

Social Return on Investment in community broadcasting

thinkimpact

Contents

GLOSSARY **5**

1. INTRODUCTION **6**

1.1 Valuing community broadcasting in Australia 6

1.2 About this report 7

2. SUMMARY OF SROI FINDINGS **10**

3. COMMUNITY BROADCASTING SECTOR THEORY OF CHANGE **12**

3.1 Audiences and community 12

3.2 Society 13

3.3 Government 13

3.4 Sponsors 13

4. CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY BROADCASTING **16**

4.1 SROI findings 16

4.2 Outcomes by stakeholder 17

5. DISABILITY COMMUNITY BROADCASTING **26**

5.1 SROI findings 26

5.2 Outcomes by stakeholder 27

6. ETHNIC AND MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY BROADCASTING **37**

6.1 SROI findings 37

6.2 Outcomes by stakeholder 39

7. FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY BROADCASTING **47**

7.1 Survey findings 47

7.2 Outcomes by stakeholder 48

8. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS **52**

8.1 The value of community broadcasting 52

8.2 Continuing to create value 52

8.3 Research recommendations 52

APPENDIX A METHODOLOGY **54**

What is SROI? 54

Approach to determining financial proxies of outcomes 55

Evaluation approach 56

List of tables

Table 1 Summary of SROI ratios 10
Table 2 Summary of most valuable outcomes by sector and stakeholder....11
Table 3 Summary of investments in Christian media FY24 16
Table 4 Social value per stakeholder created by CMAA member stations 17
Table 5 Value by outcome for listeners of CMAA member stations 18
Table 6 Value by outcome for CMAA member stations' employees....20
Table 7 Value by outcome for government created by CMAA member stations 22
Table 8 Value by outcome for sponsors of CMAA member stations 23
Table 9 Summary of investment in Disability Media FY24 26
Table 10 Social value per stakeholder created by DMA member stations 27
Table 11 Value by outcome for listeners of DMA member stations 28
Table 12 Value by outcome for DMA member stations' employees and volunteers 32
Table 13 Value by outcome for government created by DMA member stations 34
Table 14 Summary of investment in ethnic community broadcasting FY24 37
Table 15 Social value per stakeholder created by NEMBC members and broadcasters....38
Table 16 Value by outcome for listeners of NEMBC members 40
Table 17 Value by outcome for NEMBC members' employees and volunteers 43
Table 18 Value by outcome for government created by NEMBC members and broadcasters 45
Table 19 Examples of financial proxies 55
Table 20 Stakeholder engagement 56
Table 21 Survey response rates 57

List of figures

Figure 1 SROI equation 8
Figure 2 Total social value of the community broadcasting sector by stakeholder 11
Figure 3 Community broadcasting sector theory of change 12
Figure 4 Total social value by stakeholder created by CMAA member stations 16
Figure 5 Outcomes for listeners of CMAA member stations 18
Figure 6 Outcomes for CMAA member stations' employees and volunteers 20
Figure 7 Outcomes for CMAA member stations' corporate sponsors 22
Figure 8 Outcomes for CMAA member stations' charitable sponsors 23
Figure 9 Total social value by stakeholder created by DMA member stations 26
Figure 10 Outcomes for listeners of DMA member stations 28
Figure 11 Outcomes for DMA member stations' employees and volunteers 31
Figure 12 Outcomes for DMA member stations' corporate sponsors 34

Figure 13 Outcomes for DMA member stations' community and charitable sponsors 35
Figure 14 Total social value by stakeholder created by NEMBC members and broadcasters 38
Figure 15 Outcomes for listeners of NEMBC members 39
Figure 16 Outcomes for NEMBC members' employees and volunteers 42
Figure 17 Outcomes for corporate sponsors of NEMBC members and broadcasters 45
Figure 18 Outcomes for community and charitable sponsors of NEMBC members and broadcasters 46
Figure 19 Outcomes for listeners of FNMA member stations and broadcasters 49
Figure 20 Outcomes for FNMA member stations' employees 50
Figure 21 Social value principles 54

PREPARED BY

Natasha Rees, Associate Director, Think Impact
Marty Bortz, Senior Consultant, Think Impact
Rebecca Cain, Director, Think Impact

Project code: J24CMAA01
Report status: Final
Date: 9 February 2026

Think Impact is a specialist social impact consultancy based in Melbourne. Our focus is to support organisations, across all sectors, to manage for better impact.

CONTACT

For further details please contact:

Think Impact
Our Community House
552 Victoria Street,
North Melbourne, VIC 3051, Australia
natasha@thinkimpact.com.au
+61 404 317 909

ABN 15 129 607 576

DISCLAIMER

This report has been prepared by Think Impact on the instructions, and for the benefit, of the community broadcasting sector in relation to supporting the understanding of the Social Return on Investment in community broadcasting. It is not to be used for any other purpose.

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material and the integrity of the analysis presented herein, Think Impact accepts no liability for any actions taken on the basis of the contents of this report.

Glossary

The following definitions and acronyms are used in this report:

Term	Definition
CBAA	Community Broadcasting Association of Australia
CBF	Community Broadcasting Foundation
CMAA	Christian Media & Arts Australia
DMA	Disability Media Australia
FNMA	First Nations Media Australia
NEMBC	National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council. Note: As of June 2026 NEMBC is known as Multicultural Voices Australia.
Outcome	A description of the change a program produces for individuals or organisations. An outcome can be positive or negative, intended or unintended, direct or indirect, long-term or short-term.
Social Return on Investment	A principles-based methodology that quantifies the value of social, environmental and economic outcomes created by an activity in monetary terms.
SROI	Social Return on Investment
Theory of change	The starting point for measuring impact. It outlines how activities are expected to lead to change and tells the story of how stakeholders are impacted by an activity, program or initiative.

1. Introduction

1.1 Valuing community broadcasting in Australia

Community broadcasting provides significant value to Australian life. According to the Australian Government, there are currently over 450 licensed community radio stations in the country. Between 2004 and 2025, listenership grew from 3.7 million to 5.4 million.[1] In addition to creating opportunities for social connection, information dissemination, cultural connection and entertainment, the sector employs over 890 employees and creates thousands of meaningful volunteering opportunities.

Despite the vast economic and social benefits provided to Australia, research by the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) has found that the sector is largely self-funded. The CBF has tried to bridge the widening gap between required revenue and revenue generation, in an increasingly competitive media landscape. However, it reports that it can only contribute about 8.5% of each station's reported revenue.[2]

Considering these challenges, Christian Media & Arts Australia (CMAA) has partnered with Disability Media Australia (DMA), National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters Council (NEMBC) and First Nations Media Australia (FNMA) to conduct an independent Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation of the community broadcasting sector. The project was partially funded by a grant from the CBF, along with philanthropic support secured by CMAA. The project was spearheaded by CMAA and project support provided by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA).

About Christian Media & Arts Australia

CMAA is a dynamic alliance of Christian media and arts professionals that has been operating for over 40 years. Their diverse membership includes broadcasters, filmmakers, musicians, writers and digital innovators. Over 230 individuals are employed in their member radio organisations, supported by more than 1,500 volunteers. Weekly, members reach over 2 million listeners in Australia via radio and more via digital platforms.

About Disability Media Australia

DMA is the national peak body for the Radio Reading Network – community radio services dedicated to informing and empowering the estimated 5 million Australians with a print disability. There are 19 dedicated AM/FM Radio Reading services across Australia as well as 10 DAB+ digital radio services, which broadcast across Australia's capital cities. The Radio Reading Network stations broadcast over 1,750 hours of specialist programs each week with the support of over 1,000 volunteers who play a major role.

About National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters Council[3]

The NEMBC is the peak organisation representing ethnic community broadcasters across Australia. They advocate for multiculturalism and media diversity and help people connect to and maintain their language, culture and identity. Programs are broadcast from five dedicated ethnic and multicultural

---

[1] McNair yellowSquares, *Community Radio Listener Survey*, December 2024.

[2] Order, S. (2016), *Australian Community Radio: Funding challenges and dilemmas*, Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, Sydney, available from https://researchportal.murdoch.edu.au/esploro/outputs/journalArticle/Australian-Community-Radio-Funding-Challenges-and/991005723862207891 , accessed 27 November 2025.

[3] As of June 2026 NEMBC is known as Multicultural Voices Australia.

stations and more than 130 generalist community radio stations across Australia[4]. In an average week the sector produces more than 2,000 hours of community language programs across some 635 programs. Program broadcasting is supported by over 1935 volunteers who broadcast in over 60 languages.

Note: For the purposes of this report 'NEMBC member stations' and 'NEMBC members' refers to multicultural programs and stations represented through NEMBC membership of a nominated person or affiliated person.

About First Nations Media Australia

FNMA is the national peak body for First Nations not-for-profit broadcasting, media and communications. They support the First Nations broadcasting and media industry to provide essential media and communications services to metro, regional and urban First Nations people and communities. For many remote communities, FNMA members and associated 'RIBS' (Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services) are the only stations that are able to broadcast to their communities. The sector is largely funded by the National Indigenous Australians Agency and employed 213 people in FY24[5]. Their members include more than 25 radio stations and radio program contributors across Australia. Content is produced in a range of languages.

1.2 About this report

This report presents the findings of an evaluation using the Social Return on Investment (SROI) methodology. The evaluation was conducted between August 2024 and December 2025 and covers one year of activities from 1 July 2023–30 June 2024.

Social Return on Investment methodology

SROI is a framework for measuring and accounting for the broader concept of social value. It tells the story of how change is being created for the people and organisations that experience or contribute to that change. It does this by identifying, measuring and valuing outcomes that may be social, environmental or economic in nature.

SROI is a principles-based approach that draws on well-established methodologies in economics, accounting and social research.

An SROI calculation provides an indication of cost effectiveness, by comparing the investment required to deliver the activities with the value of the outcomes experienced by all beneficiary stakeholders. Social value is calculated by placing a financial value on the quantified change using what are known as financial proxies. The values calculated, although expressed in monetary terms, do not equate to a financial return. The values represent the size of the value and the relative scale of different outcomes. SROI seeks to understand all types of value – social, economic and environmental – and represent this in a language which is widely understood by funders, investors, policy makers and decision-makers.

A breakdown of the SROI calculation is depicted in Figure 1. The definitions of these terms are provided in the Glossary at the start of the report.

[4] CBAA Annual Member Reporting Form, FY24.
[5] CBAA data.



Figure 1 SROI equation

Further information about the SROI methodology is provided in Appendix A Methodology.

Project scope

This SROI assesses the value associated with the community radio services of the members of CMAA, DMA, NEMBC and FNMA. It covers activity delivered in the 2024 financial year (1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024). The research that informed the evaluation was conducted between August 2024 and July 2025.

Further information about the research undertaken is available in Appendix A Methodology.

All figures in this report have been rounded to reflect their indicative nature. Any discrepancies are due to this rounding.

Value likely to be understated

We anticipate that the total value, and therefore the ratios, presented in this report are **understated** as it has not been possible to quantify all aspects of the value experienced by the stakeholder groups. The outcomes that have not been quantified and valued include:

- **Outcomes resulting from the activities of First Nation media organisations.** It was not possible to obtain enough data to quantify the outcomes, however the nature of the outcomes has been discussed in Section 7 First Nations .
- **Outcomes for sponsors of DMA and NEMBC member stations.** Outcomes for sponsors were identified through focus group discussions and are presented in this report. However, due to low survey response rates, outcomes for sponsors of DMA and NEMBC member stations or programs have not been quantified. Sufficient data was obtained to value outcomes for sponsors of CMAA member stations. However, the number of sponsors is not known. The analysis is based on the number of sponsors who responded to the survey, which is known to significantly underestimate the true figure.
- **Outcomes for government in their capacity as policy makers and sponsors who use community radio to communicate with target audiences.** The value to government of employment created by community radio has been quantified. The nature of other outcomes for government has been discussed in Section 3 Community broadcasting sector theory of change.
- **Outcomes for listeners of ethnic and multicultural programs broadcast by general community radio stations.** While the broadcasters are NEMBC members, the radio stations are not, and data audience numbers for these programs is not available.

The SROI ratios quoted in this report are presented as a range. This is because the SROI process requires judgement and assumptions, and extrapolation carries the risk of errors in the data and findings. All dollar values quoted in the report are based on conservative weightings attached to the outcomes reported by stakeholders. These values are the basis for the conservative ratio quoted. The optimistic ratio is based on slightly higher weightings attached to the outcomes.

About the report authors

This SROI was conducted by Think Impact, a social impact consultancy working to create positive change for business, government, philanthropy and the community. It helps organisations understand, communicate, and transform the impact of their work. Think Impact has one of the most experienced SROI teams in Australia.

