Ethnic Community Broadcasting

Strengthening social cohesion and citizenship

Funding Submission 2014
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In Brief: Funding for Ethnic Community Broadcasting

Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting plays a vital and central role in strengthening social cohesion and citizenship within our diverse Australian community. It is highly valued by established migrant communities for the critical role it plays in maintaining language and culture, and for the opportunities it provides for second-generation Australians to connect with their linguistic and cultural heritage. Ethnic community broadcasting also plays a vital role in helping newly-arrived migrants and refugees build supportive networks within their own community and assist them in learning about their new country.

Ethnic community broadcasting is an incredibly diverse sector, serving the needs of hundreds of thousands of Australians of all ages in urban and regional areas right across the country. It is also highly cost-effective, harnessing the skills, expertise and time of more than 4000 volunteers from 125 distinct cultural groups who create 2,118 hours of content every week in over 108 languages which are broadcast via 131 radio stations. Government funding plays a highly important role in catalysing and building the capacity of this voluntary sector, additional funding is requested to improve investment in:

1. **Targeted Support for Refugee and New and Emerging Communities**

   Ethnic community radio provides disadvantaged refugee and recently arrived communities with the opportunity to disseminate culturally and linguistically specific information about Australia, community services, news and current affairs, so as to facilitate settlement and social cohesion. Public investment is sought to build the capacity of ethnic broadcasters to support better settlement services information, training in broadcasting and media leadership, and initial start-up and support for on-air broadcasting.

   **Investment sought:** $100,000 annually

2. **Training and Skills Development for Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters**

   Given the large volunteer base in ethnic broadcasting, training and skills development are integral for further development. Training is a highly specialised service especially for language maintenance and development, and therefore needs to be customised to meet the needs of a diverse range of broadcasters. Public investment is sought to build on successful youth media training conducted during 2012 and 2013 by rolling the program out across a wider area, including regional Australia. With a volunteer support base of 4,000 broadcasters, the funding sought equates to less than $100 of training for every person in the ethnic broadcasting sector.

   **Investment sought:** $250,000 annually

3. **Content and Program Production**

   The strong emphasis on maintenance and development of language means that program content, produced locally by the communities themselves, is the backbone of ethnic community broadcasting. Content production is funded via an hourly rate paid to each station. However, strong growth in the sector has seen output increase by 53% in the last decade without any commensurate increase in public investment. This has led to a decline in the rate paid from a decade ago of $50 to $40 for each hour of content produced, and no significant increase in the amount to match the growth. This is putting substantial pressure on the sector’s capacity to develop quality content across a diverse number of cultural groups. Public investment is sought to restore and increase the hourly rate for content production to $60 per hour.

   **Investment sought:** $1,100,000 annually

**Total investment sought:** $1.45 million
The Case for Ethnic Community Broadcasting

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

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

Ethnic community broadcasting makes a highly valuable contribution to the Australian community in several ways:

**Community media promotes social cohesion, inclusion, and citizenship**

Australia is one of the most multicultural nations in the world. Forty-six per cent of Australians were either born overseas or have at least one foreign-born parent, while 3.1 million people (18 per cent of the population) speak one of an estimated 200 languages other than English at home. Since 2000, 74% of migrants have come from non-English speaking backgrounds. In 2012/13 migration and humanitarian programs were expected to bring 204,000 people to Australia — the highest since World War II — with the majority being from non-English speaking countries.

National and international research shows that community media promotes social cohesion and citizenship, particularly by assisting new and emerging communities to better understand their new country and their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Community radio is also better able than public or commercial broadcasters to respond to the needs of ethnic communities because they serve specific geographical areas with local content and interest. The principles of access to community radio also allows for ethnic communities to become a broadcaster.

