The National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council (NEMBC)

NEMBC Submission to the
Joint Standing Committee on Migration

Inquiry into Multiculturalism

2011

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About the NEMBC

NEMBC is a national peak body that advocates for multiculturalism and supports multilingual community broadcasting around Australia.
The role of the NEMBC is:

- To promote and represent the interests of ethnic and multicultural community broadcasters throughout Australia in Radio, Television and other electronic media.
- To advance the development of a harmonious multicultural society in Australia through broadcasting.
- To promote racial and religious harmony in Australia.
- To prevent discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religious and political affiliation and other forms of discrimination or distinction.
- To assist the efforts of all broadcasters to achieve a quality service for their communities.
- To involve ethnic and multicultural broadcasters in representations on issues of national significance.
- To promote and extend ethnic and multicultural broadcasting services to meet ethnic communities' needs and to the benefit of the entire Australian community.
- To liaise with government, non-government and community organisations in pursuance of the goals of the Council.
- To promote access and equity in community broadcasting.
- To foster positive relations amongst the Members of the Council.
- To advise, assist and facilitate education with ethnic and multicultural programming and broadcasting including the exchange of programs, resources, information and ideas within and between multicultural and ethnic broadcasters.
- To promote principles of community independent media and programming diversity reflective of ethnic and multicultural views.

Introduction

The NEMBC welcomes the Inquiry for providing organisations and individuals with the opportunity to highlight the immense benefits that migration and multiculturalism bring to Australian society.

This Inquiry also creates an opportunity for broader dialogue in assessing the ongoing relevance and potential that multiculturalism can offer in the context of contemporary challenges and the nature of multiculturalism in a globalised world.

The NEMBC is in favour of a strong multicultural policy that incorporates a whole-of-government approach and encourages active dialogue and information-sharing between government departments and with nongovernmental organisations. A strong multicultural policy shows a commitment to the principles of equality, cultural diversity and social cohesion and recognises the importance of a harmonious Australian society.

The *Inquiry into Multiculturalism* raises three important concepts and policy issues: migration, multiculturalism and social inclusion. While these issues intersect with each other, they are significantly different policy areas and should not be conflated. A

multicultural policy approach is a 'positive value' approach[1] that supports and acknowledges cultural and linguistic diversity.

Multiculturalism should be seen as an overarching cross-sectoral approach that will place all Australians in a better position to achieve their potential and benefit Australian society as a whole.

Multiculturalism is not about welfare or migration, nor is it simply about foods, customs and festivals; it is about the recognition, maintenance and development of language, culture, heritage and identity. It is about valuing cultural diversity to celebrate the social and economic richness of Australia and the recognition that the resulting multilingual and intercultural skills arising from this diversity play a major role in supporting a successful Australian nation. The NEMBC's recommendations relate to improving multiculturalism through strengthening policies such as the recently announced '*The People of Australia'* policy and the interplay between multiculturalism and the media.

The NEMBC's submission makes recommendations to increase the government's support of the CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) reality of contemporary Australia. This includes greater support for new arrivals, recognition of skills and overseas qualifications, culturally competent services which understand and respond to cultural and linguistic needs, responding to the changing needs of established migrant communities, recognition and support for international rights of refugees and asylum seekers and improving English language training.

Social Inclusion (SI) has been used as a starting point for discussions on multiculturalism in the government inquiry. A relatively new term, the idea of social inclusion attempts to engage those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or otherwise 'excluded' from society and assist them to be socially and economically 'included'. The present social inclusion agenda is important in addressing inequalities and assisting those who are disadvantaged. While the government's *Social Inclusion Agenda* recognises participatory aspects such as partnerships, strengthening the NGO sector, volunteerism, assisting new arrivals and recognises Indigenous Australians in its mission, it is still strongly focused on a premise of 'exclusion'. It is this vantage point of exclusion which the NEMBC sees as being problematic in addressing multiculturalism, for cultural diversity is neither a negative attribute nor a point of disadvantage in society.

As a concept, social inclusion is limited in its ability to account for 'difference'. It has problems identifying diversity and rights and it struggles with the idea that distinction from mainstream society may be a 'positive value'.[2] Multiculturalism is able to retain that positive approach and offers scope to recognise rights, social justice, cultural diversity and social cohesion. A social inclusion policy should recognise the benefits of cultural and linguistic diversity, the importance of English language proficiency for migrants and refugees, the destructive effects of discrimination and racism and look at better models for active participation in society.

Media and Multiculturalism

The NEMBC's contribution to the *Inquiry* focuses on the role that ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting has played in supporting active multiculturalism in Australia and serving as a voice for migrant and refugee communities. The 35-year history of ethnic community broadcasting started with the introduction of multicultural policies in the early 1970s and has flourished since then, providing a valuable

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[1] Tony Vinson, *The Origins, Meaning, Definition and Economic Implications of the Concept of Social Inclusion/ Exclusion*, Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009, p.4
[2] Ibid.

contribution to a culturally and linguistically diverse Australian society. It does this by providing:

- A local information, entertainment, cultural and social service to new and established migrants and refugees
- A platform for public community expression
- Support for local economies with airing local niche sponsorship announcements
- A forum for community engagement
- Information about local services and orientation to Australian systems
- Translated government and community announcements for local areas
- Training and transferable skills
- Cross-cultural communication spaces
- Opportunities for language learning

Community radio has a broad listenership and forms a significant part of the Australian media landscape with 54% of Australians listening to community radio in an average month. In terms of supporting a multicultural society, ethnic community radio plays a vital role as Australia's largest language laboratory – promoting cultural, linguistic and community development with local radio broadcasts in over 100 languages.

Media plays an important role in shaping our society. The government's social inclusion agenda rightly seeks to support 'diversity in the media'.[3] In recognition of Australia's cultural and linguistic diversity, community, public and commercial media each have a responsibility to reflect this reality in their broadcasts. Being included in the media landscape has important implications for migrants' and refugees' sense of belonging, inclusion and participation in society.

While community broadcasting is recognised for its effectiveness in providing media access and participation for culturally and linguistically diverse groups with localised diverse broadcasting, commercial/mainstream media in Australia has highly condensed ownership and lacks representation of multicultural views. The lack of multicultural voices leads to underrepresentation and misrepresentation of cultural communities in the mainstream media. This skewed coverage of Australian society in the mainstream media does not encourage the level of understanding and 'equal dialogues'[4] between diverse communities which are essential for a successful multicultural society.

Of particular concern is the high level of vilification and flagrant attacks on refugees and asylum seekers in commercial talk-back radio and tabloid publications. It is also important to acknowledge that the vilifying coverage of asylum seekers and refugees is not only symptomatic of a lack of cultural diversity in the mainstream media but also a politicisation of asylum seekers and refugees. This politicisation has seen these vulnerable people being used by some political parties for cheap short term political gain. The NEMBC would therefore call on the government to ensure that any migration and multicultural policy recognise the rights of refugees and asylum seekers and accord them the dignity, respect and protection in the spirit of all relevant UN conventions to which Australia is a signatory.