The Think Impact lead analyst and author, Natasha Rees, is a Level 3 Accredited SROI practitioner with Social Value International. The wider Think Impact team includes three other Level 3 Accredited SROI practitioners and one of only two people in Australia qualified to deliver SROI training.

2. Summary of SROI findings

An investment of $63.9M in the activities of the community broadcasters featured in this analysis creates value of $485.4M for stakeholders. This shows that community broadcasting is creating positive social value for the investment made.

> For every $1 invested in community broadcasting, $7.59 of value is created.

The SROI process requires judgement and assumptions and extrapolation carries the risk of errors in the data and findings. For this reason, different assumptions were modelled to produce a range that is more reflective of the indicative nature of the ratio. The ratio could range from $7.59 to $10.15. Even when conservative inputs are modelled, the ratio remains positive.

The SROI ratios as a whole and for the individual sectors for which a ratio was calculated are presented in Table 1. The findings and discussion for each sector are presented in the sections following this summary. Due to the more limited data being available in relation to First Nations media, the information provided in relation to their impact is qualitative only.

Table 1 Summary of SROI ratios

Sector	SROI range[6]
Overall	**$7.59–10.15**
Christian community radio	$8.70–11.54
Disability community radio	$7.30–9.97
Ethnic and Multicultural community radio	$4.59–6.26

The difference in the range for NEMBC members is believed to be due in large part to a lower intensity experience for stakeholders due to the composition of that sector. The Christian and Disability Media sectors consist of member stations solely dedicated to their primary audience. The audience can listen to programs dedicated to their needs all day, and volunteers and employees are typically operating within a team environment, with other like-minded people, at a radio station. While there are some dedicated multicultural stations within the NEMBC membership, there are many more ethnic and multicultural programs being broadcast on generalist radio stations. Listeners may have access to one program a week, and volunteers and employees may be broadcasting programs periodically from a station without being part of a broader workforce or station activity or events. As noted above, it was also not possible to quantify the number of listeners to multicultural or ethnic programs on generalist stations, thus understating the value created by NEMBC members.

For all sectors, the value is experienced by five stakeholder groups – listeners, volunteers, employees, sponsors and government. Due to the availability of data, Christian media is the only sector for which it has been possible to value outcomes for sponsors. The breakdown of value across these five stakeholder groups is presented in Figure 2.

[6] All dollar values quoted in this report align with the conservative end of the range.

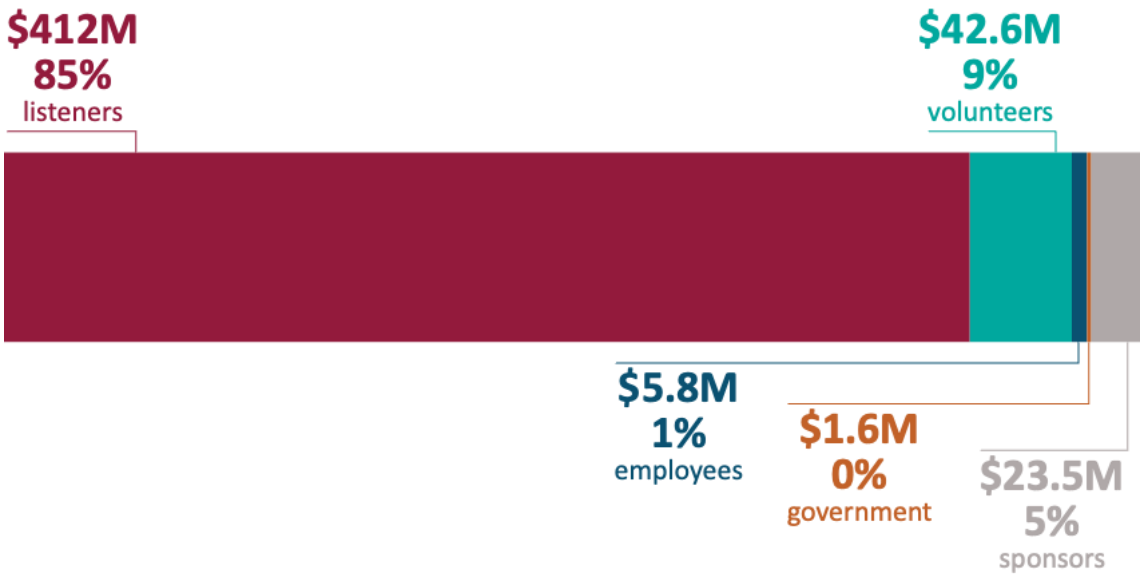


Figure 2 Total social value of the community broadcasting sector by stakeholder

The three most valuable outcomes recorded for each sector are summarised in Table 2. For all sectors, the most valuable outcomes are for listeners. This is because listeners are the largest stakeholder group. There are clear themes about connection and feeling represented across all three sectors.

Table 2 Summary of most valuable outcomes by sector and stakeholder

Outcome	Social value
CMAA	
Listeners experience positive spiritual growth	$ 114,400,000
Listeners feel more represented in society	$ 77,700,000
Listeners have improved mental wellbeing	$ 51,000,000
DMA	
Listeners have increased ability to participate in civic life	$ 21,700,000
Listeners feel less isolated	$ 11,400,000
Listeners feel safer	$ 5,300,000
NEMBC	
Listeners have increased ability to participate in civic life	$ 29,600,000
Listeners have improved mental wellbeing	$ 10,100,000
Listeners feel more connected to their communities	$ 6,100,000

3. Community broadcasting sector theory of change

The foundation of an SROI is the theory of change, which is a description of how activities are delivered to create outcomes (also referred to as changes) for the stakeholder groups affected. This theory of change tells the story of how individuals, organisations and the community are affected by the community broadcasting sector. It is based on input from stakeholders during the research conducted specifically for this SROI.

This high-level theory of change is complemented with diagrammatic and narrative descriptions of the outcomes for each stakeholder group in the following sections. They are adapted specifically for each sector, based on the themes and findings from the qualitative research with the stakeholders of each sector.

The four membership bodies who participated in this SROI represent a large proportion of the community broadcasting sector. For this reason, the theory of change is described as representing the sector as a whole. The segments of the community broadcasting sector who were not involved in this SROI are 'generalist' community broadcasting stations, that serve the diverse needs of a local community, and other stations that represent other communities of interest such as Australian music and artists and specific music communities. It is suggested that future evolutions of this theory of change be informed by these segments.

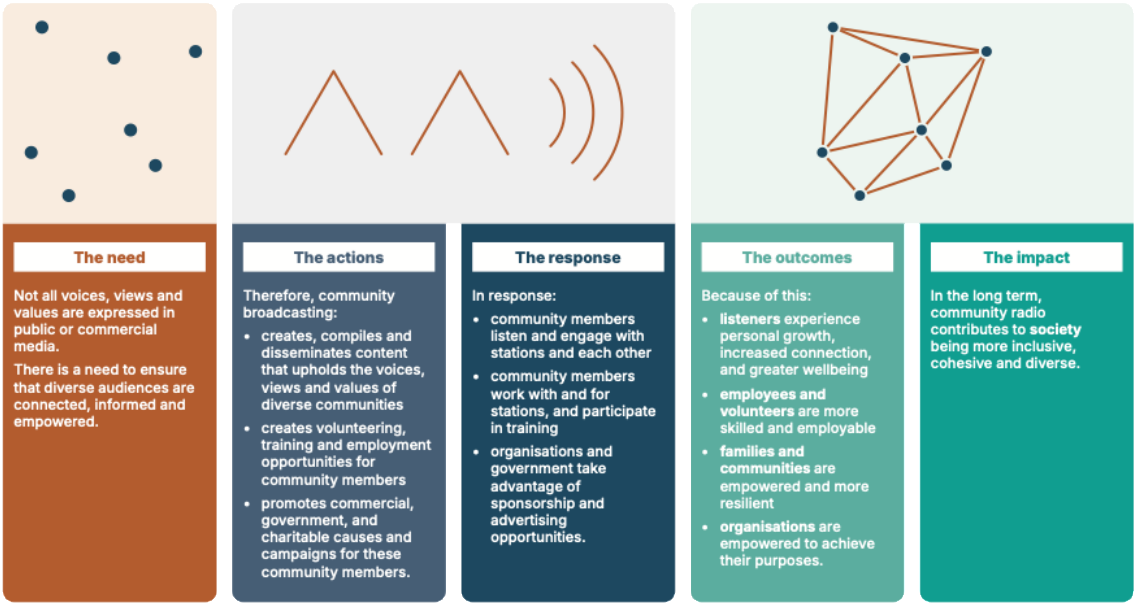


Figure 3 Community broadcasting sector theory of change

3.1 Audiences and community

Community broadcasting plays a vital role for its **audiences** and the **community** more broadly. It reflects and reaches audiences who are often overlooked by public and commercial stations and broadcasters, including marginalised groups and people in remote or underserved regions. Community broadcasters amplify voices from the grassroots, ensuring content reflects the unique character and needs of the audience or area they serve. It creates spaces where individuals connect with those who share their

interests, values, circumstances and cultural identity. By doing so, community broadcasting becomes a powerful tool for inclusion, representation and empowerment.

3.2 Society

Beyond the benefits to audiences, community broadcasting contributes to **society** being more inclusive, cohesive and diverse. It strengthens social cohesion by amplifying diverse voices and reflecting the unique identity of communities. By fostering dialogue, community broadcasting ensures that everyone has a platform to be heard and to be reached, making it a vital contributor to an inclusive and connected society.

3.3 Government

For **government**, community broadcasting provides a trusted channel to communicate vital information, policies, and emergency updates to diverse and harder-to-reach audiences, including people with a disability, remote communities and communities with cultural, linguistic and faith-based diversity. Community broadcasters foster civic engagement disseminating information and encouraging participation in democratic processes. By supporting social inclusion, engagement and resilience, they are an essential partner in achieving public policy goals around diversity, accessibility and community wellbeing. In addition, community radio provides different types of meaningful employment opportunities. While not high in number, many employees report that they would likely not be in employment without community radio. This benefits government in terms of reduced income support payments and increased taxation.

The value of the volunteering hours donated to the sectors participating in this study is estimated at $24.1M[7], showing how the sector is able to leverage the small amount of funding received through volunteer contributions.

In this SROI, it has only been possible to quantify the employment-related benefits to government.

3.4 Sponsors

Community broadcasting offers **sponsors** a unique opportunity to connect with highly engaged, niche audiences in a trusted and authentic environment. Unlike public and commercial media, community stations deliver hyper-tailored content that resonates deeply with listeners, creating strong loyalty and credibility. Sponsors gain credibility by association, which can help achieve their organisational objectives, whether they be charitable, commercial or in the public interest. Within this SROI, it has not been possible to quantify the benefits to all sponsors within the sectors participating in the study, however, data and the theory of change have been provided.

[7] Based 4,525 volunteers in 2024, the value of a volunteer hour being $41/hour and an average number of volunteer hours per week of 2.5 hours. Sources: Cost of Volunteering Calculator *Centre for Volunteering, 2025;* volunteer numbers from *CBAA 2024,* Volunteering in Australia, *Volunteering Australia 2022.*

There are lots of small communities that are hard to reach, and that mainstream media doesn't always reach … Community radio has an authentic voice and dialogue and makes information accessible.

– DMA member station sponsor

Community broadcasting is a catalyst for bringing people together.

– Ethnic and multicultural sector leader

Broader understanding of each other usually creates connections rather than divisions. The more we know each other the more we tolerate and support each other.

– Ethnic and multicultural sector leader

We have brought people together, helping our community to be more united, connected job seekers to employers, people to churches, business partners and so much more.

– CMAA member station employee

Volunteering has built my social life in a way that I never thought could happen.

– DMA member station volunteer

Messages of hope 'just at the right time' are a common theme. People hearing what they need for their situation through radio – encouragement through a song, a Scripture verse, a teaching, etc.

– CMAA member station employee

I have much more connection to my community … I've really enjoyed meeting new people and meeting people from all different walks of life.

– DMA member station volunteer

Huge needs in our city have been met through the power of community radio bringing people together, to raise funds, respond to natural disasters or just to celebrate Easter or Christmas!

– CMAA member station employee

Community radio upskills people – in the time I've been involved I've got TAFE certification to teach media production.

– DMA member station volunteer

Volunteering has widened my social network within the community and provided an opportunity to exercise my leadership skills.

– NEMBC member station volunteer

Volunteering makes me happy and keeps me sane! I feel it's a really worthwhile thing to do. I'm now a presenter and write procedures for presenter training and produce episodes as well.

