Community Radio in Western Australia:

Notions of value

By

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research.

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Abstract

Although community radio in Australia is now well established and considered an important part of the radio sector, in today’s economically driven world it is at the bottom of the media money pile. In order to argue for its continuing existence, funding and development in an ever-changing media landscape, some means of capturing its value is essential. This thesis develops a theoretical framework of value for community radio from existing literature and through the testing of the framework at three community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia. Through a combination of interviews with staff, observation/participation and audience focus groups the testing exercise provides a multimodal insight into the values and operation of community radio as reflected in real life practice. The analysis will reveal whether the framework of value can be successfully operationalised in the field, how value is perceived by the study participants, and to what extent value is contingent upon the characteristics of the individual community radio stations. The evidence collected also has the potential to inform policy-making at a community radio station.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Topic and Research Questions

Part of what I love about Community Radio is that you can’t measure its value. There are so many ripples going out. The impacts of what we do are immeasurable, because they are going out so far into the community. It’s a beautiful mystery, you kind of send it out and you don’t know how it’s going, what is the ultimate outcome of what you do (station volunteer, cited in Forde, Meadows and Foxwell 2002a, 16).

The sentiments described here are almost romantic and starry-eyed at the effect of community radio. The “beautiful mystery” of “many ripples going out … so far into the community” is a quaint and firmly positive characterisation of the sector. Workers in the sector, listeners and advocates alike, can be passionate about its worth. Community radio academics stoke the fire as well, with supporting research data suggesting that community radio stations are “playing an important cultural role in helping to draw together disparate elements of Australian society” (station volunteer, cited in Forde, Foxwell and Meadows 2009, 15). This indicates that community radio provides a valuable service. However, the above quote demonstrates one of the sector’s biggest challenges and a starting point for this thesis: “you can’t measure its value” (station volunteer, cited in Forde, Meadows and Foxwell 2002a, 16). How then is the evidence of value demonstrated? Community radio in this sense could be considered a warm and fuzzy pot of intangible community value with no specific evidential basis.

This thesis develops a theoretical framework of value for community radio to aid in the understanding of value for the sector. This is achieved through a detailed literature review of notions of value, and an exploration of the history and policy development of the Australian sector. The research methodology is then developed, in order to apply the draft framework of value at the station level, at three different community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia. Data collection methods include semi-structured interviews, listener feedback in the form of focus groups, and observation/participation at each station to gauge volunteer, staff and audience views about the station’s performance. The information is therefore generated from the stakeholders themselves.
This data is then analysed, first, to identify the extent to which the values from the draft framework of value are evident in the sample stations. Do they match or are they different? Are there new ideas or aspects that extend the concept of value? Are there factors unique to each station that impact on the study participants perceptions of value? Do the results of the field testing suggest adjustment of the framework?

Second, because the data collection methods provide a snapshot of current operational practice, it may offer community radio stations one approach to potentially examine and quantify their own worth. These snapshots, in the form of descriptive narrative case studies, could include evidential recommendations from the study participants about future station policy-making.

This thesis intends to answer the following research questions: How can we practically assess the activities and value of community radio against a clear set of standards? Can such a method provide a coherent framework to better identify value and so inform future policy development?

This thesis has two main original contributions. First, this work adds to scholarly knowledge about community media theory through a meta-analysis, which collates existing notions of value into a theoretical framework for community radio. This thesis then examines the effectiveness of the initial draft framework as operationalised in the field, and also draws conclusions on the perceptions of value for the study participants.

Second, this thesis provides a detailed contemporary snapshot of metropolitan community radio in Perth, Western Australia, through the collection of attitudinal data about the operations of the three community radio stations. Only scant attention has been given to Perth stations by researchers in the field thus far.\(^1\) The case studies bring together stakeholder perceptions about the operations of their station revealing the details of rich cultures.

\(^1\) Meadows and others (2007a) surveyed audience focus groups for two stations used in the case studies in this thesis, namely RTRFM and 6RPH. The results of this study are discussed in this thesis. Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2002a) briefly mention Christian station Sonshine FM in Perth and a regional focus group in Western Australia.
Together these two original contributions add to the knowledge and practice of community radio in this unique context.

1.2 The Lenses of Analysis

Chapter 2 through to Chapter 6 examine the existing theoretical approaches to the value of community radio, and they reveal a complex picture. Many ideas or aspects are interrelated, overlapping, sometimes interdependent, and sometimes contested or divergent. As such, there is no expectation in this thesis that there can be a ‘one-size-fits-all’ framework. It would be more appropriate instead to propose a theoretical framework that is flexible enough to accommodate the heterogeneous nature of the sector. Therefore, this thesis points towards a “contingent” approach, whereby the values in the framework are partially determined by evaluative factors to suit the specific community radio station type (Turk 2001).²

The perceived lack of a clear theoretical model to theorise community radio has been noted by Tanja Bosch (2003, 7-8) in her study of community stations in praxis at the operational level. In her ethnographic study of community station Bush Radio in South Africa, Bosch argues that community radio is rhizomatic. Drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Bosch (2005, 7):³

… generates connections through its characteristics of heterogeneity, disjunction, multiplicity, multiple entry points and routes rather than roots. In a botanical sense, a rhizome is an underground tuber that ramifies and diversifies, producing new buds, opposed to what Deleuze and Guattari call “arboric

² Andrew Turk employs a user and task based approach to website evaluation. The “contingent” approach to “evaluation criteria is based on the characteristics of the target user group and the site purpose” (Turk 2001). This approach is premised on the idea that because of the heterogeneous nature of websites, no one set of evaluative criteria will be appropriate to all websites. The objective of a website and the nature of the users should be considered before establishing appropriate evaluative criteria. This proposition is extended to the evaluation of community radio. Each community radio station has unique characteristics that determine where value is perceived by the participants. See 9.6 Towards a Contingency-Based Approach to Value for Community Radio (Chapter 9).

³ The rhizome is a philosophical concept originally proposed in A Thousand Plateaus, by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987), to explain systems of knowledge creation and transfer. Andre Pierre Colombat (1991) suggests that this concept is a metaphor borrowed from the botanical rhizome. The ‘root upwards’ model of many plants symbolises hierarchical structures of knowledge, while the horizontal growth of the rhizome symbolises thought and knowledge that occur through an “open system based on multiplicity, simultaneity and surface … It is the very proliferation of its outgrowth that allows the rhizome to create new shapes of life” (Colombat 1991, 15). Colombat states that this concept is better understood when applied to an everyday life and social construction of thought.
systems of knowledge” bases on the model of a tree. The model of the tree symbolizes linear thinking and hierarchical structures. The rhizome is therefore motional, a network of connections across which things flow and disperse.

Based on this theory of the rhizome, Bosch develops an ethnographic methodology for data collection about community radio. She combines the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and Akindes (1999), describing her approach as “multi-dimensional, dynamic … with multiple entry-points” (Bosch 2003, 7-8). She concedes that she originally expected her own ethnographic participant observation and structured interviews to sufficiently explore community radio. However, this bifocal data collection method also generated additional rhizomatic connections. As the rhizome entered her research methods, Bosch then considered additional historical data, minutes from meetings, newsletters and newspaper archives outside of the sources used in her original methodology.

While Bosch was focusing on her research methods around community radio, the rhizomatic nature of community radio also extends to theoretical concerns. The author of this thesis discovered initially that attempts to offer a strict hierarchical theory of the value of community radio was similar to trying to ‘unravel the rhizome’. The value of community radio is similar to the rhizome: “multi-dimensional, dynamic … with multiple entry-points” (ibid), and is often contested by theorists and practitioners. This comparison to the complexity of the rhizome has been previously made by community media theorists Carpentier, Lie and Servaes (2010, 65), in “Community Media: Muting the Democratic Media Discourse?”:

Community media research has a long theoretical and empirical tradition that has tried to capture their identity. Due to the complexity and elusiveness of this identity this project has proved a very difficult task.

To explore the various theoretical approaches to community radio, this thesis found it useful to borrow from photographic terminology, seeing the different theoretical perspectives as a series of lenses, each highlighting a particular aspect of value in community radio. The lenses show different angles of view on particular notions of value, offering the reader different nuances, interpretations and contexts to understand value. When brought together, the five lenses allow a multifaceted draft theoretical framework to be constructed.
The first lens is *The Lens of the Public Sphere* (Chapter 2). This lens focuses on the concept of the *bourgeois public sphere* of Jurgen Habermas (1989) as a valuable contribution to participatory democratic social theory (Calhoun 1992a, vii). Habermas’ work resonates strongly with the core values of community radio. As such, various Australian community radio theorists, including Kitty Van Vuuren (2006a, 381), and Forde, Foxwell and Meadows (2002, 56-57), have acknowledged the contribution of his work in informing community media theory. His fundamental idea was that the public sphere could offer citizens the opportunity to participate in discourse on matters of public interest. With Habermas’ theory as a foundation, this lens of view offers the widest angle of all the lenses of analysis. The focus on community radio as an agent of democracy encompasses the following values: representation of the community, the public interest, principles of access to and equity in the media, democratic forms of community radio governance, community participation in the media, the political empowerment of participants, cultural citizenship and community development. This lens captures the broadest range of notions of value under the banner of enhancing democracy. However, interestingly, similar ideas or aspects appear through the other lenses of analysis, albeit with different emphasises or from a different context.

The second lens is *The Lens of Media Ownership* (Chapter 3). This lens explores the value of community radio in the context of today’s mainstream media. This lens examines the mainstream commercial media and the public service broadcasters (PSB) who have traditionally animated the notion of democracy for citizens by representing a wide range of viewpoints. The last 30 years has seen a dramatic reduction in the number of commercial media companies in Australia, while PSBs are struggling to operate on reducing budgets in an increasingly competitive mediascape. This combination of factors has encouraged a decline in the diversity of media content, and hence its contribution to a broad range of the notions of democracy.

This discussion begins by examining the United States (US) context, because of its perceived influence on the current Australian mediascape (Jolly 2007). It focuses on the so-called “democratic deficit” of modern mainstream media (Hackett and Carroll 2006, 2-14), which encompasses issues around media ownership concentration, the citizen as purely the
consumer, the reduction of viewpoints in mainstream media and the homogenisation of media content. It proceeds to an examination of the Australian media landscape, in particular commercial media concentration, media ownership reform and the potential decline of public service broadcasters. The principle value of community radio shown by this lens is the notion of media content diversity.

The third lens is *The Lens of Contested Value* (Chapter 4). This lens focuses on the accountability of community radio. The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC, 2007) argues that the financial challenges in the sector, at the operational level, constantly distract from their community goals. Without clear guidelines of value, and clear evidence to quantify the “effectiveness of community radio” and “evidence that community radio works” (ibid, 50), obtaining sufficient funding will continue to be a challenge. This is where notions of value are most divergent and contested in the literature, and this lens has four foci. The first focus, the definition of community media, reveals the diversity of opinions and views about what it is, which makes consensus problematic. The second focus, oppositional power, examines community media in its role as challenger to the mainstream media and its frames of reference. The third focus, social power, explores ideas around personal or political empowerment that may emerge from involvement with community media. The fourth focus, participation, challenges the notion that participation in community media itself is something to be celebrated and that other factors should be considered before assigning significant value purely to the activity of participation. In particular, broadcaster ideology and participant production skills are important considerations if the act of participation is to be valued. Taken together the four foci of *The Lens of Contested Value* reveal how the heterogeneity, which is such a valued characteristic of the sector, may be hampering AMARC’s desire to provide convincing evidence of the effectiveness of community radio.

The fourth lens is *The Lens of Australian Community Radio Policy* (Chapter 5). This lens examines the community radio sector as the product of a muddled Federal Government communications policy, which saw the establishment of the third sector of public radio during
The literature reveals the extent to which this was a confused and ad hoc process involving two successive Federal Governments with different approaches, various government bodies vying for control of the sector, and a plethora of divergent enthusiast lobby groups and grassroots activists (Barlow 1998, 43; Thornley 1999, 96). This muddled and confused birth has left a lasting legacy on notions of value for the Australian sector today. While there is agreement on the broader values of access and participation, independence, not-for-profit and non-commercial, diversity and plurality, and the concept of alternative media, there is great divergence, especially amongst community advocates, regarding how to establish guidelines so that these broad values can be understood and operationalised. Such divergence inevitably blurs the concepts of value.

The fifth lens is *The Lens of Financial Challenges Facing Australian Community Radio* (Chapter 6). This lens illustrates the difficulties facing community stations. This lens also examines funding in the Australian sector, and whether the capacity to demonstrate value might assist arguments for enhanced sector funding.

Each lens of analysis will culminate in a written and diagrammatical synthesis of the values each reveals. From these five summaries the theoretical framework of value for community radio will be constructed.

### 1.3 Overview of Research Methods

The research method used for the development of the theoretical framework of value for community radio is discussed in Chapter 7 (Research Methods: Creating a Contingency-Based Evaluation Model for Community Radio). This has utilised a qualitative meta-analysis methodology (Sandelowski 2004). This comprises an aggregation of existing work on community radio and community media related to the notion of value. The notion of value in community radio is not always referred to in terms of ‘value’ by other research in the field.

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4 ‘Public radio’ was the initial term used to describe community radio during its inception in the 1970s. This sector was to be controlled by neither the government nor commercial media companies, but by communities themselves.
Other terms, including ‘objectives’, ‘guiding principles’, ‘codes of practice’, ‘benefits’, ‘motivations’ and ‘effectiveness’, are more prevalent. The notion of value for community radio is a contested and divergent terrain where even accepted terminology for the medium is not universal. Theorists have their preferred terms, such as ‘alternative media’, ‘citizen’s media’, ‘community media’ and ‘independent media’, while often addressing the same idea (Order 2011). For these reasons, this thesis has adopted an inclusive approach, reviewing as many studies as possible within the study time frame about community radio and community media.

The important themes are extracted from these existing studies in Chapter 8 (Case Studies: Data Analysis). There were initially 82 specific values generated from the meta-analysis. These values were consolidated using a “generic descriptive interpretative approach” (Timulak 2009, 595). Importantly, this consolidation process sought to concurrently retain the meaning of all the initial specific values, a fundamental aspect of meta-analysis (Sandelowski 2004, 893; Timulak 2009, 595; Walsh and Downe 2005, 208), while reducing duplication and refining the expression of meaning. To make the methodology transparent, an audit trail of the development of the theoretical framework is offered in this work. First, at the end of each Chapter examining the five lenses, a summarised schematic of the pertinent data extracted is shown with the source references. Second, a series of six iterative documents showing the consolidation process is shown in Appendix 3 (Theoretical Framework Consolidation Sequence).

The testing of the theoretical framework was conducted using a case study methodology, because of its qualitative nature, which would accommodate a wide range of evidence, including interviews, observations, documents and participation (Yin 2009, 8).

The selection of the case study stations was made, first, to ensure they were able to answer the research questions in the best possible way (Stake 1995, 4; Yin 2009, 26), and

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3 See Appendix 2: Summary of Values from the Theoretical Lenses of Analysis, for the complete list (Appendices).

6 The “generic descriptive interpretative approach” identifies units of meaning and, in a process of contrast and comparison to other units, consolidates a final set of meaning units. See 7.3.1 A Generic Descriptive Interpretative Approach (Chapter 7).
second, to address practical considerations. Community radio stations are generally divided into two broad groups: *generalist* or geographically defined, representing many different local niche communities under one station umbrella; and *specialist*, representing one small part of the community, such as ethnic, gay or senior citizen communities (Van Vuuren 2003, 2). The stations selected for this study included one generalist station, one specialist station and one hybrid of the two groups (one generalist and specialist station). Radio Fremantle is the generalist station, catering to the City of Fremantle; 6RPH is the specialist station, catering to the print-handicapped community in Perth; RTRFM is the hybrid station, partly a specialist station catering to the Perth alternative community and partly a generalist station catering to a mix of Perth communities of interest. The author has had prior cordial links with all three stations, and preliminary discussions revealed a positive response to the notion of participating in the study. Given the timescale and resources of the study, and the need for participant observation over a period of time, it was also important for the stations to be metropolitan, within easy reach for the researcher.

Case study research strategy can include a diversity of evidence, such as interviews, observations, documents and participation (Yin 2009, 9). Three field methods were selected with the research questions in mind: observation/participation by the researcher, open-ended interviews and audience focus groups. The observation/participation component was accommodated by all three stations in slightly different ways.7 The researcher was able to participate in program producing and presenting for a two-year period at 6RPH and a seven-month period at Radio Fremantle. At RTRFM the researcher volunteered as a voice talent for a two-month period. Staff at each station volunteered or were asked to participate in open-ended interviews about the operation of their community radio station. As well as identifying any mention by the study participants of values included in the draft framework of value, the second objective was to allow new themes or values to emerge. For this reason, the questions were deliberately general and, as much as possible, avoided reference to theoretical concerns. Listener focus groups surveying similar themes had recently been conducted at 6RPH and

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7 See 7.5.2 Observing and Participating (Chapter 7).
RTRFM by researchers from Griffith University,\textsuperscript{8} and the data summaries and methodology were kindly made available for use in the study. A similar methodology was used to conduct a focus group at Radio Fremantle.

These field methods have provided the data required for the quantitative and qualitative analyses to answer the research questions. The quantitative analysis of the types and rate of mentions of different values provides a snapshot of real values manifested at the operational level. The qualitative analysis of the interview data provides an evidence-based descriptive narrative for each station, adding to our understanding of how community radio in Perth operates in the present day.

1.4 Overview of Discussion

The thesis discusses the results of the data analysis in Chapter 9 (Case Studies: Discussion of Results). What value profile emerged at the individual stations and across the three stations? What conclusions can be deduced from any variations that emerge? Was the perception of value for community radio contingent upon station characteristics? How, if at all, have the identified values been operationalised in the environment of community radio? Finally, has the developed theoretical framework of value for community radio been translated from a draft theoretical model to a relevant and useful tool in the field?

The analysis reveals the league table of ‘high level mention specific values’, ‘medium mention specific values’ and ‘low level mention specific values’ over all three case studies. It also reveals emerging themes in the data that were not easily categorised under the theoretical framework for community radio. These were outside the existing value system, adding to the language of value for community radio, and could potentially add to the theoretical framework.

The analysis also identifies the typology of values within each station. This illustrates the advantages into the future of a contingent approach to value assessment in the community radio sector, which fully accommodates its variety and diversity.

\textsuperscript{8} See 7.5.4 Audience Focus Groups (Chapter 7).
1.5 Overview of Conclusions

This thesis develops a draft framework of value for community radio. The conclusions in Chapter 10 (Thesis Conclusions) summarise the effectiveness of the framework at the site of three different community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia. How has the framework been successfully operationalised in the field, and how useful are the collected narrative insights into the operations of the three sample stations? Chapter 10 also identifies and examines the limitations of the study, possible applications of the research results, future research, and what new light has been shone on existing community radio theory.

1.6 Case Study Summaries

The case study summaries situated in the Appendices (Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio; Appendix 7: Case Study Summary for RTRFM; Appendix 8: Case Study Summary for Radio Fremantle) will serve two purposes. First, the qualitative analysis of the interview data has provided evidence-based descriptive narratives, and rich insights into the operations of the three metropolitan community radio stations in Western Australia. These summarises comprise the ideas, opinions and perceptions of the community radio stakeholders, and the corroborative ethnographic impressions collected by the researcher. In a region where little work of this nature has been conducted, this is valuable historical data, offering a rich snapshot of the three sample stations.

Second, the case study summaries reveal stakeholder perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of station operations. The study participants offer suggestions to improve the day-to-day operations of their community station, which can also potentially inform board level decision-making in the future.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has offered an introduction to the content and narrative of the thesis, orientating the topic, the research questions, the lenses of analysis, the research methods, the results, the conclusions and the case study summaries. Chapter 2 through to Chapter 6 will conduct an
examination of the existing theoretical approaches to the value of community radio, through the five different lenses of analysis.
Chapter 2: The Lens of the Public Sphere

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter interprets and examines community radio through the lens of Jurgen Habermas’ (1989) democratic social theory of the bourgeois public sphere. Habermas’ theory resonates strongly with the more modern theoretical values of community radio. First, this Chapter will outline the theory of the early bourgeois public sphere. Second, this Chapter will explore aspects of the subsequent transformation of the public sphere, and will introduce alternative media as a possible way to counter the decline of public discourse in the modern public sphere. Third, this Chapter will explore how Habermas’ theory of the public sphere has been extended by more recent public sphere and community radio theorists, including Forde, Foxwell and Meadows (2002), Van Vuuren (2006a), Downing and others (2001), and Fraser (1992). Finally, this Chapter will summarise the ways that these theories can contribute to a multi-faceted framework of value for community radio. Through The Lens of the Public Sphere the democratic value of community radio is made visible. In this Chapter, and subsequent Chapters addressing the lenses of analysis, the notions of value that are incorporated into the final framework of value for community radio are indicated by *bold and italics*.

2.2 Habermas’ Participatory Democratic Social Theory

Habermas’s work is considered a significant and valuable contribution to participatory democratic social theory (Calhoun 1992a, vii). Habermas proposes a social environment that would enable a “rational-critical debate about public issues conducted by private persons willing to let arguments and not statuses determine decisions” (Calhoun 1992b, 1). Nancy Fraser (1992, 114), in “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy”, argues that Habermas’ notion of “the public sphere is indispensable to critical social theory and democratic practice.” Furthermore, and more importantly, she also states that the concept of the public sphere is valuable to thinking about alternative models for democracy and how they may be articulated.
Habermas (1989) plots the development of “The Public Sphere” in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, first published in 1962. He describes a European *bourgeois public sphere*,⁹ the emergence of which he dated to around 1700. This public sphere comprised media, such as newspapers and journals, as well as institutions of political discussion, such as parliaments, political clubs, literary salons, public assemblies, meeting halls, pubs and coffee houses, and other public spaces where socio-political discussion took place (Habermas 1989, 170). In Habermas’ view, the public sphere was an opportunity for citizens, individually or as groups, to express themselves publicly and hence exert some influence on political events. For the first time, public opinion or a “public of private individuals” had the potential to challenge and impact upon state authority (Calhoun 1992b, 7). More recently, the European democratic public sphere has been described as an ideal, comprising the following characteristics:

Discussion free from domination, equality of participation, and rationality in the sense of an appeal to general principles rather than sheer self interest. Media’s democratic roles include providing each significant group with a forum to articulate and develop its interests, facilitating the search for society-wide political census by being universally accessible and inclusive, reconstituting private citizens as a public body in the form of public opinion (Zhao and Hackett 2005, 11).

In the current context, there is an assumption by Zhao and Hackett that the public sphere can be animated by ‘democratic’ mass media and that citizens can be represented in some way by the media. It suggests that media should be accessible to citizens as producers, not just as consumers. Hence the values of the public sphere are important for community radio. However, it is also wise to examine ideas critical of the public sphere, especially where they may impact on community media.¹⁰

Habermas’ work is not without its critics. He proposes theoretical values, such as representation of the community and participation in public debate, which are criticised for not living up to their intentions. Community media offers a similar theoretical trajectory. Does it

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⁹ Bourgeois: “Belonging to or characteristic of the middle class, typically with reference to its perceived materialistic values or conventional attitudes” (Oxford Dictionaries Online 2013).

¹⁰ See 2.5 Community Radio and the Public Sphere (Chapter 2).
live up to its intentions? If community radio is intended to be or has the potential to be a valuable part of Australian democratic society, there is much to be gained from assessing community radio against its own theoretical values. An exploration of the public sphere of Habermas offers resonant theoretical territory with which to theorise community radio.

Models for community radio globally prescribe similar ideas to enhance the public sphere. For example, in the United Kingdom (UK) the delivery of ‘social gain’ is a crucial element of community radio. **Social gain** is partly defined as the provision of radio services to groups not otherwise served by commercial or public service broadcasters, the promotion of **social inclusion**, the promotion of **cultural diversity** and the promotion of **civic participation**. These are some of the criteria considered for a community radio licence in the UK (Office of Communications 2004a, 11-13), and echo the objectives of Habermas’ public sphere. In 2002, in India, government policy guidelines for the establishment of community radio at educational institutions included the overall objective of “**greater participation by the civil society on issues relating to development and social change**” (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting 2002, 1). Again, this echoes the objectives of the public sphere.

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC 2006) declares that: 1) **The promotion and protection of peoples’ communication rights** are crucial in the free flow of information and ideas, which are the pillars of a functioning democracy; 2) Communication rights are based on a vision of the free flow of information and ideas, which is interactive, egalitarian and non-discriminatory, and driven by human needs rather than commercial or political interests. Similarly, the regulatory body in Australia, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA, 2008a, 2), states that Australian community radio is considered to “**pursue the principles of democracy, access and equity, especially for people and issues not adequately represented in other media**.”\(^{11}\) Both the public sphere of Habermas and community radio have the principles of public participation and representation as essential ingredients in the pursuit of improved democracy.

\(^{11}\) See Chapter 5: The Lens of Australian Community Radio Policy.
2.3 Exclusivity of the Public Sphere

Habermas’ post-doctoral thesis, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, where he first articulated the notion of the public sphere, was rejected by the first professors who read it in 1962.\(^{12}\) The well-regarded Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno from the Frankfurt School\(^{13}\) were critical of the Enlightenment\(^{14}\) conception of democratic public life. This concurs with further criticism made by the political Left\(^{15}\) who believed that Habermas excluded the proletariat\(^{16}\) from the public sphere and had an unrealistic notion of everyday life for the bulk of society (Calhoun 1992b, 4-5).

Kellner (2000, 266-267) argues that Habermas’ view of the early public sphere is a romanticised one, and suggests that many social groups were excluded from his idealised forum. Habermas (1989, xix) admits that he portrays a “stylised picture of the liberal elements of the bourgeois public sphere”, and concedes that he was theorising the importance of an ideal type. Calhoun (1992b, 3) concurs with Kellner, and suggests that the actual situation of public debate promoted by Habermas applied to “narrow segments of the European population, mainly educated, propertied men, [who] conducted a discourse not only exclusive of others but prejudicial to the interests of those excluded.” There is also some historical context to consider here. While the public sphere was envisioned as an inclusive forum for discourse, it was actually only available to those with access to the present-day cultural products, such as books, plays, journals and newspapers, or anyone who had the opportunity to participate in producing

\(^{12}\) In Germany, a post-doctoral degree is called “Habilitation”. It is the highest qualification achievable and necessary to gain professorial status. It is reviewed and subsequently defended before an academic committee (see [http://www.mi.fu-berlin.de/en/stud/prom-habil/index.html](http://www.mi.fu-berlin.de/en/stud/prom-habil/index.html)).

\(^{13}\) Frankfurt School: A group of researchers associated with the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Researchers believed that Marxism was not sufficient to theorise 20th century capitalist societies and suggested an alternative radical interdisciplinary social theory (Held 1980, 13-15).

\(^{14}\) Enlightenment: An 18th century cultural movement of intellectuals and scientists situated in Europe and the American colonies who broadly sought societal reformation based on reason over religious faith or tradition (Hanns and Wilson 2004, ix-xi).

\(^{15}\) In this instance the Left refers to those who support left wing politics, with a particular concern for the more disadvantaged in society, and who believe in social change towards a more egalitarian society (Smith, Tatalovich and Tatalovich 2003, 30).

\(^{16}\) Proletariat: Those of a low social class, the working class, and in Marxist theory, those with no ownership of the means of production. Their only asset is their ability to sell their labour for a wage. This is in contrast to the moneyed bourgeoisie who own the means of production (Marx 1992).
these products. In practice, this reduced the public sphere to only the educated, who were readers, listeners, cultural consumers and/or producers (Calhoun 1992b, 13). This is a strong critique of the concept of the public sphere. However, according to Habermas (1989, 170), it also included oral venues, such as public assemblies, meeting halls, pubs and coffee houses, and other public spaces where the less educated may be accommodated and able to contribute to political debate.

Nancy Fraser (1992), in “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy”, adds to this critique of exclusivity and offers a revised historiography, suggesting that Habermas idealises the public sphere. For Fraser, a critical issue was the exclusion of women from the actual public sphere, especially in France. She suggests that the republicans “cast femininity and publicity as oxymorons” (ibid, 114). She also cites a classical “etymological connection between ‘public’ and ‘pubic’, a graphic trace of the fact that in the ancient world, possession of a penis was a requirement for speaking in public”, which was a view still prevalent in France in the 18th century (ibid). She suggests that this public sphere in Europe was actually a training ground for a certain class of bourgeois men who aspired to govern, and it was this emerging elite that reinforced gender stereotypes of female domesticity. For Fraser, the success of this gender stereotyping projects forward into the recent times.

Fraser explores a further aspect of the exclusivity of the public sphere. According to Fraser (1992), Habermas’ early work also fails to examine other competing public spheres. Drawing on Mary Ryan (1992), “Gender and Public Access: Women’s Politics in Nineteenth-Century America”, Fraser focuses on bourgeois North American women’s groups representing women-only alternative civil society, including voluntary groups, moral-reform associations and philanthropic societies, as examples of competing counter-publics. She also includes nationalist publics, popular peasant publics and working-class publics as further counter-publics. She asserts that the male dominated bourgeois public sphere, as idealised by Habermas, sought to reduce participation in discourse from these competing counter-publics (Fraser 1992, 109-142).

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17 Fraser refers to Republicanism as characterised by the French Revolution (1789-1799), which was anti-monarchist and proposed rule by representative democracy rather than by absolute monarchy (see Castiglione 2002).
Habermas’ idealised open-access forum was not the public sphere as a larger society-wide concept, but rather, in reality, an exclusionary realm where wealthy, male protagonists hoped to dominate and form public opinion. In conclusion, and counter to Habermas’ theory, it would be more realistic to envision an exclusionary mainstream public sphere, plus the many competing counter-publics all of whose ideas exist in a state of conflict (Fraser 1992, 122-124).

Fraser’s description of the exclusionary male public sphere and the counter-publics of North American women’s groups resemble the exclusionary public sphere of the current mainstream media18 and the many counter-publics of participatory community radio. Community radio is idealised as a site for the many voices that are inadequately represented by the mainstream media, although it too has the potential to become exclusionary at the level of the individual station.19

While Habermas has critics, his theory of the public sphere can be applied to the notion of value in community radio. The notions of citizen representation and participation discussed by Habermas are central to the aims of community radio. However, echoing the criticisms of his work that were raised here, the idea of exclusionary and competing counter-publics is one that various community media theorists address, such as Kitty Van Vuuren (2006a), which will be explored further later in this Chapter.20

2.4 The Transformation of the Public Sphere

2.4.1 A World Fashioned by Dominant Media: The Decline of Public Discourse

According to Habermas (1991), the initial conceptualisation of public sphere democracy was transformed negatively by what he describes as a refeudalisation of the public sphere. This originated in the late 19th century when private commercial interests began assuming much more of a political function. Industrial corporations began to influence and control the media, hence exerting some influence on the state. For Habermas, the turning point occurred when the

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18 Exclusionary in the sense that only trained media professionals have access to the airwaves.
19 See 2.5.2 Inclusion versus Exclusion in Community Radio (Chapter 2).
20 See 2.5.2 Inclusion versus Exclusion in Community Radio (Chapter 2).
media began to exercise a disproportionate amount of political power. As Habermas (1991, 171) remarked, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*: “The world fashioned by mass media is a public sphere in appearance only.” As Habermas’ idealised public sphere declined, the citizenry became passive media consumers looking to further their own personal interests rather than those of the common good, and thus, direct democratic involvement was limited (Habermas 1989, 171). Public opinion was now formed by powerful political, economic and media elites that struggled among themselves to advance their own interests. As a result:

The interconnection between a sphere of public debate and individual participation has been fractured and transmuted into that of a realm of political information and spectacle, in which citizen-consumers ingest and absorb passively entertainment and information. “Citizens” thus become spectators of media presentations and discourse, which mould public opinion, reducing consumer/citizens to objects of news, information, and public affairs. Inasmuch as the mass media today strip away the literary husks from the kind of bourgeois self-interpretation and utilize them as marketable forms for the public services provided in a culture of consumers, the original meaning is reversed (ibid).

Calhoun (1992b) approaches the structural transformation of the public sphere from a slightly different angle, focusing on the separation of the public sphere (comprising individual private realms) and the state. The original public sphere model offered a defined separation between the public sphere and the state. As private business organisations became more powerful, influencing the state more and more, they assumed more of the role of the public sphere. As described by Calhoun (1992b, 21), “State and society, once distinct, became interlocked.” This gave rise to three issues.

First, as large corporations assumed a larger influence on the state, the intended equity of public discourse contributions from civil society was lost. Those with the means to exert more influence on the state for their own interests would use it. Inequalities that the original public sphere hoped to eradicate were actually growing. Second, in a similar vein, the public sphere had grown due to improved mass education, literacy and cheaper access to mass communications, to potentially include many more people from wider society. This made existing societal distinctions difficult to avoid. Those classified as minorities, or less wealthy, were notionally excluded from this transformed public sphere because of their lack of means.
Third, the original public sphere emphasised the idea of objective rational-critical debate contributing to government policy. This shifted to a process of compromise between private companies, special interest groups, political parties and public administration, with the public virtually excluded from the power-brokering (Calhoun 1992b, 22-23).

Media technology also impacted on the transformation of the public sphere. The practice of reading and the development of critical literary discourse among private persons in the 18th century was a motivation and a necessary component of bourgeois public life. This engagement with the written word promoted the rational-critical argument characteristic of the original public sphere (Calhoun 1992b, 24). As radio, film and television came to dominate mass media, Habermas (1991, 172) describes a “sphere generated by mass media [that] has taken on the traits of a secondary realm of intimacy.” In this evolved sphere rational-critical argument becomes difficult. For example, within the realm of politics, political candidates or elected representatives use the spin of mass media public relations to generate citizen consent for their campaigns and policies. Citizens are mere consumers in their demographic-targeted and media-friendly advertising campaigns for power and political dominance. As Habermas (ibid, 194) notes, “the awakened readiness of consumers involves the false consciousness that as critically reflecting private people they contribute responsibly to public opinion.” The soundbites and photo opportunities are carefully designed to engineer constituent consent for the political persona, rather than any form of critical discourse with potential policy.

2.4.2 Countering the Decline: Alternative Media, Prefigurative Politics and the Lifeworld

To counter the decline of the public sphere and retain some form of critical public discourse, there is the suggestion that institutions, companies and bureaucracies “must themselves be internally democratised and subjected to critical publicity” (Calhoun 1992b, 28). In the context of alternative media, this notion resembles the concept of prefigurative politics (Downing et al. 2001). In Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements, Downing and others (2001) discuss the community/citizens media that support social change movements
using the terms *radical media* and *rebellious communication*. This radical media theory espouses socialist principles and *prefigurative politics*. Radical media need to adopt these principles so that they practice what they preach: “the attempt to practice socialist principles in the present, not merely to imagine them for the future” (ibid, 71). To achieve this, Downing (1984, 17) states the importance of encouraging contributions from as many interested parties as possible to emphasise the ‘*multiple realities*’ of *social life*, including oppression, political cultures and economic situations. Echoing Downing, Calhoun’s (1992b, 28) interpretation of Habermas offers a similar argument, stating that “*democratic access [to] and selection [of media]* is needed as a response to the concentration of media ownership and increasing scale of media organisations.”

Within the notion of democratic access, Habermas also discusses the separation of media audiences and producers as a result of the transformation of the public sphere. The bourgeois educated and propertied elite were once often both producers and consumers of public/cultural discourse: “[a] once intimate relationship” (Calhoun 1992b, 25). The decline of the public sphere has produced a new structure. There are now elite media producers and a new specialised form of public discourse from the knowledgeable critics or intellectuals, who claim the mantle of a non-participatory view of public affairs. Habermas (1991, 175) states, “The public is split apart into minorities of specialists [for example, lawyers and academics] who put their reason to use non-publicly and the great mass of consumers whose receptiveness is public but uncritical.”

In the transformed public sphere Habermas’ conceptualisation is now of a capitalist society split into these different specialist realms, contrasted with what he describes as the *lifeworld* of personal relationships. It is this *lifeworld*, along with the previous democratisation of institutional structures that characterises Habermas’ response to the disintegration and demise

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21 *Prefigurative politics* is a common term among activists seeking social change, normally through participatory democracy. The term was first used by Wini Breines to describe the organisational structures of activist movements of the Left during the 1960s, which rejected hierarchical structures of organisational governance and practiced participatory democracy in their decision-making. Their aim was to reduce inequities and a lack of representation, which they perceived in most hierarchically-structured workplaces and society. For some it was an embodiment in their organisation of how they would like to see a future society (Breines 1989).
of the public sphere. Within this capability of human speech (communication) at the *lifeworld* level, Habermas finds more promising opportunities for democracy. However, Calhoun (1992b, 30-31) suggests that Habermas idealises the use of human communication and interpersonal relationships as an alternative to money and power structures.

The echoes of these ideas, which purport the internal democratisation of institutions (Calhoun 1992b, 28) and focus on communication in the *lifeworld* (ibid, 30-31), are present in community media. Not only do many community media groups embrace *prefigurative politics* (internal democratisation) to some degree (Downing et al. 2001, 71), communication at the *lifeworld* level is encouraged and theorised by community media theorists (Rodriguez 2001). In countering the demise of the public sphere and this deficit of public discourse, the discussion leads naturally to community media.

### 2.5 Community Radio and the Public Sphere

#### 2.5.1 Subaltern Counter-Publics

Through the lens of the declining public sphere, the value of community radio becomes more visible as a possible balance to the decline in genuine public discourse. Its value as an agent of democracy becomes clearer.

While Habermas conceded that some of the early criticism of his notion of the public sphere was justified, in his later writing he still adhered to most of his original analysis of the public sphere. However, in the early 1990s, he amended his ideas by taking into account emerging forms of alternative media (Habermas 1992). Downey and Fenton (2003, 187), in an analysis of Habermas’ later work, discuss community radio, television, newspapers and Restricted Service Licenses (RSLs),

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22 Restricted Service Licenses (RSLs) are short-term broadcasting licences, normally for community radio or cable television stations.

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amongst a wider public.” Habermas (ibid) amended his negative opinion of the transformed public by suggesting that they have some ability to “resist mass-mediated representations of society.” However, although Habermas is more optimistic, he maintains his original ideas, especially when small alternative media groups are “set in the context of the global dominance of multi-media conglomerates, such as News Corp and AOL/Time Warner” (ibid).

Forde, Foxwell and Meadows (2003, 317) suggest that theorisation of community cultural production has tended to centre on Habermas’ notion of the public sphere and democracy. In his early writings, Habermas frames the public sphere as, “reconstituting private citizens as a public body in the form of public opinion”, and suggests that “media’s democratic roles include providing each significant group with a forum to articulate and develop its interests” (Zhao and Hackett 2005, 11). As noted previously,23 Fraser’s (1992, 123) revised public sphere history includes consideration of members of “subordinated social groups – women, workers, people of colour, and gays and lesbians … subaltern counter-publics”, who form their own discursive forums to formulate their own identities and interests, which offer oppositional stances to the mainstream.

Many of these alternative publics produce programs and run community radio stations. Forde, Foxwell and Meadows (2002, 56-57) expand on Fraser’s concept of subaltern counter-publics and suggest:

Community radio can be thought of as a cultural resource that plays a central role in the formation of a community public sphere … Community radio is a cultural resource that is used to facilitate citizenship in ways that differentiate it from other media … we need to think in terms of a series of parallel and overlapping public spheres – spaces where participants with similar cultural backgrounds engage in activities concerning issues and interests of importance to them.

This notion is close to Rodríguez’s (2001) concept of citizens’ media, in Fissures in the Mediascape: An International Study of Citizens’ Media. Her work on community media resonates strongly with Habermas, and is an important touchstone for the definition of participation. The classic notion of participatory communication tends to concentrate on its role

23 See 2.3 Exclusivity of the Public Sphere (Chapter 2).
of informing and influencing general publics. However, Rodriguez (2001, 3) instead proposes that participation in media production promotes social interaction and political empowerment at a personal level:

It implies having the opportunity to create one’s own images of self and environment; it implies being able to recodify one’s own identity with the signs and codes that one chooses, thereby disrupting the traditional acceptance of those imposed by outside sources; it implies becoming one’s own storyteller, regaining one’s own voice; it implies reconstructing the self-portrait of one’s own community and one’s own culture.

There are certainly strong resonances between Habermas’ notion of the public sphere and the theoretical underpinnings of community media. These synergies may provide more insight into the modern concept of the public sphere and the value of community media.

Fraser (1992) provides a hopeful conclusion to this subaltern thread of thought, with two further insights in her revised theory of subaltern public spheres. First, similar to Rodriguez (2001), Fraser suggests that each counter-public is a space for cultural identity formation, internal discussion or a training ground for oppositional activities towards the mainstream. Second, they function as mediums to promote or represent their ideas to the wider mainstream public, ensuring the continuance of wider democratic input into what is seen and heard in the wider sphere. Of interest for community radio, Fraser (1992, 124) argues that this duality or synergy of two purposes offers an emancipatory or empowerment potential within subaltern publics and also across multiple counter-publics. Within a contemporary, multicultural and egalitarian society, Habermas’ single public sphere has been replaced by a range of discursive groups, where “the unbounded character and publicist orientation of publics allows people to participate in more than one public, and it allows memberships of different publics to overlap” (Fraser 1992, 127). Fraser (ibid) believes that this “porousness” and “open-endedness of publics could promote intercultural communication” and sees no reason why a multicultural and egalitarian society cannot also be a participatory democracy. Subsequently, she proactively defends subaltern counter-publics.

Thus, Fraser provides a valuable contribution to the theoretical foundations of this thesis, particularly in relation to the democratising value of community radio. Her theorisation
of counter-publics attaches value to a medium that can offer a voice to the marginalised or “subordinated social groups – women, workers, people of colour, and gays and lesbians … subaltern counter-publics” (Fraser 1992, 123). This is the value of representation in the wider mainstream public. Concurring with Rodriguez (2001), Fraser’s theorisation attaches value to a medium that can offer social, personal or political empowerment to groups or individuals in the process of participation in subaltern counter-publics. It is these broad values of representation and participation that underpin the theoretical value of community radio. There are also other similarities with the work of Nancy Fraser.

2.5.2 Inclusion versus Exclusion in Community Radio

As mentioned previously, Habermas’ original concept of the public sphere has been criticised for its exclusionary nature. There is also some resonance here with community radio. In “Community Broadcasting and the Enclosure of the Public Sphere”, Van Vuuren (2006a, 381) focuses on the process of exclusion at community radio stations, and states that “this is a necessary strategy if they are to meet the purpose for which they were established.” At first glance this seems contrary to the purpose of a community radio station, which includes, in Australia and elsewhere, adhering to the guiding principles of community involvement in broadcasting, community access, equity, democracy, program diversity and providing a range of viewpoints (ACMA 2008a, 1). Similar to Fraser’s (1992) competing counter-publics, Van Vuuren (2003) argues that the value of community radio as an alternative public sphere does not derive purely from it being an open and accessible forum for all. She identifies two distinct types of community radio stations: generalist or geographically defined, representing many different local niche communities under one station umbrella; and specialist, representing one small part of the community, such as the ethnic, gay or senior citizen communities (ibid, 2). These two characteristics of community radio are not mutually exclusive. Stations often exhibit degrees of each, but generally exhibit the dominant features of one of these two primary types. This opens up the window to a potential community radio taxonomy, which this thesis will explore further.

24 See 2.2 Habermas’ Participatory Democratic Social Theory (Chapter 2).
2.5.2.1 Community Radio Taxonomy

This section provides examples of the interconnectedness between the notion of exclusion and the community taxonomy defined by this thesis. Applying the community radio taxonomy identifies some of the operational characteristics that were encountered in the case studies conducted by this research, and that are likely to impact on any notion of value. The examples also demonstrate the predicted usefulness of defining a community radio taxonomy to help model value for a community radio station using the contingent approach (Turk 2001).

For example, exclusion at generalist stations, catering to many niche communities, applies to programs where the respective communities of interest are segregated into program slots. A wide-ranging and diverse community representation is likely to be a high priority, but due to the competing communities of interest a strong coherent station profile within the community may be less apparent. The station is more a community resource. The inclusion of many niche communities of interest under one station umbrella can impact on any sense of station branding, marketability to sponsors, target audience specification and the cohesiveness of the internal station community. This type of station may exclude those values as station priorities and exclude participants who perceive radio as a medium where those qualities are important.

Exclusion at specialist stations applies to the whole of the station output. Station identity is likely to be a strong characteristic, with representation of their specific community being a focused objective. However, this specialist nature will exclude a more diverse representation of the community. They exclude the majority of the community to offer better representation to a niche community. This also impacts on station finances, whereby sponsors are derived from commercial interests that are more aligned with the specialist community, which may be small. This can also impact on the internal station community. A specialist station provides a more focused station mission for participants, and can be more homogeneous in their thinking compared to a generalist station. This will impact on station governance.
This section has used hypothetical examples from the two primary types to illustrate how station type can impact on the operational characteristics of community radio stations. To illustrate this further and to strengthen the argument for a community radio taxonomy, this thesis now explores the work of Kitty Van Vuuren (2006a).

2.5.2.2 Real World Examples and Community Radio Taxonomy

Drawing on Carroli and others (1985), Van Vuuren (2006a) offers the pertinent example of community radio station 4ZZZ, in Brisbane, in 1976. According to Van Vuuren, 4ZZZ wished to remain a radical media alternative to commercial stations, which tended to promote the ideas of the very conservative state National Party government, led by Joh Bjelke-Peterson. They resolved to end all volunteer programs, which were described by the full-time staff as, “badly produced, boring and disrupted the program flow” (ibid, 380), and distracted from the specific purpose of offering a political media alternative. While this likely created controversy between professional broadcasters and community volunteers, it allowed the station to remain a credible media alternative to the mainstream.

From this example, Van Vuuren (2006a) points to a problematic paradox in the community public sphere. For the station to be accepted as a legitimate and credible alternative in the mainstream public sphere, it had to adopt professional production practices and exclude untrained volunteers. The process of exclusion meant that broadcasting was only available to those “points of view [that] best represent a station’s purpose and thus preserve its value and purpose” (ibid, 380). The decision of the station assigned the value of community broadcasting to providing an alternative voice as oppositional or resistant to the mainstream public sphere, rather than providing an opportunity for community participation. This is a conflict of community radio normative values. In the context of the public sphere, one senses that the subaltern counter-public of 4ZZZ wishes to be recognised as a more powerful competitive mainstream counter-public, no longer assigned to the marginalised radical status of subaltern. It is the management and control of what Van Vuuren (ibid, 382) describes as “hegemonic
processes that determine whether access and participation are fairly distributed and in such a way that the community public sphere is sustained.”

This example shows a community station choosing professionalism over other participation concerns to ensure that a credible media alternative is available in the mediascape. To maintain this profile as a credible media alternative, it is likely that the station functioned more as a specialist station, focusing on its ‘alternative’ objectives. A specialist station will have different perceptions of value compared to a generalist station, and therefore, a taxonomy of community radio types may be useful in the selection of appropriate evaluation criteria. Also, in cases where stations choose professionalism over other concerns, this may be a potential community radio type, since other station operations are contingent upon this production strategy. This strengthens the argument for a community radio taxonomy as a useful adjunct tool in selecting appropriate evaluation criteria.

To reinforce this, Van Vuuren (2006a) draws on David Barlow (1999, 93-100) and Chris Lawe Davies (1989, 43-47), who provide further examples. Barlow investigated three Australian community broadcasters. The first community station was 3CR, where Van Vuuren was an employee. Barlow describes 3CR as a generalist station, but a haven for progressive political ideas, with strong commitments to shared, transparent governance. The station promoted the views of militant trade unions, gay and lesbian groups, peace and green activists, women’s groups, refugee associations, and ethnic groups. Based on this description, this community station appears to be a generalist station, but with some homogenous progressive political leanings. There is no mention of professionalism. However, the commitments to shared, transparent governance, might suggest concern for community participation and less for professionalism. Although 3CR belongs to the generalist type of community station, more information might reveal its concern for professionalism.

The second community station was a specialist station run by an Indigenous organisation and employed only professionals. Based on the description, this station displays two of the community radio taxonomy types, specialist and professional, and points towards
their probable value priorities. The third community station was staffed by a very small number of volunteers with no interest in community participation or access (Van Vuuren 2006a, 382). The lack of information about the third station makes it difficult to draw conclusions.

Of the three stations investigated, Barlow (1999) suggests that only one actively promoted community access and participation, namely 3CR. This description is problematic because there is no definition of the community. While the other two stations at first glance appear exclusionary because they restricted access and participation to fewer groups, 3CR is also not immune to the notion of exclusivity. The very nature of their interest groups demonstrates a characteristic slant to their membership. The notion of exclusivity here is confusing the issue of access and participation. Of interest, while Barlow uses the language of higher level constructs to discuss the notion of value around community access and participation, the notion of value itself remains problematic. However, the notion of value becomes clearer when considered in the context of a community radio taxonomy. The values the station prioritises make more sense when viewed against their station type.

Lawe Davies (1989) documented the activities of 4DDB in Toowoomba, which is described as the epicentre of Australia’s Bible Belt. Not surprisingly, the station had a strong religious slant. Presenters were “dissuaded from playing certain styles of music and they were not allowed to be political” (ibid, 45). It was observed by Lawe Davies that religion and politics were never openly used to exclude volunteers. However, he describes a “covert religion of professionalism” that was employed to deter inappropriate people (ibid). This station demonstrates two of the community radio taxonomy types, specialist and professionalism. The notion of exclusion is again indicated by the community radio taxonomy, demonstrating that a taxonomy of station type might be an effective way to examine value using a contingent approach.

These examples offered by Van Vuuren (2006a) demonstrate exclusionary practices. Whether for professional, political or religious reasons, these community radio stations conform to their membership boundaries and norms, keeping their station sustainable and managing their
community resource. If community radio stations are completely open forums, conflicts may arise in this process and will result in the exclusion of certain groups. Without some degree of like-mindedness, the cohesion of the specific community focus is likely to suffer. According to the research, 3CR was the only station of those examined that places value on community participation, access and democratic governance, limiting exclusionary practices. The Christian and Indigenous stations place value on appealing to a specific audience and representing their narrow faith or ethnic community (Van Vuuren 2006a, 382). However, this author would argue that 3CR is equally exclusionary in its membership, but in a different way, by adhering to the predicted values determined by its type.

Each station sees value in a different aspect of community radio, often at the expense of other normative community radio values. Van Vuuren (2006a) argues that this is a necessary strategy. Similar to Rodriguez (2001), Van Vuuren contends that the participatory value for community radio resides less in the broadcast message and more in its community development functions. There are multiple opportunities for community radio stations; however, each one may cater to a specific cultural or geographic sub-group of society. The value resides in the community development function (inside and outside the station), which include the not-for-profit status, the use of volunteers and the more democratic modes of governance that encourage community development. Where volunteers are asked to participate in media production and decision-making about their station, the process is likely to be one of conflict and negotiation. It is this process of conflict, management, control and resultant exclusion that Van Vuuren (2006a, 381) believes is “indicative of a community radio station’s contribution to democracy.”

Community development may appear to be a catch-all justification for the value of the sector. However, it does not offer easily understood performance indicators, especially for those wishing to evaluate community radio to assess its overall contribution to society, or to determine the extent to which it deserves and receives government financial support. To observers outside the sector it may appear that there is no common agreement on the notion of value inside the sector. This is a powerful argument for the need to scrutinise the concept of
value in community radio in greater detail. It necessitates developing a taxonomy of types of community radio so as to disambiguate discussions of community, democracy and value, and point towards a contingency-based approach to value for community radio.

2.6 Democratisation of the Media

2.6.1 Models of Democratic Media

Habermas’ (1989, 171) initial work proposed an ideal type of public sphere democracy, which has been described as idealist, elitist, romantic and unworkable in the modern world. However, his discussion of the disintegration and demise of the public sphere, due to the industrialisation of the media sector, remains relevant and offers some useful ideas (Downey and Fenton 2003, 187). Later revisions of Habermas’ work consider the value of alternative media, such as community media, in the declining public sphere. He suggests that alternative media can provide an alternative to and can also influence the mass media public sphere. There are opportunities for alternative media to bring marginalised issues into view and offer alternative dialogues or framing of issues not available in the mainstream media (Downey and Fenton 2003, 188-189). Such models of alternative media offer important contributions to the development of the draft framework of value. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers (United Nations 1948).²⁵

The natural step from this right to information is the citizen’s basic right to communicate in public. This step proposes communication systems as a site for dialogue rather than monologue through an “equitable distribution of resources and facilities enabling all persons to send as well as receive messages” (Jouet 1977, 13).

