



3MDR Submission to the Community Broadcasting Sector Sustainability Review July 2024

Community radio plays a critical role in promoting local culture, providing a platform for community voices, and fostering social cohesion. However, we are a sector full of burnt out staff, volunteers, and committee members in need of more support.

Community radio stations often serve as a voice for marginalised and underrepresented groups, individuals, and artists, ensuring that diverse perspectives are heard. It encourages active participation from local residents, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment. Supporting community radio contributes to a diverse media landscape, which is essential for a healthy democracy. It provides an alternative to mainstream media and can hold larger media outlets accountable. Additionally, the diminishing ability of printed news and social media to connect people opens a doorway for community radio to bring communities together.

As in much of the arts, there is a constant pull towards working for the love of it. And we do love what we do! But there is a danger in equating passion with workload and it's not sustainable. If government support can help stations to employ more staff, they can train more volunteers, involve more of the community, and improve the quality of their programming.

Training and upskilling members of the community creates local jobs. Engagement with young people aids in development of this vital part of our sector, and training in community radio creates a third space that is empowering for the next generation of leaders and young people from disengaged backgrounds who don't thrive in traditional learning environments.

The sector provides educational programs, health information, and important public service announcements tailored to the specific needs of their audience. This can be especially vital in rural or remote areas where access to information is limited. Community radio promotes local music, languages, and traditions, helping to preserve cultural heritage. Increased funding can support the production of culturally relevant content.

Additionally, during emergencies, community radio can be a critical resource for disseminating information quickly and effectively. Funding for disaster related infrastructure and tools such as satellite internet can help ensure that these stations have the necessary equipment and means to operate during and after a crisis.

Increased funding for community radio will be an investment in local communities, supporting their cultural, educational, and social development while enhancing media diversity and resilience.

Submission prepared by Dr. Nat Grant, 3MDR Station Manager