



Value of Community Radio

Supporting New and Emerging Communities to Broadcast



*For the past 35 years, the value of community radio for new and emerging communities has been well established. With each new wave of migrants and refugees coming to Australia, community radio is able to respond to their media needs faster than any other broadcaster. This booklet aims to enable your organisation to develop this service further by providing practical advice on involving and engaging new and emerging communities, in particular refugee communities in community broadcasting. This booklet was compiled by Rachael Bongiorno for the NEMBC and the content is based on previous publications from the **National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council (NEMBC)** as well as consultations with community members, service providers and radio stations.*

For more information on engaging new and emerging communities, please contact the NEMBC on (03) 9486 9549, admin@nembc.org.au or visit our website www.nembc.org.au



Australian Government
Department of Broadband,
Communications and the Digital Economy

WHAT IS COMMUNITY RADIO?	4
HOW DOES IT WORK?	5
COMMUNITY RADIO MAP	6
IDENTIFYING THE BARRIERS	8
GETTING ON AIR	10
TUNING IN	14
VALUE OF COMMUNITY RADIO FOR EMERGING COMMUNITIES	16
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SETTLEMENT SUPPORT	8
ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT AND SERVICE INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND WORK OPPORTUNITIES	20
BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS	24
CONNECTING TO LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND IDENTITY	26
MAKING LINKS AND STARTING OUT	28
RADIO STATION VISITS AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	29
MAKING RADIO PART OF YOUR WORK	30
MAKING LINKS AND WORKING TOGETHER	32
FUNDING	36

What is Community Radio ?

In Australia there are around 130 community radio stations which broadcast programs in 100 different languages. These programs are locally produced by volunteers who are committed to supporting their communities. In many cases new migrants and refugees take the first step to establish a media service in their language on community radio.

Community broadcasting is the grassroots independent media sector in Australia. Founded on the principles of community involvement, access and participation, it provides an information and entertainment resource to the community. It differs from government or commercial media in that it is not-for-profit, community driven and has editorial freedom, within the parameters of Australian law.

How Does it Work ?