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Alternative media models, untrammelled by the profiteering drivers of commercialisation, arguably redefine what media could be (Fisher 1981; Jouet 1977; Splichal 1993; Young 1982). Splichal (1993, 11) extends this argument and summarises four basic communication rights and freedoms:

- The right to publish opinions in the mass media, as an extension of the traditional freedoms of thought and expression, and as a right complementary to the right to receive information;
- The right to participate in the management of the mass media and communication organisations;
- The right of free association and mutual interlinkage for realising individual and common needs;
- Equality of citizens in rights and duties of which the first requirement is that this equality is not limited by or dependent on their social status and uneven distribution of material resources.

These freedoms demand an equality to publish opinions for all. To achieve these lofty ideals, Splichal suggests that communications be organised for the public good and managed by the community. This socialisation of the media is essential for the democratisation of communications. Splichal (ibid, 12) argues that socialisation is realised through the social management and control of the media, summarised as follows:

- Providing the financial resources for mass media operation on the principles of solidarity and reciprocity of all citizens (“the people”);
- Social influence on the formulation and implementation of communication policies, programs, and so on, of the mass media.

Splichal further argues that conditions should be developed to encourage active participation. He asserts that it is essential that citizens be incorporated directly or indirectly into mass communication, as this is the only way that people realise their need to communicate with others, either as individuals or collaboratively. In combination, the number of participants and the social circle of inclusion that expands around them define the democratisation process. He refers to previously excluded groups, for example, the young, the elderly, women, economic groups, ethnic groups, linguistic groups and religious groups. With these excluded groups in mind, Splichal (ibid, 12-13) argues that democratisation should remove the “major sources of distorted communications”, which he describes as “class privilege, gender preference, racial
discrimination, age grade exclusion and a division of labour which awards authority to a relatively few and mandates compliance to a large majority.”

Splichal’s conclusions foreshadow a more balanced and free-flowing world of media information, where citizen access to and participation in the media is the norm. He dares us to imagine a new world where the democratisation of mass communication is a reality.

In a mixed democracy, such as Australia, these conclusions may appear utopian. The bulk of large media outlets are commercial and owned by a relatively small number of companies. There is evidence that this concentration of ownership actively reduces the diversity of opinions available, and citizen participation is definitely not a feature of commercial media. Commercial media is driven by the financial imperative to sell advertising. They focus on maximising their audience reach for their advertising clients, rather than the democratisation of mass communication. The national broadcasters (funded primarily by the Federal Government), in the form of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), assume some responsibility for ensuring a wide variety of opinions are available in the public domain. They do not, however, encourage or offer more than token citizen participation in the media or propose any democratisation of mass communication.

First, it is only the community media sector in Australia and, for the purposes of this thesis, community radio that gives access to groups marginalised by the mainstream media, allowing a wide range of opinions and interests to be heard. Second, community radio offers citizen participation in the production and management of the media. To some degree, the ideas of Splichal (1993) and others are implemented by the community media sector because their objectives are similar. However, Splichal’s ideas around funding are difficult to envisage in the current community sector, where most stations operate on shoe-string budgets with

26 See Chapter 3: The Lens of Media Ownership.
27 See 3.2.2 Dominant Media and Representation in England and the United States (Chapter 3).
28 See 3.3.5 The Counter-Balance of the ABC and the SBS (Chapter 3).
limited government support. Ensuring financial stability for community radio in Australia has always been a difficult task.\textsuperscript{29}

In summary, community radio stations offer citizens four basic communication rights and freedoms (Spichal 1993, 11), and these rights and freedoms appear in different guises as part of the value of community radio. As discussed further later, there are differences in how this value is perceived and implemented.\textsuperscript{30}

2.6.2 Democratic Radio – Radio Should Have Two Sides

Bertolt Brecht (1930) was an early proponent of the democratisation of the airwaves. He envisaged the value of the relatively new medium of radio as a unique opportunity to enhance citizen’s participation in public affairs. Stuart Hood (1980, 25) translates Brecht’s (1967) explanation in “Radio theorie”:

Radio is one-sided when it should have two sides. It is a pure instrument of distribution. And now to be positive, that is to say, to turn to the positive side of radio, here is a proposal to give radio a new function: Radio should be converted from a distribution system to a communication system. Radio could be the most wonderful public communication system imaginable, a gigantic system of channels could be, that is, if it were capable not only of transmitting but of receiving, of making the listener not only hear but also speak, not isolating him but of connecting him. This means that radio would have to give up being a purveyor and organise the listener as purveyor. That is why it is extremely positive when radio attempts to give public affairs a truly public nature.

Early in the history if radio, Brecht perceived that it had the potential to be a medium that served the public interest. Radio started as two-way communication (for example, ship-to-shore radio); however, by Brecht’s time media companies had appropriated the medium as a one-to-many model. Brecht realised the social and political drawbacks in the one-way distribution system. He also stated that, as far as the public communication possibilities of radio are concerned, the public was not “sufficiently advanced to take it up” and that “radio waited for a public” (Hood 1980, 24). Accordingly, the novelty of this new means of mass communication meant that the public had not developed a discerning enough knowledge of the social and

\textsuperscript{29} See Chapter 6: The Lens of Financial Challenges Facing Australian Community Radio.

\textsuperscript{30} See Chapter 4: The Lens of Contested Value, and Chapter 5: The Lens of Australian Community Radio Policy.
political ramifications at this early stage and were slow to take advantage of this new medium, as content producers or as discerning consumers.

Pantelis Vatikiotis (2004, 5), in “Communication Theory and Alternative Media”, interprets Brecht and suggests that \textit{the listener needs to be activated and reemployed as a producer of content}, and as a discerning consumer of content. Vatikiotis (ibid) states that, “the technique of such a project will be directed towards the prime task of ensuring that the public is not only taught but must also, itself teach.” Brecht was clearly a visionary and understood the full value of participatory communication, but made no attempt to concretely establish this in the world. He shares with Habermas this notion of value of the public sphere, yet provides no way of translating ideals into reality. There is a notable sense of the utopian or theoretical about the ideas emerging from Habermas (1989) and Splichal (1993), as discussed previously, and Brecht (1967) regarding the democratisation of communications. This Chapter now turns to Hochheimer (1993), who has attempted to root his thinking in the necessarily pragmatic environment of the radio station. It is here that the value of relationships at a democratic radio station emerges and the value of \textit{democratic governance} is revisited.


Hochheimer (1993), in “Organizing Democratic Radio: Issues in Praxis”, examines the dominant issues that arise when the democratic ideals of communication are addressed via the practicalities of radio. He focuses on the social and community relationships that exist inside and outside the radio station. He also considers the possible notions of \textit{workplace collectivism within “democratic radio”}, which may occur as an internal mirroring of outward projections of democratic radio. He discusses \textit{representation of the community}, and asks how we decide who speaks for the community, which voices are legitimate, what segments of the community are given access, and how much equitable mass communication is possible? The answers to these questions can be interpreted as assigning priorities to the values of community radio; however, which of these is more important? For example, is it more valuable to represent as wide a swathe of the community as possible or choose fewer homogenised voices that may be more
coherent as a group? As discussed previously, questions over inclusion and exclusion are dilemmas sometimes faced by community stations (Van Vuuren 2006a, 381).\(^{31}\)

In contrast to Splichal (1993, 12-13), who almost argues for compulsory participation, Hochheimer (1993) suggests that the universal desire of individuals to mass communicate is a fallacy, and the question of who participates is dictated by motivation, time and interest. Regardless, he believes that opportunities to access the airwaves should be available to all segments of society. Opinion should be as varied as possible. However, he concedes that true diversity and democracy can only happen in the long-term, as the passage of time and the transient nature of volunteering allows access to various interest groups with a strong desire to participate (ibid, 277). Hochheimer’s argument shapes Splichal’s (1993, 11) utopian vision of the democratisation of mass communication into a more pragmatic scenario.

### 2.6.4 Democratic Governance

Building on notions of community participation, Hochheimer (1993, 480) considers the community within or the operational structures within stations, such as how people interact, how decisions are made, who empowers others, who authorises and the general staff hierarchy. He regards these organisational parameters as critical to understanding that people who reject mainstream media philosophy and programming are more likely to challenge the normal pyramidal hierarchal staff structure within media organisations. He divides the topic into seven themes: authority, rules, social control, social relations, recruitment and advancement, and incentives and differentiation of labour (ibid). He primarily draws on Joyce Rothschild-Whitt’s (1977) dissertation, “The Collective Organisation: An Alternative to Rational-Bureaucratic Models”, which discusses the collective organisation of a community newspaper. Rothschild-Whitt contends that authority exists in the collective as a whole. The collectivist-democratic organisation altogether rejects rational-bureaucratic justifications for authority. This stems from anarchist ideals and the belief that social order is achievable without recourse to authority relations (Guerin 1970, 157). This assumes the capacity of members to work within a co-

\(^{31}\) See 2.5.2 Inclusion versus Exclusion in Community Radio (Chapter 2).
operative environment, which requires a high level of self-discipline. Decisions in collectivist democracies are made through a consensus process where all members participate. Only decisions made with a group’s full support are implemented. As Rothschild-Whitt (1977, 82) describes, “the group is not as concerned with efficiency, as it is with exemplifying its internal process, placing value on self-expression and group cohesion.” This approach makes collectivist decision-making and group governance a priority value of the community media group. However, there is the risk that it will be at the expense of efficiency.

These collectivist workplace ideas appeal to those concerned with democracy in the workplace, yet the implementation of a democratic structure has its challenges. Democracy takes time and has the potential to hinder day-to-day organisational efficiency. The time spent in meetings could perhaps be spent more effectively, for example, in preparing programs. However, a general feeling of consensus may expedite the decision-making process. This depends on the homogeneity of the group.

Van Vuuren (2006a, 381) raises homogeneity when discussing the exclusionary nature of community radio, where stations naturally restrict membership to those with similar objectives to the station. The homogeneity of staff naturally introduces the notion of social capital, whereby homogeneity among staff may improve the generation of social capital. Social capital is a valuable aspect of community radio and is an adjunct notion to governance structures.

2.6.5 Social Capital

In contrast to Rothschild-Whitt (1977), Kitty Van Vuuren (2002), in “Beyond the Studio: A Case Study of Community Radio and Social Capital”, examines the individual motivations of Australian participants within a community station. Rather than examining organisational

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32 See 2.5.2 Inclusion versus Exclusion in Community Radio (Chapter 2).

33 Definitions of social capital are not universal. For example, according to Pierre Bourdieu (1986, 248) social capital is, “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition.” In turn, according to Robert Putnam (2000, 19), “social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.”
structures, Van Vuuren explores the synergies of *social capital* and community development. Social capital is introduced here as a perceived value of community radio. How and why do people unite, principally volunteers, with shared objectives in a community radio station, which in turn increases social capital? What allows social collaboration to occur, and produce enhanced social capital and economic activity? Drawing on Onyx and Bullen (1997), Van Vuuren (2002, 95) identifies four key themes. First, that social capital relies on *trust* between community members who “share social norms and values” (ibid). Second, a “philosophy of the *commons* … holds that individuals are not motivated by utilitarian self-interest in pursuit of pleasure, but by complex social and individual goals” (ibid). These two key themes echo Rothschild-Whitt’s (1977) observation of group *homogeneity* and the *democratic inclination*, as discussed previously.

Third, Van Vuuren (2002, 95) identifies the theme of *reciprocity*, where participants give their time and skills in return for “short-term altruism and long-term self interest.” While there is no contractual return on this long-term investment, participants are aware of the personal benefits of their involvement. Fourth, *proactive* people enlivened by personal or community empowerment and willing to *participate in networks*, forming “a web of voluntary and mutual relationships between individual and groups” (ibid).

This research by Van Vuuren (2002) uncovers participant demographics for three case study community radio stations, including gender, age, marital status, education level, employment status and occupation. She intends to discover how such demographic variables may affect the production of social capital. She focuses on the themes of *participation in networks* and *reciprocity* as measures of social capital (ibid, 101). *Participation in networks* is considered in three ways: first, how participants came to volunteer; second, the duration of participation; and third, membership of other community organisations. *Reciprocity* is understood as reasons for community radio membership and the personal benefits of volunteering (ibid, 102-105).
Van Vuuren (2002, 106) identifies a cross-section of age groups as a factor in the generation of social capital and financial success. She also suggests that a higher participation in community organisations outside the radio station may contribute to the production of social capital, extending networks into the community and possible community development.

Both Rothschild-Whitt (1977) and Van Vuuren (2002) seek to understand the potential value of community media organisations from a social standpoint. Rothschild-Whitt echoes the “prefigurative politics” of Downing (1984, 17), where organisations attempt to practice internally what they wish for the political future of society. This assigns value to some form of internal democracy, which may subsequently benefit participants and enhance the possibility of successfully promoting these values to wider society. This is far from simple to quantify as a value. The value of social capital expressed by Van Vuuren is also far from simple to measure. While it encompasses the complexity of social networks within community stations it is a very real commodity for participants and has wide-ranging effects for all community radio stakeholders.

### 2.7 Chapter Summary

Examining community media through the theoretical lens of the public sphere reveals the largest number of values of all the lenses of analysis. This is due to the association with democracy, which is the broadest and most wide-ranging of the concepts.

Calhoun (1992b, 1), Fraser (1992, 114), Habermas (1989), and Hood (1980, 25) translating Brecht, discuss community representation,\(^{34}\) in terms of public interest and public discourse. This fundamental democratic idea suggests that community members, regardless of status, gender, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation, should be represented in matters of public interest in the media.

\(^{34}\) Community representation is defined as an avenue where members of the community are able to represent their particular individual interests or community of interest.
Calhoun (1992b, 7, 25), Splichal (1993, 11-13), Vatikiotis (2004, 5) interpreting Brecht, and Zhao and Hackett (2005, 11) examine the notion of community participation\textsuperscript{35} in the media. The value of participation is nuanced further by Forde, Foxwell and Meadows (2002, 56-57), Rodriguez (2001, 3), and Van Vuuren (2006a, 381) whose interpretations focus on the facilitation of citizenship, cultural identity and political empowerment at a personal level. Van Vuuren (2002) offers the production of social capital as a further refinement of participatory value for the participants. It is at this individual “lifeworld” level, discussed by Habermas (Calhoun 1992b, 30-31), that these theorists believe that the value of participation is best situated.

The notion of alternative points of view (oppositional to the mainstream) is raised by Atton (2002, 153), Calhoun (1992b, 28), Downey and Fenton (2003, 187-188), Fraser (1992, 109-142, 123-124), and Habermas (1991, 175). Value here is potentially the ability to resist the domination of huge media companies with vast technological coverage, whereby consumers have merely become audience demographic figures to sell to advertisers (Habermas 1991, 171). Also politicians craft their media opportunities to engineer community consent, rather than encourage active participation by community members (Habermas 1991, 194). Value here is considered to be what the mainstream media is not.

This notion of alternative viewpoints is further extended to alternative modes of operation by Atton (2007a, 19), Calhoun (1992b, 28), Downing (1984, 17), Downing and others (2001, 71), Hochheimer (1993), and Rothschild-Whitt (1977, 80-82) under the guise of alternative forms of governance. Community media organisations often demonstrate more collective or democratic forms of structure and governance. Downing and others (2001, 71) have termed this “prefigurative politics”, whereby participants adhere to governance structures that they would prefer to imagine in a future society. Downing (1984, 17), and Downing and other (2001, 71) also consider this as an added value of participation, where the processes of democratic governance engage participants in a politically empowering experience. Similarly,

\textsuperscript{35} Participation is defined as community participation in the production and management of the media, and also as listener participation, as guests. Both of these notions contribute to a sense of community access to the airwaves.
Hochheimer (1993) examines the value of the community within the station, which is generated through internal structures and governance. Rothschild-Whitt (1977) examines collectivist decision-making and group governance as priority values of the community media group. Van Vuuren (2002) explores the production of social capital, where there is a common interest and trust within a community radio station.

This Chapter has focused on the higher level constructs of representation, participation, alternative voices, alternative forms of governance and community within the station. This Chapter has also explored the lower level associated specific values. This notions of value that are incorporated into the final framework of value for community radio have been indicated throughout by **bold and italics**. Both the higher level constructs and the specific values are not confined to this lens of analysis, and will also be discussed through the perspectives offered by the other theoretical lenses of media ownership, contested value, Australia community radio policy and financial challenges. The higher level constructs and the specific values from all five lenses of analysis will be used to construct the theoretical framework for community radio. Table 1 (The Lens of the Public Sphere: Summary of Values) summarises the higher level constructs and associated specific values that emerged when looking through the **Lens of the Public Sphere**.

**Table 1: The Lens of the Public Sphere: Summary of Values**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Construct</th>
<th>Specific Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td>Representation of the community</td>
<td>Opportunities to access the airwaves should be available to all segments of society.</td>
<td>Hochheimer 1993, 477.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social gain</td>
<td>Defined as the provision of radio services to groups not otherwise served by commercial or public service broadcasters. The promotion of social inclusion, the promotion of cultural diversity and the promotion of civic participation.</td>
<td>Office of Communications (Ofcom) 2004a, 11-13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural diversity</td>
<td>The promotion of a positive view of cultural difference.</td>
<td>Office of Communications (Ofcom) 2004a, 11-13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion and protection of peoples’</td>
<td>The free flow of information and ideas are the pillars of a functioning</td>
<td>AMARC 2006; Jouet 1977, 13; Splichal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication rights</td>
<td>The democratising value of community radio</td>
<td>Specific audience, representing a narrow faith or ethnic community</td>
<td>Generalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>democracy. A citizen’s basic right to communicate in public. This proposes communication systems as a site for dialogue rather than monologue through an “equitable distribution of resources and facilities enabling all persons to send as well as receive messages.”</td>
<td>There is value to a medium that can offer a voice to the marginalised or “subordinated social groups – women, workers, people of colour, and gays and lesbians … subaltern counter-publics.”</td>
<td>The representation of a niche or specialist community group by one station.</td>
<td>The representation of a wide range of community groups under one station umbrella.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications managed by the community</td>
<td>Media should be accessible to citizens as producers, not just as consumers</td>
<td>A cultural resource for community cultural production</td>
<td>Political empowerment at a personal/group level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community participation in station management at all levels.</td>
<td>The public sphere can be animated by ‘democratic’ mass media, and citizens can be represented in some way by the media.</td>
<td>Alternative media offers a forum for cultural identity formation, facilitates citizenship, and formulates individual identities and interests.</td>
<td>An increase in perceived political strength or emancipation of individuals/groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Voices</strong></td>
<td><strong>Democratic access to the media</strong></td>
<td><strong>A counter-public sphere</strong></td>
<td><strong>A training ground for oppositional activities towards the mainstream media</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Multiple realities” of social life</td>
<td>This emphasises the importance of encouraging contributions from as many interested parties as possible to alternative media.</td>
<td>Alternative media may offer some ability to “resist mass-mediated representations of society.”</td>
<td>Alternative media as a site for the broadcasting, publishing or organisation of activities that may sublimate or undermine the dominance of the mainstream media.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: The Lens of Media Ownership

3.1 Introduction

As indicated in Chapter 2, the health of democracy in the 20th century was increasingly linked to the state of the media. Some theorists argue that the dynamics of democracy are intimately linked to communication practices, and societal communication increasingly takes place within the mass media (Dahlgren 1995, 2). This Chapter explores the role of modern mainstream media in these processes and contrasts it with the role of community media. The initial focus is on what community media is not, arguing that the practices of commercial mainstream media reduce content diversity and citizen participation in the public sphere. In comparison community radio is a vital and valuable space that offers democratic balance to a modern mainstream media that is in “democratic deficit” (Hackett and Carroll 2006, 2-14).

According to Chomsky (1989), during the 1970s and 1980s, the concept “democratisation of the media” was considered almost subversive in the United States (US). First, citing Crozier, Huntingdon and Watanuki (1975), Chomsky (1989, 2-19) highlights the notion that the mainstream media had become too powerful and that a reduction in democracy was a consequence. Second, the far Right in US politics perceived that the media efforts of special interest groups, including community radio, actually threatened democracy and undermined the national interest. Previously marginalised minority groups, with relatively recent access to the media, were regarded by the Right as crowding out mainstream media messages and preventing the democratic process from functioning properly. According to Chomsky (ibid, 19):

Across a broad spectrum of articulate opinion, the fact the voice of the people is heard in democratic societies is considered a problem to be overcome by ensuring that the public voice speaks the right words.

Citizen participation was seen as something infringing upon the independence of the media in the US. It would degrade the mission of the media to “inform the public without fear or favour.” If journalists did not impose “standards of professionalism” in the wider national interests of
society and government, then “the alternative could well be regulation by the government” (ibid, 2-5).

With these broader political ideas as a context, Chomsky also considers the political economy of the media and argues that the dominant media are designed to encourage conformity to established doctrine. This accords with a propaganda model of the dominant media, whereby “Democracy is more narrowly conceived: the citizen is a consumer, an observer but not a participant” (ibid, 10). The larger media companies reach big audiences and are often owned by even larger conglomerates. Their market is their advertising clientele and their product is undeniably their audience. This Chapter expands on these points, and contrasts the roles of mainstream media and community media.

3.2 Media Commercialisation and Market Concentration

3.2.1 Theories of Commercialisation and Market Concentration

Since Chomsky’s observations during the 1970s and 1980s, the corporate make-up of the US media market has changed considerably and Chomsky’s concerns have been magnified. Hackett and Carroll (2006, 3-6), discuss the “democratic deficit” of the media, which refers to the rapid market concentration and centralisation of media power via the reduction of the number of media companies. Media commentator Ben Bagdikian (2000, xx-xxi) concurs with this view, tracking the progress of the concentration of media ownership in the US since the early 1980s:

In 1983, fifty corporations dominated most of every mass medium and the biggest media merger in history was a $340 million deal … In 1987, the fifty companies had shrunk to twenty-nine … In 1990, the twenty-nine had shrunk to twenty three … In 1997, the biggest firms numbered ten and involved the $19 billion Disney-ABC deal at the time the biggest media merger ever … In 2000, AOL Time Warner’s $350 billion merged corporation was more than 1,000 times larger than the biggest deal of 1983.

The concentration of media into a handful of dominant players and the expansion of these firms, both transnationally and across diverse media, has led to a marketization of communications industries internationally (Hackett and Carroll 2006, 4). Taras (2001, 24), a Canadian media scholar, concludes that global alliances among major corporations are “virtually unprecedented
in world history” and that a “handful of gigantic corporations control almost all of the world’s media.”

Within this market concentration, it is possible to view the effects of what Wasko (2004, 315) describes as the “exemplars of political economy of communication.” First, the industry has seen increased internal vertical diversification as media companies have expanded and added new lines of business. For example, Time Warner is involved with publishing, film, television, home video, music, cable networks, computer services and even professional sports. Second, there is more horizontal integration as these expanded companies buy companies in the same line of business. For example, Time Warner owns and publishes over 140 different magazines. Time Warner, Warner Bros and New Line Cinema also produce and distribute motion pictures that are shown on their cable networks (HBO and Cinemax) (Wasko 2004, 315). As Bagdikian (1997, 3) notes:

A big shot at Disney or Time Warner can say, “It doesn’t make a difference whether it’s movies, books, television, magazines, or cable. Everybody has to come to us.” It’s a very explicit strategy. These corporations are larger and more powerful and control more media than ever.

As the media monopoly expands in all directions, it is difficult to see a place for citizen’s participation in the vast media corporations. At all levels, increasingly fewer people own the organs of information. The concentration of media also has significant political implications. Media companies can exercise considerable power, deciding which political issues are allowed to enter the public arena and how those debates are framed (Hackett and Carroll 2006, 5).

3.2.2 Dominant Media and Representation in England and the United States
A further outcome of media commercialisation is blatant democratic inequality for citizens, which is a critical theme in Hackett and Carroll’s (2006, 2-14) analysis of the “democratic deficit” of the media. The dependence of media on advertising revenue naturally reduces the range of socio-economic and political viewpoints. Advertisers want to show their products on media outlets that reinforce the socio-economic values of an affluent audience able to afford to
buy their products. Hackett and Carroll (2006, 6) present *The Daily Herald* as an example, an English newspaper that collapsed in 1964. *The Daily Herald* had a much larger circulation than more thriving conservative dailies. However, because its readers were not an affluent enough market, advertisers went elsewhere and the newspaper died.

Other by-products of commercialisation include the under-representation of women and people of colour in key media occupations in Anglo-American democracies (Hackett and Carroll 2006, 6). This impacts on content as well. McChesney (2004, 5) highlights news coverage that over-emphasises African-Americans as criminals or welfare recipients and whites as victims. Downing (1984, 5), in *Radical Media: The Political Experience of Alternative Communication*, makes a similar point:

Commercial media conventionally portray themselves as virtual slaves to ‘the market’, and thus – as providing people with exactly what they want! They quietly gloss over the power of major advertisers and corporations to define poor people’s media wants as irrelevant, compared to those of the more affluent sectors of the market. Compare for instance, the media attention in the USA to Black issues and demands as compared to elegant home décor. But this is almost nit-picking: only the extraordinarily gullible believe in the democratic passions of commercial media executives.

In addition, commercialisation and market concentration have led to greater homogenisation of media content. Homogenisation results from large media companies networking their programs or newspapers and centralising their national political reporting or book reviews, and then doling out content for their affiliates (Hackett and Carroll 2006, 6). The convergence of media ownership has meant operations have been reduced to purely profitable outcomes at the expense of local programming and any notion of local contribution. Hackett and Carroll (ibid, 7) suggest that the “Wal-Martization” of the media has produced a declining connection between the media and local communities. Local programming has been reduced to centralised, syndicated and networked material with a dash of “local flavour” and is comparable to the “regional variations on a McDonald’s fast food menu” (McChesney 2004, 7).

McChesney (2004) cites ClearChannel as the leader in this strategy and as an example of the problem. ClearChannel owns 1,200 stations in the US. However, in 2002, when a train accident in Minot, North Dakota released toxic fumes, the local authorities were unable to find
any local radio station staff to raise the alarm. None of the six local ClearChannel stations had any actual staff and were merely relaying feeds from a central office elsewhere outside the state (ibid, 7). This incident starkly highlights how networked media content is reducing local programming and content diversity.

C. Edwin Baker (2006), in *Media Concentration and Democracy: Why Ownership Matters*, examines the approach of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to media ownership in the US. In the past, the FCC aimed to disperse media ownership. However, more recent rules have permitted ClearChannel to increasingly expand. Recent changes in the media ownership rules have focused on preventing an “undue concentration of economic power” in a defined geographic area (ibid, 14). There has been a prevailing view from the FCC that national media chains, spread across disparate geographical areas, do not create anticompetitive economic power. Although, as Baker (ibid) contends, “a merger of a station operating in Vermont with one in California does, however, increase the owner’s power over opinion within the broader national public sphere.” It is this distributive power that not only encourages a homogenisation of content but also reduces the diversity of viewpoints.

In summary, it is apparent that economics as the prime driver of the media has encouraged the decline of public participation in political discourse in the US. The public is considered a mere consumer or part of an audience to be bought and sold at the whim of dominant media corporations. This helps explain the drift towards the tabloidization of commercial television and radio. Cheap content and titillating stories cater to the lowest common popular denominator, and genuine or thoughtful politically-relevant discourse is largely avoided (Hackett and Carroll 2006, 3). This state of affairs parallels the transformation of the idealised public sphere of Jurgen Habermas, as discussed previously. Certainly, there appears to be little effort by commercial media to balance the democratic deficit they have created. Research around the North American political economy:

Drawing on both Marxian and institutional approaches has been driven more explicitly by a sense of injustice that the communication industry has become an integral part of a wider corporate order which is both exploitative and undemocratic (Mosco 1996, 19).
3.3 Media Ownership in Australia

3.3.1 Deregulation and Political Influence

Control of the media is important because the news media have long been considered the “fourth estate”, an independent public institution with numerous important roles. These roles include informing society, animating public sphere debate, especially around news content, current affairs and politics, and holding those who govern to account for decisions and actions. This perspective remains and still has sway among some modern journalists, politicians and citizens (Schultz 2002, 101). The arguments around media ownership centre on the role of freedom of speech, and the capacity of media to make information available to citizens who may then use the information to make democratic decisions. These ideas traditionally suggest that the media should be pluralistic, offering the public open access to diverse and wide-ranging opinions to ensure effective democratic governance (Di Mauro and Li 2009, 2).

Despite these media values still being espoused by Australian governments, media ownership deregulation in Australia has followed a similar path to the US, as discussed previously. Rhonda Jolly (2007), in her comparison of Australia and the US, asks whether deregulation is in the public interest. She suggests that similar arguments have been used to advance deregulation in the two countries. The primary argument from commercial media organisations and their political allies is that regulation prevents traditional private media owners from competing with emerging new media. Freedom from these restrictions would allow traditional media to expand into new markets, and in turn develop wider customer bases. The same argument proposes that deregulation serves the public interest through increased content diversity and broader or varied delivery types. These justifications were most

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36 Traditionally, journalism perceives its role as central, ensuring accountability in the democracy by revealing the detail of debate in the political process and investigating the interests of various positions in the debate. This account of journalism is based in the terminology of the “fourth estate”. This was first employed by Macaulay in Great Britain, in 1828, to contrast the press to the Lord Spiritual, Lords Temporal and Commons, and is now used to contrast the press to the legislative, executive and judicial arms of government. In this context, journalism is understood and justified as a watchdog of political institutions and the social processes those institutions create and defend. For journalists, “fourth estate” theory has the dual benefits of placing them inside the political process, yet outside the institutions of governance, and allows them power but soft rather than hard power (Stockwell 2004, 3-4).
prominently advanced when the Howard Government won the 1996 election, and subsequently deregulated the media in the spirit of US deregulation (ibid).

For Jolly (2007), the media landscape should serve the public interest by providing diverse views that inform, clarify and illuminate news and current affairs information. Far from endorsing arguments that support deregulation, Jolly (ibid, 1) suggests that there is a need to “counter the possible emergence of a private media landscape that may be more homogenised and restricted and more restrictive in content.”. Trevor Barr (2000, 6-7) concurs, stating that there is inadequate ideological diversity within the media system. The Australian media landscape is essentially a commercial system characterised by a restricted number of viewpoints available to the public. Deregulation may encourage more players; however, there will be no advancement of the public interest if these players share the same ideologies as the existing media companies.

Paul Jones (2003, 1) states that Australia has been characterised as an “exemplar of the failure of media policy to guarantee the quality and independence of broadcasting.” Public interest in his opinion has not been served and his argument extends to criticism of politicians. There may be a diversity of political viewpoints available from politicians; however, Jones suggests that Australian politicians feel obliged to court media moguls due to the well-founded belief that these companies can strongly impact electoral results. Politicians need a media running mate to have a chance of attaining office (ibid, 3). Former Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating was acutely aware of the power of the media, and once stated, “educate John Laws and you educate middle Australia” (RadioInfo 2003). Similarly, John Brennan, 2UE Program 37

37 John Laws was considered one of the most influential radio presenters in Australian media from the 1970s through to 2007, and was cited as the highest paid personality. He has said many times that he does not consider himself a journalist, rather an entertainer and salesmen. His “shock-jock” approach has embroiled him in numerous controversies, including the infamous ‘cash for comment’ scandal. Laws and fellow radio presenter Alan Jones were found to be giving on-air favour to companies, such as Telstra, Qantas and Foxtel, in the guise of editorial comment, rather than declared advertisement, in return for substantial and secret remuneration (Adams and Burton 1997).
Director said, “Alan Jones\textsuperscript{38} and John Laws are the two most influential men in Australia outside Federal Parliament” (Jellie 1998, 4). If talk radio hosts are perceived in this light, it suggests the media has influence that is not in the public interest.

3.3.2 Media Concentration in Australia

According to Sawer, Abjorensen and Larkin (2009, 216), “Ownership of the media in Australia is concentrated to an extent that is almost without parallel in liberal democracies.” The reduction in newspaper titles alone during the 20th century in Australia replicates the reduction in media companies in the US, as mentioned previously (Bagdikian 2000, xx-xxi).\textsuperscript{39} Sawer, Abjorensen and Larkin (2009, 216) describe 26 metropolitan daily newspapers in 1923 in Australia owned by 21 companies. 1950 saw this reduce to 15 titles owned by ten companies, and by 1987 only two major companies remained, namely News Ltd and the Fairfax Group. Apart from Sydney and Melbourne, no Australian state capital has more than one daily newspaper and there are only two national newspapers, namely \textit{The Australian} and \textit{The Australian Financial Review}. In 2007, News Ltd owned 70 percent of the newspapers distributed in the metropolitan areas, and Fairfax owned 21 percent of the newspapers distributed in the metropolitan areas and also significant broadcasting assets. Subscription television is dominated by Foxtel.\textsuperscript{40}

Analysis of broadcast media ownership concentration normally focuses on commercial media because of their dominance of the industry, compared to the public or community broadcasters. This thesis focuses on radio broadcasting. Table 2 (Major Metropolitan and

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\textsuperscript{38} Alan Jones shares similar characteristics with his former colleague and competitor John Laws. Jones is known for his politically charged radio content, which he has been known to use to further his conservative beliefs. Jones was also implicated in the ‘cash for comment’ scandal. He has been a vociferous critic of the political Left in Australia. During the 1990s, Jones was embroiled in numerous controversies (Adams and Burton 1997). Notably, in 2005, he was accused of on-air incitement of racial tensions, violence and vigilantism in the Cronulla riots, by the ACMA (Welch 2007). Recently, in September 2012, Jones was embroiled in more controversy. Speaking at a young Liberals dinner, he said that the 83-year-old father of Prime Minister Julia Gillard had died of shame, over his daughter’s political conduct (Marshall 2012).

\textsuperscript{39} See 3.2 Media Commercialisation and Market Concentration (Chapter 3).

Regional Commercial Radio Networks) shows Australian commercial radio ownership as of June 2012. The Australian Radio Network (ARN), Southern Cross Austereo, The Daily Mail Group (DMG) and the Fairfax Radio Network dominate the metropolitan scene in all capital cities. They also own a substantial share of the fledgling digital radio and digital only (DAB+) stations.41

Table 2: Major Metropolitan and Regional Commercial Radio Networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital City</th>
<th>Australian Radio Network (ARN)</th>
<th>Southern Cross Austereo</th>
<th>Daily Mail Group (DMG)</th>
<th>Fairfax Radio Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>Mix 102.3 FM Cruise 1323 AM</td>
<td>SA FM Triple M FM</td>
<td>5aaAM Nova 91.9 FM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>4KQ AM 97.3 FM (with DMG)</td>
<td>B105 FM Triple M FM</td>
<td>97.3 FM (with ARN) Nova 106.9 FM</td>
<td>4BC AM 4BH AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>Mix 106.3 FM FM 104.7 FM (both joint with Austereo)</td>
<td>Mix 106.3 FM FM 104.7 FM (both joint with ARN)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Gold 104.3 FM Mix 101.1 FM</td>
<td>Fox FM Triple M FM</td>
<td>Nova 100 FM Smooth 91.5 FM</td>
<td>3AW AM Magic 1278 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mix 94.5 FM 92.9 FM</td>
<td>Nova 93.7 FM</td>
<td>882 6PR AM 96 FM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>WS FM Mix 106.5 FM</td>
<td>2Day FM Triple M FM</td>
<td>Nova 96.9 FM Smooth 95.3 FM</td>
<td>2UE AM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Australian Communications and Media Authority 2012)

Major media owners are restricted to owning no more than two commercial radio licences in the same geographical area (Sawer, Abjorensen and Larkin 2009, 217).42 Table 2 clearly shows that almost all companies have taken near maximum advantage of this, owning two licenses in most capital cities. Although their delivery is limited in the same local areas,

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41 In October 2005, the Federal Government announced a plan for the introduction of digital radio in Australia using the European DAB+ broadcasting standard. Services began in April 2011, and can be received using a digital radio in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. Regional services are to follow, but no date has been set. Currently, most metropolitan radio stations simulcast their FM or AM signal on the new digital service, and there are a handful of digital only stations in operation (see http://www.acma.gov.au/scripts/nc.dll?WEB/STANDARD/1001/pc=PC_90054).

42 See 3.3.3 Changes to Media Ownership in Australia (Chapter 3).
they dominate nationally and they can also redistribute content from one area to another, reducing *local content production* and impacting *content diversity* (ibid, 216-217).43

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2009a), the population of Australia is highly concentrated in urban centres. In June 2008, almost two-thirds (63.9 percent) of the population or 13,687,640 Australians were living in the capital cities. According to the Treasury of the Commonwealth of Australia (2010, 21), by 2020, 90 percent of the population will be living in urban areas. This means that four companies alone will deliver commercial radio to the majority of Australians.

Recent figures from the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA 2012, 1), show that there are a total of 273 commercial radio stations nationally. In metropolitan areas, the major media companies own almost all of the 37 commercial radio licences (see Table 2). Table 3 (The Five Largest Regional Commercial Radio Networks) shows that the five largest regional radio networks control 174 of the 236 commercial radio licences.44 The remaining 62 stations are owned by various smaller companies that often specialise in their regional area.

**Table 3: The Five Largest Regional Commercial Radio Networks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network</th>
<th>Number of regional radio licences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Cross Austereo</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super Radio Network</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Broadcasters</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ace Radio</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Radio</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>174</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, there is less commercial radio ownership concentration in regional Australia than metropolitan areas. Also, with fewer Australians living in regional areas, the market for

43 See 3.3.3 Changes to Media Ownership in Australia (Chapter 3).
44 Notably, Southern Cross Austereo own a substantial share of the regional market, in addition to their metropolitan holdings.
advertisers is small and larger companies have consolidated their holdings in large population centres. This evidence of concentrated commercial radio ownership is not surprising from a commercial viewpoint, but what impact does it have on content diversity and democracy?

Barry Hindess (2004), in a study for the Democratic Audit of Australia,\(^{45}\) suggests that *a wide range of media viewpoints* is necessary for a viable democratic government. The main reason behind this need is because of the far-reaching political power that mediums of mass communication are capable of exerting. The two main problems with concentrated media ownership are that it diminishes *content diversity* and that immense political power can be in the hands of a few media proprietors. Hindess (ibid, x) believes that, “the corruption in this case has become a structural condition of Australian Society.” This suggestion of concentrated political power was illustrated in 2012 by mining billionaire Gina Rinehart. She increased her share ownership in Fairfax media from 10% to approximately 15%, and lobbied for a seat on the Fairfax board (West 2012). Her bid for a seat on the Fairfax board was rejected because she was unwilling to accept their charter of editorial independence (Johnston 2012).

Senator Stephen Conroy, Minister for Broadband, Communications and Digital Technology, in an interview with Jon Faine on 774 ABC Melbourne, stated: “Clearly she’s seeking to exert her influence” (Brown 2012). Jon Faine suggested that Gina Rinehart, as a strong detractor of the present Labor Government and vehemently opposed to the mining tax, intended to influence public opinion through editorial media content for her own interests and purposes. As a result, Conroy stated that Australia needs stronger media ownership laws, and blamed the previous Liberal Government for weakening these laws (ibid).

### 3.3.3 Changes to Media Ownership in Australia

In 1987, the Australian Labor Government introduced legislation that made it impossible for one company to own more than one commercial television licence, two commercial radio licences or a single newspaper licence in the same geographical market (Sawer, Abjorensen and

\(^{45}\) Democratic Audit of Australia: “Since 2002 a team at the Australian National University has been conducting Audits to assess Australia’s strengths and weaknesses as a democratic society” (see [http://democraticaudit.org.au/?page_id=2](http://democraticaudit.org.au/?page_id=2)).
Larkin 2009, 217). However, following the election of the Howard Government in 1996, the legislation was weakened in 2006 to favour the major players. Amendments to the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* were introduced for two main reasons. First, the amendments were designed to remove foreign ownership restrictions. Second, they were designed to allow cross-media transactions to proceed, thus increasing media concentration. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) were to continue evaluating media mergers and transactions (Jolly 2007, 38-39). While the previous 1987 restrictions remain today, the new deregulation reduced the minimum number of commercial media companies in a capital city to five and four in the regions. This has become known as the “5/4 voices test” (Given 2006). The deregulation set the scene for numerous mergers and acquisitions. The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA 2006, 18) suggested that, “the proposed reforms to ownership aim to tear up the 20-year-old cross media and foreign ownership restrictions and, in their place encourage a free-for-all of merger activity among the major media players.” The deregulation encouraged further media concentration with the potential to reduce *content diversity* and further threaten the public interest.

Jolly (2007) observes that the Howard Government rejected the inclusion of a public interest test within the legislation. A public interest test was proposed as an item in the public consultation, as part of the reform development process, but it never made it into legislation. The Howard Government argued that what constituted the public interest was unclear and that this subjective judgement would be more effective if decided by those commercial interests involved in each potential merger or transaction. Jolly comments that when previous public consultation had suggested a public interest test about bank merger legislation in 2000, the notion of the public interest had been included in the revised legislation. She pursues this argument and shows that a media public interest test applies in other jurisdictions, such as the US and the United Kingdom (UK), when considering concentrations of media ownership. Her argument suggests that the public interest has been ignored in this case of media deregulation in Australia (ibid, 40).
Consideration of the public interest has also been reduced by the intrinsic nature of the reforms. While media owners cannot own newspapers, radio and television in the same geographical area, there is no restriction on other kinds of media. The legislation focused only on traditional media. Pay television, magazines and the Internet are not restricted. In practice, media owners can purchase in these other areas and maintain domination over information across Australia (ibid, 40). Some of the media transactions carried out directly following the passage of the reforms into law are worthy of mention. In particular, News Corporation spent AU$170 million purchasing 25 magazine titles from Federal Publishing, making it the third largest magazine owner in Australia. Kerry Stoke’s Seven Television Network bought 14.9 percent of West Australian Newspapers and five percent of the Fairfax group (ibid, 47). The predictions of a merger and acquisitions frenzy, as previously mentioned (MEAA 2006, 18), are evident in this purchasing activity. As media ownership becomes more concentrated, political media power becomes more concentrated and the public interest potentially suffers.

Jock Given (2006) suggests that those nervous about ownership consolidation should look beyond the simple 5/4 test and focus on the record of the ACCC when dealing with media ownership. The ACCC investigates proposed media mergers and large scale changes in commercial media activity that may affect market competition. In 2006, as the Federal Government moved forward with the planned deregulation, the ACCC was asked to articulate its approach to future media mergers. The result was a guidance paper called Media Mergers (ACCC 2006). The preamble states that “this paper does not and cannot provide hard-and-fast rules about the impact of specific mergers on competition” (ACCC 2010b). Each merger is considered on a case-by-case basis, which positions the investigation of cross-media ownership firmly in the hands of the ACCC. Although a proposed merger may satisfy the seemingly simple 5/4 voices broadcasting test, the ACCC can still rule on whether it satisfies their

46 “The ACCC promotes competition and fair trade in the market place to benefit consumers, businesses and the community. It also regulates national infrastructure services. Its primary responsibility is to ensure that individuals and businesses comply with the Commonwealth competition, fair trading and consumer protection laws” (ACCC 2012).

47 Media Mergers is still current (ACCC 2010b), and is available for consideration by potential merger applicants (see http://www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/758231).
additional “competition test” (Given 2006).48 The ACCC would normally conduct a market analysis to determine where a merger is “likely to substantially lessen competition” in the market place (ACCC 2006). If this is the case, the merger will not be approved. However, if merger applicants are unhappy with the judgement of the ACCC, they may continue with their transaction knowing that the ACCC will launch court action to stop them. The final outcome rests with a Federal Court of Australia. Ultimately, media ownership in Australia rests on a relationship between broadcasting and competition law. The net result, however, has been increasing concentration of ownership of traditional and new emerging media.

Besides the political ramifications of media concentration, there are consequences for content diversity. As discussed previously, in the context of the US media, content diversity will be reduced. Networked programming becomes the norm as local community content is reduced to cut costs. There has been a tendency, especially in Australian radio, for the supply of news and popular presenter-driven shows to be distributed to other stations owned by the same group (Sawer, Abjorensen and Davis 2009, 216-217). Lindsay Foyle (2006), a cartoonist with The Australian, identifies the same tendency in newspapers, whereby fewer newspapers, mean fewer reporters, less information, less diversity and the public receive fewer points of view. She also suggests that in-depth reporting is the first casualty. Those still working as reporters spend their time reacting to news and less time researching. She wonders whether decreasing circulation figures for the daily newspapers is the result of an increasing reliance on syndicated stories and a lack of variety. While some of the richest Australians own the media and continue to make money from the media, there will be no motivation to diversify ownership and subsequently content. For a vibrant and thriving democracy, there must be a vibrant and thriving media. As Foyle (2006, 19) argues, “That will only happen with diversity of media ownership.”

The Media Merger guidance paper addresses issues of content diversity and considers “whether a merged media business could exercise market power by reducing the quality of the content it provides consumers, which could include reducing the diversity of the content it

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48 Section 50 in the Trade Practices Act 1974, now called the Competition and Consumer Act 2010, states that, “Some mergers may also have anti-competitive effects by altering the structure of markets and therefore incentives for firms to behave in a competitive manner” (ACCC 2010a).
provides” (ACCC 2006, 5). Given (2006) puts forward two points for consideration. First, does the ACCC have the skills to evaluate content quality, in a way they would assess any other type of product? Regardless, media companies will inevitably argue that mergers will increase the quality of their product because of the improved investment in production available from a larger company. Given suggests that this is exactly the same argument that has been used to justify reducing cross-media ownership rules. Second, he proposes that it is difficult to envisage the ACCC or the courts embracing the qualitative issues around content diversity and quality, and crafting evaluative structures of assessment for merger applicants. Historically, the ACCC has concerned itself more with the quantitative aspects of mergers. These include the sales of assets to balance competition in a market. Community standards around content, quality and diversity have traditionally been the remit of the ACMA. However, historically, the ACMA (2009) has promoted a policy of self-regulation and competition in the communications industry, around issues of content, quality and diversity, “fostering an environment in which electronic media respect community standards and respond to audience needs.”

3.3.4 The Convergence Review (2012)

There is some recognition of the dangers of media concentration by the current Federal Government. In a recent examination of the media ownership and public interest debate, the Department of Broadband Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE 2012), in the Convergence Review: Final Report, analysed Australia’s media and communications policy framework. This review was commissioned by Senator Stephen Conroy, Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy. At present, as outlined previously, media ownership is examined only under general competition laws. The Convergence Review recommends that “media ownership rules should promote a diverse range of owners at a local and national level” (ibid, 18). One of the stronger messages in the review recommends the introduction of a public interest test for media mergers, which would amend current cross-media ownership rules. The Convergence Review suggests a range of criteria that could assess public

49 The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) is the government agency responsible for the regulation of broadcasting, the internet, radio communications and telecommunications (see http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARDnpc=ACMA_ROLE_OVIEW).
interest. This includes defining content of “national significance”, which might be lost due to a change in media ownership. Factors that could be considered by the regulator to affect national significance include:

- whether the combined audience of a single service is above a threshold figure to be determined by the regulator; and
- whether the content service enterprise has a controlling interest in one or more prominent media operations on different platforms.

The focus of the public interest test should be on maintaining services with a diversity of content at a national level. Factors the regulator could be required to take into account when making a decision about whether mergers could affect diversity include:

- whether the outcome of the transaction would diminish the diversity of unique owners providing general content services as well as news and commentary at a national level;
- whether the outcome of the transaction would diminish the range of content services at a national level; and
- whether the person(s) taking control of a content service enterprise would represent a significant risk that the content service enterprise would not comply with its obligations (ibid, 24).

The Convergence Review provides a detailed process model for administering the public interest test, which includes liaison with the ACCC. The review also recommends substantial changes to the existing competition regulation where ownership is determined by geography or market share. These current quantitative restrictions are suggested to be superfluous under a new public interest test (ibid, 25).

However, the Convergence Review has not been well received by media owners. Several media CEOs sent a letter to Prime Minister Julia Gillard, stating that the public interest test included in the Convergence Review should be denounced: “In regards to the

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50 See 3.3.3 Changes to Media Ownership in Australia (Chapter 3).

51 The signatories to the letter were: Brett Chenoweth, the CEO of APN News and Media, which owns 50% of the Australian Radio Network, David Gyngell from the Nine Network, Don Voelte from Seven West Media, Bruce Davidson from the AAP, Kim Williams from News Limited, Richard Freudenstein from Foxtel and Angelos Frangopolous from Sky News (Radioinfo 2012).
‘public interest’ test, the executives labelled it a ‘massive increase in regulation’ based on subjective, vague and imprecise’ guidelines that ‘have not worked overseas’” (Radioinfo 2012). They also felt that the powers of the ACCC were already extensive enough to break up monopolies. In a final statement, the letter asserts:

In our view [it is] nothing more than a political interest test. It has the capacity to be misused by politicians of all persuasions to block the acquisition of media companies by people they do not agree with or simply do not like (ibid).

There is also comment on the tone of the debate around media ownership regulation:

There has been an overemphasis on coverage that some people believe is egregious with little comment (other than from some media commentators) on the important principle which is at stake here. This principle is: press freedom and the need for an independent press to hold all Governments, institutions, businesses, regulators and other in power to account (ibid).

There are strong views on both sides of the media ownership regulation debate. Those who would advocate for more regulation, especially a public interest test, believe that content diversity has been and continues to be reduced by current deregulation. Those who would advocate for less regulation believe that more regulation could threaten press freedoms.

This section has focused on content diversity and the affect of media ownership. Community radio is a valuable medium in this deregulated ownership landscape. It is one of the last bastions of media content diversity when all else is tending towards the homogenised and shallow. Content diversity is suggested as important for society at large and for democracy. However, this examination of the Convergence Review indicates that advocates from both sides of this debate are perhaps more focused on the potential political power wielded by the media and how media ownership regulation affects that power, rather on issues of content diversity.

3.3.5 The Counter-Balance of the ABC and the SBS

Rhonda Jolly (2007) concludes her analysis of media ownership in Australia by stating that deregulation is problematic for the public interest. However, it is a favourable outcome compared to the US context. This is because Australian content diversity is potentially enhanced by the public service broadcaster (PSB), the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and
the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) (ibid, 49). Modelled on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (ibid, 7), the ABC has been characterised as a “cultural, moral and educative force for the improvement of knowledge, taste and manners” (Scannell and Cardiff 1991, 7). Elizabeth Jacka (2006, 344) describes this as a “Reithian vision”, which envisaged public broadcasters as a democratising agent in society. First, the PSB should offer the best or highest aspects of culture to a national audience who might not otherwise experience this type of content, or where it has traditionally only been available to the elite who could afford this type of cultural product, such as opera performance. For example, early BBC radio services contained ‘high’ cultural content, such as drama or classical music. Popular music genres of the era, such as jazz, or popular entertainment, such as quiz shows, were frowned upon in this early vision of public service broadcasting (ibid, 345). In the UK and Australia, the PSB has been criticised for this cultural elitism. In Australia, the ABC, following in the footsteps of the BBC, has traditionally focussed on “fine arts rather than low culture” (Phillips and Lindgren 2006, 7).

Second, the PSB is to provide information about national affairs, especially regarding politics and elections. Such information ensures that citizens receive a balanced view about those who govern or seek to govern. Entwined in this information role should be educational programs about a diverse range of topics. There is also a role to improve programming for segments of the community that are not catered for by other media. This includes women, children, minority groups, and citizens in rural and remote regions. The PSB is also expected to produce services of the highest quality and excellence that would “stretch and extend the audience. It would make them better than they were” (Jacka 2006, 346).

