved as volunteers each week in providing broadcasting for their communities

Our review indicates that for every additional dollar spent by the federal government that we have an increase in the voluntary contribution from broadcasters valued at more than \$7. That's a sevenfold return on the government's funds.

One of the government's aims in providing the additional multicultural broadcasting funds was to return the hourly rate of funding to its original level of \$50 an hour. The level over a number of years had declined to just \$28 an

TRAINING...

Trainees: 2435
Accredited modules delivered: 18634
Languages of trainees: 82
Trainers recruited & trained: 142
Cost of delivering AERTP training: \$6.50 per hour
Average national cost of delivering workplace training: \$12.60 per hour

All figures current as of 31/12/00

hour. While the additional funds did return the level of funding to \$47.66 per hour that rate has again slipped over time to now be \$37.90 per hour even though funding guidelines limit the amount of funding per language at each station.

It is important in this year that celebrates the work of volunteers, that the work of ethnic community broadcasters is recognised. Every week you research, translate, produce and present programmes with news, information and culture. You liaise with your communities and their organisations to provide local information to your listeners. You train, develop new skills and are involved in fund raising and management of your stations. Recognition would best come with a return of the funding rate to \$50 per hour.

AERTP Training

AERTP is the biggest provider of accredited broadcast training in Australia. AERTP is recognised as the benchmark for training in community broadcasting and has been universally seen as a great success that has produced better broadcasting and significantly assisted in providing broadcasters with skills that are in demand in their workplaces – particularly in the area of new technology. Because we use existing local facilities and local trainers AERTP

training is delivered at about half the average cost of delivering workplace training. The average cost of delivering workplace training is \$12.60 per hour. The cost of delivering AERTP training is \$6.50 per hour. This efficiency has enabled us to extend the life of the one off funding. However these funds are now running out and refunding this training is essential

AERTP is recognised as the benchmark for training in community broadcasting

Promoting Ethnic Community Broadcasting

Ethnic community broadcasting has played a very significant role in establishing Australia as a harmonious and successful multicultural society. Ethnic community broadcasting provides information about government and community services, cultural expression and maintenance, news and a range of local information to listeners. Ethnic community broadcasting builds strong, caring communities. Ethnic broadcasting in Australia is unique in the world. We should be very proud of what has been achieved and should take all opportunities to promote what we do to the community and to our politicians.

As the year progresses we will be providing you with further

ETHNIC BROADCASTING

No. of hours: 1632
No. of languages broadcast: 98
No. of stations: 87
No. of metropolitan stations: 39
No. of regional & rural stations: 48
No. of volunteers: 4000

Ethnic community broadcasting produces three times as many hours of original programming as SBS in 50% more languages

All figures current as of 31/12/00

information about our election bid. However it is important if this is to be successful that you put these issues before our politicians at every opportunity. Success will mean extra funding for your programme and station and ensure that ethnic community broadcasting has a vibrant future.

Funding for community broadcasting

The NEMBC is supporting claims by all sections of community broadcasting for an increase in funding that reflects the growth that has taken place. Since 1996 the number of licensed stations has grown from 128 to 203 and by 2005 the number of licensed stations will be around 300. This has led to an increase in indigenous, radio for the print



handicapped, general as well as ethnic broadcasting. We are requesting an increase in core funding that reflects the whole sector's growth and for continued funding for new technology projects.

Much of this increase has taken place in regional Australia and the NEMBC is supporting new management and technology initiatives for these stations. The NEMBC is also supporting an extension of AERTP training into all sections of community broadcasting particularly in the management area. We are also looking for a commitment from all political parties that all community broadcasters will receive assistance in transferring to digital broadcasting when it is introduced.

Bruce Francis

TONY MANICAROS AWARD

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

The award is open to all ethnic community broadcasters. The Award is valued at \$1500 and is for a project of benefit to ethnic community broadcasting including programming, training & information projects.

Projects must be of interest or benefit on a national, state or regional basis. Projects of benefit and interest to a single station will not be considered.

For more information and to get an application form visit the NEMBC website at www.nembc.org.au

**Applications close
Friday 28th September 2001**



NEW SKILLS, DIVERSE VOICES CONFERENCE 2001

Get out your diaries! The not-to-be missed 2001 National Conference for Ethnic Broadcasters will take place in Melbourne from the 9th – 11th of November. The conference may even be taking place in the lead up to the federal election, which would bring even greater focus on the issues we'll be discussing.

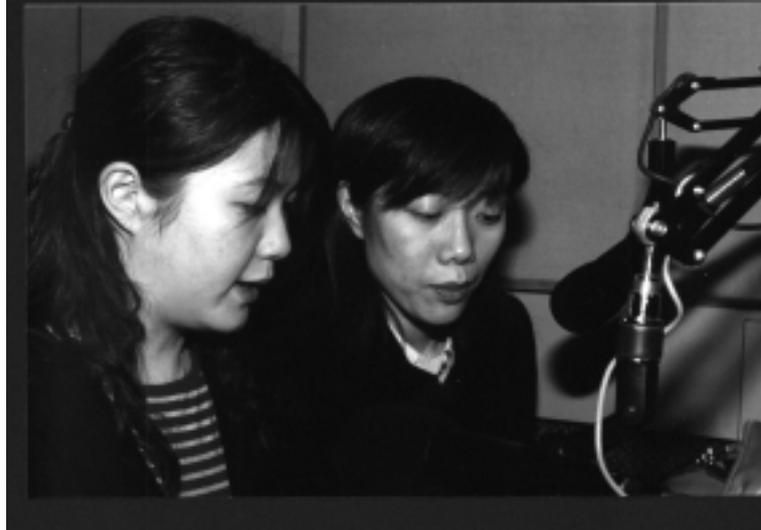
While election dates are beyond our control, holding a fantastic conference is not and that's what we'll be providing. This year's conference will look at issues around language, culture and diversity. How important are language skills for Australia as a nation and what are the relationships between culture and language? What is the future for single language, bilingual and English language multicultural programmes?

Developing skills and diversity of programming will also be major topics of the conference. We'll be looking at making documentaries and the use of national programme series as an important training tool. We'll discuss some of the online skills broadcasters need and explore the role of ethnic community broadcasting in playing, promoting and recording Australian world/ethnic music. We'll also take a bit of time to look at the role of ethnic broadcasting in the life and development of our communities and its ramifications for multicultural Australia.

We're also in the early stages of planning the entertainment around the conference. With the wealth of creative and artistic talent in Victoria, we hope that the cultural performance aspects of the conference will be bigger and better than ever. We have already secured the photographic exhibition 'Living Australia' to exhibit at the conference centre.

Melbourne and Victorian broadcasters are very excited about having the conference back in Melbourne and will make you feel very welcome. Conference is an opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people, develop new ideas and enthusiasm, and most importantly a time to have fun. We can promise you all of these at this year's conference.

If you have ideas on ways that ethnic community broadcasting can support emerging communities, contact the NEMBC Office on (03) 9486 9549 or email to nembc@nembc.org.au



EMERGING COMMUNITIES, EMERGING BROADCASTERS

While many of Australia's new and emerging communities have become ethnic community broadcasters, some communities are still experiencing difficulties in getting to air. The difficulties centre on the lack of resources in these communities and the competing demands that are a reality for members of emerging communities.

Each of these communities however understands the importance of communication for their community. People need information about their new home and about their former home. They need to know about government and community services. They need to know about health, education and employment. They also need to feel a sense of community and cultural maintenance. They need to know about the assistance, services and events available in their community.

At last year's national conference some resolutions about improving the access of emerging and refugee communities to the airwaves were adopted. These have been acted upon by the NEMBC national executive. Over

coming months the NEMBC will be producing information for emerging communities about becoming involved in ethnic community broadcasting. This will include information on:

- Who to approach to become broadcasters
- How to access training
- What programming resources are available
- What assistance can be sought to get a broadcasting group established, trained and resourced
- Establishing networks to share information and resources with other programmers

This information will be distributed through government agencies and the community organisations that represent and work with refugees and emerging communities.