In addition, in August 2010, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD) drew attention to the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by some Indigenous Australians, African Australians, Muslim Australians, international students and asylum seekers. In its concluding statement the committee encouraged Australia to 'develop and implement and updated comprehensive cultural

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[3] As stated by the then Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion, Ursula Stephens, in her address to the 2008 FECCA conference Mosaic, Magazine of Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia, 18 April 2008, pg 16.
[4] FECCA encourages 'equal dialogues' and equality of all cultures in, Different but Equal: FECCA's National Multicultural Agenda, FECCA: Canberra 2010.

policy that reflects its increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse society' and recommended that 'Australia strengthen the race and cultural dimensions of its Social Inclusion Agenda'.[5]

In any multicultural policy, more must be done to address the levels of vilification and racism that are promulgated in certain sectors of the media. While freedom of expression is an important element to democracy, particular commentary that helps foster racial and religious hatred needs to be strongly condemned and challenged by better use of the existing broadcast legislation. Very seldom does the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) use its powers to suspend or cancel a licence, prosecute or pursue a civil penalty in these extreme vilification cases.

Valuing and Promoting Multiculturalism

Prioritising and promoting multiculturalism encourages social cohesion, a positive sense of wellbeing and underpins a physically, emotionally and socially healthy community. Multiculturalism allows for people to identify with a community and at the same time with the wider society - feeling connected and having a sense of belonging are essential for health and wellbeing.

Critics of multiculturalism say that a policy is no longer necessary or that it contributes to segregation or ghettoes. However in Australia, through a policy of valuing cultural difference rather than taking an assimilationist approach, the opposite has been proven, showing multiculturalism as a vehicle for innovation, ideas, skills development and social, political and economic achievements, bringing richness and strength to a nation. As the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) argues, 'It is not 'multiculturalism' that has failed but it is rather the lack of an authentic and courageous engagement with cultures and their many aspects.'

Multiculturalism in Australia

The introduction of Australia's multicultural policy in the early 1970s has assisted in creating a diverse and harmonious society. Many Australians from a culturally and linguistically diverse background put a high priority on maintaining their own culture. Fortunately, we have not experienced the same level of socioeconomic and ethnic exclusion seen in some European countries, demonstrating that support for cultural maintenance does not prevent people from 'being socially active citizens with a broad range of cultural experiences.'[6]

Australia is now in its second and third generation of immigration since the 1960s and a lot has changed in that time. Migrants have been entering Australia from a larger number of countries and today there are multiple generations of Australians from various backgrounds who have 'grown up in societies marked by diversity and growing global connectedness.'[7]

Multicultural polices need to address the changes that have occurred, recognise this growing diversity and respond with more opportunities for dialogue and active, meaningful participation of diverse members of society. This requires policies and media that reflect these multiple forms of identity and belonging and ensure respect for cultural diversity.

The digital era has brought new multimedia platforms for communication, which will expand with the commencement of the National Broadband Network (NBN).

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[5] Australian Human Rights Commission, UN Committee urges more progress on race discrimination Media Release, http://www.hreoc.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2010/84_10.html
[6] Living Diversity, Australia's Multicultural Future, Prof. Ien Ang, Dr J Brand, Dr. G Noble, Dr.D Wilding. SBS Corp, Sydney 2002, pg 8.
[7] Elsa Koleth, Multiculturalism: a review of Australian policy statements and recent debates in Australia and overseas, 8 October 2010 pg 33.

Community radio has started broadcasting on the digital spectrum and is enjoying a growing presence online, embracing this opportunity for innovative communication and dialogue. The Government's policies on multiculturalism and communications must also aim to increase digital literacy for migrants so that they too can utilise these resources and reach their potential in society.

As Australia's population becomes more diverse and more complex, so too must this multicultural reality be better represented and reflected in institutions, government structures and the media.

Conclusion

There is a real chance now for multiculturalism to reinvent itself. A fresh look at multiculturalism and multilingualism in Australia can enable the development of new concepts and lead to innovative ways of negotiating and engaging with culture, heritage, identity and belonging. A new and original multicultural policy framework would contribute to public discourse, participation, innovation and economic productivity and reduce the marginalisation of cultural communities by supporting social cohesion in an increasingly diverse world. Without a strong policy on multiculturalism, Australia will regress and risk fostering cultural isolation, marginalisation, racism and fear.

1. Multiculturalism, social inclusion and globalisation

The role of multiculturalism in the Federal Government's social inclusion agenda

The history of Australia is a history of migration and the role of multiculturalism should have a strong emphasis in government policies. Countries around the world are becoming more multicultural and nations need to find the best ways to recognise and work with this cultural diversity.

Multiculturalism should be recognised, but not consumed, in the social inclusion agenda to provide more depth and meaning in understanding diversity and accepting people's language, cultural, heritage and identity.

The Government's Social Inclusion Agenda should recognise the benefits and challenges of cultural and linguistic diversity, migration and globalisation and provide better models for participation. In addition, the government should recognise the broader benefits of cultural and linguistic diversity and not limit engagement with multiculturalism to the social inclusion agenda, which has the potential to position diversity as a 'disadvantage'. Cultural and linguistic diversity is above all a strength in all aspects of society, at the levels of community, government and business. To ensure that all Australians are able to contribute to decisions which directly affect them, the government should support more cultural and linguistic diversity in Australia's institutions, including the social inclusion board.

In relation to migration, multiculturalism and social inclusion, the NEMBC acknowledges the importance of:

- Initial and ongoing settlement support.
- A dedicated and realistic approach to increasing English language proficiency for migrants and refugees – this is strongly linked to people's ability to participate in society and access social, educational, economic, legal and political opportunities.
- More cultural and linguistic diversity in commercial and government media.
- Supporting community broadcasting as an accessible and democratic way for diverse communities to gain a voice in the media.
- Making a dedicated effort to addressing the root causes of discrimination and racism.
- Looking at better models for active participation at all levels of society. The NEMBC recommends that engagement with cultural difference is approached with an ethos of equality and that the government understand, acknowledge and respond to barriers to participation in society to ensure that all Australians are able to reach their full potential.

Poor engagement with cultural diversity promotes discrimination and systematic racism which can lead to marginalisation and disadvantage and 'reduce people's participation in a wide range of economic, social and community activities'.[8]

As the Social Inclusion Board points out, it can impact on and negatively affect almost all aspects of a person's life such as employment, income, local neighbourhood and community networks, social supports, access to services, health, participation in community building activities, well being and life expectancy.[9]

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[8] 'Social Inclusion in Australia, how Australia is fairing', Australian Social Inclusion Board 2010, p11.
[9] Ibid.

Media and Multiculturalism: Community Broadcasting Supports Multiculturalism and Social Inclusion

Media plays an important role in shaping our society and the government's Social Inclusion Agenda rightly seeks to support 'diversity in the media'.[10] Recent international research conducted for the Council of Europe established that "on the question of whether community media (third sector media) contributes to social cohesion or threatens it, the evidence points to the sector being an important factor in social cohesion and citizenship, particularly for minority ethnic communities, refugee and migrant communities".[11] The report goes on to point out that the "community broadcasting sector is already making a substantial contribution to social cohesion, community engagement and regeneration".[12]

Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting has played a vital role in supporting active multiculturalism in Australia and serving as a voice for migrant and refugee communities. The 35-year history of ethnic community broadcasting started with the introduction of multicultural policies in the early 1970s and has flourished since then, providing an invaluable contribution to a culturally and linguistically diverse Australian society. It does this by providing information, entertainment and a cultural and social service to new and established migrants and refugees, a platform for public community expression, assistance for local economies, a service for translated government and community announcements specifically targeted to local areas, training and transferable skills, and spaces for cross-cultural communication.