– DMA member station volunteer

It's been really good for my mental health as I've transitioned from full-time work to semi-retirement to find something that keeps me occupied, connected to my community, connected to other people, and allows me to use my life experience and skills in different ways.

– DMA member station volunteer

Our local radio has shown itself to be an important unifier in church community. People from different churches can come together on the radio (i.e. present a program) or through opportunities the committee and volunteers provide.

– CMAA member station employee

The Victorian Government has an ambition to reach every single Victorian, and a specific focus on supporting community stations.

– DMA member station sponsor



4. Christian Community Broadcasting

4.1 SROI findings

A monetary and in-kind investment of $40,319,000 by Christian media and other contributors creates value of $350,640,000 for stakeholders. This shows that Christian media is creating positive social value for the investment made.

> For every $1 invested in Christian media, $8.70 of value is created.

The SROI process requires judgement and assumptions and extrapolation carries the risk of errors in the data and findings. For this reason, different assumptions were modelled to produce a range that is more reflective of the indicative nature of the ratio. The ratio could range from $8.70 to $11.54. Even when conservative inputs are modelled, the ratio remains positive. The range specified is known to underestimate the value being created because the number of sponsors is based on the number of respondents to the survey, rather than the true number which is not known.

The investment required to broadcast Christian media is presented in Table 3. This includes expenditure of the stations and the value of the time contributed by over 1,500 volunteers.

Table 3 Summary of investments in Christian media FY24

Description of investment	Type of investment	Value of investment
Expenditure of Christian community stations FY24, including transmission, salary and other	Monetary	$32,148,000
Volunteer time	In kind	$8,171,000

Source: Community Broadcasting Association Australia data and Think Impact analysis

A summary of the value by stakeholder group is provided in Figure 4 and Table 4. These results are discussed in the following sections.



Figure 4 Total social value by stakeholder created by CMAA member stations

Table 4 Social value per stakeholder created by CMAA member stations

Stakeholder	Total social value	Number of stakeholders[8]	Value per stakeholder	% of value
Listeners	$308,100,000	1,776,000	$173	88%
Volunteers	$12,700,000	1,533	$8,284	4%
Employees	$5,000,000	237	$21,097	1%
Government	$1,400,000	1	$1,400,000	<1%
Corporate sponsors	$40,000	48*	$833	<1%
Charity sponsors	$23,400,000	32*	$731,250	7%
Total	**$350,640,000**			

The key findings of the analysis are:

- Over 85% of the value is experienced by **listeners**. While the value per listener is small, there are almost 1.8 million listeners across Australia. Positive spiritual growth is the most valuable outcome for listeners.
- **Volunteers** experience over $8,000 of value per person. The most valuable outcome for volunteers is improved mental wellbeing as a result of feeling like they are part of 'something bigger'.
- **Employees** are the stakeholder group experiencing the highest value per person, at approximately $21,000. The most valuable outcome to employees was to feel part of something bigger than themselves, similar to volunteers.
- About one quarter of employees reported they would highly likely be unemployed without community radio. Being employed provides valuable economic and social benefits for individuals as well as representing value to **government**, through savings in unemployment benefits and increased tax revenue.
- It is likely the total value, and therefore the ratio, is understated as it has not been possible to calculate the full value experienced by government. The contribution made by community broadcasting to government policy objectives, such as civic engagement, social inclusion and strengthening cultural and national identity has not been valued.

4.2 Outcomes by stakeholder

Listeners

It is estimated that Christian community radio reaches almost 1.8 million listeners every week. Approximately 20% of these listeners are in remote and regional areas, with the bulk being located in metropolitan areas.

According to the Community Radio Listener survey[9], listeners spend almost 10 hours listening to Christian radio each week. About 10% exclusively listen to Christian radio. 60% of listeners are aged

[8] McNair yellowSquares, *Community Radio Listener Survey*, December 2024.
[9] McNair yellowSquares, *Community Radio Listener Survey*, December 2024.
* The total number of sponsors is unknown. This figure refers to the total number of survey respondents and understates the total number of sponsors.

between 25 and 54. 53% of listeners identify as male, 46% identify as female and <1% identify as gender diverse.

The outcomes experienced by listeners of Christian media are depicted in Figure 5. The activities delivered by the Christian radio stations result in a range of short and medium term changes for listeners. The changes for listeners that are more significant and long lasting are depicted in orange; these outcomes are measured and valued as part of the SROI.

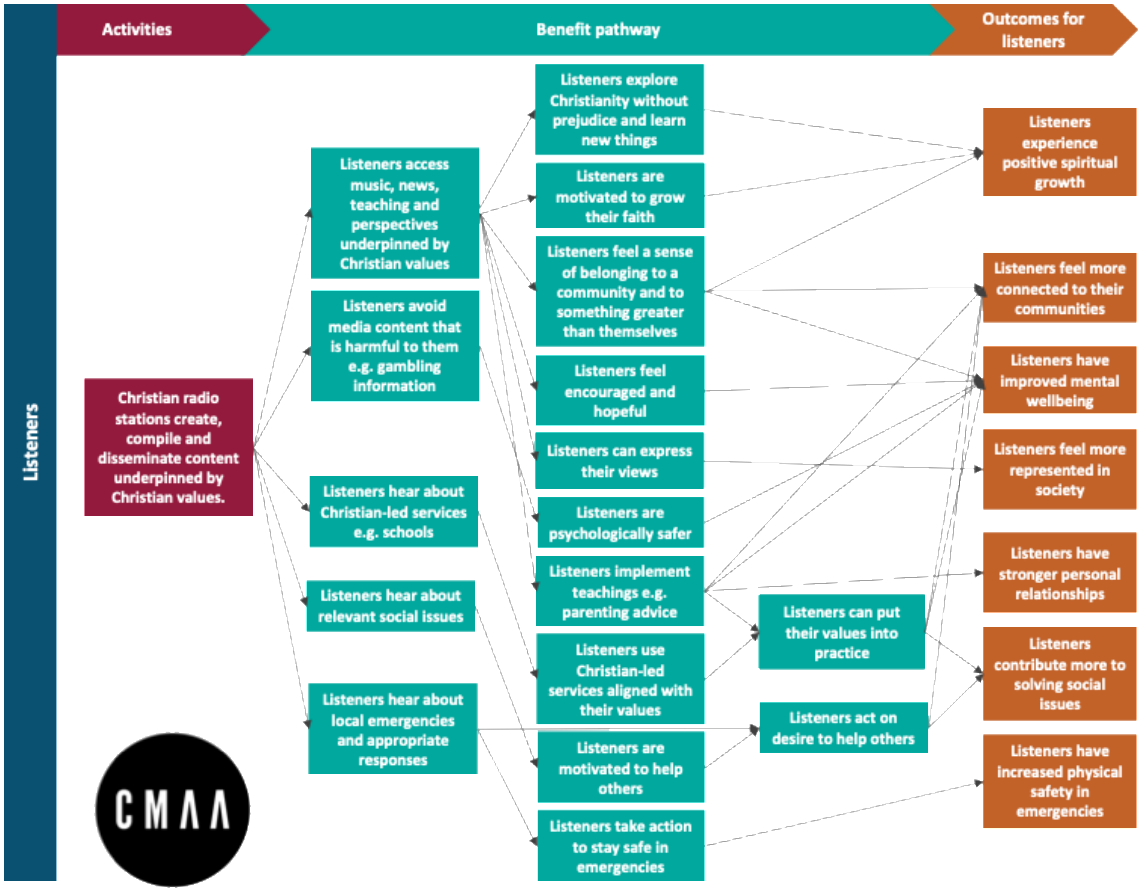


Figure 5 Outcomes for listeners of CMAA member stations

The value of the listener outcomes is summarised in Table 5. Listeners are the largest beneficiary stakeholder group of Christian media experiencing almost 85% of the total value.

Table 5 Value by outcome for listeners of CMAA member stations

Outcome	Value	% of value to stakeholder
Positive spiritual growth	$114,400,000	37%
Feel more represented in society	$77,700,000	25%
Improved mental wellbeing	$51,000,000	17%
Feel more connected to their communities	$33,700,000	11%

Stronger personal relationships	$13,400,000	4%
Contribute to solving social issues	$12,200,000	4%
Feeling safer in emergencies	$5,700,000	2%



Employees and volunteers

Christian media stations employ 237 people and benefit from the time and expertise of over 1,500 volunteers. The outcomes experienced by employees and volunteers of Christian media are depicted in Figure 6. The experience provides employees and volunteers with the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge, as well as be part of meaningful work. The changes for employees and volunteers that are more significant and long lasting are depicted in orange; these outcomes are measured and valued as part of the SROI.

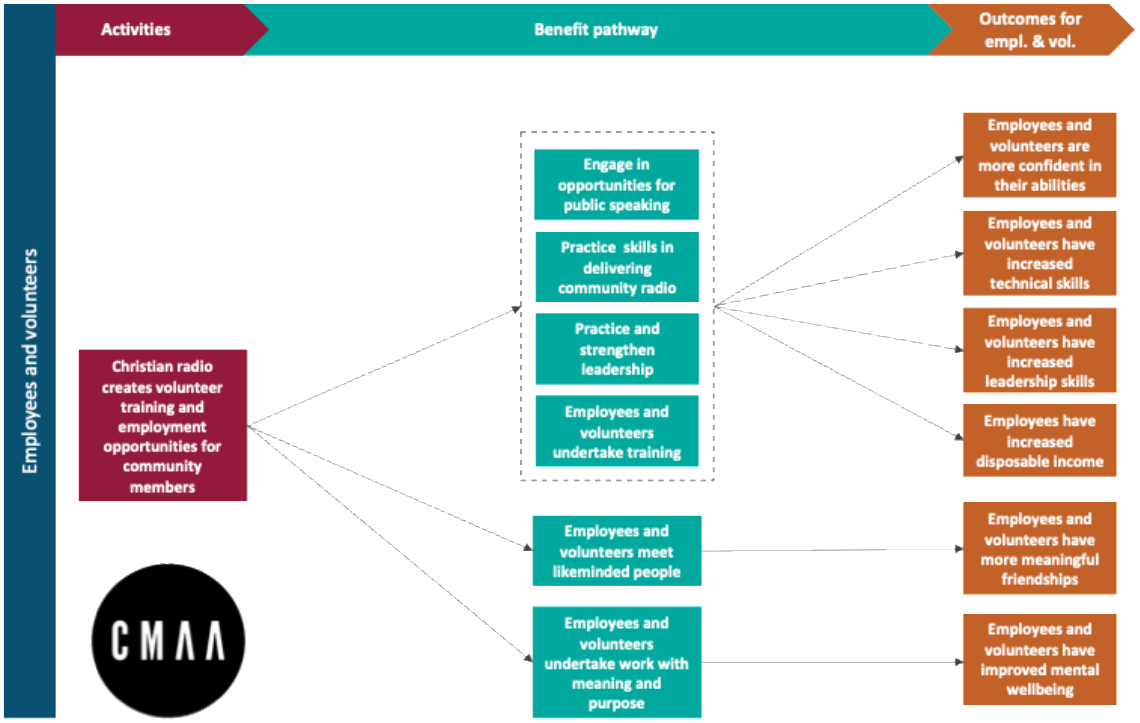


Figure 6 Outcomes for CMAA member stations' employees and volunteers

The value of the employee and volunteer outcomes are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6 Value by outcome for CMAA member stations' employees

Stakeholder	Outcome	Value	% of value to stakeholder
Employees	Improved mental wellbeing	$2,600,000	52%
	Increased disposable income	$1,700,000	34%
	Increased leadership skills	$250,000	5%
	Increased technical skills	$245,000	5%
	More meaningful friendships	$163,000	3%
	More confident in their abilities	$75,000	1%
Volunteers	Improved mental wellbeing	$9,400,000	74%
	More meaningful friendships	$1,600,000	13%
	More confident in their abilities	$871,000	7%
	Increased technical skills	$520,000	4%
	Increased leadership skills	$329,000	3%



Government

As we saw in the previous section, being employed provides valuable economic and social benefits for individuals. In addition to the benefits to the individual, there is also value for government from increased employment, resulting from reduced benefits and increased tax revenue.

About one quarter of employees of CMAA member stations reported they would **highly likely be unemployed** without community radio. For all other employees who believe they would be employed without community radio, there is no additional benefit claimed.

Table 7 Value by outcome for government created by CMAA member stations

Outcome	Value	% of value to stakeholder
Reduced benefits	$1,100,000	77%
Increased tax revenue	$332,000	23%

Sponsors

Sponsors of CMAA member stations include government, corporate or charitable organisations. These organisations can reach the audience of member stations to promote commercial, government and charitable causes and campaigns.

