

Inquiry into Community Broadcasting

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

About the Association of Christian Broadcasters and Christian Community Broadcasting

Whoever controls the media, controls the mind.

Jim Morrison

The media is too concentrated, too few people own too much. There's really five companies that control 90 percent of what we read, see and hear. It's not healthy.

Ted Turner

For better or for worse, our company (The News Corporation Ltd.) is a reflection of my thinking, my character, my values.

Rupert Murdoch

History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamour of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Christian Broadcasting is often one of the few voices that present alternative viewpoints to those expressed in the other media. Christianity has a proven track record for having a positive influence on western society (hospitals, education, basis of government and the law) and we believe that Community Christian Broadcasting is an important and dynamic sector.

There are a number of sub-sectors of community broadcasting, who each have special needs and cultural sensitivities. These are RPH, Indigenous, and Ethnic. Each of these make up a very small portion, in both numbers

of stations and audience of the total sector. However, due to the argued special needs of these sectors they now enjoy significant government funding which the Association of Christian Broadcasters supports and would like to see increased.

However, Christian Broadcasting makes up approximately 10% of the total number of stations in Community Radio, is the largest sub-sector of community broadcasting, in both stations and audience numbers (approximately 1,000,000 listeners per week), but does not enjoy any defined (line funded) government support to run its Secretariat and as a sector receives the least amount of government funding in overall grants (see ACMA report on data of Community Broadcasting funding). However there are significant special needs and considerations and benefits which would justify government support of the sector. This paper will hopefully provide an overview of the Christian Radio sector.

In addition to this at the end of this paper the Association of Christian Broadcasters gives its position on a number of strategic issues facing community broadcasting today.

Background and statistics

Formed in 1978, the Association of Christian Broadcasters is the peak body representing Christian Broadcasting in Australia. Membership consists of

- Christian Community Radio Stations
- The Vision Network with 228 relay Stations
- Christian TV – commercial and Pay TV
- Short-wave international broadcasters
- Radio Programme Producers
- TV programme producers
- Record companies

The organisation represents its members to all government and non-government industry bodies and for the past 27 years has held successful annual conferences.

Listeners to Christian Radio

Christian Media provides great benefits in the communities they serve. Stations currently have a potential audience of 15 million people.

24% of Australian radio listeners (3.76 million) listen to community radio in a typical week with an estimated monthly national radio audience reach of more than 7 million. (source: McNair Ingenuity Community Radio National Listener Survey, September 2004.)

In Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney in an average month there are 1,415,000 listeners representing 940,000 people each week. These figures indicate that the bulk of the audience listening to Community radio are tuned into community Christian stations (source McNair Ingenuity Listener Survey, November 2005 – see chart for more details).



LISTENING TO CHRISTIAN RADIO – 5 CITIES – 2005

	Total 15+	Sydney FM103.2	Melb. 89.9 Light FM	Bris. 96five	Adel. 107.9 Life FM	Perth 98five
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Potential 15+ ('000)	9533	3332	2851	1311	905	1134
<u>Listen to Christian radio during - An average week Monday-Sunday</u>	940	289	170	222	118	141
Men 15+	483	145	105	107	60	66
Women 15+	455	143	65	116	57	74
15-17	65	21	13	19	8	4
18-24	165	47	34	32	25	27
25-39	247	43	44	70	38	52
40-54	285	98	56	72	31	28
55+	177	80	22	29	16	30
<u>An average month</u>	1415	422	253	318	193	229
Men 15+	721	225	151	147	95	103
Women 15+	695	197	102	171	98	127
15-17	101	33	22	24	13	9
18-24	262	72	51	57	39	43
25-39	406	90	75	100	68	73
40-54	389	122	76	89	44	58
55+	254	104	28	47	29	46

Source: McNair Ingenuity Research Pty Ltd, November 2005

Role of Christian Broadcasting

The Association of Christian Broadcasters recognises that radio is one of the most powerful communication tools available today.