Our work on better access for refugee and emerging communities to ethnic community broadcasting will also look at:

- Possible new sources of funding for emerging and refugee communities
- Extra ways in which stations and the NEMBC can assist these communities to get to air and
- What extra programming resources can be provided to these communities.

A Refugees & Emerging Communities Working Group is being established to provide advice on implementing this project. Ethnic community broadcasting has stayed relevant to all of multicultural Australia because we have been able to welcome new communities into our stations and hence into the broader multicultural community. This project is another part of the ongoing process of inclusion and renewal for ethnic community broadcasting.

Communities with large refugee numbers face extra difficulties. Getting themselves established in a new homeland is hard work. Recent policy changes by the government and usually supported by the opposition have made Australia a less rather than more welcoming homeland for our newest citizens. This adds extra urgency to our responsibilities to assist these communities to successfully establish themselves as part of the Australian nation. Becoming community broadcasters is an important part of this process.



Lawyers, Bus Drivers, Factory

Workers & Doctors...

The NEMBC's Women's Subcommittee came up with the idea of doing a national oral history project involving migrant women broadcasters at one of its first meetings. The strategy was to get funding for a series which would offer migrant women broadcasters the chance to improve, and use, their production skills and to make their presence felt in the sector. Of course, the product, a ten part series of radio programs would also promote the contribution that migrant women make to both broadcasting and across other fields.

Many years later, those original women's committee members should feel pleased. The NEMBC's Oral History Series on Migrant Women in the Workforce is in the final stages of production, and so far the project has been a great success.

In the last issue of *The Ethnic Broadcaster* we gave you a rundown on the series content. The programs range from looking at migrant women lawyers to bus drivers, factory workers and doctors. Executive Producer of the series Nicola Joseph, who is based in Sydney has communicated back and forth with producers in Melbourne, Adelaide, Alice Springs, Sydney and Canberra.

She says the producers' experience in making complex



Photo supplied by AMWU

programs varies enormously. "I think it would be fair to say that community broadcasting has not offered migrant women broadcasters the opportunity to produce documentaries or series like this very often."

As producers, they have had to research, interview, edit and script the programs, sending their material to Nicola for feedback.

"Producing oral history requires a very high level of skills not just in researching and interviewing but also in editing" Nicola said.

For many of the producers it is the first time they have used new digital editing systems and with the hours of editing required to produce the final half hour program, they have had plenty of practice. Some of the women have already commented that

they are more confident using the on-air studio after using it to record, edit and mix their programs.

The use of email has meant that the producers have been able to ask for advice, have their material checked at various stages and keep an eye on the other producers' progress. It is also possible for producers to email their recordings to an executive producer, who is able to do any final edits that are needed. As the technology becomes more accessible, national production projects, like the oral history series involving producers around the country, could indeed become a model for the development and training in community language broadcasting.

The programs will be distributed on CD to community radio stations around the country.



Photos by Maurizio Salvati/The Boite

More Music Please!

For many broadcasters, it's not always easy to find the sorts of music they want to play. But there are an increasing number of organisations that promote and sometimes record local ethnic community music.

If you want to develop the music used on your program, why not get in touch with one of these groups and explain what sort of music you are interested in playing. They are usually keen to hear from ethnic community broadcasters. They may be able to supply you with CD's, put you on a mailing list so you can keep your listeners informed of local music and cultural performances or help you get interviews with local and touring groups.

If your program is funded by the CBF then some of that grant can be spent on program expenses like CDs.

ORGANISATIONS YOU CAN CONTACT:

NSW: CARNIVALE is a multicultural arts organisation in NSW that presents a range of multicultural arts activities including an annual statewide festival. Carnivale also provides a range of grants in areas that include Artists and Community Development initiatives

Contact them on (02) 9251 7974 or www.carnivale.com.au or at carnivale@carnivale.com.au

QLD: BEMAC, the Brisbane Ethnic Music and Arts Centre, is a resource centre for culturally diverse artists, artswomen, community cultural development workers, arts and cultural organisations, communities and community organisations. In addition to advocacy and support services, it has a range of tapes and CDs available.

Contact them on (07) 3391 4433 or www.bemac.org or at bemac@bemac.org.au

Music venue is: World Music Café, Yungaba, 120 Main Street, Kangaroo Point Brisbane [monthly].

VIC: THE BOITE is dedicated to supporting artists from all communities and aims to promote understanding of, and participation in, music, dance and story telling from diverse traditions. The Boite runs festivals and live events, radio programs and from time to time produces compilation CDs.

Contact them on (03) 9417 3550 or www.boite.asn.net or at info@boite.asn.au

Music venue is: World Music Café, 1 Mark St. North Fitzroy [Friday and Saturday nights]

WA: KULCHA [Multicultural Arts of Western Australia] is a membership based arts organisation, which specialises in fostering and promoting world cultures within Western Australia. It has access to a diverse range of cultural talent and audiences and provides a venue for exhibitions, live performances, workshops and other cultural events.

Contact them on 08 9336 4544 or www.kulcha.com.au or at mawa@kulcha.com.au
Music venue is: 13 South Terrace (corner Collie Street, above the Dome) Fremantle [Friday and Saturday nights]

SA: The Folk Federation of South Australia is a community organisation which actively promotes and supports a wide range of folk arts through festivals, dances, concerts and radio programs.

Contact them on 08 8354 4606 or www.folk-sa.asn.au or at folksa@senet.com.au

Music venue is: cnr George St & South Rd, Thebarton

ACT: Canberra Multicultural Festival
Held each year in March at a range of venues around Canberra.

Contact the Festival on 02 6207 6477 or



Results of the first round of Australian Music Radio Airplay Project (AMRAP) grants have been announced by the CBF. A number of important projects proposed by ethnic and multicultural stations received funding.



AMRAP Funding Flows

Grants were allocated in several categories.

In the **Training** category, the **Australian Ethnic Radio Training Project** received funding to develop a new module that will specifically develop skills in the area of music broadcasting. More news about the training will be available soon at www.nembc.org.au

In the **Festivals** category, **4EB** received funding towards two projects. Firstly a live broadcast of the annual Brisbane Carnivale and secondly, a broadcast from the annual Woodford Folk Festival. Both events feature a diverse range of music from a variety of cultures and will be made available to stations via the community radio satellite network.

In the **Music Recording And Distribution** category there were a number of successful applicants. **2NBC** in Sydney received funding for a CD of local Macedonian

music. **3ZZZ** in Melbourne received support for their proposed CD compilation of local ethnic and multicultural musicians. **2RSR** were funded for a CD entitled "Shades of black" which will feature "the diversity of black music in Sydney" including hip hop, reggae, African, gospel and island style music. **4EB** also successfully proposed a compilation CD of artists featured at the Brisbane Carnivale.

Copies of all these CDs will be distributed throughout the sector.

In the "**Development, Innovation and Partnerships**" category, an exciting partnership proposal submitted by Melbourne stations **3ZZZ**, **3PBS** and **3CR**, in conjunction with multi cultural music organisation **The Boite**, was successful. The partnership involves installation of equipment at The Boite venue which will allow all three stations to regularly record and broadcast live events.

Given The Boite's culturally diverse music programming, this should provide the sector with a substantial body of relevant material which will be made available via satellite and CD.

Also as part of this category, a partnership funding arrangement was approved using funding provided by the forthcoming **Noise festival**. As a result of this arrangement, a further round of grants to stations undertaking music projects featuring young people has been available to the sector. You can find out more about Noise at www.noise.net.au

In other AMRAP news, distribution of music to the sector continues to grow with a number of ethnic and multicultural CDs having been distributed to stations by AMRAP.

Paul Mason
AMRAP Project Coordinator

You can contact Paul via email at pmason@cbaa.org.au

WWWWhat and WWWWhy?

Gavin Unsworth looks for answers in the digital future.

We want to get our station on line. How do we do it? I've been asked this question many times and my response is always the same. Why do you want to be on line? Simply jumping on the on line bandwagon because everyone else is doing it is really not a good idea. Why devote valuable time, resources and money in establishing a web presence when you don't know what it is that you want to achieve?

Unfortunately many organisations do exactly that. They continue to publish web sites as if they were a glossy brochure for the station. Your desire to get on line must be **content** and **objective** based rather than technology driven.

