



**The National Ethnic and Multicultural  
Broadcasters' Council (NEMBC)**

**Submission to the**

**SOCIAL INCLUSION NATIONAL COMPACT  
CONSULTATIONS**

National Compact Section  
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## Executive Summary

The National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council (NEMBC) thanks the Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard and the Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and The Hon Jenny Macklin MP Senator Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Hon Ursula Stephens Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector for the initiative to build a National Compact with the third sector in Australia. Particularly important is the opportunity to stimulate ideas and develop linkages so that government and the Third Sector can work more effectively to support each other and develop policy and programs, to combat economic and social disadvantage in Australia and break down barriers to participation. The NEMBC welcomes any ongoing contact with government.

In this submission the NEMBC would like to show the important role that ethnic community broadcasting has in building community, strengthening multiculturalism and creating social inclusion. The main recommendations for the National Compact in relation to Respect, Inclusiveness, Diversity, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability are addressed in more detail in the conclusion of this submission.

The key aspects of a National Compact for the NEMBC would be recognising the role of ethnic community broadcasting and assisting in engagement on a number of levels with government for policy development, program initiatives, funding and sustainability of the sector, in particular with the introduction of digital broadcasting.

The NEMBC represents the ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting sector and has played a strong role in building communities and providing voice and platform for marginalised members of the community to represent themselves and provide a service to the community.

Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting is Australia's largest language laboratory – providing information, maintaining community connections, promoting linguistic diversity, cultural development, social inclusion and belonging. The most recent 2008 McNair survey revealed that in an average week the sector produced 2,439 hours of ethnic language programs and broadcasts in over a 100 languages<sup>1</sup>. SBS is currently broadcasting in 68 languages.

The media environment in Australia consists of the public sector (the ABC and SBS), the commercial sector and community broadcasting. Community broadcasting holds a significant place in Australian media and society – indeed this uniquely Australian democratic and social infrastructure has few counterparts anywhere in the world. For the 4.5 million Australians who listen to community radio and 3.7 million who watch community television each week<sup>2</sup> it is more than a valuable source of local news, information and entertainment.

To have a healthy and effective national broadcasting sector you need to have a sustainable and effective community broadcasting sector. These services are distinct and complementary, and ought to be adequately supported and recognised for their particular roles in serving the communication needs of this diverse country. Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting has more extensive programming and services a larger number of local communities, than the capacity of government broadcasting and this role needs to be acknowledged.

In this submission the NEMBC will focus on the significant role that community broadcasting contributes to social inclusion. Ethnic and Multicultural broadcasting has a significant input into local communities and developing social inclusion by:

- **Service delivery** to the community through broadcasting information, news and entertainment that build local community networks, informs and educates.
- **Ethnic community radio by definition practices multiculturalism and 'Social Inclusion'** by involving, supporting and building community. Community radio establishes a local workforce of volunteerism, empowers people through training and the acquisition of new skills, provides social opportunities, provides information and

education, increases self-esteem and well being, assists community members to seek employment and helps strengthen local economies.

- Ethnic broadcasting plays a significant role in **maintaining language, culture and identity**, simulating multilingualism and combating racism/stereotypes, through self-representation of minority communities, promoting communication, dialogue and understanding
- Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting helps **create a culture of human rights** and works in conjunction with the many principles of human rights such as 'everyone has the right to freedom of expression' and 'the right to enjoy culture, declare and practice their religion and use of languages'. Community radio provides an important space to broadcast language, express opinions, ideas and resolve issues.
- Community radio is cost effective due to a **large volunteer workforce** and cooperative ethos.
- **Develops transferable skills, which increases employability.** Key among these are ICT skills, broadcast technology, management capability and spoken and written communication. Over 7,500 people receive training in the sector each year and it is a way for many vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as at risk youth, refugees and migrants, those with a disability, to reengage with learning in a practical environment
- **Strengthens economic networks** by giving local people information about local businesses and enables local business to make themselves known through the tens of thousands of sponsorship messages broadcast each week
- **Develops partnerships with business and other not for profit organisations** to deliver projects and services to communities
- Provides a communication channel about **Commonwealth and State Government services and initiatives**, including training and education, small business and migration programs
- **Providing emergency information and relief.** In the recent bushfires in Victoria community radio stations play an invaluable role in being the glue that provides support for the local communities. Many community radio stations received phone calls telling how their station had helped save peoples lives during the Black Saturday fires and stations provided valuable information to assist in appeals and raised money or clothing for the ongoing emergency relief period.
- The ethnic community broadcasting networks effectively **builds relationships with Indigenous broadcasters** and share common issues of language and identity. Ethnic community broadcasting supports indigenous community broadcasting in recognising the importance in maintaining their independence as community broadcasters and for the indigenous community broadcasting sector to have access to resources, and a commitment from the government for genuine consultation prior to decisions being made.