In Australia, the ABC performs this PSB mission. Although free from commercial pressures, the ABC has a large remit and vast national responsibility in a geographically large

32 “The first Director General of the BBC, John Reith, articulated a philosophy for public service broadcasting which deeply influenced how broadcasting was established in the ‘dominions’ (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa) in Europe, in India and in post-World War II Japan” (Jacka 2006, 344).
continent. In this environment, the work of the ABC is delineated in its charter in the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983.* The four key areas of this charter are:

1. Innovation: the ABC is expected to extend the boundaries of broadcasting, experimenting in challenging programming that opens up new areas of creativity.
2. Comprehensiveness: the ABC is expected to mix mass appeal programming with more specialist programs that appeal to a variety of different audiences.
3. National identity: the ABC is expected to be distinctly Australian, developing and enriching Australian culture through programs that reflect the regional and ethnic diversity of Australia.
4. Arts, cultural, educational, and international broadcasting: the ABC is expected to be an outlet for Australian arts and culture. It has an explicit brief to provide educational programming, and is also expected to have an international profile presenting Australia to the world (Phillips and Lindgren 2006, 11).

While the ABC was responsible for providing services reflecting Australia’s ethnic diversity, many ethnic Australians of non-British descent considered the offerings inadequate and called for greater amounts of programming to suit their needs. The creation of the SBS, in 1978, was driven by a change in the Federal Government’s understanding of migrant settlement needs. Rather than prescribing wholesale assimilation into Australia culture, during the 1970s, the Federal Government eventually recognised that migrants wanted to maintain and perpetuate affiliations with their ethnic origins.

Miller (1997, 53) suggests that the SBS “drives its legitimacy from a notion of fragmentation-in-unity.” Lobbying by ethnic Australians led to ethnic radio stations 2EA in Sydney and 3EA in Melbourne, and the SBS was given control of these stations. The SBS programming was modelled on language rather than community, where language was an ideological approach maintaining and perpetuating ethnic culture (ibid). The SBS gradually expanded. In January 1980, experimental weekly ethnic television programs were broadcast on ABC Channel 2, and then on SBS television in Canberra in October 1983, followed by a gradual extension of television services around Australia until 1989. Federal legislation then

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established the SBS as an independent corporation with its own charter. Although the Commonwealth provides the majority of funds for the SBS, a change to the charter in 1991 allowed the SBS to raise funds though advertising or sponsorship, with similar guidelines to those for community radio (SBS 2002).

Jacka (2006) suggests that the SBS improves the public sphere in two ways. First, the SBS offers news and current affairs from an alternative perspective, offering national and international content from wide-ranging sources, contributing to public debate and improved democracy. Second, the SBS can be described as the “government apparatus for the establishment of a consciously multicultural society in Australia” (ibid, 347). She proposes that the SBS addresses Australians as citizens of a multicultural society, and that this may promote tolerance and acceptance of ethnic diversity (ibid).

The ABC and the SBS can potentially counter-balance the homogenisation of media content and declining diversity in a deregulated Australian commercial media landscape. However, Jolly (2007, 8) qualifies this analysis, stating that it will only be effective in this capacity if it is “supported and nurtured to act for this purpose.” Contrary to any notions of support or nurturing, Jacka (2006, 348) describes the PSB as being “under threat.” In contrast to other PSBs around the world, the Federal Government provides the majority of the funds for the ABC and the SBS. However, since the late 1970s, funding for the ABC has slowly decreased

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55 See “Brief History of SBS” (http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/doc/sbs_3.pdf). Making Multicultural Australia is a website developed by academics, state governments, and the Australian council for the Arts, Arts Victoria and the Australian Multicultural Foundation, and “aims to assist young people of upper primary and high school age, their parents, the teachers and the wider community explore our cultural diversity” (see http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/purpose/).

56 The SBS has also had a long-standing history of association with remote Indigenous media organisations. In particular, the National Indigenous Television (NITV) became part of the SBS in December 2012 (Benjamin 2012). “NITV is part of the SBS family of free-to-air channels broadcasting across Australia providing a nationwide Indigenous television service via cable, satellite and terrestrial transmission means and selected online audio visual content. The content for these services is primarily commissioned or acquired from the Indigenous production sector” (NITV 2013). Indigenous community radio stations are an important part of the Australian community broadcasting sector. For further information see the Indigenous Remote Communications Association (http://www.irca.net.au/). However, they are beyond the scope of this study.
According to Friends of the ABC (2003, 4), between the mid 1980s and 2003, there was a 29.5% reduction in real funding. This trend has continued.

Sawer, Abjorensen and Larkin (2009, 219) argue that the conservative Howard Government (1996-2007) orchestrated a campaign against the ABC. Some ministers felt the ABC was biased in its political reporting, and was more sympathetic to left-wing politics. During the Iraq war, tension between the Howard Government and the ABC was most acute (Jacka 2006, 349). The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (2005, 11) assert that the government “maintained a hostile approach to the national broadcaster through attritional defunding, board stacking and campaigns to stereotype, vilify and smear all public broadcasters as left wing and anti-American.”. The reduction in ABC funding was suggested to be because of the ABC’s reporting, which often embarrassed the Howard Government (Jacka 2006, 349). In 1997, the Howard Government reduced ABC funding by $55 million (12%) and retained this reduction for the period they were in office (Sawer, Abjorensen and Larkin 2009, 219). This perceived campaign was also accompanied by conservative and controversial appointments to the ABC Board made by Communications Minister, Senator Richard Alston. Senator Alston appointed an overt critic of the ABC, a high profile conservative commentator and a Liberal strategist, without following the normal ABC criteria for selection. These appointments saw ABC supporters allege political interference by the Howard Government in ABC operations, while critics of the ABC perceived the appointments as long overdue reminders of the responsibility of the ABC to produce politically balanced broadcasting (Jacka 2006, 349).

While this so-called campaign by the Howard Government to reduce funding and political power can be debated, Jacka (2006) suggests that there were other influential factors. The changes in the media landscape, especially the expansion of digital and online platforms meant the PSB needed to rethink its mission. Previously, the PSB was justified as a service that offered social value in areas where commercial media companies did not traditionally venture. Programs for cultural minorities, education and the arts, were not generally delivered by commercial media. The buying-power of these niche audiences did not offer attractive advertising returns. However, in the age of digital delivery, where there are more than 200
television channels offering content to international audiences, arguments for niche content from the PSB are harder to justify. In particular, as Jacka points out, pay TV and digital TV address niche audiences directly. For example, the content now provided by specialist channels, such as the Discovery Channel and National Geographic, was once the strict domain of PSBs. There are now other providers covering similar content to the ABC and the SBS, making an argument to sustain the PSB with Federal Government money a difficult one (ibid, 350).

However, the SBS has become increasingly reliant on funding from advertising. Since 2006 there has been a relaxation of rules regarding the placement of advertising on the SBS. Before 2006, the SBS had only been allowed to place advertising between programs. After 2006, the SBS could place commercials during programs. Television advertising in Australia tends to target affluent, English-speaking audiences, purely because of the size of that demographic. Although this is not an audience the SBS specifies in its charter. There has been criticism of the SBS regarding its advertising, suggesting that a reliance on this income stream will inevitably force the SBS to deliver populist content, especially in primetime periods to maximise income (Sawer, Abjorensen and Larkin 2009, 220). Similar to the ABC, during the Howard Government there were appointments to the SBS Board that have been considered by many observers as contrary to the SBS charter. The SBS Board was originally mainly comprised of members from non-Anglo backgrounds, reflecting the mission of the organisation to represent multicultural Australia. However, by 2006, the SBS Board comprised nearly all Anglo-Australian members, and more specifically they were from a commercial background. These appointments have been made with financial considerations as a priority (ibid). The current SBS Board comprises two members from non-Anglo backgrounds and seven Anglo-Australian members (SBS 2013).

While this may seem to compromise the SBS mission, some commentary suggests that the SBS has done a remarkable job balancing their editorial independence and public service imperative with the influence of advertising (Dawson 2006, 2). Two arguments have emerged from this success. ABC supporters argue that the SBS should seek full commercialisation, giving its Federal Government funding to the ABC. Critics of the ABC suggest that this
commercialisation may be the way forward for the ABC, and that repeatedly asking for more Federal funding in an expanded digital media landscape is difficult to justify. In conclusion, under either approach, the decline of public broadcasting in its present incarnation seems inevitable (ibid).

In a context where the deregulation regime for commercial media ownership rules remains in place and the public broadcasters fight for survival in an increasingly difficult funding environment, the idea of an independent “fourth estate” that informs and animates the public sphere with diverse viewpoints can be difficult to imagine. However, on the contrary, “the history of media regulation in Australia would make an excellent case study of the pursuit of private interests by powerful individuals and of the failure of governments to protect the public interest” (Albon and Papandrea 1998, vii). In this mediascape, any trend towards content diversity, citizen participation, connection between media and communities and diversity of viewpoints is a welcome counter-balance to the high tide of commercialism. The ABC and the SBS have a role to play as public information services, but, as Susan Forde (2011, x-xi) points out, “they can’t do it all on their own”, and the broader commercial media “simply cannot provide diverse, unbiased, empowering, useful information that people can move forward with.”

In this mediascape, community media is potentially an agent of diversity in the public interest, filling the vacuum and offering society what is not available elsewhere.

### 3.4 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has predominantly focused on the erosion of aspects of democracy, by the practices of the mainstream media. The arguments rest on an assumption that the animation of democracy occurs within the mass media (Dahlgren 1995, 2).

The concentration of media ownership is described as responsible for reducing the number of viewpoints available in the media (Bagdikian 2000; Baker 2006, 14; Hackett and Carroll 2006, 5; Jones 2003, 1-3; Sawer, Abjorensen and Larkin 2009, 216; Taras 2001, 24), for the homogenisation of content (McChesney 2004, 7), and for the reduction in community representation (Downing 1984, 5). These factors also manifest as a reduction in content
diversity (Barr 2000, 6-7; DBCDE 2012; Foyle 2006, 19; Given 2006; Jolly 2007; Taras 2001, 24; Wasko 2004, 315), and while public service broadcasters in Australia struggle to balance this decline (Forde 2011, x-xi; Jacka 2006, 345-346; Miller and Turner 2002), media concentration is ultimately a threat to the public interest (Jolly 2007).

The theoretical lens in this Chapter has focused on the higher level constructs of alternative, participation, representation and diversity from the perspective of trends in the modern mainstream media. Essentially, this Chapter has focused on what community media is not. As such, the specific values in this theoretical lens are small in number compared to the other lenses of analysis. Table 4 (The Lens of Media Ownership: Summary of Values) summarises the findings of this lens for incorporation into the theoretical framework for community radio. The value of community media in this context can be perceived as a vital alternative to mainstream media and as a potential counter-balance to the democratic deficit of modern media (Hackett and Carroll 2006; Jolly 2007), especially for those who are not catered for by the mainstream media. This can potentially offset the lack of citizen participation in the mainstream where the public is perceived as purely a consumer (Chomsky 1989, 10). Community media is one locale where the citizen is actively encouraged to mass communicate and participate in public discourse. Moving on from external definitions of value, the following Chapter focuses on those values articulated by the community media sector itself.

Table 4: The Lens of Media Ownership: Summary of Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Construct</th>
<th>Specific Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td>Democratic balance (in society)</td>
<td>Community radio is a vital and valuable space that offers democratic balance to a modern mainstream media that is in &quot;democratic deficit&quot;.</td>
<td>Di Mauro and Li 2009, 2; Hackett and Carroll 2006; Hindess 2004, x; Mosco 1996, 19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Representation of women and people of</td>
<td>In comparison to mainstream media, community media offers a space for the</td>
<td>Downing 1984, 5; Hackett and Carroll</td>
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82
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Colour in key media occupations</th>
<th>representation of all.</th>
<th>2006, 6; McChesney 2004, 5.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connection between the media and local communities – local programming</td>
<td>The convergence of media ownership has meant operations have been reduced to purely profitable outcomes at the expense of local programming and any notion of local contribution. Community radio is one balance to this.</td>
<td>Hackett and Carroll 2006, 6-7; McChesney 2004, 7; Sawer, Abjorensen and Davis 2009, 216-217.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
<td>Citizen’s participation</td>
<td>In comparison to media ownership concentration of mainstream media, community media is the only place available for genuine citizen participation in the media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>The community that are not catered for by other media</td>
<td>In this instance the discussion is around the PSB in Australia as a balance to the democratic deficit, but it is clear that the ABC is inadequately resourced to fulfil this task and it falls to community media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Content diversity</td>
<td>Community radio offers content diversity in comparison to a modern mainstream media that is arguably reducing content diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of viewpoints – ideological diversity</td>
<td>It is the distributive power of concentrated media ownership that encourages the homogenisation of content. Community radio is one balance to this.</td>
<td>Baker 2006, 14; Barr 2000, 6-7; DBCDE 2012; Hackett and Carroll 2006, 3; Hindess 2004, x; Jolly 2007.</td>
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Chapter 4: The Lens of Contested Value

4.1 Introduction

Following the discussion of community radio in Chapter 3, in so far as it is ‘not mainstream’, this Chapter examines the intrinsic values within the community radio sector itself. While the higher level value constructs of representation, participation, diversity, independence and alternative have been summarised in previous Chapters as notions of value for community radio, their exact meanings are not always clear among community radio theorists or practitioners. This Chapter looks more closely at these higher level value constructs in order to reveal a finer granularity of sub-values underneath, which will contribute to a more effective methodology for collecting evidence about the value of community radio. As in previous Chapters, in this Chapter, the specific notions of value are indicated by **bold and italics**.

In response to the Productivity Commission (2000), Kerrie Foxwell (2001, 3), stated that, “community radio, in a climate of rapidly increasing stations and decreased government funding, is being called to evaluate its role in fiscal terms and economic jargon.” The “soft notions”, the social and cultural benefits of community radio, are difficult to quantify in terms of profitability, efficiency, competition and concrete dollar figures. These have never been the ideologies underpinning community radio (ibid, 6). Even the Productivity Commission (2000, 277) stated that the sector “could not be understood in economic terms but required more research.” Although this indicates a level of difficulty around the evaluation of community radio, there is still a need to better articulate and quantify value for the sake of continued resources and better funding.

According to the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC 2007, 7, 23), the sector globally has always faced challenges of financial sustainability that distract community radio practitioners from their primary tasks. AMARC proposes that unconditional public funding is one way to ensure financial sustainability, allowing the sector to concentrate on the community participation and creative programming that make it an
alternative to commercial and public broadcasting. Whether the funding is public or private, AMARC (ibid, 51) contend that, “donors need to know if their money has been put to good use.” What value will donors and other stakeholders receive from their funding of community radio? In this context, AMARC (ibid, 50) discusses the “social impact of community radio”, the “effectiveness of community radio” and “evidence that community radio works.” This need for accountability justifies the examination of possible ways of assessing the effectiveness of the sector.

In November 2006, during their conference in Amman, Jordan, AMARC (2006) asked members to assess their community radio station and recommended that they focus on two aspects. First, AMARC (2007, 51) recommends an assessment of the effectiveness of the process of delivering professional radio (station management, operation and programming). While global communications technology offers a varied platter of available media, community radio practitioners need to consider why consumers would listen to their station. They may be offering an alternative voice in the mediascape, but as a lone value this is unlikely to be sufficient to command attention. What use is another voice in the mediascape if no-one is listening? There is no room for complacency in an ever-shifting mediascape, especially when community radio has historically been branded a second-class form of ghetto radio (Griffiths 1975, 7) or perceived as an amateur-sounding medium (Meadows et al. 2007a, 33). Shedding this legacy will mean producing a credible professional-sounding alternative to commercial and public broadcasting (AMARC 2007, 52). A combination of station management, operation and programming contribute to the delivery of community radio in an efficient and effective manner, and all warrant examination. A specific value in this context relates to community radio professionalism.

Second, AMARC (2007, 51) recommends an assessment of the effectiveness of community radio stations in contributing to the social progress of the communities in which they are broadcasting and an analysis of the impact of such contributions. AMARC (ibid, 8) believe that their previous investigations have uncovered a need to demonstrate the richness and positive experiences of the community radio movement: “Community radio practitioners and
stakeholders have not taken the time and efforts to present systematically the achievements of community radio worldwide.” There is a need to develop assessment tools and quality indicators that highlight the value of the social impact of community radio on individuals and communities, with respect to both the producers and the listeners. Concise and clear assessments demonstrating the social impacts of community radio play a vital role in sustaining broadcasters. Such assessments would show legislators, regulators and funders the value of community radio. A medium that offers evidence of enhancing community values, public information, cultures and languages, will receive greater support from governments (ibid, 52). Without evaluative tools for the sector, the value of social impact will remain intangible.

4.2 The Divergent and Contested Value of Community Radio

Atton (2007a) maintains that research into alternative media has expanded since 2000. He cites various media journals that have dedicated whole issues to alternative media research, for example, Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism (2003); Media, Culture and Society (2003); Media History (2001); and Media International Australia (2002). However, Atton (2007a, 17) maintains that the relevant theory is still highly contested with much work to be done, especially since alternative media rarely appears in “dominant theoretical traditions of media research” (Atton 2002, 7). He suggests that the dominant Marxist and Gramscian ideas of alternative media are mostly found in counter-hegemonic, radical, and anti-capitalist publications. While these publications provide some theoretical space, they may be limited in scope. He asserts that there is a dearth of developed theoretical frameworks for alternative media (ibid).

In Australia, Van Vuuren (2009, 175) also suggests that the “discourse of community broadcasting is a highly contested terrain”, where dominant themes are transient. The principles that emerged during the inception of the Australian sector, in 1974, were wide and represented

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Antonio Gramsci, a Marxist intellectual, developed the theory of cultural hegemony. This theory describes a culturally diverse society dominated by a ruling class whose values, cultural norms and beliefs are imposed as a dominant world view on the working classes as a means of political dominance (Hall 1986, 29).
the diverse ideas of interest groups and government departments of the time (Thornley 2001a, 8). These have endured and still offer no easily identifiable framework of value. There are multifarious views from practitioners, the government, media and society at large, all of which impact on the sector and contribute to ideological tensions within Australian community broadcasting. As discussed previously, some of the plurality around value is generated by the two different types of community radio station, specialist and generalist stations, which have different objectives (Van Vuuren 2003, 2). Thus, any interpretation of value is variable. Due to this plurality, Van Vuuren (ibid) believes that it would be wiser to initially identify who decides on the objectives for the sector, rather than what those objectives are. However, such an approach stops short of delivering the value assessment tools so needed by the sector.

Among these theorists, there is some agreement that the value of community radio is not clearly understood. The following section examines the areas of uncertainty or debate, confirming the diverse objectives and adding weight to the argument that a better way to evaluate community radio is needed.

4.3 Definitions of Community Radio and Value

This thesis is concerned with community radio, and relevant definitions and theory are derived from other disciplines that include community radio under their umbrella terms. The definitions and theory reveal much about how practitioners and academics view the role of their particular medium and where value resides within it. The range of umbrella terms in common usage include: community media, alternative media, citizens’ media, radical alternative media, democratic media, emancipatory media, independent media, participatory media, citizen’s journalism and social movement media. All of these terms can be applied to community radio and are pertinent to the discussion; however, it is beyond the scope of this study to examine all of these. This section will explore four terms, alternative media, citizens’ media, independent media and community media, in order to illustrate the subtle differences that are entwined with notions of value.

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38 See 2.5.2 Inclusion versus Exclusion in Community Radio (Chapter 2).
When considering what term to use for community media, Atton (2007a, 18) suggests, “that their differences lie less in the definitions they imply and more in the emphasis they place on how to conceptualise ‘media’ and ‘communication’, and how the terms relate to social and cultural practices.” While Atton opts for the term *alternative media* in most of his work, he acknowledges that this can encompass a large range of media forms, including newspapers, magazines, radio, television, blogs and other websites, pamphlets and posters, fanzines and zines, graffiti and street theatre, songs and music, independent book publishing, and independent record production. Atton (2002, 3) particularly defines *alternative media* as services that exist outside of the mainstream media, including the “media of protest groups, dissidents, fringe political organizations, even fans and hobbyists.” The producers are often amateurs, writing or broadcasting as citizens, activists or members of a community, and may be concerned with representing the views, interests and opinions of those not adequately represented by the mainstream media. The producers may seek to offer some media access to those marginalised or demonised by mainstream media. There is a tendency to operate from a non-commercial standpoint, and thus offer a notion of independence from the market and commercial pressures on their content (Atton 2007a, 18). The specific value resides in the concept of an *alternative space for community participants to produce their own media* without the normal constraints of the mainstream.

In contrast, Downing (2001, ix) believes that, “to speak of *alternative* is almost oxymoronic. Everything, at some point, is alternative to something else … [and] to some extent, the extra designation *radical* helps firm up the definition of alternative media” [italics added]. His analysis of *radical alternative media* focuses on the media of the Left and its ability to oppose and subvert dominant capitalist messages. Downing argues that it is impossible for media of the socialist left to successfully oppose the dominant media hegemony of capitalist bourgeois ideology. It will always be a ‘David versus Goliath’ battle, although doomed to failure, unlike the biblical precedent. He suggests that the emphasis on *radical* is not only about progressive politics but also about participation in a media production organisation. Such participation takes the radical action of prioritising collective decision-making as an important
value (Downing 1984, 23-25). He focuses on the creation of multiple alternative public spheres that could occur through self-managed media with democratic organisational structures. Value in this context resides, first, in the **democratic opportunity** that community radio affords to radical politics or other marginalised groups, giving them a voice on the airwaves; and second, in the **organisational prefigurative political stance** (Breines 1989, 46; Downing et al. 2001, 71), which is valuable as a **democratising agent in society** (Downing 1988, 169).

Rodriguez (2001) prefers the term *citizens’ media*. Similar to Downing, she believes that empowerment resides less in a battle with the mainstream and more in the power that occurs with quotidian\(^59\) citizen participation, involving the restating and reshaping of participants cultural codes. She believes that citizenship is not a passive legal right but something to be enacted on a daily basis through participation in media production. Value in this context refers to the participation that shapes the identities of participants and produces empowerment or an active cultural citizenship (ibid, 19-22). Therefore, the term *citizens’ media* is more resonant with the specific value of **participation and cultural practice**.

In the Australian context, Forde, Foxwell and Meadows (2003, 316) prefer the terms *independent* or *community media*, which offer a clear “alternative to the mainstream.” They draw on Nancy Fraser (1992, 123), who uses the term “subaltern counter-publics”\(^60\) to describe the formation of public spheres of discourse that are alternative to the mainstream. It is the interaction and the sharing of experiences of community media participants within these subaltern counter-publics that Forde, Foxwell and Meadows (2003, 316) suggest could be considered “a form of alternative media literacy.” They also suggest that Australia is unique globally because it contains such a diverse range of community radio cultures, for example, political, religious, ethnic, musical and youth. In comparison to *citizens’ media* or *alternative media*, the terms *independent* or *community media* are more inclusive and appropriate to a diverse Australian society. The specific value in this context relates to notions of independence.

First, an **independence of personal thought** that enables critique of the dominant media

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\(^59\) Quotidian: “Recurring daily, everyday, commonplace, ordinary” (Collins Online Dictionary 2013).

\(^60\) See 2.5.1 Subaltern Counter-Publics (Chapter 2).
messages of the mainstream, and second, a sense of an *independent community enabling and generating independent media messages of their own.*

Peter Lewis (1993), in *Alternative Media: Linking Global and Local,* explores the impact of *alternative media,* and offers the most all-encompassing or generous explanation of the term.\(^\text{61}\) He suggests that the term may be better assessed through qualitative rather than quantitative measures. The guidelines of the study, which are reproduced below, were sent to potential contributors or sites of alternative media, and indicate the range of possible definitions of *alternative media.* As general objectives, he suggests they may imply that *alternative media* seeks to “supplant” mainstream media (ibid, 12). In a previous study of urban community media, Lewis (1984, 1) proposes that they “expand the services of mass media” and are “doing things which mass media systems cannot do.” For Lewis (1993, 12), *alternative media* differs from the mainstream as follows:

a) **Motive or purpose**, for example, rejection of commercial motives, assertion of human, cultural, educational ends.

b) **Sources of funding**, for example, in different places state or municipal grants are rejected, or in others, advertising revenue.

c) **Regulatory dispensation**, for example, alternative media may be supervised by agencies different from those usually concerned (Ministry of Communications or Culture) or be autonomous, or local.

d) **Organisational structure**, for example, the media may be consciously alternative in their way of operating.

e) Alternative in criticising *professional practices,* encouraging the use of volunteers or the production, participation and/or control by ‘ordinary’ people; trying to adopt different criteria for selection of news stories for instance.

f) **Message content** may be alternative to what is usually available or permitted. An established medium (for example, satellite channel) may be used for this purpose.

g) **The relationship with audience/consumers** may be different. This might relate to the degree of user/consumer control, or to a policy of allowing media ‘needs’ and goals to be articulated by the audience/consumers themselves.

h) **The composition of the audience** may be alternative, for example, young people, women, rural populations, and so on.

\(^{61}\) “This study is not concerned with ‘impact’ only in the limited sense of ‘effects studies’. The answer to the question ‘what impact did project X have?’ may in any case not even be recoverable in terms of quantitative data. There may still, however, be answers at the level of social, political and cultural analysis” (Lewis 1993, 13).
i) *The range of diffusion* may be alternative, for example, local rather than regional or national.

j) *The alternative nature of research methodology* may even construct a picture of media provision or use which can qualify as alternative.

These guidelines offer potential contributors or sites with plenty of scope to define themselves as *alternative media*. Value in this context has been widely defined to accommodate the full range of notions. This is a significant indication that the contributors to the field are far from unified in their objectives.

While this thesis examines *community radio*, the umbrella term of *alternative media* is adopted when referring to the larger theoretical stage. The term *alternative* is a recurrent theme in almost all of the definitions examined here. Atton (2002) specifically chooses it to describe media that is *alternative* to the mainstream and that offers a space for citizens to create their own *alternative* messages. Downing (2001), while critical of the term *alternative*, keeps it as part of his definition, where *radical alternative media* affords marginalised groups a democratic opportunity. In addition, *alternative* underlines Downing’s proposal of prefigurative politics within alternative media organisations to describe alternative working practices. Rodriguez (2001) prefers *citizens’ media*, which is theoretically close to Downing’s *radical alternative media*, separated at times by what seems like semantics. Forde, Foxwell and Meadows (2003, 316) cite *independent or community media* as “alternative to the mainstream”. Finally, Lewis (1993) uses *alternative media* to corral a multitude of notions.

This thesis examines the perceived value of community radio, where the perceptions are often dictated by the differing objectives of a community radio station. The term *alternative media* can accommodate the wide range of perceived values that community radio can contain, in its various guises. An important aspect of *alternative* is its ability to oppose and sublimate dominant mainstream messages. This is the specific value of *oppositional power*.

### 4.4 The Value of Oppositional Power

The discussion in this Chapter and previous Chapters has characterised alternative media as providing opportunities to oppose the power of mainstream media. However, Atton (2008)
argues that media theorists have traditionally placed too much emphasis on the oppositional value of alternative media in challenging the mainstream. It is a simplistic binary model where alternative media cannot hope to compete with the resources of the mainstream media. This model also encourages alternative media to judge itself by mainstream values of success, including the specific values of audience reach and production quality. Atton (ibid, 215) outlines two main approaches within the current model of alternative media and explains why they are of limited use.

The first approach is to paint the mainstream media as “monolithic and unchanging”, where “the power of the mass media marginalizes ordinary citizens: not only are they denied access to its production, they are marginalized by its reports” (ibid). Although Atton is primarily interested in alternative print journalism, his theorisation of alternative media is relevant to community radio. He argues that independent media provide an alternative framing of news, whereas dominant media have inbuilt biases towards social-movement groups. These biases include the selection of stories, treatment of stories and general de-legitimisation of their beliefs. Atton (2007b, 74) contends that, “independent accounts can provide a powerful counter to the enduring frames of social-movement coverage in mainstream media.” However, the concern is that alternative media coverage largely speaks to its own community. In part, this occurs because they do not have the resources to reach a wider audience.

Atton refers to a study by Ashley and Olsen (1998), “Constructing Reality: Print Media’s Framing of the Women’s Movement, 1966 to 1986”. This study examines print media coverage and argues that the mainstream media portrays the women’s movement groups as homogenised social deviants on the fringes of society who are disorganised “bra burners, angries, radicals, libbers and militants” (Ashley and Olsen 1998, 273). This homogenisation of dissenting voices by the mainstream media reduces the credibility of protest and social movements to small media bites. Atton (2007b, 74) gives the example of a photograph of a

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62 Atton (2008) gives the example of the Glasgow University Media Group (Eldrige 1995) who analysed BBC media texts, such as news and current affairs, to identify bias towards certain groups in the community, namely politicians, business leaders, law and order professionals, while workers and trade unions are marginalised and often demonised. This study challenges the objectivity and impartiality of the BBC and suggests that professional journalists have a narrow view of societal groups.
masked anti-globalisation protester, at the G8 Genoa riots in 2001, standing proudly on a riot-damaged car. In the mainstream media, the whole social-movement was reduced to this single image. Arguably, when social movements are reduced to this low level of credibility by the mainstream media, their accompanying alternative media outlets are similarly branded, subsequently limiting their impact.

The second approach is the propaganda model of Herman and Chomsky (1989). This model reflects the way media commercialisation and market concentration have reduced citizens to mere consumers incapable of contributing to genuine public discourse. Some in the US Right, view the contribution of citizens and alternative media as actually hampering democracy (Herman and Chomsky 1988, 2-19). Hackett and Carroll (2006, 3-10) term this a “democratic deficit”, which includes a general under-representation of people based on ethnicity, indigenous descent, gender and class in the mainstream media. The democratic deficit also portrays a trend towards media tabloidization, thrill-seeking controversy and shallow reporting. There has also been a move towards homogenisation of content across media networks. Local content is reduced because it is cheaper to use networked content. The hope in this “propaganda model” for media studies is that alternative media can balance this deficit (Splichal 1993, 12-13). For Atton, alternative media studies have mostly been reduced to approaches that paint a picture of conflict/separation between citizens and the media. Macek (2006, 232) is also critical of these brands of media studies:

At its worst, it is overly polemical, shrill and dogmatic. At its best, it consists of careful empirical documentation of, and empirically-grounded theorizing about, the deficiencies and contradictions of capitalist or state-run media systems (seen as instrumental in propping up the hierarchies and oppressive power relations in which they are embedded.

Downing (1988, 169), in his analyses of European alternative media during the 1970s and early 1980s, is also sceptical of oppositional notions of power:

The various alternative movements of the latter part of the 20th century know much more clearly what they did not want (nuclear holocaust, nuclear pollution,

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63 See 3.2 Media Commercialisation and Market Concentration (Chapter 3).
militaristic budgets, capitalism, Sovietism) than what they propose to put in their place [italics added].

Given these approaches to oppositional value, it is easy to see why alternative media are celebrated by some sections of society. They provide a space for those disillusioned with the mainstream. As Atton (2008, 216) states, “They appear more democratic and socially inclusive.” They construct an alternative reality, often in contrast to the messages of the mass media. They are seen to be attractive by those disillusioned with the mainstream. A specific value in this context sees community radio as a place to broadcast messages that are alternative to the mainstream.

4.5 The Value of Social Power

Clemencia Rodriguez (2001, 2-7), in Fissures in the Mediascape: An International Study of Citizens’ Media, states that the discovery of three startling global communication trends has hastened scholarship around the democratisation of communications in the late 20th century, focusing on the emergence of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). First, the amount of media flowing from First World countries to Third World countries is ten times stronger than from Third World to First World countries. Second, there is little or no communication moving from Third World countries to other Third World countries. Third, the content from First World countries about First World countries is far greater than any content about Third World countries. During the 1970s, Third World United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) representatives protested against these dramatic global communication trends because the balance of global media ownership and information flow was unevenly skewed towards the power of the dominant Western media corporations. UNESCO (1980), in Many Voices, One World (MacBride Report), addressed these issues and suggested a revision of international communication policies to redistribute communicative power.

Alternative media production was seen as an important part of the solution to bring about a more democratic media landscape. Traditionally, alternative media has been valued for
its perceived ability to undermine the power of large media corporations (Rodriguez 2001, 5-7). Similar to Downing and Atton, as discussed previously, Rodriguez also considers this to be a flawed model. Rodriguez (ibid, 12-13) describes alternative media as a “heterogeneous set of media practices developed by very diverse groups.” She suggests that theorists should look at alternative media for what it is, rather than what it is not. Her detailed alternative media case studies, including citizens’ journalism in revolutionary Nicaragua, community television in Catalonia, participatory video production for Columbian women and Latino community radio in the United States (US), examine the specific value of developing the cultural identity and political and social empowerment of marginalised groups. Instead of researching political intention and perceived media power, she suggests that more research is needed into the social phenomena of participation to understand the real value of alternative media (ibid, 4).

Researching alternative media at the grassroots reveals more about value than the binary power approach of mainstream media versus the alternative media. Rodriguez (ibid, 16-17) discusses how, “multiple streams of power relationships are disrupted in the everyday lives of alternative media participants.” The power of personal and community identities is constantly in flux as they move between participation in groups and their individual everyday lives. For example, she suggests that because an individual is part of a historically marginalised or minority group this does not mean they symbolically become a member of this specific under-represented interest group and accordingly take on the homogenous characteristics or experience of that group. Their identity and empowerment is more complex because it is based on other variables including gender, social class and age. Power is not a fixed notion in any part of our lives; however, as Rodriguez (ibid, 18) suggests, participation in alternative media can:

Facilitate the fermentation of identities and power positions … alternative media spin transformative processes that alter people's senses of self, their subjective positioning, and therefore access to power.

Heather Anderson (2012), in “Facilitating Active Citizenship: Participating in Prisoners’ Radio”, contributes to this thread of social power and citizenship. In the prison environment, the denial of civil rights for prisoners is the norm, producing “a sense of non-citizenship and a
status of non-person” (ibid, 12). Prisoners are denied power and the opportunity to contribute to the discourse of an ‘outside’ community, where they will later live and work. This is suggested to be “out of step with a modern rehabilitative approach” and engenders a sense of isolation from community norms while in prison (Ridley-Smith and Redman 2002, 292).

However, prisoner participation in radio production, where the content is broadcast to the wider public, encourages active citizenship, engagement with issues in the public sphere and fosters “prisoners’ identities as citizens of the outside world” (Anderson 2012, 12-13). There is a sense of empowering prisoners to regain some of their lost personal power, and fostering a healthy sense of citizenship prior to returning to society, as part of the rehabilitative process.

Both the Rodriguez (2001) and Anderson (2012) focus less on where power is situated and more on how personal power emerges from participative social action. They offer a more subtle notion of the role of community media in the democratisation of communications. A specific value in this context involves a sense of empowerment at the personal, political and cultural level.

4.6 The Value of Participation

In contrast to Rodriguez (2001), Atton (2008, 218-219) is wary of the celebratory approach to alternative media that assigns a lot of value to participation, access, self-management and alternative working practices. He feels that there is a gap in any value assessment that ignores other aspects of alternative media practices, including broadcasting production skills, broadcaster ideology development and their relationship with the audience. According to Atton (ibid), this underexplored aspect is a weakness of alternative media studies, where “in its rush to praise and support alternative media, critical research appears reluctant to examine them too closely.”

To illustrate his concern with the lack of close examination of alternative media practices, Atton (2008) focuses on the website SchNEWS (www.schnews.org.uk), and dissects their news framing, representation, discourse, ethics and reporting norms. The news sources on
the website are “ordinary people” rather than elite experts. *SchNEWS* does not ignore mainstream news sources, such as government officials, but tends to focus on their failings. *SchNEWS* is suspicious of elite expert sources used by mainstream media, and subsequently its reporting tends to “betray its own politicized discourse” (Atton 2008, 224). Atton asks whether the news sources share a similar ideology to the website. *SchNEWS* has turned media access upside down by ensuring that the opinions of ordinary people are the dominant voices. However, do the media producers dominate the expression of those ordinary voices? Atton draws no conclusions on this, but suggests a step away from an assumed celebration of alternative media to consider future research that is “multiperspectival”. As Atton (ibid) states, “the position of the researcher as ideological advocate needs to be sacrificed for the sake of properly critical media research.”

Atton’s arguments about the benefits of participation are shared by other researchers in the field. Sandoval and Fuchs (2010) present their own vision of an ideal alternative media that can change society into a truly participatory environment. First, they state that alternative media should be *critical* media if it is to have maximum effect. Participation in media production alone does not bring balance to a mediascape dominated by corporate power (ibid, 142). Second, they are critical of participatory, not-for-profit, collectively-governed media who operate on a shoe-string and tend to dispense with *professional organisational practice and production values* (ibid, 143). As AMARC (2007, 52) has suggested, community media must be *competitive in the mediascape* if they are to be effective.

If alternative media are to produce critical content that truly challenges the mainstream, they must improve their public visibility and audience reach. Critical media should use the media production techniques of the capitalist mainstream media to reach a wider audience and thus be politically effective (Sandoval and Fuchs 2010, 143). Giving people a voice in participatory media is not enough if it means their message is not heard (ibid, 146). Value in this context of participation is distinctly contested.
4.7 Chapter Summary

The above analysis shows that there is no unified understanding of the values of alternative media and by extension community radio, even though there is acknowledgement of the need to demonstrate the positive outcomes of community radio while the sector struggles to be financially sustainable in a competitive mediascape (AMARC 2007, 50-51).

The values that are attached to the notion of community media include free space, an environment unencumbered by the constraints of the mainstream media, where citizens can produce their own alternative content (Atton 2002, 3; 2007a, 18). Downing (1984, 23-25) discusses the democratic value of access by radical or marginalised groups to space on the airwaves. In addition, Downing and others (2001, 71) identify organisational prefigurative politics (alternative governance) as a democratising agent in society. For Rodriguez (2001, 19-22), value lies in the participation in media production, which produces personal or political empowerment, an active cultural citizenship or representation. Forde, Foxwell and Meadows (2003, 316) focus on the notions of personal and community independence and alternative media literacy.

Notions of the value of community radio at this juncture seem unlikely to fall under any unified model of evaluation. This is reason enough to attempt to formulate a more effective framework, which answers the call for the demonstration of value to donors or stakeholders (AMARC 2007, 50). Following Rodriguez (2001), it may be that detailed case studies of community radio stations reveal more about their own heterogeneous or unique notions of value. Unique notions of value require unique and flexible frameworks of evaluation, which may utilise a taxonomy of community radio types. The case studies in this thesis allow for value to be tested under operational conditions, as enacted within the context of three different community radio stations.

In this Chapter, similar to the previous two Chapters, the higher level constructs or themes of representation, participation, alternative and independence are present. This Chapter

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64 See 2.5.2 Inclusion versus Exclusion in Community Radio (Chapter 2).
also reveals another group of specific values, some repeated, some nuanced and some entirely new. While there may be little that unifies the contested notions of value, the specific values that emerged will contribute to the theoretical framework for community radio. For a summary of values, see Table 5 (The Lens of Contested Value: Summary of Values).

Table 5: The Lens of Contested Value: Summary of Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Construct</th>
<th>Specific Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td>Social impact of community radio</td>
<td>The social outcomes of community radio on individual listeners, participants and the community.</td>
<td>AMARC 2007, 52.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Democratic opportunity. Representation of people based on ethnicity; indigenous descent, gender and class</td>
<td>Access to the airwaves for marginalised, minority, ethnic, political or other groups not adequately represented by the mainstream.</td>
<td>Downing 1984, 23-25; Hackett and Carroll 2006.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship with the audience</td>
<td>Links with the audience and avenues of listener feedback.</td>
<td>Atton 2008, 218-219.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competitive in the mediascape</td>
<td>An ability to compete with mainstream media for audience share.</td>
<td>AMARC 2007, 52.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>A professional sounding broadcaster, comparable to the mainstream media.</td>
<td>AMARC 2007, 52; Griffiths 1975, 7; Meadows et al. 2007, 33.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional organisational practice</td>
<td>Efficient management and delivery of a broadcast service.</td>
<td>Sandoval and Fuchs 2010, 142.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>Alternative voices and content</td>
<td>Alternative voices and content to mainstream media.</td>
<td>AMARC 2007, 51; Atton 2002, 3; Atton 2007a, 18; Atton 2008, 216.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alternative free space</td>
<td>An independent media production environment free from commercial or professional pressures of the mainstream.</td>
<td>Atton 2007a, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative media literacy</td>
<td>The shared and interactive nature of media production produces this literacy.</td>
<td>Forde, Foxwell and Meadows 2003, 316.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Independence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent community</td>
<td>Enables generation of independent media messages of their own.</td>
<td>Forde, Foxwell and Meadows 2003, 316.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5: The Lens of Australian Community Radio Policy

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter argues that the sometimes divergent notions of value in the present-day community radio sector in Australia can be partly attributed to the fragmented nature of government policy-making, and the disparate, often contradictory, interest groups involved in the emergence of the early public radio sector.65

Research by Elizabeth More (1991) into the development of Australian communications policy, from an interest group and organisational perspective, provides context for this discussion. Her conclusions support the notion of disorganised and unfocused policy-making, in relation to the emerging public radio sector. Based on an understanding of policy construction as “communication between government’s executive bureaucracy and communication interest groups” (More 1991, 41), she asserts that policy development strategies have been largely determined by powerful economic interest groups and technological objectives rather than a concern for community needs or desires.

In addition, this Chapter draws on Evans (1983, 218), who identifies an ideal “elite or informal college of policy makers”, including political parties, government bureaucracy, commercial interests, activist groups and individuals, the media and academics. Structured interaction between these groups and an intended wider public would enable appropriate policy-making to occur. However, Evans (ibid) asserts that decision-making around communications policy does not generate significant public attention. Due to this, he is sceptical of any real public contribution because their input is derived from diffuse public opinion. This deficit in the policy development process is maintained by Thornley (1999, 120-121), who suggests that the dearth of coherence in the development of public sector broadcasting policy was partly caused by a lack of government attention, who saw other issues as national election priorities. More

65 “Public” radio was the term used from 1974-1993, and was the early incarnation of “community” radio.
(1991, 41) concurs that the government approach to communications policy development was ad hoc, lacked a well developed strategy, and was “a mockery of any rational decision-making.”

More (1991) suggests that the best way to research communications policy development is to analyse the interaction between government and interest groups. She proposes examining institutional settings, organisational relationships and financial considerations. Within this examination, the objectives of stakeholders and the groups they represent need to be identified. However, this analysis is described as a “tall order” (ibid, 49). A chief complication is the lack of documentation about the content of “in-house” meetings that naturally occur in the policy development process, and meetings between parties that result in ‘classified’ information unavailable to the researcher. More believes that lack of access to these documents creates problems because the subtleties of policy-making can be lost.

More (1991, 49) is realistic in her expectations of policy development reconstruction and urges that more research in this complex field be conducted to improve accuracy. This Chapter borrows from her approach, and draws on government reports, community submissions to government, and publications of public sector advocates and the substantial work of academics that have pursued the reconstruction of public radio policy development. In combination, this provides an insight into the emergence of the Australian public radio sector and the divergent notions of value for the sector.

David Barlow (1998), in “The Promise, Performance and Future of Community Broadcasting”, explores the emergence of the public radio sector during the 1970s. He focuses on its objectives and the political machinations that led to the initial legislation in 1978 and later to the Broadcasting Services Act 1992. He paints a picture of a “journey from concept to legislation [that] was somewhat haphazard”, contending with changes in government and the most frustrating ad hoc policy-making process (ibid, 43).

These sentiments are supported by Phoebe Thornley (1999), whose historical work traces the political and governmental influences on the establishment of public broadcasting until 1992. She states that while there was some government motivation in the early 1970s to
expand broadcasting services to include a third sector, broadcasting was not a national election issue. She identifies a high level of malaise among law makers, in that the government was “confused about its own role in the endeavour” (ibid, 96). This confusion is illustrated by various conflicting government reports, lobbying from disparate interest groups, and a lack of any strong guiding policies. Jeff Langdon (1995, 5), manager of Radio Adelaide in the late 1980s, provides similar analysis to Barlow (1998) and Thornley (1999), suggesting that:

The Whitlam administration supported the introduction of public broadcasting and worked actively towards it [but] it was antagonistic to the [government] bureaucracy and so accident prone that it’s a miracle that public broadcasting emerged out of the other end intact.

Prior to 1974, the government debate around the establishment of a public sector occurred alongside the technical debate about the introduction of FM (frequency modulation) broadcasting and proposals for the allocation of new broadcast licences based on a greater number of FM bandwidth ‘slots’. Lobby groups from the community and different government departments had varied views on both issues. The interaction between the two issues created confusion, as well as opportunities.

Thornley (1999, 120-121) contrasts the murky government policy on broadcasting with the debate on the Medibank health insurance scheme, where there was defined policy. The health of the nation was a national election matter and commanded more attention, whereas public radio suffered from a lack of priority. Despite the debates and confused policy-making, the third sector emerged in 1978 in response to genuine community desires and determined lobbying.

This Chapter draws on Barlow (1998) and Thornley (1999) to chart the emergence of Australian notions of value of community radio. Notably, according to Barlow (1998, 96), the early notions of value are still represented today in the Broadcasting Services Act 1992. In Barlow’s study, what becomes quickly apparent are the diverse, and sometimes contradictory, 

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66 Frequency modulation (FM) technology was invented by Edwin Armstrong, in the United States, in 1933. In contrast to amplitude modulation (AM) broadcasting where the amplitude of the carrier wave is modulated, FM broadcasting modulated the frequency. FM had two added benefits over AM. It allowed a wider range of audio frequencies to be transmitted, hence more radio ‘slots’, and it also produced audio with substantially less noise or ‘static’ (Armstrong 1936).
ideas around the objectives of the emerging sector from both the government and the community. His work traces the “initially uncoordinated grassroots initiatives” that advocated for the proposed sector and their community submissions to the government (ibid, 43). From this interaction between public radio advocates and the various government bodies examining the establishment of the third sector, the proposed characteristics of the sector can be gleaned.

There was some agreement among government bodies regarding the general objectives for the sector. However, how those sector objectives are understood and the suggested implementation shows greater divergence, especially from community advocates, which impacts on the questions of value. Not surprisingly diversity is touted as a sector objective. What is important, especially in terms of this study, is whether the question of value can be examined, particularly when it must accommodate diversity of objectives. Did this muddled inception set the stage for the sector’s confused future?

This thesis previously examined the notion of exclusivity of community radio as a means of survival, and also as a signpost to defining a taxonomy of community radio stations. The community radio taxonomy proposed by this thesis begins with the designation of community radio stations as either generalist or geographically defined, representing many different niche communities under one station umbrella, or as specialist, representing just one small part of the community, such as the ethnic, gay or senior citizen communities (Van Vuuren 2003, 2). These characteristics of community radio are not mutually exclusive, and stations often exhibit degrees of each. It is this variation of community radio types that could be one reason for the complexities and differences of perspective during the inception of the sector.

5.2 General Objectives for Public Radio in Australia

In Australia, several government reports examine the introduction of public radio and the objectives. The Priorities Review Staff (1974, 29), in the Report on Radio, put forward four recommendations. First, proposals for new stations should come from the community and not

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67 See 2.5.2 Inclusion versus Exclusion in Community Radio (Chapter 2).
68 See 2.5.2.1 Community Radio Taxonomy (Chapter 2).
from government. Second, stations should be legally constituted as owned and controlled by the community to serve the community, and give *entitlement to participation in programming*. Third, stations may receive support from the government but *not be controlled by the government*. Fourth, commercial sponsorship is permitted, but stations are *excluded from profit-making*. Reflecting on this report, Thornley (1999, 126) suggests that this was possibly the first serious discussion of the role of government in public broadcasting in Australia.

The Priorities Review Staff (1974, 9) proposed that the social objectives of government should be considered alongside their broadcasting policy, whereby radio should be recognised as a vehicle for *community development*. Thornley (1999, 29-36) remarks that government bodies made preliminary suggestions about funding, accepting that volunteers would be the only viable option to keep the new sector afloat. Unfortunately, part of the report suggested that any expansion of radio services be controlled by the Department of the Prime Minister rather than the Department of the Media. This fuelled press speculation that focussed on government infighting rather than on the content of the report (Thornley 1999, 126-127). Thornley (1999, 129) concludes that the report:

> Provided the basis for beginnings of a coherent government policy on broadcasting, including the establishment of FM and public broadcasting … It is indicative of the government’s inability to concentrate on developing a consistent broadcasting policy that the Prime Minister shelved the report indefinitely and … the Minister for Media … later on the same day announced an ad hoc jumble of new licences.

The Working Party on Public Broadcasting (1975), in *Public Broadcasting: Report by the Working Party to the Minister for the Media*, pointed to resistance in the Department of Media towards the *Report on Radio* (Priorities Review Staff 1974) and dual government processes. The Working Party emphasised that community participation at all levels of broadcasting was desirable, recommending that public radio licence applicants emphasise how they propose to deliver *community participation*. Three recommendations were presented. First, that *control of the station by the community* be made possible by an appropriate organisational structure. Second, that *participation in programming by the community* be encouraged. Third,
that outside groups would have the right to be granted broadcasting access (Working Party on Public Broadcasting 1975, 90).

The Postal and Telecommunications Department (1976), in *Australian Broadcasting: A Report on the Structure of the Australian Broadcasting System*, addressed all sectors of the broadcasting industry and also discussed public sector objectives. The report recognised that the sector should encourage *diversity in broadcasting, participation of special interest and minority groups, community-centred programming* and *broadcasting to more localised areas* (Postal and Telecommunications Department 1976, 35). The report reiterated support for community programming, while adding *local programming* as another objective. There is also the added suggestion of *diverse and niche programming* from smaller interest groups.

Following these government reports and others, the legitimacy of the emerging public radio sector as the third sector was finally enshrined in 1978, in an amendment to the *Broadcasting Act 1942* (Harding 1979, 92). The newly created Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT)\(^6^9\) conducted a public enquiry into broadcasting regulation, which produced support for the public broadcasting sector. The ABT put forward licensing criteria for consideration, and asked licence applicants for information about what means to establish to ensure public radio serves the community, enables community access and participation, and ensures community support. The following criteria for new licence applications were identified by the enquiry:

- Whether the applicant will extend the range of meaningful services available to the public;
- Evidence of community support for the applicants;
- Whether there will be any means of enabling the community of interests which the station serves to *participate in the management and programming of the station*;
- Whether programmes would be transmitted for a reasonable period each day;

\(^{69}\) The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT) was established as an independent statutory authority on January 1, 1977, under Section 7 of the *Broadcasting Act 1942*. The functions of the ABT included management of broadcasting licences, determination of broadcasting standards, publication of broadcast reports relating to inquiries and regulations as directed by the Minister, and exercise of powers conferred by the *Broadcasting Act 1942* and associated regulations (ABT 1992, 3).
• The extent to which the applicant will give access to outside groups (ABT 1977, 101).

While these government reports and initiatives generated general objectives for the public radio sector, these were broad guidelines, and contained no policy detail and many unanswered questions. Sector funding had also not been addressed. As described by David Barlow: “with a policy framework yet to emerge, the potential scope and nature of the new sector remained unclear, uncertain and unrealized.” Notably, the ABT (1986, 5) later acknowledged that, “no clear statement of objectives for the public sector was provided” in the 1978 amendments to the Broadcasting Act 1942.

The ad hoc emergence of the public radio sector, including recognition in legislation, exemplifies the divergence of ideas regarding implementation from different parts of the public radio movement. Thornley (1999) concurs with Barlow (1998), suggesting that there were a variety of aspirants, including those who saw public radio as a vehicle for social change, those who saw present social needs as inadequately serviced, and those who saw an opportunity for personal empowerment or education. Some saw the national picture, while others were “parochial in their concerns … The only thing these people had in common was a belief that current broadcasting services were defective” (Thornley 1999, 131).

Barlow (1998, 48) suggests that concepts of access and participation, independence, alternative, not-for-profit and non-commercial, and diversity and plurality best describe the values and aspirations of the third sector advocates. Arguably, the difference of opinion about what these values mean from both the government and the community, especially in terms of implementation, has contributed to the heterogeneous nature of the present-day sector, comprising divergent notions of value.

