

**The National Ethnic
and Multicultural
Broadcasters'
Council**

The National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters'
Council (NEMBC)

SUBMISSION TO

The Select Committee on Regional Australia

The NEMBC

Enables diverse communities to have a strong voice and make a safer
and more inclusive Australian society.

This submission was sent via email to: regional.reps@aph.gov.au

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The National Ethnic and Multicultural Community Broadcasting Sector

Community broadcasting is Australia's largest independent media sector, a key pillar in the Australian media landscape, and recognised internationally as one of the most successful examples of localised, participatory and diverse media.

Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting plays a vital and central role in strengthening social cohesion and citizenship within our diverse Australian community. It is highly valued by established migrant communities for the critical role it plays in maintaining language and culture, providing crucial information on services and commentary on issues.

Ethnic community radio is and has been a pivotal aspect of all Australian migrant communities' economic, social and cultural development. Ethnic radio also supports intergenerational linguistic and cultural connections between the first and second generations in migrant communities. Ethnic community broadcasting also plays a vital role in helping newly arrived migrants and refugees build supportive networks within their own community and assist them in learning about their new country.

Ethnic community broadcasting is a dynamic diverse sector, serving the needs of hundreds of thousands of Australians of all ages in urban and regional areas across Australia. It is highly cost effective by harnessing the skills, expertise and time of more than 4000 volunteers from 125 distinct cultural groups who create 2,070 hours of content every week in over 110 languages broadcast via 100 radio stations.

Criteria: Consider other measures to support the ongoing growth and sustainability of regional Australia.

In this submission, we wish to address what helps sustain a multicultural community in a regional town – that is, in regional towns where a significant proportion of the town's population is made up of people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Sustainability is significant as new migrant groups seek to live in these regions, recently encouraged by the Commonwealth Government with offers of visas to new arrivals to settle in these areas.

The common challenges that arise in this context are:

1. Sustainability: Tendency of populations to stay for a few years, then drift into the major cities.
2. Social coherence: How to encourage the wider community to feel comfortable about new arrivals, who may be culturally and linguistically different.
3. Security: How to make new arrivals feel welcomed by the community in which they are moving.

Background: Changes in Regional populations

There have been significant changes to the population composition in regional and rural areas since 2011. This is due to a natural tendency for some migrant groups to move to regional areas (moving to where there are already established communities) and Government policy to actively encourage new migrants to live in rural areas – in 2019, offering regional 5-year settlement visas.

“In March this year, the Government announced it would reduce the permanent migration cap from 190,000 to 160,000 places, and within that set aside 23,000 places for regional visas.

Following unprecedented growth (124 per cent) in the number of regional visas granted in the first quarter of this programme year, the Government is increasing the total number of regional places to 25,000.”¹

Regional cities such as Toowoomba and Logan in Queensland, Wagga Wagga, Wollongong and Coffs Harbour in New South Wales and Shepparton in Victoria have settled many refugees. (See more in later.)

However, there are issues for new migrant communities willingly moving to the regions: a culture of welcome, job opportunities, and access to community, health and education services.

The Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia (FECCA), that has studied this issue extensively, suggests that migrants and humanitarian entrants who initially settle in rural and regional areas often do not obtain adequate support and settlement services.²

¹ <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/morrison-government-increases-regional-migration-target>

² <http://fecca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/FECCA-submission-to-Australias-Humanitarian-Program-2019-2020.pdf>

A more expansive perspective on regional migration is provided in the study, *Welcoming Regions* by John van Kooy and Rebecca Wickes, Monash Migration and Inclusion Centre and Aleem Ali, *Welcoming Cities* ³.

Meaningful consultations with migrant groups (through, for example, ethno-specific community organisations) can provide insights to real experiences, concerns and aspirations, and mitigate risks of early flight from regional destinations. Receiving communities and local organisations should also be well-informed and prepared to welcome new arrivals. An understanding of local attitudes towards migrants, as well as the perceptions that locals have about different cultures and ethnicities, need to be addressed in planning for regional settlement.