Community radio has a broad listenership with 54% of Australians listening to community radio in an average month, forming a significant part of the Australian media landscape. This is important in terms of supporting a multicultural society, considering that ethnic community radio is Australia's largest language laboratory, promoting cultural and community development in over 100 languages.

Part of community radio's appeal is that it is a highly accessible medium for media participation. Often defined as 'radio for the people by the people', community broadcasting differs from commercial and public broadcasting, in that it has a large participatory component. Community broadcasting gives all people, regardless of age, gender, cultural background or English language proficiency, the chance to have a voice in the media and provides a forum to express their ideas, experiences, language, culture and identity through talks, music and arts programs. This facilitates cultural and linguistic continuity and development, community connections, a rare opportunity for self-representation in the public sphere and increases self-esteem. It also challenges the hierarchy of a dominant a culture and language in the media and society. This in turn works to strengthen multiculturalism and counter racism and promote cross-cultural understanding between all groups of society.

Moreover, community broadcasting's participatory, non-commercial and collaborative ethos also promotes cultural, social and linguistic meeting places and communication spaces, which are unlikely to come about in any other setting. In this way, community broadcasting becomes a site of difference, which creates a unique and rare opportunity for 'equal dialogues' that encourage understanding and social inclusion.

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[10] As stated by the then Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion, Ursula Stephens, in her address to the 2008 FECCA conference Mosaic, Magazine of Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia, 18 April 2008, pg 16.
[11] Peter Maynard, Promoting Social Cohesion: The role of community media, a report prepared for the Council of Europe's Group Specialists on Media Diversity, Council of Europe, July 2008, p.5
[12] Peter Maynard, Promoting Social Cohesion: the role of community media, p.32

Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting should be recognised for the important role it plays in supporting a healthy multicultural society in Australia. It ensures that the 'missing voices' that the Federal Government seeks to include in its Social Inclusion Agenda are heard.

Dominant/Mainstream Media and Multiculturalism

In contrast to community media's participatory, culturally inclusive and localised services, the commercial/mainstream media in Australia has highly condensed ownership and lacks representation of multicultural views. This lack of multicultural voices leads to underrepresentation and misrepresentation of cultural communities in the mainstream media. Of particular concern are the high level vilification and flagrant attacks on refugees and asylum seekers in commercial talk-back radio and tabloid publications. This skewed coverage of Australian society in the mainstream media does not encourage the level of understanding and 'equal dialogues'[13] between diverse communities which are essential for a successful multicultural society.

The power of the media is such that it plays a central role in shaping societal views and has the ability to include or exclude different groups of people. It is crucial for the wellbeing and sense of belonging for all in society and it is vital to have all sections of the media (commercial, public and community) to reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of this nation. This will validate the diversity of perspectives and value the contributions of all Australians, and in doing so will provide a sense of belonging and inclusion for all. It will also facilitate active public engagement with culture and language as well as raise awareness of different experiences in the wider community.

A lack of representation and certainly the misrepresentation of cultural views can lead to marginalisation and discrimination. For example, when a young woman from Somalia was interviewed by 3CR community radio she described the effects that the lack of cultural diversity in the mainstream media and the racism she experiences have on her sense of home and belonging in Australia:

> "When you're in your house, you constantly miss your country, if you flick through the TV channels there's no one that looks like you, there's no one that represents your issues, it's not inclusive in that sense… when your step outside and experience racism… you feel like you're excluded and sometimes people tell you directly you're not like us and you're not welcome… it's really sad."

In her article, 'Young take on the monoculture', *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 13th 2010, Adele Horin laments that the lack of a culturally representative media in Australia has strong implications for people's sense of home and belonging. Amongst research studies which support her assertion, Horin, cited a quite critical yet realistic quote from a 25-year-old woman of Lebanese-Greek background who remarked that, "The only time I see an ethnic person on the TV is when they've done something bad".

The Centre for Advanced Journalism at Melbourne University is currently investigating media representation of Sudanese Australians. A preliminary research study analysed newspaper coverage before and after the 2007 federal election – a period which also coincided with the tragic bashing death of Liep Gony. The analysis of 203 articles found that while not all coverage was negative, the majority of the stories represented Sudanese Australians problematically in relation to violence and integration into the broader community.[14] Focus groups found that Sudanese Australians perceive that they are being portrayed inaccurately and unfairly by the

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[13] FECCA encourages 'equal dialogues' and equality of all cultures in, Different but Equal: FECCA's National Multicultural Agenda, FECCA: Canberra 2010.
[14] Media Treatment and Communication Needs of African-Australians: A Media Participation and Intervention Project, http://www.caj.unimelb.edu.au/research/further_research

media.[15] Further, negative media coverage has had broader, ongoing effects, with fewer Sudanese immigrants accepted into Australia and increased discrimination in employment and public places.[16]

Some recent research studies have also reported the damaging effect that some mainstream media reports have had on the lives of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) young people. In 2010 the Springvale Monash Legal Service found that misleading media imagery had the affect of CALD young people feeling that they are 'outsiders', 'foreign' and 'not local' in Australia.[17] More damaging to these young people's sense of belonging and security in Australia was that some of the media misrepresentation focused public paranoia on African young people congregating in public spaces, including, parks, outside shops, on the streets and even the outside areas of their own homes. The report also found that young people have limited skills and knowledge to counter any misleading media and few opportunities to represent themselves in the media and broader society.

Similarly, researchers for the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission were repeatedly told that, 'there was a general fear of the media and a feeling that the media misrepresented African-Australians generally and Sudanese-Australians specifically'.[18] The researchers also noted the 'sense in the community that only 'bad' stories made the news and that this was disproportionate to the reality'.

Spreading knowledge and understanding and encouraging cross-cultural dialogue will dispel fears and work to extinguish racism. These reports are just a few examples documenting how fear and racism has detrimental effects on the lives of diverse cultural communities in Australia and particularly their young people. Bridging this gap in knowledge, understanding and cultural exchange will facilitate greater social cohesion on a broader level.

Thriving democracies should support pluralistic media and communication in order to enable important dialogue and social interconnectedness through a number of alternative public spheres. This requires recognition of the valuable and unique role that all media sectors – the public broadcaster, commercial and community – play in Australia. An investigation of public broadcasting in the UK concluded that a variety of communication forums are required to adequately address the needs of a diverse population. Communication involves the majority (public broadcaster) hosting divergent and contesting minority perspectives – both intercultural communication (minorities speaking to both majority and to other minorities) and intra cultural communication (a minority speaking to itself). This particular aspect of communication is unique to community broadcasting and is vital to representing, understanding and acknowledging minority voices and the need for them to communicate and strengthen their community development and connections.[6]

In any multicultural policy more should be done to address the levels of vilification and racism that are promulgated in certain sectors of the media. While freedom of expression is an important element to democracy, particular commentary that is vilifying and leads to racial and religious hatred needs to be strongly condemned and challenged by better use of the existing broadcast legislation. Very seldom in cases of

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[15] In the period of 2007-2008, 55% of articles from the major Australian newspapers which discussed Sudanese Australians had violence as the central theme as opposed to 2010 which only had 24% of articles linking Sudanese with violence. Assoc. Prof Karen Farquharson, Media Images and Experiences of Sudanese Australia, Swinburne University, presentation at Aus-Sud forum, 18th June 2011.