Through radio people can be reached in their car, at home and at work. At present, 33 full time Christian Community Stations operate throughout Australia, the bulk of the audience being represented in Capital City markets (940,000 listeners each week).

In addition to providing a vital community radio services across the nation enjoyed by Christian (and secular) listeners, the sector also is extensively involved with community works which enrich individual communities. Many stations actively seek out people who are in need, have disabilities or who are hurting in some way and provide either events or services for them.

Examples include the crisis counselling care lines operated through radio stations, the Life FM Christmas party for special children (in Adelaide) which helps 5,000 children with disabilities, Compassion Day which encourages sponsorship of children in third world countries and radio campaigns which promote healthy lifestyles, positive attitudes and family values.

A Benchmark Snapshot of Christian Broadcasting

The following profile was collated from data collected through the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia survey of stations 2004. Although the figures are now two years old the overall profile has not changed significantly.

Background

- There were 344 licenced Community Broadcasting stations in Australia when this research was collated.
- Of these there are 33 full time Christian Radio Stations
- A further 67 % of stations broadcast religious programmes (230 stations)
- Fulltime Christian Radio stations represents 9.6% of the total Community Broadcasting Sector the largest sub-sector in Australia.

Benchmark profile.

The hallmark of community broadcasting is serving a community of interest. Demonstrated support from that community of interest is reflected in management, volunteers, membership, financial support, programming and listeners.

These areas of a station's operations can be measured demonstrating the effectiveness of a Community Station. The Association of Christian Broadcasters has compiled the following profile and compared them with the benchmark figures for the whole community broadcasting sector.

Volunteers.

The Christian Radio Sector has 1,255 volunteers or an average of 38 per station.

Males represented 53% and Females 47% of volunteers. This compares with Males 55% and Females 45% in the whole Community Broadcasting Sector.

Paid Staff

Christian Radio employed 219 staff. This represents 25.1% of all staff employed in Community Radio.

Members

Christian Radio had 15,961 members representing 12% of all members of Community Broadcasting, demonstrating strong grass roots membership support for Christian Stations. This further translates into 16.6% of all membership income for the Community Broadcasting.

Donors

The Christian Radio Sector had 12,955 donors or a staggering 36% of total donors to Community Broadcasting. These donors represent 63.9% of all funds donated to Community Broadcasting in Australia.

Australian Music

Australian Music represented 28% of all music played on Christian Stations. The average for the Community Broadcasting Sector was 32%.

Finances

When reading the figures below it is important to remember that the Christian Radio Sector only represents 9.6% of all stations.

The turnover for the Christian sector was \$9,168,321 or 19.9% of the total income of the Community Broadcasting Sector. This figure was primarily self generated through donations (28.6%), fund raising (7.7%), memberships (6.9%) and sponsorship (42.3%). These figures represent 31% of all income generated by the Community Broadcasting Sector in these areas.

Christian Stations represent **22%** of all fees from Community Radio paid to APRA.

Christian stations were under represented in government funding and the secretariat has not been line funded by the government.

Current Activities of the Association of Christian Broadcasters

"Organization doesn't really accomplish anything. Plans don't accomplish anything, either. Theories of management don't much matter. Endeavours succeed or fail because of the people involved. Only by attracting the best people will you accomplish great deeds."

Colin Powell

Currently the Association of Christian Broadcasters has a part time secretariat which is primarily funded through private donations and membership. Even though it is not well resourced, the Association of Christian Broadcasters still co-ordinates major projects such as:

National Conference (2006 will be the 28th National Conference)



The conference is the most significant gathering of Christian media in Australia and attracts international delegates and speakers. This year the conference theme is "Aussie Accents: Who Are We?" and will focus on what it means to be a Christian Broadcaster in 2006, what is the make up of Australian society, and how to stations best communicate and service the population.