5.3 Specific Sector Objectives

5.3.1 Access and Participation

Meyer (1976, 127) states that “access” to radio is a broad term that could mean almost anything, from a few supervised hours at an ABC station to regular open microphone access elsewhere.
The Working Party on Public Broadcasting (1975, 63-64) simply suggested that access could enable a *greater diversity of programs*, and favoured *access for neglected and minority groups including trade unions, industry groups, professional groups, religious groups and all political, social, ethnic and cultural minorities*. The Department of Media (1974, 27) additionally wanted public broadcasting to be controlled by the community to ensure public participation in locally focused community programs. There is a high level ideal evident here, summarised in the proposal of the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and Arts (1975, 22) that a wider offering of broadcast frequencies to community groups showed a “healthy democratic state”.

These government bodies, although having an eye for social and political visions, perhaps missed some of the pragmatic concerns of advocates. For example, the fine music groups of the Music Broadcasting Societies of Victoria (Cabena 1974, 4) and New South Wales (Jarvie 1974, 5) regarded democracy in a far simpler fashion. They argued that groups who met an identifiable community need and did not seek external funding should be offered access to the airwaves regardless. While fine music enthusiasts Brian Cabena and Trevor Jarvie had different perspectives on the public sector, Thornley (1999, 140) argues that their main motivation was access for “their beloved classical music on the airwaves. Everything else evolved from that.” Jarvie (1974, 5) is suggested as a man with a wider vision for the new sector. His paper includes “*participatory volunteerism*” as an important part of public radio and suggests more social concerns.

David Griffiths (1976, 18), a vocal sector advocate and secretary of the Alternative Radio Association (ARA), perceives public broadcasting as *a way to advance social change*. His ideas around public sector participation were motivated by a vision to see *more participatory democracy in society* as a whole. He openly criticised the Department of Media Conference on Public Broadcasting in 1974, which proclaimed the virtues of access and participation while in reality the conference was only open to invitees, thus denying access to the wider community (Griffiths 1974, 2). He was keen to reveal the unrepresentative nature of the dual sector media framework of the 1970s. The public sector offered an alternative that
would have aimed to give *community participation in planning, operating and owning radio*. It would also offer access to the airwaves to trade unions, industry groups, professional groups, specific interest or cultural minorities and those marginalised by mainstream politics (Griffiths 1975c, 19).

Griffiths (1975b) also raised concerns about funding and voluntary participation. First, he believed that half of the licence applications he analysed made unrealistically low estimates for funding. These estimates were based on a wide acceptance that the sector should receive less funding than the other two sectors, and a blithe acceptance of the use of volunteers (ibid, 32-34). He accepted the importance of volunteer involvement, while practically noting that to survive in a competitive industry would require some *professional expertise* that would require more funding. Second, he criticised the overt expectation of volunteerism. The expectation of near universal volunteering in the public radio sector discriminated against those from low socioeconomic groups who had less opportunity to volunteer. His argument was aimed at the Music Broadcasting Societies who he perceived as middle class and unconcerned about democratisation of the airwaves (ibid). This shows the diverse ideas around the new sector as well as infighting within the public radio movement.

Academic Peter Pockley is described as one of the best known advocates for the sector and was one of the earliest lobbyists (Thornley 1999, 8, 136). His ideas were submitted to the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts. His philosophy was strong on *representation of society, programming diversity, creativity, quality* and *independence from outside influences*. On the notions of access and participation he was not in favour of allowing public participation in program production, believing that quality would be best maintained by paid qualified professionals. Public access was seen in terms of community feedback on programs and programming policy (Pockley 1973, 1183). This emphasis on maintaining broadcasting quality coincided with Griffith’s position, but his exclusion of volunteers from programming is contrary to ideas from other quarters.
In summary, this section has outlined arguments around notions of access and participation. There appears agreement on the need for access; however, the nature of access is unclear. This lack of policy clarity, as will be shown, has continued until the present-day. Any theoretical framework of value for community radio must recognise and be flexible enough to accommodate this diversity of vision.

5.3.2 Independence

An early public broadcasting advocate, Professor Max Keogh, from the University of New South Wales, contributed to a Senate Committee report on the sector. An educator with a commercial radio background, his submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts in 1973 provided a detailed picture of his particular vision for public radio (Keogh 1973). His commercial background inclined him to orient listeners as consumers of content and advertising, but he also suggested that public radio should offer as much broadcasting diversity to audiences as possible (Thornley 1999, 134). He believed that all public stations should be government regulated indicating that he had little if any interest in establishing the independence of the sector (Keogh 1973, 976-979). He embraced a need for commercial advertising if the public sector was to survive (Keogh 1975, 4-5). Thornley (1999, 135) describes his approach as, “basically conservative … not trying to change individuals or society, just better fulfil the consumers existing needs for broadcasting services.” Keogh’s vision for the public sector was less about the democratisation of the airwaves and more about an opportunity to offer a wider range of programming.

In comparison, Barlow (1998, 54) suggests that the new public broadcasting sector was viewed by some advocates as radio’s “white knight”, free of commercial and government pressures, a more “wholesome” kind of radio. The sticking point, of course, was how to fund the new sector, deserving as it may be. There was a spectrum of opinion. Peter Pockley (1974, 2), in “The Concept and Character of Public Broadcasting”, saw the sector as needing to be clearly autonomous and uncontrolled by political or bureaucratic concerns. However, he also believed government funding was necessary. There are obvious contradictions here, whereby
the more “radical” advocates of the public radio movement\textsuperscript{70} were against government funding because it meant being beholden to the government (Meyer 1976, 129). Government funding would also leave public broadcasters at the mercy of any changes in government or policy (Community Radio Federation 1974, 3). Reports from the Priorities Review Staff (1974, 40) and the Working Party on Public Broadcasting (1975, 51) raised these concerns while maintaining that some government funding was required. Certain groups would need funding to establish and equip their stations (ibid, 7), thus the Priorities Review Staff believed that poorer groups should receive establishment funds and operating costs. This was part of a larger view that government should help public radio facilitate \textit{social and cultural goals for underprivileged communities} (Priorities Review Staff 1974, 34).

The concerns raised by the Community Radio Federation about the foreseeable effects on funding from government change or policy change were recognised by the Department of Media (1974, 131), in “The Public and the Media” A Discussion Paper”. The Department of Media also wanted to safeguard the new sector, suggesting a multiple income funding strategy that relied less on the government. The Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts (1975, 23) went a step further, stating that limited government funding was possible, but groups wanting to use the radio medium should simply fund themselves.

Similar to the views on access and participation, the notion of independence is viewed differently across the community and the government. Apart from the more radical elements of the public radio movement, there was general agreement on the need for some level of government funding, especially for the start of the sector. However, any reliance on government funding seemed unpopular with all parties. The source of funding would likely determine the extent of independence in the sector.

\subsection*{5.3.3 Not-for-Profit and Non-Commercial}

Although there were differences of opinion around funding sources for the long-term, some operational guidelines were necessary to ensure a \textit{non-commercial and thus independent} status

\textsuperscript{70} Radical: “favouring fundamental social, economic, or political change” (Colman 2009).
was maintained. Listener subscriptions were proposed by the Music Broadcast Societies as a primary funding method (Cabena 1975, 4), and the then industry regulator, the Australian Broadcasting Control Board (ABCB 1972, 88), maintained that this was acceptable. However, advertising became the main point of contention. The ABCB stated that ‘normal’ advertising, such as that found in the commercial sector, was unacceptable. However, they were happy to allow on-air acknowledgment of commercial organisations supporting the station (ibid). Barlow (1998, 57) suggests that this was the first time ‘sponsorship’ was described before the term came into general usage.

Other revenue generation ideas were suggested. For example, Pockley (1975, 6) proposed that funding for the new sector could be similar to the performing arts, where government grants provided one-off funding for specific projects to provide for a shortfall in sponsorship. This is not dissimilar to current arrangements. Charles Bentley (1974, 17), in “Public Radio Broadcasting in Australia”, alternatively proposed that an optional portion of the listener radio licence fee could be allocated to the sector. The Working Party on Public Broadcasting (1975, 47) offered a seven-day period each year when controls on fundraising were lifted. A public radio station could employ any method they wished during this time. This seems similar to what is now known as “Radiothons”, where community radio stations concentrate on funding-raising for a short but intense period each year, or more frequently use on-air promotion of the station to encourage listener subscription.

While originally there was little consensus on funding sources for the public radio sector, plenty of funding ideas were discussed for use in the future. Irrespective of the sources of funding, there was general agreement that public radio stations should be not-for-profit organisations. Initial recommendations from government enquires into public broadcasting all stated that some government funding was appropriate and agreed upon by most of the

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71 Charles Bentley is described as an ‘educationist’ by the New South Wales State Library who hold a collection of his papers (see http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/item/itemDetailPaged.aspx?itemID=456973).

72 Radio licence fees for listeners were introduced in 1924 to help fund national broadcasting, with the introduction of the Class ‘A’ stations (the ABC), and were collected by the post office. The scheme ran until 1974 when listener licences were dropped (Inglis 2006).
community; however, no actual financial assistance or agreed structure for the new sector was forthcoming before 1977 (Barlow 1998, 58). In a scenario where funding was becoming the central issue, any theoretical framework of value for the sector would have to consider how funding may compromise the desired community, social and democratic outcomes of the sector.

5.3.4 Diversity and Plurality

The inability of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the commercial stations to provide content for niche interests, ethnic minorities, local communities or those marginalised by the mainstream provided a major reason to establish a third sector. The lack of diversity and a sense that the current system had failed motivated the public radio movement to believe they could rebalance this deficit. The public radio movement held the progressive belief that they could create multiple new and different audiences rather than a single alternative. Community access to the airwaves would encourage a plurality of ideas to emerge. Divergence and variety were important in contrast to the sameness of the ABC or the commercial stations (Barlow 1998, 59). Unsurprisingly, various ideas gained prominence concerning the structure of this diversity and they tend to mirror what is available today. Peter Pockley (1974, 3) proposed a single channel that would offer opportunities for educational groups, music groups, community groups and drama groups. Over time, as the contributions of these particular interest groups grew they could expand to their own channel. This sounds like the generalist stations of today with their “umbrella” access. The Community Radio Federation (1974, 1) offered what is very similar to the present-day ethnic broadcasting model, where many ethnic community groups have a language-purpose access to one station. Others suggested another present-day model, where stations are operated by special interest groups, such as the senior citizen or the gay community (Hargreaves and Griffiths 1974, 4).

This aligns with the taxonomy of community radio, whereby stations are broadly designated as either generalist or geographically defined, representing many different niche communities under one station umbrella, or specialist, representing one small part of the community, such as the ethnic, gay or senior citizen communities (Van Vuuren 2003, 2). Diversity is reflected here, in terms of how public broadcasters cater to the different
communities and their unique needs. Those needs will determine station objectives and operational values. Generalist and specialist stations have different goals, and this is most apparent when considering the notion of diversity and, by default, representation. For example, the needs of a multi-ethnic station are likely to focus on access and a forum for many small niche communities. A station catering to the retired community has a much larger single audience with very different needs guided by their age. Representing the two different communities commands different notions of value. Any assessment of value may be contingent upon individual station characteristics rather than derived from a one-size-fits-all model. Any collection of evidence of value will therefore require a contingency-based approach to account for the different types of community radio station.73

5.3.5 Alternative

Barlow (1998) suggests that the new sector was to offer an alternative product, something for listeners unsatisfied with the ABC or commercial stations. Expanding on this, he draws on David Griffiths, a public radio advocate behind the Alternative Radio Federation, who states that public radio, to be alternative, should have two main characteristics. First, they must challenge what is considered “good radio”; and second, decision-making at all levels of the station should be in the hands of the community. This latter characteristic meant that community governance of a station was considered one determinant of the notion of alternative. However, what was considered ‘alternative’ programming was undefined by Griffiths (1975b, 33). What exactly was it alternative to?

Bentley (1974, 14) draws on simple definitions of ‘alternative’ to explore public radio in more detail. For Bentley, part of ‘alternative’ involved proposing that public radio fill the content gaps left by the other two sectors, while at the same time he saw a space where citizens had the opportunity for public discourse at the local level. This was buttressed by the Department of Media (1974, 129) who agreed with a local focus, and also envisaged a forum for local culture and arts.

73 See 9.6 Towards a Contingency-Based Approach to Value for Community Radio (Chapter 9).
However, the most divisive issue in the ‘alternative’ objective centred on *broadcast professionalism and the quality of programming*. This division split the public radio movement into two distinct camps. Barlow (1998) describes the two camps as follows. First, Pockley, supported by the Music Broadcasting Societies, stated that public radio should meet high standards of production and professionalism to retain a financially supportive audience and employ well qualified broadcasting talent (Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts. 1973-1975, 1187). Second, David Griffiths, supported by the Community Radio Federation, stated that professionals and their perceptions of what constituted “good radio” was the antithesis of the public radio movement. He believed that the notion of necessary professionalism would exclude the wider community from broadcasting, demean their ability to articulate in a public forum, and that professionalism mirrored the mode of operation of the existing ABC and commercial sectors (Hargreaves and Griffiths 1974, 4-6). The full realisation of the community broadcasting ideals would only be possible when this layer of professional gate-keeping was eliminated, or when the program-makers could choose whether or not to avail themselves of professional advice.

Griffiths maintained that the dependency relationship between professional broadcasters and the wider community is a self-fulfilling relationship, whereby the broadcasters vaunt their professionalism, and the community is convinced of their comparative amateurishness, incompetence and inferiority. According to Griffiths (1976, 56), the dominance of professionals in public radio required examination: “we need to define the role of the expert in broadcasting and isolate those aspects considered harmful and helpful.” The Griffiths camp wanted to encourage *wide community participation* and saw potential for *personal/community development* with the appropriate level of broadcast training (Barlow 1998, 64-65).

Both sides of this debate hoped to offer more *dynamic, alternative relationships between listeners and producers*; however, this polarisation demonstrates a divide over how ‘alternative’ was conceived. On the one side, grassroots community participation and community development are seen as enabling a more dynamic audience-producer relationship. On the other side, a professional approach that mirrors existing standards is seen as delivering a
more credible source of alternative/local content by listeners. Like other sector objectives, the notion of ‘alternative’ as a value is interpreted in various ways. However, in this instance, the interpretations are actually contradictory. One interpretation encourages the use of professionals in public radio, while the other is very cautious of this model. As with the notion of diversity, both meanings will need to be accommodated by a contingency-based approach to the collection of evidence of value with the level of professionalism as a further potential factor in a taxonomy of community radio.

This review of the sector objectives during the early years demonstrates general consensus on the importance of the sector and the main desirable characteristics of the sector, but the interpretations of value are diverse and at times contradictory. Thornley (1999, 155) suggests that “there was at least as much conflict among public broadcasters as there was between public broadcasters and the reports to the government on broadcasting policy development.” This divergence and lack of clarity contribute to an unclear understanding of how to evaluate the value of the sector. While the various stakeholders and government bodies could not agree on anything except the broadest principles, there was no way to benchmark the performance of the sector. This author proposes that this situation has been carried forward to the present-day where understandings of value are still unclear.

5.4 The Broadcasting Services Act 1992

Barlow (1998, 67-97) traces the further political machinations that moved the public sector forward when a major government review into the whole broadcasting industry was conducted, which resulted in the Broadcasting Services Act 1992. A number of key changes between 1977 and 1992 impacted the sector. In 1977, Communications Minister Tony Staley recommended that any application for a public radio licence would require a “Promise of Performance”, which would detail the potential objectives of the broadcaster. This could include descriptions about their designated community, participation, management, access, diversity and independence, which were notions of value that had been previously identified. This Promise of Performance would ensure a station’s accountability to the regulatory body of that time, the ABT (Staley
The Promise of Performance was a licence application template for all new public broadcasters to define their commitments and the value they intended to offer (ABT 1977, 103).

Thornley (1999, 197) points out that these were simply guidelines and not legislation. Subsequently, it resulted in a government policy of self-regulation for the sector rather than direct government regulation. Not only were they guidelines, their scope was broad. In practice, this meant that the ABT avoided offering tight definitions of objectives and instead considered each application on its merits. In defence of this flexibility, the ABT (1979, 7) believed it minimised the chance of developing a formulaic sector, and instead encouraged diversity and unique broadcasting.

The ABT (ibid, 16) also defined the term “sponsorship” and its limitations for public broadcasters. The guidelines insisted on no more than four sponsorship messages in one hour. Each message had to include the name, address and nature of the business, but could not refer to specific products. Sponsor messages were a way to recognise financial support for public stations without impacting on the commercial sector.

In 1985, the guidelines were developed further, specifically around the notion of access. Until then, access and its definition had been vague and stations were left to define “access” largely unguided by the government (Barlow 1998, 76). In 1985, for the first time, the government articulated what it meant. They stated that public radio was to offer broadcasting access to those with special needs, special interests and those marginalised and not covered by the other two sectors (Department of Transport and Communications 1985, 1). By default, this statement also offered one way to define ‘alternative’, as offering services not available elsewhere and to audiences not adequately served by the other sectors. Further changes to the guidelines centred on participation. Like access, previously the concept of participation had been only vaguely defined. However, the ABT now insisted on community participation if a licence application was to be considered or renewed (Ryan 1989, 51).

These were small but important changes. Barlow (1998, 96) asserts that the original characteristics of the early public radio movement are still represented strongly in the
Broadcasting Services Act 1992, confirming the values of **access, participation, independence, diversity, plurality** and **not-for-profit**. In a final confirmation of the intrinsic nature of the sector, the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* also decided that the new third tier of broadcasting should be known as “community broadcasting” (Department of Transport and Communications 1993, 210).

Alongside the development of the sector, the Public Broadcasting Association of Australia (PBAA), since its inception in 1974, had slowly become the national industry association and lobby group. It presented the interests of its membership to government and other relevant bodies (Barlow 1998, 81). In 1993, the sector changed its name to the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) and developed its own Code of Practices based on the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* (ibid, 96). The CBAA and the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA 2008b) now publish the community media guidelines. These guidelines still have the spirit of the ideas promoted by early public radio advocates.

### 5.5 The Guiding Principles of Community Radio

In Australia, the roots of present-day codes of practice for community radio are found in the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, which originates from the development of the sector during the 1970s. From this historical snapshot, emerges an overriding sense of heterogeneity around any notion of values within the community sector. The notions of **access and participation, independence, not-for-profit and non-commercial, diversity and plurality**, and **alternative** are wide umbrella terms mentioned frequently. However, there is huge variation in how they are understood and implemented. A clear reluctance to narrow the scope of these terms is also obvious historically, and is still today evidenced in current codes of practice for community radio in Australia. There are three main areas of interest: 1) Guiding Principles; 2) Key Provisions; and 3) Codes of Practice.
Community broadcasters are united by six Guiding Principles:

- Promote harmony and diversity and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally-diverse Australian community,
- Pursue the principles of democracy, access and equity, especially for people and issues not adequately represented in other media,
- Enhance the diversity of programming choices available to the public and present programs that expand the variety of viewpoints broadcast in Australia,
- Demonstrate independence in programming as well as in editorial and management decisions,
- Support and develop local arts and music, and
- Increase community involvement in broadcasting.

Community broadcasters are required to fulfil four Key Provisions:

- Provide community broadcasting services for the benefit of the community and not operate to make a profit,
- Continue to represent the community of interest that it represented when the licence was allocated or last renewed, although a licensee can apply to change that community interest at renewal,
- Encourage community access and participation in all aspects of station operations from programming to management, and
- Only broadcast sponsorship announcements, rather than advertising, which total more than five minutes in any hour of broadcasting (ACMA 2008a, 1-2).

Community broadcasters are bound by the following Codes of Practice:

- Principles of sound governance ensuring an independent body represents the community of interest,
- Principles of diversity and independence ensuring stations encourage community participation,
- General programming reflects the community of interest,
- Indigenous programming ensuring the cultures and customs of first Australians are represented, 5) Australian music ensuring 25% of music programming is Australian music,
- Sponsorship, ensuring they meet the licence provisions of the Act,
- Complaints ensuring a structured complaints provision process, and
- Codes of Practice review every three to five years ensuring contributions from community radio stakeholders (ACMA 2008a, 4-12).

These Guiding Principles, Key Provisions and Codes of Practice offer community stations very similar umbrella terms to those discussed by Barlow (1998). It also emerges that these modern Codes of Practice conform to the generic notions of value identified in this thesis,
Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. The notions of *representation, participation, alternative, alternative forms of governance, diversity, access* and *independence* are contained within these Guiding Principles and Codes of Practice. The same broad notions that have been shown to have various interpretations still guide the sector. How is the sector able to benchmark or evaluate its value where the “discourse of community broadcasting is a highly contested terrain” (Van Vuuren 2009, 175)? This thesis seeks to answer this question.

### 5.6 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has drawn on the work of David Barlow (1998), Phoebe Thornley (2001), public radio advocates and numerous government bodies to explicate the muddled development of public radio broadcasting in Australia. The early history of the “third sector” of Australian broadcasting shows that from the beginning there were an abundance of divergent ideas about sector objectives and value from both the government and public radio movement. Barlow (1998, 43) refers to the ad hoc approach from all concerned. This is not surprising given that the public radio movement itself was far from philosophically homogeneous. Combined with the seemingly receptive but disparate responses from government bodies, under governments of different parties, it easy to see why Barlow uses the word “haphazard” to describe the development of the third sector up to its inception. It would be fair to ask whether this well-meaning heterogeneity has permeated through to the present-day. Are the objectives of today’s community sector still in a state of flux, where notions of value and performance are far from being uniform and are unique to each station and its community?

Identifying value is an important part of the argument in this thesis. When assessing the contribution of the sector, it is necessary to have an effective way of evaluating value. It would be harsh to describe the current guidelines as inadequate when the actual situation is that there are a variety of types of community stations that must be accommodated within the guidelines. Concepts of value need to accommodate all permutations of community stations, in order to effectively identify, recognise, encourage, reward, refine and sell value to funders. This thesis

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74 See 2.5.2 Inclusion versus Exclusion in Community Radio (Chapter 2).
suggests that a contingent-approach to evaluation is required to accommodate the various guises of community radio (Turk 2001).

For a summary of the higher level constructs of value and the granular associated specific values identified in this Chapter, see Table 6 (The Lens of Australian Community Radio Policy: Summary of Values). Across the Chapters, while these notions are similar in scope, they have appeared sometimes conflicting, contested, nuanced or subtly different. The methodology in Chapter 7 (Research Methods: Creating a Contingency-Based Evaluation Model for Community Radio) will bring these constructs of value together in a theoretical framework for community radio, towards examining three community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia.

Table 6: The Lens of Australian Community Radio Policy: Summary of Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Construct</th>
<th>Specific Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access and Participation</td>
<td>Participation in programming</td>
<td>Community participation in producing broadcast content. Give access and representation to outside groups from society.</td>
<td>ABT 1977, 101-103; ACMA 2008a; Department of Transport and Communications 1985, 1; Pockley 1973, 1183; Priorities Review Staff 1974, 29; Ryan 1989, 51.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community development</td>
<td></td>
<td>Community radio can be “a vehicle for positive social change”, especially for underprivileged communities.</td>
<td>ACMA 2008a; Griffiths 1976, 18; Priorities Review Staff 1974, 9, 34; Thornley 1999, 131.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation of special interest and minority groups. Diverse and niche groups</td>
<td>Participation of special interest and minority groups. Diverse and niche groups</td>
<td>For example, music enthusiasts, ethnic language, Indigenous, gay, religious, trade union, educational.</td>
<td>ACMA 2008a; Cabena 1974, 4; Jarvie 1974, 5; Postal and Telecommunications Department 1976, 35; Working Party on Public Broadcasting 1975, 64.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-centered/local programming</td>
<td>Participation in management of stations</td>
<td>Community involvement of station management at the board level.</td>
<td>ABT 1977, 101-103; ACMA 2008a; Griffiths 1975b, 33; 1975c, 19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>personal empowerment or education</strong></td>
<td>brings about a sense of identity, personal satisfaction or education.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Participatory volunteerism”</strong></td>
<td>Community radio is primarily operated by volunteers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participatory democracy in society</strong></td>
<td>Community radio will promote more active participation in public sphere discourse.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional broadcast quality</strong></td>
<td>To survive in a competitive media industry, community radio would need to adopt professional media practices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Diversity**

| Diversity in type of broadcasting and programs | Diverse formats, voices and content. |
| **Content for niche interests, special needs, ethnic minorities, local communities or those marginalised by the mainstream** | Community access to the airwaves would encourage a plurality of ideas to emerge, multiple new and different audiences rather than a single alternative. |
| **An alternative to what is considered "good radio"** | An alternative to mainstream program formats and norms of broadcasting. |

**Alternative**

<p>| Decision-making at all levels of the station should be in the hands of the community | An alternative to mainstream media norms of governance. |
| <strong>Fill the content gaps left by the other two sectors</strong> | Cater to those inadequately represented by the mainstream media. |
| <strong>Focusing on primarily local issues, arts and culture</strong> | Offering a local alternative. |
| <strong>Dynamic, alternative relationships between listeners and producers</strong> | A narrowing of the traditional gap between broadcasters and listeners, where listeners can become broadcasters or contribute to broadcasting. |
| <strong>Credible source of alternative/local content</strong> | The use of a professional broadcasting approach that mirrors existing standards may encourage the perception of alternative credibility in the community. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent and Not-for-Profit</th>
<th>Not controlled by the government</th>
<th>Stations should be legally constituted as owned and controlled by the community to serve the community.</th>
<th>ABT 1977, 103; ACMA 2008a; Cabena 1974, 4; Pockley 1973, 1183; 1974, 2; Priorities Review Staff 1974, 29.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excluded from profit-making</td>
<td>Commercial sponsorship is permitted but on a not-for-profit basis.</td>
<td>ACMA 2008a; Cabena 1974, 4; Priorities Review Staff 1974, 29.</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 6: The Lens of Financial Challenges Facing
Australian Community Radio

6.1 Introduction

The largest pressure faced by community radio stations is financial, particularly how to ensure an adequate operating income in an increasingly competitive mediascape. A method to demonstrate the value of the sector more widely, and particularly for individual stations, can only aid the sector. In a previous examination of the inception of the sector, this thesis emphasised that funding was the ever-present ‘elephant in the room’. While governments espoused the benefits of community radio to society and discussed provision of seed funding, sustainable economic viability was and continues to be the responsibility of each station. Unclear understandings of the value of the sector certainly impact upon funding; however, as discussed in this Chapter, funding also has a bearing on the notions of value.

Like its global counterparts, Australian community radio faces its own financial challenges and dilemmas. Van Vuuren (2006c, 40) argues that the extent of the contribution of community media to media democracy in Australia depends largely on how the sector manages commercial pressures. There is a need to ensure more financial stability to allow stations to focus on their primary community-orientated and participatory goals.

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC 2007, 51) argues that if financial contributors are available, whether public or private, the sponsors will want to know they are receiving value for any investment they make in the sector. This emphasis on ‘value for money’ is a good reason to evaluate and demonstrate the efficacy and effectiveness of Australian community radio stations. The value of Australian community radio, like the citizens media (Rodriguez 2001, 163), centres on what are sometimes quite subtle objectives. These can be difficult to evaluate. For example, according to the Australian Communications and Media

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75 See Chapter 5: The Lens of Australian Community Radio Policy.
Authority (ACMA 2008a, 1), the first guiding principle of community broadcasting states: “We will work to promote harmony and diversity and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally-diverse Australian community.” What type of evaluative benchmark can easily distinguish whether harmony and diversity in the community, for example, has been promoted or not? The case studies in this thesis seek to uncover answers to these kinds of questions. However, this Chapter explores the financial challenges facing the sector and supports the argument that there is a need to better demonstrate the value of Australian community radio to support sector funding.

The supporters of community radio see it as a vital part of the fabric of Australian media, and argue that it should receive regular funding for the social and cultural contributions of value it makes to society. However, the detractors suggest that the sector is receiving special privileges over commercial broadcasters who pay substantial sums for their frequency allocation and licences. From this standpoint it would be easy to question why the community sector should exist at all. Snape and Simson (2000, 275) reflect this view:

The major cost to the general community of community broadcasting is the opportunity cost of the spectrum they use. Community broadcasters receive ‘free’ access to scarce radio frequency spectrum and thus exclude other potential broadcasters.

Community radio does indeed receive free access to frequencies from the government. Nevertheless, this comes at an operational cost in terms of the service it is mandated to provide (Forde, Meadows and Foxwell 2002a, 98). The Broadcasting Services Act 1992 lists the rules of operation for community broadcasters (ACMA 2008a; Forde, Meadows and Foxwell 2002a, 10), and balances those special privileges with strict protocols for the sector. Part of the sector’s brief is to represent local geographic communities or communities of interest not adequately represented by mainstream media. Unlike commercial media, their mandate is democratic representation and access to the airwaves rather than revenue generation.

The Broadcasting Services Act 1992 requires that the “licensee must continue to represent the community interested it represented when licensed; and [there is] the expectation that community stations will encourage their communities to participate in station operations,
and in the selection and provision of programs” (Thompson 1999, 23). Community stations tend to cater to niche audiences, namely the marginalised or under-represented minority groups (ACMA 2008a, 1; Phillips and Lindgren 2006, 6). For many, this is the whole point of community radio: a local motivation driven by a larger desire to see a democratisation of the media (Barlow 1988; Barlow 2002; Forde, Foxwell and Meadows 2009, 15; Griffiths 1975a; Hochheimer 1993; Price-Davies and Tacchi 2001, 16). The Australian community radio sector emphasised representation and participation from the start (Barlow 2002, 142-143; Department of Media 1974, 63). As will be discussed further, these democratic values of representation and participation of the wider community in the production of radio are often at odds with the financial realities of keeping a station afloat. Community radio is required to operate on a not-for-profit basis and this fundamental requirement affects the whole operation of a station.

According to the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF 2010), the sector in Australia is largely self-funded, and subsequently “can be described as economically impoverished” (Price-Davies and Tacchi 2001, 16). For the day-to-day operations, most community stations operate on a shoe-string budget (McCarthy 2008). As noted by Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2002a, 96), “Concerns about under-funding and under-resourcing are generally acknowledged and frequently bemoaned throughout the sector.” Forde, Meadows and Foxwell cite the CBF funding, showing an increase in the number of stations from 56 in 1985, to 251 in 2003, and a decrease in the amount of core funding available per station from $22,280

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76 See Chapter 2: The Lens of the Public Sphere.

77 The Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF, 2012b) affirms the principles of access, diversity, independence, innovation and localism, and the commitment to social justice that underpin the community broadcasting sector’s philosophy and operation. The CBF is supported by the Australian Government through the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy (DBCDE) with additional Indigenous community broadcasting funding through the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (CBF 2012c). There are currently 25 grant categories, which include funds for the promotion of Australian music, funds to assist stations with digital or satellite technology transmission purchases, funds to develop websites, emergency grants to restore transmission in exceptional circumstances, ethic program grants, station technology grants, Indigenous grants, radio print-handicapped support grants and training grants (CBF 2012a). Each grant category has specific guidelines and associated funding amounts available (see www.cbf.com.au).
in 1985, to $14,300 in 2003. More stations and less funding only increases competition for the limited grant money that is available (ibid, 96-97).

A recent report by Community Broadcasting Online (CBOonline, 2012), in *Survey of the Community Sector: Community Broadcasting Station Census*, shows some startling financial data about the sector. Sponsorship is the largest source of income for the sector accounting for 39 percent of revenue. In the 2009/2010 period, sponsorship dropped by $2.5 million compared to the 2007/2008 period. Fortunately some of this was offset by a slight rise of 7,854 (16%) donors to station subscriptions, but it still represents a substantial drop in sector income. Of more concern were the income figures for regional and rural stations. Regional stations lost $1.6 million (13%) in income and rural stations lost $1.5 million (13%) in income. The report suggests that remote and rural stations are suffering more than others. As commented by CBOOnline (ibid, 3), both went into the following year with “less technology and online presence with which to engage communities and gather financial support than some of their metropolitan counterparts.” This report stated that the first priority for stations was achieving financial stability to stay in operation. This required developing sponsorship income to provide for improved spending on infrastructure. These priorities were top-ranked challenges for metropolitan, suburban, regional and rural stations.

The Federal Government funds less than ten percent of the income of Australia’s community radio sector. As a result, Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2002a, 98-99) describe the “creep of commercialism” within the sector, where income is increasingly generated by fundraising and sponsorship. Selling sponsorship can require a more commercial approach to programming, where sponsors want to know that their announcements are accompanied by slicker, more demographically targeted programs. This creates a dilemma for the sector where the ideals of community participation may be sacrificed. Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (ibid) cite a Victorian station who suggested that one solution to this dilemma was to organise the

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78 These figures have not been adjusted to reflect inflation. The Reserve Bank of Australia inflation calculator, “calculates the change in cost of purchasing a representative ‘basket of goods and services’ over a period of time.” From 1985 to 2003, the total change in cost is 101.3%. This means that the 2003 figures are worth substantially less (see [http://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/annualDecimal.html](http://www.rba.gov.au/calculator/annualDecimal.html)).
station schedule in two distinct programming blocks. The daytime programming had a more professional or commercial approach, while the evening programming was handed to the volunteers. This ensured the financial well-being of the station, while retaining some community access/participation. These are the kinds of compromises that community stations are finding necessary to stay viable. They also impact on the notion of value for a station, and impact negatively on community participation and community representation.

6.2 Sponsorship

Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2002a, 101) suggest that more than half of the station managers spend a considerable portion of their time arranging sponsorship sales or fundraising. Also for the majority of paid staff, their work is in administration and sales rather than production or programming. This demonstrates the importance placed on fundraising rather than content delivery or community engagement.

For station finances, there is a five minute per hour limit on the amount of time a community station can allocate to sponsorship (ACMA 2008a, 13). This restricts the possible income stream from this source. Selling sponsorship in itself brings its own challenges for a community radio station, including taking staff away from valuable broadcasting and participation activities.

Community radio stations cannot always accept any type of sponsorship. By their nature, they are often licensed to represent niche communities of interest and this has its consequences. Gordon (2009, 74) describes Live FM, a Christian station in Queensland, who felt it was unethical to take sponsorship that supported alcohol or gambling. The station wanted to promote family values and accepting such sponsorship was perceived as inappropriate. Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2002a) identify the reasons that community radio stations to “refuse sponsorship”. Of those surveyed who refused, 57 percent of stations disagreed with the content.

79 Community radio is not allowed under the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 to air advertising but can air sponsorship. The distinction between the two is defined by the ACMA (2008a, 13) guidelines: “The key feature of a sponsorship announcement is its acknowledgment of the financial or in kind support given by a sponsor to a community broadcasting licensee or a program.”
of the announcement, 19 percent disagreed with the organisation seeking sponsorship, and the rest were mostly audience related issues (ibid, 101). Their study also revealed that 90 percent of stations had sponsorship guidelines to handle these issues (ibid, 101). Of interest, the stations studied by Gordon (2009) showed a correlation between clear station objectives and successful funding. Those stations that had clearly identified funding sources and an awareness of why those sources were appropriate seemed to be more successful in obtaining funds. Gordon (ibid, 74) suggests that this probably stems from identifying sponsors who would recognise extra value by associating themselves with the ideals of the station.

Some stations may find it hard to attract sponsorship in a manner commensurate with the regulations. Van Vuuren (2006c) examined a sample of Australian stations that had been investigated by the Australian Broadcasting Authority between 1995 and 2005 due to complaints, mostly about their commercial sponsorship practices. Since the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (BSA), the sector has been obliged to self-regulate against its own Codes of Practice (ACMA 2008a). Similar to Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2002a, 98), Van Vuuren (2006c, 27) suggests that while the BSA has relaxed the rules on sponsorship, which has helped stations raise funds, there has been a shift by some stations to adopt more commercial business and programming formats. According to Van Vuuren, many in the sector would like to see the five minutes an hour time limit on sponsorship increased. This desire to see an increase in sponsorship announcements is a particular response to the reduction in government funding, suggesting that it would also allow stations to develop more professional programming and offer local businesses a cheaper alternative to commercial radio advertising.

Where community radio is leaning towards a more commercial approach, this has the potential to arouse concern from the commercial sector and any governmental regulatory body (ibid, 30). Van Vuuren argues that it is not only the time limit that is an issue, but also the lack of clarity around the definition of sponsorship content.

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80 See 6.1 Introduction (Chapter 6).
There are three main components to the sponsorship guidelines. First, the five minute per hour restriction on sponsorship, which is relatively easy to regulate (ACMA 2008b, 15). Second, the on-air “tagging” of announcements, which is also relatively easy to regulate and demonstrates clear financial support from the sponsor, for example, “XYZ Pty Ltd, sponsor of 1FM” (ACMA 2008b, 14). Third, there must be clear differentiation between community information and community promotion (sponsorship or free advertising). In relation to this third component, Van Vuuren (2006c) maintains that there is overlap between community information and community promotion, especially when interviewing local businessmen, local performers and artists. The ACMA (2008b, 3) deals with complaints in this category on a case-by-case basis and considers what “an ordinary, reasonable listener would have understood the broadcast to have conveyed.” Presenters must walk the line between the two types of information and ensure that the talent is aware of the distinction. The ACMA (ibid, 9) notes that discussion with subject matter experts can be problematic, giving the example of a do-it-yourself (DIY) expert on a home improvements program, who must ensure that their comments are restricted to technical information and do not promote goods or services in the process.

For music stations that promote local music this can also become difficult. Sponsorship guidelines allow presenters and artists to mention their artistic or cultural works, including gigs, venues and websites. However, the language, context, flavour and repetition of announcements will determine whether it constitutes promotional advertising. For example, a band’s new album can be mentioned, as well as the recording process and the tour to promote the album. However, any mention of where the album can be purchased and the purchase price is likely to be considered advertising (ACMA 2008b, 12). Where it becomes somewhat murky for music shows is around gig and venue promotion. On-air gig guides that offer a range of venues and bands, without promotion of any particular venue or band, are presumed to be community

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81 An ordinary, reasonable listener: “A person of fair average intelligence, who is neither perverse, nor morbid or suspicious of mind, nor avid for scandal. An ordinary, reasonable listener does not live in an ivory tower, but can and does read between the lines of that person’s general knowledge and experience of worldly affairs” (Amalgamated Television Services Pty Limited v Marsden (1998) 43 NSWLR 158: 164-167).

82 In this scenario, ‘talent’ refers to a studio guest or interviewee.
information. However, the promotion of a particular venue will most likely be considered advertising (ibid). When performers are being interviewed they will most likely promote their upcoming events. As Van Vuuren (2006c, 32) states, this is a “run-of-the-mill conclusion” to most artist interviews. Van Vuuren cites an example from 2003, at Radio Logan in south-east Queensland, where a presenter repeatedly mentioned the artists’ gigs during their conclusion to an interview. There were five mentions in total and this was considered advertising by the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) because “the character of the broadcast had changed from being a general promotion of culture to a broadcast of a commercial nature” (ibid).

In comparison to Radio Logan, Van Vuuren (ibid, 33) cites another example, at 2000FM in Sydney, which suggests that the definitions of community information and community promotion are not clearly articulated by the sponsorship guidelines. 2000FM in Sydney allegedly broadcast community promotion of a play and musical where tickets were featured as prizes in an on-air competition. The play was produced by a not-for-profit organisation of retired and elderly participants. The venue had been donated by a local school. There was no payment to the radio station for the broadcast information. The play was mentioned eight times and the musical two times on-air, yet the ABA did not consider this a breach of the guidelines.

Van Vuuren is concerned by the disparity in the rulings on these two cases. She asks whether the rulings here were determined by the beneficiaries of the funds from the events. The musicians are a professional act and are paid as individuals making a living, but not-for-profit organisations are equally allowed to pay individuals in their organisation. If this is the determining factor in these rulings, it becomes a matter of interpretation, lending credence to a lack of definition here (ibid). Although there has been a recognisable shift towards commercialism within the sector, in order to stay viable, it may also be that these less than clear sponsorship guidelines have encouraged the shift.

This shift towards commercialism is not only demonstrated by an increasing emphasis on sponsorship, but also by the decision of some community stations to rebroadcast material.
from commercial stations. This was also a subject of investigation by the ABA. The issue was highlighted by a group of stations in New South Wales who decided to rebroadcast the John Laws Show on the grounds that it was in response to overwhelming demand, as 15 commercial stations had stopped broadcasting the show. There is no regulation on rebroadcasting commercial radio programs, yet it is assumed that community stations will fill the advertising slots with their own sponsorship. The problem arises because advertising is part of the live John Laws Show, and is not easily segmented from the talkback material. As such, community stations will potentially be in breach of the BSA. In these cases, the ABA reprimanded the stations. However, the stations continued to broadcast the John Laws Show and three more community stations followed their example. Van Vuuren (2006c, 35-37) suggests that the argument for broadcasting commercial content centres on demand, as well as the broadcasting role of community stations, which are obliged to offer wide ranging programming options. It is this group of broadcasters that see community radio as a cost-effective entrance to the commercial sector and this raises concerns about the efficacy of current legislation. The dividing line between community radio and commercial radio is blurred by such practices.

The trend towards increasing sponsorship income in the sector comes with another cost. Maximising audience share to satisfy sponsors may push community stations into producing more commercial style program formats. The guiding principles of Australian community radio include promoting diversity, access and equity for those not adequately represented in other media, independence in programming and increased community participation in broadcasting (ACMA 2008a, 1). The creep of commercialism would seem to undermine these objectives. As Meadows and others (2005, 174-176) note:

[This] is against the very principles of community radio … A recurring theme across the sector is the pressure to remain ‘community-orientated in an increasing commercial environment … where the desire to be primarily ‘community’ is met with the everyday realities of ‘paying the rent’.

83 As stated by Barnard (2000, 51): “The classic critical argument against the commercialization of mass communications media is that pursuit of advertising revenues encourages programming assumed to appeal to the greatest number [maximizing audience share], thereby marginalizing less popular tastes and interests.”
6.3 Grants

At present, the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF 2011) is the “independent non-profit funding agency that solicits and distributes funds for the maintenance and development of community broadcasting in Australia.” Stations can apply for grants under many categories, but mostly do so for specific purposes, such as broadcasting equipment or community development projects, and they are generally one-off payments. Each grant is for a separate reason and applications are considered separately on their merit.

From the station perspective, this funding can seem a little ad hoc and there has been some criticism of the CBF. Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2002a, 106) refer to the findings from a focus group who described the application process as too lengthy and suggested the time would be better spent selling sponsorship. There is also further paperwork for the stations in the form of grant reporting and accounting requirements, which include a grant outcomes report, grant financial report, certification statement and an auditor’s financial certificate. Adequate and timely reporting is mandatory to receive further grants.84

Others suggest that ethnic programs are funded not necessarily based on their popularity within the community but on other issues. For example, to ensure ethnic stations receive their funding, they are obliged to broadcast at least 50 percent of foreign language content, which reduces the music content.85 These kinds of compromises, which impact on programming independence, may push stations to rely more on sponsorship and other income streams than the CBF (Forde, Meadows and Foxwell 2002a, 106). This may push stations towards more commercial formats, which may mean sacrificing some of their community access and participation goals.

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85 To receive the CBF Ethnic Program Grant, a program must contain at least 50% spoken content and it must contain 50% in a language other than English (see [http://www.cbf.com.au/grants/grant-finder/grant-categories/ethnic-grants/ethnic-program-grants/](http://www.cbf.com.au/grants/grant-finder/grant-categories/ethnic-grants/ethnic-program-grants/)).
In addition, the CBF is criticised by some stations for the restrictions they place on funding if the stations become successful at raising funds elsewhere. If a station raises a substantial amount of **funding through subscription** or sponsorship, then they are informally excluded from the CBF funding (Forde, Meadows and Foxwell 2002a, 106-107). Funding is generally for stations struggling to generate income in other ways. For some, this funding philosophy is ill conceived. However, the research by Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (ibid) also revealed that some of the more financially stable stations were happy to support poorer stations, especially if they were struggling due to their location in more remote areas.

Janey Gordon (2009), in “Community Radio: Funding and Ethics”, explores the theme of grants. She discusses funding dilemmas in the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia (Gordon 2009). Similar to Australian radio stations, community stations in the UK are required by their licence requirements to demonstrate some social gain through their operation. This has seen many stations seek funding from social or government bodies that specify social gain outcomes in their investment. However, such funders also normally impose strict conditions, which may well affect the program material that is delivered (Gordon 2009, 66). In contrast, the guidelines set by AMARC (2010), in *The Community Radio Charter for Europe*, state:

>[Community radio stations] are editorially independent of government, commercial and religious institutions and political parties in determining their program policy.

According to Gordon (2009, 67), this presents stations with a continuing dilemma:

>It can be seen that community radio broadcasters and listeners have set high ethical principles by which to function. Their quandary being that someone still has to pay the bills.

In the research by Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2002a), one participant raised the issue of the placement of government sponsorship across different Australian media sectors. These are a form of indirect grants. The supposition is that the government allocates a lot of money to the ABC and the commercial media to broadcast government advertising. The *International Year of the Volunteer* was provided as an ironic example. The placement of government advertising could be perceived as indirect support for those companies involved.
However, the government could show this indirect support to the community sector if some of those advertising contracts were placed with the sector (ibid, 97).

6.4 Sale of Air Time

The sale of air time under the banner of community representation is another way community broadcasters can legitimately raise funds. The Broadcasting Services Act 1992 does not legislate specifically for the sale of air-time. However, as long as the other licensing conditions are met, namely community participation and community representation, this practice is considered acceptable and even encouraged if it means the station can provide services to people from a particular niche, ethnic or cultural background (ACMA 2010, 23). In the case of ethnic community radio stations, the sale of air-time can provide sometimes as much as 75-95 percent of their income (Ethnic Broadcasting Association of Queensland 2002, 97). It equates to the ethnic community paying for their program. Local community associations will sometimes donate funds or provide volunteers to represent their community.

It could be argued that if programming becomes restricted to those who can afford to pay for it, this goes against the grain of widening community participation, especially as there is no limit to the amount of air time that can be sold under the ACMA guidelines. However, Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2002a, 103) point to the Sydney focus group in their study who indicated that this method of income generation was a primary source of financial stability for stations in their locale. Fees ranged from $5 to $90 for one hour of programming, and they believed that this activity was a way of ensuring that, “programs they were presenting were coming directly from their community of interest – groups paying for air time had to show that they had reasonable community support” (ibid). The ACMA (2010, 23) guidelines offer a similar sentiment suggesting that it should, “encourage community participation by giving individuals or groups an opportunity to contribute to the program schedule.” Viewed in this light the sale of airtime can be a positive thing. Those who belong to a community organisation that can afford to purchase airtime are able to bring their own contributions to the airwaves adding to the value of community radio. Concern arises, however, if stations under financial
pressure were to adopt a practice of excluding community members who cannot afford to pay for airtime.

6.5 Subscription

Another effective way of raising funds is through **listener subscription**. If a station has a good listener base, it can tap into that resource by asking listeners for a small annual financial subscription or a tax-deductible pledge to help keep the station afloat. Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2002a, 103) point to a number of stations from 2000-2001 whose income rose from $42,000 to a substantial $300,000 from subscription campaigns. These campaigns are commonly termed Radiothon because they are marathon-like fundraising events (continue for a long period of time). Through a subscription, the listener pays a fee to be a member of the station and often then receive benefits, such as discounts at bookshops, music/film retailers and movie theatres. For example, community radio station Triple RRR, in Melbourne, “is regarded as being amongst the most successful financially … 55 percent [of their AU$1.2 million turnover in 2005] came from its listeners in subscriptions” (Gordon 2009, 72). As Triple RRR (2010) explains:

> You will be filled with the warm fuzzy sense of satisfaction that you are part of the **RRR family** and helping us stay on-air, there are subscriber events like BBQs, live broadcasts in our performance space, and movie screenings.

The station uses subscriptions to cultivate the sense of belonging to a station family, and there is no doubt that this is attractive for some listeners. The development of this kind of relationship between station and listener impacts positively on democratic station governance. Some stations tether a listener survey to their Radiothons. At the time of subscription, members are asked to complete a survey about what they think of the station, enhancing that feeling of family and inclusivity (Edge FM 2011). Other stations have used the success of previous Radiothons and

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86 Community radio organisations are normally listed as deductible gift recipients (DGR) under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*. This means that donations to a community radio station can be declared as tax deductions (see [http://www.ato.gov.au/nonprofit/content.aspx?doc=/content/62774.htm](http://www.ato.gov.au/nonprofit/content.aspx?doc=/content/62774.htm)).

87 -athon: “added to the end of words referring to an activity or event, especially one that has been organized to raise money for charity, to show that it continues for a long time” (Cambridge Dictionaries Online 2013). In the case of Radiothon, the ‘a’ has been dropped presumably for ease of pronunciation and marketability.
have included listener surveys to engender the sense that the station is always open to feedback not just during Radiothon. Listener surveys are available at other times during the year as well (RTRFM 2011). The Radiothon is just one way of accessing and encouraging more feedback from the listeners.

6.6 Community Radio and Professionalism

Thus far the discussion has focused on the direct financial challenges that face community radio stations, but community radio also operates in the competitive media marketplace. Stations are competing with both commercial and public service radio for listeners. The principles of community representation and participation may be fundamental, but the station also needs listeners and those listeners need to be entertained, informed or educated. If the sector is struggling to stay afloat, can it provide the sort of competitive and professional service that will attract listeners?

Community radio is often portrayed as demonstrating *amateur media production values* (compared to commercial and public service broadcasters). The absence of slick, dynamic professional production values “is perceived as a negative attribute of the sector and its presenters” (Meadows et al. 2007a, 33); however, there are two sides to this coin. The same audience study by Meadows and others (2007a) also suggests that existing community radio listeners prefer the relaxed style of community broadcasting. They feel it is more accessible and they can associate better with the presenters: “it’s like talking to a good mate or something like that. There’s no barrier” (focus group member, cited in ibid, 33). These viewpoints are understandable if you are an existing listener, but this is unlikely to attract new listeners from mainstream media to community radio. The view from listeners who prefer the professionalism of mainstream media may be slightly different: “A bunch of amateurs playing at radio … it all sounded messy and … not a very good listen” (Doyle 2010). The lofty ideals of representation and community participation become less important if there are no listeners or very small audience groups.
Van Vuuren (2006a) also addresses this idea, focusing on the public sphere and community radio.\textsuperscript{88} She discusses an earlier incarnation of 4ZZZ in Brisbane from 1976, whose full-time staff dispensed with volunteer programs altogether because they felt they were “often badly produced, boring and disrupted the program flow” (ibid, 380). The station at the time wanted to be a coherent and legitimate voice in the wider mediascape. Their goal was to provide what they considered to be a \textit{reputable voice} in contrast to the State Government. Van Vuuren (ibid) points to a paradox within community media:

[to be accepted as a legitimate alternative voice in a wider mainstream public sphere, a process of exclusion ensures that access to broadcasting is limited to those individuals and groups whose points of view best represent a station’s purpose and thus preserve its value and purpose.

If the community radio sector wants to be a \textit{legitimate voice} or satisfy a larger demographic, while still contributing to the democratisation of the media, then production values should be strong and the message of the station clear.

One of the earliest community radio activists in Australia, David Griffiths (1975a), supports this view. Observing the sector in 1975, he believed that its potential would only be fully realised when it operated at a professional level. He looked at programming, staffing, organisational issues and “the complexities and dimensions of radio [from a professional producer’s viewpoint]” (ibid, 7), and believed that until these elements were performed at a high professional standard:

[they are preventing an effective challenge to the hegemony of commercial and ABC radio networks and creating an inferior, ghetto-type second-class form of radio (ibid).]

In his view, without a degree of professionalism there would be little motivation for society at large to engage with the community sector. Community radio can give voice to the voiceless, but the sector needs to make sure there are people listening to that voice. For that to happen, professional training is necessary. Training to a professional standard is costly, and presents yet another financial challenge for the sector.

\textsuperscript{88} See 2.5.2 Inclusion versus Exclusion in Community Radio (Chapter 2).
6.7 Chapter Summary

The relationship between funding and the value of community radio is by no means simple. Funding and the value of community radio are arguably interdependent. As AMARC (2007, 51) contends, there is a need to demonstrate ‘value for money’, or the efficacy and effectiveness of the sector in meeting their community goals. This argument suggests that funding should follow if there is a clearer model of value and stations can demonstrate that value. However, as Griffiths (1975a) suggests, it might be that funding is required to bring the station to a professional standard or perceived level of value. Referring to 4ZZZ in Brisbane, Van Vuuren (2006a) supports this and suggests that professionalism was essential for the station to meet their goal of offering a viable political media alternative. In this case, it could be argued that funding would have helped to train existing volunteers. As discussed previously, notions of value are not clearly understood, which makes any funding model based on value difficult to construct. This kind of ‘chicken and egg’ dilemma is difficult to resolve. It adds weight to the argument that a clearer model of value is long overdue.