[16] Ibid.

[17] 'Boys you wanna give me some action? Interventions into Policing into Radicalized Communities in Melbourne', Springvale Monash Legal Service, 2010.

[18] 'Rights of Passage: The experiences of Australian Sudanese Young People', VREOC.

[6] Georgina Born, 'Digitising democracy', in (eds.) J. Lloyd and J. Seaton, What Can Be Done? Making the Media and Politics Better, pp. 102-23. Special book issue of Political Quarterly. Oxford: Blackwell. ISBN: 1 4051 3693 6. p.11

racial vilification does the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) use its power to suspend or cancel a licence, prosecute an offender or pursue a civil penalty.

The NEMBC recommends that the government make a more concerted effort to increase cultural and linguistic diversity in the commercial and government media as well as increase support for community media, which actively supports the opportunity for the voices of all Australians to be heard in the media and society.

Recommendations

1.1   A multicultural policy must adopt an overarching, whole-of-government approach. For this reason, multicultural policy should be included side-by-side with social inclusion policy, but not subsumed by or limited to the social inclusion agenda.

1.2   The Social Inclusion policy should:

- Recognise and respond to the benefits and challenges of cultural and linguistic diversity, migration and globalisation and provide better models for participation.
- Recognise the broad benefits of cultural and linguistic diversity and not limit engagement with multiculturalism to the social inclusion agenda, which has the potential to position cultural difference as a point of 'disadvantage'.
- Increase English language proficiency for migrants and refugees with a more realistic approach to English language support.
- Respond to the root causes of discrimination and racism.
- Look at better models for active participation in society for all Australians.
- Ensure that all Australians are able to contribute to decisions which directly affect them. The government should support more cultural and linguistic diversity in Australia's institutions, including the Social Inclusion Board.

1.3   To reduce discrimination based on culture, ethnicity, faith and language and thus ensure that community members are not marginalised and excluded from society, the Government should give strong consideration to culture and language in its Social Inclusion Agenda.

1.4   The Government should recognise that multicultural community broadcasting by definition practises   multiculturalism and 'social inclusion' by involving, supporting and building communities. Community radio and television establishes a local workforce of volunteers, empowers people through training and the acquisition of new skills, provides social opportunities, access to information, employment and educational opportunities, orientation to Australian systems, increases self-esteem and wellbeing and strengthens local economies.

1.5   The Government should recognise that ethnic community broadcasting plays a significant role in maintaining language, culture and identity, stimulating multilingualism and combating racism and stereotypes through the self-representation of minority communities.

1.6   The Government should recognise the important role that ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting plays in supporting a healthy multicultural society. It does this by actively supporting intra- and inter-cultural communication as well as engaging, connecting and developing communities (newly arrived and established). Community broadcasting actively supports the opportunity for the voices of all Australians to be heard in the media and society.

1.7 The Government should provide more support for community media to fulfil its role, as it runs on a meagre budget and relies heavily on overworked and under-resourced volunteers.

1.8 The Government should make a concerted effort to encourage government and commercial media to be more representative of the culturally and linguistically diverse people who live in Australia.

1.9 The Government should recognise that while the mainstream media is lacking in its portrayal of multicultural Australia, the community broadcasting sector is an example of active and participatory multiculturalism, social inclusion, social cohesion and cultural and linguistic diversity.

1.10 The Government should act on existing legislation and enforcement mechanisms on acts of racial vilification in the media.

2. Immigration and diaspora communities

The contribution of diaspora communities to Australia's relationships with Europe, the UK, Middle East and the immediate Asia-Pacific Region

Diaspora communities are an important resource for Australia and continue to provide benefits for Australia's international relationships by promoting and encouraging trade and investment through local and international business networks. Previous multicultural policies have assisted diaspora communities to share links between Australia and their countries of origin and strengthen networks for social interaction and dialogue. This in turn provides Australia with a deeper understanding of other nations and provides for better diplomatic relations.

The role of diaspora communities in promoting and encouraging international trade and investment is discussed in Section 4, National Productive Capacity.

Migration today is rarely in a singular direction; it involves fluid movements of populations which have multiple connections with multiples places and communities. We are no longer simply referring to diaspora communities, but also transnational and cosmopolitan communities. Transnational migrants, migrants here on a temporary basis (including international students and skilled migrants), diaspora connections and multilingualism have multiple benefits for Australia in an increasingly globalised world. These communities are using different forms of communication and social, economic and political exchange and an array of tools for disseminating information – all of which plays important and beneficial roles on the level of community, society, politics and commerce, both in Australia and overseas.

Multicultural community broadcasters in Australia retain strong links with communities in their country of origin as well as diaspora communities. Community radio has already embraced innovative technology, such as online broadcasting, to connect dispersed communities and share local (Australian) information with communities around the world. Online simulcasts and 'listen-on-demand' broadcasts of multilingual radio shows produced in Australia allow communities here and abroad to engage with each other and their respective countries. Online platforms and networks – such as the NEMBC's innovative new multimedia website which will act as a hub of multilingual radio programs – provide a novel and creative way to transmit information and knowledge and negotiate, culture, identity and belonging.

Moreover, research is currently being undertaken to ascertain whether resettlement is more successful if young refugees are able to identify, connect, communicate and engage with their home communities and diaspora refugee communities, through new communication technologies and media channels.[19]

Community broadcasting is committed to balancing both local and international material to service the unique needs of multicultural communities in Australia. When people migrate (including forced migration) they do not automatically cut the ties with their country of origin, where many still have family, friends and identity connections. Facilitating these connections ensures that communities are not marginalised and are able to feel comfortable and welcome to make community connections in a number of places.

The fact that community radio or TV programs are locally produced in language encourages those living in Australia to make the connection with their culture, heritage and sense of home here in Australia. If migrant communities are only accessing satellite or re-broadcast media services from their country of origin they

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[19] Homelands http://www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/home-lands-forum/

can sometimes live with a sense of home being somewhere else, rather than being here in Australia. Community media's capacity to incorporate news, information and cultural content from both geographical areas encourages multiple feelings of home, belonging and inclusion both in Australia and elsewhere.

A growing migrant population with strong diaspora relationship is international students. The value of international students should be acknowledged beyond economic terms and consequently supported by the government and respective educational institutions and support services. This group of migrants are part of multicultural Australia and more consideration should be paid to them. Many international students stay in Australia or maintain long-term relations with Australia and often take up influential positions in their respective countries when they return.

Although international students make up a significant part of the student population in Australia, they encounter many challenges and are largely separate from the local student population. They are often invisible in the wider society, including the media. International students participating in a CALD youth focus group for the NEMBC in June 2010 remarked at the lack of media representation of them. The participants felt that the limited media coverage that did exist had mostly focused on the violence experienced by Indian international students. They felt that little attention is given to other issues international students encounter, such as living abroad without family and home networks and the difficulties that many encounter in terms of housing, childcare, limited financial means, and lack of access to local services and transport concessions.