Ethnic community broadcasting serves the diverse needs of three key groups within the Australian community:

**Seniors and established communities**

Established migrant communities tend to have a high proportion of seniors and mature age members, as the migrants who arrived as part of the post-World War II migration streams of the late 1940s and 1950s are now in the older age groups. The top 5 countries of birth with the highest proportion of their populations aged 65 years or older are Italy (56%), Greece (55%), Hungary (51%), the Netherlands (43%) and Malta (42%).

Despite being considered established as defined by years since migration, English proficiency is still relatively low among many of the senior members of these communities. When these migrants arrived in Australia, a large percentage were able to secure employment that required very little English (e.g. factory work), or else set up small businesses where they could survive on limited English.
Established communities consequently have a strong connection to language retention. In maintaining the continuity of their language, these senior members continue to play a central role in maintaining continuity of culture and identity for their communities.

As an ageing group with limited access to other media because of language barriers, ethnic community radio becomes both a ‘connection’ to the community and a means of ‘companionship’. At the same time, as this first generation of native speakers ages, there is a risk that much of the language proficiency and with it the rich cultural history of our migrant communities will be lost. Retention of language and culture during this time – not only to maximise the continued participation of seniors in wider community life, but also to facilitate inter-generational transfer of language and culture to younger people – is of the utmost importance.

**Snapshot of the Greek Community**

Greeks are today one of the more established ethnic groups in Australia, and their experience is illustrative of the wider post-war immigrant community. Although migration from Greece and Cyprus to Australia slowed down considerably after the 1970’s, the 2011 Census showed that Greek was still in the top five languages other than English spoken at home\(^\text{10}\). By 2018 those who migrated here in the 50s and 60s will be over 75 years of age and this ageing group will reach its peak. The current financial crisis in Greece has also seen the return of approximately 2,000 Greek-Australians, alongside many ‘new’ Greeks trying to migrate to Australia for the very first time.

With an increasingly ageing Greek migrant population, much of the rich cultural history of those first Greeks will be lost, and with that comes the loss of language. There is however evidence of active interest in retaining the Greek language across 2nd and 3rd generations, with more than 1000 students enrolled in the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne & Victoria (GOCMV) after-hours community language schools, and another 5500 students studying Greek at 40 after-hours community language schools throughout Melbourne\(^\text{11}\).

Ethnic community broadcasting can help language maintenance of the older generations and act to facilitate keeping languages alive.

**Refugee and new and emerging communities**

Ethnic community broadcasting is a highly valued, vital service for migrants and refugees as they establish themselves in a new country. Testimony from refugees themselves as cited in the Community Media Matters report, underscores the value of ethnic community broadcasting as Australia’s largest language laboratory – providing information, maintaining community connections, promoting linguistic diversity and cultural development\(^\text{12}\).

**Snapshot**

A Turkish man in the Community Media Matters said “As we’re living here, we’re able to hear what our responsibilities are and also our rights are here, like for example, when you hear information about Centrelink, or about taxation office, traffic infringement notices to be aware of those and what to do and what not to do. Legal, family matters, divorces, domestic violence, those kinds of things, to get those information in Turkish. To understand these matters wrongly or understand them a little bit does not, will not help you”\(^\text{13}\).
Humanitarian migrants, refugees and some new emerging communities come from backgrounds of extreme disadvantage, having typically been forced to leave their homes because of armed conflict and human rights abuses\(^\text{14}\). The Sudanese are the largest group numerically to have arrived from Africa over the last five years with more than 23,000 Sudanese now residing in Australia, with a large presence in Victoria.

The Sudanese are among the most disadvantaged communities in Australia, having not only come from backgrounds of extreme disadvantage in their home country, but then also experiencing disadvantage once in Australia. More than 40 per cent of Sudanese left school before Year 11 compared with 16 per cent of the general community; while at least 50 per cent of residents aged 35 to 44 are earning less than $250 a week (compared with the community average of 28 per cent)\(^\text{15}\).

Community radio plays a vital role in assisting new and emerging communities establish themselves within Australian society, by providing culturally and linguistically appropriate information about settlement services and other relevant information about Australian society, culture and current affairs.

