

Submission 105

**Submission to House of Representatives  
Standing Committee on Communications**

***Inquiry into Community Broadcasting in Australia***

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Ethnic Public Broadcasting Association of Victoria (3ZZZ)

## ***Introduction***

This submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications Inquiry into Community Broadcasting in Australia summarises some of the content, programs, activities, funding, projects, and community service occurring at 3ZZZ and attempts to paint a picture of the volunteers, broadcasters and supporters of 3ZZZ. The submission covers the four areas of interest to the Standing Committee – the scope and role of Australian community broadcasting across radio, television, the Internet and other broadcasting technologies; Content and Programming Requirements that reflect the character of Australia and its cultural diversity; Technological opportunities, including digital, to expand community broadcasting networks; and the Opportunities and threats to achieving a diverse and robust network of community broadcasters.

## **Executive Summary**

3ZZZ aims to enable people to:

- Become involved in the affairs of the nation, world and their own ethnic community;
- Promote culture and language;
- Maintain links with their country of origin; and
- Learn from, and respect other cultures, languages and traditions.

The 3ZZZ constitution provides further clarification: "To establish communication and liaison between... ethnic communities... in order to achieve through broadcasting an exchange of information and ideas, greater understanding of the diversity of cultures within the Australian community as well as to promote multiculturalism, and community languages and to combat racism." (Section 2 g)

Community investment in the station is significant - 3ZZZ has over 5,000 members and more than 400 volunteers freely giving time to research, prepare and deliver radio programs. 3ZZZ and ethnic community broadcasting generally are a vital part of Australia's multicultural makeup, providing a broad range of functions, including an easily accessible source for news and community announcements and access to services for new arrivals, the elderly and the marginalised in our community.

3ZZZ is Australia's largest multilingual community radio station and our programs have strong connections with community groups, sporting events and festivals and the station has strong ties to community service. Earlier on in the year, 3ZZZ produced Community Service Announcements for Crimestoppers in 21 languages, which were then distributed to community radio stations state-wide. Much of the content of our programs is tied to providing community information to the community. This is important for many communities as only the larger of ethnic communities have newspapers and in many instances no other local service is available apart from ethnic community radio. 3ZZZ also provides Federal, State and Local government the opportunity to communicate with their constituents in their own languages for campaigns such as the Traffic Accident Commission's messages about the risks of speeding and Department of Health and Aging's messages about the importance of exercise.

Australia prides itself as a multicultural nation – our multiculturalism is a big selling point for international events such as the Olympics and Commonwealth Games, as well as in business and trade with the nations of the world. While multiculturalism seems to be the 'buzz word' of the moment to promote ourselves, it must be recognised that Australia is a country built on many waves of migration over many years, and these waves of migration will continue into the future. Maintaining and developing this multiculturalism goes hand in hand with maintaining and developing our multilingualism.

3ZZZ aims to enable and empower people to maintain their culture, language and identity and to develop their language skills, to improve the cultural and language diversity in the community and to educate members of the community in multiculturalism. 3ZZZ helps young people develop their knowledge of a language other than English which is particularly important when maintaining connections with their heritage and networks with grandparents and older members of their community. In many ways, 3ZZZ is a school of languages, a place where multilingualism is fostered and multiculturalism is hard at work.

Community stations with high level of community access such as 3ZZZ are central to the health of the community by giving space and time for members of the community to volunteer, to connect and to interact. Broadcasters and ethnic group Committees are elected by 3ZZZ members, giving any member of the community to opportunity to be empowered to be involved and participate. This is one of the greatest strengths of community radio.

3ZZZ encourages community harmony through support of the principles of multiculturalism and tolerance. Developing ethnic communities and nurturing them to provide support systems and community facilities for their members is an important outcome of community radio. 3ZZZ has also commenced a number of cross-cultural projects in the past year, including a *Living in Harmony* supported project which aims to reduce tensions between established migrant communities and new and emerging communities.

Another great value and strength of ethnic community radio is its localism. At 3ZZZ, communities are served by their own members, people who are held in high esteem and prominent within that community. The broad access to the airwaves for the community to broadcast – a critical aspect of the Community Broadcasting Code of Practice – produces programming which reflects the diverse range of opinions and viewpoints of the more than 70 communities represented.