It is important that your website, like your program, provides information and services that are relevant to your audiences. Although the reach of a web site is global, you must consider that the majority of the visitors to your web site will be your existing or your potential listeners. If I visit a web site it's usually because I'm seeking **more** information than I already have. It is the same for your listeners. They will want **more** information about your programme, its content or your station.

The key to a successful web site is to provide what the visitor is seeking. One of the most common web site pitfalls is to provide a site that never changes. Listeners won't tune into your programme if

it's the same content every week. Similarly they are not going to visit your web site every week if it never changes.

For programme web sites, creating updated content can involve transcripts of programs, links to web sites related to any issues that were discussed, phone numbers and contact details for further information, audio segments and an on line feedback mechanism such as a discussion board. To update this every week can sometimes take as much time as preparing the programme itself and this is a reason a lot of programme based web sites remain static.

If you have enthusiastic volunteers involved in your programme or station then your web site can really provide a valuable complement to your normal programme. In addition to your web site becoming a programme archive and reference, you can extend it to become a general resource by providing links to government services and other organizations that serve your community. Collating such resource links to services in your own language could be very useful and particularly information of benefit to new immigrants.

There has been a great deal of interest in live streaming of programme content. But is it worthwhile or is it just a neat toy for computer nerds? From a pessimistic perspective, you could argue that a web stream provides a very low quality audio service to listeners who are predominantly outside your broadcast area. After

all, if you tune in using a radio why listen to a web stream? Web listeners from outside the broadcast service area are, according to the ABA, outside the community of interest for which the station was licensed. So why devote resources to servicing them? On a dollar per listener basis, web streaming can be many times more expensive than AM or FM broadcasting.

On the other hand, many would argue that their communities extend beyond the broadcast service area of the station and that the low audio quality is not an issue with a language based service. This is a very valid point. Certainly at my station 4EB, many of our broadcasters' communities extend well beyond our broadcast service coverage area. Although at this stage streaming live content is probably beyond the resources of many community stations, streaming of pre-recorded material can be a useful addition to a web site and something worth considering. Many community stations archive complete programmes on their web site which can be downloaded or streamed at a later date.

So what about the future? We're on the threshold of what is known as broadband services that will provide access speeds of up to ten times of that of a standard modem. So within the next three to five years, the majority of the Australian population will have access to high speed but more importantly low cost broad band services. With this will come the feasibility of

providing FM stereo quality, streamed audio. I know that many of you face access to air time problems. Perhaps streamed audio could alleviate some of this. For example, a half hour radio broadcast could be supplemented by further hours of streamed web programming. It will be a challenge to our programmers, policy makers and funding bodies to embrace the potential that such technology may be able to provide to our sector.

SOME KEY POINTS:

People usually visit a website because they are seeking **more** information than they already have.

Listners are not going to visit your web site every week if it never changes.

Collating information resource links in your own language could be very useful and particularly information of benefit to new immigrants.

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2001 is an election year and in the run up to the election the NEMBC asked the Government, Opposition, and Australian Democrats for their views on ethnic community broadcasting.



ELECTION 2001

THE GOVERNMENT VIEW

Ethnic broadcasting is invaluable in introducing people from different countries to Australian society; it offers them a voice; and, at the same time, encourages them to maintain their own cultural identities.

Ethnic broadcasting has the flexibility to accommodate new strands of programming that will focus on the needs of second and third generation migrants and promote cross cultural awareness among the diverse sectors of Australian society. Ethnic broadcasting plays a vital role in further developing a cohesive and successful multicultural society.

The ethnic broadcasting sector is a lively and integral part of the wider community broadcasting sector. Community broadcasting would be the poorer without the great contribution of many dedicated volunteers in ethnic broadcasting. There are now over 1600 hours per week of programming in 98 languages on 87 stations. Ethnic broadcasters make a major contribution to community broadcasting in this country.

Ethnic broadcasting is not neglected in the regions: 48 community stations outside the major cities provide non-English language broadcasting to the groups living in the bush.

The Government has traditionally made use of ethnic community broadcasting because it provides an extremely effective mechanism for providing information and services in languages other than English.

Not only do ethnic broadcasters provide news, information and entertainment to the older and well-established ethnic communities, they particularly help those who have arrived in Australia relatively recently, helping them gain access to Government information and programs, and helping them establish and maintain community networks and support structures.

By working directly with local communities, ethnic broadcasters have been able to provide immediately relevant material in languages that would be otherwise unavailable in free-to-air broadcasting.

It was the Coalition Government that increased the level of funding for the ethnic community broadcasting sector when it committed to additional targeted funding for the community broadcasting sector of \$1.5 million per year before the 1996 election. \$1 million per year of this was provided to ethnic community broadcasters.

In 1999, the Government re-committed itself to this targeted funding of \$1 million a year for another 3 years. This money is provided as reimbursement for the additional hours of programming that are being produced. This is on top of the core ongoing funding to ethnic community broadcasting of \$1.4 million per year.

In fact, since taking office, the Coalition Government has committed over \$6 million in additional funding to the ethnic community broadcasting sector.

The Government is committed to providing certainty of funding for the ethnic community broadcasting sector. Before the current three year commitment to additional ethnic community broadcasting funding expires, the Coalition will consider its continuation in a timely fashion that provides certainty to broadcasters.

The Australian Ethnic Radio Training Program has played a pioneering role in developing fully accredited training. The Government is pleased at the continuing success of the Australian Ethnic Radio Training Project. Funded by the Government, the project has so far trained more than 2400 ethnic broadcasters in more than 82 languages and in more than 18500 modules.

The place of ethnic community broadcasting in the digital broadcasting future must be considered in conjunction with the sector as a whole, and in the light of decisions still being made regarding the change-over, which will affect all broadcasters, commercial, public and community.

Ethnic Broadcasters should take great pride in what they have achieved – ethnic broadcasting has provided access, diversity, localism and innovation and has made a difference to the lives of so many Australians. The Government will continue to work with the ethnic broadcasting sector to ensure that it remains a key pillar in the ever-changing communications environment.

Senator Richard Alston
Minister for Communication, the Arts and

THE ALP VIEW



The community broadcasting sector is vital to the provision of quality local and diverse media to all Australians. Labor regards community broadcasting, both radio and television, as the third tier of the free to air broadcasting system and encourages its growth wherever possible.

Ethnic community broadcasters are an essential part of community broadcasting in Australia. Labor has supported the sector both in Government and in Opposition and we will continue to do so upon our return to Government.

This support reflects Labor's wider approach to a National Cultural Policy. Labor recognises that culture embodies the energy and spirit of our nation through the creative expression of ideas and imagination. Labor is committed to supporting and promoting opportunities for cultural expression and cultural experiences for all Australian whatever their backgrounds and wherever they live.

In a democracy, a necessary part of effective participation is equitable access to diverse sources of information and opinion. It is also of fundamental importance to Australians that our news and entertainment reflect our own values and priorities. The celebration of our diverse cultures expressed in uniquely Australian voices is important for our vision of ourselves and for the vision of Australia overseas. This requires Australian Governments to commit to the promotion of local content development and availability.

Ethnic community broadcasters provide a vital link between new Australians and the wider community.

ELECTION 2001

THE ALP VIEW (continued)

Assisting new migrants to become part of the Australian community and to access vital information and government and community services is an obvious, often unheralded, benefit the sector brings.

As well, continuing the ability of more established Australians to celebrate and participate in their culture and origins, through foreign language news, entertainment and community bulletins adds to the social fabric that is multi-cultural Australia.

Ethnic community broadcasters are increasingly becoming important to other Australians too.

Australia has always survived by being a great trading nation. Developing and maintaining foreign language skills and access to foreign news is also important if Australia is to enhance our understanding of those we do business with.

An important part of the years ahead will be to help the community broadcasting sector, and ethnic community broadcasters in particular, to make the transition to digital broadcasting.

It is essential that this important community voice not be lost simply because the means of distributing that voice will change. Digital technology will provide Australians with access to a much wider variety of information and entertainment.

Ensuring that Australian voices continue to be heard, whether they speak English or another language, will be a priority for Labor.