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1 "Community Radio National Listener Survey", McNair Ingenuity Research, October 2008 at p. 8; OzTam Community Television cumulative audience reach 8am-12 midnight, August 2006.

2 "Community Radio National Listener Survey", McNair Ingenuity Research, October 2008 at p.25 - 'Reasons for Listening to Community Radio'.

## Background to the NEMBC

The NEMBC is a progressive non-for-profit peak-body that advocates for multiculturalism and supports multilingual community broadcasting around Australia. The NEMBC contributes to media diversity in Australia by maintaining and connecting people to their language, culture and experience of migration.

In every state capital there is a large multilingual community radio station, and hundreds of general community radio stations which operate in country towns and cities that broadcast multilingual and multicultural programs. Community radio forms a large part of the media landscape, with 57% of Australians tuning-in to community radio each month. Recent national surveys revealed that in an average week the sector produces 2,439 hours of multilingual language programs, a 40-hour increase from 2007 and broadcasts in over a 100 languages, which is an increase from 97 languages in 2007.

Through national committee's, membership of ethnic and multicultural radio programs, projects and policy development, the NEMBC supports, assists and provides opportunities to develop multilingual and multicultural community broadcasting around the country. Multilingual broadcasting plays a critical role in servicing the settlement, linguistic and cultural needs of this diverse population.

We have found multilingual community radio to be a vital settlement tool for new and emerging communities as well as a valued cultural and linguistic resource for established migrant communities. Multicultural community broadcasting provides a rare opportunity for self-representation in the public sphere for migrant and refugee communities as well as cultural and linguistic continuity, an important source of translated local and country of origin news and information. This communication tool most defiantly contributes to a greater sense of inclusion and belonging in society.

The role of the NEMBC is:

- To advocate for and support ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting
- To be a voice for multiculturalism in Australia
- To maintain and connect people with their ancestry, language and culture
- To counter racism in Australian society
- To contribute to media diversity in Australia
- To perform in a manner that is ethical, professional, responsive, self reliant and with integrity

## Social Inclusion and the Role of Community Broadcasting

Increased attention is being paid to the community radio sector and the possible benefit it can deliver to social groups, which are not serviced adequately by existing public or commercial broadcasting. Recent international research conducted for the Council of Europe established that “on the question of whether third sector media (community media) contribute to social cohesion or threatens it, the evidence points to the sector being an important factor in social cohesion and citizenship, particularly for minority ethnic communities and refugee and migrant communities”.<sup>3</sup>

The founding principles of community radio is built on community involvement, access and participation and providing a resource of information and entertainment to the community. International research shows that the “community sector is already making a substantial contribution to social cohesion, community engagement and regeneration”<sup>1</sup>

Community radio:

- Establishes a local workforce of volunteerism
- Empowers people through training and the acquisition of skills
- The rare opportunity for self-representation in the public sphere, (this is particularly pertinent for minority communities who are underrepresented or misrepresented in mainstream media)
- Actively fights racism and counters stereotypes
- Provides educational and social opportunities
- Assists community members to seek employment
- Strengthens local economies through sponsorship and on-air announcements
- Informs community of local and federal government initiatives, especially in different languages providing information to niche sections of the community.

The community broadcasting sector is a substantial third sector industry servicing the Australian community. Comprised of more than 480 community-owned organisations representing the endeavours of over 23,000 volunteers and more than 800 staff. Community radio is the largest sector in the Australian media landscape and should be duly recognised for this significant role.

The breadth of ethnic and multicultural community radio cannot be ignored; it extends to 123 radio stations (including 7 dedicated ethnic stations). The most recent 2008 McNair survey revealed that in an average week the sector produced 2,439 hours of Ethnic language programs and broadcasts in over a 100 languages, which is an increase from 97 languages in 2007. With the Federal government increasing the immigration intake by approximately 300,000 people (including temporary skilled migration) in the foreseeable future, multilingual broadcasting will continue to play a critical role in servicing the settlement, linguistic and cultural needs of this diverse population.