Opportunities and Threats to 3ZZZ include:

- Changes to the nature of volunteering and limitations of the goodwill of volunteers;
- Declining government support;
- Congestion of the airwaves;
- The opportunity for Digital Radio which will be inaccessible to Community Radio due to the high cost of migrating to the new technology unless the Federal Government fund it. and
- The effects of the changing demographics of our community, including New Immigrants, Aging Communities, Youth and Emerging Groups.

It is difficult to see growth in the areas of community input (Radiothon donations) and sponsorship. The majority of our volunteers and supporters in the community are in low income brackets or classed as a concession (Pensioners, unemployed or students). While about a third of the station's income is generated from membership fees and donations during our annual Radiothon fundraiser, this support has reached a peak and has been stable for the past 5 years. New approaches to work in Australia such as the 'casualisation' of the workforce, recent Industrial Relations changes, and increasing personal debt will impact negatively on volunteerism across the community sectors. We seem to expect more and more from our volunteers each year, it is becoming unsustainable with volunteers finding it more difficult to find the time and money needed to volunteer.

Government funding has remained static since 1996 when ethnic programs that were eligible for grants through the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) received \$50 per hour. According to Griffith University research (Meadows *et al*, 2005) current levels of federal government funding for community broadcasting remain almost exactly the same as when DCITA first began supporting the sector in 1985. Not only does this represent a significant drop in real terms but this funding has been diluted by the number of new stations and new communities making the slices of the pie smaller per station/community – it is now at \$35 per funded program hour, averaging out at just over \$24 per broadcast hour. 3ZZZ estimates that

CBF funding has dropped by over 50% in \$/hour to each station which added to inflation would amount to closer to 75% reduction in real terms since the mid-1980s.

Until eighteen months ago the Federal Government also provided 3ZZZ with \$15,000 per year to train broadcasters, this training not only provided broadcasters with the necessary skills but assisted them in gaining skills for use in the broader community of their new land. The removal of this funding not only reduced skills but meant that new arrivals to Australia, or broadcasters new to radio, could not acquire the skills required to give them the confidence to serve their community. Programs are important to all ethnic communities but particularly in those with new arrivals striving to understand and become part of their new home country – this sadly is now lost with resulting increase in responsibility and pressure on the trained broadcasters.

Training people whose strongest or only language is other than English has special problems requiring special training. Training is normally delivered in English to people with unique language and cultural differences; this was done by specially trained trainers with understanding of the special needs, funded by the Federal Government. The removal of that funding has resulted in a vital training service no longer being available and an important factor in people settling in, and understanding, their new homeland removed.

# **1. The scope and role of Australian community broadcasting across radio, television, the internet and other broadcasting technologies**

## **3ZZZ – Our Volunteers and Community Service**

Ethnic Public Broadcasting Association of Victoria Ltd (3ZZZ) is a full time ethnic broadcaster providing vital information to Australians from over 70 countries in over 75 languages. Community investment in the station is significant - 3ZZZ has over 5,000 members and more than 400 volunteers freely giving time to research, prepare and deliver radio programs.

3ZZZ and ethnic community broadcasting generally are a vital part of Australia's multicultural makeup, providing a broad range of functions, including:

- An easily accessible source for news and community announcements and access to services for new arrivals, the elderly and the marginalised in our community. Older migrants are particularly in need of services in their own language, with many reverting to their first language as they age;
- Assistance in integration and developing a sense of belonging to the greater community whilst allowing migrants and refugees to retain a sense of their origins; and
- Information, support and interaction for new arrivals provided through 3ZZZ and community ethnic radio is an important aspect in their attempts to settle into a new environment which can be threatening to new migrants, many of whom may come from unsettled backgrounds.

It is important that a balance of broadcast groups combining older, well established communities and new, emerging communities be present to allow mentoring and training for new communities and broadcasters. 3ZZZ has found that the introduction of emerging/refugee groups has been welcomed by the older migrants and a supportive environment has developed.

Many of these broadcasters are either members of other organisations in their community or in constant contact with them to make sure that information is accurate and responsive to their communities needs. Of our more than 400 broadcasters, 21.5% are women and 8.2% are young people (under the age of 30). There are a number of projects underway to work at increasing these numbers.

Over 50% of our programming is dedicated to ethnic groups which have no other access to media of any type, for these groups the importance of radio cannot be overestimated as it is their only immediate way of gathering community news. 3ZZZ programs have strong connections with community groups, sporting events and festivals. For example, our Spanish Language (Latin American) program was strongly involved in the Johnson Street Fiesta earlier this year and the Ethiopian Program is also heavily involved in several community and refugee festivals.