In fact, as the range of media available to Australians becomes more international and diverse, the importance of ensuring that Australians can continue to access local community information in a diverse range of languages will become even more important. Ensuring due prominence for community broadcasting in the digital world is a crucial part of a proper public policy framework.

Details of Labor's communications policy will be released closer to this year's Federal election. As with all other areas of policy, detailed funding commitments will not be released until that time.

However, Labor accepts that appropriate public funding must be provided to the community broadcasting sector. This funding will continue to enable ethnic community broadcasters to serve their communities by providing support to the sector for improving skills, technical equipment and program development.

Under a Beazley Labor Government, ethnic community broadcasting will continue to play the important role that it does today.

I look forward to working with ethnic community broadcasters across Australia to ensure that the diversity of your voices continue to be heard, both in your communities and in the important public policy debates ahead.

I congratulate all those who work and volunteer in this sector for the valuable service they provide to our nation.

Mr Stephen Smith
Shadow Minister for Communications



THE AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS' VIEW

To the Australian Democrats, the community broadcasting sector can be described as local, diverse and innovative.

The special role community broadcasters play adds significantly to the overall diversity of Australian media, to increased local and Australian content. Most importantly, it provides unique innovative programming, free of the commercial pressures confronting other media. Community broadcasting also contributes significantly to industry training.

Community broadcasting stations are vital to the cohesion of local communities, particularly in regional areas. The sector is unique in its capacity to cater for the diverse needs of communities – in particular communities bound by language, culture or ethnicity.

The mix of specialist programs, and programs of broad appeal, means that community stations can meet the range of their community interests – for information, news and entertainment. Whether programs are presented in their own languages, or in English, ethnic community radio provides an important link between communities. There is a real need for people to know what is happening in their local areas, to share information about their own communities, and to participate in society more broadly. This is particularly true of people newly arrived to Australia, or those who require access to government and other services.

Sadly, funding and recognition for community broadcasting at a government level remains low. Many community broadcasting stations receive no government assistance and rely on the good will of their local communities for funds and volunteers to ensure their programs go to air. Successive governments have denied community television any funding, limiting their potential for growth. Issues of access to the digital television broadcasting spectrum for community stations are still undetermined. This is detrimental to the sector. The Democrats believe that government planning must ensure that community radio and television are provided for in a digital environment to ensure ongoing community access and participation.

Increases in government funding to ensure local



communications services continue, particularly as we migrate into digital technology, represent a sound investment in the future of both these communities and of community broadcasting.

The Australian Democrats are proud to support the community broadcasting sector and ethnic community broadcasters in particular. We recognise their contribution to cohesive communities, especially through the maintenance and development of culture and language skills. Ethnic broadcasters deserve their place in the Australian media.

Senator Vicki Bourne
Australian Democrats Spokesperson on
Broadcasting and Media

4EB

broadcasts
2001 Paniyiri
Festival
worldwide.

In an historic broadcast, on Sunday the 20th of May Radio 4EB broadcast live from Musgrave Park in Brisbane across 5 continents. Direct from the Greek Paniyiri Festival, live programming was beamed to ERA 5 in Athens from 4pm to 6pm Brisbane time, and then rebroadcast live worldwide.

The broadcast was a huge success. Listener calls came into Athens from all over the world. "Even ships at seas contacted the program" said broadcaster Nondas Panagiotakis.

Radio 4EB's Station Manager, Damien Lee said, "this was a major operation technically. It is really amazing to think that a festival in Brisbane Australia has so much appeal all over the world."



Over 300 people attended a recent fundraising dinner dance held by the multicultural broadcasters at Geelong Radio

STATION NEWS ARE

From Better Music to Better Broadcasting

4CCR in Cairns has become one of the leading community service organizations in the Cairns area. Its greatest strength is that the station provides a homebase for a great diversity of cultural interests and activities.

In 1999 the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs ceased funding to the Cairns Migrant Resource Center and 30 ethnic groups lost their base. 4CCR offered them the opportunity to join the station and community radio is now their new home from which they broadcast 30 hours per week in languages other than English. East Timorese, the newest broadcasting group, is one of the emerging communities in Cairns with around 600 people. Italian programming, in contrast, has a listening audience of more than 20000 people.

All ethnic language programs feature community news, information, education and music.

Starting in 1984 under the banner "Live And Local" as a "better music station", 4CCR has evolved over the years into more than just a community radio station. It now provides free of charge promotional support, information, advice and training for radio broadcasting to many community organisations including non profit organizations, art and cultural groups, sport and recreation clubs, school and education centers.

As of May 2001, the station had 80 trained presenters over 25 and more than 70 under 25. In the past two years the station has focussed heavily on training more than 40 high school and university students.

"It's a bitter sweet pleasure that within the past year, our training programs have led to greater career opportunities especially for our youth presenters. Six of our youth presenters have been successful in obtaining positions with commercial broadcasters, the ABC and print media" said 4CCR President Billy Lee Long.

You can visit 4CCR on the web at www.4ccr-fm.org.au



ROUND AUSTRALIA

TV NEWS

Channel 31 Melbourne is one of Australia's biggest community television broadcasters. The station began full time transmission in 1994, coordinating programs produced by locally based groups and organisations.

The station has a decentralised structure that keeps it in touch with the community and accessible to the diverse range of programming groups.

One tangible way of doing this is the community notices aired during programming periods. Offered as a free service to non-profit organisations, they include one 30 second graphic and voice-over.

The station currently provides programming to around 20 language groups, from large and small communities, and these groups form an important part of the stations broadcasting. The station also prides itself on having up to 60 hours of first-run programmes per week.

Visit Channel 31 Melbourne at www.channel31.org.au

WYN(ERS)

Over 4 years of aspirant broadcasting has come to a welcome end for Victorian aspirant WYNfm. The Werribee/Hoppers Crossing based community broadcaster, covering a big growth corridor south west of Melbourne, received its full time licence from the ABA in April.

With a diverse broadcast area that includes farming, residential, conservation and industrial areas, the station broadcasts to a range of communities. Local ethnic programming currently includes Polish, Macedonian, Punjabi and Tongan and the strong support that these programs generate is one of the reasons that WYNfm hopes to add Vietnamese and Italian soon.

You can visit them at www.wyn.org.au

WOWing them

Also successful in getting a sub metro Sydney licence was Way Out West Fine Music (WOWfm) Based in Penrith, 2WOW has been an aspirant for 12 years and broadcasts in a range of languages including English, Maltese, Tongan, Samoan, Arabic and Filipino. Station President Tony Vella said that the station was thrilled and they looked forward to serving their diverse community. WOWfm was profiled in the Spring 2000 Ethnic Broadcaster.

Licence for Muslim Community Radio

Muslim Community Radio (MCR) was one of the three successful applicants for a community licence in Sydney. The other two licences went to Gadigal (Indigenous) Radio and FBI (youth) Radio. In granting the licence, the head of the ABA, Professor David Flint said, "These three new FM licences will add to the diversity of voices that can be heard on the public airwaves."

Sydney has Australia's largest population of young people and the country's largest indigenous and Muslim populations". There are 100 000 Muslims living in Sydney. They come from many countries including Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Indonesia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

MCR has been an aspirant since 1995. Station President Mr Mohammed Mehio said that everyone at the station was delighted that all the hard work over the last 6 years had paid off. He thanked all the station volunteers, supporters and the Sydney community for their support.

The licences will be granted as of 1st June and stations must be broadcasting within 12 months.

Congratulations to MCR and the Sydney Muslim community. Congratulations also to Gadigal and FBI.



ETHNIC GRANTS: HOW THEY WORK

Your station should have just received the notification of ethnic grants from the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF). So it's a good time to tell you again how the funds are to be spent and what broadcasters and stations are required to do in using the funds.

The grants are provided for stations and broadcasters to subsidise the costs associated with production, broadcast and transmission of ethnic (usually non-English language) programmes. The funds are paid to your station or in a very few cases directly to an ethnic broadcasters umbrella group. To receive funding an umbrella group must be incorporated.

Full time stations and umbrella groups are democratic bodies representing ethnic broadcasters at the station so they can determine how all these funds are spent (in line with the funding guidelines of course).

