**Programming Policy**

Cover note:

Things to consider when drafting your programming policy

**This template is a station resource. When drafting your station’s programming policy, consider whether your station has a stance on these points - and if so, add them to your policy:**

**Who**

* Diversity? Are there goals or expectations the station has around diversity in the program grid, about both content and identity?
* Updating the program grid? Is there a regularity to this? Who is responsible?
* Who owns the right to content? Does the presenter maintain the rights to the program or does the station?

**What**

* How does this programming policy reflect your station’s strategic plan? Identify the key pillars of your strategic plan.
* In practice, how does the station support our community, meet your strategic plan’s standard?
* Child protection? What kind of content will not be covered?
* Balance of content? Is there a set percentage of spoken word vs music content? Are there certain times of the day that feature certain types of content?
* Does the station charge for airtime access and is if so, does station have an air time access policy in place to ensure compliance with Broadcasting Services Act 1992 and adherence to community broadcasting principles of fairness, inclusivity and not-for-profit operations?

Does the station engage in emergency broadcasting?

**How**

* Program reviews? Do presenters have to reapply to programs? If so, how often and who oversees this?
* Listener surveys or survey data? Does the station take into consideration programming decisions based on listener feedback or survey data?
* How does your station format of the programming grid flow vs block?

**Programming Policy**

Policy Template

Purpose

This programming policy sets out **[station name]** principles that govern content broadcast and how the content is presented.

Policy

**Overall Programming**

**[Station]** will observe all relevant laws, regulations and standards applicable to community broadcasting, and adhere to the Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice (2025) (the Codes).

**[station]** will broadcast at least one on-air announcement each week that contains information about the Codes and where listeners can get a copy in accordance with Code 1: Application of the Codes. A copy of the announcement is made available to ACMA on request.

Program producers and presenters are required to be members of **[station].**

**[Station]** will present a diverse range of community radio programs consistent with the organisational mission and audience profile.

**[Station]** will prioritise airtime to programs that are locally produced and/or presented and offer a unique perspective to our community of interest.

**[Station]** ensures the time allocated to community broadcasts and programs is fairly distributed across all community organisations commensurate with their size and stature within the community.

**[station]** encourages programming that reflects our community interests. We facilitate direct participation in programming by community members including individuals and interest groups.

**[Station]** will not broadcast material that is likely to stereotype, incite, vilify, or perpetuate hatred against, or attempt to demean any person or group, based on ethnicity, nationality, race, language, gender, sexuality, religion, age, physical or mental ability, occupation, cultural belief or political affiliation.

In accordance with Code X - Will not broadcast material that may:

a. incite, encourage, or present for its own sake violence or brutality,

b. mislead or alarm listeners by simulating news or events,

c. present as desirable the use of illegal drugs, the misuse of tobacco or alcohol as well as other harmful substances, and

d. glamorise, sensationalise, or present suicide as a solution to life problems,

e. broadcast material should not provide explicit details about the method and/or location of a suicide attempt or death.

[Station] will defend freedom of expression. In our programming decisions, we will consider our community interest, context, degree of explicitness, the possibility of alarming the listener, the potential for distress or shock, prevailing Indigenous laws or community standards and the social importance of the broadcast. This is not intended to prevent the broadcast of material which is factual, or the expression of genuinely held opinion in a news or current affairs program or in the legitimate context of a humorous, satirical or dramatic work. The **[station role]** will seek a broad range of opinions before withdrawing or not allowing content. This will include the programming committee and the committee of management.

**[Station]** will actively encourage the submission of new program proposals from individuals and community groups, and particularly encourage proposals which add to the diversity of programming and voices on air.

Within the confines of the sponsorship framework and the music styles being presented, **[Station]** will promote local talent by playing music performed by local artists.