It also equips disadvantaged communities with media skills, facilitating their capacity to communicate with each other and build stronger and more resilient community networks. Recent research suggests that a lack of these community networks or ‘network capital’ is a significant factor affecting employment prospects (or the lack thereof) for these communities\(^\text{16}\).

**Snapshot**

"Because you don’t have much time here to meet with all your friends... and especially when you’re driving, you turn the station on and it attracts you, . . . it’s something in your own language and it keeps you occupied and abreast of what’s happening.... issues that are also happening in the country itself, not just overseas.\(^\text{17}\)

A Sudanese focus group participant reiterated the importance of not just hearing news from the home country, but being able to easily access local and national news from Australia through Sudanese-language programming\(^\text{18}\).

**Second Generation youth**

Many communities, especially established communities are concerned about how to effectively encourage young people to become involved in multilingual programs. The experience of young people born from a migrant community can be very different from that of their parents, as many young people are familiar with two languages and two cultures\(^\text{19}\).

Second generation migrants typically have little or no first-hand experience of living in the culture and society of their parents. Being raised in Australia for the majority of their lives, second generation migrants face the challenges of finding their space and identity within different cultural landscapes. They can experience immense pressure to fit into both Australian culture and their parent’s culture and this conflict can challenge their ability to sustain their culture and language maintenance is one of the biggest challenges. The deterioration of language ability is affected by various factors such as parental influence, lack of opportunities to speak their mother tongue, lack of contact with members from the same community and a perceived lack of relevance.
According to the 2011 ABS statistics, only around 20 per cent of second generation Australians speak a language other than English at home, with that number dropping to 2 per cent for third-plus generations.  

Language is critical to cultural connection, in that it “gives meaning to an ethnic group because it connects the present with the past through its oral traditions, literary forms, music, history, and customs.” Furthermore, language is the key pathway to understanding one’s traditional culture and motherland.

Multicultural broadcasting gives second generation youth an opportunity not only to learn about their traditional culture and heritage, but also to connect and communicate with their contemporaries who have similar lived experiences and in so doing sustain their heritage as a living and evolving culture within Australian multicultural society. Encouraging and supporting multicultural youths to embrace their traditional culture openly will enable them to appreciate diversity and alleviate their anxiety about not fitting in.

**Snapshot**  “For first- and second-generation migrant youth growing up in Australia’s multicultural society.....being brought up in a diasporic community but also within a global youth media culture, can mean that these young people’s experience of community and ethnicity is very different from that of their parents.......Due to their greater participation in the broader Australian society, and greater participation in the educational system, many of these young people have become familiar with two languages, two cultures and ultimately vastly different ways of life from those experienced by their elders.

..... Understanding the processes that inform the creation and maintenance of both ethnic minority and Australian mainstream identities amongst second-generation young people is critical if these young people are to feel included and recognised, whilst avoiding the alienation and social exclusion that has had such ugly results in other parts of the world. It seems that this is especially so for migrant youth of Islamic background, who face a particular challenge in maintaining their cultural heritage in spite of an increasingly hostile public and media discourse.  

Lisa Hopkins, Swinburne University of Technology, Second-generation youth and the new media environment

**Community radio is the most cost-effective means of meeting specialist content needs**

The community broadcasting sector continues to be the most cost effective and efficient means of providing ethnic and multicultural radio for Australia’s culturally and linguistically diverse communities. It is also by far the most prodigious producer of such programs, providing almost three times as many hours of individual programs as SBS Radio and at a much lower cost.

A simple indicator of the cost-effectiveness of the core and targeted funding provided for the support of ethnic community broadcasting is to compare the community radio sector’s output and cost to the public purse with that of the Special Broadcasting Service.

In 2012 SBS Radio broadcast a total of 743 hours each week in 74 languages. Ethnic community radio broadcasts 2118 hours each week and in 94 languages. Funding for SBS radio was 28.7m while funding for ethnic community radio was 3.9m. Therefore in general terms an SBS program is worth $740 per hour and ethnic program on community radio worth $35 an hour.

