

# Digital Connections: Ethnic Community Broadcasting in the Post- Terrestrial and Post-Pandemic Mediascape



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**GRIFFITH CENTRE FOR  
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL  
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# The Project

National project involving an online/telephone survey of Station Managers, and interviews and focus group discussions at 8 sites/stations across Australia.

Aims to advance our understanding of the place of ethnic community broadcasting in an increasingly digital and disrupted world.

Aims to inform how the sector's traditional types of radio broadcasting and newer digital programming (podcasting, livestream on social media etc.) might enhance the sector's role in social cohesion and the migrant experience.

# 2022-2023

- One year project with the hope for further research with the Australian Research Council.
- **Project Team:**  
Dr Heather Anderson  
Professor Susan Forde  
Associate Professor Halim Rane  
Dr Suus de Groot Heupner  
Dr Poppy de Souza
- **Project partners:**  
NEMBC, CBAA, CBF.
- FECCA is a potential partner on a larger Australian Research Council project which will build on this current one-year pilot.



# Topic Tables/Key Project Issues

Topic	Outcomes
Covid Spotlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Covid highlighted the importance of new technologies and related training (some stations were disadvantaged because of lack of knowledge/training in new technologies)</li><li>• Covid demonstrated the value of the sector for social connection, support and mental health.</li><li>• Option of home-broadcasting more relevant during pandemic/crisis</li><li>• However, home broadcasting increased costs for stations – people at the station were required to be available and upload programs that previously were delivered live at the station</li><li>• Is Covid the trigger for the sector to move into more sophisticated Play Out programming – RCS, Zetta, Symian – which will enable full programming, reception and scheduling of programs produced from home, etc. Issues here – funding (software is \$15K+; and training to use it)</li></ul>

Topic	Outcomes
<b>An Ageing Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People – need for bilingual content to bring in more people;; some great strategies for bridging between generations</li> <li>• Culture - important to not generalize about older broadcasting (e.g., tech); being ‘aging aware’ for emerging communities</li> <li>• Medium – tech upgrades/changes can be a challenge</li> </ul>
<b>Demographics and New Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need of research of how communities consume media.</li> <li>• The need to be proactive about approaching new communities.</li> <li>• Overlapping cultures and languages offer opportunities for a diversity of programs.</li> </ul>
<b>Community radio stations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very diverse sector</li> <li>• Relationship between ethnic broadcasters and rest of station (generalist stations)</li> <li>• Questions about identity and knowing the audiences</li> </ul>
<b>Youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is youth?</li> <li>• Importance of consulting youth – youth for youth</li> <li>• Ensuring accessibility for young people (school holidays etc)</li> </ul>



Topic	Outcomes
<b>Membership and Organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Membership limited to new communities; restricted by laws.</li><li>• Lack of transparency of what membership means and what the benefits are.</li><li>• Members vs subscribers; what is better? (example: changing to subscriber model from membership-only model saved 4EB \$10K).</li><li>• Sponsorship is the main area of growth.</li><li>• Youth membership opportunities; broadcasters to attend local and wide events.</li></ul>
<b>Media Marketing and Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reluctance to embrace tech/social media; lack of knowledge regarding possibilities</li><li>• Marketing to older customers through ‘old-fashioned’ mediums (e.g., email)</li><li>• Triumphs in creating communities, regulating licensed radio stations, building trust with communities, using different platforms for different audiences/demographics</li></ul>
<b>Funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increasing transparency about funding assessment criteria (CBF) and quality to ensure smaller/bigger stations have equal opportunities to funding</li><li>• Need for sustainable (federal/state) government and/or sector support</li><li>• No discussion recorded on other forms of fundraising (e.g., memberships, sponsorship)</li></ul>

Topic	Outcomes
<b>Digital Platforms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Challenges – adapting to new tech; access to digital platforms</li><li>• Successes – partnering older/less tech savvy with younger/more tech savvy</li><li>• Suggestion – offering training in language</li></ul>
<b>Regional stations and broadcasters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Volunteer retention and motivation (ageing population and youth moving to cities)</li><li>• Covid – support for mental health, drop of funding/membership</li><li>• Covid – positive changes in tech</li><li>• Flood coverage – community radio stepped up however there are funding/people challenges to do this properly</li></ul>
<b>Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lots of innovative ways described to make, broadcast and connect with audiences in language.</li><li>• Successful models offered for engaging with young people/children</li><li>• Live translation on-air (resource intensive and requires commitment from volunteer/paid broadcasters but essential to meet the remit)</li></ul>

Topic	Outcomes
<b>New Normal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stations more vulnerable to termination of programs/groups in pandemic context</li><li>• Higher understanding of mental health, area of opportunities for future engagement</li><li>• Home-broadcasting disrupting radio families/communities</li><li>• Sector more equipped to respond to emergencies/crisis</li><li>• New ways to engage with different age groups for outreach/fundraising (e.g., 3ZZZ electric car)</li><li>• Reintroduce minimum standards of performance</li></ul>



# What's next ?

Station managers: keep an eye out for our survey in the next 4-6 weeks.  
[and get a chance to win a recorder for your station]

We will visit 8 field sites across Australia in the next 4-8 months. We might be in contact with you to arrange interviews and focus group discussions.

Research findings will be presented in the form of a substantial report (open access) and at future NEMBC, CBAA, CBF conferences.



We'd love to hear from you!

Write us at [digitalconnections@griffith.edu.au](mailto:digitalconnections@griffith.edu.au)

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