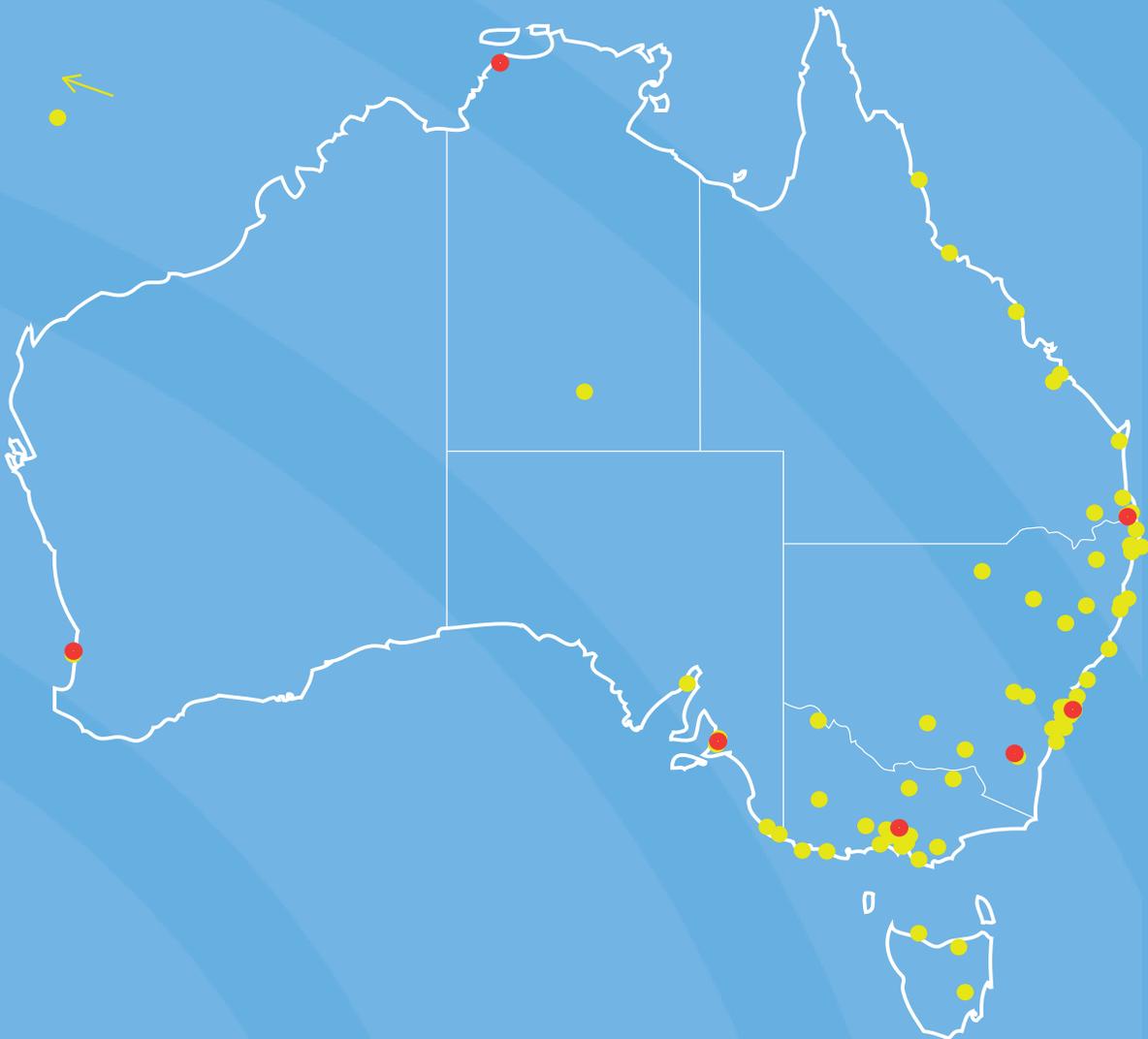
Community radio is largely volunteer operated, with some stations only having a few or no paid staff. Therefore, volunteers play a crucial role in all aspects of the radio station, from management to broadcasting, technical support and administration.

Community radio provides individuals and community groups with the opportunity to broadcast their own locally produced programs for their community. Community members who wish to broadcast usually approach a station and apply for training and airtime. If an individual or small group wishes to present a language or cultural community program they will usually need to demonstrate that they are representative of their community and that they engage with their community on a regular basis.

In terms of funding, community radio stations survive on small grants from the Community Broadcasting Foundation, limited sponsorship and community donations. For more advice on other funding opportunities please see the section on funding in this booklet on pg 36.

Community Radio Map

This map shows the breadth of community radio stations around Australia. To view the contact details of radio stations and which station is closest to you, you can refer to the interactive map on the NEMBC website www.nembc.org.au The extensive distribution of radio stations in rural and urban areas means that community radio is well positioned to service the changing geographic and demographic patterns of migrants and refugees.



Identifying The Barriers

What's stopping new and emerging communities from getting involved in community radio?

- **Don't know about community radio**

Many new migrants and refugees aren't aware that community radio exists in Australia or that communities can start their own program.

- **Limited English skills**

Communities with low literacy in English are less able to access the information needed to start a radio program.

- **Radio is not a priority during the first stages of settlement**

While communities are growing, more immediate settlement concerns center around finding employment, retraining, qualification recognition, education, housing etc.

- **Limited awareness of funding and training opportunities**

Many new migrants are not aware that funding is available for radio programs and that community radio stations offer low cost entry-level training, with no prior media experience necessary.

- **Not enough people from the community are able to get involved to sustain a weekly program**

Most stations only offer weekly programs to ethnic communities. Many new and emerging communities find it difficult to gather enough people in the early stages of settlement to be able to commit to the work required to sustain this kind of broadcasting. Encouraging multicultural programs with a number of different community groups and running short term projects are good ways to build the skills of communities to eventually start a community language or multicultural program.