This Chapter has charted the common financial challenges that face community radio stations in Australia, and has shown how the relative poverty of the sector requires a kind of financial pragmatism that is often at odds with the core community broadcasting values of community representation and community participation. Given that these benchmarks of representation and participation can vary in quite subtle ways, it can be problematic to evaluate the sector and show the value of community to potential funding bodies. It is important to demonstrate this value.

As in previous Chapters, the higher level constructs of value are present and similar; however, the specific values in this Chapter are more concerned with how funding affects the operation of any given station. These specific values will contribute to the theoretical framework for community radio in this thesis, and will add important pragmatic and financial considerations to the mix. Table 7 (The Lens of Financial Challenges Facing Australian Community Radio: Summary of Values) captures the pertinent issues discussed in this Chapter, in terms of value.
In Chapter 2 through to Chapter 6, this thesis has looked at value in the community radio sector through a variety of lenses. Following, this thesis will illustrate how these values can be consolidated in a draft theoretical framework of value for community radio. Adopting a contingency-based approach, the framework will then be tested in three community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia.

### Table 7: The Lens of Financial Challenges Facing Australian Community Radio: Summary of Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Construct</th>
<th>Specific Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access and Participation</td>
<td>Represent local geographic communities.</td>
<td>Cater to the broadcasting needs of states, cities and suburbs rather than national wide.</td>
<td>ACMA 2008a; Forde, Meadows and Foxwell 2002a, 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Represent communities of interest not adequately represented by mainstream media.</td>
<td>Rather than the revenue generation model of commercial media, community media strive for more democratic representation of society.</td>
<td>ACMA 2008a, 1; Forde, Meadows and Foxwell 2002a, 10; Phillips and Lindgren 2006, 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in station operations, and in the selection and provision of programs.</td>
<td>Through participation in programming, representation of the community may follow.</td>
<td>Thompson 1999, 23.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community information and community promotion.</td>
<td>Community radio is an ideal site for broadcasting information at the local level and also for promotion of community events. However, there can be an overlap between community information/promotion and sponsorship.</td>
<td>ACMA 2008b, 3, 9, 12; Van Vuuren 2006c, 27-32.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide services to people from a particular niche, ethnic or cultural background.</td>
<td>Community radio is one site able to cater to niche audiences.</td>
<td>ACMA 2010, 23.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sale of airtime.</td>
<td>A divisive issue with no current regulation. Community stations can sell airtime to community groups wishing to broadcast. It has the positive potential to encourage community participation but concern arises, if stations under financial pressure were to adopt a practice of excluding community members who cannot afford to pay for airtime.</td>
<td>ACMA 2010, 23.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Promote harmony and diversity and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally-diverse Australian community.</td>
<td>Promotion of a positive view of cultural difference in Australia.</td>
<td>ACMA 2008a, 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign language content.</td>
<td>The inclusion of foreign language programs in the sub-sector of Ethnic Community Broadcasting is one way to access additional government funding via the CBF.</td>
<td>Forde, Meadows and Foxwell 2002a, 106.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>A legitimate or credible voice.</td>
<td>One interpretation of the notion of alternative is as a viable broadcast option to the mainstream. This may entail adopting the professional media production practices of the mainstream.</td>
<td>Doyle 2010; Griffiths 1975a, 7; Van Vuuren 2006a, 380.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent and</td>
<td>A more commercial</td>
<td>Sponsors want to know their</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not-for-profit</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>approach to programming.</strong></td>
<td>announcements are accompanied by slicker, more demographically targeted programs. This may contribute to financial independence.</td>
<td>Forde, Meadows and Foxwell 2002a, 101.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sponsorship guidelines.</strong></td>
<td>Community radio may differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate sponsor ship clients or content depending on station. policy and objectives.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional programming.</strong></td>
<td>Professional programming may contribute to financial independence through increased listenership and thus sponsorship.</td>
<td>Van Vuuren 2006c, 27.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amateur media production values.</strong></td>
<td>The absence of slick, dynamic professional production values can be perceived as a negative attribute to the sector but also a positive for listeners preferring a ‘relaxed’ style of community broadcasting.</td>
<td>Meadows et al. 2007a, 33.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rebroadcasting of material from commercial stations.</strong></td>
<td>A controversial issue, not currently regulated. The debate centres on demand for popular formats, difficulty in editing out commercial advertising in talkback formats and those that might see community radio as an entry point into the commercial sector.</td>
<td>Van Vuuren 2006c, 35-37.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independence in programming.</strong></td>
<td>Community is obliged to provide programming free from commercial or government influence. This is editorial independence.</td>
<td>ACMA 2008a, 1; AMARC 2010.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding through listener subscription.</strong></td>
<td>For some subscription can be seen as positive community development but it can also exclude stations from CBF funding.</td>
<td>Edge FM 2012; Forde, Meadows and Foxwell 2002a, 103; 106-107; Gordon 2009, 72; RTRFM 2011; Triple RRR 2010.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 7: Research Methods: Creating a Contingency-Based Evaluation Model for Community Radio

7.1 Overview of Methodology

This Chapter describes the methodology for compiling a theoretical framework of value for community radio and for testing it in the field. In Chapter 2 through to Chapter 6, an extensive literature review identified the six key areas of higher level theory relevant to the values of community radio. This meta-analysis yielded a draft set of specific values for each of the areas of theory. In this Chapter, these draft sets of values are combined to form an integrated set, following the removal of inconsistencies and duplications. This list of values, grouped into categories based on the areas of theory, comprises the draft theoretical framework of value for community radio.

In order to test the validity, completeness and utility of the draft theoretical framework of value, three case studies were conducted with different types of community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia. If the draft theoretical framework had been used to explicitly determine the questions to be asked of participants in the case studies this may have biased the results in favour of the listed values. Hence, a general list of more open questions was developed to interrogate key issues from the literature review, concerning the way the radio stations operated, their effectiveness with respect to their objectives and potential areas for improvement. This also allowed for new values to emerge.

Interviews were conducted with 35 participants involved in running the community radio stations, and one focus group meeting was conducted with listeners. The records of the interviews were analysed to identify the key themes that participants raised in response to the set of open-ended questions. A total of 500 utterances were identified and classified in terms of the values from the draft theoretical framework.

89 See 7.5.4 Audience Focus Groups (Chapter 7).
Using data from the interviews and focus groups two analyses were undertaken. First, a qualitative analysis of the interviews was undertaken, and then three descriptive narrative case study summaries were prepared, describing the views of the participants regarding the key issues at the stations and participant recommendations for future station operations. The key issues raised in the focus group meetings held with listeners were also used to inform the case study summaries. These narrative case studies comprise potentially valuable evidence that may inform station policy-making.

Second, the set of 500 utterances was then analysed, in terms of the set of specific values in the draft theoretical framework, and summaries were prepared listing the number of utterances that significantly mentioned each of the values. This allowed a comparison of the frequency of occurrence for each of the values.

These lists were reviewed, in terms of the total numbers for all participants across the three stations and then for each station individually, permitting an appraisal of the validity, completeness and utility of the draft theoretical framework. This demonstrated what values were most important for participants, and what values were of moderate or low importance for participants in these case studies. Three values were identified that could be eliminated from the theoretical framework on the basis of this analysis. Six new emergent values were also identified from the case study utterances and two of these were revealed as possible additions to the draft framework. Based on this detailed review of the case study utterances a revised framework of value was produced.

It was also possible to evaluate the potential for a contingency-based approach to use the framework of value. For example, an approach where radio station types could be identified on two axes (dimensions), such as specialism and generalism, so that an appropriate set of values of a significantly reduced number can be selected for use in evaluation of any specific radio station, based on its classification in terms of the contingency axes. This analysis revealed that the number of case studies was inadequate to clearly confirm the utility of a contingency-based approach; however, it indicated that this approach is worth pursuing in future research.
7.2 A Theoretical Framework for Community Radio: A Meta-Analysis

7.2.1 Overview of Framework Development

Before conducting the fieldwork, a theoretical framework of value for community radio needed to be developed. This would inform the evidence collection, including what questions to ask and what themes to explore in order to answer the research questions. The framework was developed from the literature review and analysis in Chapter 2 through to Chapter 6. These Chapters examined the notion of value for community radio through five theoretical lenses, which produced a wide range of potential ‘values’. A new draft theoretical framework of value for community radio was derived from a qualitative meta-analysis, aggregating existing studies, extracting the pertinent elements and distilling the results into a new theory or conceptualisation (Paterson et al. 2009, 23; Schreiber, Crooks and Stern 1997, 314; Walsh and Downe 2005, 204).

7.2.2 Terminology

There is some unresolved discussion in the literature about whether qualitative meta-synthesis or qualitative meta-analysis best describes this type of methodology (Sandelowski 2004, 893). Some authors propose that aggregative studies are qualitative meta-analysis and interpretive studies are qualitative meta-synthesis (Timulak 2009, 592; Walsh and Downe 2005, 204). However, the terms are often used interchangeably, especially where studies are a combination of approaches (Timulak 2009, 592). This study primarily aggregates the notions of value for community radio and for this reason uses the term qualitative meta-analysis. However, in the discussion in this thesis the term qualitative meta-synthesis may be used by other authors.

7.2.3 Framing the Meta-Analysis

According to Ladislav Timulak (2009, 594), those in the field of meta-analysis have no rigid protocols for deciding what studies should be included in a meta-analysis. The scope of the methodology, for example, how many studies and what kind of methodological approaches should be included, remains a topic for further discussion (Sandelowski 2004, 893; Walsh and Downe 2005, 206). However, it is suggested that in qualitative research, “which sees truth as multiple and knowledge as constructed, it is legitimate to include a variety of approaches”
(Walsh and Downe 2005, 207). In the tradition of qualitative methodologies some researchers have used theoretical sampling and saturation as a strategy for study selection. In this practice, the researcher selects studies that might inform theory development and stops the study search when new studies do not appear to add any new insights. Other authors have opted to review all the relevant studies in a field, adopting a more inclusive approach (Timulak 2009, 594).

This thesis adopted a combination of both of these approaches for the following reasons. The notion of value for community radio is not always referred to in terms of value by other studies in the field. Other terms are more prevalent, including objectives, guiding principles, codes of practice, benefits, motivations and effectiveness. The notion of value for community radio was also a contested terrain with no accepted universal terminology (Order 2011). For that reason, this thesis adopts an inclusive approach, reviewing as many studies as possible about community radio and also community media, given the study time frame. However, a point of saturation was reached and it became obvious that reviewing more studies would replicate already reviewed work. The development of the theory would not benefit from the further inclusion of studies.

7.3 Framework Consolidation

7.3.1 A Generic Descriptive Interpretative Approach

The literature on qualitative meta-analysis offered no universal guidelines for analysing the studies under scrutiny. However, as a general guiding principle, whatever process of analysis was conducted, the researchers agreed that the preservation of meaning from the source studies was essential, as far as possible (Sandelowski 2004, 893; Timulak 2009, 595; Walsh and Downe 2005, 208). This study chose to follow Timulak (2009, 595) who offers a more prescriptive process, at least in its description. The generic descriptive interpretative approach uses a four-phase system. This system is outlined below with a description of how each phase was implemented in this study.
In the first phase, the collected data are assigned into domains (the domains represent a conceptual framework that the researcher brings to or observes in the data) (Timulak 2009, 595). In this study, Chapter 2 through to Chapter 6 conducted a review of existing community radio/media theory and reports from previous studies relevant to the notion of value. At the end of each Chapter, the information pertaining to value was summarised in a table, with ‘higher level constructs’ as umbrella domains representing the salient ideas from the analysis. The constructs or themes identified across the five Chapters were: Representation, Participation, Alternative Voices, Alternative Governance, Independence, Diversity, Access and Participation, Alternative, Independent and Not-for-profit. There is some overlap and duplication here that will be discussed further in a later phase.

In the second phase, meaning units are delineated (the meaning units are the smallest units of the data that can stand on their own while conveying a clear meaning) (Timulak 2009, 595). In this study, sitting underneath the umbrella domains, were the more granular ‘specific values’. These were more detailed descriptors of value at the operational level of community radio and are the “meaning units” (Timulak 2009, 595). Each value was also given a short text descriptor to add a little more detail and help the specific value retain its original meaning, which is an important aspect of meta-analysis (Sandelowski 2004, 893; Timulak 2009, 595; Walsh and Downe 2005, 208). There were initially 82 specific values generated from the five Chapters.90 There was substantial overlap and duplication of meaning in the initial list, which was rectified in a later phase.

In the third phase, categories are generated through the comparison of meaning units among themselves and through the distilling of the essence of similar meaning units (the categories are abstracted and meaning units are clustered on the basis of inherent similarities), they are defined by the meaning units they contain and can be further categorised (Timulak 2009, 595). In this study, among both the higher level constructs and the specific notions of value there existed duplication of values, similar values and often unclear nuances in the

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90 See Appendix 2: Summary of Values from the Theoretical Lenses of Analysis, for a complete list (Appendices).
terminology. The framework consolidation process aimed to remove any duplication or overlap of meaning and improve the descriptive quality of the expression of values within the final framework. The consolidation process was an iterative process to ensure nothing was ‘lost’. Where specific values were similar in meaning but with slightly different nuances, these specific values were combined into single values, and any possible loss of detail was incorporated into the descriptions of the remaining specific values.

7.3.2 Consolidation Process

7.3.2.1 Consolidation of Higher Level Constructs of Value

The first phase involved consolidating the higher level constructs. Figure 1 (Combination and Renaming of Higher Level Constructs) illustrates the consolidation.

**Figure 1: Combination and Renaming of Higher Level Constructs**

Representation occurred in three of the Chapters. This was seen as a constant that required inclusion in the amalgamated version. The meaning was clear. It was always seen as meaning “representation of the community” and required no further consolidation.
Participation occurred in all five Chapters, but was often linked with the notion of Access to Australian community radio. The difference between Participation and Access was not defined. This framework makes a clear distinction between these two constructs. Access is confined to an outside-in direction (access from the community into the station, in terms of content). It also refers to Access by the community to media services that meet their needs. Both of these result in social outcomes. Participation relates to involvement of the community in the station as participants. This results in individual (and some group) outcomes.

Alternative occurred in all five Chapters. With this construct came a number of different nuances of meaning. Broadcast media content as an Alternative to the mainstream was a dominant theme, and Alternative voices was another, which included the broadcasting of minority or marginalised voices by the mainstream. Alternative governance related to prefigurative politics, internal organisational transparency and collective governance within community radio stations. These different themes were included in the single amalgamated higher level construct of Alternative and their different nuances of meaning emerged in the more granular specific values in the second phase of the framework amalgamation.

Diversity occurred in three of the Chapters. This had a clear meaning, accommodating diversity of media content and ideological diversity. The amalgamation in this process simply reduced the duplication. The different nuances of meaning emerged in the specific values.

Independence and Not-for-profit tend to be concerned with the financial and process aspects of community radio. Not-for-profit is more a legal requirement than a value, which requires little interpretation. Independence and Not-for-profit were amalgamated to form the higher level construct of Independence. The different nuances of meaning of Independence and Not-for-profit would emerge in the more granular specific values in the second phase of the framework amalgamation.

7.3.2.2 Consolidation of Specific Values

With the higher level constructs amalgamated into six broad themes, the specific values that emerged within these were reviewed. First, the amalgamation of the higher level constructs
meant that some specific values were moved under more appropriate ‘parent’, higher level construct umbrellas. Second, there was a fair amount of duplication and overlap among the specific values that had to be addressed. Third, there was a simplification and improvement of the quality of some of the descriptions that give more specificity to the specific values. Fourth, some of the descriptions were expanded to include the sense of any eliminated specific values. Six iterations of these processes were used to ensure that they occurred incrementally with the highest level of validity.\(^9^1\) This resulted in a refined set of 27 values grouped under six higher level constructs. With the consolidation of the higher level constructs and the specific values, the final phase of the generic descriptive interpretative approach to meta-analysis could be conducted.

In the fourth phase, the main findings are abstracted (often in the form of figures or narratives). The analysis also uses several safeguards (credibility checks) that ensure its validity (Timulak 2009, 595).\(^9^2\) In this study, the final draft theoretical framework of specific values is shown in Table 8 (A Draft Theoretical Framework of Value for Community Radio). This is the draft theoretical framework of value for community radio that was used in the field to investigate the three community radio station in Perth, Western Australia. The higher level constructs of *Access, Diversity, Alternative, Independence, Representation* and *Participation* determined the broad areas of investigation for the case studies. These were themes that enabled questions about station operations, their effectiveness with respect to their objectives, and potential areas for improvement.

**Table 8: A Draft Theoretical Framework of Value for Community Radio**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Construct</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Specific Value Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Connection between the media and local communities</td>
<td>Offering community-centred/local programming. Content is drawn from and aimed at the community. Cater to the broadcasting needs of states, cities and/or suburbs, rather than nation-wide content. Thus, local issues, arts and culture are emphasised.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^9^1\) See 7.3.3 Credibility Checks (Chapter 7).
\(^9^2\) See 7.3.3 Credibility Checks (Chapter 7).
<p>| 1b | Represent communities of interest not adequately represented by mainstream media | Providing services to people from a particular niche, ethnic or cultural background. For example, music enthusiasts, ethnic language, Indigenous, gay, religious, trade union, and educational groups. |
| 1c | Community information and community promotion | Broadcasting information especially relevant at the local level, and promotion of community events. |
| 1d | Community development and social outcomes | Facilitating the promotion of positive social change through social inclusion, cultural diversity and civic participation. Creating social capital by building connections among individuals to produce social networks based on the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. |
| 1e | Participatory democracy in society | Promoting more active participation in public sphere discourse beyond the range and reach of increasingly concentrated mainstream media. |
| 1f | A resource for community cultural production | Offering a forum for cultural identity formation through diverse modes of cultural production. |
| Diversity | 2a | Promote harmony and diversity, and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally-diverse Australian community | Promoting a positive view of cultural difference in Australia through community radio presenting diverse perspectives. |
| | 2b | Content diversity | Presenting diversity in programme formats, voices and content. |
| | 2c | Diversity of viewpoints – ideological diversity | Presenting a plurality of ideas, rather than a narrow mainstream perspective to serve the needs of diverse audiences. |
| | 2d | Foreign language content | Including foreign language programs to appeal directly to ethnic sectors of the audience. |
| Alternative | 3a | Alternative dialogues, voices and content | Featuring alternative voices and content to mainstream media, especially relevant to those groups and issues inadequately represented by the mainstream media. This involves both the selection of stories and the treatment of stories, as well as alternatives to mainstream programme formats and norms of broadcasting. |
| | 3b | Credible source of alternative/local content | Aspiring to professional broadcasting standards to enhance appeal and credibility of the service as an authoritative alternative to mainstream media. |
| | 3c | Political media alternative | Presenting political views alternative to the mainstream. |
| | 3d | Internal democratisation pre-figurative politics, transparent governance | Running stations with internal governance structures, in line with community radio principles of democratisation, pre-figurative politics and transparent participative governance and decision-making. |
| | 3e | Alternative media literacy | The shared and interactive nature of community media production leads to enhanced media literacy within listeners. |
| | 3f | Oppositional power | Contributing to a counter-public sphere that can potentially undermine the dominant representations of society presented by |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independence</th>
<th>4a</th>
<th>Independence in programming</th>
<th>Providing programming free from commercial or government influence. Stations should be legally constituted as owned and controlled by the community to ensure that they are accountable to and serve the community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Not-for-profit status</td>
<td>Depending on a not-for-profit revenue generation model through commercial sponsorship, listener subscription, and/or sale of airtime with clear guidelines to ensure equity of access and independence from commercial interests.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c</td>
<td>Professional/amateur media production values, programming and broadcast quality</td>
<td>Professional programming and broadcast quality may contribute to financial independence through increased listenership and thus sponsorship. The absence of slick, dynamic professional production values can be perceived as a negative attribute in the sector, but also a positive for listeners preferring a ‘relaxed’ style of community broadcasting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4d</td>
<td>Audience participation</td>
<td>Proactively fostering audience participation and avenues of listener feedback.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td>5a</td>
<td>Representation of the community</td>
<td>Facilitating access to the airwaves to all segments of society to ensure that a wide range of views are represented. This includes representation of otherwise marginalised groups (for example, based on ethnicity, gender and class) to provide a democratic balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>Specialist representation</td>
<td>Relating to stations devoted specifically to the representation of a niche or specialist community group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c</td>
<td>Generalist representation</td>
<td>Relating to stations devoted to the representation of a wide range of community groups under one station umbrella.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5d</td>
<td>Audience reach</td>
<td>Reaching a high percentage of the intended station audience, as high as is practical.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>6a</td>
<td>Citizen’s participation</td>
<td>Involving community members as contributors in the selection, production and delivery of broadcast content, usually as volunteers, rather than paid employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b</td>
<td>Communications managed by the community</td>
<td>Fostering community participation in station management at all levels.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6c</td>
<td>Personal development and possible political empowerment at a personal/group level</td>
<td>Enhancing participants’ sense of identity, personal satisfaction and education through involvement in broadcasting. May also be manifested as an increased sense of political empowerment or emancipation. This may also include the development of broadcast skills through training.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3.3 Credibility Checks

The quality of meta-analysis, like any research, can benefit from some form of credibility audit. Timulak (2009, 597-598) suggests that validation by primary researchers is an effective strategy. The primary researchers supervising this thesis reviewed the process and the results of the meta-analysis conducted by this author, and made suggestions towards validation. The transparency of the meta-analysis process is also documented in two additional ways.

Paterson and others (2009, 27), in “Conducting Qualitative Metasynthesis Research: Insights from a Metasynthesis Project”, refer to the regular use of schematics to document the unfolding of their meta-synthesis project, which provides an audit trail of their decisions. For similar reasons, in this study, the initial evolution of the meta-analysis of the theoretical framework was represented in a schematic table at the end of each Chapter addressing a lens of analysis. This provides a clear summary of the values discussed in each Chapter, plus a more detailed description about each specific value and a reference identifying the source.

The next phase involved the consolidation of the Chapter summaries, first, dealing with the higher level constructs of value, and second, with the specific values. The process has been described and rationalised in verbal form. In addition, the process was retained in an iterated schematic form, as a second credibility check of the consolidation process. Appendix 3 (Theoretical Framework Consolidation Sequence) contains a series of six iterative documents tracking the removal of inconsistencies and duplications, and the expression refinement.

7.4 Research Strategy: The Case Studies

7.4.1 Case Study Approach

The five major research strategies available to the social science researcher are experiments, surveys, archival analysis, histories and case studies. According to Yin (2009, 8), deciding which strategy to use is determined by three conditions. First, the type of research question posed. Second, the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events. Third,

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93 See 7.3.2.1 Consolidation of Higher Level Constructs of Value, and 7.3.2.2 Consolidation of Specific Values (Chapter 7).
the degree of focus on contemporary events as opposed to historical events. The decision-making process is summarised in Table 9 (Social Science Research Strategies).

**Table 9: Social Science Research Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Form of research question</th>
<th>Requires control over behavioural events?</th>
<th>Focuses on contemporary events?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>How, why</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Analysis</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>How, why</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>How, why</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Yin 2009, 8)

The research question is the source of any enquiry and the first condition. The research question in this thesis fits under the “how” category: how do community radio stations practically assess their activities against a clear set of standards? Yin (2009) suggests that “how” and “why” questions are best suited to case studies, experiments and histories. However, there are situations where the different strategies overlap. To clarify this decision, the column *Requires control over behavioural events?* shows that there is absolutely no control over the behavioural events in and around a community radio station, which excludes experiment as a strategy. Histories and case studies can overlap. Yin (2009, 9) states that histories can be undertaken in relation to contemporary events, yet historians tend to avoid systematic interviewing and observation/participation. The advantages of the case study in exploring the world under investigation is that it includes a wider range of evidence, including interviews, observations, documents and participation. The research questions in this thesis examine community radio stations in the present moment, as alive and breathing social worlds of the now. There is a definite *focus on contemporary events*.

In summary, the case study has distinct advantages as a research strategy in a world where the investigator has no control over events, and where a “how” or “why” research question is posed about contemporary matters. Case studies are a suitable approach for the
world of the community radio station. The next decision was which community radio stations would make suitable case studies.

7.4.2 Selection of Case(s)

Which community radio stations in Western Australia would be the best choice for case studies? Since the amount of time and access available for fieldwork is always limited, the first criterion in the process of selecting suitable case studies, “should be to maximize what we can learn” (Stake 1995, 4), or similarly “case(s) that will most likely illuminate your research questions” (Yin 2009, 26). The challenge was to implement these directives facing the practical considerations.

Stake’s (1995, 4) practical advice is to select cases that are easily accessible, receptive to the research and with which the researcher has prior links. Yin’s (2009, 26) practical advice is to choose cases that give “sufficient access to potential data … to interview people … review records or make observations in the field.”

Since Western Australia is geographically large and the author lives in Perth, the capital city of the state, it was financially and time expedient to choose Perth metropolitan stations as they would be within easy reach. This narrowed the choice to 15 community radio stations. Given the three-year time span for the field research, the author decided to focus on three in-depth case studies to make the data collection and analysis manageable within the timeframe. When there is more than one case study, Stake (1995, 5) suggests, “A collective case study may be designed with more concern for representation … balance and variety are important; opportunity to learn is of primary importance.” To achieve these outcomes, the different types of community radio stations were considered.

First, community radio stations can be described as *generalist* and/or locally geographically defined, representing many different local niche communities under one station umbrella. Notably, Perth is often popularly described as one of the most isolated cities in the
world, and in this sense everything is locally defined. However, even within the environs of Perth, there is some demarcation between different localities (for example, the coast and the hills, north and south of the Swan River, and inner city and suburban), and this reflected within the community radio ranks. Second, other stations can be described as specialist, representing one small part of the community, such as the ethnic, gay or senior citizen communities (Van Vuuren 2003, 2). This research aimed to examine one station from the specialist category, one station from the generalist category, and one hybrid station (both specialist and generalist). The author also wanted to ensure the stations were keen to be involved in the research and would appreciate the benefits of participation (Stake 1995, 4).

6RPH is a community station operating specifically for the print-handicapped community, a very narrow community of interest. It caters to a community not served specifically by any other radio media and is also part of a nationwide network, which is an additional unique feature. As a station that caters to the print-handicapped community across Western Australia it broadcasts on an AM (amplitude modulation) frequency to increase the availability of its service to as much of the state as possible. It also operates a channel on the Aura satellite system to further increase its geographical reach. The print-handicapped audience mission is very tightly focused and the station rigidly adheres to this. A prime example of its content is the reading of daily newspapers. 6RPH fits the specialist category, catering to a very narrow community of interest. The researcher also had a cordial pre-existing relationship with the station having worked there for six months as a volunteer, the station board was receptive to the work, and geographically the station was conveniently located close to the researcher’s place of work. All of these factors pointed to an ideal case study. Chronologically, this was the first case study to be undertaken.

For further information, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perth%2C_Western_Australia.

Print-handicapped people are usually considered to be those with significant visual impairment. However, broader definitions of print-handicapped include anyone who has difficulty reading a newspaper or book, which could include people with low literacy skills, or even mothers of young children who do not have the time to sit and read, but can listen to the radio or audio books. See Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio (Appendices).

See RPH Australia: The Radio Reading Network (http://www.rph.org.au/).

However, anecdotal evidence from station workers suggests that the majority of the audience is located within metropolitan Perth.
Radio Fremantle caters geographically to the port City of Fremantle, located 20 kilometres south of the City of Perth at the mouth of the Swan River. Although technically classified as a ‘city’, in reality, it is a suburb of Perth. Radio Fremantle represents the vibrant diversity of the Fremantle community, including many ethnic and language groups. Murdoch University students also broadcast on the station, providing an existing link to the researcher. Unlike many stations, Radio Fremantle has one daily program staple, the breakfast show. After breakfast, every show is different with a different daily presenter on the weekly schedule. Each weekly show could be thought of as a community of interest in itself, and the physical station operates more as a community resource to allow representation for as much of the wider community as possible. Radio Fremantle perfectly fits the generalist category, catering to a locally defined community with a variety of niche programs. This diversity also suggested that the station could provide an opportunity to learn from the many and varied contributors. Chronologically, this was the third and last case study to be undertaken.

In addition to specialist stations, serving a particular community of interest and generalist and/or locally geographically defined stations, there are hybrid stations that demonstrate degrees of each category. RTRFM is an abbreviation of the term “Arty Radio”, which forms part of the station’s call sign: “RTRFM – The Sound Alternative.” The main focus of the station is alternative music, comprising a wide range of genres. The current affairs programs also tend to represent ‘alternative’ view points. During weekday daytimes, the station caters to an 18-40 plus age group, concentrating on alternative/local music, local alternative arts and some current affairs. There is a clearly formatted, professional daily schedule of staple programming more akin to their commercial radio counterparts. During weekday evenings and on weekends, the station diverges from its primary age demographic and the age/content broadens. The specialist programming of primetime weekdays changes to a more generalist approach. The more commercial style of broadcasting demonstrated during the weekdays also changes to more relaxed, less formatted offering.

98 However, with the exception of the breakfast show, presenters change on a daily basis. RTRFM operates a ‘program collective’ model with each regular program normally having a roster of different presenters to enhance community participation (RTRFM 2012).
RTRFM is also locally defined. It is Perth-orientated and dedicated to promoting local events, local music, arts and issues. Therefore, RTRFM blends the local geographical with the niche community of interest of an alternative media outlet. From this unique standpoint, the station holds considerable cultural importance for its Perth audience, with alternative content at the foreground. RTRFM fits the hybrid (both specialist and generalist) category. In addition, the researcher was able to take advantage of a variety of connections with RTRFM. The station manager was a previous Murdoch University radio student, the researcher had been an occasional voice talent for station sponsorship announcements, and RTRFM’s breakfast presenter was a part-time tutor at Murdoch University. Compared to the other case studies, the researcher had fewer personal direct links with RTRFM; however, the station board reacted positively to being included in the research. Chronologically, this was the second case study to be undertaken.

With the selection of these three community radio stations as case studies, the researcher hoped to uncover as much as possible about how they operated and how they perceived notions of value for community radio. By ensuring this balanced variety of working examples, the study would evaluate the wider generic qualities of community radio and the uniqueness of individual stations, where the detail would emphasise the “how” and “why” of their operation.

Thus far, in defining this methodology, the themes for investigation have been developed, the overall research strategy for the case studies specified and the selection of case study community radio stations rationalised. The next phrase was defining what specific field research methods might be appropriate.

7.5 Field Research Methods

7.5.1 Overview of Methods

Case study research strategy tends to include a wide range of evidence, such as interviews, observations, documents and participation (Yin 2009, 9). Field methods such as these would
provide the data required for the two intended analyses towards answering the research questions. First, a qualitative analysis of the interviews would produce the descriptive narrative case study summaries. Second, a numeric analysis of the utterances would align them with the draft framework of value for community radio. Three field methods were selected with these tasks in mind, namely, observation/participation by the researcher, open-ended interviews and audience focus groups.

7.5.2 Observing and Participating

7.5.2.1 The Ethnographic Approach

This study seeks to understand the values and systems within community radio stations to answer the research questions. Each radio station can be seen as a living and ever-evolving social entity. Staff and programs come and go, ideas are generated, agendas addressed, plans made, and interpersonal relationships are formed and broken. This is a taste of the complex internal social world of a radio station. The researcher must enter this world immersing themselves in the day-to-day challenges, issues and activities that characterise a radio station. This is essentially an ethnographic approach. Machin (2002, 1) suggests that ethnography can be seen as “hanging out”. Machin (ibid, 13) uses the following image to describe the process of ethnographic research:

Interlocutors in a social parlour to evoke an image of society being like a conversation. Participants arrived in the parlour, listened in order to get the gist; put in their oar’s worth and then left. This conversation was about what life and the world is all about. It was about how we can be human beings.

This analogy portrays the participant observer as someone who spends time in the “parlour” completely immersed in the setting. The researcher gets to know the people as they come and go, learns about their lives and then uses the social knowledge gained to improve understanding. This analogy also acknowledges the transience of social knowledge and the ever-changing nature of the conversation.

In this study, “hanging out” takes the form of working at a radio station and being an integral part of the broadcasting production process. After all, only watching radio happen at a
station is a very dull way to collect data. Working with the actual people, producing, broadcasting, and experiencing the highs and lows of the broadcasting environment yields a depth of data not available to the mere observer. The researcher is observing an ever-changing social world while contributing to it, immersed in the process itself. This is ethnographic participant observation at its most exciting, yielding rich and contextualised data. However, the research does need to take steps to ensure that his or her active participation in the organisation does not bias the data collected or the analysis process.

At 6RPH, the researcher volunteered part-time for a period of two years. During the first year he produced and broadcast three shows per week at the station, and in the second year this was reduced to one show every fortnight. Similarly, at Radio Fremantle, the researcher produced and broadcast a weekly show for seven months. In these case studies, the researcher was fortunate enough to be given production and broadcasting responsibilities, allowing an in-depth view of the station and a personal understanding of what it was like to be a volunteer. At RTRFM the process to become a broadcaster was more rigorous. The demand for broadcasting slots was high and usually a period of non-broadcasting duties would be undertaken before a slot became available. RTRFM caters to a younger audience and the kudos to be gained amongst that demographic means there is a queue of eager presenters. Due to this station protocol, it was not practical to participate as a regular broadcaster. However, the researcher had been volunteering as a voice talent on station sponsorship announcements for some months prior to the official case study period. This continued during the case study period and beyond.

In contrast to the other stations, RTRFM adopted a slightly different approach to the duration of the study, preferring that the researcher do the bulk of the work in a short time period. The interviews and main observation at 6RPH and Radio Fremantle occurred over a period of six months, while at RTRFM they occurred in only two months. Whilst methods varied slightly following negotiations with each station, a similar amount and type of data was collected successfully, thanks to the generous contributions from everybody involved.
As suggested previously, observation and participation are perfect methods to gain the socio-cultural background against which to view the interview and focus group data. Other advantages to the ethnographic approach also became apparent during the study. These advantages were informed by Michael Patton (1990), in *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*.

First, through observation, it became obvious very early on that although the benchmark for the investigation was a comprehensive draft framework of value for community radio, not all the themes would apply to every station. The initial station study experiences of the researcher meant that an “open, discovery oriented and inductive approach” was adopted very quickly (ibid, 203-205). This was important since it meant that the testing of the draft framework of value, while integral to the study, should also allow emerging themes to be considered.

Second, observational inquiry provided the researcher with an overview of the given world, which led to noticing things that either staff were not aware of or that they had grown used to. Patton (ibid, 204) suggests that social routines can become so taken for granted that their subtleties can only be apparent to a slightly less immersed observer.

Third, observation taught the researcher about things that the study participants were not willing to discuss in an interview. Sensitive topics existed at all three stations and observation helped to add data to the study that might have been overlooked in the interview process. It was also the case that researcher familiarity with a sensitive topic encouraged interview participants to be more open. This occurred on several occasions with particular reference to station governance or so called ‘difficult’ members of staff.

Fourth, observation allowed the researcher to see the knowledge and opinions of the people interviewed in a broader context. The interviewees reported their understandings from a very personal viewpoint. For example, at RTRFM the out of office hours presenters (evenings and weekends), often had little contact with the station management or administration. Their personal experience of the station was limited to the broadcast studio when they did their show.
Therefore, their perspective of the station was very different from the weekday daytime staff. This is what Patton (ibid, 204) refers to as “selective perceptions”. Of course the researcher’s observational perceptions are also selective; however, adding these to the respondent’s perceptions created a multi-dimensional understanding of the world examined. Becker and Greer (1970, 32) explain the phenomenon as follows:

Because he (the researcher) sees and hears the people he studies in many situations of the kind that normally occur for them, rather than just in an isolated and formal interview, he builds an ever growing fund of impressions, many of them at the subliminal level, which give him an extensive base for the interpretation and analytic use of any particular datum. This wealth of information and impression sensitizes him to subtleties which might go unnoticed in an interview and forces him to raise continually new and different questions, which he brings to and tries to answer in succeeding observations.

7.5.2.2 Human Ethics Approval and Field Work

The subject of researcher observation/participation also raises questions about the scope of human ethics during the field work. Murdoch University, where this work was based, operates strict protocols for human research ethics. The approval of a human research ethics application by the University Human Research Ethics Committee was required before field work could commence. This research included observation/participation on behalf of the researcher, and interviews and focus groups with research participants. For this research, the primary factor to be considered was consent. After a presentation about the research to the station boards by the researcher, and further internal station consultation, the boards of the respective stations consented to the overall study at their station, allowing the researcher physical access. The individual participants signed informed consent documents, on the understanding that their opinions may be recorded as audio, could possibly be published in a written form, but their identity would not be revealed. The existing cordial relationships between the researcher and the case study stations made establishing consent a relatively easy process. Trust had already been established.

A potential risks and benefits appraisal was also made for participants and the wider community. No risks were anticipated but the benefit to the participants was a possible enhanced awareness about their involvement in their community radio station and the operations
of the station. The wider station community could also benefit from an enhanced awareness of their operational practices, encouraging discussion about good practice. Any development of the station from this enhanced awareness may benefit the audience community in terms of better programming or better representation of the community. The benefits to all were considered generally positive but difficult to measure. An ethics approval application covering all aspects of the research was submitted and approved.

7.5.3 Field Interviews

7.5.3.1 Sampling

The two main community radio stakeholder groups participating in the interviews were the people who work or volunteer at the radio station, and the members of the radio station audience. The members of the radio station audience were consulted in later focus groups, while staff and volunteers who expressed an interest participated in open-ended interviews. There were two challenges. First, the researcher needed to access the station staff and volunteers to interview them, and second, the selection of potential interviewees needed to satisfy various requirements.99

At each station, the researcher developed a number of relationships with people in the field who functioned as liaison points between himself and other staff/volunteers who were not directly known to the researcher. Although not titled as such, in all cases, these staff members could be described as volunteer managers or station administrators/managers, or as “informants” or “gatekeepers” (Neuman 1997, 350, 374). Informants are the people who are totally familiar with the culture under investigation and can spend more time with the researcher. Gatekeepers are the people within the culture who negotiate the researcher’s entry into the field. These were essential relationships to develop. It was impossible for the researcher to know everything about all the people at each station on arrival and to determine who could be considered as potential interviewees. It was through consultation with these important informants that interviewees

99 The general interview sampling strategy is described in this section. See Appendix 1a: Radio Station Study Participant Sampling (Appendices), for a detailed breakdown and summaries of interviews undertaken at each station.
were selected, contact details were collected and a physical place to conduct the interviews was arranged.

These informants were crucial intermediaries in the fieldwork process. Although the research had been approved by the station management, there was still a need to build the trust of the wider station community, especially to gain approval and consent to an interview. The participation of these helpful figures meant the field researcher could navigate the internal landscape of the station with some confidence, and led to more participation from staff willing to be interviewed.

In some cases, the stations had over 100 volunteers, so the method for choosing interviewees was especially important considering the study needed to balance researcher time and resources, station time and resources, and getting the best selection of people to best answer the research questions. These participants also needed to be as representative as possible of the wider community.

Full-time or part-time paid station staff were considered essential interview candidates in all case studies because of their pivotal roles. However, each station had a slightly different staffing structure so each case study needed a different method of selecting volunteer interviewees. There were specific selection guidelines common to all the case studies in line with the research objectives. Neuman (1997, 206) labels this type of interview selection as “purposive” or “judgemental” sampling. It is normally undertaken by an expert (the case study “gatekeeper” or, in this case, the researcher) who selects interviewees with a specific purpose in mind directly related to the research objectives. The expert aims to select participants who will maximise the quality of the data collected, and ensures the inclusion of particular types of participants who will assist in providing a deeper and representative understanding of the type of person involved in the radio station.

In this study, the purposive goal at each radio station was to obtain a representative volunteer sample that covered the different station roles, the period of volunteering, type of
radio show, station board membership, gender and age group. In line with these goals, it was estimated that approximately ten volunteers would be needed, in addition to the full-time or part-time paid station staff interviews at each station.

For example, at 6RPH there were four categories of station volunteer roles, including readers (77%), announcers (10%), technicians (4%) and researchers (9%). Using these percentages as starting points, the researcher and the volunteer manager at 6RPH constructed a ten volunteer sample frame that represented these role percentages. Although the overall sampling method here is described as purposive, the particular starting point is reminiscent of “stratified sampling”, where the larger population is sub-divided using meta data (Neuman 1997, 212). According to Neuman (ibid), this tends to produce samples that are “more representative of the population than simple random sampling.” Once the approximate numbers in each role subdivision were calculated, each role subdivision sought to give equal representation to age, period of volunteering, station board membership, gender and type of show. As a third and more subjective criterion, the study also sought people who were known to be articulate, especially on the subject of community radio. With such a relatively small sample frame, the study sought to maximise the data potential of every interview.

There was also an element of what Neuman (ibid, 207) refers to as “snowball” sampling. During an interview, respondents would often suggest other volunteers who would be knowledgeable on certain research areas that arose during the interview. Where possible, these suggested interviewees were included, or when other potential interview candidates declined to participate or were not available, these “snowball” interviewee suggestions were slotted in. This occurred at all three stations. Interestingly, it was much more prevalent at stations with a strong sense of community within the station itself.

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100 Participant demographic information that was formally collected included name, station role, age and gender. This information was stored in the database alongside participant utterances. See Appendix 4: The Database (Appendices). The participant period of volunteering, the type of radio show and board membership was used informally in discussion with station administrators to obtain a representative sample of participants at each station.
At RTRFM, there were over 100 volunteers on the books and there were 12 paid staff. The types of roles delineated at 6RPH were not evident among the RTRFM volunteers. Almost all volunteers were presenters with the exception of several office staff. A slightly different sampling approach was required here. The maximum number of interviews considered reasonable at any one station was 14. At RTRFM, included among the paid staff were the station manager, production managers, an office manager, sponsorship managers, music director/local music producer, breakfast presenter/script writer, talk’s producer/webmaster, and technical staff. There was quite a wide range of expertise and experience here that needed representation before considering the volunteers. The researcher conducted seven interviews with paid staff, to gain a representative sample of all the major job roles, and seven interviews with volunteers giving equal representation to age, period of volunteering, station board membership and gender. There was also an important division at RTRFM between music and talk shows. Since around 75 percent of the shows were music-based, the volunteer sample frame was constructed to approximately represent the same proportion. To complicate the sampling frame, almost all the paid staff were also volunteer presenters. RTRFM was definitely the largest and most challenging case study in terms of constructing the sample frame.

In contrast, at Radio Fremantle the task of constructing a sample frame was much easier. There was one technical station manager, an office administrator, and a part-time production manager. Outside of these paid staff, there were around 80 unpaid volunteer presenters and an ethnic program coordinator. Almost all shows were considered music-based with a smattering of talk. The station manager and production manager agreed to be interviewed, representing the paid staff, and the ethnic program coordinator was interviewed, as a special case considered vital to the study. In consultation with the station manager, ten volunteers were selected that gave equal representation to age, period of volunteering, station board membership, gender and type of show.

Something that became apparent very quickly at Radio Fremantle, in sharp contrast to 6RPH and RTRFM, was the type of community that existed within the station. Radio Fremantle prides itself on representing a diversity of communities of interest. Each show is almost a
separate community in itself, and while this is wonderful for community representation, the station community itself is less socially active. There was far less “snowball sampling”, and volunteers seemed more distant in their relationship with the station and with their fellow volunteers. The researcher certainly felt potential interviewees were harder to source because their only contact with the station was their weekly show.

7.5.3.2 The Theoretical Framework of Value and Question Development

The higher level constructs for community radio emerged through the literature analysis in Chapter 2 through to Chapter 6. They are the umbrella concepts that practitioners and theorists have described as values for the sector. One of the objectives of this thesis was to reveal how, if at all, these value constructs and their finer granularity specific values, manifested themselves at three community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia.

While the purpose of the data collection was to see how values were operationalised, the use of the specific value terminology in framing the questions for participants raised three issues. First, this would assume that community radio participants understood the nature of their participation and the nature of community radio in these theoretical terms. Second, mention of the framework of specific values within a question might, using legal parlance, “lead the witness”. For example, in the context of validating the draft framework, it would lead participants to use that same terminology. Third, the specific values have been shown to be often overlapping and difficult to define. Their meaning in the context of community media, as discussed in Chapter 4 The Lens of Contested Value, is often conflicted and contested (Order 2011). Allowing the respondents to use their own terminology would permit the greatest flexibility in later assigning their responses to specific values in the draft framework. In addition, this approach would enable new values and themes to emerge.

These three issues were addressed in the following ways. First, the questions were formulated to address operational issues rather than theoretical issues, and specific value terminology was avoided where possible. There are occasional questions where the specific values do arise and this is because it is difficult to ask the question another way. Second, the
questions were deliberately open in nature. They were devised to encourage the participants to express their undirected thoughts and opinions. In this way, the perceptions of participants are approached as valuable and meaningful within themselves, rather than purely in terms of how they might relate to pre-existing theoretical constructs. Third, in the analysis phase it provided flexibility to associate interview responses with more than one specific value when multiple references were embedded within them.

The questions were also developed with specific subsets of staff in mind. While there were questions that applied to all stakeholders, other questions would yield more information from staff within a focused area. There were question sets for volunteers, production staff, sponsorship staff and station managers. For example, the station manager might know more about the history of the station and also the hows and whys of station governance at the board level. Production staff would likely know more about station technology and production values. Sponsorship staff would know more about funding strategies. This interview question strategy enabled the researcher to ask general questions while probing deeper into role-specific areas. The interview and focus group questions were developed from the literature review and with the daily operations of a community radio station in mind. The same question sets were adapted for use in the focus group.  

7.5.3.3 Open-Ended Interviews

The open-ended responses permit one to understand the world as seen by the respondents. The purpose of gathering responses to open-ended questions is to enable the researcher to understand and capture the points of view of other people without predetermining those points of view through prior selection of questionnaire categories (Patton 1990, 24).

The questions were seen by the researcher as open-ended signposts throughout the interviews, and were developed in a specific way. The areas of investigation were previously defined by the developed higher order constructs draft framework of value for community radio. Although

101 See 7.5.3.3 Open-Ended Interviews (Chapter 7).
102 See Table 11: Value Constructs and Questions, in Appendix 1: Higher Level Value Constructs, Specific Values and Questions (Appendices).
103 See 7.5.3.2 The Theoretical Framework of Value and Question Development (Chapter 7).
the researcher had vital areas to cover in each interview, the way that these areas were covered varied enormously. Capturing the best data from respondents often meant being flexible and working with the train of thought of respondents, as much as with the prepared list of questions. Flexibility is one of the biggest advantages of open-ended interviewing (Sarantakos 1998, 266).

The researcher wanted to enter into the perspective of a respondent under the assumption that “the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (Patton 1990, 278). Adapting the rigid structure of a list of interview questions to a more organic process that still navigated the question topics encouraged the development of ideas for respondents, and meant that their perspective had a much better chance of emerging untainted by the formalisation of any arranged interview process. In this way, the researcher always tried to encourage the development of a meaningful conversation, seemingly undirected by the question list. Often the small talk before an interview officially commenced would determine and merge into what areas were discussed first, and then the direction of the interview onwards. As Neuman (1997, 371) confirms, “the questions and the order in which they are asked are tailored to specific people and situations” and “the beginning and end are not clear.”

Although this flexibility was integral to successful data collection, qualitative open-ended interviews can appear a “soft methodological option”, and one that is simply a recorded conversation (Sarantakos 1998, 256). However, Patton (1990, 278) believes that this type of interview is a very difficult task, where the “quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer.” The experience of this researcher corroborates this view.

Although the researcher had a background in conducting radio interviews, the skills required for conducting longer, in-depth and more organic research interviews took practice to develop. The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes, depending on the contributions of the participant and rapport with the researcher. The first three interviews undertaken at the first case study were regarded as pilot interviews to test the question sets and the interview style. At this early stage, the questions were modified either to hone their meanings or to add extra questions to allow for alternative readings. The researcher also learnt very quickly that the
“primacy of the respondent”, their unique perspectives and development of ideas, were key to successful research interviews (Sarantakos 1998, 256). The development of a relationship of trust between the researcher and the respondent, either before the interview or at the beginning of the interview was also vital. In short, the “soft methodological option” actually required a high degree of competence on the part of the interviewer (ibid).

7.5.4 Audience Focus Groups

7.5.4.1 Background

Prior to this study, research had recently been conducted by academics at Griffith University, in Queensland, looking into the audiences of the community radio sector across Australia (Meadows et al. 2007a). Until then, there had been no qualitative audience research undertaken in the sector except for a few isolated case studies (ibid, 18). Quantitative studies had been carried out by McNair Ingenuity Research (2006a, 2006b) examining audience numbers and listening habits, yet nothing that asked how the audience relates to community radio. The Griffith University research sought to complement the McNair Ingenuity Research data and discover why audiences liked community broadcasting, the types of programming they liked, and their suggestions for improving the service. The Griffith University research also looked at what other media outlets were regularly accessed by the community radio audience and the nature of their other interactions with communities of interest outside the station, which were relevant to community radio (Meadows et al. 2007a, 18).

The purpose of this study was not to create a new audience focus group methodology, given that a tried and tested methodology was already in place. The Griffith University focus group methodology had asked similar questions to this study, and had already surveyed two of the three case study stations in this study.

With the permission of the Griffith University team and the managers of the case study stations (6RPH and RTRFM), this researcher was provided with the station survey documents that detailed their audience findings. The researcher was also given access to a pre-publication copy of the research methodology. Thus, the audience focus group data for 6RPH and RTRFM
have been derived from the Griffith University source material, and this author expresses considerable gratitude to these researchers for their kind cooperation. The methodology was replicated by this researcher in undertaking an additional focus group at Radio Fremantle.

### 7.5.4.2 Focus Group Methodology

This section acknowledges and is indebted to the work already undertaken and designed by the Griffith University researchers. Their audience methodology included interviews with key people (station managers, language group representatives), interviews with key groups (community groups, sponsors, musicians), and audience focus groups (forming the core of the study). The first two data collection methods related specifically to their audience research goals, and were not within the scope of this study. The audience focus group methodology is relevant to this study and is summarised here.

Critical to a theoretical approach is the understanding that focus group discussion is “a cycle of shared activities and understandings” (Kitzinger and Barbour 1999, 18). The methodology seeks to mirror the emphasis placed on the democratic and participatory social forms that are central to community radio. The relationships between the researcher and the researched demonstrate “shared responsibility, knowledge and power”, thus empowering the research participant to reflect on the participatory nature of community radio (ibid).

In the practical setting, the focus groups were asked to nominate initial discussion priorities based on their experiences of community radio. As such, the agenda was open to participation and input from an early stage. The researcher as mediator also had a prompt sheet for when either the discussions flagged or direction was needed. The aim was to “generate talk that will extend the range of thinking about an issue and thus recruits groups that are defined in relation to the particular conceptual framework of the study” (MacNaughten and Myers 2004, 68). The interviews were recorded and then transcribed.

The Griffith University audience focus groups ranged from ten to 15 participants (Meadows et al. 2007a, 23). The issue of recruiting participants for the task was discussed in the research because it raises questions about obtaining objective data (Meadows et al. 2007a, 19).
The Griffith University study only interviewed people who had already tuned in to community radio, and not people who were not attracted by the output. As stated by Meadows and others (2007a, 19), “We were already looking at subjective outcomes, in that sense, because we were consulting only those people who were already audiences of community radio and television.” However, a point of clarification is required. The study only wanted to interview those people who were listeners, because the study was about how people related to the community sector: why they listened, what they liked, what could be improved and how they consumed other media. As such, interviewing people who were not listeners to community radio would be pointless. They might be fans, yet that also means they would have strong opinions about what could be better and that is ideal. In this study, where the methodology actively seeks out the stakeholders of community radio, the Griffith University audience focus group method works very well. Their views and suggestions could only improve or refine the service.