Community consultations and information-sharing are critical approaches to build trust, respect and understanding. Engaging local Indigenous communities in welcoming work is a core component of resettlement preparation and planning. Policies and programs that include First Nations Peoples while also emphasising shared values and building positive social relationships can go a long way to fostering openness and acceptance in local communities.

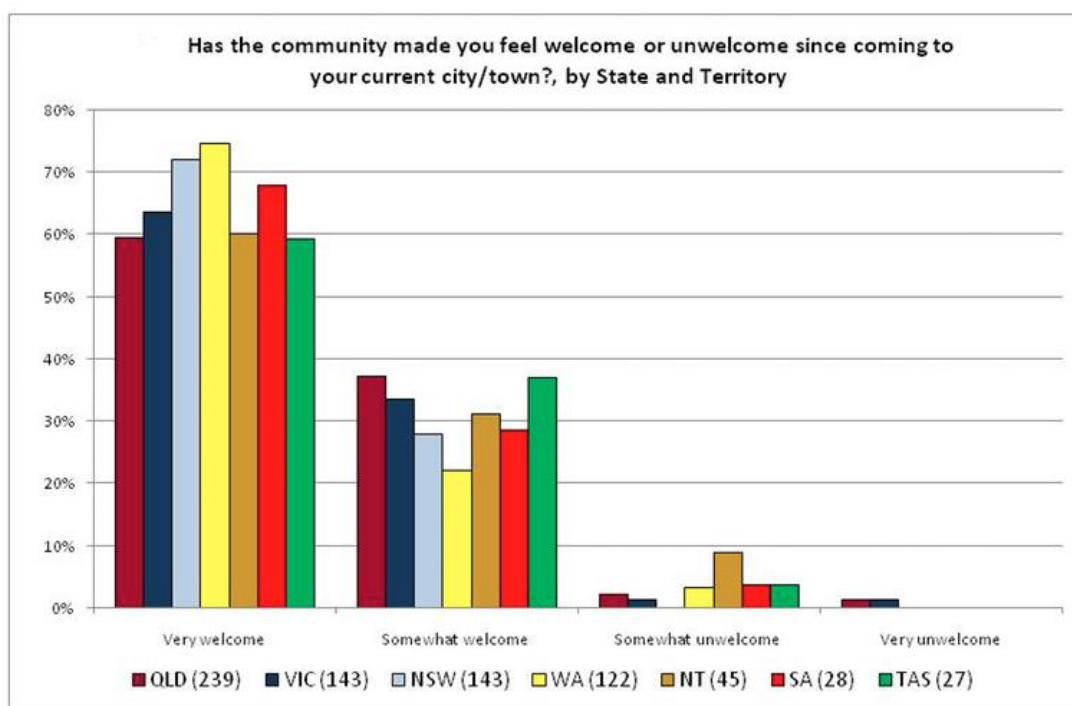
Aleem Ali, the national manager of Welcoming Cities and CEO of Welcoming Australia, summarised this view in the *Conversation*: “A culture of welcome can reduce the cultural distance between migrants and local residents, and reduce the risk of isolation for migrants.”⁴

New immigrants in regional and rural Australia: attraction and retention, by Jock Collins and Branka Krivokapic-skoko (2008)/Rural and Regional Industries Research Council, Author provided the following data on some regions across Australia:⁵

³https://welcomingcities.org.au/wpcontent/uploads/2019/03/WelcomingRegions_Summary.pdf

⁴ <https://theconversation.com/settling-migrants-in-regional-areas-will-need-more-than-a-visa-to-succeed-114196>

⁵ <https://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/our-research/centre-business-and-social-innovation/news/regions-can-take-more>.



Although the results are generally very good, nevertheless 30- 40% declare that they feel “somewhat welcome” and 5-10% feel somewhat “unwelcome”.