- **Ensuring representation from a broad cross-section of the community**

There is gender, cultural and age considerations which need to be taken into account to ensure all members of the community have a voice and are able to participate in all aspects of broadcasting, announcing, technical roles and research support.

- **Limited mobility**

This is one of the biggest obstacles in large cities, especially in relation to women's groups.

- **Limited resources to pay for airtime**

Some stations charge for their airtime and in many cases smaller communities cannot rely on sponsorship or donations to pay these fees. Access to community grants is usually needed to cover the start up costs and it also helps if stations are able to be flexible and assist with this challenge in the first two years of broadcasting.

Getting On Air

How do service providers support a community to get air time?

- **Community Engagement**

A community group or a settlement worker may suggest starting a radio program as a way the community can connect with each other and work together to share news, information, entertainment and culture.

- **Introduction to Radio - Organising a Community Meeting**

It's a good idea to organise a community meeting specifically dedicated to starting a radio program. At this session you could play the DVD, *'Becoming a Radio Broadcaster'* (available on youtube and through the NEMBC) and encourage the community to organise a team of dedicated and interested potential broadcasters. Ideally the broadcasters will represent a broad cross section of the community with people from different age groups and different genders. Feel free to use the PowerPoint presentation available from the NEMBC website (under the Resources menu) which outlines what's involved in starting a program.

- **Contacting your local radio station**

Once you've gauged community interest, contact your local radio station and discuss with them the process in starting a program. Every station differs in their availability of airtime, training opportunities, broadcast area, resources and cost of broadcasting. So it is important to contact your local radio station to see what is available and what their application process is. A language or cultural program which wishes to start broadcasting will usually need to demonstrate that they are representative of their community and that they engage with the community on a regular basis.

- **Practical Support from Service Providers**

If possible, it's highly beneficial to include supporting a radio program in your workplan as part of a community development project or program. Your organisation could offer some practical support which may include, assisting communities with writing and accessing grants, meeting space, computers, childcare or transport support.

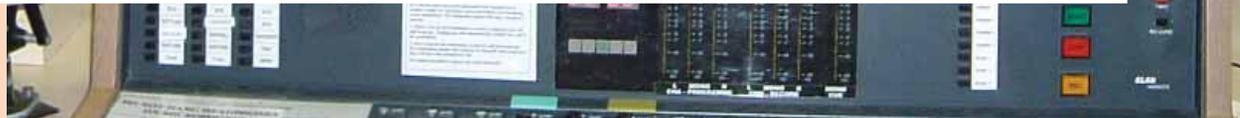


“Radio plays a vital part in entertaining and informing the Oromos in Australia. It is also significant because it is like a gathering that occurs once a week. In the Oromo culture there is a symbolic tree called the “Oda” (Sycamore) where men and women would gather underneath to resolve certain issues. It was also used for cultural education and performances or for children’s recreation. So the Oromo program on 3ZZZ Radio is an ‘Oda’ for the Oromos in Australia”

Aisha, Oromo youth program 3ZZZ Radio



Tuning In



Migrant Resource Centres or community organisations are a great way to publicise language programs which currently go to air. Some community members may be unaware of radio programs which go to air, the station frequency and the time of broadcast. Refer to the map on the NEMBC website or contact your local community radio station to find out which language programs are broadcast in your area. Assisting with publicising which community language programs are on air and online, ensures that community members can access this resource. It also enables the radio producers to engage more widely with their community. If a program is already broadcasting, interested community members may like to join the program's broadcast team or suggest ways in which the radio program can better represent or engage with the community.



Value of Community Radio



Multilingual and multicultural community broadcasting is a vital service for migrants and refugees as they establish themselves in a new country. New migrants and refugees have reported that early access to local radio in their own language greatly assists with the settlement process and provides a sense of belonging and inclusion in society.

For new and emerging communities, community radio is able to respond to their media needs much faster than government or commercial broadcasters. This is because of community radio's commitment to access and participation, low cost entry-level training and greater opportunities to broadcast through a larger number of stations.