Multilingual and multicultural community radio in particular plays a unique and valuable role as a settlement resource for migrant and refugee communities and continues to be valuable resource for servicing the linguistic and cultural needs of all ethnic communities (both established and recently arrived). This opportunity promotes dialogue, understanding and self-representation of minority cultural and linguistic communities, which work towards building and strengthening healthier communities.

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Maynard, *Promoting Social Cohesion: the role of community media*, p.32

## **Social Cohesion and 'Meeting Places'**

Community broadcasting's participatory, non-commercial and collaborative ethos promotes cultural, social and linguistic meeting places and communication spaces, which are unlikely in other settings. The cooperative, independent and creative nature of community broadcasting encourages innovation, diversity and self-representation. In this way, community broadcasting becomes a site of difference, which creates a unique and rare opportunity for dialogue that encourages understanding and social cohesion.

Community broadcasting is also a site of cultural and linguistic negotiation. Members of different ethnic backgrounds can participate in a language program together and through their differences can open up understanding and common ground. This contact between different ethnic groups when operating and producing community radio programs is often taken for granted; As Peter Lewis found, "the contact between different community groups contributing to a community media project as they negotiate the allocation of airtime and/or resources underlines the importance of the co-presence necessitated by community broadcasting of this kind. That different members of the local public sphere come together facilitates social cohesion".<sup>4</sup>

This bringing together of different cultural groups creates a forum of local interaction and discussion that is vital for minority voices. In order for minority voices to be represented in the national public sphere a local conversation and discussion needs to take place within minority communities. The forum of community broadcasting allows a conversation, which, to a degree is able to transcend traditional boundaries of power, in terms of social, economic, political, religious or gender relations. Community broadcasting represents diverse communities and allows a space for minority-to-minority interaction and discussion to be supported.

## **Responding to Community Needs**

Community Radio has the ability to respond to the needs of new and emerging communities as well as the changing needs of established ethnic communities much quicker than government broadcasters such as SBS. Community radio, through its commitment to participation and access, inexpensive training and more opportunity to broadcast through a larger number of stations, has proven to be in a good position to respond to the linguistic, cultural and settlement needs of emerging and refugee communities as well as the changing needs of established ethnic communities.

The extensive distribution of radio stations in rural and urban areas means community radio is well positioned to service the needs of changing patterns of migrants, both in terms of demography and geography.

In order to continue its role in supporting established ethnic communities as well as new and emerging communities to have access to radio, the NEMBC would like to see the restoration of the Australian Ethnic Radio Training Project (AERTP). The AERTP, which trained 2,500 ethnic community broadcasters over 10 years, ceased to be funded in 2004. This training project needs to be re-funded for the NEMBC to adequately service the needs of ethnic, refugee and migrant communities; a service that public broadcasting is unable to address. This cost-effective training scheme was highly successful and provided sustainability to the sector. The NEMBC is well positioned to address the linguistic, cultural and gender training concerns of ethnic, migrant and refugee communities and this unique role should be respected and supported by the government.

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Maynard, *Promoting Social Cohesion: the role of community media*, p.38

## Migration and Multiculturalism

The Australian Government's migration program is at its highest level since the 1960s. Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting is Australia's largest language laboratory – providing information, maintaining community connections, promoting linguistic diversity, cultural development, social inclusion and belonging.

Ethnic community broadcasting is a vital service for migrants and refugees as they establish themselves in a new country. This settlement role is exemplified in the following extract from the Griffith University Community Media Matters Report, 2007

“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: 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.”<sup>5</sup>

A member of the Turkish focus group further clarified the importance of ethnic-language programming in providing essential Centrelink and government information:

“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.”<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting not only connects migrant and refugee communities with their local communities it also assists with the integration and inclusion into Australian society. Several participants in the Turkish focus group of the Community Media Matters report, felt this is one of the key roles of the program, which at the time broadcast only one hour per week:

“The radio, this radio station is not separating us from Australia, as our friend said before, it's integrating us to Australia, It's very important. Our children are growing up Australians anyway, maybe they're having difficulty adapting culturally, but through the radio, they will be able to get some help or adapt anyway. And also we see our differences as richness, in Turkey too, where we come from different backgrounds and things that, backgrounds, we're living the same thing here too and we're happy about that. Everyone's got their own different folklore, folklore and songs and everything else so we have that here too and we're happy with that.”<sup>7</sup>

Such testimony underscores the value of ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting for social inclusion and engaged citizenship.