Programmingdecisions will not be influenced by sponsors, **[station role]** does not accept any form of payment in cash or in-kind, in return for providing airplay or promotion of music, except under standard sponsorship arrangements

[Station] programming will:

1. explore areas of debate, information, music and cultural activities not adequately covered by other media
2. encourage listeners to make their own informed and critical judgements
3. try to reveal insights into the social, political and cultural aspects of society
4. emphasise and encourage Australian content in terms of composition and production
5. present a clear and identifiable station image.

Canvassing local community groups and organisations which may have a particular programming need (for example, a program designed to help newly arrived migrants settle into their new environment) - inviting individuals and community groups to provide programming for vacant airtime.

**News & Current Affairs**

News, current affairs (including news updates and promotions) documentaries, feature programs and interviews shall:

1. provide access to views not adequately represented by other broadcasting sectors,
2. present factual material accurately and ensure that reasonable efforts are made to correct substantial errors of fact as quickly as possible,
3. clearly distinguish factual material from commentary and analysis,
4. present news in such a way that it does not create public panic or unnecessary distress to listeners
5. represent viewpoints fairly without having a misleading emphasis, editing out of context or withholding relevant and available material.
6. put in the distinction between news bulletins and opinion.

**Indigenous Program Content**

**[station]** will seek to involve and take advice from Indigenous Australians in the production of programs focusing on Indigenous Australians and issues. **[station]** will engage, consult and involve the relevant people.

**[station]** will take care to verify and observe the best way to respect culture and customs by:

1. considering regional differences, that is, be mindful of differences between Indigenous local groups,
2. using appropriate words and phrases in referring to Indigenous peoples and their regional groups
3. seeking proper advice on how to best respect Indigenous bereavement customs when reporting on people who are recently deceased
4. using suitable words and phrase.

**Emergency content**

Community radio stations with the ability to offer emergency broadcasts will:

1. have procedures in place to enable appropriate local emergency broadcasts,
2. liaise with appropriate emergency and essential service organisations, and
3. ensure the accuracy of emergency information.

**Suicide**

Consider suicide in content:

1. should I run the story?
2. be careful with the language you use.
3. don’t be explicit about the method or location of suicide.
4. discussion of celebrity suicide can glamorise suicide.
5. consider the angle (or positioning) of the story.
6. should you interview the bereaved? Is it necessary? Place the story in context. Reduce prominence. f. Include helpline contacts in your story.

Additional resources are available from [Mindframe](https://mindframe.org.au/industry-hubs/for-media).

**Syndication**

Syndicated programs have a legitimate place in community broadcasting and can help community radio to flourish even in very small communities. However, syndication needs to be consistent with:

* the community nature of the service – as a result, licensees need to approach the use of syndicated commercial programs with extreme care
* the community interest being served – syndication is more appropriate for services with a specific community interest that is not necessarily geographically defined (for example, services for the print handicapped).

Limiting the amount of vacant airtime or syndicated programming in favour of locally-produced programs, particularly where individuals or community groups have expressed interest in providing programs,

**Programming Committee**

The duties and responsibilities within the PBS programming process are vested in a number of individuals and groups. The overall aim of the process is to maintain a practical system of directing and managing programming within the station in an inclusive, unbiased, transparent and accountable way.

The Programming Committee will provide guidance and oversight for both the strategic and operational programming of [station]. [Look at RTR policy for expansion on this.](https://rtrfm.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/RTRFM-Programming-Policy-July-2022_FINAL.pdf)

* Decision making

**Program selection Criteria**

Infill

**Programming Reviews**

The Board has the authority to make any programming changes at any time. Usually, however, this will take place following the station’s annual programming review.

The Board will review the program schedule a minimum of every 12 months.

This review will involve all presenters of local programs. The review will be considered in relation to the[station] Strategic Plan and other relevant documents. Any changes to the schedule will be made in consultation with local program presenters.

**Suspension or cancellation**

A program can be suspended or cancelled if it shows sustained poor performance or a significant lack of attendance by its presenters.

Writing a short statement on our website that explicitly confirms our commitment to not broadcasting anything racist, vilifying etc.

Definitions

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