The NEMBC believes international students should be supported to participate in community broadcasting to enable them to have a voice in the media and society while they are in Australia. Online media capabilities mean that this can provide a sense of belonging not just here in Australia but also in their country of origin or in dispersed communities. Working on a radio or TV program with other young people in Australia is a practical and positive way to bridge the gap between local and internationals students, who may share common cultural or linguistic backgrounds. For example, the Asian Pop radio programs (Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Japanese) which air weekly on SYN Media (90.7FM) represent local and international students working together for cross-cultural and linguistic exchange.

Australia's community broadcasting sector is well renowned as a global leader in terms of providing support, access and participation for migrant and refugee communities to provide local news, information and entertainment to their communities. The ethnic community broadcasting sector now boasts:

- 130 radio stations broadcasting different language programs (including 6 full-time ethnic station)
- With an audience of over 2 million
- over 2,000 hours of ethnic community broadcasting each week
- Over 3,000 volunteers from 125 distinct cultural groups.
- Broadcasts in 100 languages across metropolitan, regional and country Australia.

In January 2010, a delegation from the Communications Department at Sookmyung Women's University in Seoul, Korea, conducted a research tour of Australia in an attempt to emulate Australia's approach to multicultural broadcasting. Responding to growing multiculturalism and immigration in Korea, their project aims to understand the role of locally produced multilingual community media in forming a successful multicultural society. Ultimately the group hopes to influence the Korean Government to introduce policies to assist ethnic minorities in Korea. The university team chose

Australia as their research model because of its vibrant and unique multicultural broadcasting sector.[20]

Another example of using diaspora connections for positive social and political change is provided by some young Sudanese Australians who are leading peace and reconciliation movements in Sudan and Kenya.[21] Through their experience of living in both places and utilising the skills that they have acquired in Australia and their country of origin, there is evidence that they are able to effect positive social and political change both here and Sudan. The government can acknowledge these links and multiple connections to strengthen our relationships with other regions and show that people can have multiple forms of belonging and build social, political and commercial productive capacity in multiple places.

Recommendations

2.1   That the Government fund initiatives that relate to language communication in the digital economy and through new media.

2.2   Greater acknowledgment of role community radio plays in connecting diaspora communities and exporting local Australian media content.

2.3   The government acknowledge the links and multiple connections of diaspora communities, to strengthen our relationships with other regions.

2.4   The government acknowledge that people can have multiple forms of belonging and build social, political and commercial productive capacity in multiple places; acknowledging that having connections with your country of origin or diaspora isn't mutually exclusive to a commitment and connection to Australia.

2.5   Greater support for international students to be included in Australian society.

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[20] Community Media and Multiculturalism in Korea, *The Ethnic Broadcaster*, April 2010
http://www.nembc.org.au/userfiles/file/EB_pdf/EB%20Autumn%202010.pdf
[21] Rachael Bongiorno, Lost Children are Peace Leaders, New Matilda, December 2010
http://newmatilda.com/2010/12/01/lost-children-are-peace-leaders

3. Settlement and participation

Innovative ideas for settlement programs for new migrants, including refugees, that support their full participation and integration into the broader Australian society *and*

Incentives to promote long term settlement patterns that achieve greater social and economic benefits for Australian society as a whole.

For the past 35 years, the value of community radio for emerging and refugee communities has been well established. With each new wave of migrants and refugees coming to Australia, community radio has responded to their media needs faster than any other broadcaster.

Through its commitment to access and participation, inexpensive entry-level training and more opportunities to broadcast through a large number of stations, community radio plays a unique and valuable role as a settlement resource for migrant and refugee communities and as a social, cultural and linguistic service for established migrants. This approach acknowledges that settlement is a lifelong process and needs to be continually supported in innovative and adaptive ways.

For new and emerging communities, the information broadcast on community radio programs is vital to inform the local community who may be unfamiliar with local structures, services and culture. It encourages them to connect as a community, feel a sense of inclusion and belonging and work together to support each other. Regular local media in language also addresses potential barriers arising from limited English skills, literacy in their own language, oral tradition and limited mobility (especially for women and elderly).

Many community radio stations make a concerted effort to support and engage new and emerging communities. For example, the full time ethnic radio station in Melbourne, 3ZZZ FM, broadcasts nineteen different language programs from newly arrived or emerging communities.

Coordinator of the Karen language program on 3ZZZ FM (one of the station's newest programs), Keh Blut Keh, sees the radio program as an important communication tool for the development of a new community and an accessible way they can keep themselves informed of news and information in Australia and around the world:

> "There are more and more Karen people resettling in other countries and many of them cannot speak or read and write English language. It is very difficult to start a life in a new country if you cannot understand the language. Having the radio in Karen language can help the Karen community to get to know more about the society which they settle in. Karen people in the community are happy and proud as they can now listen to the radio in their own language. They can learn and understand about their new society through the news broadcasting from this radio. It is also the first Karen radio that Karen people around the world can listen to through the 3ZZZ website."

Similarly, a Sudanese focus group participant for a Griffith University study reiterated the importance of not just hearing news from the home country, but being able to easily access local and national news from Australia through Sudanese (Nuer, Dinka, Arabic) language programming:

> "Because you don't have much time here to meet with all your friends …
> you turn the station on and it attracts you … its something in your own
> language and it keeps you occupied and abreast of what's happening.
> And again it talks about issues that are also happening in the country
> itself, not just overseas."[22]

Community radio is one of the most accessible ways new migrant and refugee
communities can access government and service information, orientation to the
Australian systems and community discussions. This further enhances their social
inclusion in Australian society. A member of a Turkish focus group for the Griffith
University study highlighted the importance of language programming in providing
essential legal and government information:

> "As we're living here, we're able to hear what our responsibilities are and
> also our rights are here, like for example, when you hear information about
> Centrelink, or about taxation office, traffic infringement notices to be aware
> of those and what to do and what not to do… Legal, family matters,
> divorces, domestic violence, those kinds of things, to get that information
> in Turkish… To understand these matters wrongly or understand them a
> little bit does not, will not help you."[23]

Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting not only connects migrant and
refugee communities with their local communities, it also assists with their integration
and inclusion into Australian society. Several participants in Griffith University's
Turkish focus group felt this was one of the key roles of their radio program:

> "The radio, this radio station is not separating us from Australia, as our
> friend said before, it's integrating us to Australia, It's 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
> or adapt anyway. And also we see our differences as richness, in Turkey
> too, where we come from different backgrounds… we're living the same
> thing here too and we're happy about that."[24]

Such testimony underscores the value of ethnic and multicultural community
broadcasting for social inclusion, settlement, integration and community engagement.
With increased immigration and cultural diversity, multilingual broadcasting will
continue to play a critical role in servicing the settlement, social, linguistic and
cultural needs of this diverse population.

In addition, the NEMBC has embraced new technology to assist new and emerging
communities through its new innovative online web radio resource, which will be a
hub of locally produced multilingual and multicultural radio programs and podcasts.