An important component to this is the need for these communities to feel included and connected, and to have access to information and education in the first instance, in their *native languages*.

We are of the opinion that this is best served by a community radio station – managed and operated by a formal board made up of representatives of the local ethnic communities.

In a study entitled *Media Matter: An audience study of the Australian community broadcasting sector*⁶, co-ordinated by Associate Professor Michael Meadows, Chief Investigator, Griffith University, it was found that:

Audiences listening to specialist ethnic programming on generalist community radio stations or full-time ethnic community radio stations are tuning in because:

- Station programming plays a central role in maintaining culture and language;
- Programs help them to maintain community connections and networks;

⁶ <https://www.cbaa.org.au/sites/default/files/Community-Media-Matters-Exec-Sum-and-Chapt-1.pdf>

- Stations enable them to hear specialist ethnic music unavailable through other media;
- They want to hear local community news and gossip; and
- They want to hear news and information relevant to their lives in Australia, from their home countries, and from neighbouring countries/regions.

Research⁷ shows that social support is one of the most important factors for promoting sustainable resettlement. It is particularly important early in the resettlement process when new arrivals face the practical and emotional challenge of settling in a new country. When new arrivals hear their own language (on radio), it provides a strong sense of identity and assists with social integration.

A Sudanese focus group⁸ participant said that his language on the radio:

“preserves the culture and the national origins and it keeps people, makes it easier for people, to settle knowing that they are not really total strangers.”

A Tongan community participant⁹, an emerging community, highlighted the importance of hearing their language:

“There is a sense of pride there too, hearing your own language go over the radio.”

Several participants in a Turkish group¹⁰ found the radio had a unifying effect:

“The radio station is not separating us, it’s integrating us to Australia, its very important. Our children are growing up Australians anyway, maybe they’re having difficulty adapting culturally, but through the radio, they will be able to get some help and adapt ...”

⁷ Community work and exile politics: Kurdish refugee associations in London’, Journal of Refugee Studies, Wahlbeck, O 1998: vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 215–230.

Kurrien 2003, cited in Mahalingham 2006: Mahalingham, R 2006, ‘Cultural psychology of immigrants: an introduction’, in R Mahalingham (ed), Cultural psychology of immigrants, Lawrence Erlbaum, New Jersey, pp. 1–12.

‘Coping with perceived discrimination: does ethnic identity protect mental health?’, Journal of Health and Social Behaviour, Mossakowski, KN 2003 vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 318–331.

‘Racial and ethnic bias and health: perceived discrimination and depression – moderating effects of coping, acculturation and ethnic support’, American Journal of Public Health, Noh, S & Kasper, V 2003, vol. 93, no. 2, pp. 232–238.

⁸ Community Media Matters: An Audience study of the Australian community broadcasting sector.

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ *ibid*

The existence of social networks can instil a sense of belonging among new arrivals, provide them with resources and assist them to better access to services such as housing and employment.

The existence of strong ethnic communities, in terms of both formal and informal associations within communities, is critical to the refugee's adjustment in an unfamiliar environment.

A multicultural radio station is a voice to connect and link people together. Connections with one's ethnic community are also important to assist in the maintenance of ethnic identity, which in turn has been found to influence mental health. Ethnic communities have also been found to buffer the effects of adversity, especially ethnic and race based discrimination. Further, they can help to promote harmonious relations between new arrivals and the wider community by serving as a link between them.

Establishing an ethnic community station in selected regions.

There are several models in the way that migrant communities in regional Australia can have a voice on community radio.

1. Encourage those specific regional community stations to open up their airways to allow ethnic community programs.
2. Form a partnership with an ethnic community station that would allow some time on their bandwidth to broadcast regional programs.
3. Create a new station for ethnic communities in the specific region.

Rather than causing disruption to existing radio services (1), the NEMBC would prefer to develop a local facility, run and operated by local multicultural communities, to *partner with an ethnic station* prepared to broadcast their locally produced programs (2).

