VOICES THAT CONNECT AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES



Community Broadcasting Social Return on Investment

Executive Summary

with thanks to

Community Broadcasting Foundation


CBAA
COMMUNITY
BROADCASTING
ASSOCIATION OF
AUSTRALIA


thinkimpact


The National Ethnic
and Multicultural
Broadcasters'
Council
NEMBC


first
nations
MEDIA
AUSTRALIA


CMAA
Christian
Media
and Arts


Disability
Media
Australia

STRENGTHENING AUSTRALIA

COMMUNITY BROADCASTING STRENGTHENS AUSTRALIA

More than 450 community broadcasting services reach 5.4 million Australians each week, providing trusted, locally relevant media for communities often underserved by commercial and public broadcasting.

THE SECTOR AT A GLANCE

450+
licensed community broadcasting services

5.4m
Australians reached every week

900+
employees across the sector

$24.1m
estimated annual volunteer value

18,000+
volunteers supporting local services

85%
of total social value experienced by listeners

DEEPLY LOCAL. NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT.

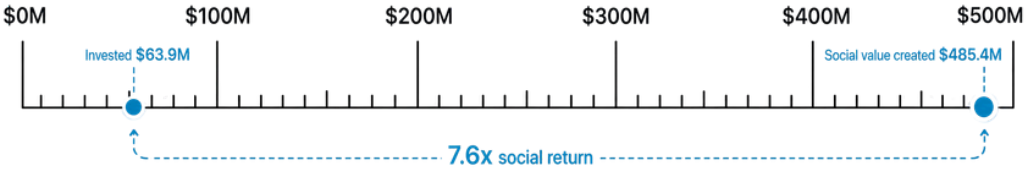
Community broadcasting reflects local voices, cultures, identities and concerns, helping people feel represented, informed and connected.



SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

For every $1 invested in community broadcasting:
$7.59 in social value is created.





7.6X SOCIAL RETURN

$63.9M INVESTED CREATED $485.4M IN SOCIAL VALUE

- **$63.9M** Invested
- **$485.4M** in social value created
- **7.6x** social value per **$1** invested

HOW COMMUNITY BROADCASTING CREATES VALUE

VOICES
Community voices, cultures, identities and experiences are represented.

CONNECTION
People feel heard, represented, informed and connected.

PARTICIPATION
People engage with their communities and participate in civic life.

VALUE
Stronger communities, improved wellbeing and greater resilience.

WHO EXPERIENCES THE VALUE?

LISTENERS | VOLUNTEERS | EMPLOYEES | SPONSORS | GOVERNMENT

85% of total social value is experienced by listeners.

This reflects the sector's strongest outcomes: representation, connection, participation, wellbeing and resilience.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT

DELIVERING ON NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Community broadcasting contributes to enduring national priorities: social cohesion, civic participation, wellbeing, resilience and access to trusted information.

SOCIAL COHESION

People feel more connected, represented, less isolated and part of something larger than themselves.

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Listeners become more aware of services and opportunities, and are more able and likely to participate in community and civic life.

WELLBEING

Trusted local content improves mental wellbeing, builds support networks and helps people feel hopeful and encouraged.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Trusted information helps people feel safer and supports communities through natural disasters, disruption and change.

A DELIVERY PARTNER FOR PUBLIC PRIORITIES

These outcomes support policy goals across health, social services, emergency preparedness, multicultural affairs, regional development, First Nations affairs and civic participation.

TRUSTED LOCAL VOICES REACH PEOPLE OTHER MEDIA OFTEN MISS

Community broadcasting moves people from passive consumption to active participation. For underserved and marginalised Australians, it provides a trusted pathway into community and civic life. As one stakeholder put it:



"Community broadcasting is a catalyst for bringing people together."

THE CHALLENGE

PROVEN VALUE. GROWING PRESSURE.

Community broadcasting is delivering significant public value, but many services are operating with limited financial and workforce capacity.

A STRONG MODEL UNDER PRESSURE

WHAT THE SECTOR DELIVERS	WHAT IS PUTTING IT AT RISK
$7.59 social value for every $1 invested	**103%** The average station is operating at a loss, with costs equal to 103% of revenue.
$485.4M annual social value created	**54%** of stations operate without paid staff
5.4M Australians reached each week	**FUNDING BELOW HISTORICAL LEVELS**
18,000+ VOLUNTEERS 900 EMPLOYEES **Volunteers contributing $24.1m** annually	**GROWING DEMAND FOR TRUSTED LOCAL MEDIA IS INCREASING PRESSURE ON STRETCHED SERVICES**

THIS MATTERS

Communities increasingly rely on trusted local information, representation and connection, especially during disruption and natural disasters. Without action, Australia risks losing value that is already working.

The challenge is not to build a new system. It is to protect and strengthen a proven national network before pressure reduces reach, local capability and public return.



SECURING THE FUTURE

POLICY PRIORITIES

POLICY PRIORITY	REQUEST	OUTCOME
Secure the future of community broadcasting and First Nations media	**Increase the Community Broadcasting Program and Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program** from $27m to $40m each per annum. Commit both to ongoing, indexed funding.	Greater social cohesion, stronger First Nations voices, improved sustainability and increased social impact.
Protect discoverability and access	**Legislate a radio prominence framework** across AM/FM, DAB+, connected vehicles, smart speakers and streaming platforms.	Continued access to trusted local media and protection of media diversity in a digital environment.
Enable sustainable community broadcasting services	**Modernise licence ownership and control arrangements,** enable shared-service models, support licence stewardship and facilitate innovative governance.	More sustainable local services, reduced risk of closure and greater operational resilience.
Strengthen sector organisations	**Recognise sector bodies as strategic delivery partners** and invest in capability building, collaboration, innovation and training.	Stronger stations, increased social value and better return on government investment.

SECURING THE FUTURE OF VOICES THAT CONNECT AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

Community broadcasting already delivers $7.59 in social value for every $1 invested, $485.4 million in annual social value and trusted local media for 5.4 million weekly listeners.

These reforms will protect that return and help build a stronger, more connected and resilient Australia.

TRUSTED LOCAL VOICES.
STRONGER COMMUNITIES.
GREATER PUBLIC VALUE.