For ethnic broadcasters at access or general stations, the station must make available to broadcasters a minimum 25% of

the funds for expenditure on programming materials and resources. This includes CDs, minidisks, phone interviews, internet access, equipment and other items used to produce and broadcast programmes.

These goods are selected by broadcasters and are for their use but their purchase needs to be discussed and arranged with station management. However these goods belong to the station as a programming resource and must be available for other ethnic broadcasters to use. When broadcasters move on these resources and equipment stay with the station for the next broadcasters to use.

To ensure that ethnic broadcasters are involved in the station and aware of the grants, station management is required to meet with its ethnic broadcasters after each round of funding ie twice a year. This fosters a good working relationship between management and broadcasters and also a very positive networking and information sharing function for broadcasters.



Vale Mike Thompson

It was with sorrow that the NEMBC learnt of the death of Mike Thompson, General Manager of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia. Mike has made a significant contribution to Australian broadcasting and to community broadcasting in particular. He also played an enormously important role in the survival, management and development of the CBAA.

The NEMBC worked with Mike over many years and we will miss him and his contribution and commitment to community broadcasting. The NEMBC extends its sympathy to Mike's family, friends and work colleagues.

FACING FACTS

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission has released Face the Facts - a plain language publication that answers some of the most common questions on immigration, refugees and Indigenous people.

Based on Commission reports, government information, academic research and other sources, it also contains a full reference list and useful websites for further information.

At the launch of the booklet, acting Race Discrimination Commissioner Dr Bill Jonas noted that debate on issues like the reconciliation process, the stolen generations, native title, responses to the arrival of "boat people" and Australia's immigration program must be based on facts rather than prejudice

Face The Facts is also available on the HREOC website at www.humanrights.gov.au

◆ In 1999 Australia received 9,450 applications for refugee status. In 1998, Tanzania hosted 543,900 refugees from neighbouring countries.

◆ In 1997-98, over 77,000 settlers arrived from more than 150 countries. However 31,985 people left Australia permanently and the net migration figure was 45,342, the lowest net migration level for 20 years.

◆ Life expectancy for indigenous Australians in 2000 is the same as it was in 1900. Indigenous infant mortality is 3-5 times higher than for all Australians. However health funding per head is just 8% higher for indigenous Australians.



BETTER SKILLS = BETTER RADIO



Servicing your community, as an ethnic broadcaster, is about giving a voice to people from your community whose opinions and voices are not heard in the English speaking mainstream media. While Roger and Yuri are fictional characters, the events in the story below are factual.

Roger had a format for his program that he felt served his community. However the program was based largely on his ideas and experiences. When Roger contacted me about AERTP training I suggested he might service his community better if he involved his community more in his program. He could reach deeper into his community and invite people to be a part of his program and produce pre-recorded segments based on recordings at local community events. He could expand the news about his country of origin and issues affecting his broader ethnic community in Australia.

When I made these suggestions to Roger, he told me he had no time to do any extra work for his program. He suggested I speak with his nephew, Yuri. If Roger is ill or unable to do his program, Yuri sits in for him. Yuri is interested in developing his broadcast skills and has completed two of the AERTP advanced modules, **Program Research Skills** and **News and Current Affairs**. Since completing these modules, every

week Yuri presents a news/current affairs segment on the program.

Roger was initially a little jealous of the positive listener response Yuri received. Determined to keep up with his nephew he decided to do the AERTP **Documentary** module. Roger doesn't produce a full-scale documentary each week, but he uses the skills he acquired from this training. Each week the program has a pre-produced segment based on interviewing someone from the community or a current topic of discussion in the community.

The AERTP advanced modules are a way to encourage experienced broadcasters to revamp their programs. AERTP offers advanced modules in:

- Talkback
- Promotional Announcements
- Documentary Making
- Program Research Skills
- News and Current Affairs
- Special Events Broadcasting
- Bilingual Broadcasting
- Working in Groups and Organisations

Information about AERTP accredited Certificate II and Certificate III courses is available on the NEMBC website at www.nembc.org.au
Michelle Vlatkovic
AERTP Project Officer

A ROLLER-COASTER YEAR: Refugees

For those of us working on refugee advocacy, it has been as if we have been trapped on a roller coaster for the last year. Sometimes we travel slowly, grinding up a seemingly impossible incline. Then, without warning, we pass over the summit and career downwards at break-neck speed towards an uncertain destination.

Every now and then, without any warning, the cart skids around a corner (invariably a right hand bend), and we are once again flung together in an undignified heap. And just when we think we have had enough, we spy with delight the exit approaching ... only to find ourselves whirling past it, destined for another bone-shaking, white-knuckled circuit.

The likeness goes one step further. Not only has the last year been a hair-raising ride with no end in sight, no matter which track we take, the ride always seems to bring us back to the same starting point: the core policies remain unchanged. The Australian Government still clings to its notion that the only way to deal with unauthorised arrivals who seek asylum is to detain them for the duration of the determination process beyond the scrutiny of any independent review body, and the Opposition has not yet had the strength of principle to adopt a more humane and legally defensible policy.

While the battle to bring about change and to bring Australia's detention policy in line with internationally accepted standards has been going on for years, the last 12 months have seen some of the most interesting developments. Not least of these has been the unprecedented rise in public awareness - both within Australia and internationally - of detention as a key human rights issue in this country, second only to indigenous issues. So how has this come about?

In the last 18 months Australia has seen a new cohort of asylum seekers arriving on our shores. Over 4,000 people have arrived by boat from the Middle East, the vast majority from two countries: Iraq and Afghanistan. Unlike the majority who have come in the past, they have come in an unauthorised fashion and they have a high probability of being granted refugee status. They thus present the Government with a significant dilemma. Not only does the law say that they have to be detained, but also they cannot be quickly processed and returned (as happened to the Chinese boat arrivals) because they are bona fide asylum seekers. Detention centres thus fill to capacity, processing times become drawn out and tensions mount all round.

The Government has responded by digging itself in deeper - staunchly defending its detention policy, denying allegations of substandard conditions in detention centres and attacking its

critics. At the same time it has sought to influence public opinion, with highly emotive rhetoric about 'illegals', 'queue-jumpers', 'rotters' and 'carriers of communicable diseases'. This dehumanises the vulnerable and defenceless and feeds into and legitimises the fears of the One Nation heartland, creating a totally erroneous picture of the scale of the 'threat'.

It is true that the numbers of asylum seekers in 1999-2000 was higher than in the previous year (11,867 as compared to 8,387). What we are not being told, however, is that the number of asylum seekers in 1996-97 was 11,135 (according to figures from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs) and if we go back to 1991 (according to figures from the UNHCR relating to the calendar year), 16,740 applications were received. The number of applications goes up and down, influenced by world events. What we saw in 2000 was not alarming - just another peak in the graph.

When this is considered, it makes it even harder to understand why the Government has reacted as it has. Rather than making public statements designed to calm public fears and acknowledging the contemporary reality of global population movements, it has tried to make Australia as unpalatable a destination as possible. It hasn't accepted that Australia will always have asylum seekers and that requires putting in place ethically and legally sound policies. Its recent initiatives



in Australia

include:

- producing 'information kits' for use in the Middle East that contain the infamous 'snakes, sharks and crocodiles' video and written material that suggests that refugees will find themselves living in slums, racially vilified, attacked in the streets and abandoned by their family, as if this is the norm in Australian society;
- refusing repeated requests to conduct an independent high-level inquiry into the conditions in immigration detention centres and the treatment of detainees;
- seeking to increase the powers of staff in detention centres, including enhancing their search powers (which are already considerable) and extending their powers to administer 'chemical restraint';

In the meantime we are seeing almost every day stories about further problems in the detention centres. The Australian newspaper has even opened its own Woomera website. Clearly the issue is not going to go away in a hurry.

We have to ask ourselves, how many of the problems in the refugee centres are the creation of the system? How many refugees have been subjected to trauma and violence in this country unnecessarily? What would things be like if the Government had adopted a policy based on humanity and respect rather than control and intimidation? And how would Australia be viewed now if it

had?