The outcomes for sponsors are depicted in Figure 7 and Figure 8.

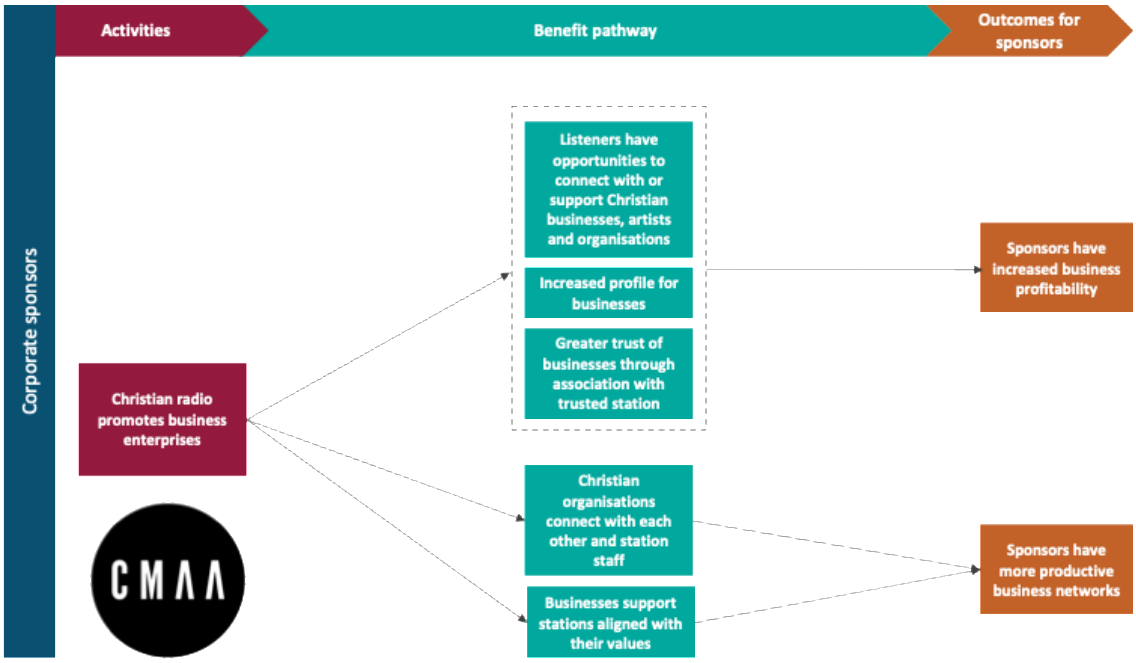


Figure 7 Outcomes for CMAA member stations' corporate sponsors

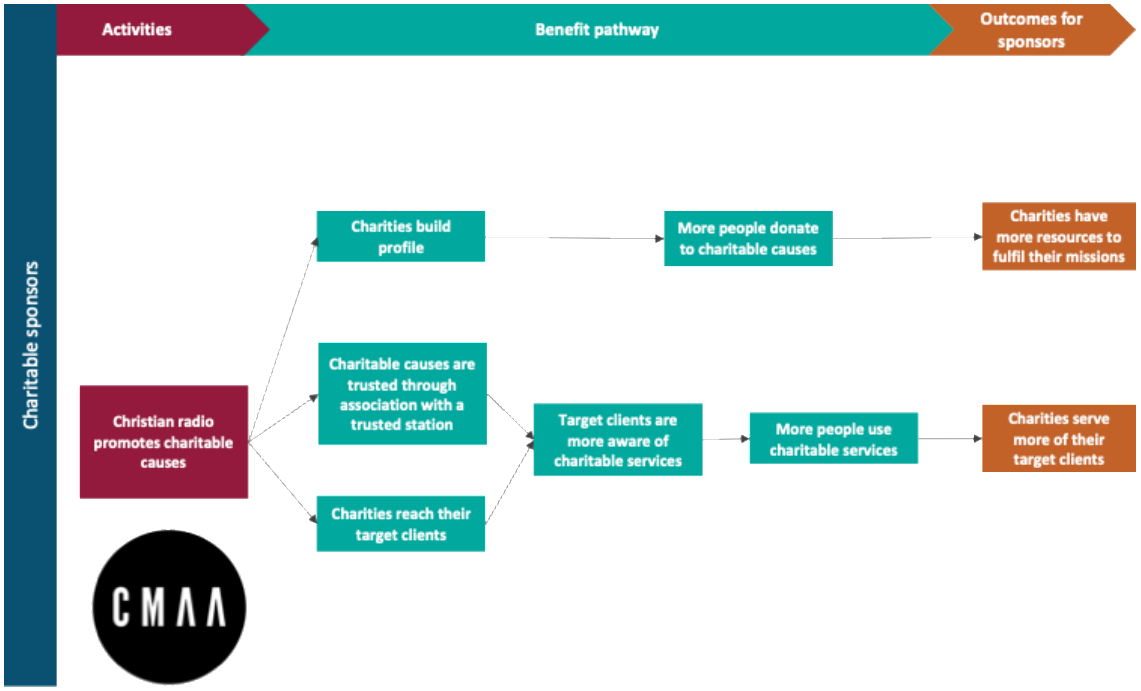


Figure 8 Outcomes for CMAA member stations' charitable sponsors

Feed the Hungry

Feed the Hungry is a charity partner of CMAA.

Since beginning CMAA's three-year partnership with Feed The Hungry in 2023, member stations have raised a total of $2,933,688. The total number of donors over three years is 22,495, showing the ability of community radio to mobilise people towards action.[10]

The value of the sponsor outcomes for which there was sufficient data to value is summarised in Table 8. As noted above, the value for corporate sponsors is understated. As the total number of corporate sponsors is unknown, only survey respondents were counted as receiving value.

Table 8 Value by outcome for sponsors of CMAA member stations

	Outcome	Value	% of value to stakeholder
Charitable sponsors	More resources to fulfil their missions	$23,400,000[11]	>99%
Corporate sponsors	More productive business networks	$40,000[12]	<1%

[10] Source: CMAA Sector Partnerships Lead, 2025.
[11] Based on actual donations received for charity partners FY24, discounted to account for the fact that some people would still have donated without Christian broadcasting.
[12] Based on 48 sponsors achieving this outcome.

I have friends who have connected with, and supported organisations I've been made aware of through my job.

– CMAA member station employee or volunteer

I have heard about Christian charitable organisations and I have been able to participate in their fundraising campaigns and make a real difference as the station has rallied the community to get behind the cause to make a profound impact.

– CMAA member station listener

Over my 20 plus years I have seen countless charities, non-profits, ministries and churches benefit from the station through exposure to the Christian and greater community.

– CMAA member station employee or volunteer

Love seeing local not-for-profits and community groups get to use a community platform to increase their impact, get more volunteers and expand their reach.

– CMAA member station employee or volunteer

Community organisations now have a space that they can publicise what they do in a budget-friendly and community-oriented way.

– CMAA member station employee or volunteer

Has helped take my business from starting out, when I had to have a full time job, to be a fully functioning profitable business where I work full time.

– CMAA sponsor

Over the years the business has grown through referrals from listeners of the station.

– CMAA sponsor

Acquired new supporters, who align with our mission and Christian identity. Raised awareness of our charity. Inspired Australians to support our charity through live broadcasts from our field projects.

– CMAA sponsor

Created a long-lasting partnership, that has been mutually beneficial to the station and our charity.

– CMAA sponsor

Christian radio listeners gave us enough donations to give 400,000+ people in developing countries cataract surgery so they could see again.

– CMAA sponsor

I consider my sponsorship more as tithing, I don't really expect a financial return.

– CMAA sponsor

We get a better range of clients and also feel like it has assisted with building trust working in an industry with a lot of dodgy practices.

– CMAA sponsor

I think it has helped attract employees that are aligned with religious values.

– CMAA sponsor

We are a charity with low brand awareness generally, but our partnership with Christian radio means many more people know who we are and what we do.

– CMAA sponsor



5. Disability Community Broadcasting

5.1 SROI findings

A monetary and in-kind investment of $9,675,000 by Disability Media and other contributors creates value of $70,600,000 for stakeholders. This shows that Disability Media is creating positive social value for the investment made.

> For every $1 invested in Disability Media, $7.30 of value is created.

The SROI process requires judgement and assumptions and extrapolation carries the risk of errors in the data and findings. For this reason, different assumptions were modelled to produce a range that is more reflective of the indicative nature of the ratio. The ratio could range from $7.30 to $9.97. Even when conservative inputs are modelled, the ratio remains positive.

The investment required to broadcast Disability Media is presented in Table 9. This includes expenditure of the stations and the value of the time contributed by over 1,000 volunteers.

Table 9 Summary of investment in Disability Media FY24

Description of investment	Type of investment	Value of investment
Expenditure of Disability community stations FY24, including transmission, salary and other	Monetary	$4,041,000
Volunteer time	In kind	$5,634,000

Source: Community Broadcasting Association Australia data and Think Impact analysis

A summary of the value by stakeholder group is provided in Figure 9 and Table 10. These results are discussed in the following sections.



Figure 9 Total social value by stakeholder created by DMA member stations

Table 10 Social value per stakeholder created by DMA member stations

Stakeholder	Total social value	Number of stakeholders[13]	Value per stakeholder	% of value
Listeners	$49,200,000	276,000	$178	70%
Volunteers	$ 20,700,000	1,057	$19,584	29%
Employees	$610,000	30	$20,333	1%
Government	$117,000	1	$117,000	<1%
Total	**$70,627,000**			

The key findings of the analysis are:

- 70% of the value is experienced by **listeners**. While the value per listener is small, there are 276,000 listeners across Australia. Increasing ability to participate in civic life is the most valuable outcome for listeners.
- **Volunteers** experience almost $20,000 of value per person. The most valuable outcome for volunteers is improved mental wellbeing.
- **Employees** experience a similar amount of value to volunteers. Similarly, the most valuable outcome to employees is improved mental wellbeing .
- About 15% of employees reported they would be **highly likely to be unemployed** without community radio. Being employed provides valuable economic and social benefits for individuals as well as representing value to **government** through reduced benefits and increased tax revenue.
- It is likely the total value, and therefore the ratio, is understated as it has not been possible to calculate the full value experienced by government. The contribution made by community broadcasting to government policy objectives, such as civic engagement, social inclusion and strengthening cultural and national identity has not been valued. It has also not been possible to value outcomes for sponsors, as only a small number of sponsors were able to provide input to this research.

5.2 Outcomes by stakeholder

Listeners

It is estimated that DMA member stations reach 276,000 listeners each week,[14] predominantly people with a print disability, including those with learning, physical, vision and literacy impairments. Listeners are provided with easy access to daily print media to underpin informed opinions and decisions, facilitating full participation in cultural, economic, political and social life. In this way, Disability Media contributes to addressing digital exclusion for people with a disability. Digital exclusion remains prevalent for people with a disability and results in social and economic disadvantage.[15] Furthermore the SROI research shows that Disability Media plays a significant role in addressing loneliness, especially for people who may experience isolation due to geography and/or disability.

15% of listeners are in regional and rural areas, and the remainder located in metropolitan areas.

[13] McNair yellowSquares, *Community Radio Listener Survey*, December 2024.
[14] McNair yellowSquares, *Community Radio Listener Survey*, December 2024.
[15] AIHW, *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 Outcomes Framework: 3rd Annual report*, January 2025.

According to the Community Radio Listener Survey[16], 64% of listeners are aged between 25 and 54, 18% are between 15 and 24, 13% are aged 65 and over and 5% are aged between 55 and 64. 62% of listeners identify as male and 38% identify as female.

The outcomes experienced by listeners of DMA member stations are depicted in Figure 10. The activities delivered by the radio stations result in a range of short and medium term changes for listeners. The changes for listeners that are more significant and long lasting are depicted in orange; these outcomes are measured and valued as part of the SROI.

