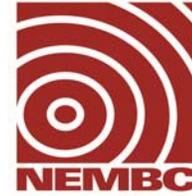


# MEDIA RELEASE



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## The Budget Fails Ethnic Community Broadcasting

A key task for government at the moment is to stabilise the economy support jobs and ensure that the effect of the economic crisis is not disproportionately carried by the weaker sections of our society. Community volunteer's broadcasters are mainly in that category.

The 2009/2010 budget leaves ethnic and multicultural community radio out in the cold with no additional funds provided for the core functions – programmes in languages other than English.

The funding for those functions has remained static for the last 12 years, apart from partial indexation. Commitments given in 2007 to address this injustice have not been carried through.

The funding for the National Training Project (\$2.5 m) for the next four years is of course welcome. However for ethnic broadcasters to derive any meaningful benefit from the NTP it needs to be directed to cater for grass roots broadcasters and provide a much more culturally sensitive training approach.

A significant amount has been given to ABC (\$130 million) and SBS (\$20 Million) but the additional money requested for ethnic community radio (\$2.4 million)-broadcasting in 100 languages over 105 community radio stations across Australia- is miniscule in comparison yet it has been ignored.

The commitment to digital radio has been maintained but at a level still to be clarified. However most community radio stations believe content and infrastructure funding has much greater need right now.

Important assistance to community television and its change over to digital has been declined.

Community broadcasting holds a special place in Australian media and society – indeed this uniquely Australian democratic and social infrastructure has few counterparts anywhere in the world.

Ethnic community broadcasting builds active citizenship and increases social cohesion which is vital to efficient local economies. With the long recession ahead of us, community radio has not been recognised for its input into building economic pathways, engaging thousands of volunteers and developing transferable skills to the local community. Ethnic and multicultural broadcasters link both new migrants and established communities with each other, their cultures, and the nation as well as providing information about government services and events.

Ethnic and other community broadcasters have every right to be disappointed and the government should be told of this. The claim for an increase was modest, affordable and best value for money in these difficult times. It is still that. To that end the NEMBC will continue to campaign.

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