So the roller coaster has sped past 'go' one more time. No one can predict where the coming year will take us. One thing is for certain. Detention is no longer a hidden issue. More and more Australians are beginning to take note of it and recognise that while we might not be able to solve the problems of the past, we can and must design a new and smoother track that will take us to a different destination.

Margaret Piper
Executive Director,
Refugee Council of Australia

*This is an edited version of an article that appeared in the journal **The Human Rights Defender**. More information on can be found on the **Refugee Council of Australia website at www.refugeecouncil.org.au***

SONGS OF FLIGHT

is a CD of music by Australian musicians who are former refugees. It is the live recording of a concert presented by the Migration Heritage Centre NSW and the NSW Ethnic Affairs Commission NSW for Refugee Week. The CD is being distributed through AMRAP.



East Timor : the rebuild continues



Nunu Saldanha at work at RTK in East Timor

Nunu Saldanha is in Australia for a month working with Christian Burnat the technical consultant for community Radio 2000-FM, Radio Skid Row, Radio Eastern Sydney and Radio Timor Kmanek (RTK). Nunu is a technical operator with RTK in Dili, he also produces and presents a number of programs.

After the East Timorese people voted overwhelmingly for independence in 1999, Caritas Canada decided, with the support of Caritas Australia, to assist in the rebuilding of East Timor's broadcasting infrastructure. Since 1999 they have progressively been rebuilding and enhancing the transmission and broadcasting capacity of Radio Timor Kmanek (RTK).

RTK is an AM and a FM broadcaster. The AM service (5kW) gives radio coverage to most of East Timor, including the Oecussi enclave, and even parts of West Timor. The FM service (200W) provides local coverage to Dili. The station is owned by the Diocese of Dili but has taken on a strong community focus. "In 1999 when I first went to visit the station, its transmitter was on the verge of collapse, the studio was in a very poor condition and not surprisingly staff felt demoralised", said

Christian. The station's transmission and studios facilities have now been overhauled and upgraded using digital technology where possible.

The next stage of this project, about human resources, is under way with Nunu the first person to receive international work experience. "I met Nunu when I was working on the technical upgrade of RTK. He obviously had a talent for technical work – in fact without his assistance, and the assistance of his colleagues, I would not have been able to complete the technical work required. Its great that Nunu has the opportunity to get this work experience in Australia", said Christian.

Nunu has been working and studying at least 10 hours a day to make the very most of his stay in Australia. Nunu has been working with Christian installing computer hardware and software, installing servers, refurbishing a mixing desk, upgrading transmission facilities and rebuilding a production studio at 2000FM and Radio Skid Row. Christian and Nunu are fully documenting the set up and operation of PCs in a broadcast environment as part of the project.

In other news from Timor two other community broadcasters from

Radio 3CR have gone to work as volunteers on aid projects in East Timor. Jan McArthur the former manager of 3CR is working for 3 months with the trade union aid agency APHEDA. Juliete Fox, until recently the producer of the national environment program 'Earth Matters' is on a 6 month project working with community radio in Los Palos in eastern East Timor. We'll keep you informed of their work in coming issues of the Ethnic Broadcaster

Support Needed

Uruguayan community radio stations are calling for international support following the violent search and closure of community radio Tapie [106.5fm] They are particularly concerned that the authorities are acting against stations that are directly owned and controlled by the community. You can show your support by contacting Radio Tapie's representative in Australia at PO Box 1032, WODEN ACT 2606.

If you are interested in supporting other overseas community radio stations, the International Community Radio Association [AMARC] has an urgent action bulletin. You can subscribe by sending an email to amarc@amarc.org



Looking In...

Margrit Lauffer from the multilingual German broadcaster, Radio Multi Kulti, recently visited Australia studying community and ethnic language broadcasting.

After working at the NEMBC Office in Melbourne, I was keen to visit Hobart as a contrast to the big cities that I am used to. The Hobart station 92.FM was located in a former apartment with cute blue-striped wallpaper, a music library packed with wild country music and an astonishingly well equipped studio. Station management and broadcasters were very helpful and friendly and the station seemed to play a "family" role for its listeners.

92FM is dealing with issues like how to attract a younger audience to ethnic broadcasting if the second generation doesn't speak their parents' language any more? And how can an elderly broadcaster play music and find topics to appeal to teenagers?

The Croatian program had found a way: the two young presenters worked with a bilingual concept, using English as the lingua franca with smattering of Croatian; mixed with the latest Croatian rock and pop that they found on the internet. Their shows are very popular and draw many young listeners.

Back in Melbourne I was lucky enough to join 3CR's International Women's Day and witness countless broadcasters from different cultural and social

backgrounds and of different ages who have been working voluntarily on highly political and difficult topics for years and years.

Speaking with some of the broadcasters, I discovered that they had similar problems here as elsewhere: many ethnic broadcasters work in isolation and often don't know what is happening with other shows. Programming on International Women's day and activities such as regular meetings of broadcasters from all groups are providing ways of bringing everyone together.

If I had to find an answer to that question that I asked so many people in Australia 'What is Australian to you?' I would say that people in Australia are warmer and more relaxed. Perhaps it has to do with this old settler sense of community and helping one another. Australia has a huge ethnic mix making it exotic and rich. I also saw that communities were partly as isolated as elsewhere. The white Anglo-Saxon Australian buying Thai spices doesn't necessarily have any deeper interest in the Thai community and

the reasons why they came to Australia.

I was also surprised to see that the white Australians I got to know a little closer had hardly any Aboriginal friends. But who of my German friends has a Jewish friend? There are thresholds of fears and prejudices against foreigners. Community radio tries to overcome these boundaries in a powerful way within its own community limits. In doing so it is a microcosm for an ideal bigger world. Let's go on doing this, leaving fears behind and making the first steps towards each other. I've seen it happen in Melbourne, Hobart and Sydney. You've helped me to do it myself. Thank you.
Dankeschön.

Magrit Lauffer
Germany

LLaufferLauffer



VOICES WITHOUT FRONTIERS

If you are in Sydney and tune into Radio Skid Row 88.9FM, don't be surprised if you hear some debate about race issues in Australia. It happens almost every day. That's why when we received an email asking us to participate in a special international broadcast to mark the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racism (March 21), we were scratching our heads about what we could do that was out of the ordinary for Skid Row.

From the beginning Radio Skid Row has commemorated March 21 as the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa in 1960. The South African authorities opened fire on anti-racist, anti-apartheid protesters in the black township of Sharpeville killing many and forcing hundreds to flee the country. It was around this time that Nelson Mandela was sent to prison. Hence the United Nations declared March 21 as a day when we focus on the elimination of racism.

Talking about race issues publicly in Australia is seen as being something which belongs to the past. Of course there is the official debate about immigration, refugees and reconciliation but if you look closely at these debates you can see that race as an issue is being played down. Immigration

and the so-called "refugee problem" is now about economics and criminal activity (people-smuggling rings"). Reconciliation has shifted in the public debate to being almost entirely about Australians living in harmony. It is not about negotiating a just outcome for indigenous Australians if you are listening to our leaders.

A large section of Radio Skid Row's daytime audience is young, migrant, at school and unemployed. It's not unusual for an old timer like me to be taking requests from 17 year olds for rap music I've never heard. My response is always "I haven't got that song but I will play you some rap I like." Then they get hit with rap from the 60s through to the present day that talks about race. It is through this music at Skid Row that we are able to capture the attention of a young audience.

So it was with this in mind that we decided to put together a day on racism to join the Voices Without Frontiers broadcast on March 21. The international broadcast was organised by AMARC (the world association of community broadcasters) in collaboration with community radio stations around the world. The aim of the broadcast was to reinforce the socially inclusive ethos of the community

radio sector, and to promote access to the media by minority and disadvantaged groups.

March 21 started with 'Am I Black Enough For You?', a program about race and cultural issues for "people of colour". The program took a look at the refugee situation in Australia, discussed relations between indigenous and migrant Australians and the recent changes to New Zealand-Australian agreements which largely affect Pacific islanders who have settled here or in New Zealand.

We opened our phone lines to talk about racism and played some great moments of Skid Row broadcasts including an interview with African American activist Angela Davis and a studio discussion between migrant and indigenous Australians and the woman famous for her blue-eyed brown-eyed exercise on racism, Jane Eliot.