This website aims to assist new and emerging communities by:

- Reducing the barriers to social connectedness and online digital inclusion.
- Improving access to multilingual local news, information, services and
  entertainment.
- Building community connections and supporting innovative media making,
  collaboration and creative expression through online media technologies.

For new and emerging communities who listen to local ethnic community radio for
vital information and news, being able to listen to programs when and where it suits
them means that they will not miss the opportunity to listen and benefit from the

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[22] Michael Meadows, Susan Ford, Jacqui Ewart, Kerrie Foxwell, Community Media Matters: An audience
study of the Australian community broadcasting sector, Griffith University p.79.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

program's content. To facilitate access and participation in this innovative online resource, the NEMBC is seeking support for a training and engagement project, with a particular focus on new and emerging communities.

The State Library of Victoria's Vicnet report on digital inclusion for minority language groups and new and emerging communities recognised that although community radio is widely used by new and emerging communities, more support is needed for digital inclusion. Websites such as the new NEMBC web radio resource facilitate that inclusion and bring the settlement benefits of community broadcasting to the online domain. This website extends opportunities for minority cultural and linguistic communities in Australia to access locally produced programs, listen to and share podcasts and engage with multimedia platforms in their own language.

The Vicnet researchers for digital inclusion for new and emerging communities recommended that:

> 'In recognition of the great potential the internet offers for new and emerging communities to connect across Australia, diasporas and the homeland, it is recommended that support be given to support and promote cooperative ventures across diaspora such as the NEMBC internet radio project.'[25]

The NEMBC also seeks to engage new and emerging communities in innovative ways by encouraging links with radio stations, service providers and communities. Community radio stations are largely volunteer-run and often under-resourced in terms of personnel. To ensure that new and emerging communities are well supported to start their program and sustain it, extra support is needed in the first couple of years of broadcasts.

Building a radio program with recently arrived refugees is interrelated with the building of a community and requires addressing a number of different needs within these groups. For this reason, it is useful to encourage a close relationship with settlement workers and community radio stations, to understand and address settlement concerns, practical support, community development and complex needs of refugees groups. More acknowledgement of the settlement role that community radio plays is needed as well as increased support for communities to access and participate in community broadcasting.

Recommendations

3.1 Make better use of community radio to assist new migrants and refugees, with a more nuanced approach to information dissemination and settlement support.

3.2 Fund projects which support and engage new and emerging communities in community broadcasting.

3.3 Targeted funding should be provided for community broadcasting settlement support, including supporting new communities to access training, get on air (including financial support for airtime) and sustain their programs.

3.4 To support media, communication and leadership projects as part of the settlement program to creatively engage more cultural and linguistically diverse people (particularly youth) in community broadcasting and provide them with a good basis for ongoing mainstream media participation. This will provide opportunities for them to disseminate culturally and linguistically specific information through community radio and new media platforms. It will also provide them with the skills and foundation for mainstream media participation,

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[25] Nicky Lo Bianco, Andrew Cunningham and Colleen McCombie, New Communities, emerging content: digital inclusion fro minority language groups, p. 23.

which will work towards making the mainstream media more representative of Australia's multicultural reality.

3.5   Encourage innovative partnership projects with NGOs and community broadcasting stations to share resources, expertise and knowledge.

3.6   Provide incentives to promote long term settlement patterns that achieve greater social and economic benefits for Australian society as a whole.

3.7   Acknowledge the important role that community radio plays as a unique and valuable settlement resource for migrant and refugee communities.

3.8   Acknowledge the vital role that community broadcasting continues to play for established migrants, responding to their changing demographic needs in an innovative and adaptive way. This recognises that long term settlement is supported through community broadcasting.

3.9   Acknowledge that community radio has the ability to respond to the communication needs of new and emerging communities, as well as the changing needs of established ethnic communities, much quicker than any other broadcaster.

3.10   Training: The NEMBC strongly recommends the restoration and re-funding of the Australian Ethnic Radio Training Program so that community broadcasting can provide vital information, education and entertainment to service the linguistic and cultural needs of a diverse population, particularly new and emerging communities, which public and commercial broadcasting are not servicing.

4. National productive capacity

The role migration has played and contributes to building Australia's long term productive capacity.

Enhancing Australia's languages and cultural skills

In Section 2 we mentioned the importance of diaspora communities in promoting and encouraging international trade and investment. Such activities by diaspora communities strengthen Australia's national productive capacity.

The promotion and encouragement of international trade and investment is meditated through the use of languages and cultural expertise. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has recognised this in attracting investment to Australia as follows:

> *Australia is the most culturally diverse country in the Asia–Pacific region and one of the most multicultural countries in the world.*
>
> *It is also home to one of the most multilingual workforces in the Asia–Pacific region with citizens from over 200 countries. About 3 million of Australia's 21 million strong population speak a language other than English at home.*[26]

The attraction of Australia as an investment location can be strengthened by enhancing its language and cultural skills. These skills can be developed through Australia's education systems. Commonwealth, state and territory Ministers for Education have said:

> *Developing* [in our learners] *language skills and inter-cultural understanding is an investment in our national capability and a valuable resource.*
>
> *Language skills and cultural sensitivity will be the new currency of this world order*[27]
>
> *Australia must build on its diverse linguistic and cultural environment which is a result of its indigenous history, geography and migration*[28].

As Australia's largest language laboratory, ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting plays an important role in maintaining Australia's existing language and cultural resources. It also has a potentially important role in supporting broader language education policies within Australia through cooperation with mainstream and ethnic /community language schools sectors. There are some examples of such cooperation already.[29] Government initiatives should encourage further cooperation along these lines.

The NEMBC will focus on four further areas in which ethnic community broadcasting strengthens national productive capacity: education and training leading to career opportunities; assistance in long term economic benefit to local communities; cost effectiveness; and a strong capacity to assist in times of emergencies and crisis.

Community broadcasting should be recognised for its role in Education and Training in media. The Centre for Creative Industries and Innovation 2007 survey reveals that community media contributes substantially to the media industries, providing training

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[26] DFAT *Investing in Australia*, available at www.dfat.gov.au/facts/investing_in_australia.html
[27] The Ministers have taken this quotation from General Peter Cosgrove
[28] MCEETYA, 2005, National Statement for Languages Education for Australian Schools, p2
[29] See for example NEMBC *The Ethnic Broadcaster*, Winter 2011, p23

and networks which lead to real career opportunities across the commercial, public, community and education sectors.[30]

The economic force that community contributes in the way of assisting local economies and volunteerism cannot be underestimated. The full time ethnic community radio stations are a hub of volunteerism and economic activity. In ethnic community broadcasting there are 6 full time stations and 130 stations that broadcast multicultural language programs, in total there are over 500 community radio stations in Australia.