## Localism

Community Radio is community driven at all levels of media production, which distinguishes it from national public broadcasting and commercial broadcasting. Community radio is a true example of civil participation and should be supported by the government for this role.

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Meadows, Susan Ford, Jacqui Ewart, Kerrie Foxwell, *Community Media Matters: An audience study of the Australian community broadcasting sector*, p.79

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Michael Meadows, Susan Ford, Jacqui Ewart, Kerrie Foxwell, *Community Media Matters: An audience study of the Australian community broadcasting sector*, p.79

- Community radio, given its commitment to access and participation in all aspects of radio broadcasting including, production, announcing, governance, and administration, is therefore in a much better position to connect with its constituents. If the government is committed to, 'allowing people with similar interests to communicate and participate in local communities', this commitment should be reflected in greater recognition and support of community broadcasting to sustain this service of localism.
- Localism plays a vital role for the social inclusion of minority voices.
- Community Radio is undoubtedly a unique meeting place of difference. A space where people, ideas and skills are shared in a regulated and supported media-making environment. This interaction is greatly important for the promoting of understanding and recognition of difference, social cohesion and dialogue.
- Community TV focuses a majority of its broadcasts on local events and activities within the community and is well connected to address the needs of the community. SBS on the other hand, more so SBS TV, seldom if ever cover local events, socio-cultural-political-educational events organised by or affecting ethnic communities and the wider multicultural constituency.

## Human Rights

Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting helps create a culture of human rights.

'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers'

*Article 19 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights*

Community radio provides an important space to express opinions and ideas and resolve certain issues. The following extract from a young radio broadcaster, illustrates the important avenue community radio provides to express opinions and impart information and ideas.

"Radio plays a vital part in entertaining and informing the Oromo's 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 would gather to resolve certain issues, also for recreation and children and women would perform underneath it. So the Oromo program on 3ZZZ Radio in Australia is an 'Oda' for the Oromo's in Australia."

*Aisha, Oromo youth program 3ZZZ Radio*

## Right to enjoy Culture and use Language

"People of all cultural, religious, racial or linguistic backgrounds have the right to enjoy their culture, declare and practice their religion and use their languages."

*Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.*

Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting is Australia's largest language laboratory – providing information, maintaining community connections, promoting diversity and cultural development in around 100 languages.

Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting not only connects migrant and refugee communities with their local communities, it also assists with their integration and inclusion into Australian society.

"The radio, this radio station is not separating us from Australia... it's integrating us to Australia, It's very important. Our children are growing up Australians anyway, maybe they're having difficulty adapting culturally, but through the radio, they will be able to get some help or adapt."

*Turkish focus group, 3ZZZ, Community Media Matters: An audience study of the Australian community broadcasting sector, Griffith University.*

Radio for and by refugee and emerging communities, provides access to languages and culture from their own perspective and can help overcome isolation that many new migrants and refugee's face particularly women, those with little English, or income.

Researches for the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) report, 'The experiences of Australian-Sudanese young people', found that some young people doubted their right to be in public spaces by virtue of who they were.

The self-representation in the public sphere that community radio offers fosters belonging and inclusion in the community, which develops self-esteem and promotes a genuine commitment to multiculturalism. This representation also reduces fear and violence, which results from lack of understanding, communication and awareness.

## **Providing information in an emergency**

In the recent bushfires in Victoria community radio stations played an invaluable role and is the glue that provides support for the local communities. Many community radio stations received phone calls telling how their station had helped save people's lives during the Black Saturday fires. A community radio station in Alexandra, 3UGFM, were able to alert residents in advance of the fire front. 3UGFM provided the first communication to the town of Marysville at 5 pm. This was followed by an ABC report half an hour later. The fire front hit Marysville at around 7pm and UGFMs reports alerted resident for a fire plan and the evacuation. 3UGFM at times gave reports that contradicted the official view but their information was correct. Community radio has the distinct advantage of having local knowledge, understanding the local geography and the people that live in the community.