The same audience focus group methodology from the Griffith University study was applied to the Radio Fremantle case study; however, there were some logistical differences. The Griffith University research used on-air announcements for four weeks prior to the focus group, inviting people to attend, or they could phone a 1800 number to register their interest. There were also announcements in the local press and circulars to station subscribers. The Griffith University study identifies seven research staff attached to the project and additional administrative staff. The project was a national one, covering many stations so adequate resources were vital.

In this study, for the single focus group at Radio Fremantle, the modest scale and minimal human resources available meant a slightly different approach was required. The station did not have an accessible subscriber database and the manager suggested that an on-air announcement may not prove effective because of the nature of the niche programming. There was an added complication in that there was also no physical social area at the station to conduct the focus group.
However, Radio Fremantle does run regular community radio courses for aspiring broadcasters, and all novice broadcasters are required to complete the course. The courses are run at Murdoch University where this research was based. The course participants were considered an appropriate focus group. The assumption was made that members of the wider community hoping to broadcast on Radio Fremantle would be a similar sample to those who attended the Griffith University focus group. Like the Griffith University participants, those from Radio Fremantle would have an interest in community radio, and would be willing to donate time and energy to getting involved. In fact, Radio Fremantle’s aspiring broadcasters were hoping to make the transition from audience members to broadcasters in the future. Of interest, in the focus group it became apparent that even at this early stage of their potential broadcasting career they had strong ideas about improving the service. These participants could be considered to be more interested in community radio than the average listener; however, this was seen as a positive rather than a problem for this study, as the key research questions were about values.

There were ten participants in the focus group, the session lasted approximately 90 minutes and the session was recorded as audio. There was a prepared list of questions to guide and keep the discussion afloat. The main themes included listening habits, programming, music content, talk content, the website, funding, listener subscription, community representation and participation. The main themes from the Griffith University study focus groups were also included.\textsuperscript{104}

7.6 Research Strategy: Evidence-Based Policy-Making

7.6.1 Evidence-Based Policy Motivations

This Chapter has concentrated on the role of the case studies in validating the draft framework of value for community radio. However, another key objective of the case studies was to provide a more general picture of these stations and to yield suggestion for how they may be

\textsuperscript{104} See Table 11: Value Constructs and Questions, in Appendix 1: Higher Level Value Constructs, Specific Values and Questions (Appendices).
improved. To achieve this objective, this thesis borrowed from the field of evidence-based public policy-making, using the principles to inform the qualitative research methodology in this work. It is this evidence that is prepared as descriptive narrative case studies of each station. The case studies give a rich and detailed contemporary snapshot of station operations, and offer evidence in the form of study participant recommendations about station policy-making.

Brian Head (2008, 2), in “Three Lenses of Evidence-Based Policy”, suggests that the motivation for evidence-based policy in Australia is “to produce the knowledge required for fine-tuning programs and constructing guidelines and ‘tool-kits’ for dealing with known problems. Hence, the currently famous phrase that defines much of the movement – “what works.” This is precisely what this thesis hopes to achieve in the context of community radio and seems a suitable starting point. The author also discovered unique research synergies when an evidence-based policy-making strategy was used to collect qualitative data from the social context of a community radio station.

In its most simple form, evidence-based policy-making, entails asking questions or doing research to inform policy decision-making. For community radio and this thesis, collecting attitudinal evidence about the operation of a community radio station is useful for two reasons: first, to discover how study participants perceive the value of their community radio station; and second, to potentially inform future operational station policy decision-making to enhance that value.

However, the field of evidence-based policy-making is not without its detractors and limitations (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 69-72). This thesis argues that these limitations are primarily apparent in the larger and more complex public policy-making domain. In the smaller domain of community radio, evidence-based policy-making can be more effective and less subject to its inherent limitations. The following section charts the background of evidence-based policy-making, discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy, and also suggests

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105 See Appendices (Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio; Appendix 7: Case Study Summary for RTRFM; Appendix 8: Case Study Summary for Radio Fremantle).
that the strategy produces unique synergies when used in the qualitative social research paradigm.

7.6.2 Background

According to Althaus, Bridgman and Davis (2004), in *The Australian Policy Handbook*, the notion that public policy-making could be informed by evidence, emerged with the election of the Blair Government in the United Kingdom (UK) in 1997. The earlier Thatcher Government (UK) and Reagan Government (United States) had favoured policy-making informed by ideology or belief. Gary Banks (2009, 1), in “Challenges of Evidence-Based Policy-Making”, suggests that the Blair Government wanted to put an end to the “inherited ways of doing things”, and the election of a reformist government was an appropriate time for a new start in policy-making.

Similarly, Banks (ibid) suggests that these “New Labour ideas” were taken up at the Australian State level, by the Bracks Government in Victoria and the Gallop Government in Western Australia. At the level of Federal Government, evidence-based policy-making also rose to prominence in public debate. Lynelle Briggs (2009, iii), the Australian Public Service Commissioner, discusses how Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, in 2009, “called it a key element of the Government’s agenda for the public service. He [wanted] policy design to be driven by the analysis of all available options, and not ideology.” It was the application of rigorous research methods to policy-making that was a new element. Historically, there has been a disjuncture between policy-makers and researchers in terms of objectives. Researchers tend to work to further knowledge and understanding, while politicians seek direct action to solve problems. In contrast, the evidence-based policy movement advocated strong links between researchers and public policy decision-making.

The evidence-based policy movement was also driven by a number of other trends. First, public policy-making was growing more complex and interdependent on multiple policy problems. Second, it existed in a competitive funding environment where the scarcity of funding meant policy-makers wanted to ensure a rational allocation of those funds. Third, there was also
a move towards ‘knowledge economies’, which promoted the sharing of knowledge. In this increasingly complex environment, there was enhanced recognition of the role of experts to supply evidence for policy development (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 67-68).

There were also increasing assertions by evidence-based advocates that “most policies are experiments” in Australia, driven by conventional wisdom, intuition, ideology or pure theory (Banks 2009, 3). As a result, policies have sometimes produced undesirable and unpredicted consequences. Banks (ibid) cites two examples from recent Productivity Commission reviews:

Our report into road and rail infrastructure pricing showed that the presumption that road use was systematically subsidised relative to rail was not borne out by the facts (facts that were quite difficult to discern). In our inquiry into waste management policy, we found that the objective of zero solid waste was not only economically costly, but environmentally unsound.

While these examples offer a glimpse into the ad hoc nature of policy-making, there are also examples where similar approaches have produced more costly disasters. According to Banks (ibid, 4), Productivity Commission reviews that have sanctioned frameworks to conserve and protect Australian flora and fauna, and historic buildings were found to have created “perverse incentives for those responsible” and completely undermined conservation objectives.

Evidence-based policy-making strategies hope to avoid these kinds of policy mishaps but the process is not without its own idiosyncrasies. The application of evidence-based policy-making to large, complex and interrelated problems, where time and money are scarce, definitely has drawbacks (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 69-72). However, this thesis argues that the strengths of evidence-based policy-making are ideally suited to the relatively small qualitative social world of community radio, while the weaknesses may be mediated by the community radio research environment.
7.6.3 Strengths of Evidence-Based Policy-Making

7.6.3.1 Overview of Strengths

In *The Australian Policy Handbook* (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004), advocates of evidence-based policy-making offer a number of strengths associated with the process. It is these strengths that suit the community radio environment and that can effectively be used to support a qualitative research methodology. This section outlines the strengths of evidence-based policy-making and discusses them in relation to the operation of a community radio station. It is argued that in the context of community radio, evidence-based policy-making, works effectively within the qualitative research paradigm by offering some unique synergies.

7.6.3.2 Asking the Right Questions

The process of conducting research encourages rigor in the search for evidence for policy-making. It is a commitment on the part of policy-makers to define the problems they are attempting to solve (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 69). The questions may not always be clear. As Chapter 2 through to Chapter 6 indicate, the notion of value for community radio is not uniform and different stations assign value to different, sometimes contested objectives. The questions to ask during field research may not be clear. Asking the right questions in the field context means collecting and reflecting on evidence to refine initial theoretical questions. In the classical tradition of qualitative methodologies, research in a social content should offer some form of reflexivity. Sarantakos (1998, 51) explains the importance of reflection in research: “Any meaning that becomes attached to emerging data is considered to be a reflection of the context in which it was developed. It can only be understood in reference to the social context.” Both evidence-based policy-making and qualitative research understand this notion of reflexivity as important.

7.6.3.3 Efficiency and Effectiveness

Evidence-based research can produce improved value for money in the process of policy-making as well as in the result. The process should be more effective because it is informed by research rather than ideology or convention. There is also much more potential for transparency
in the process (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 69). Briggs (2009, iii) states that, “evidence should also be open to rigorous public and professional debate. As well as validating evidence, transparency can help governments to gauge community reaction to ideas before they are fully formed.” Asking questions and undertaking research normally means presenting data and/or the conclusions of the evidence, making the policy-making process more public and giving a sense of accountability to the decisions made.

Transparency also means that the approach and steps of the research are made known to the participants as far as possible. This is another common tenet of qualitative research methods in social contexts (Sarantakos 1998, 51). To complement the participatory ethos of community radio and sometimes more democratic modes of governance, a policy-making process that offers transparency would be appropriate for community radio.

7.6.3.4 Means of Inclusion

The process is intrinsically more inclusive, asking for the input of researchers, policy-makers, decision-makers, the public and any stakeholders in the problem under scrutiny, potentially yielding more informed policy (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 69). In the participatory paradigm of community radio, an evidence collection process that emphasises contribution, inclusivity and working towards a common goal, is likely to be welcomed by the participants. This goes to the heart of the ethos of community radio. Community radio stakeholders offer the evidence. Without participation, the ethos of community radio is undermined. In the words of qualitative researcher Sarantakos (1998, 51), it is “research as communication between the researcher and the respondent. The researcher and the respondent work together for a common goal, although the respondents are the all important data providers.”

7.6.3.5 Appraisal and Risk Minimisation

The involvement of stakeholders presents an aspect of risk minimisation, where their reactions to policy elements can be measured before decisive action is taken (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 69). The methodology proposed here in the qualitative context of community radio offers an exceptional opportunity for risk minimisation and appraisal. In this study, there is no
compunction to act on the evidence. It is not going to become law, only potential policy. It has been collected from stakeholders and will be presented back to stakeholders. Thus, community radio stakeholders are in essence talking to themselves, with the assistance of the researcher, to discover if and how the station is providing value to the community and the participants, and also to gather evidence that could potentially inform operational station policy decision-making to enhance that value. The community radio stakeholders will have a clear vision when appraising policy decisions and minimising risk.

However, when working on specific tasks within a particular environment and concentrating on daily details, even the most reflective radio station worker will have difficulty considering matters at higher levels of abstraction. The task of the researcher is to assist the station worker, through well considered questions, to consider their activities at a higher level of abstraction and communicate their ideas in that way. The draft framework of values developed in this thesis facilitates this process.

From a qualitative perspective, there is an openness to the research that allows the process of the research to emerge as the pertinent data. As Sarantakos (1998, 51) states, in relation to the role of the researcher in the process: “The reality that the investigator seeks to establish is created and explained in interaction. Interviews, observation, focus groups etc are part of this interaction and creation of social reality.” The process of the research interaction is inherently linked with the meaning created. The discussion of risk minimisation and policy appraisal are part and parcel of this qualitative research interaction. The use of evidence-based policy-making in this qualitative paradigm offers this useful synergy.

7.6.3.6 Best Practice

The process of collecting evidence naturally encourages a search for best practice, and an eagerness to study strengths and weaknesses of other scenarios. It encourages a culture of learning through research (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 69). This thesis aims to discover

106 The data collection methods included open-ended interviews, audience focus groups and observation/participation by the researcher. See 7.5 Field Research Methods (Chapter 7).
the “how” and the “why” of value at community radio stations. Case studies were selected as a qualitative tool to collect evidence of best practice, of the “how” and the “why”, from three community radio stations. Case studies are often the preferred qualitative research strategy when dealing with “how” and “why” research questions (Yin 2009, 9). Utilising case studies enables a researcher to compare and contrast the effects of different policies at different community radio stations, and offer recommendations of best practice based on experience elsewhere. The combination of an evidence-based methodology and qualitative case studies as a research strategy offers unique synergies for examining best practice.

7.6.3.7 Defensibility

Evidence-based research provides a rigorous framework to offer objective answers to policy problems (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 69). Community radio suffers from a lack of clarity around the notion of value, and an unclear mechanism to evidence that value towards potentially informing policy-making. This methodology collects attitudinal evidence about the strengths and weaknesses of the community radio stations. The “how” and “why” opinions of stakeholders are collected and recorded as reproducible audio data. Opinions are cross-referenced with the themes of station policy. Thus, the evidence is defensible and can be validated by external inquiry. Part of this work is analysing the data and drawing out the strongest themes, which are then presented as a way to evidence value and as a way forward to enhance that value. In qualitative analysis, the interpretation of social data tends towards a sense of story-telling or narrative, which is effective in answering the “how” and “why” research questions (Creswell 1998, 17-18). While there are no “right” or “wrong” answers, as more apparent in quantitative research, the evidence is still defensible as reproducible opinion.

7.6.4 Weaknesses of Evidence-Based Policy-Making

7.6.4.1 Overview of Weaknesses

The main weaknesses of evidence-based policy-making are outlined by Althaus, Bridgman and Davis (2004, 69-71), and appear to flow mainly from governmental or public policy imperatives, rather than research weaknesses. They also serve to emphasise the historical
disjuncture between policy-makers and researchers, where their objectives are different. This section examines the weaknesses of evidence-based policy-making and how they might be mediated by the community radio research environment.

7.6.4.2 Time Pressures

The period seen as acceptable for a government to solve problems is short, compared to the time taken to conduct research and analyse the results. The electoral cycle dominates policy-making, rather than the luxury of collecting evidence (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 69-71). Edwards and Evans (2011), in ANZIG Insights: Getting Evidence into Policy-making, argue that the speed of government decision-making can be problematic for bureaucracy. How can policy-makers inform their decision-making with evidence in the short time allotted within the three year electoral cycle? This is identified as a barrier to the provision of evidence-based policy-making. Edwards and Evans (ibid, 4) suggest thinking beyond the electoral cycle and that all-party support for longer-term research funding may be a way forward.

In contrast to the realm of public policy-making, time pressures in the domain of community radio are less acute. The scale of research is relatively small and the time period required to conduct research is a fraction of most public policy research. Based on the field research conducted for this thesis, the collection of evidence ranged from three weeks to three months for each station in the study. Similarly, the analysis for each station took no more than three months. Compared to the electoral cycle, these are swift turnaround times for research outcomes. This suggested weakness of evidence-based public policy-making is not applicable to community radio, unless perhaps a station is in a critical state, for example, due to lack of funding, and immediate policy changes are therefore required.

7.6.4.3 Temporal Disjunctures

The nature of government policy-making often means addressing complex social issues, which makes long-term time series research important to ensure all the repercussions of potential policy-making are considered. It is unlikely that government policy-makers will have the luxury

107 See 7.4.2 Selection of Case(s) (Chapter 7).
of these long-term studies, which will not fit within their electoral cycles. There may also be a
need for swift action on behalf of policy-makers to remedy the seriousness of a problem. It may
be quicker to observe short-term action and apply policy lessons rather than wait for research
findings. This is likely to be the case where social policy problems are intricately connected or
multi-dependent on numerous factors. The research required may be more cumbersome than the
observation of swift policy action (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 69-70). Similar to
Althaus, Bridgman and Davis, Gary Banks (2009, 13) suggests that evidence-building for the
Productivity Commission can take unreasonable amounts of time. He states that some research
is too time-consuming or cumbersome for the Productivity Commission to conduct, or they do
not have staff with particular research expertise and the work is then given to consultants.

In the environment of a community radio station, these kinds of temporal disjunctures
are not apparent. First, long-term time series research is unnecessary and complex socially
connected policy problems are unlikely to occur within such a small group. With regard to
available research skills, it is a stark contrast to most workplaces. The broadcast journalism
skills found in a radio station are well suited to the task of conducting research interviews and
focus groups. This suggested weakness of evidence-based public policy-making is not
applicable to community radio, and rather there are strengths with regards to staff expertise.

7.6.4.4 Contesting Evidence

Researchers in the same field can often demonstrate contesting evidence from similar studies.
This is commonplace in both the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. The interpretation of
the same evidence can also yield different results from different researchers. Both of these
scenarios mean that policy-makers can be presented with conflicting information on which to
base their policy decisions (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 70). While good intentions
abound, the challenges of collecting and interpreting data that emerges from social or
environmental contexts can be a high bar to reach, especially where it is necessary to
disentangle simultaneous influences. Indigenous health policy is an example. According to
Banks (2009, 10), there are a “myriad of problems to do with identification, the incidence of
different health or other conditions, and their distribution across different parts of the country.”

This example illustrates the need for health data, housing data, employment data and drug/alcohol problem data, and then a way to analyse the simultaneous casual links that contribute to any source question about Indigenous health. It is a fraught process.

While research into community radio does not exhibit the complexities of an issue like Indigenous health, as a qualitative strategy it does hope to understand human behaviour and report on the human perceptions of the research participants. Their interpretations and those of the researcher will contribute to knowledge claims about the case studies under investigation, the understanding of meanings and functions of symbol systems in a social world (Baxter and Babbie 2003, 61; Sarantakos 1998, 35; Weerakkody 2011, 29).

For some, qualitative evidence from case studies is regarded as the lowest grade of reliable evidence. For example, the medical community would frown upon the reliability of such data and would regard the results as indicative at best.\footnote{108} Andrew Leigh (2009), in “Evidence-based Policy: Summon the Randomistas”, from the position of the policy-maker tasked with assessing social programs or similar, suggests that the only available evidence is likely to be case studies or qualitative anecdotal data. Policy-makers should be more willing to embrace this style of social research and be willing to experiment to see what works (ibid, 216). As a weakness of evidence-based research, contested evidence is likely to occur in no more or less proportions in community radio than other environments. However, community radio stations have the advantage of being a relatively small scale organisation to investigate. The methodology utilised in this study was designed to provide the most effective interpretation of the data and control process validity.

7.6.4.5 Subject Matter Limitations

People, organisations and programs are complex scenarios. It may be that policy assumptions cannot be tested, where causality is difficult to establish. The effect of policy decisions cannot

\footnote{108} Medicine has a distinct hierarchy of evidence. “Grade I evidence in that hierarchy is ‘well-conducted systematic reviews of randomised trials’. Grade II is non-randomised controlled trials and uncontrolled experiments, while Grade III is descriptive studies and case reports” (Leigh 2009, 216).
be assessed before implementation where research methods cannot predict outcomes, especially in complex social problems. Policy-makers may have to rely on their best guesses where predictable policy outcomes will not be revealed by empirical research methods (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 70). In the context of community radio research, policy outcomes that may be difficult to assess may have been tested elsewhere. There are three case study stations in this study, and cross-case comparisons can reveal what similar policies have yielded elsewhere. Obviously, community radio stations can vary greatly and there is no guarantee that what worked in one context will work in elsewhere.\footnote{See 2.5.2.1 Community Radio Taxonomy (Chapter 2).} However, as this thesis shows, experience from other stations and other studies in the literature can be a useful guide. The subject matter of community radio is not as complex and offers fewer limitations to research, compared to the public policy arenas (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004). This weakness of evidence-based research is mediated by the community radio environment.

**7.6.4.6 Public Sector Requirements**

Public accountability is an aspect of policy-making that must be considered. Research must be cost effective and demonstrate value for money, as well as deliver useful evidence. In developing a research program, it may be difficult to demonstrate cost-effectiveness (Althaus, Bridgman and Davis 2004, 70). Thankfully, this research on community radio does not incur significant costs compared to the larger public policy projects. The research methods included approximately 12 semi-structured interviews at each of the three stations, three audience focus groups, a period of regular weekly observation/participation by the researcher ranging from three weeks to three months, and a period of data analysis. If the research methods were to be adopted by community radio stations, in possible future incarnations of the work, all of the research could be undertaken in-house with a minimum of supervision from a research consultant. In short, the research is cost-effective and easily accomplished within the resources of most community stations. This weakness of evidence-based public policy-making does not apply to community radio.
7.6.4.7 Politicisation and Downplaying Democracy

While evidence-based policy-making seems a desirable process, it has the potential to conflict with democratic participation and public opinion, which is the bulwark of a politician’s standing in the community. According to Althaus, Bridgman and Davis (2004, 71), “Evidence can be a rhetorical flourish making pragmatism: what counts is what works; another tool of power manipulation perception. Thus evidence can constrain what is possible.” This weakness of evidence-based policy-making could be significant in the public policy arena. Public opinion has the potential to be out of sync with what the evidence demonstrates. For politicians, there is no escaping this difficult scenario. However, for community radio no such conundrum is likely to exist. It is public opinion that is the evidence. The views of community radio stakeholders form the evidence and any policy decisions will affect those stakeholders. This suggested weakness of evidence-based public policy-making is not applicable to community radio.

7.6.5 Evidence-Based Policy Summary

This section has established that the context of evidence-based policy-making is important to its success. Althaus, Bridgman and Davis (2004) consider evidence-based policy-making from a government perspective on public policy, while this thesis resituates evidence-based policy-making to the community radio perspective. The strengths of evidence-based policy-making align well with the community radio environment, the qualitative research paradigm and also offer some unique synergies, especially regarding the inclusion of stakeholders and appraisal of policy outcomes.

As discussed here, the weaknesses of evidence-based policy-making are primarily context determined. If evidence-based policy-making is resituated away from the public arena and within smaller organisations, without the imperatives of time, public sector requirements and democracy, the strengths outweigh the weaknesses. This is strongly supported by Banks (2009), who discusses key Australian economic policy reforms that drew on evidence-based
reviews.\textsuperscript{110} As Banks (ibid, 3) states, “Evidence that is directed at supporting narrow objectives – a particular group or sector … will generally look quite different to that which has as its objective the best interests of the general community.”

In conclusion, evidence-based policy-making is a suitable research strategy for community radio. This analysis shows the weaknesses to be mediated by the context and the strengths to be actually enhanced in some cases. The case study summaries demonstrate how this approach was applied for each community radio station.\textsuperscript{111}

7.7 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has described the method of development of the draft framework of value for community radio, which derived from the lenses of analysis examined in Chapter 2 through to Chapter 6. The rationale and process for the consolidation of the framework have also been shown. This process of development was inspired by the “generic descriptive interpretative approach” (Timulak 2009, 595).

First, case study methodology was selected as the most suitable research strategy to answer the research questions. Within this strategy, the field methods of open-ended interviews, audience focus groups and observation/participation were deemed appropriate to the task, fulfilling the analysis requirements. This enabled the testing of the draft framework to validate the specific values and identify new values or themes. Second, evidence-based policy-making was selected as a further strategy, enabling community radio to reflect on its own performance. This is demonstrated within the case study summaries. Chapter nine will discuss the results of this aspect of the research.

\textsuperscript{110} Examples include: the exchange rate and financial market liberalisation of the 1980s, the National Competition Policy reforms of the 1990s, and the shift to inflation targeting in monetary policy in 1993. Examples from the social policy arena include: the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) in its initial configuration, and the introduction of ‘Lifetime Community Rating’ provisions in private health insurance regulation (Banks 2009, 3).

\textsuperscript{111} See Appendices (Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio; Appendix 7: Case Study Summary for RTRFM; Appendix 8: Case Study Summary for Radio Fremantle).
Chapter 8: Case Studies: Data Analysis

8.1 Overview of Analysis

This Chapter summarises the analysis methods used with the broad methodology outlined in Chapter 7. These analysis methods produced the results that are discussed in Chapter 9. The data analysis in this thesis intended to produce two outcomes: first, to test the validity of the draft framework of value for community radio; and second, to generate evidence that may inform community radio station policy development. The testing of the framework used a case study methodology, where semi-structured interviews were conducted with 35 participants involved in running the radio stations and one audience focus group meeting was held.112

First, to test the validity of the framework, the recorded interviews were analysed in terms of the specific values in the draft framework of value for community radio.113 A total of 500 utterances were identified and summaries were prepared listing the number of utterances that significantly mentioned each of the values. This allowed a comparison of the frequency for each of the values, between the stations and overall.

Second, following an evidence-based policy approach, a qualitative analysis of the interviews was undertaken and three narrative case study summaries were prepared, describing the views of the participants regarding the key issues at the radio stations and recommendations for future station operations. These narrative case studies provide evidence that is potentially valuable and might inform future station policy-making.

8.2 Qualitative Content Analysis: Validating the Framework

8.2.1 Overview of Interviews

The interviews ranged in duration from 30 minutes to 90 minutes. The amount of data gathered represented a challenging analytical task. Emily Namey and others (2008, 137), in “Data

112 The audiences of the remaining two stations had been recently surveyed by another researcher, using focus groups and looking at very similar themes. See 7.5.4 Audience Focus Groups (Chapter 7).

Reduction Techniques for Large Qualitative Data Sets”, suggest that there are substantial benefits to be gained from using data reduction techniques on large data sets. Data reduction aids in the recognition of trends, themes and relationships, but also maintains the richness of the data and considers the context of the data (ibid). Data reduction was an important component of the qualitative content analysis in this thesis. Audio transcription and the identification of themes were an essential part of the data reduction strategy in this work.

8.2.2 Audio Transcription

The audio interviews and focus group were transcribed. Transcribing the audio data verbatim was impractical and not beneficial for a research project of this size (Zhang and Wildemuth 2009, 2). The interviews and focus group discussion could meander wildly, and thus it was more effective and efficient to isolate relevant quotes (utterances) that discussed the research values or themes. A total of 500 utterances were transcribed and inserted into a custom-built database coded under themes. The researcher looked for theory-driven themes already identified through the meta-analysis, and for new themes or values (data-driven) that were not on that list (Namey et al. 2008, 138-139).

8.2.3 Identification of Themes

Firstly, without thematic categories, investigators have nothing to describe, nothing to compare, and nothing to explain … Second, being explicit about how we establish themes allows consumers of qualitative research (including those who fund it) to assess our methodological choices. Third, qualitative researchers need an explicit and jargon-free vocabulary to communicate with each other across disciplines and across epistemological positions (Bernard and Ryan 2003, 85-86).

The theory-driven themes comprise the 27 themes of value for community radio that were identified prior to the field research (Namey et al. 2008, 138-139), and were consolidated into the draft framework of value for community radio. The testing of the themes in the field intended to answer the following questions: Were these values in evidence? How often were they mentioned? What inferences or conclusions could be drawn from the occurrences? This

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114 See Appendix 4: The Database (Appendices). The database software was developed for this research with the assistance of Jason Scott, a Knowledge Management expert.
was a quantitative exercise, and the data was examined across the three stations, as well as within each station.

The researcher also looked for new or emerging themes or values, outside of the theoretical framework. Ian Dey (1993, 97-98), in *Qualitative Data Analysis: A User-Friendly Guide for Social Scientists*, suggests that themes are “induced” from empirical data, and “even with open-ended questions, one cannot anticipate all the themes that arise before analysing the data.” The discovery of themes using a data-driven approach is more an “open coding” process with less obvious structure, compared to theory-driven approaches. Of importance, neither the theory-driven or data-driven approach are mutually exclusive (Namey et al. 2008, 139). This thesis used a combination of both approaches to codify themes. While the bulk of the coding concerned theory-driven themes, analysis also revealed six emerging themes.

### 8.2.4 Theme Scrutiny Techniques

#### 8.2.4.1 Frequency of Themes

For both theory-driven and data-driven themes, the objective was to assess the frequency of the values. Namey and others (2008) suggest tabulating frequency on the basis of the number of respondents who mention a particular theme, rather than the number of times a particular theme appears in the total data. A talkative participant who has strong opinions about one theme may significantly raise the frequency of that theme. However, they also state that frequency tabulation methods are dependent on the objective of analysis and, in some cases, it may be preferable to count the number of mentions at a particular location or domain (Namey et al. 2008, 143). In this study, the objective was to identify themes that occurred across a whole station rather than by an individual. Thus, it was preferable to analyse mentions at the station level. The next step involved the identification of occurrence in the audio or text.

#### 8.2.4.2 Theme Identification

Identification of the theory-driven themes involved two main techniques. First, the recognition of “theoretical key words” from the value framework in the context of an interview (Bernard
and Ryan 2003, 96), where there was obvious correlation between a participant’s meaning in an interview and a theme (a specific value from the draft framework of value for community radio). The audio would then be transcribed into the database. Second, Bernard and Ryan (ibid, 90) also identify “metaphors and analogies” as useful scrutiny techniques to discern themes. Participants sometimes talk about their experiences and thoughts using metaphors and analogies. Analysis then becomes a more deductive process to recognise themes. Overall, when using either of these scrutiny techniques, the typical approach involved asking: “What is this sentence about” (ibid, 91)? This not only helped the researcher decide whether the data correlated with a specific value, but also asked the researcher to recognise where one subject ended and another began, in order to identify particular utterances for analysis through the database. In the context of an open-ended interview, this simple question was most valuable in this phase of the analysis. The following example illustrates this approach. During an interview with a study participant at 6RPH, the question was asked: “How do you imagine your audience?” The response was: “I don’t think I ever do this consciously, but I think of mostly elderly people, sitting in a chair or bed, that can’t get out. Those that aren’t mobile.” In this instance, (5b) specialist representation was the specific value applied from the draft framework of value for community radio during analysis. It referred to the radio print-handicapped audience and their need for specialist representation.

For the data-driven themes, where new or emerging themes or values needed to be identified, repetition was one of the simplest strategies of recognition (Bernard and Ryan 2003, 89). During an interview, if a similar theme occurred on numerous occasions, or if there was strong opinion expressed this might potentially be an emerging theme. For example, during an interview with a study participant at 6RPH, the question was asked: “From your experience at the station and as a listener, how would you suggest the service could be improved?” The response was: “The governance of this place is screwed; the volunteers are good, the staffs here

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115 The database was populated with specific values from the draft framework of value for community radio. Once a theme had been identified in the audio interviews that correlated with a specific value, that audio segment would then be transcribed into the database referenced with that value. The occurrences were counted later.
are good, performing above and beyond the call of duty. The board are hopeless. I think we have problem with the station manager. We have a problem with the chairman of the board”.

In the context of this study, where the objective was data analysis across a whole community radio station, the researcher needed to compare a potential emerging theme with what other study participants had said. If an isolated participant had strong feelings about a particular issue, the inclusion of this as an emerging theme was questioned. However, if multiple voices expressed a similar issue, it was likely to be categorised as an emerging theme. For example, (7f) governance dissatisfaction was a sentiment expressed by six study participants, thus it was categorised as a perceived emerging theme.\(^{116}\)

An important consideration here is: “How many repetitions are enough to constitute an important emerging theme?” This remains an open question, and Bernard and Ryan (2003, 90) conclude that it is the researcher’s decision. It may be an easier question to answer, with knowledge of the local context or possible ethnographic data at hand. In this study, all data was collected by the researcher and emerging themes became quite obvious as each case study progressed. Repetition of themes occurred in the interviews and the focus groups, and during periods of observation/participation by the researcher.

In total, the data revealed 500 utterances that either correlated with a value from the draft theoretical framework or demonstrated an emerging theme. What conclusions could be drawn from this pattern of utterances?

### 8.3 Drawing Conclusions from the Data

#### 8.3.1 Process of Analysis

Zhang and Wildemuth (2009, 2) state that it is at “this stage that you will make inferences and present your reconstructions of meanings derived from the data.” It is a chance to explore the numbers in the data and the relationships between categories, and uncover patterns that have

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\(^{116}\) See 9.4.2 (7f) Governance Dissatisfaction (Chapter 9).
become obvious through the coding. However, it is the researcher’s reasoning abilities that are critical.

This thesis sought to discover whether the draft framework of value for community radio could transition, from a theoretical model to a relevant and useful tool in the field. How, if at all, had the identified values been operationalised in the environment of community radio? In order to answer this research question, it was decided to analyse the mention of values in three ways: the mentions of values across all case studies, the mentions of emergent values, and the highest rated mentions of values at individual case studies. The rationale for these analyses is outlined below.

8.3.2 Total Mentions of Values Across All Case Studies

The mentions of values from the draft framework across the three stations were counted to determine whether the framework was relevant in the field. What values were more prevalent and why might that be? What values were not discussed and why might that be? The analysis looked at the high level mentions of specific values (the five highest mentioned values across the whole study), the medium level mentions of specific values (values that were mentioned more than five times across the whole study, but were not in the top five highest mentioned), and the low level mentions of specific values (values that were mentioned five times or less across the whole study).

The highest mentioned values reveal the most significant values for the community radio stations in this study. The high occurrence of these values also validates their inclusion in the framework of value. The medium mentioned values also validate their inclusion in the framework of value, and might offer other insights as a value grouping in comparison with the highest mentioned values. The least mentioned values suggest these are the least significant for the community radio stations in this study, and might serve as a contrast to reinforce the highest mentioned values. In summary, this content analysis assists in validating the draft framework of value for the stations, and show where value is perceived by the study participants.
8.3.3 Mentions of Emergent Values/Themes

While this study primarily sought to test the values in the draft framework, the question strategy had also been designed to identify any new or emerging themes.\textsuperscript{117} These would add to the language of value for community radio and potentially lead to an adjustment or amendment of the draft theoretical framework. Robert Yin (2009, 141), in Case Study Research: Design and Methods, describes this process as explanation building. Explanation building is the refining of a set of propositions (in this case the draft framework of values), while simultaneously being ready to entertain new ideas or revisions (in this case the new or emerging themes).

During the process of analysis, it became evident that these new themes would need to be categorised, in order to give some indication of how they would refine the framework of value for community radio. The categorisation was conducted by considering their relationship with the draft framework. Four categories were identified: \textit{aspirational}, \textit{critical}, \textit{contingent} and \textit{new}. They were termed \textit{aspirational}, where study participants have perceived something they consider could be improved about the operation of the station; \textit{critical}, where study participants could have an impact on the establishment of value, especially where some criticism of station operation is apparent; \textit{contingent}, where study participants could be dependent on other characteristics of the radio station and may reveal insights into a taxonomy for community radio; or \textit{new}, where study participants identify specific values for possible inclusion in the framework of value. The four categories were not mutually exclusive.\textsuperscript{118}

8.3.4 The Highest Rated Individual Station Mentions

An important supposition examined in this thesis, is that value for community radio is contingent upon the characteristics of the station. These characteristics might be useful in defining a taxonomy for community radio, as discussed previously.\textsuperscript{119} This suggests that the community radio types, of \textit{generalist} and \textit{specialist}, are important characteristics in any potential taxonomy. These types will determine some of the evaluative dimensions for a

\textsuperscript{117} See 7.5.3.2 The Theoretical Framework of Value and Question Development (Chapter 7).
\textsuperscript{118} See 9.4 Emergent Values/Themes (Chapter 9).
\textsuperscript{119} See 2.5.2.1 Community Radio Taxonomy (Chapter 2).
community radio station. For example, the set of values for a specialist station will be different from the set of values for a generalist station, and their objectives are quite different. Any evaluation of value applied to a given station should reflect these differences. This can be achieved by selecting a subset of the complete list of values from the framework to provide an evaluation instrument tailored to a particular community radio station. It was also believed that testing the draft theoretical framework of value in the field would reveal these contingent notions of value, and even potentially identify other community radio types that may be added to a taxonomy.

To investigate these suppositions, the top ten mentions of value were tabulated at each station. The analysis then attempted to draw inferences as to why these values were highly significant at those specific stations. What was it about the characteristics of a given station that might contribute to the high occurrences of these specific values? Was value contingent upon station characteristics? If so, what were the pertinent characteristics and would they add to a taxonomy for community radio?

In summary, the data analysis covered: 1) The total mentions of values across all case studies to determine whether the draft theoretical framework for community radio was relevant in the field, and what the highest mention values were and why; 2) The mentions of new or emerging values to consider how they may adjust the draft theoretical framework; and 3) The highest rated individual station mentions to investigate the idea of a contingency-based approach to value for community radio.

8.4 Reporting the Narrative Case Studies

8.4.1 Reporting the Process

In this thesis, the second research question was: What is the utility of using such an evidence-based method to better identify value and inform policy development via a coherent framework? This was answered by a qualitative analysis of the data presented in narrative case studies. The testing of the draft framework of values for community radio was undertaken by conducting
semi-structured interviews with 35 participants involved in running the radio stations, and one audience focus group. A qualitative analysis of the interviews was undertaken and three narrative case studies were prepared, describing the views of the participants regarding the key issues at the radio stations and recommendations for future station operations. The issues raised in the audience focus groups were also used to inform the summaries. These narrative case studies provide evidence that is potentially valuable and might inform future station policy-making.

8.4.2 Pulling the Threads Together: A Compositional Strategy

In this study, it is the community radio stakeholders that provide the valuable evidence. This aspect of the study conforms to the description of “action research” or “action evaluation” (Wadsworth 1997, 29, 117). Wadsworth (ibid) essentially describes an evaluation as a research process that seeks to determine what a “critical reference group” (community radio stakeholders) thinks, and how much value they place on things and why? This evidence points to future options and ways of improving these things. In this study, the question of improving things, in order to inform station policy-making, often yielded the most useful answers from study participants. In accordance with the participatory ethos of community radio, it was the community participants and listeners who were making suggestions for improvement. This notion of inclusivity is also shared with the evidence-based policy-making methodology discussed previously.

For this reason, the narrative case studies sought to maximise the input of the study participants. Their voices would be paramount, and the operational issues rather than any theoretical concerns would drive the narrative case studies. In this way, the “primacy of the [study] respondent” was retained (Sarantakos 1998, 256), and it might be possible to better “understand the world [of community radio] as seen by the respondents” (Patton 1990, 24).

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120 The audiences of the remaining two stations had been recently surveyed by another researcher, using focus groups and looking at very similar themes. See 7.5.4 Audience Focus Groups (Chapter 7).

121 See 7.6 Research Strategy: Evidence-Based Policy-Making (Chapter 7).
These considerations informed the composition of the narrative case studies and were a guide for preparing the case study summaries (Sarantakos 1998, 194).

According to Yin (2009, 165), the composition of case study summaries follows no known formula or format, and instead relies on the empirical thinking and rigour of the researcher, and some flair for composition or narrative. Yin suggests it should be perceived as an opportunity to make a significant contribution to knowledge. Although the format is largely undefined, numerous factors impact on any case study composition and some general guidelines are offered. The research audience should be a prime consideration (Sarantakos 1998, 194; Yin 2009, 167). What do the audience need from the case studies?

In this instance, the research forms a dissertation and a set of examiners will be looking at how effectively the research questions have been answered. A further intended audience is the staff of the community radio stations involved in the case studies. Thus, the case study summaries should contribute new knowledge, and present evidence that might inform station policy development. First, the case studies need to be descriptive and explanatory, providing a depth of detail for the generation of new knowledge, and second, summarise the evidence for potential station policy-making. Yin (2009, 179) describes this general approach to case study composition as “theory-building” (developing the evidence), which suits case studies that are explanatory or exploratory in nature.

Initially, the 27 specific values in the draft framework of values for community radio were considered as a compositional structure. However, not all of the specific values were applicable to all three case studies, and many of the explanations referenced one or more themes. The important themes were different and unique to each station. The heterogeneous nature of the case studies made strict adherence to the 27 specific values problematic. As Yin (2009, 186) states, these spatial boundaries of a case can be problematic especially if they negatively impact the “completeness of a case” or the richness of the explanations. In this research, the author resolved the issue by making practical accommodation for the uniqueness of each case. During the writing stage, unique station themes were grouped under two umbrella
themes: *representation of the community* and *community participation*. This compositional structure provided the necessary flexibility to go beyond the limits of any theoretically imposed structure.

### 8.5 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has described the quantitative and qualitative analysis that was undertaken with the fieldwork data. The number of mentions of values from the draft theoretical framework of value for community radio reveals how, if at all, the identified values have been operationalised in the environment of community radio. This also indicates which values were perceived to be significant by the study participants across all three case studies and which values were not apparent. The quantitative analysis reveals what values were significant at individual stations, exploring the idea that perceived value is contingent upon individual station characteristics. These station characteristics may be descriptors in a taxonomy for community radio, which is explored further in Chapter 9. The qualitative analysis focuses on the descriptive and narrative case studies. The analysis is designed to ensure the voices of the study participants are the primary evidence, reflecting the participatory ethos of community radio in future station policy-making.
Chapter 9: Case Studies: Discussion of Results

9.1 Introduction

This Chapter summarises the results of the application of analysis methods to the case study data, as described in Chapter 8. It shows the results from the testing of the draft framework of value in three community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia. Notably, this testing was essentially a pilot study aimed at identifying patterns of value, rather than aimed at drawing conclusions for the community radio sector as a whole. Values for community radio may be different elsewhere. The aim of the framework of value is not to generalise across the entire sector, but rather to point towards a contingency-based approach that shows how the framework can be a tool to identify individual station value systems.\textsuperscript{122} This Chapter will present the patterns of values that emerged from the data collection process, in order to see how, if at all, the identified values have been operationalised in the environment of community radio. It will look at the value profile across the three stations and at each station, and explore what conclusions can be deduced from the variations that emerge.

9.2 Validation of the Draft Framework of Value

The data has been mainly derived from a content analysis of the interviews with community radio station participants,\textsuperscript{123} although it also includes information derived from the audience focus groups.\textsuperscript{124} The analysis focused on positive mentions, by study participants, of the specific values from the theoretical framework. A positive mention is counted when a study participant mentions a specific value as an occurrence at their station. In the case of two specific values, (5d) audience reach and (4c) professional/amateur production values, the mentions might be discursive, but still highlight their importance. First, it was important to see the numbers of mentions of values from the theoretical framework, and second, the relative importance of

\textsuperscript{122} See 9.6 Towards a Contingency-Based Approach to Value for Community Radio (Chapter 9).
\textsuperscript{123} See 8.2 Qualitative Content Analysis: Validating the Framework (Chapter 8).
\textsuperscript{124} See 7.5.3 Field Interviews, and 7.5.4 Audience Focus Groups (Chapter 7).
values, according to the number of mentions, across all three stations and at individual stations. Third, it was also important to establish where values had been discursive rather than positive. Fourth, it was important to establish what values were not mentioned and any new emergent values. Figure 2 (Positive Mentions of Specific Values) depicts the total number of positive mentions of specific values across the three case study stations.\textsuperscript{125}

Figure 2: Positive Mentions of Specific Values (Summed Across Three Stations)

125 See 9.3 The Existing Framework of Values (Chapter 9), for a discussion of high level, medium level and low level mentions. See also 9.4 Emergent Values/Themes (Chapter 9).
9.3 The Existing Framework of Values

9.3.1 High Level Mentions of Specific Values

Based on Figure 2, the five highest mentioned specific values across the whole study are (the figure in brackets at the end of each value shows the number of mentions):

- (6c) Personal development and empowerment at a personal/group level (67);
- (1a) Connection between the media and local communities (46);
- (1d) Community development and social outcomes (44);
- (4c) Professional/amateur media production values (38);
- (3d) Internal democratisation and transparent governance (36).

These five specific values were mentioned the most across all three stations, which justifies their inclusion in any community radio framework of value. These specific values also give a strong indication of the priorities of participants at the three community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia. This thesis argues that these specific values, for the most part, originate from similar participatory motivations and this explains their dominance. Within the scope of this study, the data indicates that value within community radio is as much about participant motivations as an altruistic service catering to the wider listening community. This is a major finding of the study.

The highest mentioned specific value, (6c) personal development and empowerment at a personal/group level, strongly suggests that participation in community radio is not an altruistic activity. Study participants at all stations were quite frank in their assertions that often it was a purely selfish motivation that led to their involvement. There were definite personal incentives attached to participation in community radio when balanced against the medium mentioned values.\(^\text{126}\) This indicates that community radio is as much about the benefits of participation for the volunteers as the benefits for the listening community. Motivations of participation are examined by Kitty Van Vuuren (2002), and these results corroborate her contention that the benefits of social capital are a major motivation for community radio

\(^{126}\) See 9.3.2 Medium Level Mentions of Specific Values (Chapter 9).
participants. The motivations of community radio participants are revealed in greater detail in the case study summaries, in the ‘participation’ sections.\textsuperscript{127}

The second highest mentioned specific value, \textit{(1a) connection between the media and local communities}, indicates a belief in the benefits of community radio for the listening community. Community radio is filling a communication gap between the mainstream media and the wider community. There are echoes here of the much discussed public sphere of Jurgen Habermas, where it was proposed that the wider public could contribute to societal discourse on matters of the day.\textsuperscript{128} Volunteers often described disenchantment with the mainstream media, especially the commercial sector, as a site where their interests and concerns were largely ignored. This was especially the case for minority groups within society. Community radio offers a connection for those communities to and from the media. The high rating for this specific value indicates a strong desire for this connection among the community radio volunteers in this study.

There is a strong sense here that this specific value also originates from personal empowerment motivations. Thus, \textit{(1a) connection between the media and local communities} created by community radio is a way to enact \textit{(6c) personal development and empowerment} for the participants. Their belief in the power of a \textit{(1a) connection between the media and local communities} is likely to be impacted on by their own motivations for volunteering, which are documented in this study as largely personal incentive-based. Even though at first glance this specific value appears to be of benefit for the audience community, there is a high likelihood that it also benefits the participants in community radio.

The third highest mentioned specific value, \textit{(1d) community development and social outcomes}, indicates a strong belief by participants in the benefits of community radio for the listening community. In the case of 6RPH, \textit{(6c) personal development and empowerment at a personal/group level} was rated highest, and \textit{(1d) community development and social outcomes}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[127] See Appendices (Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio; Appendix 7: Case Study Summary for RTRFM; Appendix 8: Case Study Summary for Radio Fremantle).
\item[128] See Chapter 2: The Lens of the Public Sphere.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
was also rated highly.\textsuperscript{129} Although motivations for participation were strongly personal, there was also a belief that their contributions were beneficial to their listening community. However, at a station where the primary activity of volunteers is to read newspapers and magazines on-air for the print-handicapped community, there was a fair amount of personal satisfaction gained by volunteers from doing a fairly mundane task, as well as they could. Interestingly, volunteers knew their work was valuable to the print-handicapped community, hence the high mentions, but none cited this as a primary motivation for volunteering.

The fourth highest mentioned specific value, \textit{(4c) professional/amateur media production values}, further highlights this personal motivation theme. This is a largely discursive value in the framework where opinion in community radio, over the importance of professional production values,\textsuperscript{130} was contested in the earlier analysis.\textsuperscript{131} The contested and sometimes divisive nature of this specific value is reinforced by the high mentions. Participants at 6RPH generally bemoaned the low and more amateur production values that were the norm. Participants at RTRFM generally have a more professional approach to broadcasting, while at Radio Fremantle the broadcasting standards are generally low. However, what is more interesting is that participants were aware that their broadcasting professionalism was a matter of their personal pride. Participants at RTRFM and 6RPH were especially keen to explain that they wanted to do a good job for their own sense of achievement. The reasoning behind the high mentions of this specific value again point to the personal motivations of participants.

The fifth highest mentioned specific value, \textit{(3d) Internal democratisation and transparent governance}, indicates that community radio participants felt that this was a desirable aspect to their involvement. At RTRFM volunteers and staff alike talked about a palpable sense of family at the station, which was a by-product of their more collective form of station governance. At 6RPH volunteers suggested that the flatter personnel structure contributed to a relaxed and enjoyable working environment. This specific value was not

\textsuperscript{129} See Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio (Appendices).
\textsuperscript{130} Professional production values are defined as those demonstrated by the mainstream media.
\textsuperscript{131} See 6.6 Community Radio and Professionalism (Chapter 6).
mentioned much by volunteers at Radio Fremantle, but there was a positive sense that volunteers were left to run their own shows without any interference. This suggests some satisfaction with their personal autonomy, which was also apparent at RTRFM and 6RPH. This specific value is also strongly linked to the personal motivations of community radio participants, with some participants suggesting the ‘alternative’ work environment was a deciding factor in their participation. In tune with the disenchantment of many participants with the content and style of mainstream media, there was also dissatisfaction with mainstream corporate and hierarchical workplace structures.

In summary, there is strong evidence demonstrated by the five highest mentioned specific values that the value of community radio at the grassroots level significantly resides in the personal benefits for community radio participants, in addition to community values. While other more altruistic motives geared towards the wider community are cited as important, most participants were happy to state it was more about the benefits they personally accrued from participation. This sobering conclusion also adds more weight to the validation of the draft framework of value for community radio, developed and employed by this thesis. The conclusion drawn from these highest mentioned specific values is probably unsurprising considering the limited scope of the study. The data primarily stems from participants at three community radio stations in the relatively affluent and politically stable city of Perth, Western Australia. At this time, there are not so many community issues compared to other times and/or places. It can also be argued that this reflects the increasing narcissism most evident in recent decades in Western societies (Twenge and Campbell 2010). This is a small study based on three stations, but the conclusion from the data that the ‘personal’ outweighs the ‘political’ suggests an interesting realignment of community radio values.

132 The data also contained commentary from three small audience focus groups at each station; however, this commentary was small in comparison to the community radio participant data.
9.3.2 Medium Level Mentions of Specific Values

As shown in Figure 2 (Positive Mentions of Specific Values), the following values received medium level mentions in descending order:

- (6a) Citizen’s participation (27);
- (3a) Alternative dialogues, voices and content (24);
- (1b) Represent communities not represented by mainstream media (20);
- (2b) Content diversity (19);
- (5b) Specialist representation (18);
- (6b) Communications managed by the community (16);
- (1c) Community information and promotion (15);
- (3d) Audience reach (14);
- (5c) Generalist representation (10);
- (2d) Foreign language content (9);
- (4a) Independence in programming (9);
- (2c) Diversity of viewpoints- ideological diversity (8);
- (5a) Representation of the community (7);
- (1f) A resource for community cultural production (6).

The occurrence of these medium mentioned specific values across the stations supports the inclusion these in the final framework of value. They reflect many of the notions mentioned in the theoretical literature related to community radio. Their medium level status suggests a naturally occurring diversity of perceptions about the value of community radio from stakeholders. This has been previously discussed by theorists, and expanded on by Order (2011), in “Community Radio and the Notion of Value: a Divergent and Contested Theoretical Terrain”. This is an expected field outcome.

These medium mentioned specific values also complement the story of value from the highest mentioned specific values, whose benefits were more participant-centred and tend to favour the benefits for the wider community as coming from community radio. This is not surprising since the data sample is biased towards community radio participants, but it does

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133 These specific values were mentioned more than five times, but were not in the top five highest mentions across the stations.

134 See Chapter 4: The Lens of Contested Value.
emphasise the story of value for community radio as being about both the participants and the wider listening community. The occurrence of these values illustrates the usefulness of the framework as an evaluative model, and also shows that the common values of community radio articulated by theorists and practitioners in the literature are evident at the grassroots level.

In summary, the medium mentioned specific values, first, supports their continued inclusion in the theoretical framework, second, emphasises the traditional benefits of community radio for the wider listening community, and third, reinforces the literature, which paints a diverse picture of the notion of value for community radio (Order 2011).

9.3.3 Low Level Mentions of Specific Values

As shown in Figure 2 (Positive Mentions of Specific Values), the following values received the lowest mentions in descending order:

- (3b) Credible source alternative/local content (5);
- (3c) Political media alternative (5);
- (2a) Promote harmony and diversity in a culturally diverse Australian society (4);
- (4b) Not-for-profit status (4);
- (3c) Alternative media literacy (3);
- (1e) Participatory democracy in society (1);
- (4d) Audience participation (0);
- (3f) Oppositional power (0).

These low mentioned specific values are a counterpoint to the highest mentioned specific values, and confirm that the personal outweighs the political as far as the community radio participants in this study are concerned.