Ethnic and multicultural broadcasting makes-up a large part of the overall community broadcasting environment. Community broadcasting is a contributor to efficient local economies and can directly strengthen the economic fabric of the community, because it:

- **Assists community members to identify employment pathways**
- **Engages and skills 23,000 volunteers** who provide an estimated $212 million annually worth of labour. Full time ethnic stations engage well over 3,000 volunteers[31].
- **Develops transferable skills increasing employability.** Key among these are ICT skills, broadcast technology, management capability and spoken and written communication. Over 7,500 people receive training in the sector each year and it is a way for many vulnerable groups, such as at risk youth or refugees, to reengage with learning in a practical environment
- **Strengthens economic networks** by giving local people information about local businesses and enables local business to make themselves known through the tens of thousands of sponsorship messages broadcast each week
- **Develops partnerships with business and other not for profit organisations** to deliver projects and services to communities
- **Works with emergency service providers** to provide local and current information to communities facing crisis
- **Provides a communication channel about Commonwealth and State Government** services and initiatives, including training and education, small business and migration programs

Cost Effectiveness

The community radio sector has become a major producer of locally relevant ethnic programs that would otherwise have to be provided by the ABC and/or SBS at a much greater cost. A simple comparison of the relative cost structures in Non- English Speaking Background (NESB) radio production between SBS and the community radio broadcasting sector illustrates this point.

Ethnic community radio produces 80% more programs than SBS Radio. It produces more then four times the hours of the government-funded SBS Services. SBS Radio, which is totally funded by government, received $21 million in 2006-07 at a cost of $1,500 per program, in contrast to the $2.7 million going to ethnic community broadcasting at a cost of $35 per program[32].

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[30] Ellie Rennie, *Community Media and Industry Training,* Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, 2007.
[31] This estimate is based on the model established in Culture, Commitment, Community: The Australian Community Radio Sector. Forde,S.,Meadows,M., and Foxwell, K., Griffith University, Brisbane 2002. – www.cboline.org.au/
[32] Report on funding allocation to the Community Broadcasting Sector in 2006-07, Community Broadcasting Foundation, March 2008 p.9.

Productive Capacity to Assist in Emergencies

Ethnic and multilingual community broadcasting has become an essential service in broadcasting messages and warnings around disasters that occur in our community. Natural disasters, such as cyclones, bush-fires, floods and earthquakes are on the increase around Australia. This factor along with an increased level of new migrants in Australia increases the role that ethnic and multilingual community broadcasting. Accordingly, Government should consider funding increases in this area as the messages that can be delivered in a person's own language can make a substantial difference with a person's personal safety and well being.

Ethnic community radio stations act as important disseminators of information for emergency broadcasting: during a crisis and most importantly at the post-emergency and relief stages. They can assist with the re-building and development stages and assist in networking the community.

Community radio has the distinct advantage of having local knowledge, understanding the local geography. The people that live in the community are the same people that broadcast on-air, they understand the community and can assist in the trauma that the community experiences. The Victorian Royal Commission, 2009 interim report into the bushfires concluded that; 'community radio has the distinct advantage of having local knowledge, understanding the local geography and the people that live in the community"[33].

During the Black Saturday fires in Victoria it was community radio warnings that reached the local community before any other warning[34]. Community radio stations received phone calls after the 'Black Saturday' fires telling how their on-air broadcasts had saved peoples lives. The community radio station in Alexandra, 3UG-FM, were the first to broadcast warnings of the fires advancing on Marysville. These early warnings helped many people to start their fire plan and prepare for the evacuation.

Increasingly rural areas are becoming more multicultural with new arrivals moving to rural areas, and many community radio stations have ethnic broadcasters. These broadcasters can play a vital role in broadcasting warnings, emergency relief and information in their language.

Recently in the floods in Queensland the full-time ethnic station 4EB-FM was able to continue broadcasting during the floods, relaying important information from the emergency services but also provided important information in languages to act as a comfort for people from non-0English speaking backgrounds. The following months after the floods 4EB ran an appeal and raised almost $90,000. Other stations around the country ran appeals with community serve announcements. The Vietnamese broadcasters at Sydney's 2000FM were so moved by the Queensland floods that they arranged their own appeal on their radio program. To their surprise, their listeners, also touched by the floods, pledged $10,000 in the first hour. By the end of the week the single language program had raised almost $50,000 for the appeal.

Recommendations

4.1 In order to support language and cultural maintenance, and to support broader language education policies and objectives, government should encourage and facilitate cooperation between ethnic community broadcasters and the Australian education sector including ethnic/community language schools.

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[33] 2009 Victorian Bushfires, Royal Commission, Interim Report, ISBN 978-0-646-51830-5, August 2009, pg 110.
[34] ABC "Four Corners," 27 April 2009, transcript at www.abc.net.au/4corners/content/2009/s2553879.htm

4.2 Community broadcasting should be recognised for its role in Education and Training in media.

4.3 Community radio should be recognised by government and the broader community for its positive role in strengthening communities and providing productive input into the local economy and contributing to social capacity:

    4.3.1 Ethnic and multilingual community broadcasting does not just maintain language and cultural competence, it is also an essential service that Governments should recognise and fund appropriately.

    4.3.2 Ethnic community broadcasting should be recognised for the valuable role it can play in emergency relief. National guidelines should be adopted, similar to those in the state of Victoria, to assist community radio stations to become emergency ready and provide cultural and linguistic support for migrants during emergencies.

    4.3.3 Assistance should be given in delivering better services for community radio stations to prepare for an emergency and to cope during a crisis and to offer post-emergency support. For example community radio stations need to consider that they will be in the front-line and may lose equipment or may need back-up options, or to become mobile to continue broadcasting during a crisis. Funding in this area will need to be considered.

5. Skilled migration

The profile of skilled migration to Australia and the extent to which Australia is fully utilising the skills of all migrants

Any undervaluing and underuse of the skills of migrants (including refugees, transnational and temporary migrants) should be seen as a point of 'exclusion' in society. The cumbersome and impeding nature of overseas qualifications recognition, the existence of cultural and linguistic discrimination in some workplaces and the challenges of transitioning to Australian workplaces excludes many migrants and refugees from reaching their potential, contributing to and participating more fully in Australian society.

The undervaluing and intolerance towards refugees is affected by the present negativity regarding humanitarian and refugee reaching the shores of Australia. Government policy needs to work to promote the principles of fairness, justice and respect by treating refugees and migrants with respect and dignity. As an adherent to international conventions on refugees, Australia needs to maintain protection of refugees and make sure that claims and forms are processed swiftly and fairly. In regards to families and children; the breaking-up of family groups should be avoided and children should not be held in detention. Mandatory detention should be eliminated.

There needs to be an overall humane approach to new migrants, especially to asylum seekers that have experienced trauma. Mental health issues need to be addressed with more funding given to those organisations working in this field.

Once new arrivals have been accepted into Australia there needs to be a recognition of skills which includes accepting the overseas qualifications of new arrivals and developing culturally competent services which understand and respond to cultural and linguistic needs and improving English language training.

Recommendations

5.1 Depoliticise asylum seekers and refugees. The NEMBC calls on the government to ensure that any migration and multicultural policy recognise the rights of refugees and asylum seekers and accord them the dignity, respect and protection in the spirit of all relevant UN conventions to which Australia is a signatory.

6. Government initiatives

Potential government initiatives to better assist migrant communities establish business enterprises

Often the strength of establishing new business rests on the opportunities that new migrants have in tapping into existing networks. Community radio provides a ready network to access communities and businesses and provides training opportunities in media skills, through a volunteer process, which leads to empowerment in social networking and leadership development. The ethnic community radio sector extremely cost effective in regards to its reach and distribution.