An ABC Four Corners website report gives a chronology of how 3UGFMs assisted:  
[www.abc.net.au/4corners/special\\_ed/20090427/fires2/chronology.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/special_ed/20090427/fires2/chronology.htm)

Yarra Valley FM started to hear information about the fires on Saturday afternoon when residents rang in to see if the station had any information. Apparently they were ringing because they couldn't get through to emergency services as a result of congested lines. They were asking what the station thought, 'if they should stay or go'.

Many listeners called to thank the station for their broadcasts. One caller spoke of how they got out of Marysville and for most of the time they were guided by the broadcasting of Yarra Valley's radio. They would stop at a town and listen to the broadcasts before they would move on to the next town. They believe this made it possible to find a safe passage out.

Community radio stations are themselves members of the community and accordingly there is a willingness and reliance to assist. During the fires Gippsland FM allowed the local ABC to broadcast using their frequency, after the ABC's transmitter was destroyed in the fires. As a response to requests from Marysville residents 3UGFM built a radio studio that started broadcasting on the 17th of May 2009.

Increasingly rural areas are becoming more multicultural and many community radio stations have ethnic broadcasters. These broadcasters could play a vital role in broadcasting warnings, emergency relief and information in their language.

There's an army of volunteers at community radio stations consisting of trained staff and many with professional radio backgrounds. Plenty Valley radio, for example, was able to use its professional staff to operate the studio and provide information to residents during the weekend when the fires were at their peak.

It is clear that community radio stations have been able to save lives because of their broadcasts and they continue to provide valuable ongoing assistance. Many stations have assisted in appeals and raised money or clothing for the ongoing emergency relief period.

## In Conclusion

### Key Principles

A National Compact could help build the relationships and linkages between government and the community broadcasting sector.

All of the 6 Key Principles mentioned in the draft National Compact are important to the NEMBC and the ethnic community broadcasting sector in the following ways:

- 1) **Respect:** The first Key Principle of showing what '*Value the Third Sector plays*' would be a significant first step in acknowledging and giving recognition of the Third Sector and its contribution to our society.
  - Recognition of ethnic community broadcasting would assist in its ongoing viability. There needs to be greater support and recognition of the service delivery provided to the local by community in terms information, news, service information, community engagement and entertainment.
  - There needs to be greater recognition and respect for the role that ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting plays as a settlement resource for newly arrived migrant and refugee communities. There is much more collaboration needed between government departments, and community broadcasting sector, which can utilize and develop this opportunity.
  - Furthermore ethnic community broadcasting needs to be recognised for the significant part it plays in building community, strengthening multiculturalism and creating social cohesion. Ethnic community broadcasting is a unique meeting place of exchange and diversity. This rare opportunity for dialogue works to break down stereotypes and counter racism.
  - Through a program of 'respect' assistance could be given with evaluating the importance of ethnic community broadcasting and the positive effects it has on community cohesion.
  - A process of evaluation would provide mutual respect and understanding of government and third sector contributions and expertise.
- 2) **Inclusiveness:** Involves communicating more effectively with the ethnic community broadcasting sector with the goal of having an influence on policy development. This can simply be a matter of understanding the unique role of ethnic community broadcasting and making sure that the NEMBC and ethnic radio stations, and ethnic and multicultural programs are made aware of and involved in discussions around policy development.
- 3) **Diversity:** The ethnic community broadcasting sector plays a significant role in social inclusion, supporting cultural and linguistic differences promoting understanding, dialogue, communication and encouraging diversity. Recognising and valuing diversity creates a willingness to develop linkages and networks to effectively communicate and involve different sectors in the community and recognise their strengths as well as strengths of the government.
- 4) **Effectiveness:** Ethnic community broadcasting plays a vital role in distributing information, either to niche parts of local communities and at other times to national or global audiences through its vast network of broadcasters. Ethnic community broadcasting is a reservoir of research and information about local communities, their culture and languages. Allowing the ethnic community broadcasting sector more opportunities to run projects that can engage marginalised voices in the community will create ongoing opportunities which would encourage growth, innovation, development and social inclusion.
- 5) **Efficiency:** In order for the ethnic community broadcasting sector to continue to be efficient, provide adequate support, training and better program delivery, the ethnic community broadcasting sector needs to recover from 10 years of a lack of core funding as well as the termination of its successful and ethno-specific radio training program. Efficiency would also involve supporting linkages with community broadcasting stations, government funded community organisations such as Migrant Resource Centre's and

Educational institutions. This acknowledges the important role ethnic community broadcasting can play as a settlement resource and technical training facility. Acknowledging the role of community broadcasting across institutions and services allows the sharing of resources and more opportunities for participation.