Veteran Torres Strait Island broadcaster, Sister Agnes (aka Agnes Ware) ran the lunchtime segment as usual with her special mix of indigenous and island culture which includes West Indian and Pacific Island audiences. The phones always run hot during Sister Agnes' shifts, but on March 21 they didn't stop. Our callers awareness of racism was based



Photo on left from 'Living Australia: Celebrating Ethnic Community Participation'

"100 years ago this exhibition would not have happened. The leaders at the time did not see diversity of culture and community as a cause for celebration. This is enough of a reason to present this exhibition but I hope that in 100 years at the bi-centenary of Federation there will be an exhibition that will take these photos as a historical backdrop and present something that will again, show us how far we have come."

George Lekakis, ECCV Chairperson



on their own experiences in shops (where they are treated as potential shoplifters) with police (where they are treated like potential criminals/gang members) and at school (where they are treated as if they have no potential at all).

African taxi drivers who listen to Skid Row told us great stories about being asked "Where do you come from? Do you like it here?" by just about every passenger that strikes up a conversation. Can you imagine being continuously asked about your origins, all day, every day for years? As innocent as the question may be, the asker does not appreciate the effects of having to constantly explain your ethnic origins to people (i.e. justify your presence in Australia). One African taxi driver who was tuned in was so inspired he dropped into the station with lunch for Agnes.

In order to address racism minorities must play a role in the debate about race. The thing about community radio which has always captured my imagination has been that we are literally able to "give voice" to people who are not heard in any public debate.

Ethnic broadcasters in Australia today carry a heavy burden in attempting to re-ignite a dialogue about race issues which does not play on the fears of people or confine itself to economic arguments. Spending one day a

year looking at the issue of race is not enough.

The first half of the Australian content in the international broadcast came from an Australian living in South Africa. It dealt with indigenous issues. The second half comprised of a phone hook-up with Skid Row about Australia's treatment of refugees. While we were happy to contribute to the day, I couldn't help feeling regret at the lack of action within the Australian community radio scene around this event.

Nicola Joseph

Next year on March 21 Skid Row plans to highlight the achievements of community action around race issues in Australian history.

You can find more information about the Voices Without Frontiers project at AMARC's multilingual website www.amarc.org

GETTING BEYOND STEREOTYPES

Rose Nakad is a western Sydney youth and cultural development worker. Below is an edited version of her speech given at the NEMBC Conference 2000 on the way the media has recently reported on young ethnic people in western Sydney.

If you don't come from New South Wales you might not have heard about the events that happened at the end of 1998 in the Bankstown-Punchbowl area of south-western Sydney. It's an area with lots of South East Asian, Pacific Islander, Arabic and Aboriginal communities.

Following the murder of a young Korean boy, a police station was shot at. The issue for the media was Australia's first drive-by shooting of a police station and the journalists got so excited about 'ethnic' crime. In the media the incidents were always said to be done by Lebanese, Middle Eastern or Arabic gangs of youths, long before anyone was ever arrested for any of the events that happened.

All through this period words like *gang* and *city in terror* were mentioned in relation to Lebanese young people. In terms of the ethnicity issues there was no difference between the coverage of the ABC and the Daily Telegraph. Everyone had a go.

It's really important to talk about these kind of crisis points because they are very typical of the way that the "western wilderness" of Sydney

and its people, especially the young people are reported. There was a huge police presence in the area and young people ended up fighting to keep themselves from being arrested for offences like jay walking and swearing in public; which in these tense situations are often linked to charges of resisting arrest and assaulting police.

Some of the media called for the troops to be sent in to teach those Arabs (them) who was the boss. A collective punishment was envisaged, typical of occupying forces around the world. For the Arabic community, when we think of this sort of occupation, we think of Palestine. I specifically mention that because there is a direct link between the reporting of Arabs over there and Arabs over here. The reporting creates images and myths, which reinforce one another as they circulate through the media.

It's been argued that journalists rely on an already existing racist mode of interpretation in searching out frameworks and symbols that are easily recognisable to audiences. So at the time of the events that I am talking about, violence and barbarity had been so naturalised as part of the way young Arabs are seen, that it was very difficult to create a journalistic language outside these stereotypes.

I'll give you some examples of what I mean about the structures of racism. Third world peoples, both over there and here, are usually interviewed about what's

happening to them as victims - as people being killed and slaughtered.

They're allowed to tell their stories. They're allowed to be the object of the story, but they're rarely positioned as the people to comment on, analyse or tell people why events are happening. That's the difference between being the object and being the subject. And if they are the subject, they shouldn't be trusted, because it's only the white, civilised expert who can be trusted.

So what happened? A drive by shooting, allegedly by an Arab. But in the end they found out it wasn't by an Arab. However this drive by shooting heralded "a new era in un-Australian violence (by the 'other')". There was no evidence that the killing of the young Korean boy, was racially motivated, but that's how it was represented.

So instead of the media getting even close to any complex or intelligent reporting on the issue, they were actively engaged in a process of legitimising and reproducing the values of the dominant cultural group; reinforcing the us (white Australians) and them (Arabs) way of looking at the world. I think that at the time even the alternative media didn't do justice to the issues.

The crossing of racial and cultural boundaries between ethnic groups and individuals is an everyday fluid process for western Sydney residents. It's not 'inner city exotic'



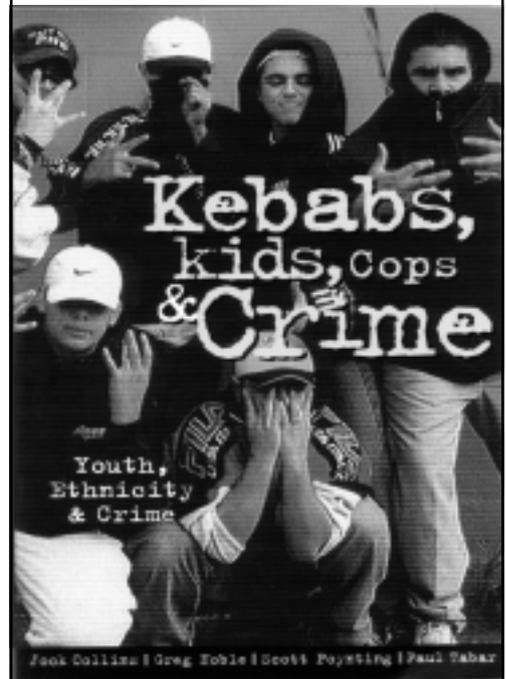
where everyone does belly dance classes. These people are our neighbours and we all live with each other. What the media was trying to say was that there's an ethnic war between us but this was not the reality.

These media stereotypes make it very difficult to offer ways to improve reporting but I think there are some ways. I don't think its just about presenting good images of 'ethnics'. We also have to look at who controls the means of reporting and who makes up the rules about reporting.

It's important to talk to community, those living the reality and not to report events with the usual media assumptions and stereotypes. It's a difficult challenge but one we have to face up to if we are to challenge the stereotypes and the concept that there are us (true Australians) and the other (ethnics).

Rose Nakad

Kebabs, Kids, Cops & Crime was published late last year by Pluto Press. It is a detailed study of the media coverage of the events in Sydney's southwest in 1998. More details from www.plutoaustralia.com



“Young men who grow up in a family which is different, in ethnic and religious terms, from the dominant community, who suffer discrimination, whose education is inadequate, whose job prospects are poor, have a tendency to shoot at police.

Ned Kelly and his mates for example did just that.”

*Letter to the Sydney Morning Herald
6-11-98 quoted in Kebabs, Kids, Cops
and Crime, Pluto Press 2000*

Have Your Say On Racism

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission is seeking community input into its preparations for the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) to be held in Durban South Africa from 31 August – 7 September 2001.

The United Nations, when setting up WCAR, noted *'with grave concern that, despite the efforts of the international community, the principal objectives of the two previous Decades for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination have not been attained and that millions of human beings continue to this day to be the victims of varied forms of racism and racial discrimination'*.

