

March 17<sup>th</sup> 2006

Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**Re: Community Broadcasting Inquiry**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to present a submission to the Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts on the important issue of community broadcasting.

3CR Community Radio has been broadcasting independent and under-represented voices to the Victorian community for 30 years.

The station makes an important contribution in terms of providing radio and technical training to volunteers, providing opportunities for communities to 'find their voice' and presenting independent analysis of news and current affairs.

Please find attached 3CR's submission.

We will also be forwarding a hard copy accompanied by two CDs showcasing 3CR's diverse and unique programming.

3CR representatives would be very keen to present to the Committee should the opportunity arise.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Libby Jamieson  
Station Manager  
3CR Community Radio

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

3CR Community Radio Station was established in 1976 and since that time has provided a voice to indigenous people, the working class, unions, women and people from a CALD [Culturally And Linguistically Diverse] background.

3CR broadcasts to Melbourne and surrounds.

Programs that illustrate 3CR's diverse programming and listening audience include:

- *Rocking the Boat* – produced by the Disability Resource Centre;
- *Doing Time* - covers issues facing Victoria's prison population;
- *In Ya Face* - current affairs from a Gay, Lesbian & Queer perspective;
- *Local and Live* – live performances from Australian musicians and the local gig guide

Every week over 400 volunteers come into 3CR and the station broadcasts 135 programs including 8 indigenous and 23 community language programs.

3CR has a strong history of accessible and professional radio training with approximately 80 people trained annually in:

- Specialist current affairs;
- Digital audio production;
- Outside broadcasting and;
- Sound engineering including a specialist program that trains young women.

In addition to the general radio training, over 30 people are annually trained in management and administration including reception skills, event management and volunteer coordination.

In the station's 30-year history this equates to over 3000 volunteers being provided with training expertise and its affordability ensures accessibility to people on low-incomes.

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

3CR regularly hosts special programming events such as:

- Live broadcasts from Victorian prisons during NAIDOC week which focus on bringing the voices of indigenous prison inmates to the broader community. This project has been developed into a CD for the last two years;
- Live broadcasts for events such as Survival Day (January 26), International Women's Day (March 8), May Day (May 1), Hiroshima Day (August 6) and Refugee Week (October);

- Ongoing promotion of unsigned local musicians and experimental multimedia artists. One such project is the *Do-It-Yourself Arts Show* CD which features local Australian musicians recorded live in the 3CR studios.

Examples of programs that serve a particular community of interest:

- *Radio Mama* – focus on issues facing mothers from all walks of life;
- *Marngrook Aboriginal Football Show* – Australian rules focusing on Indigenous players and issues;
- *Let the Bands Play* – military, brass and concert band music from around the world.

#### *Newly arrived communities*

- *Eritrean Voice* – news, music and activities from Victoria's Eritrean community;
- *Afghan Radio* – broadcast in Pashtu and Dari to the Melbourne Afghan community;
- *Somali Language Show* – local and international news and information on the Somali community;
- *Voice of Gadaa Oromo* – the only program in Melbourne in the African Oromo language which is spoken in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

#### *Youth*

- *3al Hawa* – produced and presented by young Arabic people;
- *The Voice Box* – produced and presented by young Vietnamese women;
- *Koori Youth Show* – produced and presented by young Indigenous people.

#### *Indigenous*

- *Koori Survival Show* – presented by and for the Victorian indigenous community;
- *Fire First* – critical analysis of indigenous affairs and the ongoing movement for land rights;
- *Not Another Koori Show* – Indigenous arts and cultural issues.

There are nine programs produced at 3CR that are broadcast nationally through the satellite service of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBA), supplying the sector with high quality, nationally relevant weekly programming. They include:

- *Accent of Women* - a national radio program produced by women from a CALD background;
- *Women On The Line* – the only national radio program focusing on women's current affairs;
- *Second Opinion* – explores the relationship between mainstream and alternative approaches to health;
- *Earth Matters* - the only national radio program focusing on environment issues;
- *Radioactive Show* - nuclear, peace and energy issues.

3CR also has a policy of playing at least 55% Australian music content. The station's commitment to diversity and under-represented music genres is reflected in the number of specialist music programs hosted by 3CR:

- *Songlines* – showcases indigenous music and the depth of song history in Australian indigenous culture;
- *Music Sans Frontieres* – world music program;
- *Celtic Folk Show* – traditional and contemporary Irish and Australian Folk music;
- *Hip Sista Hop* – indigenous and women's hip hop music;
- *Nostalgia Unlimited* – pre-war nostalgia music from a unique collection;
- *Hot Damn Tamale* – Australian and international roots music from the 1920's onwards.

3CR has a long tradition of supporting Australian arts and culture through programs such as:

- *Curtain Up* – profiles Melbourne's performing arts scene including reviews of current shows;
- *Girlie is Good* – featuring women's music, art, photography, films and authors;
- *DIY Arts Show* - focus on independent community artforms;
- Two film programs - *the Film Show* and *Media Moves*;
- *Published Or Not* – Australian and international authors talk about how they got published.

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

The technical requirements of 3CR are broad-ranging and complex, and we have struggled to equip our station with up-to-date technology due largely to financial constraints.

3CR has a functional transmission system requiring constant maintenance but minimal upgrades. However, our on air system continues to be reliant on carts which are extremely old and problematic and funding has restricted us in replacing the system.

In addition, the transition from reel to reels to digital recording and editing has been slow and costly and continues to be implemented.

All new technologies represent opportunities for 3CR to reach a wider audience and produce higher quality, more accessible radio. In particular, the station is keen to have online streaming and to podcast particular programs. These opportunities have not yet been taken up due to hardware and technical limitations unable to be overcome due to financial restraints.

The possibilities of digital radio are yet to be fully explored by 3CR as we struggle to implement other much needed technologies. The station looks forward to potential government assistance to the community radio sector in being able to fully utilize relevant new technologies.

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

3CR's vibrancy and strength stems from the extraordinary contributions made by its volunteers.

The stations 6 staff members – 3 full-time and 3 part-time – provide extensive technical and logistical support to volunteer programmers.

However 3CR's small staff group limits the capacity to adequately resource volunteers, particularly after-hours programmers.

If additional funding were available additional staff could be employed.

One of 3CR's priorities would be to employ an Ethnic Programs Support Worker, to specifically provide training and support to programmers from newly arrived and other CALD communities.

Another significant challenge – as outlined above – facing 3CR is its aging technical equipment, as well as the challenge posed by supplying adequate numbers of computers for programmers to train in and produce digitally edited radio production.

As stated above, 3CR is one of the few community radio stations still reliant on carts for Community-Service-Announcements (CSA's) and Station ID's. The installation of On Air Software would overcome this predicament and the only limitation to this is financial.