The advantage to the ethnic community broadcast station in this partnership is that they would be extending their normal programs into a new region, with added opportunities for larger audiences and sponsorships.

This model would create connections between the city and the region and links that help new arrivals feel connected with a wider Australia. This type of partnership also builds wider networks, creates the possibility to share information in languages across the state and to foster economic ties.

At this stage, the NEMBC has identified Griffith, Tamworth, Wagga Wagga and Shepparton as sites that require initial attention. (Further work will be required in

other regions to research and identify other sites and work with state governments, settlement services and multicultural organisations.)

The NEMBC believes there is ample opportunity for the regional services to be sustainable. There is local revenue raising options (membership, events, merchandise, etc.) and sponsorship with local community enterprises and businesses. It opens up the possibility for project funding at a local level, and from State and Commonwealth government grants. For example, the Communications and Arts portfolio “is committed to improving communications services to regional and remote Australia and provides funding to support community broadcasting services throughout Australia.”

Sponsorship and program announcements are forms of revenue-raising. The local community will has significant connections to ethnic market segments that will be important for service announcements, and sponsorships across the government, industry, education and business sectors.

Priority Regional centres

The NEMBC has identified three priority regions that urgently need dedicated community radio facilities: Tamworth, Wagga Wagga and Griffith.

Tamworth

Tamworth is the Country Music Capital of Australia and the biggest festival in Tamworth is the annual Country Music Festival and the second biggest festival is the Multicultural Festival Le Peel; the festival attracts between 10 and 16 thousand attendees.

Tamworth’s community radio station is 2YOUFM. The radio station used to have language other than English programs but the last language program Spanish stopped some years ago. The station has conducted surveys that show it would not be popular to bring back language other than English programs because it would interfere with their audience and business model.

The NEMBC visited Tamworth in 2018 and gained support from a number of organisations. The Mayor of Tamworth Col Murray supports a multicultural community radio station (MCRS) being established in Tamworth. 2YOUFM said they would assist the project and offer space on their antenna for transmission for the MCRS. There is a very active multicultural organisation called Multicultural Tamworth Inc. that is actively working in Tamworth to support the project.



NEMBC Executive Officer with the Mayor of Tamworth Col Murray

Meeting with 2YOU FM Manager

Meeting with the Multicultural Tamworth Inc at Tamworth City Council, Eddie Whitham

Eddie Whitham, chair of the Multicultural Tamworth Inc, stated:

“The larger migrant groups are now forming associations and are all advised about the ethnic radio in the future.

As to the last ten years. I have been heavily involved since 1978 in the refugee process here we really did not have many new migrants until 2006-7.

The regional visas and boat arrivals, students, and the massive expansion of the three meat processing plants, plus the health system, both hospitals and aged care have swelled the numbers of migrants and a rapid rate.

The city is moving to establish itself as a regional centre of 100,000 by 2033, so things are moving and exciting.”

Considering there is no languages broadcast other than English programs at the community radio station, there is clearly a need for the ethnic communities to have a voice to be able to better connect with their communities.

Tamworth comprises of almost 86 nationalities and cultural groups

There has been a significant increase in migrant populations to Tamworth since 2011. The Filipino community has tripled in size (112 to 342), the Chinese Mandarin speaking community has grown from 68 to 268 and the Korean community has grown from 40 to 153. The Punjabi community has grown from 13 to 89 and the Afrikaans community has almost doubled to now be 78 residents. The Vietnamese community has grown from 11 to 65. Similar increases have occurred with the Bengali and Thai communities.

There is a growing number of new arrivals. Since 2011 there have seen new cultural group grow from: Dinka (from 0 to 17 residents), Urdu (from 13 to 38 residents), Karen (from 0 to 27 residents), Tamil (from 12 to 31 residents), Bengali (from 7 to 47 residents), Nepali (from 14 to 38 residents), Sinhalese (from 8 to 22 residents), Telugu (from 9 to 22 residents), Persian/Dari (from 9 to 15 residents), Fijian (from 3 to 13 residents).