The specific value, (3c) political media alternative, achieved five mentions in this study. Four of these mentions came from RTRFM, which caters to the alternative community, covering alternative music, arts, politics, culture, sexuality, ethnicity and current affairs. There is likely to be some value placed on the station as a political media alternative, but four mentions from fifteen interviews is surprisingly small. However, the lack of any other substantive occurrences of this specific value suggest that the study participants are generally
not that concerned. In an earlier analysis of community radio theory,\textsuperscript{135} (3f) \textit{oppositional power} (oppositional to the mainstream), is proposed as valuable to community radio and a potential way to drive progressive social movements. This resonates with the idea of a (3c) \textit{political media alternative}, but in this study there are no mentions of this specific value. Progressive social movements may find \textit{oppositional power} a useful rallying call in less fortunate locales, but in the relatively affluent and politically stable location of Perth, Western Australia, there is little need for those sentiments. This will be discussed further, in relation to the need for a contingency-based approach to select appropriate value criteria (from within the framework) when evaluating any specific station. It would be useful to consider the type of community (affluent, political stability, and so on) when constructing a subset of values from the comprehensive framework for use in evaluation of a specific community station.

The above discussion holds true for the remaining low mentioned specific values, (2a) \textit{promote harmony and diversity in a culturally diverse Australian society}, (4b) \textit{not-for-profit status}, (3c) \textit{alternative media literacy}, (1e) \textit{participatory democracy in society}, and (4d) \textit{audience participation}. Their importance as values for community radio is relegated by a sense that some of these values might be taken for granted in Australian society, and that unlike the earlier highest mention specific values, they offer no immediate benefit to community radio participants.

### 9.3.4 Analysis of Mentions of Specific Values

In summary, reflecting on the high level, medium level and low level mentions of specific values from the theoretical framework for community radio, there are a number of pertinent conclusions to draw about the utility of the theoretical framework of value for community radio.

First, the highest mentioned specific values show that for the community radio stations in this study the value of community radio resides significantly in the personal benefits or satisfaction derived from participation in community radio. Second, the medium mentioned values reinforce the traditional notions of value and benefits of community radio for the wider

\textsuperscript{135} See 4.4: The Value of Oppositional Power (Chapter 4).
listening community, and reinforce the literature that paints a diverse picture of the notion of value for community radio (Order 2011). The occurrence of both the highest and medium mentioned values from the case studies validates their inclusion in the framework of value.

Third, low mentioned specific values serve as a reinforcement of the conclusions drawn from the highest level mention values, confirming that the personal motivations outweigh the political motivations, as far as the participants in this study are concerned. These low mentioned specific values could perhaps be culled from the framework.136

9.4. Emergent Values/Themes

9.4.1 Nature of Emergent Values/Themes

Values or themes in the data that were not easily categorised in the framework of value for community radio were termed ‘emergent’, which adds to the language of value for community radio. These new values or themes normally emerged in response to interview conversation regarding improvements to station operation. The case study summaries contain more detailed recommendations from study participants about potential station policy directions.137 However, for the purposes of evaluating the draft framework, the emergent themes are classified here by their function. Figure 3 (Emerging Themes, Values or Issues at Individual Stations) shows the emerging themes, values or issues. The values in the draft framework were arranged in six groups and numbered from 1a through to 6e,138 hence these emerging themes, values or issues are numbered 7a through to 7f.

136 See 9.5.2 Superfluous Specific Values (Chapter 9).
137 See Appendices (Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio; Appendix 7: Case Study Summary for RTRFM; Appendix 8: Case Study Summary for Radio Fremantle).
138 See 7.3.2 Consolidation Process (Chapter 7).
These emerging themes, values or ideas can be arranged in four categories, in order to show how they would function in the framework of value for community radio. These categories are ‘aspirational’, ‘critical’, ‘contingent’ and ‘new’. First, they could be termed ‘aspirational’, where study participants have perceived something they consider could be improved about the operation of the station, which could provide evidence regarding the future development of station policy. This is the primary feature of these emerging themes. Second, they could be termed ‘critical’, where study participants could have an impact on the establishment of value, especially where some criticism of station operation is apparent. In this way, emerging themes

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139 See Appendices (Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio; Appendix 7: Case Study Summary for RTRFM; Appendix 8: Case Study Summary for Radio Fremantle). These case study summaries contain more detailed recommendations from study participants about potential station policy-making directions.
may contradict an existing positive mention of a specific value from the framework. It may be necessary to weigh up the positive mentions against the negative mentions, and consider the context to gain a clearer picture. Third, they could be termed ‘contingent’, where study participants could be dependent on other characteristics of the radio station and may reveal insights into a taxonomy for community radio. Fourth, they could be termed ‘new’, where study participants identity specific values for possible inclusion in the framework of value. These emergent values stem from the case studies of actual community radio practice and literature review.

9.4.2 (7f) Governance Dissatisfaction

At 6RPH there were seven mentions of (7f) governance dissatisfaction, especially around the reporting and accountability of the board. There were a number of suggestions from volunteers to improve this situation. Notably, there were no mentions by participants from the other two stations. This emerging theme impacts the establishment of the existing specific value, (3d) Internal democratisation and transparent governance, which had 13 positive mentions. This emerging theme can be described as ‘aspirational’ and ‘critical’, but does not qualify as an entirely new specific value. This is more concerned with evidence to improve the operation of the station. The negative mentions might need to be addressed, as a possible improvement within the station, if there is substantive evidence.

9.4.3 (7e) Station Internal Community

At Radio Fremantle there were seven mentions of concern about the lack of any vibrant (7e) station internal community, and some participants felt that this affected the station in other negative ways. The case study summary suggests that there is a lack of coherence about the station identity in the community. There is also a sense that this lack of internal community and coherence is a product of the generalist nature of the station. By catering to so many different niche communities, the station has become more of a community resource space than a coherently identifiable and marketable radio station. Thus, in this instance, (7e) station internal

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140 See 9.6 Towards a Contingency-Based Approach to Value for Community Radio (Chapter 9).
141 See Appendix 8: Case Study Summary for Radio Fremantle (Appendices).
community is potentially contingent on the generalist nature of the station. There were a number of suggestions from participants to improve this concern. In contrast to RTRFM where some participants mentioned a palpable notion of ‘family’ at the station, this stated lack of internal community at Radio Fremantle, which is important to community radio stations, suggests that this theme is a brand new specific value. The emerging theme of (7e) station internal community can be added to the framework of value.

9.4.4 (7d) Audience Feedback

Also at Radio Fremantle, there were four mentions that mechanisms for (7d) audience feedback about the station could be improved. There was one mention of the same at RTRFM. This emerging theme can be described as ‘aspirational’, but it might also impact on the existing specific value of (1a) connection between the media and local communities, which had 15 positive mentions at Radio Fremantle and 19 at RTRFM. The positive mentions vastly outweigh the negative mentions. As such, the negative mentions about (7d) audience feedback appear to be an ‘aspirational’ emerging theme and point to a recommendation for future station policy-making in this area of station operations. However, since (7d) audience feedback is considered part of the existing specific value of (1a) connection between the media and local communities it does not warrant inclusion as a new value.

9.4.5 (7c) Staff and Volunteer Disparity

At 6RPH and RTRFM (7c) Staff and volunteer disparity was a concern for some study participants, but in very different ways. At 6RPH there were suggestions that management treated the volunteers differently to staff. This was linked to earlier concerns about governance methods and suggestions that existing volunteer skills were not being managed effectively. There were ideas about how to improve this situation. At RTRFM there has been on-going concern that evening and weekend volunteers were being left out of the station governance communications as they rarely met the daytime staff members, so their concerns were not well represented in station operations and policy-making. The station manager at RTRFM recognised
the different expectations of staff and volunteers, and was looking into ways to improve communications.

This emerging theme at 6RPH was linked to (7f) governance dissatisfaction at 6RPH, and impacts the existing specific value of (3d) internal democratisation and transparent governance, which had 13 positive mentions at 6RPH. As such, it would appear to be an ‘aspirational’ issue that may be solved with future station policy-making. At RTRFM participants described the situation as improving. For these reasons, it would be appropriate to describe this emerging theme as a ‘critical’ and ‘aspirational’ issue and something for future station policy-making, rather than a new value to be added to the framework.

9.4.6 (7b) Marketing and Publicity
At Radio Fremantle there were eight mentions of a lack of (7b) marketing and publicity about the station in the community. The participants felt the station profile or branding in the community could be improved. The case study summary reveals that station branding appears to be indeterminate due to the generalist nature of the station. This emerging theme is ‘aspirational’ in that there is hope for improvement in future station policy-making, but is also contingent on the generalist nature of the station. Generalist stations who operate as umbrella resources for various niche community groups may ultimately present no clear overall station identity. They are challenging to market and publicise to a traditional radio audience demographic. Specialist stations have a comparably easier task as their target audience is usually smaller and largely determined by their specialisation. The emerging theme of (7b) marketing and publicity would seem ideal for a new specific value, as the effectiveness of this would appear to be essential and valuable for any community radio station. However, the extent to which this is perceived as a value will be contingent upon the nature of the station.

9.4.7 (7a) Station Resource Improvement
Finally, all three stations indicated that they could benefit from more funding for (7a) station resource improvement. These ranged from large items, such as owning their own building, to

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142 See Appendix 8: Case Study Summary for Radio Fremantle (Appendices).
smaller items, such as more space for their music library. Funding is an on-going ‘aspirational’ issue for the community radio sector rather than a new value.

9.5 Contribution to Revised Framework

9.5.1 Additional Specific Values

The themes that emerged from the station case studies that did not exist in the draft framework of value were (7e) station internal community and (7b) marketing and publicity. These were themes that community radio participants felt strongly about as potentially valuable aspects of community radio. In both cases, the themes were categorised as ‘aspirational’.

In the case of (7e) station internal community, the participants felt the station could benefit if it worked towards a more vibrant and inclusive community. As discussed above, the generalist nature of the station was part of the reason for this lack, and the benefits of a more dynamic and cohesive station community would flow through positively, benefiting other areas of station operation. A comparison to RTRFM, where the internal community is a strong value, made it clear that this was a value worthy of inclusion in the framework of value.

Notably, this notion of internal community as a value, appears in the literature, but in a slightly different context. Van Vuuren (2002, 101) examines the individual motivations of Australian participants within a community station and introduces social capital as a benefit for participants. The framing of the discussion, while not explicitly excluding benefits for the station and the wider listening community, focuses more on the themes of participation in networks and reciprocity (benefits for the participants) as measures of social capital. In this study, social capital is part of the draft framework of values, included in the description of (1d) community development and social outcomes. However, similar to the literature, the description of the specific value in the theoretical framework focuses on benefits for the participants. The

143 See Appendix 8: Case Study Summary for Radio Fremantle (Appendices).
144 Definitions of social capital are not universal. According to Pierre Bourdieu (1986, 248) “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition.” According to Robert Putnam (2000, 19), “social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.”
lack of social capital at Radio Fremantle is more likely the result of a lack of a vibrant (7e) station internal community. This adds weight to the inclusion of (7e) station internal community as a specific value in the framework, enhancing the existing values.

Interestingly, the notion that there is value attached to a vibrant station internal community also flows outward to the external listening community. Some participants felt that this lack of internal community was not confined to the station but was a general issue affecting the wider station operations, in particular, negatively impacting Radio Fremantle’s identity within the community. The perceived lack of internal cohesion and identity as an internal station community was reported similarly by listeners as an incoherent external station brand or ethos. This indicates that internal and external station functions are not separate and in some cases intrinsically linked. Notably, this is reiterated by the emergence of another specific value.

In the case of (7b) marketing and publicity, the participants at Radio Fremantle felt the station had no clear identity, branding or profile within the wider Fremantle community. Although this lack of identity is potentially contingent upon the generalist nature of the station, there was space for improvement. This theme is related to existing specific values, (1a) connection between the media and local communities and (5d) audience reach, but neither of these completely addresses the concerns of participants at Radio Fremantle. Their concern was with what they perceived as a fundamental flaw in station operations, which affected many other aspects of the station. They had found anecdotally, through their work as presenters and interviewers at the station, that the station had a low profile in the community. Few in the community knew of the existence of the station.

This speaks to a larger argument about the funding of community radio and the benefits to the wider listening community, as discussed previously. According to the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC 2007, 51), “donors [to community

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145 See Appendix 8: Serving the Radio Fremantle Communities pages 350-352
146 See 9.6.4.5 RTRFM: (3d) Internal Democratisation and Transparent Governance for further discussion on station ethos as a potential type within a taxonomy for community radio. Station ethos has the potential to impact this notion of a station internal community.
147 See 4.1 Introduction (Chapter 4).
radio] need to know if their money has been put to good use.” What value will donors and other stakeholders receive from community radio through their funding? In this context, AMARC (ibid, 50) discusses the “social impact of community radio”, the “effectiveness of community radio” and “evidence that community radio works.” In this instance, where Radio Fremantle is largely unknown in the community, the notion of social impact, effectiveness or “evidence that community radio works” (for the wider listening community) is questionable (ibid). Thus, the value of (7b) marketing and publicity of the station instantly becomes apparent. It is for this reason that this is included as a specific value in the revised framework of value for community radio.

9.5.2 Superfluous Specific Values

The case studies also showed existing values from the draft framework that apparently held no value for the study participants. These are the low mentioned specific values discussed previously, (1e) participatory democracy in society, (4d) audience participation and (3f) oppositional power.\textsuperscript{148} These received little or no attention from the study participants. Their absence from the station case studies is surmised as follows. First, the scope of the study considers three community radio stations in the relatively conservative, affluent and politically stable location of Perth, Western Australia. The specific values of (1e) participatory democracy in society and (3f) oppositional power are unlikely notions of value for study participants in this location. Second, (4d) audience participation is unlikely to figure highly in a study that primarily focuses on community radio participants. Also, (4d) audience participation is either taken-for-granted from their position as participants or offers no extra benefit to them as existing participants.

The low mentioned specific values of (1e) participatory democracy in society, (4d) audience participation and (3f) oppositional power are not necessarily superfluous in all situations. However, they could be removed from a framework of value for community radio that, first, considers similar stations and locations as this study, and second, assesses value from

\textsuperscript{148} See 9.3.3 Low Level Mentions of Specific Values (Chapter 9).
a predominantly participant point of view. However, the objective of using the framework of value for community radio resides in this very fact, that it does identify what values are important to the given station and thus identifies appropriate evaluation criteria. As such, it was decided not to cull these specific values from the framework, since in other locations they may be relevant.

9.6 Towards a Contingency-Based Approach to Value for Community Radio

9.6.1 Basis of the Contingency-Based Approach

The contingency-based approach to value for community radio proposed by this thesis is borrowed from Turk (2001), in “Towards Contingent Usability Evaluation of WWW Sites”. While Turk focuses on websites as the objects of evaluation, the methodology can be utilised effectively for community radio stations. According to Turk (ibid), “The most significant set of usability dimensions [evaluation parameters] is contingent upon the characteristics of the intended users and the purpose of the WWW site.” Similar to websites, community radio stations operate with the characteristics of the users in mind (participants and listeners). Any analysis should consider what evaluation parameters are appropriate. User characteristics and site purpose offer a taxonomy for WWW sites. They help define WWW site types and, according to Turk, this taxonomy helps define a contingency table where appropriate evaluation criteria would be selected.

In this thesis, the contingency-based approach is used to propose that the perceived value can be contingent on factors unique to the community radio station. These factors will exist in a taxonomy for community radio. As suggested previously, the generalist and specialist community radio types are potentially important in a taxonomy. These types may determine some of the useability dimensions for community radio. For example, it would be appropriate for a specialist station to have evaluation criteria that focus on serving their single niche audience, and for a generalist station to have evaluation criteria that focus on enabling access to broadcasting by a wide range of audiences. Turk (2001) suggests that this is a “heuristic

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149 See 2.5.2.1 Community Radio Taxonomy (Chapter 2).
evaluation approach”, where the evaluation criteria are potentially determined or ‘learnt’ for a community radio type from a taxonomy. Generalist and specialist are proposed as initial community radio types, but this thesis concludes that other types are possible.

The draft framework of value developed from the existing literature forms the initial evaluation criteria. Testing the draft framework of value in the three community radio stations identified the dominant perceptions of value from study participants, and thus the most useful evaluation criteria. This potentially offers a station an evaluation optimisation procedure (Turk 2001). The taxonomy dimensions of the community station can be indentified and the appropriate evaluation measures can be selected. This will also yield insights about the usefulness of a taxonomy of community radio. An examination of the highest rated individual station mentions in this research tested this approach and provides conclusions on the potential effectiveness of a contingency-based approach to value for community radio. 

9.6.2 Indicative Data

Notably, the measurement of mentions (utterances) from study participants is an indicative measure rather than a rigorous measure. Due to the circumstances at the individual stations, the number of interviews conducted varied a little from station to station. The total mentions (utterances) at each station also varied a little. The mentions that were about a specific value from the draft framework or an emerging value or theme also varied, somewhat more significantly. The qualitative nature of open-ended interviews meant it was unlikely that different study respondents would necessarily be equally as cogent or concise when discussing value within community radio. Interestingly, although 6RPH had an average number of interviews compared to the other two stations, it had the highest number of value mentions. Anecdotally, this researcher would suggest that the more mature study respondents at 6RPH

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150 See 9.6.4 The Highest Rated Individual Station Mentions (Chapter 9).
151 The total number of interviews conducted at each station: 6RPH – 12; RTRFM – 13; Radio Fremantle – 10. See 7.5.3 Field Interviews (Chapter 7).
152 The total mentions (utterances) at each station: 6RPH – 181; RTRFM – 165; Radio Fremantle – 153.
153 The total mentions of a specific value or emerging theme at each station: 6RPH – 152; RTRFM – 115; Radio Fremantle – 107.
were generally more articulate than participants at the other two stations. While the number of interviews and the number of value mentions varies a little across the three studies, the figures are within similar parameters. For this reason the conclusions of this study are described as indicative, but still strongly point towards a contingency-based approach to value for community radio.

9.6.3 Generalism and Specialism

The theoretical analysis section in this study suggested that a taxonomy of community radio may be a useful adjunct tool, helping to refine a theoretical framework of value for community radio and to offer a contingency-based approach. The contingency-based framework of questions would be contingent on station characteristics, for example initially, whether a community station is a generalist or a specialist station. While there are likely to be specific values that occur across all types of community radio, some specific values will be confined to stations of those types and in some cases there may be overlap between types. The data from this research corroborates the use of a contingency-based approach to evaluate the value of particular community radio stations.

Figure 4 (Positive Mentions of Specific Values at Individual Stations) compares the pattern of values across all three stations. It demonstrates that for each specific value from the theoretical framework, there is almost always one community station in the study that has significantly more mentions of that value. The mentions of values are not distributed evenly across the three stations. For example, the highest number of mentions of (5b) specialist representation (12) was at 6RPH, which is not surprising for a station that specialises in content for the niche print-handicapped community. Their main objective is to cater to the specialist needs of that community. However, RTRFM has a different mission and thus there was a lower number of mentions of (5b) specialist representation (6). RTRFM is a hybrid station type (both specialist and generalist), and caters to its specialist ‘alternative’ community during the week.

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154 See 2.5.2.1 Community Radio Taxonomy and 2.5.2.2 Real World Examples and Community Radio Taxonomy (Chapter 2).

155 This can be seen as the logical equivalent of different key evaluation criteria for websites of different types (Turk 2001).
and has a more generalist approach during the evenings and on weekends. This blend of priorities is reflected in the data for RTRFM, with six mentions of specialist representation and two for generalist. The data appears to approximately reflect the ratio of specialist and generalist programming at RTRFM. By stark contrast Radio Fremantle had no mentions of (5b) specialist representation, which is not surprising as it is a generalist station. This study adopts Van Vuuren’s (2003, 2) distinction between generalist and specialist as powerful defining types within a community radio taxonomy.
Figure 4: Positive Mentions of Specific Values at Individual Stations
The mentions of (2d) foreign language content were entirely confined to Radio Fremantle. This is an obvious yet pertinent example, because Radio Fremantle was the only station in the study offering foreign language programmes. Part of the mission of Radio Fremantle is to serve the different language groups in Fremantle, and thus part of its value resides in the achievement of that goal. However, it would be unrealistic to expect this to appear as a specific value for 6RPH or RTRFM in the case study data. This example again points towards the use of a contingency-based framework of value for community radio (Turk 2001). Interestingly, (2d) foreign language content is likely to be broadcast content at generalist stations.

In summary, Figure 4 reveals patterns of perceived value that attach to different types of stations. Given the variations it is possible to speculate that in addition to revealing relevant differences between the three stations in the sample, they may show the value of the model in defining other stations in a similar way. They are almost the station DNA. However, from the data of this sample of three stations, one cannot state that generalism and specialism alone form a definitive dimension in the proposed taxonomy. Future studies may corroborate these community radio types where similar DNA patterns emerge, but also propose additions. An examination of the highest rated station mentions in this study may also propose additions to a taxonomy for community radio.

As noted previously, the analysis of mentions for the case study stations indicated less than expected concern for community aspects. This was posited as a result of the type of communities found in affluent and politically stable Perth, Western Australia. It is worth exploring in future research whether the dimension of community type could be included in a contingency-based approach, as well as radio station type.

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Turk (2001) considers website usability evaluation. Evaluation of a website should consider the objective of the website and whether that objective is being reached. Like community radio, all websites are unique, but can be classified through a taxonomy (including objectives). The evaluation of value for community radio could be contingent on its objectives.
9.6.4 The Highest Rated Individual Station Mentions

9.6.4.1 Identification of the Highest Rated Mentions

Figure 5 (6RPH Value Mentions), Figure 6 (RTRFM Value Mentions) and Figure 7 (Radio Fremantle Value Mentions) show the station-by-station analyses of the value mentions from the draft framework of value for community radio. They demonstrate where the highest mentioned values occur for individual stations. A taxonomy that establishes specialist stations and generalist stations as useful types may go some way to validating a contingency-based approach to value for community radio. However, it would also be useful to analyse some of the other high mentions of specific values for further insight. Examining some of the higher examples from these groups may add weight to an argument for a contingency-based approach to value for community radio and add to a taxonomy for community radio.

Figure 5: 6RPH Value Mentions

[Diagram showing various value mentions with 6RPH values]
Figure 6: RTRFM Value Mentions

- Specialist Representation (5b).
- Represent communities not represented by mainstream media (1b).
- Content diversity (2b).
- Professional/amateur media production values (4c).
- Citizen’s participation (6a).
- Community development and social outcomes (1d).
- Alternative dialogues, voices & content (3a).
- Personal development and empowerment at a personal/group level (6c).
- Connection between the media and local communities (1a).
- Internal democratisation & transparent governance (3d).

Figure 7: Radio Fremantle Value Mentions

- Participatory democracy in society (1e).
- Promote harmony and diversity in a culturally-diverse Australian community (2a).
- A resource for community cultural production (1f).
- Diversity of viewpoints - ideological diversity (2c).
- Content diversity (2b).
- Foreign language content (2d).
- Community information and community promotion (1c).
- Represent communities not represented by mainstream media (1b).
- Community development and social outcomes (1d).
- Connection between the media and local communities (1a).
9.6.4.2 6RPH: (6c) Personal Development/Empowerment at a Personal/Group Level (36)\textsuperscript{157}

The logic of a contingency-based approach is emphasised by this high occurring value, when the reasons for such a high rating are revealed. Most of the volunteers at 6RPH were retired or semi-retired and the average age was over 65. Many of the participants in the case study discussed their participation at 6RPH in a similar fashion. Participation at the station was explicitly explained as a strong sense of empowerment, well-being or purpose in their retirement.\textsuperscript{158} The high level mention of the specific value of (6c) personal development and empowerment at a personal/group level is potentially dependent on the age of the volunteers at 6RPH than at the other two stations. This example highlights a specific perceived sense of value at this community radio station that may be partly contingent on the volunteer age.\textsuperscript{159}

9.6.4.3 6RPH: (1d) Community Development and Social Outcomes (23)

This relationship between perceived value and station characteristics persists for the second highest mentioned value of (1d) community development and social outcomes at 6RPH. The participants felt that their service was particularly valuable for the development and social enhancement of the print-handicapped community. The broadcasting of daily newspapers and magazines is a great help to those who struggle to read. It can reduce the social isolation caused by their reading challenges. This social and community benefit for the print-handicapped community is the main operational objective for 6RPH. It is no surprise that this value has high level mentions at this station. This has a bearing on the community radio taxonomy and station contingencies. The nature of a specialist community station would suggest that there is substantive knowledge about the development and social needs of that community within the

\textsuperscript{157} The figure in brackets at the end of each value shows number of mentions at the individual station.

\textsuperscript{158} See Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio (Appendices).

\textsuperscript{159} Van Vuuren (2002, 106) discusses a case that identifies volunteer age, a cross-section of age groups, as a factor in the generation of social capital. The definitions of social capital and (6c) personal development and empowerment are not altogether mutually exclusive. See 2.6.4 Democratic Governance, and 2.6.5 Social Capital (Chapter 2).
station. The community station is serving those needs, which are more likely to be focused and quantifiable at a specialist station than a generalist station. Station specialism is a predictor of a high value in this area, reinforcing a developing argument for the use of a contingency-based approach to a framework of value for community radio.

While this example definitely emphasises the use of specialist and generalist types in a taxonomy for community radio, there is also a validation of more unique station characteristics. Volunteers and staff at 6RPH often spoke of the station as a disability service provider rather than a community radio station. Radio was purely a convenient medium to reach theprint-handicapped community. In this way, the value of (1d) community development and social outcomes among the study participants, was also partly contingent on the niche needs or characteristics of their listening community. It might be a specialist community but there were other factors at play. To further advance the contingency-based approach, any community radio taxonomy could include audience characteristics as a type. Catering to those audience characteristics, through the station operations, would have a substantial impact on any perceived value for the station.

9.6.4.4 6RPH: (4c) Professional/Amateur Production Values (20)

Another high mentioned specific value at 6RPH was (4c) professional/amateur production values. This is more a discursive value in the framework compared to other values because, as discussed in the theoretical analysis section, opinion was contested over the importance of professional production values in community radio. There were a number of reasons for its’ high mention rate. First, the broadcasting process at 6RPH was hampered by old and obsolete technology and dated audio resources. Second, where station participants were mainly retired and from a pre-digital era, their enthusiasm for learning to use broadcast technology was generally low. Third, the majority of production tasks were conducted by one under-resourced

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160 See Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio (Appendices).
161 See 9.3.3 Low Level Mentions of Specific Values, and 9.6.3 Generalism and Specialism (Chapter 9).
162 See 6.6 Community Radio and Professionalism (Chapter 6).
163 Professional production values are defined as those demonstrated by the mainstream media.
164 Audio resources refer to station promos, stings, program promos, idents and library music.
part-time member of staff. As a result, production values at 6RPH were considered in need of some enhancement, and both staff and volunteers were aware of the potential effect this could have on the listener’s satisfaction. This example from 6RPH reiterates that the age of the volunteers at 6RPH had some impact. This high mention value also suggests that it is partly contingent on station resources, allocation of funding and a likely perceived lack of funding. This example adds to the evidence suggesting that value for community radio is contingent on other station factors.

9.6.4.5 RTRFM: (3d) Internal Democratisation and Transparent Governance (20)

RTRFM has been described in this research as a hybrid station, whereby the weekday daytime programming focuses on their specialist alternative audience, and the weekday evenings and weekends has a more generalist approach. However, their station catch-line is “RTRFM – The Sound Alternative” (RTRFM 2012), and the station mission is slanted more towards their specialist alternative listening community than a generalist brief. They pride themselves on providing alternative (to the mainstream) music, arts, current affairs and culture, and as part of this alternative ethos, there is also a strong commitment to alternative governance within the station. This is often cited as a reason to participate at RTRFM, and described as a strong sense of the ‘RTRFM family’.165 The highest mentions of any specific value at RTRFM was (3d) internal democratisation and transparent governance. The perception of this value as important for community radio is contingent upon the type of people attracted to alternative culture or those disillusioned with mainstream media and culture. This also flows through to the listening community to who are likely to share similar alternative values. The high mentions of this value at RTRFM not only supports the inclusion of audience characteristics as a type in a community radio taxonomy, as discussed previously,166 but adds a possible new type of station ethos. This example further emphasises that a contingency-based approach to value for community radio may be an effective strategy.

165 See Appendix 7: Case Study Summary for RTRFM (Appendices).
166 See 9.6.4.3 6RPH: (1d) Community Development and Social Outcomes (23) (Chapter 9).
9.6.4.6 RTRFM: (3a) Alternative Dialogues, Voices and Content (14)

Since alternative music, arts, current affairs and culture are part of the station ethos at RTRFM, it is hardly surprising that the specific value of (3a) alternative dialogues, voices and content has high level mentions. Participants at RTRFM perceive their station as providing a real alternative to mainstream radio content. Their passion for this mission is palpable. Study participants spoke of increasing frustration and disillusionment with the mainstream media. They felt mainstream media did not represent their interests or the interests of the wider population of Western Australia. These sentiments were not all about an alternative side of culture but also about a representation of local culture. They felt local music, local arts and local culture was not adequately represented by the mainstream. RTRFM has a valuable role on the airwaves. Although the notion of alternative is a strong idea in the literature across community radio in general, this study shows it has only generated significant support from a station whose ethos embraces the notion of alternative. Radio Fremantle or 6RPH participants showed few mentions of this specific value compared to RTRFM. The high mentions of this specific value for RTRFM adds further support for a contingency-based approach to value for community radio but also supports the potential inclusion of station ethos as a type in a community radio taxonomy.

9.6.4.7 Radio Fremantle: (1a) Connection Between Media and Local Communities (15)

Radio Fremantle serves the geographical area of Fremantle, in Western Australia. It is a generalist community radio station catering to the niche communities of Fremantle. A large portion of the weekly programming is allocated to various language and ethnic groups that broadcast from the station, primarily to their own small communities. The station also services other communities of interest, including local music, specific genres, religious, Indigenous, trade union, health, film enthusiast, sports and current affairs. The station mission is focused on enabling access to the airwaves for communities of interest from Fremantle who are keen to broadcast. The station case study revealed some long standing connections with interest groups
from the community. It was often the case that the innate longevity of the more established local community groups and associations meant that connections with the station were lasting. They were not purely reliant on individuals to retain and develop relationships. The more established community groups would also sometimes have ‘their own program’ via the sale of airtime. Businesses from the community interest group may use the airtime to focus their sponsorship at their own community audience more effectively. These kinds of arrangements vary between groups in negotiation with station management but served to reinforce and develop relationships with the community. Radio Fremantle is more akin to an “umbrella” station, housing many mini-stations, broadcasting to their own mini-communities.

The highest mentioned specific value at Radios Fremantle was (1a) connection between the media and local communities. The study participants were primarily members of these mini-communities representing their respective groups. This example from Radio Fremantle does not suggest a new type for inclusion in a taxonomy for community radio but it does provide further support for the generalist type, as discussed previously, and adds to the growing evidence for a contingency-based approach to value for community radio. However, Radio Fremantle is not strictly a generalist station and is perhaps better classified as an “umbrella” station serving many niche. Perhaps “umbrella” is a new station type or classification, adding another dimension to the generalist type.

9.6.4.8 Radio Fremantle: (1d) Community Development and Social Outcomes (11)

The same study participants from the communities of interest broadcasting at Radio Fremantle also perceived the specific value of (1d) community development and social outcomes as a high priority for the station. The (1a) connection between the media and local communities enabled this specific value. Radio station participants often attended community association events, sometimes in a broadcast capacity or presenters were able to promote community events on-air, promote community opportunities, read community service announcements or arrange local guest appearances on a radio show. The relationship between the station and the local

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167 See Appendix 8: Case Study Summary for Radio Fremantle (Appendices).
168 See 9.6.3 Generalism and Specialism (Chapter 9).
community was an example of a positive symbiotic arrangement, where both the community and the station were helping each other to develop and often facilitate positive social outcomes for all involved. As the second highest mentioned value at the station, it was clearly important to the study participants, and the sheer number of communities resourced by Radio Fremantle may also raise the awareness of the value. In contrast, at RTRFM, the same specific value only rated as the fifth highest specific value. In support of the argument for a contingency-based approach to value for community radio, the high mentions is likely symptomatic of the number of different communities represented by the generalist station.

9.6.4.9 Summary of the Highest Rated Individual Station Mentions

The above seven examples of high mentioned specific values at individual stations highlight that perceived value can be contingent on factors unique to the station. Those factors can be loosely termed ‘station characteristics’ and may potentially form types in a taxonomy for community radio. Some of the examples support the argument for the use of specialist and generalist as types, as suggested previously,\(^{169}\) and some examples suggest potentially new dimensions such as station volunteer age, audience characteristics and station ethos. While these are certainly possible as new contingency dimensions, the scope of this research (three community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia) is not wide enough to confirm whether they would be useful elsewhere. Further research at more stations is required to ascertain their usefulness. However, these seven examples do provide evidence that a contingency-based approach to value for community radio would be a potentially effective strategy.

9.7 Chapter Summary

The results reported in this Chapter show support for existing notions of value for community radio, but also propose new insights into the manner in which value is operationalised in the field. The testing of the draft framework shows value to reside in the perceptions of community radio participants and that the notion of value is dependent on factors unique to the station. Where value is contingent on station characteristics, this thesis argues for a future approach to

\(^{169}\) See 2.5.2.1 Community Radio Taxonomy (Chapter 2).
value that is contingent upon those characteristics. This work proposes a taxonomy for community radio, where types of community radio will define station characteristics and thus appropriate evaluation parameters.
Chapter 10: Thesis Conclusions

10.1 Introduction

Community radio stations provide a valuable service to both the community and its participants. This has been emphasised by the academics, theorists and practitioners discussed throughout this thesis. However, one of the biggest challenges for the sector, and the starting point for this study, is that value for community radio stations is problematic to demonstrate. Without some demonstrable evidence of value, the sector and individual stations will find it hard to quantify their worth, their effectiveness and pragmatically, their value for money. In a sector that has always been financed on a shoe-string budget, the lack of any clear way to evaluate value is not beneficial. The purpose of this research has been to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of a theoretical framework that may enable a better understanding of value for individual community radio stations, and potentially provide a way of gathering evidence to assist the stations in adding to the value inherent in their operations.

This Chapter describes the key contributions to knowledge that this thesis provides, by initially answering the research questions and then explaining the findings within the limitations of the study. It also identifies possible applications of the research results, how the framework could be implemented given the findings of this study, which naturally segues into a discussion of future research. Where do the findings of this research point? How can further research address the limitations of this study? What steps can be taken to expand the scope of this study? This Chapter also revisits and reflects on the five lenses of analysis examined in Chapter 2 through to Chapter 6.

10.2 Key Contributions to Knowledge: Answering the Research Questions

How can we practically assess activities and the value of community radio against a clear set of standards?
This thesis has developed a theoretical framework of value for community radio. This was achieved through a detailed literature review of notions of ‘value’, and an analysis of the history and policy development of the sector in Australia. Pertinent understandings of value were extracted through a meta-analysis of the literature and were consolidated to form a draft theoretical framework of value. A research methodology was then developed to examine how the draft framework would be operationalised at the station level, and was then applied at three different community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia. The data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observation/participation at each station to gauge volunteer, staff and audience views.

The resulting data was analysed to identify the extent to which the values from the draft framework of value were evident in the sample stations. Do they match or are they different? Are there new ideas or aspects that extend the concept of value? Are there factors unique to each station that impact on the study participant’s perceptions of value? Do the results of the field testing suggest adjustment of the framework?

Within the scope of this study, testing the draft framework at three community radio stations, it has been established that the framework can be successfully operationalised in the field. Overall, across all three stations, most of the values from the draft framework were evident, although in varying degrees, some were not evident at all, and some new themes and values emerged.

Following a thorough analysis of the data, searching for evidence of values from the draft framework across all three stations, the results show that the value of community radio resides significantly in the personal benefits or satisfaction derived from participation in community radio. The benefits for the wider listening community are also apparent, but less significant. The political or ‘oppositional’ values from the framework were virtually non-existent, which has been suggested in previous research. Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2002b, 1), in “Community radio, radicalism and the grassroots: Discussing the politics of contemporary Australian community”, state that the Australian community radio sector is “relatively
conservative in its outlook, possibly caused by a significant shift to the ‘right’ in the past 10 years.” Participation and access to the airwaves have remained valuable aspects of community broadcasting, but there has been a noticeable decrease in the notion of “progressive political action, such as epitomised by ‘left-wing’ and student-run stations” (ibid, 7). However, where some values are absent or have diminished, others have appeared.

The values of (7e) station internal community and (7b) marketing and publicity that emerged through the station case studies did not exist in the draft framework. These were themes that community radio participants felt strongly about, as potentially valuable aspects of community radio. These themes have been included as new values in a revised framework of value, presented in Table 10 (Revised Final Framework of Value for Community Radio).\(^{170}\)

Table 10: Revised Final Framework of Value for Community Radio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Construct</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Specific Value Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Connection between the media and local communities</td>
<td>Offering community-centred/local programming. Content is drawn from and aimed at the community. Cater to the broadcasting needs of states, cities and/or suburbs, rather than nation-wide content. Thus, local issues, arts and culture are emphasised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Represent communities of interest not adequately represented by mainstream media</td>
<td>Providing services to people from a particular niche, ethnic or cultural background. For example, music enthusiasts, ethnic language, Indigenous, gay, religious, trade union, and educational groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>Community information and community promotion</td>
<td>Broadcasting information, especially relevant at the local level, and promotion of community events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1d</td>
<td>Community development and social outcomes</td>
<td>Facilitating the promotion of positive social change through social inclusion, cultural diversity and civic participation. Creating social capital by building connections among individuals to produce social networks based on the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1e</td>
<td>Participatory democracy in society</td>
<td>Promoting more active participation in public sphere discourse beyond the range and reach of increasingly concentrated mainstream media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1f</td>
<td>A resource for community</td>
<td>Offering a forum for cultural identity formation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{170}\) These emerging values have been included in the revised framework under appropriate high level constructs: station internal community has been added to Participation as (6d), and marketing and publicity has been added to Independence as (4e).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>2a</th>
<th>Promote harmony and diversity and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally-diverse Australian community</th>
<th>Promoting a positive view of cultural difference in Australia through community radio presenting diverse perspectives.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2b</td>
<td>Content diversity</td>
<td>Presenting diversity in programme formats, voices and content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2c</td>
<td>Diversity of viewpoints – ideological diversity</td>
<td>Presenting a plurality of ideas, rather than a narrow mainstream perspective, to serve the needs of diverse audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2d</td>
<td>Foreign language content</td>
<td>Including foreign language programs to appeal directly to ethnic sectors of the audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Alternative dialogues, voices and content</td>
<td>Featuring alternative voices and content to mainstream media, especially relevant to those groups and issues inadequately represented by the mainstream media. This involves both the selection of stories and the treatment of stories, as well as alternatives to mainstream programme formats and norms of broadcasting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Credible source of alternative/local content</td>
<td>Aspiring to professional broadcasting standards to enhance appeal and credibility of the service as an authoritative alternative to mainstream media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3c</td>
<td>Political media alternative</td>
<td>Presenting political views alternative to the mainstream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3d</td>
<td>Internal democratisation pre-figurative politics, transparent governance</td>
<td>Running stations with internal governance structures in line with community radio principles of democratisation, pre-figurative politics and transparent participative governance and decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3e</td>
<td>Alternative media literacy</td>
<td>The shared and interactive nature of community media production leads to enhanced media literacy within listeners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3f</td>
<td>Oppositional power</td>
<td>Contributing to a counter-public sphere that can potentially undermine the dominant representations of society presented by mainstream media, and provides a training ground for oppositional activities towards the mainstream media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>4a</td>
<td>Independence in programming</td>
<td>Providing programming free from commercial or government influence. Stations should be legally constituted as owned and controlled by the community to ensure that they are accountable to and serve the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Not-for-profit status</td>
<td>Depending on a not-for-profit revenue generation model through commercial sponsorship, listener subscription, and/or sale of airtime with clear guidelines to ensure equity of access and independence from commercial interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4c</td>
<td>Professional/amateur media production values, programming and broadcast quality</td>
<td>Professional programming and broadcast quality may contribute to financial independence through increased listenership and thus sponsorship. The absence of slick, dynamic professional production values can be perceived as a negative attribute in the sector, but also a positive for listeners preferring a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This research also revealed that notions of value can be contingent upon the characteristics of the individual community radio station. The results of this thesis support the generally accepted division of community radio into *generalist* and *specialist* stations. This illustrates the importance of a contingency-based approach to evaluation in this sector. For example, it would be appropriate for a specialist station to have evaluation criteria focused on serving their single niche audience, and for a generalist station to have evaluation criteria.
focused on enabling access to a wide range of audiences. This study also identified potential dimensions, including station volunteer age demographic, audience characteristics and station ethos. These were seen to be powerful dimensions for community radio and the inherent values, but as yet unrecognised. Where value is contingent on station characteristics, this thesis suggests a future approach to value that can accommodate those characteristics. This study proposes a taxonomy for community radio, where the dimensions of community radio demarcate a community radio typology, thus establishing appropriate evaluation parameters.

**What is the utility of using such an evidence-based method to better identify value and inform policy development via a coherent framework?**

This study has, for the first time, collected rich, narrative insights into the operations of three community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia. Due to Perth’s remoteness, local community radio stations have not featured much in the literature. Three discursive and descriptive case study summaries were compiled from the data gathered at the stations in the study. In the case study summaries, the voices of the study participants have been purposefully positioned in the foreground, echoing the participatory ethos of the community radio sector. These comprise the ideas, opinions and perceptions of the community radio stakeholders, and the corroborative ethnographic impressions collected by the researcher.

The case study summaries serve two purposes. First, they provide a rich snapshot of station operations, and study participant experiences and perceptions from a particular time period. The voices of the community radio stakeholders add a strong sense of oral history. In a region where little research of this nature has been conducted, this is extremely valuable data.

Second, they identify stakeholder perceptions of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of station operations. There is no sense of judgment or benchmarking from the viewpoint of an external assessor, and accordingly this study provided an opportunity for community radio stakeholders to express their views about the operations of their station. While

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171 See Appendices (Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio; Appendix 7: Case Study Summary for RTRFM; Appendix 8: Case Study Summary for Radio Fremantle).
the governance methods of stations may vary greatly, these case study summaries offer community radio stakeholders and associated boards of governance an intimate insight into the station operation from those involved in or closest to the action. Across the range of questions the study participants demonstrated, in their responses, a palpable desire to express their ideas about improvements for community radio participants and the listening audience. One of the pivotal and most provocative questions asked was: “From your experience at the station and as a listener, how would you suggest the service could be improved?” Many of the recommendations in this study emerged from the responses to this question, and could potentially inform future policy development at the station. Regular opportunities and use of this kind of community radio stakeholder feedback could be an effective way to drive board level decision-making in the future.

10.3 Limitations of the Study

It is important to acknowledge that, in effect, this study has been a pilot, and the results and findings are not able to be generalised across all community radio stations. On the contrary, this study has aimed to capture and identify differences, and define these in terms of value. The proposal of a community radio taxonomy, utilising a contingency-based approach, makes it clear that the evaluation profile of each station is unique.

In addition to theoretical limitations, there were practical limitations. Given that this was a prescribed three-year research project, there were certain cost and time constraints. There were also limits to the number of stations that could be investigated, the number of different station types that could be included, and the geographical area that could be covered.172 Given these parameters, three community radio stations with different emphases and types of services were purposely and reasonably selected. As such, the conclusions in this study are only indicative and point to areas for further study to corroborate, adjust or refine the views here.

172 The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) lists over 260 member stations in Australia (see http://www.cbaa.org.au/Who_We_Are/CBAA-Members).
As discussed previously, an analysis of community radio stations in the relatively conservative, affluent and politically stable location of Perth, Western Australia, will likely be effected by those social, economic and political factors.\textsuperscript{173} The results show that the study participants in this research perceived very little value in community radio as a progressive, radical, oppositional or political medium. These values appear in the literature about community radio, but were not evident in this study. This does not mean that these values are superfluous in the theoretical framework of value for community radio. Rather these values may appear in a different socio-economic environment, and thus the limiting factor is the location.

The three different community radio stations examined in this research are a small representative sample of the various types of stations available in Australia. There are a wide range of communities of interest that broadcast on community radio in metropolitan, regional and remote areas, for example, Indigenous, ethnic, religious, age-defined, sexual preference, art, music and mining-related, to name some. This study is proposes a contingency-based approach to value, whereby the evaluative criteria are derived from the different types of community radio. Value is contingent upon the unique characteristics of each station. This approach could be applied to other stations to further enrich the data.

\section*{10.4 Applications of the Research Results}

The theoretical framework of value for community radio has been useful in three ways. First, it has helped identify appropriate evaluation criteria for a given community radio station. The testing of the framework at a station reveals the value profile, according to how the value is perceived and understood by the study participants. Any future station assessment could use this value profile to determine what questions to ask or areas to investigate, in order to determine how a station was performing. As such, the value profile of a station could serve as a key performance indicator template.

\textsuperscript{173} See 9.5.2 Superfluous Specific Values (Chapter 9).
Second, the testing of the framework at a station reveals contingency dimensions that may contribute to a taxonomy for community radio. With further testing of the framework at more stations, it is possible that a taxonomy can be further developed and refined, and future evaluation criteria can be customised according to station type. This would ensure that any assessment of performance would include those questions most appropriate for that station.

Third, the results of the testing of the framework demonstrate the value of an evidence-based policy development approach for community radio stations. The testing of the framework generates substantive, evidential qualitative data. The perceptions of community radio stakeholders, concerning the operations of the station, provide powerful evidence in a participatory-inclined governance environment. This could be used to shape the future of the station. In any community radio station, the biggest stakeholders are the station community and the listening community. They are primary reference groups. The case study summaries in this research demonstrate the depth and richness of the data gathered. These could potentially be valuable to station governance bodies, seeking stakeholder participation in the governance and policy-making process. The results and findings generated from the application of the framework of value could also be used more broadly, by the community radio sector, and could facilitate informed input from the sector to evidence-based policy development at all three levels of Australian government.

10.5 Future Research

Given the limitation of this research to three case studies, what would be the benefits of extending it further? Would a taxonomy of community radio become an unmanageable, ever-expanding number of different types, or would it coalesce into an effective set of descriptors allowing a framework of value for community radio to be an effective contingency-based assessment tool?

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174 See 7.6 Research Strategy: Evidence-Based Policy-Making (Chapter 7).
175 See Appendices (Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio; Appendix 7: Case Study Summary for RTRFM; Appendix 8: Case Study Summary for Radio Fremantle).
To answer these questions, future research should initially focus on community radio stations here in Australia, within a single national context and current national guidelines. This would further validate the utility of the framework of value and contribute to the development of a more complete Australian taxonomy of community radio. This may finally offer Australian community radio stations a way to assess their value, argue their worth and benefit from evidence-based policy-making.

10.6 Theoretical Conclusions

As argued previously in this thesis, the theoretical field around community radio is a divergent, conflicted, contested and murky terrain. The five lenses of analysis delineated in Chapter 2 through to Chapter 6 offered a multifocal view of the field, focusing on similar higher level values for community radio, but also revealing variations in implementation and interpretation by practitioners and theorists at a lower level of abstraction. What emerged from this analysis was a consolidated table of higher level values and lower level specific values for community radio, reflecting the contributions of each author and each lens. It would be useful to ask: how were these theoretical contributions supported by this research?

The Lens of the Public Sphere relates to the enhancement of democracy through enabling participatory public discourse on present-day issues. The participants in this study did not report significant perceptions of value around the ideas of participatory democracy, political media alternatives, or oppositional power, all of which might be associated with concepts derived from the public sphere. The reasons for this may well be linked to the scope of a study, situated in Perth, Western Australia. In a different environment, the value may have been more relevant to participants.

Interestingly, a concept that was derived from a critique of the public sphere was more prevalent. Nancy Fraser’s (1992, 123) notion of “subaltern counter-publics”, which describes niche communities of interest, including “subordinated social groups – women, workers, people of colour, and gays and lesbians”, is more apparent in this study. The high occurrence of
alternative dialogues, voices and content, as a reported value, bears this out. The high occurrence of connection between the media and local communities also supports this value.

The Lens of Media Ownership focuses on notions of diminishing broadcast content diversity because of media ownership concentration. The results of this research reveal that content diversity is a well reported value, and specialist representation, another possible measure of content diversity, is also perceived as an important value for community radio. However, diversity of viewpoints – ideological diversity is less apparent but present. With regard to diversity, the value was particularly relevant since the study participants had a high regard for the notion of diversity.

The Lens of Contested Value examined the sometimes divergent and conflicted understanding of value from the sector itself. This primed the researcher to expect different understandings of value in the field. This was born out fully by the results. The three community radio stations in this study exhibited different value profiles. The value of oppositional power for community media was considered of limited use by theorists, and there were no mentions of the value. However, this more political value may be more evident at another site, and should not be discounted altogether.

The area of greatest agreement under this value concerned the notion of participation. The nature of participation in community media is disputed by theorists, but the act of participation strongly supported. The latter is strongly reflected in this research. The values related to participation are citizen’s participation, personal development and empowerment, and internal democratisation and transparent governance, and all were highly regarded by participants in this study. In fact, the participants are far more concerned with the personal benefits of participation for community radio volunteers, than with value for the wider community. These results support the conclusions by Van Vuuren (2002) regarding the individual motivations of Australian participants within a community radio station, with regard to social capital.
The *Lens of Australian Community Radio Policy* showed how the ad hoc emergence and nature of the early public radio sector, especially in terms of the perception of value, still haunts the sector today. The higher level values for community radio, while well meaning and generally agreed upon, were disputed at the lower grassroots level of interpretation and implementation. Government bodies and practitioners were in disarray about the meaning of terms, such as *access and participation, independence, not-for-profit and non-commercial, diversity and plurality, and alternative.* This study demonstrated how, even within the relatively small confines of the Perth locality, there are varying perceptions of value for community radio among the three case study stations.

The *Lens of Financial Challenges Facing Australian Community Radio* examined the sometimes tricky relationship between station funding and perceptions of value. It can be argued that funding and value are interdependent. David Griffiths (1975a) argues that funding is often required to bring the station to a professional standard, and therefore to a perceived level of value. Meanwhile, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC 2007) articulates the need to demonstrate ‘value for money’ and then use that demonstration of value to argue for funding. This kind of ‘chicken and egg’ dilemma is difficult to resolve. The troublesome nature of funding for community radio emerges most clearly in the narrative case study summaries. Funding was an ever-present concern that intersected and often collided with perceptions of value or theoretical concerns. This lens of analysis was useful as a primer for the field work, and the evidence confirmed the difficult and pragmatic realities facing community radio stations as they strive to remain financially viable.

### 10.7 Final Remarks

This thesis undertook the ambitious task of drawing together various notions of value around community radio into a consolidated framework that could be tested in the field. The results showed the usefulness of the framework of value in collecting station data that revealed the variations in perception of value across the three case study stations, both individually and as a consolidated group. It demonstrated the need for and the usefulness of a contingency-based
approach to evaluation in the community radio sector. This research also offered, for the first time, rich, narrative insights into the operations of three community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia.

It is hoped that the framework of value piloted in this study could potentially be adopted in any community radio station evaluation or action research exercise.
Appendices

Appendix 1: Higher Level Value Constructs, Specific Values and Questions

The value constructs (higher level constructs) for community radio, as shown in Table 11 (Value Constructs and Questions), emerged from the literature review in Chapter 2 through to Chapter 6. They are the umbrella concepts that theorists and researchers in previous studies have described as values for the sector. One of the objectives in this study was to reveal how, if at all, these value constructs and their associated finer granularity, specific values,\textsuperscript{176} manifested at three community radio stations in Perth, Western Australia. With this objective in mind, the case study method in this research used interviews and focus groups to collect data. The questions used in the case studies relate to both the interviews and the Radio Fremantle focus group (where applicable).

Focus group questions, from the “Community Broadcasting Qualitative Audience Project 2005” (Meadows et al. 2007a, 116), were used in the focus groups at 6RPH and RTRFM, and are shown in Table 11. The focus group questions covered similar themes, but the discussion was slightly less directed.\textsuperscript{177}

In Table 11, the Participant Set shows the groups of participants who were asked the specific question: Volunteers (V); Production/Technical staff (P); Sponsorship/Sales/Business Development staff (S); Station Managers (SM). Some questions were posed to all participants, but some questions were focused and posed to particular participants, in order to yield the most useful data.

Table 11: Value Constructs and Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Construct</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Participant Set</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>How do you feel the station has a relationship with the community?</td>
<td>V, SM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{176} See 7.3.2.2 Consolidation of Specific Values (Chapter 7), Table 8 (A Draft Theoretical Framework of Value for Community Radio).

