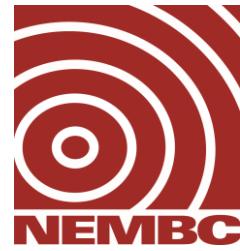


UPDATE:

PROTECT ethnic and community broadcasting



Re: UPDATE on CBF's new model and funding arrangements.

Dear Ethnic Broadcasters and Stations

It has been a challenging year for the NEMBC and I think it will continue to be the case in the future. The main concern of course is the change to the existing Community Broadcasting Foundation's structural and governance model, in particular, the new funding arrangements for ethnic community broadcasting.

As you are aware the NEMBC and ethnic community broadcasters have opposed the CBF's changes and the NEMBC is bound to uphold decisions made by the members in the 2015 AGM.

The CBF is moving ahead to change the constitution and will have a new board and organisation by July 2016. New guidelines will be established by the end of the year with a new grant round starting next year.

Logic tells me that with every new business model, an accompanying cost analysis is provided, so as a transparent process of the transitional changes from the old to the new is documented and clearly articulated. The CBF haven't provided the cost implications of the new model in relation to the operational and actual costs and potential loses or gains.

There are a lot of unanswered questions. There is no guarantee that full-time ethnic stations will not lose their funding, even if they will, we don't know how much. Further, regional stations and broadcasters need to be supported, how is this support provided in the new model? Some interim guidelines were provided but we have no idea about the final guidelines which will definitely be more onerous and complicated for ethnic community broadcasters.

Unfortunately the Liberal Federal Government, just before the Federal elections, wrote to the NEMBC and they have agreed to support the CBF changes. The NEMBC finds this disappointing that they cannot understand the benefits the current system brings to ethnic community broadcasting.

The NEMBC remains concerned at the potential effects the CBF changes will have on ethnic community broadcasting and will continue to work in the best interests of ethnic community broadcasters.

How can the NEMBC stay involved?

The NEMBC has been involved now for almost two years. Recently we decided that being a part of the process was only adding confusion and we needed to step away from the CBF reforms and we called for a boycott of the nomination process. Why did we do this? The NEMBC needs to represent its members by not being a part of a process that may ultimately makes things harder for ethnic community broadcasters.

Being involved in the CBF consultation process has not seen any gains for Ethnic community broadcasters. The CBF just continues with its radical changes despite the NEMBC input.

The NEMBC needs an arm's-length distance from the CBF in order to maintain our integrity to our members.

Conclusion

Every time the NEMBC writes reports or is involved in meetings with the CBF our input has been ignored. A very good example was allowing a plenary session with the CBF at our Annual Conference in 2015. Everyone in the session expressed extreme concern at the changes, only to be ignored.

The NEMBC needs to keep the best interest of its members and ethnic community broadcasters at the centre of what it does. The NEMBC is not here to help the CBF bring in a new plan that is going to be detrimental to ethnic broadcasters; that would be confusing to our members.

In the coming months we will approach the CBF and ask for a plan. Not as part of their consultation process because we do not want to be again wrapped in that cloud of consultation. This time we want to see the real cost of what they propose. The CBF has been running a so called consultation process now for two years. We want to see their model and see the cost implications for ethnic community broadcasters and stations.

We will keep you informed.

Sincerely,



Dr Tangi Steen
NEMBC President



Nick Dmyterko
NEMBC Vice president