Details about the conference can be found at www.acb.org.au. Some of the speakers involve are:



International Speakers

Rick Dunham USA
Media Fund Raising, Dunham & Company

Ian Grant New Zealand
TV and Radio Presenter, Author,
Programming for Youth

Keynote Speakers

Leigh Hatcher
Sky News Presenter, Author & Journalist

Craig Rispin
One of Australia's leading futurists

Peter Irvine
MD Gloria Jeans

David Smith
Genesis Foundation

Brad Entwistle
Marketing specialist WA

Jim Wallace
Australian Christian Lobby

Sue Ovens
Personality profiles

Berni Dymet
CEO Christianity Works

David Ford
Emil Ford & Co - Lawyers

National, regional and individual station training.

Through private non-government funding, the Association of Christian Broadcasters provides practical management training in the areas of programming, fund raising, management, governance, budgeting, marketing and sponsorship sales. In addition to this the Association has put in place a mentoring system where stations are visited by experienced managers who assist them with their structures, policies, procedures and systems.

Regional training has been held in Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, Port Macquarie and NSW.

Individual visits to stations include Perth, Esperance, Ballarat, Orange, Dubbo, Bathurst, Sale, Toowoomba, Brisbane, Melbourne, Darwin, Gold Coast, Canberra, Launceston, Hobart, Victor Harbour, Mount Gambier, Wollongong, and Gladstone.

Industry liaison and representation.

The ACB has regular meetings with industry bodies including ACMA, CBAA, PPCA, and APRA.

The ACB also provides feedback as the peak sector body on submissions over a range of issues and discussion papers affecting its members.

Recently a new code of practice has been developed and a discussion paper on fund raising ethics is being circulated with the view to producing a code of practice in fund raising.

Co-ordinated Projects

The Association also assists with the promotion and participation in national collaborative projects such as Compassion Day, National Day of Thanksgiving and Operation Christmas Child.

The organisation also produces SQUAWK a fortnightly email newsletter that is circulated to Christian Broadcasters. SQUAWK has industry news, developments in broadcasting, practical articles on station operations etc.

There are a number of key projects that the ACB has planned, but is unable to achieve due to a lack of resources.

Future Plans

Cross Communication: An internet based communication and resource sharing project that would bring the sector together closer. This project would involve the development of internet based IT solutions for stations in the areas of programming, fund raising, sponsorship, management and general information sharing.

National Sponsorship Sales: In comparison with all of the other sectors Christian Broadcasting is the most marketable, and attractive, to sponsors. There is a high degree of skills in the sector. With a resourced secretariat, the Association of Christian Broadcasters would be able to develop packages that would help with the funding of stations and also generate revenues for the Association.

Private Sector Funding: Member stations of the ACB have demonstrated that they are skilled at raising funds from the private sector. This project will devise a strategy to approach the private sector to support Christian Broadcasting.

Radio Trainee Internship: This will be a project where trainees will be placed with stations to develop them as broadcasters. This will be an adjunct to the existing training through the ACB. Stations will be required to pay a training wage and guarantee placement for a 12 month period.

Funding for Community Broadcasting

According to the 2005 CBF Annual Report, sector funding levels (not including general subsidies and specific programme grants) for co-ordination and management by peak sector bodies, are as follows:

- CBAA received \$404,000 for sector co-ordination., \$157,000 for manage AMRAP, and \$518,271 for CB Online. Licenced stations received \$235,000 in general grants and \$218,000 was allocated for programme production including \$55,000 for NRN (National Radio News). There are 282 full time licenced stations.
- NEMBC (ethnic) received \$150,000 to fund secretariat, there were \$31,000 for development grants, \$2,446,000in programme grants. There are 6 full time ethnic stations and 98 stations carrying ethnic programming.
- RPH received \$94,900 for sector co-ordination, and \$207,000 in service support. There are 15 RPH stations (some networked) and 20 stations carrying RPH programmes.
- Indigenous broadcasters received \$40,000 for sector co-ordination, NIRS received \$108,850 towards operational costs plus \$40,000 for their conference. There were also \$394,000 in programme grants. There are 23 full time indigenous stations.

The ACB received \$0 for sector coordination, and \$4,500 for its national conference. There are 37 full time Christian stations and approximately 67% or 189 stations carrying Christian programming.