The settlement role of community radio was illustrated in Griffith University's 'Community Media Matters' report published in 2007. For example, a Sudanese focus group participant reiterated the importance of not just hearing news from their country of origin, but also being able to easily access local and national news from Australia through Sudanese language programming.

"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 . . . its something in your own language and it keeps you occupied and abreast of what's happening. And again it talks about issues that are also happening in the country itself, not just overseas."

Sudanese focus group participant, Community Media Matters: An Audience study of the Australian community broadcasting sector, 2007



Community Development & Settlement Support

Community radio can play an important role in community development for newly arrived groups of people. For this reason, it is useful to encourage a close relationship with settlement workers, particularly community development workers in your organisation and community radio stations so that settlement considerations, practical support, community development and the needs of refugee groups are understood and addressed.

Coordinator of the Karen language program on 3ZZZ Community Radio, Keh Blut Keh, sees the radio program as an important communication tool for the development of a new community. For the Karen people (from Burma), community radio is an accessible way of keeping themselves informed of news and information in Australia and around the world and greatly assists with their settlement.

“There are more and more Karen people resettling in other countries and many of them cannot speak or read and write English language. It is very difficult to start a life in a new country if you cannot understand the language. Having the radio in Karen language can help the Karen community to get to know more about the society which they settle in. Karen people in the community are happy and proud as they can now listen to the radio in their own language. They can learn and understand about their new society through the news broadcasting from this radio. It is also the first Karen radio that Karen people around the world can listen to through the 3ZZZ website.”

Keh Blut Keh, Karen Radio, 3ZZZ, Melbourne



Access to Information and Services

Community radio is one of the most accessible ways new migrant and refugee communities can access government and service information, orientation to the Australian systems and community discussions.

Service providers are encouraged to contact their local radio stations to get information out to the community. Broadcasters are usually bilingual and can often translate as they are interviewing. Accessing government and community service information in this way is a vital component of language programming.

“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, getting this information in Turkish... To understand these matters wrongly or understand them a little bit does not, will not help you.”

Turkish focus group participant, Community Media Matters:

An audience study of the Australian community broadcasting sector.

Working With Radio Stations

4EB is Brisbane's full time multilingual radio station and it maintains a connection with settlement service providers via many different means. Importantly, this contact is enriched through 4EB's involvement with government departments, community organisations and interaction with the community at large.

The immediate link is through broadcast activities, with regular interviews taking place on 4EB with settlement service providers. 4EB also organises community announcements for these organisations.

4EB has a holistic approach with respect to working with the community. Maintaining regular contact with settlement service providers is important, but it is by incorporating this contact within general station activities that the benefits are maximised. This is achieved through partnerships and meetings with settlement service providers and agreements to work together and to cross promote each other. For example, 4EB promotes itself through stalls and outside broadcasts at many community events throughout the year.

4EB also organises tours of the station and maintains contact with other organisations that work with settlement service providers such as English language schools, public and private schools, universities and community language schools. Whilst maintaining this contact with activities and recording projects, the station continually targets migrant communities. 4EB has also organised and participated in several media training projects linking with settlement service providers and training institutions.

Constant promotion outside of the station and being visible in the community is the best way for a community station to promote itself to service providers and the community to encourage involvement.

Peter Rohweder, Station Manager Radio 4EB



Building Community connections

Broadcaster Profile, Ambrose Mareng, 979fm Melton

Ambrose Mareng hosts Southern Sudanese FM every Monday night from 10pm to midnight on Melton community radio station 979fm. The program which has been broadcasting since 2006 is a mix of talk back, news (local and from South Sudan) and music. It contains information about local services, housing, jobs, education, training as well as some social issues in the community. The mix of local and South Sudanese news and information means that the community is both connected to what's happening in their local community as well as back in Sudan where many still have family and friends.

“We have lived in terrible times and worry about our families left behind. Australia is peaceful and we have chances to gain education. We want to be good citizens and make strong contributions. I think we need programs that we help design. That will be good for us and for others” Mareng says.

