



Summary of stakeholder discussion—Adelaide and regional South Australia

This document provides a high-level, deidentified summary of the discussion at the workshop held virtually on 29 July 2024, and does not reflect all views given.

September 2024

Challenges for community broadcasters in Adelaide and regional SA

- Stations face financial challenges, including securing grants, managing costs and generating revenue amidst increasing operational costs.
- Pressure to explore alternative revenue generation (e.g. partnerships, merchandise, and digital products).
- Need to adapt to the digital age (e.g. streaming, podcasting and social media) while maintaining traditional broadcast services.
- Reaching and engaging diverse audiences, particularly young people and CALD communities.
- Outdated infrastructure and technology, limiting the ability to deliver high-quality programming.

Calls for reform

- Improve strategies to increase reach and diversity (e.g. audience research, funding for diverse programs).
- Improve transparency in the grant assessment process to build trust between CBP and stations.
- Secure long-term and increased funding for community radio stations to ensure viability.
- Streamline the grant application process to reduce administrative burden and increase success rates.
- Provide targeted support for volunteer-run stations to enhance their capacity and sustainability.
- Government investment in infrastructure upgrades and access to new technologies.

Sponsorship

- Confusion around sponsorship vs. advertising, leading to inconsistencies in application and compliance.
- Restrictions on sponsorship and tagging limit revenue potential.
- Stations expressed frustration over limited access to government advertising, despite significant audience numbers, with smaller stations affected disproportionately.

Calls for reform

- Relax the 5-minute per hour sponsorship limit with a more flexible approach (e.g. averaging over a longer period or increasing the limit).
- Provide clearer sponsorship guidelines.

- Implement a more equitable system for allocating government advertising across commercial and community radio stations, based on audience size.

Community participation, volunteers and staff

- There is limited collaboration between community, commercial, and public broadcasters.
- Many stations heavily rely on volunteers, which can lead to inconsistency in operations and difficulties in attracting and retaining talent.
- Retaining volunteers, particularly in the face of increasing demands and limited resources, is challenging.
- Many volunteers and staff lack essential skills in areas such as grant writing, financial management, and digital media.
- Balancing volunteer commitments with personal/professional responsibilities can be difficult. Stations must have support to implement strategies to support in maintaining a healthy work-life balance.
- Opportunities for career progression within the community radio sector are often limited.

Calls for reform

- Encourage greater collaboration among stations to share best practices and resources.
- Create clear pathways for volunteers to transition into paid roles within the sector.
- Provide comprehensive training and support for volunteers (e.g. strategic planning and grant writing).
- Incentivise volunteer involvement (e.g. offering professional development opportunities or recognition).
- Provide resources and support for volunteer-led projects and initiatives.

Licensing and regulation

- The licensing and regulatory processes are complex and time-consuming, diverting from core operations.
- The licensing renewal process is burdensome and time-consuming.

Calls for reform

- Review existing regulations to identify and remove unnecessary barriers.
- Simplify the licensing renewal process.
- Adopt a risk-based approach to licensing, focusing on stations with compliance issues rather than imposing excessive requirements on all stations.

Grants programs

- Overall funding for CBP grants is inadequate to meet the sector's needs, resulting in intense competition.
- Grant assessment criteria are inconsistent and do not reflect challenges faced by different station types.
- Many grants are short-term, making it difficult for stations to plan and implement long-term projects.
- The application process is complex, time-consuming and requires significant resources.
- Grant guidelines often lack flexibility, limiting the ability of stations to adapt to changing circumstances.
- Many grants are project-based, rather than supporting core operations or capacity building.

Calls for reform

- Increase CBP funding.
- Offer multi-year grants to support long-term planning and sustainability.
- Simplify the grant application process to reduce administrative burden.
- Develop more transparent and equitable grant assessment criteria that accurately reflect needs.
- Ensure grant assessment criteria accurately reflect the challenges and priorities of different station types.
- Provide clear and timely feedback to applicants, explaining the reasons for decisions.
- Allow for more flexibility in grant spending to accommodate unforeseen challenges.
- Provide grants for core operational costs to support the ongoing work of community radio stations, digital infrastructure and digital innovation and capacity building (e.g. training and equipment).