Commonwealth, state and territory governments have adopted a wide range of measures to encourage the establishment and expansion of business enterprises. The government could use the ethnic community broadcasting sector to disseminate more widely information about the available programs and measures.

Recommendations

6.1 Governments should use the ethnic community broadcasting sector to disseminate more widely information about available programs and measures to support business enterprises.

Conclusion

Ethnic community broadcasting is a vital service for migrants and refugees as they establish themselves in a new country. The Australian Government's migration program is at its highest level since the 1960s. Ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting is Australia's largest language laboratory – which not only provides an information and entertainment service, but maintains community connections, promoting linguistic diversity, cultural development, social inclusion and belonging.

Please see below a list of full recommendations.

Overall Recommendations

1. Multiculturalism, social inclusion and globalisation

1.1 A multicultural policy must adopt an overarching, whole-of-government approach. For this reason, multicultural policy should be included side-by-side with social inclusion policy, but not subsumed by or limited to the social inclusion agenda.

1.2 The Social Inclusion policy should:

- Recognise and respond to the benefits and challenges of cultural and linguistic diversity, migration and globalisation and provide better models for participation.
- Recognise the broad benefits of cultural and linguistic diversity and not limit engagement with multiculturalism to the social inclusion agenda, which has the potential to position cultural difference as a point of 'disadvantage'.
- Increase English language proficiency for migrants and refugees with a more realistic approach to English language support.
- Respond to the root causes of discrimination and racism.
- Look at better models for active participation in society for all Australians.
- Ensure that all Australians are able to contribute to decisions which directly affect them. The government should support more cultural and linguistic diversity in Australia's institutions, including the Social Inclusion Board.

1.3 To reduce discrimination based on culture, ethnicity, faith and language and thus ensure that community members are not marginalised and excluded from society, the Government should give strong consideration to culture and language in its Social Inclusion Agenda.

1.4 The Government should recognise that multicultural community broadcasting by definition practises multiculturalism and 'social inclusion' by involving, supporting and building communities. Community radio and television establishes a local workforce of volunteers, empowers people through training and the acquisition of new skills, provides social opportunities, access to information, employment and educational opportunities, orientation to Australian systems, increases self-esteem and wellbeing and strengthens local economies.

1.5 The Government should recognise that ethnic community broadcasting plays a significant role in maintaining language, culture and identity, stimulating multilingualism and combating racism and stereotypes through the self-representation of minority communities.

1.6 The Government should recognise the important role that ethnic and multicultural community broadcasting plays in supporting a healthy multicultural society. It does this by actively supporting intra- and inter-cultural

communication as well as engaging, connecting and developing communities (newly arrived and established). Community broadcasting actively supports the opportunity for the voices of all Australians to be heard in the media and society.

1.7 The Government should provide more support for community media to fulfil its role, as it runs on a meagre budget and relies heavily on overworked and under-resourced volunteers.

1.8 The Government should make a concerted effort to encourage government and commercial media to be more representative of the culturally and linguistically diverse people who live in Australia.

1.9 The Government should recognise that while the mainstream media is lacking in its portrayal of multicultural Australia, the community broadcasting sector is an example of active and participatory multiculturalism, social inclusion, social cohesion and cultural and linguistic diversity.

1.10 The Government should act on existing legislation and enforcement mechanisms on acts of racial vilification in the media.

2. Immigration and diaspora communities

2.1 That the Government fund initiatives that relate to language communication in the digital economy and through new media.

2.2 Greater acknowledgment of role community radio plays in connecting diaspora communities and exporting local Australian media content.

2.3 The government acknowledge the links and multiple connections of diaspora communities, to strengthen our relationships with other regions.

2.4 The government acknowledge that people can have multiple forms of belonging and build social, political and commercial productive capacity in multiple places; acknowledging that having connections with your country of origin or diaspora isn't mutually exclusive to a commitment and connection to Australia.

2.5 Greater support for international students to be included in Australian society.

3. Settlement and participation

3.1 Make better use of community radio to assist new migrants and refugees, with a more nuanced approach to information dissemination and settlement support.

3.2 Fund projects which support and engage new and emerging communities in community broadcasting.

3.3 Targeted funding should be provided for community broadcasting settlement support, including supporting new communities to access training, get on air (including financial support for airtime) and sustain their programs.

3.4 To support media, communication and leadership projects as part of the settlement program to creatively engage more cultural and linguistically diverse people (particularly youth) in community broadcasting and provide them with a good basis for ongoing mainstream media participation. This will provide opportunities for them to disseminate culturally and linguistically specific information through community radio and new media platforms. It will also provide them with the skills and foundation for mainstream media participation,

which will work towards making the mainstream media more representative of Australia's multicultural reality.

3.5 Encourage innovative partnership projects with NGOs and community broadcasting stations to share resources, expertise and knowledge.

3.6 Provide incentives to promote long term settlement patterns that achieve greater social and economic benefits for Australian society as a whole.

3.7 Acknowledge the important role that community radio plays as a unique and valuable settlement resource for migrant and refugee communities.

3.8 Acknowledge the vital role that community broadcasting continues to play for established migrants, responding to their changing demographic needs in an innovative and adaptive way. This recognises that long term settlement is supported through community broadcasting.

3.9 Acknowledge that community radio has the ability to respond to the communication needs of new and emerging communities, as well as the changing needs of established ethnic communities, much quicker than any other broadcaster.

3.10 Training: The NEMBC strongly recommends the restoration and re-funding of the Australian Ethnic Radio Training Program so that community broadcasting can provide vital information, education and entertainment to service the linguistic and cultural needs of a diverse population, particularly new and emerging communities, which public and commercial broadcasting are not servicing.

4. National productive capacity

4.1 In order to support language and cultural maintenance, and to support broader language education policies and objectives, government should encourage and facilitate cooperation between ethnic community broadcasters and the Australian education sector including ethnic/community language schools

4.2 Community broadcasting should be recognised for its role in Education and Training in media.

4.3 Community radio should be recognised by government and the broader community for its positive role in strengthening communities and providing productive input into the local economy and contributing to social capacity:

4.3.1 Ethnic and multilingual community broadcasting does not just maintain language and cultural competence, it is also an essential service that Governments should recognise and fund appropriately.

4.3.2 Ethnic community broadcasting should be recognised for the valuable role it can play in emergency relief. National guidelines should be adopted, similar to those in the state of Victoria, to assist community radio stations to become emergency ready and provide cultural and linguistic support for migrants during emergencies.

4.3.3 Assistance should be given in delivering better services for community radio stations to prepare for an emergency and to cope during a crisis and to offer post-emergency support. For example community radio stations need to consider that they will be in the front-line and may lose equipment or may need back-up options, or to become mobile to

continue broadcasting during a crisis. Funding in this area will need to be considered.

5. Skilled migration

5.1 Depoliticise asylum seekers and refugees. The NEMBC calls on the government to ensure that any migration and multicultural policy recognise the rights of refugees and asylum seekers and accord them the dignity, respect and protection in the spirit of all relevant UN conventions to which Australia is a signatory.

6. Government initiatives

6.1 Governments should use the ethnic community broadcasting sector to disseminate more widely information about available programs and measures to support business enterprises.

Victor Marillanca
President NEMBC