The program is presented in Dinka, Arabic, Nuer and English to engage a broad spectrum of the South Sudanese community. The information broadcast on the program is vital to inform the community who may be unfamiliar with local structures and culture. It also encourages South Sudanese in Melton to connect as a community and work together to support each other.

Through Ambrose Mareng's initiative, the dedication of the South Sudanese community and with the support of the staff at 979fm, Melton radio station's South Sudanese program has been able to flourish over the past five years. With an ever growing Southern Sudanese population in Melton, the program is as important as ever in providing crucial settlement, social and cultural community support.



Connecting to Language, Culture and Identity

“Language is not only a tool for communication and knowledge but also a fundamental attribute of cultural identity and empowerment, both for the individual and the group. Respect for the languages of persons belonging to different linguistic communities therefore is essential to peaceful cohabitation.”

(UNESCO, education in a multicultural world, 2003)

Making Links and Starting Out

Use the community radio map in the booklet or on the NEMBC website www.nembc.org.au to find a community radio station near you. Every station differs in their availability of airtime, training opportunities, broadcast area, resources (including meeting space, computers, recording equipment etc) and cost of broadcasting so it is important to contact your local radio station to see what is available and if it's the most suitable radio station for the interested community group.

It's a good idea if you can organise a meeting with some members of the community prior to contacting a radio station. This will provide a good opportunity to gauge interest, community representation and feasibility of starting a program. During this information session you may like to present an introduction to the media in Australia and an introduction to community radio. This presentation and accompanying DVD 'Becoming a community broadcaster' is available from the NEMBC website. For more information or support for this introductory session feel free to contact the NEMBC directly.

Community radio stations are largely volunteer run and can be under resourced in terms of personnel. To ensure that new and emerging communities are well supported to start their program and sustain it, extra support from settlement service providers and community organisations (such as meeting space, transport, childcare, publicity, assisting with accessing grants etc) may be needed for the first few months or first year of broadcasts.

Radio Station Visits and Relationship Building

Radio station visits are a great way for new communities to observe and gather an understanding of how community radio works and most importantly, how your local community radio station operates, as the resources as well as processes change significantly from station to station. The face-to-face contact that comes from the station visits not only brings with it the opportunity to forge working relationships and trust but it can also build confidence and enthusiasm in the potential broadcasters.

Newly arrived community members may not attain the level of understanding and confidence needed to start a program simply by reading 'an expression of interest' advertised by a radio station in a newsletter or from an information session at a Migrant Resource Centre or community meeting. Radio station visits are a great way communities can see this broadcasting opportunity in action and gather a clear understanding of what's involved.

In addition to radio station visits, it's also useful to introduce people into the station in a staged process. Involving new communities in short-term broadcasting projects, for example, is useful to build the knowledge, skills and foundations for broadcasting.

Making Radio Part of Your Work

Although community broadcasting is committed to providing access and participation in the media, community radio and TV stations are largely volunteer run and severely underfunded and under resourced. Therefore it is important to encourage organisational links to share skills, opportunities, resources and facilities. This ensures new and emerging communities are adequately supported to establish and sustain a program.

Victorian Arabic Social Services, for example, incorporates supporting community radio and TV programs in the role of a project officer employed by the organisation.



Arabic Youth Radio Project

When it comes to working with vulnerable populations such as newly arrived immigrants and refugees, Victorian Arabic Social Services (VASS) believes that the provision of opportunities to let these people's voices be heard is paramount. Access to media in the form of community television and radio programs therefore help to address this need.

VASS utilises a radio coordinator to recruit volunteers & support them throughout their time volunteering with the radio. However, with the actual programs themselves, we give our volunteers the freedom to pursue what they themselves are passionate about. This also ensures that volunteers get to develop organisational skills regarding how to plan & execute their shows.

The Arabic Youth community radio programs are ongoing radio programs that aim to engage Arabic youth. The two programs, 3Al Hawa and Shabab Sawa, provide Arabic youth with a public forum to voice their opinions and ideas. The programs are presented in English and Arabic respectively.