3ZZZ has strong ties to community service. At the end of 2005, 3ZZZ was presented with a Crimestoppers Appreciation Award for our support of the Crimestoppers program. Earlier on in the year, 3ZZZ produced Community Service Announcements for Crimestoppers in 21 languages, which were then distributed to community radio stations statewide. 3ZZZ has conducted a number of similar production projects for various organisations including the State Emergency Services, Refugee Council of Australia and Western Suburbs Legal Services. The station has a formal role in providing State Emergency Services warnings such as Total Fire

Ban declarations to listeners in their own language. Much of the content of our programs is tied to providing community information to the community.

As with volunteers across the community radio sector, 3ZZZ volunteers regularly use their own resources in preparing their programs. This includes lining up interviews using their home or mobile phones, buying CDs, travelling to do interviews or outside broadcasts. Volunteers at 3ZZZ have a large impact on the success of our annual fundraising efforts (our Radiothon), and many use their own resources to collect donations from members of their communities.

Community radio volunteers are passionate about their stations. It is difficult to estimate the number of volunteer hours and to put a dollar figure on the worth of salary that volunteers forgo. For the 150 hours of locally produced programming each week at 3ZZZ there are an average of 3 volunteers putting together the program, each spending on average 4 hours per broadcast hour – this would equal 1800 hours each week, or 93 600 hours each year.

## **Partnerships with local Councils**

3ZZZ has a strong relationship with the City of Yarra, our local council. In 2005 and 2006 we have collaborated on a number of projects and community events. These projects include:

- A community celebration to mark 30 years of ethnic broadcasting and a signing of a community accord by more than 20 community groups. This event has been supported by VicHealth, the City of Yarra, the Victorian Multicultural Commission and Multicultural Arts Victoria.
- A new project where refugees and emerging communities will broadcast in a cross cultural program to give airtime and practical experience in the training process. It is a new way of approaching training new groups and new communities.

3ZZZ also has a proud history of supporting councils across metropolitan Melbourne, as well as State and Federal governments by assisting in communicating council activities in language to their constituents in their own languages. These campaigns range from the Traffic Accident Commission's messages about the risks of speeding to Department of Health and Aging's messages about the importance of exercise.

## **Training**

Since 3ZZZ was licensed in 1988, thousands of members of the communities have been trained in panelling/production, presentation, using the Internet, digital audio production, talkback and broadcast law. Training of people of different cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds whose first language is not English creates huge problems and has been made extremely difficult with the almost total elimination of funding for that purpose. The restitution of that funding for training of Ethnic Community Broadcasters is essential and urgent.

Training and practical experience using radio technologies has given many of our older broadcasters their first use of computers, email and the Internet, as well as providing skills and attributes that are transferable into daily life – such as self-confidence, assertiveness, public speaking and confidence using new technologies.

Until eighteen months ago 3ZZZ received \$15,000 per year for recognised Ethnic Broadcaster Training, a specialised and highly skilled service, the loss of this funding has meant that broadcasters can no longer be trained to that high standard. This certificated training and recognition was, and is, important to broadcasters feeling comfortable with the skills they have learned; it played a vital role in the presentation of programs and the service provided to new

arrivals, emerging groups and older migrants. The cessation of funding had made it extremely difficult to maintain the skill level required to present high quality programs, putting more pressure on the trained volunteers.

### **New Technologies**

3ZZZ is proud of being able to offer our audience streamed programs on demand. Each program is available for a week, giving communities the opportunity to tune in online if they are unable to listen to the radio at the time of their program.



## **2. Content and Programming Requirements that reflect the character of Australia and its cultural diversity.**

3ZZZ aims to enable people to:

- Become involved in the affairs of the nation, world and their own ethnic community;
- Promote culture and language;
- Maintain links with their country of origin; and
- Learn from, and respect other cultures, languages and traditions.