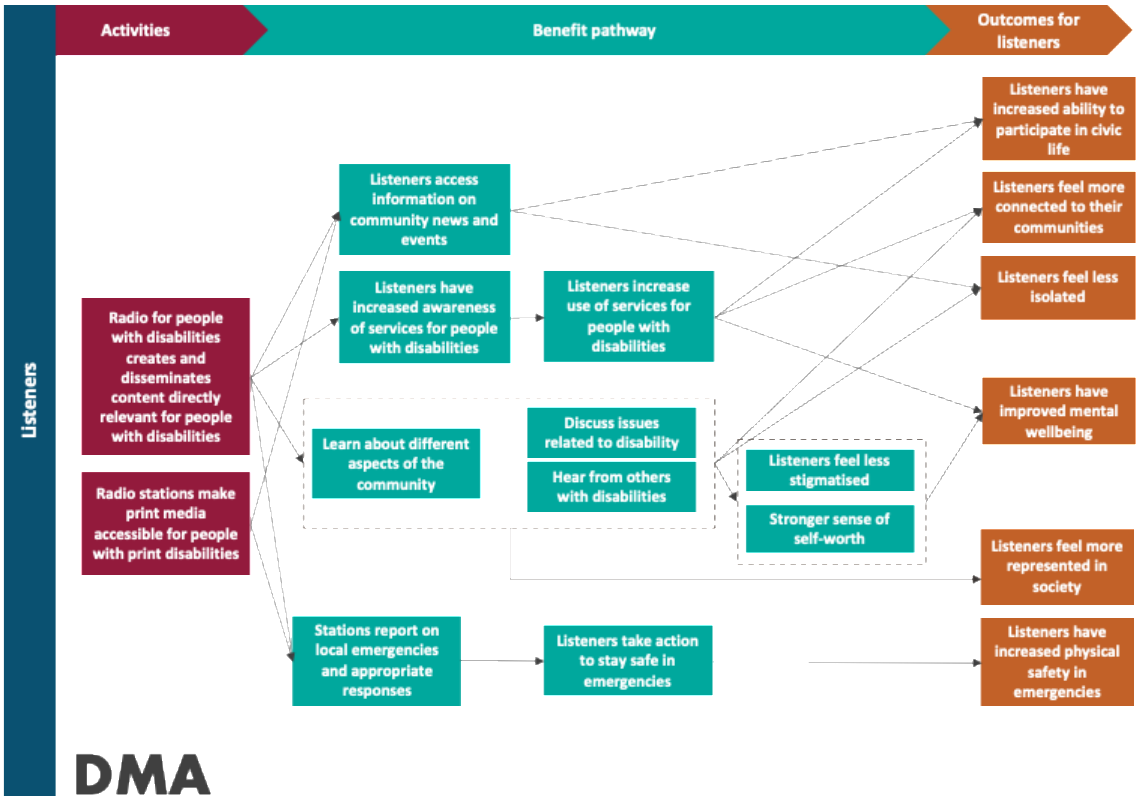


Figure 10 Outcomes for listeners of DMA member stations

The value of the listener outcomes is summarised in Table 11. Listeners are the largest beneficiary stakeholder group experiencing 70% of the total value.

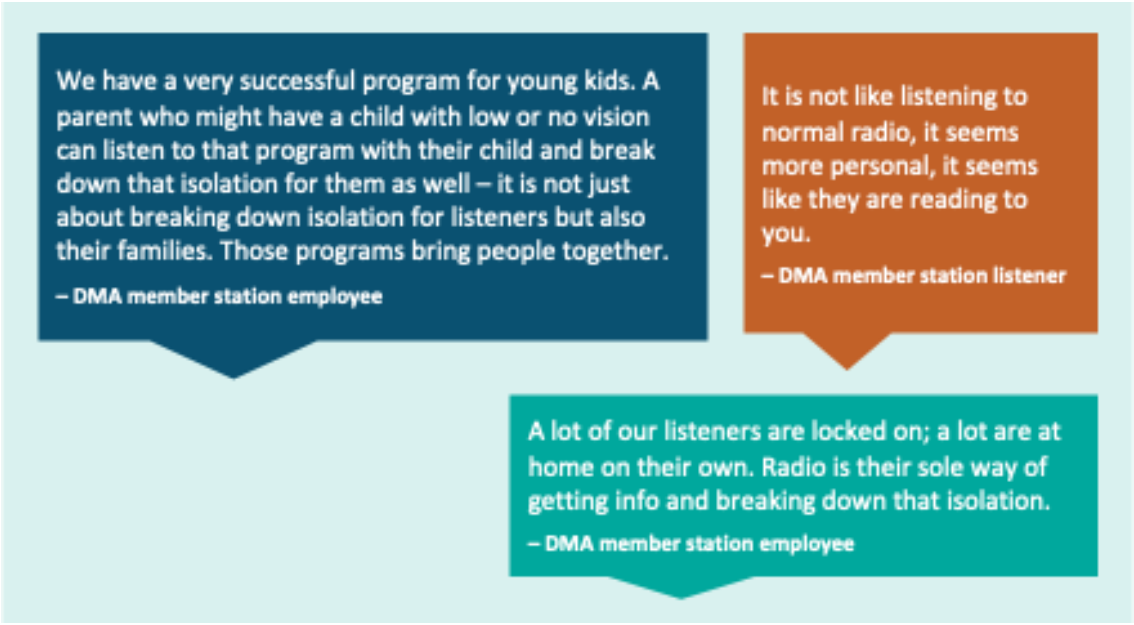
Table 11 Value by outcome for listeners of DMA member stations

Outcome	Value	% of value to stakeholder
Increased ability to participate in civic life	$21,700,000	44%
Feel less isolated	$11,400,000	23%
Feeling safer	$5,300,000	11%
More connected to their communities	$3,900,000	8%

[16] McNair yellowSquares, *Community Radio Listener Survey*, December 2024.

Improved mental wellbeing	$3,300,000	7%
Feel more represented in society	$3,500,000	7%





Employees and volunteers

DMA radio stations employ 30 people and benefit from the time and expertise of over 1,000 volunteers.

Volunteers and staff prepare and read from a broad range of national, state and local newspapers and other high-turnover print materials, including magazines. They also serialise books for broadcast and broadcast important information segments including government information.

The outcomes experienced by employees and volunteers are depicted in Figure 11. The experience provides employees and volunteers with the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge, as well as be part of meaningful work. The changes for employees and volunteers that are more significant and long lasting are depicted in orange; these outcomes are measured and valued as part of the SROI.

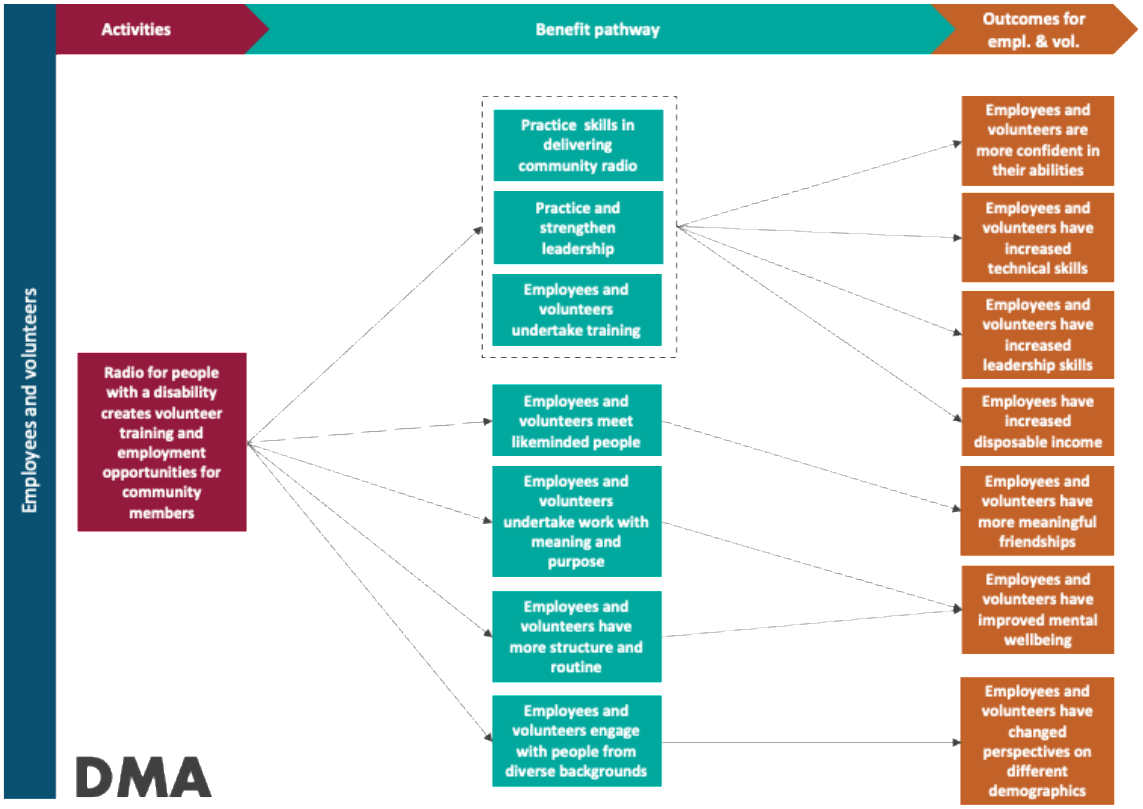


Figure 11 Outcomes for DMA member stations' employees and volunteers

The value of the employee and volunteer outcomes is summarised in Table 12.

.

Table 12 Value by outcome for DMA member stations' employees and volunteers

Stakeholder	Outcome	Value	% of value to stakeholder
Employees	Improved mental wellbeing	$246,000	40%
	Increased disposable income	$125,000	21%
	Changed perspectives on different demographics	$108,000	18%
	More meaningful friendships	$47,000	8%
	Increased technical skills	$35,000	6%
	More confident in their abilities	$25,000	4%
	Increased leadership skills	$23,000	4%
Volunteers	Improved mental wellbeing	$15,200,000	73%
	Changed perspectives on different demographics	$2,100,000	10%
	More confident in their abilities	$2,000,000	10%
	More meaningful friendships	$827,000	4%
	Increased leadership skills	$298,000	1%
	Increased technical skills	$286,000	1%

I volunteer to get involved and help my physical and mental health issues. I also feel like I'm earning my disability pension.

– DMA member station employee or volunteer

Doing radio has given me the confidence to be myself, for probably the first time in my life. That extra confidence is just amazing to me.

– DMA member station employee or volunteer

The crunch of it for me is to effect change within the wider community for a greater understanding of disability.

– DMA member station employee or volunteer

It gives me a better understanding of the different demographics in society and their needs.

– DMA member station employee or volunteer

I've thought differently about communication and understanding. I've learnt about the importance of being able to paint pictures with words.

– DMA member station employee or volunteer

Without my volunteering my life would collapse. I would become more isolated. I wouldn't feel worthwhile as a human being.

– DMA member station employee or volunteer

I've seen a lot of people become more open-minded and broaden their experience from volunteering with us. They've seen the challenges of others who are blind or have low vision.

– DMA member station employee or volunteer

One of our volunteers is long-term unemployed and this is now his job and his purpose. It has given him so much energy and focus. He is blind and has not had a lot of connections in his community, but now he is being active and doing interviews for his program, so he has this real purpose.

– DMA member station employee or volunteer

Government

As we saw in the previous section, being employed provides valuable economic and social benefits for individuals. In addition to the benefits to the individual, there is also value for government resulting from people being employed through reduced benefit payments and increased tax revenue.

About 15% of employees of DMA member stations reported they would highly likely be unemployed without community radio. This is less than the corresponding figure for Christian Broadcasting (25%) and slightly more than that the corresponding figure for ethnic and multicultural broadcasting (10%). For all other employees who believe they would be employed without community radio, there is no additional benefit claimed.

Table 13 Value by outcome for government created by DMA member stations

Outcome	Value	% of value to stakeholder
Can reallocate benefits for people who would otherwise be unemployed	$90,000	77%
Collects increased taxes from people who have increased incomes	$27,000	23%

Sponsors

Sponsors of DMA member stations include government, community and charitable organisations as well as a small number of corporate sponsors. These organisations can reach the audience of member stations to promote businesses, services and campaigns.

The outcomes for sponsors have been described here, but they have not been valued due to the low response rate to the survey of sponsors.



