

GIPPSLAND FM POLICY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Gippsland FM is licenced as community radio station 3GCR to operate in the Latrobe Valley (RA1) incorporating the general geographic area of Latrobe City. This is our local community.

Gippsland FM has based its purpose and role on meeting the needs of the local community, particularly those needs that are not met by other media. In its original Promise of Performance, the station committed to delivering an alternative radio service to supplement and complement other media serving the local area. These commitments remain as a foundation of our service to the local community.

- 1.2 The station also has a key objective of undertaking activities which promote or enhance the well-being of the local community. We reflect this in our station vision where our aim is to “connect our community by delivering unique, diverse and valued programmings, celebrating the character and values of our Gippsland region while promotion freedom of expression and the breaking down of isolation and cultural barriers.”
- 1.3 In order to deliver on its commitment to meeting the needs of the local community, Gippsland FM shall endeavour to maintain effective levels of engagement across the broad spectrum of community focussed interest groups and local community issues. This notion is reflected in the station’s slogan of “Connecting Our Community.
- 1.4 The station shall achieve its objectives of community engagement and connection through a range of initiatives which include:
- a) formal surveys, focus groups or other forms of consultation with the local community to determine how well the station is meeting the needs of that community and what emerging or other needs should be addressed by the station,
 - b) establishing and maintaining interactive relationships with key community influencers and representatives,
 - c) endeavouring to ensure that community representatives that are independent of the station’s day to day operations are involved in the station’s management, decision-making or consultation processes,
 - d) promotion of access to station facilities and resources for all members of the community
 - e) provision of training and induction for all groups and individuals without screening unless such people are deemed to be a threat to the organisation or its members,

- f) ensuring that the station maintains a bias towards programs that actively engage with the local community or involve a wider level of participation by the local community or coverage of issues that affect that community, and
 - g) embracing platforms such as the station's website and social media to maintain dialogue with the local community.
- 1.5 Gippsland FM consists of the Board which is the determining authority. Assistance to the Board is provided by Committees such as the Program Advisory Committee and Fundraising Committee and a number of sub-committees and staff. These bodies meet regularly to address matters specific to their areas of responsibility, thus ensuring the station's community interest in operations and programming, are met.

2.0 RESEARCHING COMMUNITY NEEDS

- 2.1 The station shall endeavour to undertake formal surveys of the local community at least every five years to align with strategic goals and to assist in determining on-going community needs. It is noted that the cost of such surveys can be significant and in the event that costs are unable to be funded at any time, the Board should implement alternative options such as member surveys, establishment of focus groups, utilisation of educational institutions or other means (e.g. web-based options) to support research in identifying community needs.
- 2.2 Surveys or alternative mechanisms should aim to provide the following basic information and be referenced against the local community demographics to ensure any results are not skewed by those in the survey sample not being representative of the community:
- Audience sizes for existing programs – by age, gender and location,
 - Feedback on quality and content of programs,
 - Identification of subjects that should be broadcast on the station.
- 2.3 Member surveys should be only used when other forms of information gathering are not possible, given that the members may not be representative of the community at large. Emphasis should be given to the views of subscriber members (i.e. those who are not presenters) as this group is more independent of the station and should therefore be less inclined to show bias towards existing programs or issues.
- 2.4 In the event that focus groups are established, the station should endeavour to ensure that such groups are comprised of individuals that are independent of the station and as a group are generally representative of the local community in terms of age, gender and location.
- 2.5 The station shall actively encourage the community to give feedback on the programs and services being delivered by it and on issues or needs that the

station should consider being addressed by it. The station should ensure that mechanisms for feedback are simple and clear and promote these regularly on the station and its website.

- 2.6 The station may also receive unsolicited feedback at times in the form of complaints, congratulations and other correspondence which may provide insights into community needs or the performance of the station in meeting those needs. The station should publish internally such information and retain related documentation for further reference. The station Secretary shall be responsible for retaining a register of such feedback.
- 2.7 In any business planning or reviews that the station undertakes, the Board shall ensure that core objectives will always include strategies and actions to meet existing and emerging local community needs.
- 2.8 The Board shall be responsible for sharing with all members the feedback from all forms of information gathering in a timely and coherent manner and implementing changes resulting from such feedback and consultations.

3.0 COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- 3.1 The station will establish and maintain positive relationships with local organisations which represent the various elements of the local community. Such bodies should include:
 - the Latrobe City Council
 - ethnic groups or clubs,
 - indigenous organisations,
 - community institutions,
 - health organisations,
 - educational institutions,
 - sporting organisations,
 - religious institutions,
 - unions, and
 - various other cultural and community organisations that together with the foregoing are representative of the local community,
- 3.2 The station will provide ongoing support for community groups wishing to promote community based activities or community service announcements. The Board shall ensure that a co-ordinator role for community service announcements is maintained and that community services announcements are broadcast regularly each day by the station. It is noted that the station shall give precedence to community service announcements that are:
 - free of political influence,

- relate to the local community and its needs,
 - are consistent with the aspirations of the station and its community of interest, and
 - are delivered in a timely and presentable manner.
- 3.3 The station will promote its ability to provide community service announcements free of charge to community based organisations. The Board will ensure that at least one such announcement is broadcast each week, clearly identifying the process to be followed by community groups to achieve broadcast of their announcements.
- 3.4 The station will actively maintain a bias towards presenters, potential presenters and programs which involve greater participation by members of the community or where the station is more visible in the local community (i.e. outside broadcasts) or where the focus is on the local community and its needs. To give effect to this policy position, the Program Advisory Committee shall be expected to give priority to such programs in terms of scheduling, resourcing and support to ensure that community engagement is seen as the greatest priority for the station.
- 3.5 The station shall provide opportunities for community based organisations or individuals to participate in voluntary activities in either broadcasting or non-broadcasting roles, provided that the station can deliver adequate assistance, resources and supervision. Examples of such involvement could include:
- Work experience for secondary school students,
 - Execution of community based orders for individuals,
 - Youth development programs and projects, and
 - Unemployed individuals seeking voluntary work to sustain their self esteem, skills development and social contact.
- 3.6 Station fundraising events should also be seen as an opportunity for increased engagement and feedback from the local community. The Board shall ensure that such events are effectively managed and that feedback received from such events is factored into station information gathering processes.
- 3.7 The Board should also give consideration to donating part of any proceeds raised from station fundraising events to worthy community based organisations to give effect to the station's role in promoting and supporting local charitable causes.

4.0 GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

- 4.1 Notwithstanding the democratic process for the election of directors to the station Board, the station shall endeavour to ensure that participation occurs from non-station personnel on the station Board or Programming Advisory Committee or other such committees that may exist from time to time.

- 4.2 The station will encourage interested people or groups who are external to the station to consider taking on such roles and the Board shall promote that process by providing assistance and resources (where possible) to garner the participation of such people.

5.0 PROMOTION OF OPPORTUNITIES

- 5.1 The Board shall ensure that station facilities and access are promoted each week through station broadcasts and via the station website.
- 5.2 The Board shall ensure that station personnel are able to respond in a timely and effective manner to members of the community who enquire about participation or access to present an issue or point of view and that personnel and processes are identified to deliver such outcomes.
- 5.3 The Board shall maintain the role of station training and induction co-ordinator and that this person keeps records of approaches made by individuals or groups to participate in station activities.