In the Australian context, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations, have expressed concern over the continuing disadvantage of Australia's Indigenous peoples, the effects of mandatory sentencing, the effects of mandatory detention and the treatment of asylum seekers. The attitudes of our elected representatives and some sectors of Australian society and media to this issue and other race related issues have been uncompromisingly hostile.

I would encourage everyone through community networks and radio programs to spread the message that racism in any form is not acceptable. Most importantly HREOC wants your help in developing strategies that will successfully combat racism.

There are several ways you can help. Firstly, HREOC will be conducting a series of direct consultations (dates and venues are available on our web site). The first of these was the *Racism and civil society: A national summit on racism* held in Canberra from 7-9th May 2001.

Recommendations from this Forum will be posted on the HREOC website as background for regional consultations being held throughout Australia in June and July. I encourage everyone to come to the consultations and to tackle racism in Australia.

We are also planning to hold a national conference in November or December this year to present the outcomes of our consultations and the WCAR but more importantly we see it as the starting point for revitalising the battle against racism in Australia.

Our discussion paper, *Combating racism in Australia* and other information are available on our website <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/worldconference/index.html> If you ring us on (02) 9284 9600 we can send you a printed version of the discussion paper. We have also provided a bulletin board so that submissions and comments can be made online.

**Bill Jonas
Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Social Justice
Commissioner and
Acting Race Discrimination
Commissioner
Human Rights and Equal
Opportunity Commission**

USEFUL WEBSITES:

Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission
www.humanrights.gov.au

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
www.unhchr.ch

Australian Human Rights Information Centre
www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/ahric

Race Discrimination Commissioner
www.humanrights.gov.au/racial_discrimination/index.html

Racial Discrimination Act
www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/rda1975202

International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_icerd.htm

Department of Immigration fact sheets
www.immi.gov.au/facts/index.htm

Refugee Council of Australia
www.refugeecouncil.org.au

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
www.unhcr.ch

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
www.atsic.gov.au

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation
www.antar.org.au

Reconciliation Australia [Council



Re - thinking Australians



Jason Yat-Sen Li, human right lawyer and ex-community broadcaster, was the keynote speaker at *Our Emerging Futures*, NEMBC Conference 2000. Here in the second part of his edited address he examines how cultural and linguistic diversity can build a new type of national unity, based not on cultural identity but on participation.

Statutes Of Liberty?

I have just returned from a year working and studying in New York City. I remember visiting the Statue of Liberty, the first symbol of the freedom and the new life that the United States represented for the immigrants first arriving by sea.

And it made me wonder: what is our Statue Of Liberty? And what is it with, that we welcome the migrants who make the brave and difficult journey to start a new life among us? Since the term of the present Government, I would suggest that we haven't been all that welcoming at all.

- The overall intake of migrants has been reduced by over 17 000 places;
- The Family Stream has been cut both in real terms and in proportion to the intake of skilled and business migrants;
- Spousal migration has been made subject to numerous new restrictions and conditions in an effort to "retain the public trust" and

"prevent rotting of the system";

- Admission of migrant parents, both aged and working age, has also been drastically reduced – the parent intake for 1999 was only 500 places, and with the backlog of parent visa application close to 20,000, some applicants could potentially wait up to 40 years before being granted a visa;
- In broad terms, it has become increasingly difficult for people in Australia to sponsor any family member who does not fall into one of the skilled categories in their own right;
- The focus has been placed on migrants placing as little burden on Australia or Australian taxpayers as possible with the introduction of Assurance of Support bonds and means testing;
- Enforcement laws and mechanisms have been strengthened and tightened;
- Judicial review of immigration decisions has been abolished.

The specifics of immigration policy are technical and complex but there is one resounding impression: The politics of economic rationalism are abundantly clear in immigration policy. As clear as the government's desire to be seen to be responding to the anti-immigration mood reflected in the policies of groups such as One Nation. In an effort to make the economics of immigration politically palatable, policy makers

neglect something quite simple and quite human: the immigration process is **most** successful and complete where the migrant is able to build a stable family base in their new country.

In reconfiguring Australia's immigration policy in an economic rationalist way that is void of compassion and ignores the family, the sole emphasis is placed on the skills and qualities of the individual migrant who must fend for him or herself.

This is precisely the same individualism that has caused the modern plague of isolation, alienation and social exclusion in Australian society. This is the same mean-spirited individualism that has accompanied the breakdown of community at all levels, local, regional and national.

The Challenge For Broadcasters

So here, I would like to propose, is the real challenge for ethnic broadcasters in light of the changing face of immigration and multiculturalism. The challenge is for you to nurture and encourage a culture of participation and the rebuilding of community in a way that is inclusive, in a way that links Australians from all cultural and linguistic groups.

To move forward, we must foster an understanding that multiculturalism and immigration are not issues and policies that have only to do with migrants and ethnic Australians. Rather, they are policies and issues that go to the

heart of the social future of our nation. They impact upon all Australians.

To move forward we must understand why Australians feel the way they do today and how they might feel tomorrow. We must learn how to harness the natural forces of socialisation that draw Australians together.

Unity and Diversity

But what is it, in a population of such diversity, that Australians share in common, that can unite us? Beyond economics, we need to foster an understanding that cultural diversity gives us both social and political strength. Diversity means flexibility, opportunity for interaction and a depth of inputs.

In evolutionary terms, diversity is also strength. Australians speak over 240 languages at home. Our cultural diversity is a source of richness; not simply richness of lifestyles, but richness in a deeper social and political sense.

The Indonesian motto is "Diversity in Unity". It could be rephrased as "Unity despite diversity". Australia could adopt a similar, but radically different motto: Unity through Diversity. Paradoxically, it is the difference we all share, that makes us all the same.

If there is one thing that is the same for all Australians – especially young Australians, it is this: we have grown up among diversity. Diversity has been our environment. We have learnt to build ourselves from the plurality

that surrounds us. It has always surrounded us – in our playgrounds, schools and our streets. We live and breathe it every day. It is everything we know.

So what can ethnic broadcasters do? Perhaps it is this: you can contribute to building a community by creating a cultural and community infrastructure that allows different cultural and ethnic groups a meaningful opportunity to participate. An opportunity to live rich lives by enriching the lives of others.

Rethinking Australians

What this calls for is a reconceptualisation of Australian citizenship – it is calling for a notion of citizenship that is de-linked from cultural identity, or membership of any particular group other than the group we call Australia. This new citizenship is the citizenship not of cultural identity – not what we are – but of participation – what we do. You become part of the group we call Australia by contributing to its production and reproduction.

We have a lot to do to truly adopt this model. It means allowing anyone a real opportunity to contribute. It means giving everyone a fair go. It means making sure people get to the starting line.

It means putting in place the cultural infrastructure that will enable all individuals to express themselves through our common political and social institutions.

It means believing that a



“ Australia could adopt a similar, but radically different motto: Unity through Diversity. Paradoxically, it is the difference we all share, that makes us all the same.”

transformation in individuals and groups of people will take place, if only they are given a voice and feel that they are being heard and listened to. Nowhere in Australia will you find a greater potential to achieve these goals than within our young people. And in nowhere but Australia will it be a greater waste and tragedy if we ignore this need.

And so I'd urge you to reach out to the younger members of your audiences. Build bridges to our youth. Actively recruit younger members of your communities and make them broadcasters. They are among the most isolated, disenfranchised and vulnerable groups in our society. They are also the group in respect of which we should have the greatest amount of optimism. They embody the evolutionary forces I have spoken about. And they provide an avenue by which ethnic broadcasting can move beyond the static multiculturalism mode and be an integral part of building Australia's cultural and social future.

Jason Yat-Sen Li

From Living Australia: Celebrating Ethnic Community Participation.

"Identity is made up of layers. For each person we must consider the relevance of our heritage, customs, work, education, home, family, religion and friends when we define ourselves. It is through this identity that we decide what we embrace, share and express".

Michal Morris, Exhibition Curator



From Living Australia: Celebrating Ethnic Community Participation.

"Immigration does not finish when your feet touch land. Included into a person's journey to Australia is their learning of 'the Australian way of life'; of their making a home, and how they merge their past with their future".

George Lekakis, ECCV Chairperson



NEMBC Conference 2001

Melbourne 9 - 11th November 2001

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