The capacity to deliver the many services mentioned in this submission is threatened by inadequate Commonwealth support. While there have been levels of CPI increase in funding there has been no significant increase over the last decade:

- Support available per station has declined significantly – the average total funding level is now 18% lower in real terms than a decade ago
- Support has not kept pace with overall sector growth and diversification – since the last major funding review in 1996/7, the sector has established over 200 new services and augmented analogue broadcasting through new digital platforms. While total Commonwealth funding has risen by 25% over the last decade, a 53% increase in the number of licensed services has resulted in an 11% drop in real core annual funding. This lack of funding undoubtedly threatens sustainability of the sector.

**Training for the ethnic community broadcasting** sector is crucial. Specialist training needs of particular areas of community broadcasting cannot be met given the confines of the existing funding. Culturally sensitive training programs are essential to address the needs of these diverse broadcasters. Ethnic community broadcasting accredited training resources have ceased since Australian Government funding for the Australian Ethnic Radio Training Project was terminated in 2004. The NEMBC estimates that an amount of \$250,000 per annum from an increased Training Fund would be required for the NEMBC to develop and deliver dedicated Ethnic trainer training and culturally appropriate training for Ethnic community broadcasters.

- 6) **Sustainability** and survival plays a major role for the ethnic community broadcasting.
- The sector relies upon a number of key factors, including: volunteers, responses to good governance, equipment upgrades, access to resources and infrastructure.
  - New emerging communities and maintaining the established languages are ongoing challenges for sustaining a multicultural Australia.
  - Adapting to digital platforms creates a new challenge for the ethnic community broadcasting sector.

The development of projects specific to ethnic community broadcasting that assist in the maintenance of culture and language development will be able to keep the sector vibrant so that volunteers feel they are continuing to making a contribution.

A priority to assist organisations with long term security and sustainability would be to:

- **Amend the Income Tax Assessment Act to include human rights as a charitable purpose.** The Income Tax Assessment Act should be amended to include 'the promotion and protection of human rights, reconciliation and the promotion of racial harmony, equality and diversity' as a charitable purpose, so as to allow community organisations advocating against racism and advancing the development of a harmonious multicultural society to access deductible gift recipient and income tax-exempt charity concessions.

## **Prioritising action for the short term**

The NEMBC would rate the short term action list as follows. An additional high priority would be to 'Amend the income Tax Assessment Act to include human rights as a charitable purpose', as mentioned in point 6 of the Sustainability Principle.

1. documentation and promotion of the value and contribution of the Sector
2. recognition of sector diversity in consultation processes and sector development initiatives

3. improvements in information sharing, including greater access to publicly funded research and data
4. protection of the right to advocacy, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist – and **'Amend the income Tax Assessment Act to include human rights as a charitable purpose, as mention in point 6 of the Sustainability Principle.**
5. responses to paid and unpaid workforce issues – development, retention, recruitment and remuneration.
6. reduction in red tape and streamlining of reporting
7. increase in consistency/ simplicity of financial arrangements, including across state and federal jurisdictions
8. improvements to funding and procurement processes

## **Implementation and governance of the compact**

The NEMBC recognizes that a voluntary agreement that would ask peak bodies to 'sign up' would be a good process, and the formation of a National Compact council and developing a five year action plan would be appropriate form for implementation and governance of a National Compact.

The NEMBC and the ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting sector present a unique and significant example of social inclusion in action. Many of the practices and principles used in ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting can be translated to other sectors to encourage cultural and linguistic development and continuity, belonging, inclusion and participation of marginalised groups in society as well as meeting places and communication spaces for dialogue, understanding and respect.

The sector has for the past 30 years played a significant role in supporting and developing multiculturalism and social inclusion in Australia. Adequate support and recognition of community broadcasting's unique role in creating social inclusion is essential to ensure sustainability for the sector. The NEMBC supports working efficiently and effectively with government and the community sector to develop it's contribution to social inclusion in Australia and looks forward to the work of the National Compact.