The 3ZZZ constitution provides further clarification: "To establish communication and liaison between... ethnic communities... in order to achieve through broadcasting an exchange of information and ideas, greater understanding of the diversity of cultures within the Australian community as well as to promote multiculturalism, and community languages and to combat racism." (Section 2 g)

3ZZZ and ethnic community radio is a fantastic example of multiculturalism at work. Programs from different cultural, religious and political backgrounds exist back-to-back and there are many opportunities for cross-cultural interaction. In fact, these off-air interactions develop the mutual understanding of the broadcasters and its effects are wide-spread – on air our broadcasters, leaders in their communities, are positive examples of tolerance, understanding and harmony. It is often the effects of these off-air interactions between broadcasters and volunteers which help make the station a vibrant interactive community hub. Community stations with high level of community access such as 3ZZZ are central to the community by giving space and time for members of the community to volunteer, to connect and to interact. This is one of the greatest strengths of community radio.

Ethnic community radio has a range of service deliveries and policies including:

- Providing a haven for the aging migrant population. Australians are living longer than ever before, and as Australia's population ages across the entire spectrum we are encountering an aging migrant population which values its languages and cultures. Provision of this through ethnic community radio aids listeners to access existing social services and infrastructures and is an important factor in helping older migrants cope with the challenges of old age.
- Provision of settlement information for newly arrived migrants and refugees in a timely and easily understood manner. This content includes information about Migrant Resource Centres, community support systems, Centrelink and any changes to legislation.
- Provision of an easily understood format to people in situations where there is a low level of literacy skills.
- Maintaining cultural and language skills, links and traditions, critical in assisting settlement in a new country and in building the multicultural fabric of Australian society.
- Provision of a communication service to migrants which have no other method of communicating in their own language. Only the larger of ethnic communities have newspapers and in many instances no other local service is available apart from ethnic community radio.
- Enabling new arrivals to understand their new environment and to play a constructive role in their new country.

- Consolidating local communities and contributing to the Australian Nation.
- Encouraging community harmony through support of the principles of multiculturalism and tolerance. This is done both within stations and between the various broadcasting groups and to the wider community, for example 3ZZZ frequently receives calls from listeners who just enjoy listening to the music and culture of other countries.
- Developing ethnic communities and nurturing them to provide support systems and community facilities for their members thus providing invaluable services at greatly reduced costs to government. An example of this is the benefits of volunteers having social networks in their community benefiting mental health reducing the impact of isolation.

### **3ZZZ – Local and relevant**

Another great value and strength of ethnic community radio is its localism. At 3ZZZ, communities are served by their own members – people elected from their own community who are held in high esteem and are prominent within their community. The broad access to the airwaves for the community to broadcast – a critical aspect of the Community Broadcasting Code of Practice – produces programming which reflects the diverse range of opinions and viewpoints of the more than 70 communities represented.

Our programs feature local festivals, local sport and local arts.

*“People tune into the Turkish program every time because we broadcast death notices. People in our community can then know that their friends have passed away and can follow the customs such as going to the mosque.”*

Turkish Broadcaster

### **News and information – from Australia and abroad**

Our ethnic community broadcasters select information of importance to their community. The programs feature both local and homeland news, but each program has the freedom to research, script and broadcast whatever content is relevant to their community. The majority of our news content is sourced from the Internet, local and overseas newspapers and from journalists overseas. Our programs help each community keep in touch with what’s happening at home – and in many cases they are a crucial independent voice about political news in their homelands – our volunteers’ reports do not exist to serve the nationalist interest but are analytical and questioning. For those with little other local media in their language, 3ZZZ provides their primary source of Australian information.

The programs help heal wounds which may be the legacy of generations of strife within countries of origin and provide a feeling of comfort within their new country. Ethnic community radio reacts quickly to overseas news without any time limits or restrictions to coverage of events which are of concern to migrants and in times of crisis, such as the Tsunami, reacts and mobilises communities immediately.

## Cultural Maintenance

3ZZZ's programs help the community to maintain cultures through:

- Music
- Stories
- Children's entertainment
- Language maintenance
- Folklore
- Oral History
- Literature & Poetry
- The Arts
- Festivals and community gatherings

## Grass Roots and Democratic

3ZZZ's broadcasters are elected from their communities. 3ZZZ provides access to the community to broadcast to the community.

The Station Structure is set out in the Constitution, as follows:

### MEMBERS

Members of EPBAV pay an annual membership fee and can affiliate with a broadcasting group. As a member, you can participate in activities around the station and have a say in the way programs are broadcast. Membership gives you the opportunity to vote and to stand for election to the Group Committee at the Group AGM and the Council at the Station AGM.