Figure 12 Outcomes for DMA member stations' corporate sponsors

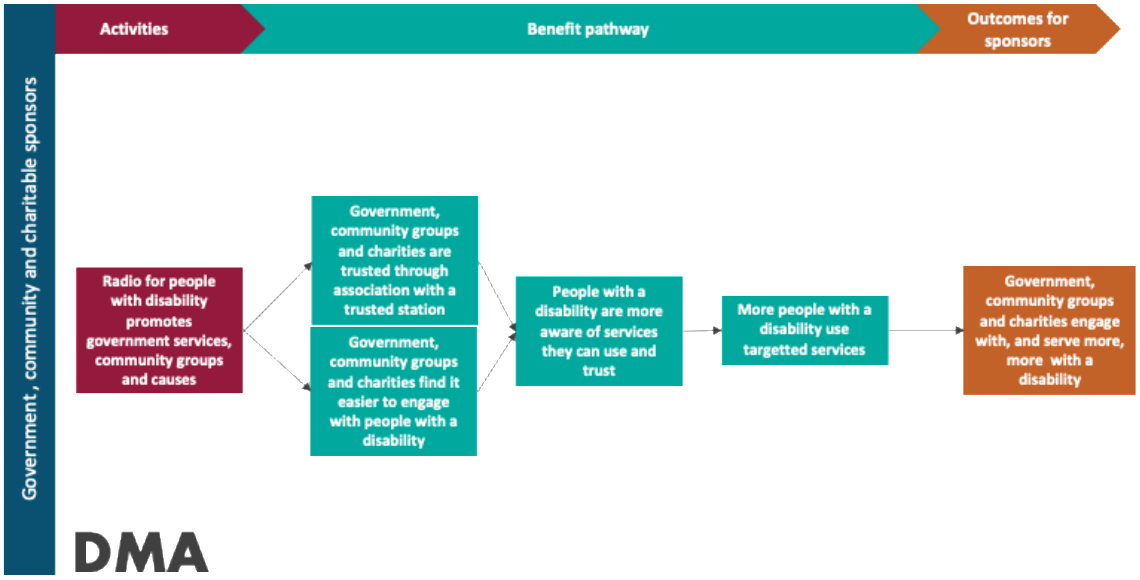


Figure 13 Outcomes for DMA member stations' community and charitable sponsors

We chose to engage with disability media because the audience is perfectly engaged in the content we want to deliver.
– DMA member station sponsor

We ensure disability media is in our media plans so we can reach the community and target people from different backgrounds or abilities.
– DMA member station sponsor

We share events that are coming up and draw awareness to what we offer in the disability sector.
– DMA member station sponsor

We use disability community radio to directly reach communities. We communicate important government policies and updates.
– DMA member station sponsor

Audio format is a major win for us. Getting knowledge to people to help them in their day-to-day life in that format is very valuable for us.
– DMA member station sponsor

Using community radio is reaching all sections of the community. It's more relevant – print media only goes so far and posting on websites is only accessible to certain parts of community.
– DMA member station sponsor

Community radio like DMA can reach a lot of other avenues that we wouldn't otherwise be able to. It helps us continue to grow our pathways.

– DMA member station sponsor

Being involved with DMA has changed my perception on how important it is for the community and how much people use it, not just people with a disability.

– DMA member station sponsor

DMA is a very valuable avenue to reach our community … it's very difficult to find people in the CALD community who are blind or vision impaired because of cultural stigma.

– DMA member station sponsor



6. Ethnic and Multicultural Community Broadcasting

Note: For the purposes of this report 'NEMBC member stations' and 'NEMBC members' refers to multicultural programs and stations represented through NEMBC membership of a nominated person or affiliated person.

6.1 SROI findings

A monetary and in-kind investment of $13,978,000 in ethnic community broadcasting creates value of $64,112,000 for stakeholders. This shows that ethnic community broadcasting is creating positive social value for the investment made.

> For every $1 invested in ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting, $4.59 of value is created.

The SROI process requires judgement and assumptions and extrapolation carries the risk of errors in the data and findings. For this reason, different assumptions were modelled to produce a range that is more reflective of the indicative nature of the ratio. The ratio could range from $4.59 to $6.26. Even when conservative inputs are modelled, the ratio remains positive. The range specified is known to underestimate the value being created because the number of listeners does not include the number of listeners of ethnic and multicultural programs broadcast on generalist community radio stations.

The investment required is presented in Table 14. This includes expenditure of the stations and the value of the time contributed by almost 2,000 volunteers.

Table 14 Summary of investment in ethnic community broadcasting FY24

Description of investment	Type of investment	Value of investment
Expenditure of Ethnic community stations FY24, including transmission, salary and other	Monetary	$3,633,000
Volunteer time	In kind	$10,313,000
Estimated expenditure of generalist stations on multicultural broadcasting	Monetary	$32,000[17]

Source: CBAA data and calculation of programming time

A summary of the value by stakeholder group is provided in Figure 14 and Table 15. These results are discussed in the following sections.

[17] Based on estimates from NEMBC of the number of multicultural broadcasting hours on generalist stations and a cost per hour.



Figure 14 Total social value by stakeholder created by NEMBC members and broadcasters

Table 15 Social value per stakeholder created by NEMBC members and broadcasters

Stakeholder	Total social value	Number of stakeholders[18]	Value per stakeholder	% of value
Listeners	$54,600,000	358,000	$153	85%
Volunteers	$9,200,000	1,935	$4,755	14%
Employees	$238,000	36	$6,611	<1%
Government	$69,000	1	$69,000	<1%
Total	**$64,107,000**			

The key findings of the analysis are:

- 85% of the value is experienced by **listeners**. While the value per listener is small, there are, conservatively, almost 360,000 listeners each week across Australia. Increased ability to participate in civic life is the most valuable outcome for listeners. It is likely that the value for listeners is higher as there are many more listeners than estimated. The number of listeners of multilingual and multicultural programs broadcast on general community radio stations cannot be estimated.
- **Volunteers** experience almost $5,000 of value per person. The most valuable outcome for volunteers is changed views on different demographics in the community.
- The 36 **employees** of the sector each experience almost $7,000 worth of value each. The majority of the value for employees relates to increased disposable income.
- About 10% of employees reported they would **highly likely be unemployed** without community radio. Being employed provides valuable economic and social benefits for individuals as well as representing value to **government**. When people who would otherwise be unemployed have employment, they are not claiming unemployment benefits. In addition, people in employment are paying taxes to the government that would not have been paid otherwise, resulting in increased tax revenue to the government.
- It is likely that the total value, and therefore the ratio, is understated as it has not been possible to calculate the full value experienced by government. The contribution made by community broadcasting to government policy objectives, such as civic engagement, social inclusion and

[18] McNair yellowSquares, *Community Radio Listener Survey*, December 2024.

strengthening cultural and national identity has not been valued. It has also not been possible to value outcomes for sponsors, as only a small number of sponsors were able to provide input to this research.

6.2 Outcomes by stakeholder

Listeners

It is estimated that NEMBC members and broadcasters reach 358,000 listeners across Australia each week. Just 3% of these listeners are located in regional and rural areas, with the bulk residing in metropolitan areas. Estimating audience for this sector is difficult because, in addition to dedicated multilingual radio stations, there are many generalist community radio stations in cities and towns broadcasting multilingual and multicultural programs. These listeners are not captured within the 358,000.

According to the Community Radio Listener survey[19], the majority (70%) of listeners are aged 25–54. 63% of listeners identify as male and 37% identify as female.

The outcomes experienced by listeners are depicted in Figure 15. The activities delivered result in a range of short and medium term changes for listeners. The changes for listeners that are more significant and long lasting are depicted in orange; these outcomes are measured and valued as part of the SROI.

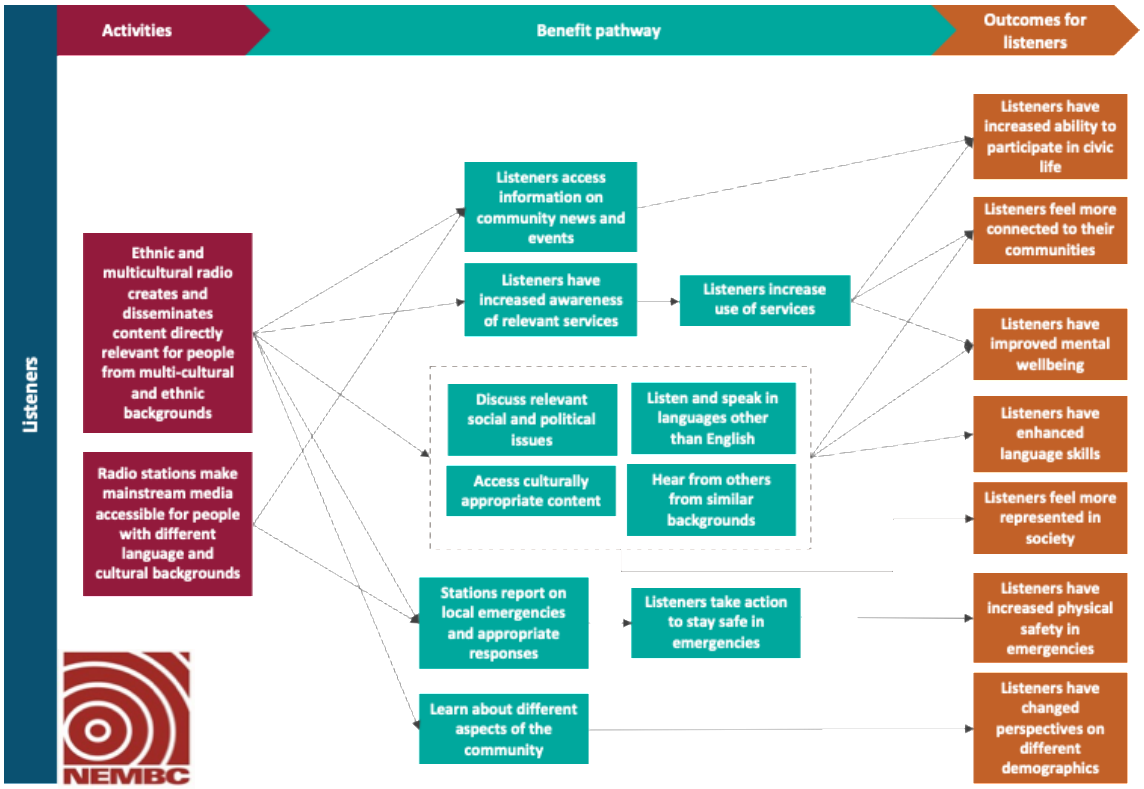


Figure 15 Outcomes for listeners of NEMBC members

The value of the listener outcomes is summarised in Table 16. Listeners are the largest beneficiary stakeholder group experiencing 85% of the total value.

[19] McNair yellowSquares, *Community Radio Listener Survey*, December 2024.

Table 16 Value by outcome for listeners of NEMBC members

Outcome	Value	% of value to stakeholder
Increased ability to participate in civic life	$29,600,000	54%
Improved mental wellbeing	$10,100,000	18%
Feel more connected to their communities	$6,100,000	11%
Feel more represented in society	$4,500,000	8%
Changed perspectives on different demographics	$2,700,000	5%
Enhanced language skills	$1,000,000	2%
Feeling safer in emergencies	$700,000	1%





Employees and volunteers

The ethnic community broadcasting sector employs 36 people and benefits from the time and expertise of almost 2,000 volunteers.

The outcomes experienced by employees and volunteers are depicted in Figure 16. The experience provides employees and volunteers with the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge, as well as be part of meaningful work. The changes for employees and volunteers that are more significant and long lasting are depicted in orange; these outcomes are measured and valued as part of the SROI.

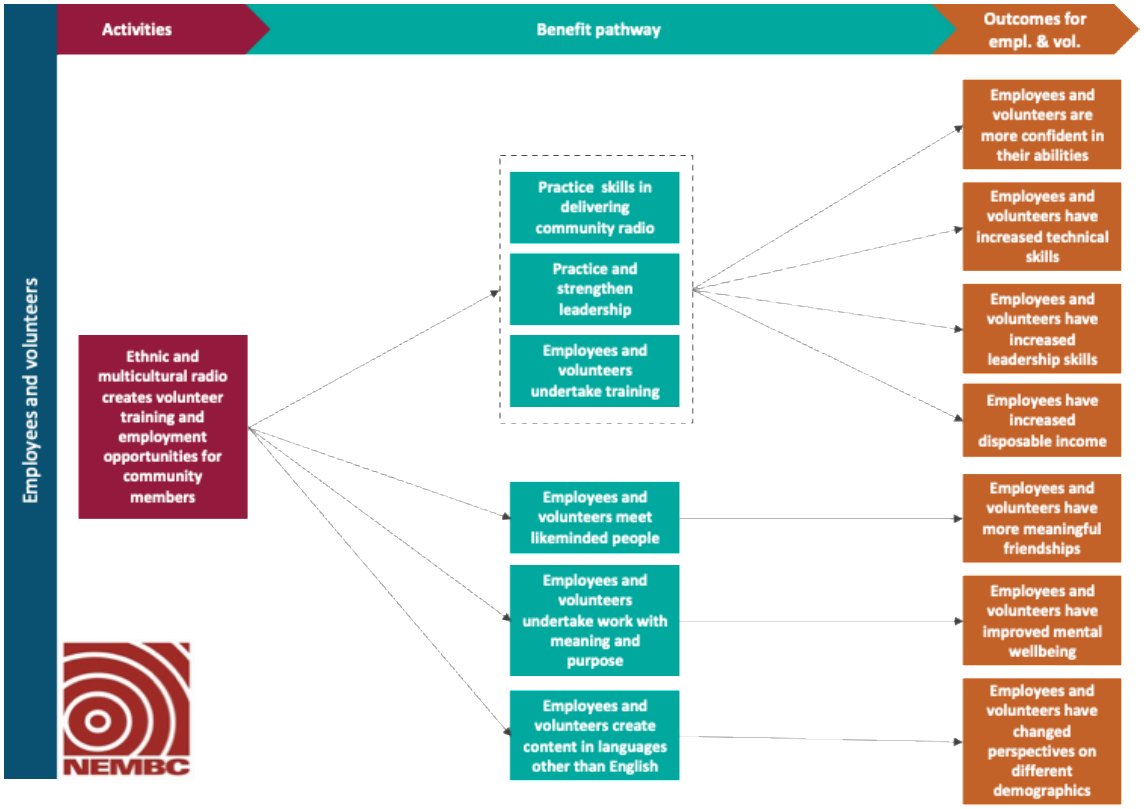


Figure 16 Outcomes for NEMBC members' employees and volunteers

The value of the employee and volunteer outcomes is summarised in Table 17.