The NEMBC would like to see a meagre increase of $60 an hour for ethnic community broadcasting.
Community media represents a unique form of communication

Community broadcasting allows for diversity in the ways in which Australians, both migrant and Australian-born, communicates with each other, and hence builds connections and understanding. Effective and inclusive communication requires not only the provision of opportunities for English-speaking Australians to hear minority perspectives, and for minority communities to speak to each other (inter-cultural communication), but also for minority communities to speak to themselves in their own language (intra-cultural communication).

The first two forms of communication are well served by public and community broadcasting. It is the third aspect which is unique to ethnic community broadcasting and which is vital to representing, understanding and acknowledging minority voices\textsuperscript{34}. 
Detail of 2014-15 investment to drive sector growth

1. Targeted Support for Refugee and New Emerging Communities

A "new and emerging community" is any ethnic community that has experienced a significant percentage increase in the number of people arriving in Australia in the past fifteen years. These identified eighty one communities can be relatively small and may experience the following: high levels of unemployment, English language barriers, low-income status or other social factors that could be defined as special needs.25

Recently arrived communities lack resources and do not have access to established media in their own language. As mentioned previously, many refugees and members of new emerging communities are vulnerable and have come from backgrounds of extreme disadvantage, having been forced to leave their homes by armed conflict and human rights abuses.26

There are a number of key ways in which refugee and newly arrived communities differ from other ethnic communities, and hence why specifically targeted services for these groups are essential.

- **Increase and change in migration level:** There has been a shift over the last decade in terms of the ethnic make-up of migrants to Australia, with the result that several communities have significantly grown in size in a relatively short time. For example, immigrants from North-East Asia increased their representation from 1.7% in 2000 to 3.0% in 2010, and Southern and Central Asia has increased from 1.0 in 2000 to 2.5% in 2010. The first significant refugee grouping recruited from Africa came in the 1980s and were East Africans - Somalian, Eritreans and Ethiopians. The next stage included displaced people from West Africa - Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Congo. Sudan has emerged as the largest group to arrive in the last 5 years.

  This has significantly increased the need for culturally and linguistically specific and appropriate broadcasting for these rapidly growing communities, and hence the need for support for the communities themselves to provide such content.

- **Migration to rural and regional areas:** The migration intake has witnessed more migrants moving to rural areas, particularly as result of government support to encourage workforce opportunities and rural economic growth. This has ensured regional employers have access to the information they need about various migration and visa programs available to help them in filling skilled vacancies.

  There is an equivalent need for newly arrived migrants to have access to adequate settlement services to assist their smooth transition to a life in Australia. Recent experience with relocating new migrants in country towns unused to cultural diversity such as Tamworth and Castlemaine in the absence of adequate settlement services has been a recipe for tension.27

A service specifically aimed at new and emerging communities will teach settlement life skills and provide opportunities for involvement and engagement in the client’s own cultural and linguistic community, as well as the broader community through leadership training and broadcasting on radio and online media. It will also assist orientation by disseminating multilingual settlement information through community radio.
Additional funding for refugee and new and emerging communities will:

- provide for the planning and organisational work to target refugee and new and emerging communities
- create opportunities for starting new ethnic radio programs
- provide support and mentoring to maintain new radio programs
- create linkages between community service providers, radio stations and multilingual communities
- provide communities with multilingual settlement information
- provide leadership, training opportunities and transferrable skills to enhance employment opportunities
- create ‘network capital’ to improve employment prospects.

**Investment sought:** $100,000 annually

### 2. Training and Skills development for Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters

As ethnic community radio programs are produced by the communities themselves, high quality, appropriate training and skill development for broadcasters and content producers are critical.