*"Every time our program has talkback, all the lines light up – it's fantastic – everyone has their say on the issues."*

Macedonian Program  
Producer

### COUNCIL

The Council is made up of 16 members who are elected every two years at an EPBAV Annual General Meetings. Each member of EPBAV over the age of 18 has the right to vote in the election, and when they have been a financial member for 12 months they have the right to stand for Council. The Council meets monthly and conducts the planning and direction of the station.

### GROUPS

Ethnic Groups must have annual meetings and select a Committee that is responsible for managing the allocated program time. The Group Committee ensures that all volunteers and broadcasters follow the rules and regulations of the Station.

### CONVENORS

Each Group elects a Convenor from the Committee to coordinate the Group and Chair the Group Committee. Some of the responsibilities of the Convenor can include signing up members, communicating to Station Management and attending Convenors meetings which are four times per year. These meetings make recommendations to Council regarding the running and organisation of the station.

### PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Responsible for allocating and regulating broadcast times and elected by the Convenors.

A community ethnic group must satisfy **two** of the following Conditions to join 3ZZZ

1. **Distinct Nationality:** Nationality is defined by the presence of a national government with geographic jurisdiction recognized by the United Nations.
2. **Distinct Ethnicity:** Ethnicity is defined whereby a community has a distinct social identity, based on customs, beliefs, traditions, and characteristics. Political or religious beliefs alone do not constitute a sufficient basis for authenticity.
3. **Language:** The community has a distinct language common to the majority of its members.

To ensure that the Groups reflect the needs of the community, Groups must satisfy the following:

1. **Population:** There must be a sufficient number of people belonging to the Group's community living in Melbourne.
2. **Organisation:** The community has been able to form cultural organisations and associations in Melbourne.
3. **Membership:** The Group must have 25 people willing to join the EPBAV as financial members. Once established, Groups are required to be supported by 40 financial members per broadcast hour.
4. **Resources:** The Group must demonstrate that they are able to effectively resource their program: news, information, music and broadcasters.
5. **Needs:** The Group must have community support and be able to demonstrate that their community has expressed a need to broadcast.
6. **Policy:** The Group must be familiar with 3ZZZ's objectives and policies on ethnic and multicultural broadcasting, and agree to comply with its constitution.

## **Multiculturalism and Living in Harmony**

The Northern Migrant Resource Centre Strategic Plan (2003-2005) describes the need for “active leadership and commitment from all levels of the service system and community to combat racism, promote social inclusion and build cross-cultural understanding, especially of newly emerging refugee communities from Africa and the Middle East.” The report acknowledges that racism is “a complex issue given its direct and indirect nature, and its existence within ethnic communities as well as toward ethnic communities.”

The Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland Ltd New and Emerging Communities Advocacy Project (Letitia Bouloukos, June 2002) confirms that discrimination and racism is of a medium to high priority for most of the new and emerging communities that were consulted, stating that almost half of the communities consulted found that racism and discrimination were entrenched in all of their everyday activities.

The Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW Community Relations Symposium (2003) has reported that “there is still widespread community ignorance and confusion about refugees and asylum seekers fuelled by the media and others and settlement issues are not being adequately addressed.” The report identified the need for a “community education campaign to debunk the myths” and suggested that “a summit be held to identify issues and policy changes required to resolve settlement issues”. One of the suggestions was that the community “develop and promote positive stories through the ethnic and mainstream media”.

3ZZZ has commenced a number of projects in the past year, including a *Living in Harmony* project which aims to reduce tensions between established migrant communities and new and emerging communities. The project has facilitated the production of 30 radio documentaries, produced by a diverse group of people. By producing and distributing thirty cross-cultural radio features tackling issues raised by community leaders, students and multicultural organisations community radio audiences across Australia will have the opportunity to discuss and understand the issues through the airplay of the documentaries. The project's aims include:

- To **Engage and Network:** *Making connections and strengthening links with leaders of migrant communities and emerging communities, and multicultural organisations.*
- To **Consult and Facilitate:** *Asking the community members what they see as the crucial issues to develop the areas the radio features will focus on.*
- To **Build Capacity:** *Sharing information and developing skills to empower the community leaders and assist them in their communications with members of their communities. We have trained participants in sound editing software to assist them to make their radio documentaries.*
- To **Produce thirty radio features tackling the relevant issues**
- And to **Distribute the radio features:** *Encourage national airplay of the features on community stations across the country.*

To increase the number of women broadcasters and women in leadership roles, 3ZZZ recently submitted an application to VicHealth's Building Bridges Scheme to begin a cross-cultural women's program, similar in structure to our cross-cultural youth program, *Polyfonix*. The idea for this project came from the 3ZZZ Women's Committee a few years ago. Without support, particularly for airtime, the idea has remained unimplemented (the Community Broadcasting Foundation has grants for one multicultural youth hour for community stations but does not fund opportunities for cross-cultural programming for adults). Recently the Women's Committee has been reinvigorated and women from 3ZZZ are committed to getting the project off the ground.