The Christian Radio Sector is significantly under represented in government grants when compared with the other sub sectors in Community Broadcasting.

2. **Content and programming requirements that reflect the character of Australia and its cultural diversity.**

The content and programming on Christian stations have the following common elements.

- Positive family values
- Programming serving the Christian community which also can be listened to by non-Christians
- Alternative opinions reflecting a Christian world view
- An emphasis on programming for the whole person, including spiritual values
- Campaigns to assist and address recognised social problems such as drug and substance abuse, breakdown of the family unity and promotion of social justice.

Christian programming also promotes and fosters the development of the Christian music industry, the fastest growing genre of music in the world.

Christian programming assists the wellbeing in the community and often address the problem of insecurity as faced by many people in Australia, as researched by the National Church Life survey. Please see below extracts from two reports, supporting the positive influence Christian values have on Australian society.

Wellbeing

"...a spiritual orientation, whether religious or broader, appears positively linked to some aspects of wellbeing. Those who would see a secular society as improving the wellbeing of Australians may need to reflect carefully on the results that are here."

"...It is evident from these results that those who are active religiously record higher levels of wellbeing in some areas, particularly in terms of a sense of purpose in life and involvement in caring activities. With the decline of religious life in Australia, are we losing something of the fabric

of individual and community wellbeing that has supported us well in times past?"

(source NCLS research "Spirituality and Wellbeing in Australia", Peter Kaldor, Philip Hughes, Keith Castle, John Bellamy November 2004)

Insecurity

Do Australians Feel Insecure?

"One conclusion from this survey is that there are high levels of insecurity in Australian society. With 60 per cent of the population feeling that a large increase in crime is likely, and with similar percentages believing that an international terrorist attack is likely to occur on Australian soil in the next five years, that cloning of plants and animals and genetic modification of foods are likely to have disastrous, unintended impacts, one must say that there is widespread gloom about the future.

Two-thirds of the population have little or no confidence in the government, at any level, or, for that matter in the legal system. Fewer still have confidence in the private sector organisations such as banks, major companies and the media. Around two-thirds of Australians have only moderate or low levels of trust in others outside their immediate family and work colleagues. They are wary, in particular, of people of different races and religions, and are not very trusting of Australians as a whole."

(source NCLS research "Insecurity in Australia", Philip Hughes, September 2004)

3. Technological opportunities, including digital, to expand community broadcasting networks; and

Digital Radio

The Association of Christian Broadcasters holds the view that there is a need for further digital trials and need for non-shared channels for community broadcasters. It supports the pioneering work and research being carried out by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia and will play an active role in the development of a suitable model for Community Broadcasting.

Other Opportunities

There is both an opportunity and a threat in the roll out in two particular new technologies. These are pod-casting and the convergence of broadcast and the internet.

The Association of Christian Broadcasters holds the view that funds should be allocated to explore these technologies allowing community broadcasters to become pro-active in making the best use of this development.

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

There are four issues the Association of Christian Broadcasters would raise on behalf of the sector which we believe are of concern and wishes to bring to the attention of the inquiry.

Issue One: recent decision by ACMA.

"The Australian Communications and Media Authority has found that Blacktown City Community Radio 2SWR-FM Association Ltd, the licensee of community radio service 2SWR Blacktown, breached the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 by broadcasting an advertisement during the Talaash program. The full media release can be viewed at

http://www.acma.gov.au/ACMAINTER:STANDARD::pc=PC_100439"

Christian stations are concerned about the implications of this decision by which defined an extended feature interview as an advertisement. The content and substance of the complaint was that SWR FM was in breach of the Broadcasting Services Act for interviewing an Indian entertainer, who was performing at nearby Baulkham Hills, despite the fact that no money changed hands between the concert promoter and the station. The program was in Hindi and targeted at the Indian community.

Christian stations, and also many community stations, go to extensive lengths to promote and encourage the development of music for its respective communities of interest. This decision calls into doubt what stations can and can not do when trying to assist artists, who are usually ignored by commercial stations.

Issue two: sponsorship regulations.