Table 17 Value by outcome for NEMBC members' employees and volunteers

Stakeholder	Outcome	Value	% of value to stakeholder
Employees	Increased disposable income	$82,000	34%
	Increased leadership skills	$55,000	23%
	Increased technical skills	$37,000	16%
	More confident in their abilities	$29,000	12%
	More meaningful friendships	$12,000	5%
	Improved mental wellbeing	$12,000	5%
	Changed perspectives on different demographics	$11,000	5%
Volunteers	Changed perspectives on different demographics	$2,600,000	28%
	More meaningful friendships	$1,800,000	20%
	More confident in their abilities	$1,700,000	18%
	Increased leadership skills	$1,500,000	16%
	Improved mental wellbeing	$878,000	10%
	Increased technical skills	$733,000	8%



Government

As we saw in the previous section, being employed provides valuable economic and social benefits for individuals. In addition to the benefits to the individual, there is also value for government resulting from people being employed. People in employment are not claiming unemployment benefits and are paying taxes to the government.

About 10% of employees of NEMBC member stations reported they would highly likely be unemployed without community radio. For these employees, the avoided payment of benefits and increased tax revenue can be seen as a value to government. For all other employees who believe they would be employed without community radio, there is no additional benefit claimed.

Table 18 Value by outcome for government created by NEMBC members and broadcasters

Outcome	Value	% of value to stakeholder
Can reallocate benefits for people who would otherwise be unemployed	$53,000	77%
Collects increased taxes from people who have increased incomes	$16,000	23%

Sponsors

Sponsors of NEMBC members include corporate, community and charitable organisations. These organisations can reach the audience of member stations to promote businesses, services and campaigns.

The outcomes for sponsors have been described here, but they have not been valued due to the low response rate to the survey of sponsors.

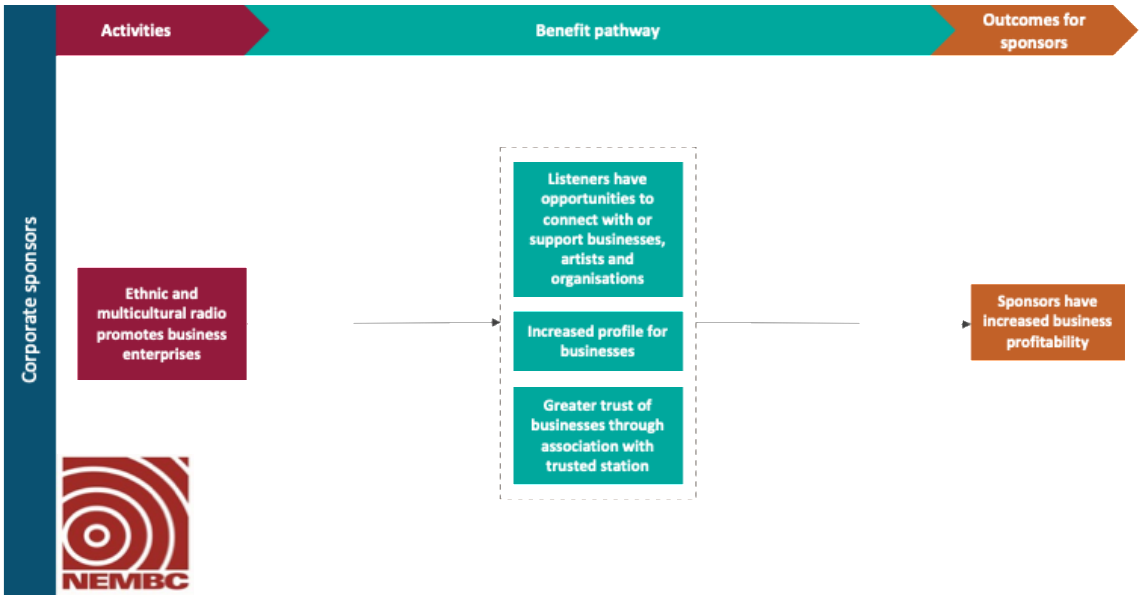


Figure 17 Outcomes for corporate sponsors of NEMBC members and broadcasters

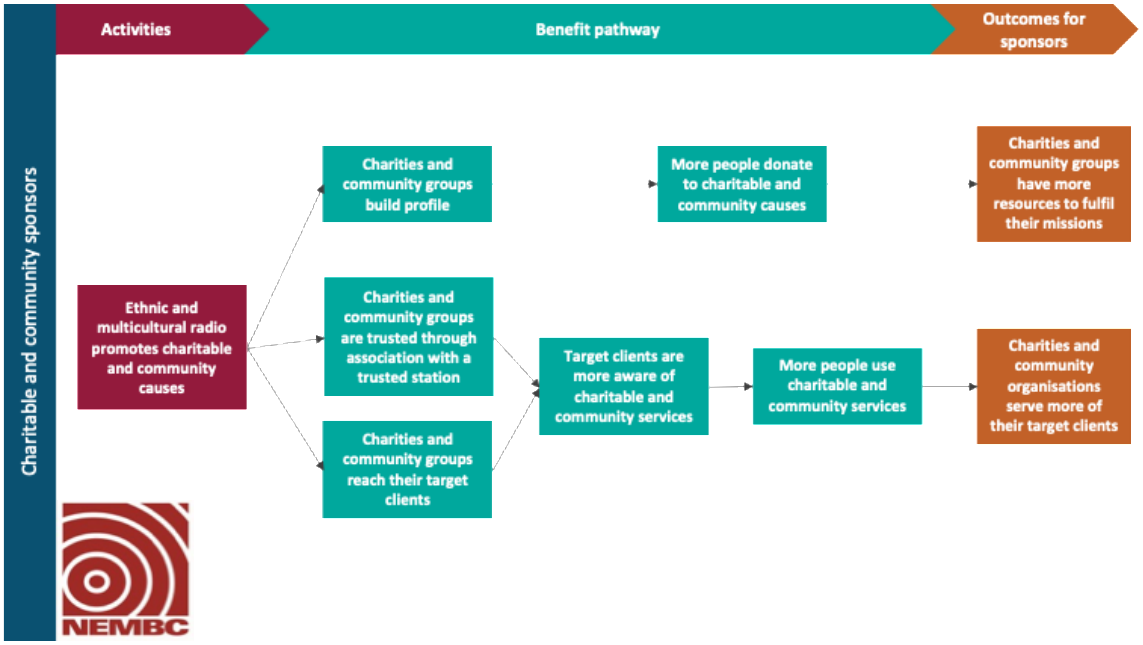


Figure 18 Outcomes for community and charitable sponsors of NEMBC members and broadcasters

Multicultural radio has helped us to make connections with multicultural communities and domestic and family violence services. It's helping this project fulfill its mission.

– NEMBC member station sponsor

Ethnic and multicultural radio can increase visibility for local businesses.

– NEMBC member station volunteer

Businesses that need the customer base can advertise on multicultural radio to boost their business among the multicultural cohort.

– NEMBC member station employee

7. First Nations Community Broadcasting

Results from the survey conducted for this research and interviews conducted at First Nations Media Australia's 2024 CONVERGE conference are presented in this section. Due to more limited data being available, it has not been possible to calculate the Social Return on Investment in First Nations media.

However, a social return on investment analysis in 2017 found that Indigenous Broadcasting Services achieved outcomes in four interrelated areas:

1. Communication
2. Stronger communities
3. Culture strengthened
4. Meaningful employment and participation.[20]

The research conducted for this project supports the hypothesis that there continue to be outcomes in these four areas in 2024.

7.1 Survey findings

FNMA member stations provide trusted, local information to listeners. Member stations celebrate Culture, give Blak perspectives and give a voice to communities.

In the survey conducted for this research, 29 respondents were FNMA member radio station listeners – four who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, 21 who identified as non-Indigenous and four who preferred not to say. Key survey findings are provided below.



[20] Social Ventures Australia *More than radio – a community asset: Social Return on Investment analyses of Indigenous Broadcasting Services* (2017).



7.2 Outcomes by stakeholder

Listeners

The outcomes experienced by listeners are depicted in Figure 19. The activities delivered result in a range of short and medium term changes for listeners. The changes for listeners that are more significant and long lasting are depicted in orange.

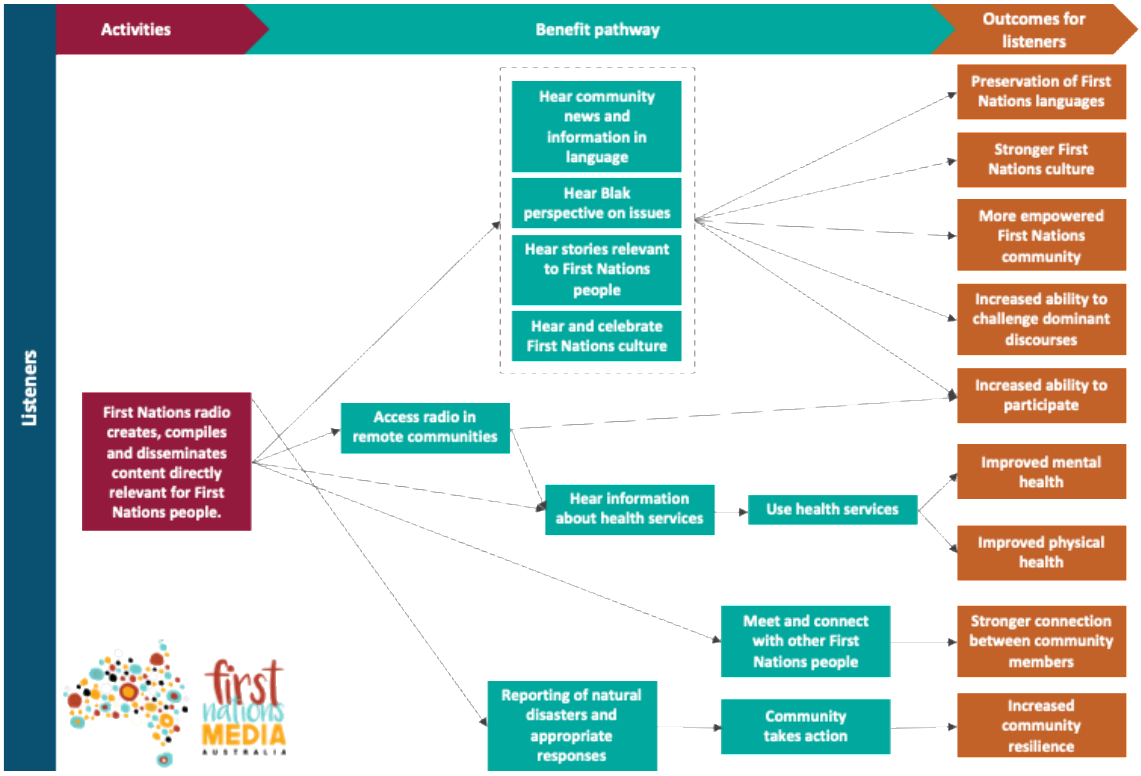


Figure 19 Outcomes for listeners of FNMA member stations and broadcasters

> We get to tell our story, our way. We are often portrayed negatively and that's not all our story.
>
> **– First Nations media sector representative**

> We only see one type of face on our TV screens and hear one type of voice on our radio. It's not reflective of the diversity that we have in Australia. [First Nations radio] allows people within groups who do not fit the general target audience get to see themselves represented and hear stories about themselves.
>
> **– First Nations media sector representative**

> The radio allows us to connect with people and allows people to get their news. [Without it] we would miss out on hearing the stories of regional and remote areas.
>
> **– FNMA listener**

> First Nations voices get drowned out by the colonial terminology and the systems of mainstream media.
>
> **– FNMA member station employee**

Listeners can hear information in language and First Nations tone, e.g. Federal election information.