The sheer number and diversity of volunteers within the ethnic community broadcasting sector sets it apart from other forms of community broadcasting, in that training needs to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of a wide range of ethnic groups. In ethnic community broadcasting, training frequently needs to incorporate familiarisation with Australian laws and attitudes which are often strange to potential broadcasters of recent arrival.

**Investment in training and skill development will:**

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

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

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

- **Training new and emerging communities.** The NEMBC establishes training programs by identifying where new communities are emerging and growing but are not yet represented on local community radio stations. The NEMBC has produced a Media Kit to assist stations and service providers to create linkages with new and emerging communities in their local area. However further training programs and assistance is necessary to get these new communities on-air. The recent Station Survey shows a
decline in languages programs at radio stations. With more funding support, there would be growth in radio programs servicing language groups that are underrepresented.

- **Getting young people** who have never been involved in radio, on air and leadership trained. The 'Next Generation Media' (NGM) training sourced young people who had never been involved in community radio and then provided a summer-school intensive radio and leadership training course, in 2012 and 2013. Participants were then given supervision and mentoring as they broadcast a three-month on-air program. However, despite its success, the program – and in particular the ability to roll out similar training in a larger number of areas, particularly in rural and regional areas – has always been hampered by limited funding.

- **Adapting to new multimedia platforms.** The NEMBC facilitates training programs to assist ethnic communities to adapt to new technologies such as digital editing, podcasting, streaming and networking in languages. The website 'Culture Cloud' helps ethnic community broadcasters to set up an online platform whereby they could develop a stronger profile for their radio programs and language. However, while young people tend to adapt quickly to new technologies, the majority of ethnic broadcasters are seniors who need assistance and support in this area. Ethnic broadcasters are also less inclined to take up these new technologies due to their already heavy volunteer workload in meeting the needs of their larger cultural group. New technologies are an extra area that needs specialised funding assistance so that ethnic communities are not left behind other broadcasting sectors.

- **Targeted support for regional and rural areas.** The NEMBC's regional training program – ENGAGE – targeted country and rural areas and resulted in four new radio programs commencing in Shepparton, Mildura and Bendigo. The ENGAGE program needs ongoing funding to work with more language groups, for sustainability, to mentor groups once they are on-air, and to expand the work to other states in Australia. This is especially pertinent as more new and emerging communities are moving to regional areas.

- **Marketing and promotion.** Successful marketing and promotion of these programs has encouraged uptake and significantly increased the number of people participating in training. An important component of training is the need to communicate with partners and radio stations, and market and promote the programs so that ethnic communities are fully aware of the benefits.

- **Ongoing professional development.** Full-time ethnic stations already run basic training programs but are in constant need of professional development to train and retrain their existing ethnic broadcasters. These stations, however, are the least likely to take up the present accredited training opportunities. Regional and rural areas that lack resources and training facilities are also in need of assistance to outreach and run training programs to specifically targeted ethnic broadcasters.

The ethnic sector has a track record of developing and operating successful training programs. The previous Australian Radio Training Project (AERTP) (from 1998 to 2003) showed that over 2,435 ethnic broadcaster trainees participated throughout the life of the project. Trainees came from 82 different language groups; female trainees slightly outnumbered male trainees and the project had 70 active trainers.

The community broadcasting sector recognises the need for more training funds. Presently the National Training Program (NTP) already has ethnic community broadcasting; youth, women and new and emerging communities as one of its priorities. However, only a relatively small percentage of ethnic broadcasters are
serviced by these funds. This is due to a lack of access and application to the scheme, there is a need for a more targeted and innovative approach and the need for training that encompasses the overarching needs of ethnic broadcasters – culturally and linguistically.

Training for ethnic communities is different in that it deals with a large number of volunteers and while the classroom activities are of utmost importance, it is the organisational aspect of bringing together cultural groups that needs high consideration.

In the report on the first five years (2005 to 2010) of the NTP only 9% of funding went to ethnic training. The rate of trainees was 13 percent of people who identified as being ethnic, and an even smaller proportion of actual ethnic broadcasters would have been trained. The last three years of the NTP, 2011 to 2013 has witnessed a similar low participation rate from the ethnic community broadcasting sector.