These programs aim to engage Arab youth including those who are disadvantaged or marginalised, and raise awareness of current issues through community talk-back. Presenters are encouraged to research areas relating to youth that they are interested in and to discuss the issues and solutions during the show. They also discuss current news and events and advertise other VASS events.

Making Links and Working Together

Including a radio element to an existing cultural project at your organisation or through English language classes can present an opportunity for different communities to work together on a radio show. This can provide a creative and engaging outlet for expression and cross cultural collaboration. It can also build the skill base of aspiring broadcasters if their community is not yet ready to establish a regular radio program.

SYN, for example has been engaging English language students in radio for a number of years now. SYN, which is based in Melbourne, is one of the largest youth organisation in Australia. It provides training and broadcast opportunities for young people aged 12-25 years. Through it's education program, SYN actively engages newly arrived young people through partnerships with service providers and educational institutions.



SYN has worked with education programs in Melbourne to engage recently arrived young people with our radio broadcasting. For example, we have worked with NMIT's Young Adult Migrant Education Program (YAMEC) and Western English Language School to engage their students with radio and enhance their English language studies at the same time. The education providers report that there are many benefits to their students and programs overall when they partner with SYN.

For SYN, working with partnered programs like YAMEC allows the radio training and broadcasting to be supported by staff in the partnership. YAMEC staff members have ongoing relationships with the students and are able to meet the particular needs of each student, to ensure their experience at SYN is optimised and integrated into their broader program of study. SYN has sourced funding to support the programs through the Community Broadcasting Foundation.

SYN's broadcast content is greatly enhanced by the stories and perspectives of young people from new and emerging communities. We aim to provide training and broadcast opportunities to all young people in Melbourne. We have found that partnering with existing programs in the community has been a great way to ensure we meet the needs of these communities.

Georgia Webster, Station Manager, SYN

Short term Project ideas:

If a community wishes to start a program, you may want to present several options to them about how they might start their involvement in community radio. Short term projects such as radio features or documentaries are a great way to introduce newly arrived communities to the station and to broadcasting. This multi-staged approach will build trust, relationships, understanding and skills.

In 2010 3CR Community Radio conducted two short term projects to engage refugee communities, *Refugee Radio* and *Girls on Air*.



Girls on Air was a short term radio project which provided an introduction to radio broadcasting and some initial training for young women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The girls then produced, with some extra support and resources, a radio feature each which was broadcast and podcast on International Women's Day. The radio features covered social and political issues affecting young women and was funded by the Yarra City Council (inner Melbourne). This project proved to be very successful, with the young women producing outstanding radio and getting an introduction to 3CR as well as other opportunities in community radio. To access the project go to www.3cr.org.au/girls-air

Refugee Radio was a short term project which introduced ten refugees and asylum seekers to 3CR and enabled them to share their opinions, reflections and stories on radio. Each participant was supported by a trained technical radio producer from 3CR, and the station worked closely with the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre www.asrc.org.au

Participants were diverse in terms of age and cultural background and chose a broad range of subject matters. They shared the struggle of leaving family and the familiar behind, of learning a new language yet maintaining their culture and of wanting to contribute to Australian society.

The five-minute radio features were broadcast as part of 3CR's celebration of International Human Rights Day and podcast via the 3CR website www.3cr.org.au/refugeeradio The audio from the outside broadcast at the ASRC is available at www.3cr.org.au/humanrightsday2010

Funding

The Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) offers a number of grants which can support the involvement, recruitment and training of new and emerging communities. New and emerging communities are also considered a priority area for funding.

The following grants relate to both the CBF ethnic grants and training grants categories:

- Ethnic Grants - New Program Group
- Ethnic Broadcasting Special Projects Grants
- Ethnic Program Grants
- Training Grants

for more information on CBF grants please go to www.cbf.com.au



Funding opportunities can also be sought from philanthropic trusts and local councils as well as state and federal government departments which work in the areas of community development, multicultural affairs, immigration, settlement support, health and well-being, youth and women.

Produced by



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

*For more information on engaging new and emerging
communities, please contact the NEMBC on (03) 9486 9549,
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