Young people at 3ZZZ contribute to a cross-cultural program mostly broadcast in English. The program gives the participants and the audience the opportunity to learn about each other's cultures and build a mutual understanding of our common humanity. 3ZZZ youth are building their involvement in decision-making and activities affecting the wider station community – for example, the 3ZZZ Youth Committee has recently coordinated a project to host an event to celebrate 30 years of ethnic broadcasting. The Committee has also written a Youth Policy to encourage more youth involvement in the future and formalise the Youth Committee as an important part of the station.

*“In some cultures groups women are not able to express their views publicly”*

Latvian woman,  
aged over 60

*“(It's a) good way to get to know other people and to learn other cultural backgrounds... (it) is needed to get women more involved and to express their opinions”*

### **3. Technological opportunities, including digital, to expand community broadcasting networks.**

Currently 3ZZZ technology – analogue, many programs still use cassettes and vinyl records. There is limited access to digital production and broadband internet for research. The station streams programs on demand on the web (updated weekly).

With digital technology 3ZZZ anticipates the opportunity to multi-stream – we will broadcast more than one language at once giving the community great access, more airtime – which will mean more languages and groups represented and more time for groups/audiences. Currently the high demand for airtime has meant that some are yet to be given access to airtime and other communities broadcast only one hour of programming per week. Somehow, these programs fit in all the news (local and overseas), information, music, talkback, community events, birth/death/marriage notices, the arts and entertainment that other communities (including English speaking) people fit into a week. It is an exciting prospect for these communities to broadcast more programming once digital radio commences.

With digital radio there will also be the opportunity for 3ZZZ to broadcast more cross-cultural programming, covering issues relevant to the wider-community such as multiculturalism, immigration, sharing stories, refugees, cultural understanding and inter-faith issues.

With just one frequency 3zzz serves over 67 languages and 100 communities, the greatest limitation we have is in serving new and existing groups with new, much needed programs due to time availability. Through digital broadcasting this can be addressed and Australia's migrant populations served far better. This is unfortunately with the proviso that the Federal Government provide funding for the Community Broadcasting sector as the cost of migration to the new technology is far beyond our ability to afford it.

#### **4. Opportunities and threats to achieving a diverse and robust network of community broadcasters.**

##### **Opportunities and Threats: Aging Communities, Youth and Emerging Groups**

In the next 5 - 10 years, 3ZZZ's community of interest will see a growth in the numbers of younger and older people that we serve. New and emerging communities will have also established themselves on the air.

In the past year, 3ZZZ has broadcast at least 35 hours each week from emerging communities and 6 hours from youth programs. New communities regularly join the station. Two new weekly programs added to the schedule in the past year serve members of the Bangladeshi and Eritrean communities.

3ZZZ has begun projects that will attract more emerging communities. These include a Refugee radio program supported by the City of Yarra. New partnerships have also been developed with Migrant Resource Centres and Resident's Associations to increase emerging community involvement.

New and emerging communities face greater challenges and require more support from 3ZZZ staff. Some language barriers must also be overcome, making training and communicating station policies more demanding. There is also a high demand for airtime – new and existing groups frequently request more airtime and it is challenging to find suitable airtime for these groups.

Immigration into Australia historically and currently occurs in waves and to serve both new arrivals and existing communities it is vital that Ethnic Community Broadcasting remains strong. This year will see the highest income of new arrivals for many decades at approx 140,000. Australia always needs to address the needs of the diversity of its population, whether established, new arrivals, young people or the elderly. The vibrant nature of migration means that both newly established communities require equal attention; e.g. the Russian migration occurred mainly in 1940/50, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union we have seen a new wave of arrivals requiring the same settlement and other community information as any other establishing communities.