List of nationalities represented in Tamworth Regional Council LGA at 1/09/2019.
Collated from information; derived from health, education and support areas of the community and our contacts.

Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Abu Dhabi, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bosnia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Cambodia, Columbia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Democratic Republic of Congo, England, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Macedonia, Malaysia, Morocco Malta, Mexico, Myanmar (Karen. Chin. Rohingya and Burmese Bhuddist) Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Romania Samoa, Scotland, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Korea, South Sudan, Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Syria, Tanzania Taiwan, Thailand, Tonga Turkey, Ukraine, United States of America, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela, Vietnam, Wales, Zimbabwe.



The last 12 months, 135 people received citizenship.

The top 10 language groups. <https://profile.id.com.au/tamworth/language>

[Ancestry](#)
[Birthplace](#)
[Overseas arrivals](#)
[Proficiency in English](#)
[Language spoken at home](#)
[Religion](#)

Area:	Benchmark area:	Comparison year:	
Tamworth Regional Co	Regional NSW	2011	reset

Language spoken at home - Ranked by size [export](#) [reset](#)

Tamworth Regional Council - Total persons (Usual residence)	2016			2011			Change
Language (excludes English)	Number	%	Regional NSW %	Number	%	Regional NSW %	2011 to 2016
Filipino/Tagalog	342	0.6	0.3	112	0.2	0.2	+230
 Mandarin	268	0.4	0.4	68	0.1	0.2	+200
Korean	153	0.3	0.1	40	0.1	0.1	+113
 Cantonese	95	0.2	0.2	77	0.1	0.2	+18
Punjabi	89	0.1	0.2	13	0.0	0.1	+76
Hindi	84	0.1	0.1	36	0.1	0.1	+48
Afrikaans	78	0.1	0.1	41	0.1	0.1	+37
German	70	0.1	0.3	54	0.1	0.3	+16
Vietnamese	65	0.1	0.1	11	0.0	0.1	+54
Italian	54	0.1	0.5	54	0.1	0.6	0

[Show all \(38 entries\)](#)

Exclude language spoken at home by fewer than 10 people

Tamworth has a particularly high level of new migrants compared to the rest of the state from the Filipinos, the Chinese (Mandarin), Korean, Hindi and African Communities.



Wagga Wagga

Wagga Wagga is situated 450 kilometres south-west of the Sydney CBD and 460 kilometres north of the Melbourne CBD. Latest statistics show a population of 65,500, up from 61,800 in 2011.

Wagga Wagga is an extremely diverse city, with a large variety of ethnic and cultural groups (more than 70) living there, with about 6.9% from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The top five languages (other than English) spoken in Wagga Wagga are: Cantonese, Mandarin, Hindi, Arabic and Italian. The top six countries of birth for people in Wagga Wagga are: 81.7% Australia, 1.7% India, 1.6% England, 0.8% New Zealand, 0.7% China and 0.4% Germany.

According to the latest Census, most popular languages spoken other than English are:

Malayalam	398	0.7% of population
Arabic	279	0.5%
Mandarin	272	0.5%
Tagalog	177	0.3%
Filipino	159	0.3%

Significant increases ethnic community populations (ancestry) since 2011 are Indian (+498), Filipino (+278), Burmese (+136), German (+136), Chinese (+117), Italian (+86), Sinhalese (+65), Afghan (+49), Bengali (+43) and Sudanese (+33).

In 2016, 9.3% of people in Wagga Wagga City were born overseas. In terms of birthplace, significant increases in the populations of these communities include: India (+372), Philippines (+266), Burma (+86), Afghanistan (+52), Iran (+54), Bangladesh (+48) and Nepal (+47).

The Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga (MCWW) was established in Wagga Wagga in 1988. Its Mission Statement is: “to provide a range of high quality programs and services to assist people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to integrate successfully into the Wagga Wagga and surrounding communities”. They claim to have from 2005-2017 settled 484 families (1697 individuals) under the Federal Government HSS (Humanitarian Settlement Services) Program.

The Wagga Wagga Council “supports people from culturally diverse backgrounds through a variety of projects, programs and partnerships each year and works with key organisations to hold events such as Refugee Week, Naidoc Week and our Multicultural Festival as well as conducting regular Citizenship Ceremonies”.

Wagga Wagga has one community radio station, Life FM, which is a Christian radio station, with music coming from Christian labels, distributors and independent artists, as well as sharing syndicated programs from Australia and overseas.

The NEMBC will work closely with these organisations to provide ethnic communities with a voice to assist them to better connect and integrate into the town and region.

Griffith

Griffith is the regional capital of Western Riverina. With a population of 26,000, Griffith has a rich blend of cultures and traditions. There are more than 70 nationalities including Italian, Indian, Afghani and Pacific Communities.

In Griffith City, 20.8% of people spoke a language other than English at home in 2016. The table below shows the largest non-English speaking households and the increases of their populations since 2100. In most language groups there has been a significant increase in numbers since 2011.

Italian	1,920	7.5% of total	-429
Punjabi	793	3.1	+42
Samoan	245	1.0	+11
Gujarati	233	0.9	+111
Mandarin	223	0.9	+181
Tongan	187	0.7	-13
Fijian	170	0.7	+47
Filipino/ Tagalog	165	0.6	+39
Persian/Dari	138	0.5	+7

4,812 people who were living in Griffith City in 2016 were born overseas, and 25% arrived in Australia within 5 years prior to 2016. The significant increases in populations since 2011 in specific communities are: India (+152), Philippines (+63), Taiwan (+145), Pakistan (+66), Afghanistan (+61) and Malaysia (+72).

In terms of ancestry, significant increases in communities included Indian (+223), Indian subcontinent (+129), German (+120), Chinese (+199), Tongan (+68), Fijian (+69), Filipino (+73), Cook Islander (+81), Pakistani (+62).

The Griffith community station is 2MIA FM. The station officially opened in April 1993 and started broadcasting full-time then. It broadcasts 3 ethnic programs: 2 for the Italian community and 1 for the Fijian.

The Multicultural Council of Griffith, along with other activities, organizes an annual Multicultural Festival in October, which is a celebration of food, music and culture.

The NEMBC will work closely with these organisations to provide ethnic communities with a voice to assist them to better connect and integrate into the town and region.

The Role of the NEMBC in Regional Radio Development Plan

As a national representative organisation of ethnic and multicultural broadcasters, the NEMBC is in a unique position to bring communities together and empower them to take on the responsibility for organising and sustaining a community radio facility.

The NEMBC has considerable experience working in regional areas.

From 2011 to 2018, the NEMBC has supported Victorian regional centres through its ENGAGE project. Research in this project has indicated a lack of support for migrant communities, with many communities having no access to local radio stations.

The NEMBC would:

- Make connections with local communities, and help them to facilitate a production centre. This would mean training management and broadcast skills.

- Liaise with ethnic community stations that may take on a partnership service role.
- Assist in the technical arrangements (with Government and local authorities) to enable the service (transmission frequency, landlines, production studios, etc).

Government Support

Government funding plays a highly important role in catalysing and building the capacity of this voluntary sector, therefore additional funding is requested to improve investment.

We also propose that the Commonwealth and State Governments stipulate that ACMA allocate FM (and in the longer term, digital) frequencies in these regions to permit broadcast transmissions.

Recommendations:

1. In order to help sustain new and emerging ethnic communities in regional centres, community broadcast facilities should be established to provide a voice for these communities.
2. Commonwealth and State Governments should support and facilitate the endeavours by local ethnic communities in regional centres to establish community radio facilities.