In the scenarios below, the broadcaster is a Christian Radio station with the community of interest being Churches, Christian Ministries, para-church Christian ministries, Christian listeners and others interested in Christian radio programmes and Christian music.

In all the examples below, it is also assumed that all of the organisations are not for profit entities, religious organisations or Charities.

The Association of Christian Broadcasters would submit that the examples below are events and activities that would inform, entertain and be of direct benefit to the community of interest, and that this community of interest would expect the station to be providing these services for them.

In all cases there is a clear link that can be easily demonstrated between the community of interest, the group accessing the service and the broadcaster. The ACB would assert that in all cases below the content's primary purpose is to entertain, educate or inform the audience, as per the Act.

The ACB would also assert that in the examples below "*the third party provides programmes that serve the same community of interest as the community broadcasting service, it is likely that the service will still be provided for community purposes*"

Scenario One.

Information about a Church service.

XYZ Church will have a great service this Sunday featuring international speaker "Father Bob" who will bring a life challenging message on creation. Starting at 6 pm this is one talk you really shouldn't miss. XYZ Church, 777 Heaven Street, Angeltown. To find out more phone 1234 5678

Scenario Two

Information about a para Church organisation

Youth Challenge help homeless and disadvantaged children break free from the devastating effect of drugs and sexual abuse in their lives. If you know someone who can use this service or you want to help personally in some way, then give them a call on 1234 5678 or visit them at <address>.

Scenario Three

Information about a Christian conference

The biggest Christian conference will again be held at Gawler Church in South Australia. Speakers from all over the world will motivate, grow and inspire you in your faith. Don't miss out on this amazing Christian event which has impacted the lives of so many people Phone 1234 5678 to secure your place.

Scenario Four

Giving to Christian Ministries

"Feed the World" is a Christian charity who's mission is feeding, clothing and housing children in third world countries. As a Christian you know that we are called to help the poorest of the poor. One way you can do this is by donating funds to "Feed the World" for more information phone 1234 5678 or visit their website on www.feedtheworld.com.au

Scenario Five

Christian ministries

Do you want to know more about the Christian faith? Do you have questions that just won't go away. You might be able to find the answers through "Tell Me More" or by attending a "tell me more" course being held near you. For more information contact 1234 5678 or call in to <address>.

Do you need help? Want someone to talk to. Phone "Christians Who Listen" on 3636 7272 your help might just be a phone call away.

Scenario Six

Promotion of Christian Concerts by stations

Christian FM brings you the world's most popular Christian artist "Amazing Grace" playing at <venue> this Saturday night. Their music has inspired thousands for many years. Proceeds from the tickets will support Christian FM and "Feed the World Ministries". Book your tickets by phoning 8765 4321 or get them at the door.

The Association of Christian Broadcasters current understanding is that if a station were to be paid for these announcements then they are to be treated as sponsorships in regards to the five minute limit. However, we suggest that these all are a legitimate "sale of airtime" arrangement and should not count towards sponsorship. On the one hand community programmes under "Sale of Airtime" arrangements are acceptable, however as soon as there is any promotional element to this it becomes sponsorship. an anomaly we believe that needs to be clarified or rectified.

Issue three: overall funding of community broadcasting.

The Association of Christian Broadcasters has pointed out earlier in this submission that there is no allocated funding for the co-ordination of the Christian sector. This causes stress and disadvantage for Christian stations and the Association of Christian Broadcasters will be seeking to redress this issue through the partial funding of a its secretariat and for the co-ordination of National projects as is enjoyed by all the other sub-sectors.

Christian broadcasters will not however seek individual line funding for "Christian programming" or general allocated support for Christian stations but supports an increase to the overall level of funding for community stations to redress the funding imbalance which currently exists.

Issue four: an independent statutory review of Community broadcasting funding.

The ACB believes that this review should look into performance and effectiveness of the various sectors and the community/social return on investment that the Government is getting for its dollars.

The review should also target Government advertising for community stations.

End#

Signed by



David Turrell

Development Manager

Association of Christian Broadcasters

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