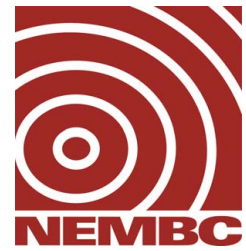


14 May 2010

Silencing the Voices of Multicultural Communities



Despite a strong push from the community radio sector's lobby campaign, the 2010/2011 Federal Budget leaves ethnic and multicultural community radio stations with no additional funding support for the core functions of program-making. The Budget has failed to support a sector which provides a voice for multicultural communities across Australia. The specific need for culturally sensitive training for multicultural and multilingual broadcasters has also been ignored.

Apart from a small increase through partial indexation, funding for core functions has remained static for the last 12 years. This static funding does not match the growing need for multicultural programs. There are presently 130 community radio stations across Australia broadcasting programs in languages other than English. Commitments given in 2007 to address this injustice have not been carried through.

The National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council (NEMBC) would like to thank those radio stations and its member broadcasters that have worked to support the campaign, particularly through the launches already held in Canberra and Melbourne and planned in Brisbane. We received many supportive letters from members of parliament, reiterating the case for ethnic community broadcasting.

Multilingual and other community broadcasters have every right to be disappointed with the Budget, and the Federal Government should be made aware of this. The sector's claim for increased funding was modest, affordable and best value for money in these difficult times.

Ethnic and multilingual community radio must be recognised for its role in engaging thousands of volunteers, developing transferable skills for the local community and increasing social cohesion—all of which are vital to nation-building and stimulating local economies. Ethnic community broadcasting provides a national vehicle to breakdown racial stereotypes and can be used as an educational tool to combat racism.

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.

The NEMBC will work even harder with its members, listeners and their communities to step up and maintain the lobby campaign right up to the federal election and secure commitments from all political parties. The NEMBC's comprehensive lobby brochure will be used as a basis for the ongoing campaign and to assist members make their case to local members and candidates. The detailed brochure is available from the NEMBC's website, www.nembc.org.au.

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