– FNMA member station employee

Without First Nations media Indigenous cultures and Indigenous protocol would not be shared. We would not be amplifying voices of Mob. They wouldn't have a platform to share their stories and their voices. We would only have people speaking on behalf of Indigenous communities. We are also reclaiming our language.

– First Nations media sector representative

Mob that are not able to read the newspaper can actually listen and it's more palatable to listen to radio.

– FNMA member station employee

Employees

The First Nations community broadcasting sector provides employment opportunities in a culturally safe environment. It provides a way for young people to gain employment and a longer-term career pathway.

The outcomes experienced by employees are depicted in Figure 20. The experience provides employees with increased confidence and purpose, the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge, and forging stronger connections with other community members. The changes for employees that are more significant and long lasting are depicted in orange.

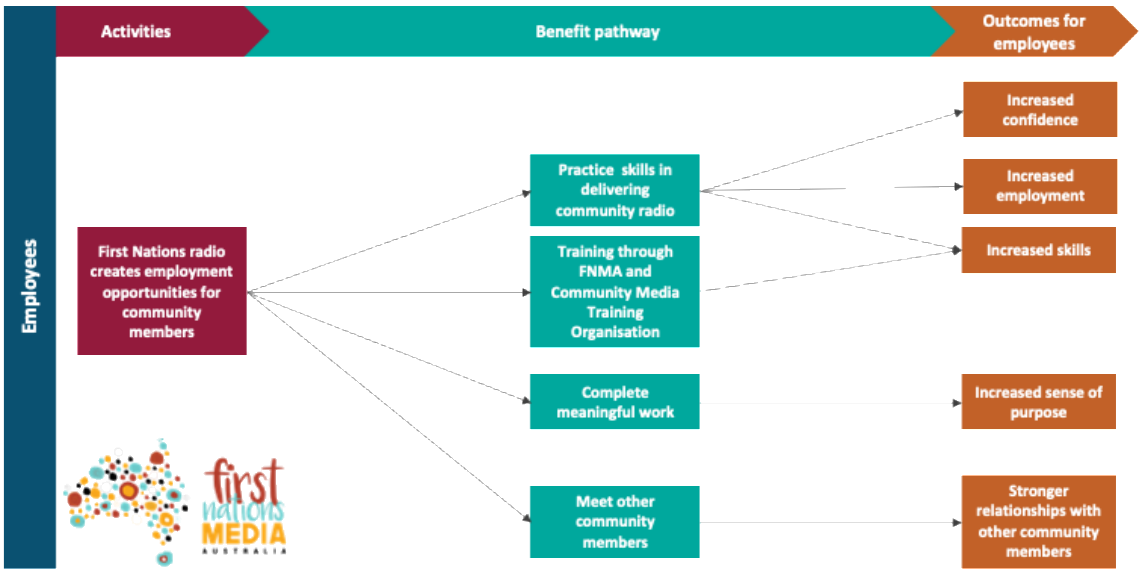


Figure 20 Outcomes for FNMA member stations' employees

It's a pathway to continue my education and travel overseas.

– FNMA member station employee

Staff need a skillset to work the panel technically. A Cert 3 in Screen Media gives you those skills. It's also important to be well-versed in media law. A 4–5 hour online self-paced course or refresher is best for people to stay current.

– Community Radio sector representative

The demographics doing training used to be retirees … but post-pandemic there are more people starting their careers in community radio. And mid-career changers. From my experience it's more accessible to be part of a community station now. You used to have to go to a studio. Now you can do all the courses online and people can record weekly shows remotely.

– Community Radio sector representative

It's opened so many doors in my career and community and travel.

– FNMA member station employee



8. Conclusion and future directions

8.1 The value of community broadcasting

Although each of the four sectors examined here has different funding structures, employment mixes and stakeholders, there are common themes about creating connection within and between communities and catering to specific needs that are not met by public and commercial media.

As well as creating connection and belonging, community radio genuinely improves the mental health of many Australians who are feeling isolated, feeling a lack of connection or feeling a lack of hope.

Training, employment and volunteering opportunities are created by the sector that are not created anywhere else.

As a free, localised, trusted and accessible media, there is clearly a strong place for community radio in Australia.

8.2 Continuing to create value

Community radio needs to continue to evolve with technological advances to continue to be free and accessible. This requires investment. Government should invest to ensure that community radio can continue to fill the void left by other media. Specifically for each sector:

- With additional investment, Disability Media Australia can build on its strong history to work towards serving people with a range of disabilities beyond print disabilities. Disability Media can continue to contribute to the well-being and resilience of people living with disability across Australia.
- Christian Media can continue to build strong communities by supporting mental health, employment, events and significant fundraising for charity partners.
- Ethnic and Multicultural media can invest in data collection to understand the listenership of multiethnic media across Australia and produce tailored and important programming to reach more underserved audiences.

It was also noted by stakeholders that Government should further utilise the sponsorship opportunities to reach audiences that are otherwise difficult to reach, especially in First Nations Media where they can leverage the trust built by First Nation-run media to promote important messages for First Nations communities.

Finally, as natural disasters become more frequent, trusted and localised emergency broadcasting are already becoming more important. Maintenance of, and investment in, community broadcasting will strengthen media infrastructure and capacity to cater to local needs in every community.

8.3 Research recommendations

The following are recommendations for the community broadcasting sector, to continue to build upon this project.

- Continue to run the outcomes survey biannually, or after any major sector changes, with a shortened set of questions, in order to confirm and validate the findings.
- Further exploration could be done on regional differences between listeners, volunteers and employees, providing an opportunity to share learnings.

- Data collection conducted by CBAA is very valuable to the sector to give a broad picture of the sector and should continue to be supported.
- Research could be extended to explore the drivers of sponsorship of community radio, especially why there are very few in First Nations media and how this can be addressed.



Appendix A Methodology

What is SROI?

SROI is a framework for measuring and accounting for the broader concept of social value. It tells the story of how change is being created for the people and organisations that experience or contribute to that change. It does this by identifying, measuring and valuing outcomes that may be social, environmental or economic in nature.

SROI is an approach that draws on well-established methodologies in economics, accounting and social research. It is underpinned by eight principles which ensure the analysis understands the changes that take place and the additional value that has occurred through the activities being delivered. The principles are presented in Figure 21.



Figure 21 Social value principles

An SROI calculation provides an indication of cost effectiveness, by comparing the investment required to deliver the activities with the value of the outcomes experienced by all beneficiary stakeholders. Social value is calculated by placing a financial value on the quantified change using what are known as *financial proxies*. SROI seeks to understand all types of value – social, economic and environmental – and represent this in a language which is widely understood by funders, investors, policy makers and decision-makers.

The value of the outcomes represents 'additional value' that would not have occurred in the absence of the activities being analysed. Value that would have happened anyway (deadweight), that is attributable to other actors (attribution) or that has displaced other outcomes (displacement) has been deducted.

The values calculated, although expressed in monetary terms, do not equate to a financial return. The values represent the size of the value and the relative scale of different outcomes, so that economic, environmental and social outcomes can be understood using a common unit of measurement.

Approach to determining financial proxies of outcomes

Think Impact aligns with Social Value International's approach to valuing social outcomes. This approach is anchored in stakeholders' own assessments of what matters, ensuring that valuations reflect the relative importance of changes experienced by people rather than assumptions made by organisations.

Under SVI's Principle 3, *Value what matters*, the relative value of outcomes was determined by asking survey respondents, which outcome was the most valuable to them. This data was then validated against qualitative stakeholder engagement to ensure that the relative weightings of the outcomes reflected stakeholder values.

For each group of stakeholders an 'anchor proxy' was selected for one outcome and then the relative weightings of the other outcomes were used to determine the valuation of the other outcomes.

By weighting and valuing outcomes according to stakeholder preferences the 'anchoring' practice ensures that valuations remain credible, comparable, and grounded in lived experience.

Examples of financial proxies for non-monetary outcomes were monetised are below in Table 19

Table 19 Examples of financial proxies

Stakeholder group	Outcome	Anchor proxy and rationale	Source
Listeners	Listeners feel more connected to their communities	Revealed preference valuation method. Community members choose to spend time and money on a club membership to increase their connection with people. The average membership fee paid to clubs in NSW was $63.85 in 2023.	Urbis, *Economic and Social Impact of Clubs in NSW*, May 2023
Employees and volunteers	Employees and volunteers have increased technical skills	Revealed preference valuation method. People choose to spend money on a Cert III in Media Studies to increase their technical skills. The cost of a Cert III in Media Studies for a domestic student is up to $2,750.	JMC Academy website, accessed 2025

Evaluation approach

The evaluation drew on three main data sources:

- document review
- stakeholder engagement
- national survey.

These sources supported developing a theory of change for the community broadcasting sector, as well as benefit pathways for the individual sub-sectors. They also supported the SROI analysis and modelling.

Each of these data sources, as well as our approach to the analysis and modelling, are described in more detail below.

Document review

At the commencement of the project, we reviewed several background documents relevant to the community broadcasting sector in Australia. This included (but wasn't limited to):

- *Roadmap 2033: Community broadcasting's plan for greater impact in every Australian community*
- Griffith University's *Radio, Television and Digital Media in 21st Century*
- The Australian Government and Social Research Centre's *Evaluation of the community broadcasting program*
- Social Ventures Australia *More than radio – a community asset: Social Return on Investment analyses of Indigenous Broadcasting Services* (2017)
- annual reports.

This review helped us develop an initial set of outcomes for further testing through the stakeholder engagement. It also supported question design for the engagement phase.

Stakeholder engagement

We engaged with stakeholders in the following categories to develop the theory of change and inform the survey design:

- listeners
- volunteers and employees
- sponsors
- community broadcasting sector leaders.

Participants from each sector were recruited in each of the above categories. Engagement took the form of either group or one-on-one interviews. All these were conducted online. In addition, we attended the CONVERGE Conference 2024 to engage with stakeholders from the First Nations media sector.

Stakeholder engagement is summarised in Table 20. In addition to the figures quoted, we spoke to three 'sector leaders' – people with a broad overview of the community broadcasting sector that aren't tied to any specific sub-sector.

Table 20 Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder	Sector				TOTAL*
	CMAA	DMA	NEMBC	FNMA	
Listener	6	3	2	Converge*	≈11

Volunteers and employees	15	15	6	Converge*	≈36
Sponsors	8	4	3	Converge*	≈15
Sector leaders	4	3	3	1	11
TOTAL	33	25	14	40-50	≈73

* The nature of the engagement at Converge means it is not possible to give definitive numbers of how many people were engaged. We estimate that we had 15–20 in-depth conversations with people in attendance and 40–50 people participated in an engagement activity, such as valuing outcomes or describing outcomes.

Survey

A survey was used to measure the outcomes identified in the benefit pathways for each sector.

The survey was administered by Compass Polling. Survey distribution, marketing and promotion was completed by each of the community broadcasting organisations involved in the project, as well as individual stations. Response rates are provided in Table 21.

The survey was opened on 5 May 2025 and closed on 13 August 2025.

Table 21 Survey response rates

Stakeholder	Sector				TOTAL
	CMAA	DMA	NEMBC	FNMA	
Listener	1530	185	144	30	1,889
Employees	122	19	10	1	152
Volunteers	196	199	26	3	424
Corporate sponsors	48	2	8	0	58
Charitable or government sponsors	32	5	2	1	40
TOTAL	1,928	410	190	35	2,563

Survey responses were based on the respondent's primary involvement with community radio. For example, a listener was asked to select the most appropriate response to statements related to being a community radio listener. If the respondent was involved in multiple capacities, they were branched into specific questions in the following priorities in order to ask the most relevant questions only and limited the length of the survey:

1. Sponsors
2. Employees and Volunteers
3. Listeners.

For example, if someone responded that they were an employee and a listener, they were only given the questions relevant to employees.

Respondents were also directed to questions related to the type of station that they listened to. If they listened to stations from more than one sector, they were branched into specific questions related to only one sector in the following priorities in order to limit the length of the survey and avoid repetitiveness:

1. First Nations
2. Disability
3. Ethnic and Multicultural
4. Christian.

For example, if someone listened to First Nations station and a Christian station, they only answered questions about their First Nations stations and their responses are attributed to First Nations media.



thinkimpact.com.au