Eight per cent of 3ZZZ's members are under the age of 30. Youth involvement at the station has increased greatly in the past 5 years. There is currently at least 6 hours of dedicated youth airtime per week. Recent activities have included:

- The station recently introduced a youth policy to encourage greater involvement and support.
- Increased involvement in the Youth Committee which directly reports to the Council (Board).
- Targeted projects including organising a multicultural event.
- Volunteering at recruitment stalls at universities and festivals.
- Coordinating the production of announcements at the station.
- Interns, work experience and language students practice and maintain language skills.

Another trend that will impact on the shape of 3ZZZ in years to come is the 'casualisation' of the workforce in Australia. It is expected that recent Industrial Relations changes, new approaches to work and increasing personal debt will impact negatively on volunteerism across the community sectors.



## Opportunities and Threats: Funding

3ZZZ provides 150 hours of locally produced ethnic broadcasting or 7,800 hours per year. This is done by volunteer broadcasters with 4 full time and three part time paid staff to run the station and co-ordinate volunteers.

3ZZZ's major sources of income are fairly evenly split between:

- Membership Fees and Community Donations (30% in 2004-2005)
- Sponsorship and Production (on air announcements) (27% in 2004-2005)
- Grants from the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) (32% in 2004-2005).

It is difficult to see growth in the areas of community input (Radiothon donations) and sponsorship. The majority of our volunteers and supporters in the community are in low income brackets or classed as a concession (Pensioners, unemployed or students). While about a third of the station's income is generated from membership fees and donations during our annual Radiothon fundraiser, this support has reached a peak and has been stable for the past 5 years. New approaches to work in Australia such as the 'casualisation' of the workforce, recent Industrial Relations changes, and increasing personal debt will impact negatively on volunteerism across the community sectors. We seem to expect more and more from our volunteers each year, it is becoming unsustainable with volunteers finding it more difficult to find the time and money needed to volunteer.

Government funding has remained static since 1996 when ethnic programs that were eligible for grants through the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) received \$50 per hour. According to Griffith University research (Meadows *et al*, 2005) current levels of federal government funding for community broadcasting remain almost exactly the same as when DCITA first began supporting the sector in 1985. Not only does this represent a significant drop in real terms but this funding has been diluted by the number of new stations and new communities making the slices of the pie smaller per station/community – it is now at \$35 per funded program hour, averaging out at just over \$24 per broadcast hour. 3ZZZ estimates that CBF funding has dropped by over 50% in \$/hour to each station which added to inflation would amount to closer to 75% reduction in real terms since the mid-1980s. 3ZZZ provides programming as diverse as SBS and receives approximately \$245,000 of Government funding (through CBF grants) compared to the \$5 - \$6 million that SBS receives.

Major sources of expenditure include (2004 – 2005 financial year):

- Salaries (35.6% of expenditure)
- Licence fees 7% of expenditure)
- Technical Maintenance (5% of expenditure)
- Insurance – General, Directors and Defamation (4.5% of expenditure)
- Broadcasting Materials (3% of expenditure)
- Telephone (2.7% of expenditure)
- Printing, Stationery, Postage (4.7% of expenditure)
- Light and Power (2% of expenditure)
- Computer Software/Hardware and Maintenance (1.8% of expenditure)

Other costs include capital expenditure.

If we had more funding we would:

- Upgrade equipment
- Promote our programs better
- Be out in the community more (grassroots community events, festivals)
- Deliver more and better training
- Invest in a back up transmitter
- Invest in back up power for the station
- More support for broadcasters, other projects.

It is expected that transmission costs will greatly increase from 2008.

## **Conclusion**

3ZZZ and ethnic community broadcasting are a vital part of Australia's multicultural makeup, providing a broad range of functions. 3ZZZ is Australia's largest multilingual community radio station and our programs have strong ties to community service. 3ZZZ enables and empowers people to maintain their culture, language and identity and to develop their language skills, to improve the cultural and language diversity in the community and to educate members of the community in multiculturalism. 3ZZZ's aims and programs are relevant to ethnic communities, and maintaining and developing Australia's multiculturalism goes hand in hand with maintaining and developing our multilingualism. 3ZZZ helps young people develop their knowledge of a language other than English which is particularly important when maintaining connections with their heritage. In many ways, 3ZZZ is a school of languages, a place where multilingualism is fostered and multiculturalism is hard at work.

For the last three decades, members of local ethnic communities have had access to community radio and the bi-partisan programming reflects the diversity of the Australian society it serves. Ethnic community radio provides an educational and working example of multiculturalism for the wider-community, and must continue to be supported and funded to serve each wave of migrants in each age group.