With additional funding, the NEMBC sees a real opportunity to do things differently, and actively market and promote skills development opportunities within the ethnic community. NEMBC will draw upon its extensive experience from the AERTP, from the successful programs it has run, and its understanding of and experience with ethnic broadcasters, radio stations and partnerships with multicultural organisations.

An ethnic specific training program will be able to draw upon the recommendations of the NTP to; "enable more cost-effective trainer training" and to "spread the delivery of training across RTOs [Registered Training Organisations] for the primary national training". The NEMBC believes that a dedicated ethnic specific training will be able to deliver a more culturally aware training with larger and better outcomes for ethnic community broadcasters.

Investment sought: $250,000 annually

3. Content and Program Production

Maintaining program quality and community support is a main priority for the ethnic community broadcasting sector. In the latest National Station Survey ranking of station challenges for 2009-10, most stations rated ‘achieving financial stability’ highest. However, for the ethnic community sector by far the biggest issue was ‘maintaining community support and engagement’ and also ‘maintaining program quality’. The two key factors influencing program quality are:

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

**Talk-based, information-rich content.** Content production is the backbone of ethnic community broadcasting, with the majority of program content being locally produced, talk-based and rich in locally specific information. Ethnic community broadcasting is rich in content for a number of reasons:
There is a strong emphasis in ethnic broadcasting on maintenance and development of community languages.

Almost 4 million Australians speak a language other than English at home.\textsuperscript{31}

1.5 million people listen to community radio to hear language programs other than English.\textsuperscript{32} This figure would be much higher if the research to establish this figure was also conducted in other languages than English.

There is a high language content requirement (50%) for meeting funding guidelines. The Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) ethnic grant guidelines have been very specific in relation to language content programs to maintain multilingualism.

The station census shows that ethnic community radio has maintained a high level of local content production, at above 80% since 2003.\textsuperscript{33}

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

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

The Stations Census 2009-10 showed that ethnic community radio stations had a high number of volunteers compared with other subsectors (see Figure 1 below). The 7 full-time ethnic stations make up a large proportion of volunteers (on average 285) and the total 131 stations that broadcast ethnic programs provides a total of 4,000 volunteers.

Content production is funded via an hourly rate paid to each station. However, strong growth in the community broadcasting sector has seen output increase by 53% in the last decade\textsuperscript{34} without commensurate increase in public investment. This has led to a decline in the rate paid for each program from $50, to at times $35 and now at $40 for each hour of ethnic content produced. This is putting significant pressure on the sector’s capacity to develop quality content across a diverse number of cultural groups.

Public investment is sought to restore and revitalise the hourly rate for content production to $60 per hour.

**Investment sought:** $1,100,000 annually

**Figure 1. Volunteers: average number per station by subsector**
Ethnic Community Broadcasting at a glance

Hours of broadcasting per week 2118

Languages broadcast 108

Number of cultural groups 125

Number of stations 131

Number of regional & rural stations 79

Number of metropolitan stations 52

Number of volunteers involved 4000

Monetary volunteer contribution $61 million

Volunteers hours each year over 2 million

Languages:

Endnotes


3 This figure is taken from the membership database of the NEMBC, and made with comparisons of CBF funding to language groups.


5 This figure is taken from the membership database of the NEMBC, and made with comparisons of CBF funding to language groups.


18 Ibid


This estimate is based on the mean weekly earnings of $1,115 or full-time workers as outlined in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Ausstats data series 6310.0 for August 2012. Assuming a 38 hour week this produces an hourly rate of 29.34. Using an average of ten hours of contribution time per week per volunteer (as established by Meadows, Forde and Foxwell in their study *Culture, commitment community - the Australian community radio sector*, Griffith University, Brisbane 2002) across 4,000 volunteers a figure of $561,027,200 per annum is produced for the value of volunteers input.