\textsuperscript{177} See 7.5.3.2 The Theoretical Framework of Value and Question Development (Chapter 7).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>How do you see the station serving that community</strong></th>
<th>SM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Besides broadcasting, how does the station interface with the outside community?</td>
<td>SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kind of contact does the community have with the station?</td>
<td>SM, P, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the station know that its programming is well received by the community?</td>
<td>P, S, SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you imagine XXX makes a difference to the community?</td>
<td>V, P, S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Alternative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What are the guidelines for general program content policy?</strong></th>
<th>SM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>News, music and speech. (guidelines that relate to alternative programming)</td>
<td>SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What role community radio plays in the community - what do you think its brief is - and how much does it fulfil that brief?</strong></td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Can you describe what you see as your personal challenges in managing a station based on volunteers?</strong></td>
<td>SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think there is maybe an assumption in the wider community that community radio, as a sector, tends to have lower production values compared to commercial or public sector broadcasting. Why do you think of this is?</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professionalism in production (as defined by broadcast professionals) has sometimes been criticised as being a way of keeping marginalised broadcasters off the air thereby going against the whole ethos of representing a community. How do you see this argument at XXX?</strong></td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How would you characterise the production values here at XXX?</strong></td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Diversity

| **Community radio aims to attract an audience often neglected by other services - the elderly, people from different ethnic backgrounds and so on. What sorts of audiences does the content appeal to? Should it do more to broaden its audience? How could it do this?** | V, P, S, |
| **How are new ideas generated, discussed and implemented?** | P, S, SM |

### Independent and Not-for-Profit

<p>| <strong>Can you tell me how the station is funded?</strong> | S |
| <strong>Does the need for sponsorship impact on the social aims of community radio? If so, how?</strong> | S |
| <strong>How, if at all, does the type of funding or levels of funding affect the programming or production?</strong> | S |
| <strong>How does the funding get allocated and to what?</strong> | S |
| <strong>How are the production values defined?</strong> | P |
| <strong>What led you to become a member of the broadcasting community and why?</strong> | V, P, S, SM |
| <strong>What motivates you? What do you get out of it? What incentives do you see for yourself?</strong> | V, P, S, SM |
| <strong>How would you characterise your day-to-day experiences of working at the station?</strong> | V, P, S, SM |
| <strong>Do you get any sense of personal expression, social empowerment by being involved with the station?</strong> | V, P, S |
| <strong>Do you feel you have a say in any decision-making that affects your work?</strong> | V, P, S |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representation</th>
<th>General Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there any responsiveness to your ideas and needs?</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you see any sense of authority or staff hierarchy within the station?</td>
<td>V, P, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there any forms of incentive or notions of advancement within the station?</td>
<td>P, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the mediation of internal or external complaints managed?</td>
<td>P, S, SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you describe your training experiences?</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With hindsight would you make any suggestions for improving the training?</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How comfortable are with the broadcasting technology here and has this affected your choice of job role?</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you see the station as representing the community you serve?</td>
<td>V, SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what ways, if any, does the community have a say in programming?</td>
<td>P, S, SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the station know how its output is received by the community?</td>
<td>P, S, SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the station programming reflect the community you serve?</td>
<td>SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you imagine your audience?</td>
<td>V, P, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From your experience at the station and as a listener, how would you suggest the service could be improved?</td>
<td>V, P, S, SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What role does the board play in running the station? What is their job?</td>
<td>SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you go about improving the sound of the station?</td>
<td>P, SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your opinion, what would be the arguments for more funding for community radio?</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you had more money what would you do with it?</td>
<td>V, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you had less money what would happen to the station?</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you tell me about the history of the station?</td>
<td>SM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did the community need for the station develop?</td>
<td>SM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6RPH and RTRFM Focus Group Questions

Community Broadcasting Qualitative Audience Project 2005

Focus Group Schedule

Individual Themes

- Listening Patterns: what they listen [to] (programs) and when (frequency)?
- Why they listen? How did they discover community radio?
- Likes/dislikes? Expectations
- Improvements?
- Future needs?

Community Themes
- Has the station increased your knowledge about your local community? If so, how?
- Has viewing [listening] facilitated your involvement in your local community or communities? Examples?
- Has the station given you a sense of community? (or sense of belonging)

Media Themes
- Local news and current affairs? Quality and usefulness of content?
- Do you give feedback to the community radio station? Do you think your feedback is taken into account?
- Key differences between community radio and other media broadcasters (Meadows et al. 2007a, 116).
Appendix 1a: Radio Station Study Participant Sampling

Table 12a: 6RPH Participant Sampling Detail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Position</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader/Board Member</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Producer</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station Manager and Board Member</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Manager, Announcer and Reader</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Manager, Announcer and Reader</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Manager, Announcer and Reader</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12b: 6RPH Participant Sampling Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6RPH: Summary</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Female 42%</td>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male 58%</td>
<td>30-39 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Production</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>60-69 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid staff</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>70-79 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board members</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 13a: RTRFM Participant Sampling Detail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Position</th>
<th>Type of Show</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Office Administrator</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks Producer, Web Master and Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Talk</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Talk</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson of Board</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship Manager</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcast Engineer</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast Presenter and Talks Producer</td>
<td>Talk</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Manager and Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Manager and Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Director and Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 13b: RTRFM Participant Sampling Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Type of Show</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Music Shows 70%</td>
<td>Female 36%</td>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Office Admin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Talk shows 30%</td>
<td>Male 64%</td>
<td>30-39 years</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks Producer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadcast Engineer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50-59 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60-69 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70-79 years</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Director</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 14a: Radio Fremantle Participant Sampling Detail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Position</th>
<th>Type of Show</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Music 80%/Talk 20%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Music 70%/Talk 30%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter/Board Member</td>
<td>Music 70%/Talk 30%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter/Ethnic Coordinator</td>
<td>Music 60%/Talk 40%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter/Production Manager</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>Music 50%/Talk 50%</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station Manager</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 14b: Radio Fremantle Participant Sampling Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Type of show</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Presenter</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Music only 40%</td>
<td>20% Female</td>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Music/Talk 60%</td>
<td>80% Male</td>
<td>30-39 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Coordinator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40-49 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50-59 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60-69 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Summary of Values from the Theoretical Lenses of Analysis

These are the values drawn from the five lenses of analysis chapters 2-6, prior to the consolidation process.

Table 15: Full List of 82 Values from the Theoretical Lenses of Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Construct</th>
<th>Specific Value Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Lens of Financial Challenges Facing Australian Community Radio</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Represent local geographic communities</td>
<td>Cater to the broadcasting needs of states, cities and suburbs rather than national wide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Represent communities of interest not adequately represented by mainstream media.</td>
<td>Rather than the revenue generation model of commercial media, community media strive for more democratic representation of society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in station operations, and in the selection and provision of programs</td>
<td>Through participation in programming, representation of the community may follow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community information and community promotion</td>
<td>Community radio is an ideal site for broadcasting information at the local level and also for promotion of community events and so on. However there can be an overlap between community information/promotion and sponsorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide services to people from a particular niche, ethnic or cultural background</td>
<td>Community radio is one site able to cater to niche audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sale of airtime</td>
<td>A divisive issue with no current regulation. Community stations can sell airtime to community groups wishing to broadcast. It has the positive potential to encourage community participation but concern arises if stations under financial pressure were to adopt a practice of excluding community members who cannot afford to pay for airtime.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Lens of Australian Community Radio Policy**

<p>| Participation in programming | Community participation in producing broadcast content. Give access and representation to outside groups from society |
| Community development | Community radio can be “a vehicle for positive social change” especially underprivileged communities |
| Participation of special interest and minority groups. Diverse and niche groups. | For example: music enthusiasts, ethnic language, Indigenous, gay, religious, trade union, educational |
| Community-centered/local programming | Content is drawn from, and aimed at, the community |
| Participation in management of stations | Community involvement of station management at the board level |
| Opportunity for personal empowerment or education | Participation in community radio brings about a sense of identity, personal satisfaction or education |
| “Participatory volunteerism” | Community radio is primarily operated by volunteers |
| Participatory democracy in society | Community radio will promote more active participation in public sphere discourse |
| Professional broadcast quality | To survive in a competitive media industry, community radio would need to adopt professional media practices |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th><strong>The Lens of Financial Challenges Facing Australian Community Radio</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote harmony and diversity and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally-diverse Australian community</td>
<td>Promotion of a positive view of cultural difference in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language content</td>
<td>The inclusion of foreign language programs in the sub-sector of Ethnic Community Broadcasting is one way to access additional government funding via the CBF.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Lens of Media Ownership</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of viewpoints-ideological diversity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Lens of Australian Community Radio Policy</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity in type of broadcasting and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content for niche interests, special needs, ethnic minorities, local communities or those marginalised by the mainstream.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th><strong>The Lens of Financial Challenges Facing Australian Community Radio</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A legitimate or credible voice</td>
<td>One interpretation of the notion of alternative is as a viable broadcast option to the mainstream. This may entail adopting the professional media production practices of the mainstream.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Lens of the Public Sphere</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Multiple realities” of social life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic access to the media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A counter-public sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A training ground for oppositional activities towards the mainstream media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political media alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative dialogues or framing of issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal democratisation, prefigurative politics, transparent governance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Lens of Media Ownership</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The community that are not catered for by other media</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| <strong>The Lens of Contested Value</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative voices and content</th>
<th>Alternative voices and content to mainstream media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative space</td>
<td>An independent media production environment free from commercial or professional pressures of the mainstream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefigurative politics</td>
<td>Democratic internal station governance structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative media literacy</td>
<td>The shared and interactive nature of media production produces this literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppositional power</td>
<td>Opposition and sublimation of dominant mainstream messages. A perceived ability to undermine the power of large media corporations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Lens of Australian Community Radio Policy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An alternative to what is considered “good radio”</th>
<th>An alternative to mainstream programme formats and norms of broadcasting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making at all levels of the station should be in the hands of the community</td>
<td>An alternative to mainstream media norms of governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill the content gaps left by the other two sectors</td>
<td>Cater to those inadequately represented by the mainstream media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on primarily local issues, arts and culture</td>
<td>Offering a local alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic, alternative relationships between listeners and producers</td>
<td>A narrowing of the traditional gap between broadcasters and listeners, where listeners can become broadcasters or contribute to broadcasting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credible source of alternative/local content</td>
<td>The use of a professional broadcasting approach that mirrors existing standards may encourage the perception of alternative credibility in the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Lens of Financial Challenges Facing Australian Community Radio**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A more commercial approach to programming</th>
<th>Sponsors want to know their announcements are accompanied by slicker, more demographically targeted programs. This may contribute to financial independence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship guidelines</td>
<td>Community radio may differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate sponsor ship clients or content depending on station policy and objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional programming</td>
<td>Professional programming may contribute to financial independence through increased listenership and thus sponsorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amateur media production values</td>
<td>The absence of slick, dynamic professional production values can be perceived as a negative attribute to the sector but also a positive for listeners preferring a ‘relaxed’ style of community broadcasting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebroadcasting of material from commercial stations</td>
<td>A controversial issue, not currently regulated. The debate centers on demand for popular formats, difficulty in editing out commercial advertising in talkback formats and those that might see community radio as an entry point into the commercial sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence in programming</td>
<td>Community is obliged to provide programming free from commercial or government influence. This is editorial independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding through listener subscription</td>
<td>For some subscription can be seen as positive community development but it can also exclude stations from CBF funding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Lens of the Public Sphere**

| Not-for-profit status | Commercial sponsorship is permitted but on a not-for-profit basis, ensuring some degree of independence from commercial interests |

---

251
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Lens of Contested Value</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence of personal thought</td>
<td>Enables critique of dominant media messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent community</td>
<td>Enables generation of independent media messages of their own</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Lens of Australian Community Radio Policy</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not controlled by the government</td>
<td>Stations should be legally constituted as owned and controlled by the community to serve the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluded from profit-making</td>
<td>Commercial sponsorship is permitted but on a not-for-profit basis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Representation</strong></th>
<th><strong>The Lens of the Public Sphere</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation of the community</td>
<td>Opportunities to access the airwaves should be available to all segments of society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social gain</td>
<td>Defined as the provision of radio services to groups not otherwise served by commercial or the public service broadcasters, the promotion of social inclusion, the promotion of cultural diversity and the promotion of civic participation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural diversity</td>
<td>Promotion of a positive view of cultural difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion and protection of peoples’ communication rights</td>
<td>The free flow of information and ideas are the pillars of a functioning democracy. A citizen’s basic right to communicate in public. This proposes communication systems as a site for dialogue rather than monologue through an “equitable distribution of resources and facilities enabling all persons to send as well as receive messages”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratising value of community radio</td>
<td>There is value to a medium that can offer a voice to the marginalised or “subordinated social groups – women, workers, people of colour, and gays and lesbians … subaltern counter-publics.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific audience, representing a narrow faith or ethnic community</td>
<td>The representation of a niche or specialist community group by one station</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalist</td>
<td>The representation of a wide range of community groups under one station umbrella</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Lens of Media Ownership</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic balance (in society)</td>
<td>Community radio is a vital and valuable space that offers democratic balance to a modern mainstream media that is in “democratic deficit”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representation of women and people of colour in key media occupations</td>
<td>In comparison to mainstream media, community media offers a space for representation of all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection between the media and local communities - local programming</td>
<td>The convergence of media ownership has meant operations have been reduced to purely profitable outcomes at the expense of local programming and any notion of local contribution. Community radio is one balance to this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>The Lens of Contested Value</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social impact of community radio</td>
<td>The social outcomes of community radio on individual listeners, participants and the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience reach</td>
<td>The size and composition of the listening audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative framing of news</td>
<td>The selection of stories and the treatment of stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with the audience</td>
<td>Links with the audience and avenues of listener feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive in the mediascape</td>
<td>An ability to compete with mainstream media for audience share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
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<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Lens of the Public Sphere</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Equity of participation by civil society on issues relating to development and social change | Habermas proposes a social environment that would enable a “rational-critical debate about public issues conducted by private persons willing to let arguments and not statuses determine decisions”  
| Communications managed by the community | Community participation in station management at all levels  
| Media should be accessible to citizens as producers not just as consumers | The public sphere can be animated by ‘democratic’ mass media and citizens can be represented in some way by the media  
| A cultural resource for community cultural production | Alternative media offers a forum for cultural identity formation, facilitate citizenship and formulate their own identities and interests  
| Political empowerment at a personal/group level | An increase in perceived political strength or emancipation of individuals/groups  
| Professional production practices | A professional sounding broadcaster, comparable to the mainstream media  
| Community development | Community radio can be “a vehicle for positive social change” especially underprivileged communities  
| Social Capital | Social capital refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them  
| **The Lens of Media Ownership** |  
| Citizen’s participation | In comparison to media ownership concentration of mainstream media, community media is the only place available for genuine citizen participation in the media.  
| **The Lens of Contested Value** |  
| Professionalism | A professional sounding broadcaster, comparable to the mainstream media  
| Cultural identity and practice | Participation in media production that produces personal or political empowerment or active cultural citizenship. Broadcaster ideology development.  
| Production quality | The quality of production skills and values compared to mainstream media practice  
| Professional organisational practice | Efficient management and delivery of a broadcast service  

Appendix 3: Theoretical Framework Consolidation Sequence

The following tables (Table 16a: Specific Values for Community Radio Version 1; Table 16b: Specific Values for Community Radio Version 2; Table 16c: Specific Values for Community Radio Version 3; Table 16d: Specific Values for Community Radio Version 4; Table 16e: Specific Values for Community Radio Version 5; Table 16f: Specific Values for Community Radio Version 6) represent the iterative process that was undertaken to consolidate values from Table 15 (Full List of 82 Values from the Theoretical Lenses of Analysis) to produce the draft framework of value for community radio.

Table 16a: Specific Values for Community Radio Version 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Construct</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Specific Value Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Connection between the media and local communities. Community-centered/local programming.</td>
<td>Content is drawn from, and aimed at, the community. Cater to the broadcasting needs of states, cities and/or suburbs, rather than nation-wide content. Thus, local issues, arts and culture are emphasised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Represent communities of interest not adequately represented by mainstream media. Provide services to people from a particular niche, ethnic or cultural background.</td>
<td>Rather than the revenue generation model of commercial media, community media strive for more democratic representation of society. Community radio is one site able to cater to niche audiences. For example: music enthusiasts, ethnic language, Indigenous, gay, religious, trade union, educational groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>Community information and community promotion</td>
<td>Community radio is an ideal site for broadcasting information at the local level and also for promotion of community events, and so on. However there can be an overlap between community information/promotion and sponsorship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1d</td>
<td>Sale of airtime</td>
<td>A divisive issue with no current regulation. Community stations can sell airtime to community groups wishing to broadcast. It has the positive potential to encourage community participation, but concern arises if stations under financial pressure were to adopt a practice of excluding the views of community members who cannot afford to pay for airtime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1e</td>
<td>Community development</td>
<td>Access to community radio can be a vehicle for positive social change, especially for underprivileged communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1f</td>
<td>Participatory democracy in society</td>
<td>Access to community radio will promote more active participation in public sphere discourse, to counter the increasing concentration of media ownership and size of media organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Promote harmony and diversity and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally-diverse Australian community</td>
<td>Promotion of a positive view of cultural difference in Australia via community radio presenting diverse perspectives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>Content diversity</td>
<td>Community radio offers content diversity in comparison to a modern mainstream media that is arguably reducing content diversity. Diverse formats, voices and content.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
<td>Diversity of viewpoints - ideological diversity</td>
<td>It is the distributive power of concentrated media ownership that encourages homogenisation of content. Community radio is one balance to this.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2d</td>
<td>Content for niche interests, special needs, ethnic minorities, local communities or those marginalised by the mainstream.</td>
<td>Community access to the airwaves encourages a plurality of ideas to emerge, multiple new and different audiences rather than a single perspective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2e</td>
<td>Foreign language content</td>
<td>The inclusion of foreign language programs in the sub-sector of Ethnic Community Broadcasting is one way to access additional government funding via the CBF.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Alternative dialogues, voices and content</td>
<td>Alternative voices and content to mainstream media, especially concerning groups and issues inadequately represented by the mainstream media (including PSBs). This provides opportunities for alternative media to bring marginalised issues into view, in an environment free from the commercial or professional pressures of the mainstream. This involves both the selection of stories and the treatment of stories, as well as alternatives to mainstream programme formats and norms of broadcasting; redefining what is considered “good” radio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Credible source of alternative/local content</td>
<td>The use of a professional broadcasting approach that mirrors existing standards may encourage the perception of credibility in the community for alternative media, especially regarding local issues. This can lead to an enhanced ability to compete with mainstream media for audience share.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>Political media alternative</td>
<td>Alternative media may offer society a political alternative to a mainstream political norm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d</td>
<td>Internal democratisation pre-figurative politics, transparent governance</td>
<td>Alternative media may adopt internal principles of democratisation, pre-figurative politics and transparent participative governance and decision-making, so they practice what they preach; for instance, “the attempt to practice socialist principles in the present, not merely to imagine them for the future”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3e</td>
<td>Alternative media literacy</td>
<td>The shared and interactive nature of community media production produces enhanced media literacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3f</td>
<td>Oppositional power – a counter-public sphere</td>
<td>Opposition to, and sublimation of, dominant mainstream messages. A perceived ability to undermine the power of large media corporations by providing content to counter mass-mediated representations of society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community media can provide a training ground for oppositional activities towards the mainstream media. It can also, perhaps, contribute to ideological development within mainstream media organisations.

| 4a | Independence in programming | Community is obliged to provide programming free from commercial or government influence. This is editorial independence. Stations should be legally constituted as owned and controlled by the community to ensure that they really serve the community. |
| 4b | Not-for-profit status | Commercial sponsorship is permitted but on a not-for-profit basis, ensuring some degree of independence from commercial interests. |
| 4c | Funding through listener subscription | The listener subscription method of funding can be seen as positive community development but it can also exclude stations from CBF funding. |
| 4d | Amateur media production values | The absence of slick, dynamic professional production values can be perceived as a negative attribute to the sector but also a positive for listeners preferring a ‘relaxed’ style of community broadcasting. |
| 4e | Professional programming and broadcast quality | To survive in a competitive media industry, community radio may need to adopt professional media practices. Professional programming and broadcast quality may contribute to financial independence through increased listenership and thus sponsorship. Sponsors want to know their announcements are accompanied by slicker, more demographically targeted programs. This may contribute to financial independence. |
| 4f | Rebroadcasting of material from commercial stations | Rebroadcasting of material from commercial stations is a controversial issue, not currently regulated. The debate centres on demand for popular formats, difficulty in editing out commercial advertising in talkback formats and those that might see community radio as an entry point into the commercial sector. |
| 4g | Sponsorship guidelines | Community radio may differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate sponsorship clients or content, depending on station policy and objectives. |
| 5a | Representation of the community | Opportunities to access the airwaves should be available to all segments of society to ensure that a wide range of views are represented. This includes representation of particular groups of people based on ethnicity, gender and class. |
| 5b | Relationship with the audience | Links with the audience and avenues of listener feedback. |
| 5c | Democratic balance (in society) | Community radio is a vital and valuable space that offers democratic balance to a modern mainstream media that is in “democratic deficit”. There is value to a medium that can offer a voice to marginalised or subordinated social groups, such as women, workers, people of colour, and gays and lesbians; so-called... |
subaltern counter-publics... This emphasises the importance of encouraging contributions from as many interested parties as possible to alternative media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Specific Value Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5d</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>The representation of a niche or specialist community group by one station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5e</td>
<td>Generalist</td>
<td>The representation of a wide range of community groups under one station umbrella.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5f</td>
<td>Social outcomes of community radio</td>
<td>The provision of radio services to groups not otherwise served by commercial or the public service broadcasters facilitates the promotion of social inclusion, cultural diversity and civic participation. The social outcomes of community radio on individual listeners, participants and the community are often positive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5g</td>
<td>Audience reach</td>
<td>The size and composition of the listening audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>Citizen’s participation</td>
<td>In comparison to the ownership concentration of mainstream media, community media is the only place available for genuine citizen participation in the media. A narrowing of the traditional gap between broadcasters and listeners, where listeners can contribute to selecting, producing and delivering broadcast content, usually as volunteers, rather than paid employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b</td>
<td>Communications managed by the community</td>
<td>Community participation in station management at all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6c</td>
<td>A cultural resource for community cultural production</td>
<td>Alternative media offers a forum for cultural identity formation and citizenship development. Diverse modes of cultural production are facilitated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation Code</th>
<th>Specific Value Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6d</td>
<td>Personal development and possible political empowerment at a personal/group level</td>
<td>Participation in community radio brings about a sense of identity, personal satisfaction and education. An increase in perceived political strength or emancipation of individuals/groups may also occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6e</td>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td>Social capital refers to connections among individuals; social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. These can be fostered by community media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6f</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>A professional sounding broadcaster, comparable to the mainstream media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6g</td>
<td>Professional organisational practice</td>
<td>Efficient and effective management and delivery of a broadcast service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16b: Specific Values for Community Radio Version 2
| **Community-centred/local programming** | states, cities and/or suburbs, rather than nation-wide content. Thus, local issues, arts and culture are emphasised. |
| **1b** Represent communities of interest not adequately represented by mainstream media. Provide services to people from a particular niche, ethnic or cultural background. | Rather than the revenue generation model of commercial media, community media strive for more democratic representation of society. Community radio is one site able to cater to niche audiences. For example, music enthusiasts, ethnic language, Indigenous, gay, religious, trade union, educational groups. |
| **1c** Community information and community promotion | Community radio is an ideal site for broadcasting information at the local level and also for promotion of community events, and so on. However there can be an overlap between community information/promotion and sponsorship. |
| **1d** Community development and social outcomes | Access to community radio can be a vehicle for positive social change, especially for underprivileged communities, facilitating the promotion of social inclusion, cultural diversity and civic participation. Social capital refers to connections among individuals; the social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. These can be fostered by community media. |
| **1e** Participatory democracy in society | Access to community radio will promote more active participation in public sphere discourse, to counter the increasing concentration of media ownership and size of media organisations. |
| **1f** A resource for community cultural production | Alternative media offers a forum for cultural identity formation and diverse modes of cultural production are facilitated. |
| **2a** Promote harmony and diversity and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally-diverse Australian community | Promotion of a positive view of cultural difference in Australia via community radio presenting diverse perspectives. |
| **2b** Content diversity | Community radio offers content diversity in comparison to a modern mainstream media that is arguably reducing content diversity. Diverse formats, voices and content. |
| **2c** Diversity of viewpoints – ideological diversity | It is the distributive power of concentrated media ownership that encourages homogenisation of viewpoints. Community radio is one balance to this. A plurality of ideas to emerges, for multiple new and different audiences rather than a single perspective. |
| **2d** Foreign language content | The inclusion of foreign language programs in the sub-sector of Ethnic Community Broadcasting is one way to access additional government funding via the CBF. |
| **Alternative** | |
| **3a** Alternative dialogues, voices and content | Alternative voices and content to mainstream media, especially concerning groups and issues inadequately represented by the mainstream media (including PSBs). This provides opportunities for alternative media to bring marginalised issues into view, in an |
environment free from the commercial or professional pressures of the mainstream. This involves both the selection of stories and the treatment of stories, as well as alternatives to mainstream programme formats and norms of broadcasting; redefining what is considered “good” radio.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Credible source of alternative/local content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The use of a professional broadcasting approach that mirrors existing standards may encourage the perception of credibility in the community for alternative media, especially regarding local issues. This can lead to an enhanced ability to compete with mainstream media for audience share.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>Political media alternative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alternative media may offer society a political alternative to a mainstream political norm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d</td>
<td>Internal democratisation pre-figurative politics, transparent governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alternative media may adopt internal principles of democratisation, pre-figurative politics and transparent participative governance and decision-making, so they practice what they preach; for instance, “the attempt to practice socialist principles in the present, not merely to imagine them for the future”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3e</td>
<td>Alternative media literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The shared and interactive nature of community media production produces enhanced media literacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3f</td>
<td>Oppositional power – a counter-public sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opposition to, and sublimation of, dominant mainstream messages. A perceived ability to undermine the power of large media corporations by providing content to counter mass-mediated representations of society. Community media can provide a training ground for oppositional activities towards the mainstream media. It can also, perhaps, contribute to ideological development within mainstream media organisations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>Independence in programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community is obliged to provide programming free from commercial or government influence. This is editorial independence. Stations should be legally constituted as owned and controlled by the community to ensure that they really serve the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Not-for-profit status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commercial sponsorship is permitted but on a not-for-profit basis, ensuring some degree of independence from commercial interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c</td>
<td>Funding through listener subscription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The listener subscription method of funding can be seen as positive community development but it can also exclude stations from CBF funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4d</td>
<td>Amateur media production values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The absence of slick, dynamic professional production values can be perceived as a negative attribute to the sector but also a positive for listeners preferring a ‘relaxed’ style of community broadcasting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4e</td>
<td>Professional programming and broadcast quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To survive in a competitive media industry, community radio may need to adopt professional media practices Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4f</td>
<td>Rebroadcasting of material from commercial stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4g</td>
<td>Sponsorship guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4h</td>
<td>Sale of airtime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Representation**

| 5a | Representation of the community | Opportunities to access the airwaves should be available to all segments of society to ensure that a wide range of views are represented. This includes representation of particular groups of people based on ethnicity, gender and class. |
| 5b | Relationship with the audience | Links with the audience and avenues of listener feedback. |
| 5c | Democratic balance (in society) | Community radio is a vital and valuable space that offers democratic balance to a modern mainstream media that is in “democratic deficit”. There is value to a medium that can offer a voice to marginalised or subordinated social groups, such as women, workers, people of colour, and gays and lesbians; so-called subaltern counter-publics. This emphasises the importance of encouraging contributions from as many interested parties as possible to alternative media. |
| 5d | Specialist representation | The representation of a niche or specialist community group by one station. |
| 5e | Generalist representation | The representation of a wide range of community groups under one station umbrella. |
| 5f | Audience reach | The size and composition of the listening audience. |

**Participation**

| 6a | Citizen’s participation | In comparison to the ownership concentration of mainstream media, community media is the only place available for genuine citizen participation in the media. A narrowing of the traditional gap between broadcasters and listeners, where listeners can contribute to selecting, producing and delivering broadcast content, usually as volunteers, rather than paid |
employees.

6b Communications managed by the community

Community participation in station management at all levels.

6c Personal development and possible political empowerment at a personal/group level

Participation in community radio brings about a sense of identity, personal satisfaction and education. An increase in perceived political strength or emancipation of individuals/groups may also occur.

6d Professionalism

Despite using volunteers, community radio can produce professional sounding broadcasts, comparable to the mainstream media.

6e Professional organisational practice

Efficient and effective management and delivery of a broadcast service, which might require a mix of volunteers and paid staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Construct</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Specific Value Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Connection between the media and local communities</td>
<td>Offering community-centred and local programming. Content is drawn from, and aimed at, the community. Cater to the broadcasting needs of states, cities and/or suburbs, rather than nation-wide content. Thus, local issues, arts and culture are emphasised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Represent communities of interest not adequately represented by mainstream media</td>
<td>Providing services to people from a particular niche, ethnic or cultural background. For example, music enthusiasts, ethnic language, Indigenous, gay, religious, trade union, educational groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>Community information and community promotion</td>
<td>Broadcasting information at the local level and also for promotion of community events, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1d</td>
<td>Community development and social outcomes</td>
<td>Facilitating the promotion of social inclusion, cultural diversity and civic participation. Creating social capital through building connections among individuals and, the social networks based on the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1e</td>
<td>Participatory democracy in society</td>
<td>Promoting more active participation in public sphere discourse beyond the range and reach of mainstream media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1f</td>
<td>A resource for community cultural production</td>
<td>Offering a forum for cultural identity formation through diverse modes of cultural production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Promote harmony and diversity and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally-diverse Australian community</td>
<td>Promoting a positive view of cultural difference in Australia via community radio presenting diverse perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2b</td>
<td>Content diversity</td>
<td>Presenting diversity in formats, voices and content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2c</td>
<td>Diversity of viewpoints – ideological diversity</td>
<td>Presenting a plurality of ideas rather than a narrow mainstream perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foreign language content</td>
<td>Including foreign language programs to appeal; directly to ethnic sectors of the audience.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2d</td>
<td>Alternative dialogues, voices and content</td>
<td>Featuring alternative voices and content to mainstream media, especially of those groups and issues inadequately represented by the mainstream media. This involves both the selection of stories and the treatment of stories, as well as alternatives to mainstream programme formats and norms of broadcasting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Credible source of alternative/local content</td>
<td>Aspiring to professional broadcasting standards to enhance appeal and credibility of the service as an authoritative alternative to mainstream media.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Political media alternative</td>
<td>Presenting alternative political views to the mainstream norms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>Internal democratisation pre-figurative politics, transparent governance</td>
<td>Running stations with internal governance structures in line with community radio principles of democratisation, pre-figurative politics and transparent participative governance and decision-making.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d</td>
<td>Alternative media literacy</td>
<td>The shared and interactive nature of community media production produces enhanced media literacy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3e</td>
<td>Oppositional power</td>
<td>Contributing to a counter-public sphere that can potentially undermine the dominant media messages of mainstream media and provide a training ground for oppositional activities towards the mainstream media.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independence in programming</td>
<td>Providing programming free from commercial or government influence. Stations should be legally constituted as owned and controlled by the community to ensure that they are accountable to and serve the community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent and Not-for-Profit</td>
<td>Not-for-profit status</td>
<td>Depending on a not-for-profit revenue generation model via commercial sponsorship, listener subscription, and/or sale of airtime with clear guidelines to ensure equity of access and independence from commercial interests.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>Funding through listener subscription</td>
<td>The listener subscription method of funding can be seen as positive community development but it can also exclude stations from CBF funding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Amateur media production values</td>
<td>The absence of slick, dynamic professional production values can be perceived as a negative attribute to the sector but also a positive for listeners preferring a ‘relaxed’ style of community broadcasting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c</td>
<td>Professional programming and broadcast quality</td>
<td>To survive in a competitive media industry, community radio may need to adopt professional media practices Professional programming and broadcast quality may contribute to financial independence through increased listenership and thus sponsorship. Sponsors want to know their announcements are accompanied by slicker, more demographically targeted programs. This may contribute to financial independence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4d</td>
<td>Rebroadcasting of material</td>
<td>Rebroadcasting of material from commercial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Representation

| 5a | Representation of the community | Facilitating access the airwaves to all segments of society to ensure that a wide range of views are represented. This includes representation of otherwise marginalised groups based on ethnicity, gender and class. |
| 5b | Relationship with the audience | Proactively fostering audience participation and avenues of listener feedback. |
| 5c | Democratic balance (in society) | Community radio is a vital and valuable space that offers democratic balance to a modern mainstream media that is in “democratic deficit”. There is value to a medium that can offer a voice to marginalised or subordinated social groups, such as women, workers, people of colour, and gays and lesbians; so-called *subaltern counter-publics*. This emphasises the importance of encouraging contributions from as many interested parties as possible to alternative media. |
| 5d | Specialist representation | Relating to stations devoted specifically to the representation of a niche or specialist community group. |
| 5e | Generalist representation | Relating to stations devoted to the representation of a wide range of community groups under one station umbrella. |
| 5f | Audience reach | The size and composition of the listening audience. |

### Participation

<p>| 6a | Citizen’s participation | Involving the community as contributors to the selection, production and delivering of broadcast content, usually as volunteers, rather than paid employees. |
| 6b | Communications managed by the community | Fostering community participation in station management at all levels. |
| 6c | Personal development and possible political empowerment at a personal/group level | Enhancing participants’ sense of identity, personal satisfaction and education through involvement in broadcasting. May also be manifested as increased sense of political empowerment or emancipation. |
| 6d | Professionalism dealt with elsewhere | Despite using volunteers, community radio can produce professional sounding broadcasts, comparable to the mainstream media. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Construct</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Specific Value Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Connection between the media and local communities</td>
<td>Offering community-centred/local programming. Content is drawn from, and aimed at, the community. Cater to the broadcasting needs of states, cities and/or suburbs, rather than nation-wide content. Thus, local issues, arts and culture are emphasised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Represent communities of interest not adequately represented by mainstream media</td>
<td>Providing services to people from a particular niche, ethnic or cultural background. For example: music enthusiasts, ethnic language, Indigenous, gay, religious, trade union, educational groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>Community information and community promotion</td>
<td>Broadcasting information especially relevant at the local level and also promotion of community events, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1d</td>
<td>Community development and social outcomes</td>
<td>Facilitating the promotion of positive social change via social inclusion, cultural diversity and civic participation. Creating social capital through building connections among individuals to produce social networks based on the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1e</td>
<td>Participatory democracy in society</td>
<td>Promoting more active participation in public sphere discourse beyond the range and reach of increasingly concentrated mainstream media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1f</td>
<td>A resource for community cultural production</td>
<td>Offering a forum for cultural identity formation through diverse nodes of cultural production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Promote harmony and diversity and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally-diverse Australian community</td>
<td>Promoting a positive view of cultural difference in Australia via community radio presenting diverse perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2b</td>
<td>Content diversity</td>
<td>Presenting diversity in programme formats, voices and content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2c</td>
<td>Diversity of viewpoints – ideological diversity</td>
<td>Presenting a plurality of ideas rather than a narrow mainstream perspective to serve the needs of diverse audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2d</td>
<td>Foreign language content</td>
<td>Including foreign language programs to appeal; directly to ethnic sectors of the audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Alternative dialogues, voices and content</td>
<td>Featuring alternative voices and content to mainstream media, especially relevant to those groups and issues inadequately represented by the mainstream media. This involves both the selection of stories and the treatment of stories, as well as alternatives to mainstream programme formats and norms of broadcasting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Credible source of alternative/local content</td>
<td>Aspiring to professional broadcasting standards to enhance appeal and credibility of the service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>265</td>
<td>as an authoritative alternative to mainstream media.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>Political media alternative</td>
<td>Presenting political views alternative to the mainstream norms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d</td>
<td>Internal democratisation pre-figurative politics, transparent governance</td>
<td>Running stations with internal governance structures in line with community radio principles of democratisation, pre-figurative politics and transparent participative governance and decision-making.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3e</td>
<td>Alternative media literacy</td>
<td>The shared and interactive nature of community media production produces enhanced media literacy within listeners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3f</td>
<td>Oppositional power</td>
<td>Contributing to a counter-public sphere that can potentially undermine the dominant representations of society presented by mainstream media and provide a training ground for oppositional activities towards the mainstream media.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Independent and Not-for-Profit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>Independence in programming</td>
<td>Providing programming free from commercial or government influence. Stations should be legally constituted as owned and controlled by the community to ensure that they are accountable to and serve the community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Not-for-profit status</td>
<td>Depending on a not-for-profit revenue generation model via commercial sponsorship, listener subscription, and/or sale of airtime with clear guidelines to ensure equity of access and independence from commercial interests.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c</td>
<td>Amateur media production values</td>
<td>The absence of slick, dynamic professional production values can be perceived as a negative attribute to the sector but also a positive for listeners preferring a ‘relaxed’ style of community broadcasting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4d</td>
<td>Professional programming and broadcast quality</td>
<td>Professional programming and broadcast quality may contribute to financial independence through increased listenership and thus sponsorship. Sponsors want to know their announcements are accompanied by slicker, more demographically targeted programs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4e</td>
<td>Audience participation</td>
<td>Proactively fostering audience participation and avenues of listener feedback.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Representation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>Representation of the community</td>
<td>Facilitating access to the airwaves to all segments of society to ensure that a wide range of views are represented. This includes representation of otherwise marginalised groups (for example, based on ethnicity, gender and class) to provide a democratic balance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>Specialist representation</td>
<td>Relating to stations devoted specifically to the representation of a niche or specialist community group.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c</td>
<td>Generalist representation</td>
<td>Relating to stations devoted to the representation of a wide range of community groups under one station umbrella.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5f</td>
<td>Audience reach</td>
<td>Reaching as high a percentage as is practical of the intended station audience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Specific Value Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>Citizen’s participation</td>
<td>Involving community members as contributors to the selection, production and delivery of broadcast content, usually as volunteers, rather than paid employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b</td>
<td>Communications managed by the community</td>
<td>Fostering community participation in station management at all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6c</td>
<td>Personal development and possible political empowerment at a personal/group level</td>
<td>Enhancing participants’ sense of identity, personal satisfaction and education through involvement in broadcasting. May also be manifested as increased sense of political empowerment or emancipation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16e: Specific Values for Community Radio Version 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Construct</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Specific Value Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Connection between the media and local communities</td>
<td>Offering community-centred/local programming. Content is drawn from, and aimed at, the community. Cater to the broadcasting needs of states, cities and/or suburbs, rather than nation-wide content. Thus, local issues, arts and culture are emphasised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Represent communities of interest not adequately represented by mainstream media</td>
<td>Providing services to people from a particular niche, ethnic or cultural background. For example: music enthusiasts, ethnic language, Indigenous, gay, religious, trade union, educational groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>Community information and community promotion</td>
<td>Broadcasting information especially relevant at the local level and also promotion of community events, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1d</td>
<td>Community development and social outcomes</td>
<td>Facilitating the promotion of positive social change via social inclusion, cultural diversity and civic participation. Creating social capital through building connections among individuals to produce social networks based on the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1e</td>
<td>Participatory democracy in society</td>
<td>Promoting more active participation in public sphere discourse beyond the range and reach of increasingly concentrated mainstream media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1f</td>
<td>A resource for community cultural production</td>
<td>Offering a forum for cultural identity formation through diverse modes of cultural production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Promote harmony and diversity and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally-diverse Australian community</td>
<td>Promoting a positive view of cultural difference in Australia via community radio presenting diverse perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2b</td>
<td>Content diversity</td>
<td>Presenting diversity in programme formats, voices and content.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                      | 2c   | Diversity of viewpoints – ideological diversity | Presenting a plurality of ideas rather than a narrow mainstream perspective to serve the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>2d</th>
<th>3a</th>
<th>3b</th>
<th>3c</th>
<th>3d</th>
<th>3e</th>
<th>3f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign language content</td>
<td>needs of diverse audiences.</td>
<td>Including foreign language programs to appeal; directly to ethnic sectors of the audience.</td>
<td>Featuring alternative voices and content to mainstream media, especially relevant to those groups and issues inadequately represented by the mainstream media. This involves both the selection of stories and the treatment of stories, as well as alternatives to mainstream programme formats and norms of broadcasting.</td>
<td>Aspiring to professional broadcasting standards to enhance appeal and credibility of the service as an authoritative alternative to mainstream media.</td>
<td>Presenting political alternative to the mainstream norms.</td>
<td>Running stations with internal governance structures in line with community radio principles of democratisation, pre-figurative politics and transparent participative governance and decision-making.</td>
<td>Contributing to a counter-public sphere that can potentially undermine the dominant representations of society presented by mainstream media and provide a training ground for oppositional activities towards the mainstream media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative dialogues, voices and content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credible source of alternative/local content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political media alternative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal democratisation pre-figurative politics, transparent governance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative media literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppositional power</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent and Not-for-Profit</th>
<th>4a</th>
<th>4b</th>
<th>4c</th>
<th>4d</th>
<th>4e</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence in programming</td>
<td>Providing programming free from commercial or government influence. Stations should be legally constituted as owned and controlled by the community to ensure that they are accountable to and serve the community.</td>
<td>Depending on a not-for-profit revenue generation model via commercial sponsorship, listener subscription, and/or sale of airtime with clear guidelines to ensure equity of access and independence from commercial interests.</td>
<td>The absence of slick, dynamic professional production values can be perceived as a negative attribute to the sector but also a positive for listeners preferring a 'relaxed' style of community broadcasting.</td>
<td>Professional programming and broadcast quality may contribute to financial independence through increased listenership and thus sponsorship. Sponsors want to know their announcements are accompanied by slicker, more demographically targeted programs.</td>
<td>Proactively fostering audience participation and avenues of listener feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-for-profit status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amateur media production values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional programming and broadcast quality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representation</th>
<th>5a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation of the community</td>
<td>Facilitating access to the airwaves to all segments of society to ensure that a wide range of views are represented. This includes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
representation of otherwise marginalised groups (for example, based on ethnicity, gender and class) to provide a democratic balance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Specific Value Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5b</td>
<td>Specialist representation</td>
<td>Relating to stations devoted specifically to the representation of a niche or specialist community group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5c</td>
<td>Generalist representation</td>
<td>Relating to stations devoted to the representation of a wide range of community groups under one station umbrella.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5d</td>
<td>Audience reach</td>
<td>Reaching as high a percentage as is practical of the intended station audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6a</td>
<td>Citizen’s participation</td>
<td>Involving community members as contributors to the selection, production and delivery of broadcast content, usually as volunteers, rather than paid employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6b</td>
<td>Communications managed by the community</td>
<td>Fostering community participation in station management at all levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6c</td>
<td>Personal development and possible political empowerment at a personal/group level</td>
<td>Enhancing participants’ sense of identity, personal satisfaction and education through involvement in broadcasting. May also be manifested as increased sense of political empowerment or emancipation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16f: Specific Values for Community Radio Version 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Level Construct</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Specific Value Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Connection between the media and local communities</td>
<td>Offering community-centred/local programming. Content is drawn from, and aimed at, the community. Cater to the broadcasting needs of states, cities and/or suburbs, rather than nation-wide content. Thus, local issues, arts and culture are emphasised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Represent communities of interest not adequately represented by mainstream media</td>
<td>Providing services to people from a particular niche, ethnic or cultural background. For example: music enthusiasts, ethnic language, Indigenous, gay, religious, trade union, educational groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1c</td>
<td>Community information and community promotion</td>
<td>Broadcasting information especially relevant at the local level and also promotion of community events, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1d</td>
<td>Community development and social outcomes</td>
<td>Facilitating the promotion of positive social change via social inclusion, cultural diversity and civic participation. Creating social capital through building connections among individuals to produce social networks based on the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1e</td>
<td>Participatory democracy in society</td>
<td>Promoting more active participation in public sphere discourse beyond the range and reach of increasingly concentrated mainstream media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1f</td>
<td>A resource for community cultural production</td>
<td>Offering a forum for cultural identity formation through diverse modes of cultural production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diversity</strong></td>
<td>2a</td>
<td>Promote harmony and diversity and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally-diverse Australian community</td>
<td>Promoting a positive view of cultural difference in Australia via community radio presenting diverse perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2b</td>
<td>Content diversity</td>
<td>Presenting diversity in programme formats, voices and content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2c</td>
<td>Diversity of viewpoints – ideological diversity</td>
<td>Presenting a plurality of ideas rather than a narrow mainstream perspective to serve the needs of diverse audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2d</td>
<td>Foreign language content</td>
<td>Including foreign language programs to appeal; directly to ethnic sectors of the audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative</strong></td>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Alternative dialogues, voices and content</td>
<td>Featuring alternative voices and content to mainstream media, especially relevant to those groups and issues inadequately represented by the mainstream media. This involves both the selection of stories and the treatment of stories, as well as alternatives to mainstream programme formats and norms of broadcasting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Credible source of alternative/local content</td>
<td>Aspiring to professional broadcasting standards to enhance appeal and credibility of the service as an authoritative alternative to mainstream media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3c</td>
<td>Political media alternative</td>
<td>Presenting political views alternative to the mainstream norms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3d</td>
<td>Internal democratisation pre-figurative politics, transparent governance</td>
<td>Running stations with internal governance structures in line with community radio principles of democratisation, pre-figurative politics and transparent participative governance and decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3e</td>
<td>Alternative media literacy</td>
<td>The shared and interactive nature of community media production produces enhanced media literacy within listeners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3f</td>
<td>Oppositional power</td>
<td>Contributing to a counter-public sphere that can potentially undermine the dominant representations of society presented by mainstream media and provide a training ground for oppositional activities towards the mainstream media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent and Not-for-Profit</strong></td>
<td>4a</td>
<td>Independence in programming</td>
<td>Providing programming free from commercial or government influence. Stations should be legally constituted as owned and controlled by the community to ensure that they are accountable to and serve the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Not-for-profit status</td>
<td>Depending on a not-for-profit revenue generation model via commercial sponsorship, listener subscription, and/or sale of airtime with clear guidelines to ensure equity of access and independence from commercial interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4c</td>
<td>Professional /amateur media production values, programming and broadcast quality</td>
<td>Professional programming and broadcast quality may contribute to financial independence through increased listenership and thus sponsorship. The absence of slick, dynamic professional production values can be perceived as a negative attribute to the sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Representation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4d</td>
<td>Audience participation</td>
<td>Proactively fostering audience participation and avenues of listener feedback.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Representation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Representation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>Representation of the community</td>
<td>Facilitating access to the airwaves to all segments of society to ensure that a wide range of views are represented. This includes representation of otherwise marginalised groups (for example, based on ethnicity, gender and class) to provide a democratic balance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>Specialist representation</td>
<td>Relating to stations devoted specifically to the representation of a niche or specialist community group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c</td>
<td>Generalist representation</td>
<td>Relating to stations devoted to the representation of a wide range of community groups under one station umbrella.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5d</td>
<td>Audience reach</td>
<td>Reaching as high a percentage as is practical of the intended station audience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>Citizen’s participation</td>
<td>Involving community members as contributors to the selection, production and delivery of broadcast content, usually as volunteers, rather than paid employees.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b</td>
<td>Communications managed by the community</td>
<td>Fostering community participation in station management at all levels.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6c</td>
<td>Personal development and possible political empowerment at a personal/group level</td>
<td>Enhancing participants’ sense of identity, personal satisfaction and education through involvement in broadcasting. May also be manifested as increased sense of political empowerment or emancipation. This also may include the development of broadcast skills through training.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: The Database

Introduction

It was foreseen early in the development of the framework of value for community radio that a custom built database tool would help to ensure a successful outcome of the project. The storage and organisation of the field data once collected had to be in user-friendly package for the researcher. Off-the-shelf software was considered but the author decided that purpose-built software was within the project budget.

Interviews and focus groups were the data collection methods that would primarily benefit from the database where the data was originally recorded as audio. This tool would assist with two main tasks. First, the audio would need to be transcribed into an organised text storage location, and second, the data would need to be analysed. The author worked with Jason Scott, a Knowledge Management expert, to develop the database. The software was written during the early part of the data collection phase at the first case study community radio station, 6RPH. The functionality and usability were designed with the emerging data in mind and were refined as the case study continued.

The Coding Window

The database was written in Microsoft Access. The coding window is the screen for audio transcription (see Figure 8). The top right of the window features an audio player that allows the user to import audio data from interviews and focus groups in an audio format. Audio transport controls are available to navigate the files. There are also two “set” buttons which allow the user to store the start and end times of a specific section of the audio (an utterance). This is very useful for research purposes. If you wish to get more detail or check the context of an utterance at a later date you do not have to trawl through the entire interview to find the relevant section. The set points allow instant access. It also allows for data validation if there is a request to verify any part of the original audio data at later date.
The left and middle of the coding window is the transcription workspace. Database entry identifiers include the record number, name of the interviewee, the type of data (interview or focus group) and the question asked. At the bottom are user administrative functions for adding new lookup data.
Figure 8: Coding Window

The coding window is designed for data coding and analysis. It includes fields for coding ID, source, data type, and themes. The text box allows for the input of specific coding notes and themes. The window also features a timeline for audio interviews, which can be used to manage and analyze audio data efficiently.
To describe how this screen is used, here is an example of a typical event sequence when transcribing from an interview.

1. To create a new database record (new transcription) – go to bottom left record and press “play*”
2. *Select Interview* allows the user to choose the audio file they wish to work with.
3. *Load Audio* loads that file into the software and enables the audio transport controls.
4. To create a new interview source, go to *Manage Lookup Data*, then source and new interview source, press “play*”.
5. The transport controls allow the user to listen to audio, pause and stop.
6. If the user wishes to transcribe audio to text, the *Text_Grab* box is available.
7. User can set the questions and the themes.
8. The *set* controls allow user to specify time location to be recorded with database record.
9. User can work through each audio file, creating multiple text grab records (for utterances), stored with their research themes and questions for later interrogation.

**The Data Analysis Window**

On initial opening (see Figure 9), the data analysis window is a view of every record (transcription of an utterance) the user has created in a list in this database. The user has the choice using Microsoft Access (MS) data filter/sort controls to display the records in any way they wish, which records are displayed is vital to the analyst.
Figure 9: Data Analysis Window
For example: if the user wishes to display all the records from Radio Fremantle that have the primary theme of *Representation of the Community*, this is accomplished simply using the MS Access *Filter by Form* function and inserting the required parameters of *station* (*Radio Fremantle*) and *primary theme* (*Representation of the Community*). Once that filter is applied, the analyst can instantly see what the interviews and focus groups have said about *Representation of the Community* (as the primary theme) at Radio Fremantle. The analyst can also dig further into the database by asking to see the records that were referenced as having *Representation of the Community* as the secondary or tertiary theme. The analyst can search records using, any of the parameters (questions, themes, interviewee, text grab, station, role, age and gender) as search terms.
Appendix 5: Value Mentions at Case Studies

Appendix 5a: Total Mentions of Specific Values Across Three Stations

Figure 10: Mention of Specific Values (Summed Across Three Stations)
Appendix 5b: Mentions of Specific Values at Individual Stations

Figure 11: 6RPH Value Mentions

Figure 12: RTRFM Value Mentions
Figure 13: Radio Fremantle Value Mentions

- Participatory democracy in society (1e).
- Promote harmony and diversity in a culturally-diverse Australian community (2a).
- A resource for community cultural production (1f).
- Diversity of viewpoints - ideological diversity (2c).
- Content diversity (2b).
- Foreign language content (2d).
- Community information and community promotion (1c).
- Represent communities not represented by mainstream media (1b).
- Community development and social outcomes (1d).
- Connection between the media and local communities (1a).
Appendix 5c: Consolidated Cross-Station Comparison of Values

Figure 14: Mentions of Specific Values at Individual Stations

- Personal development and empowerment at a personal/group level (6c).
- Communications managed by the community (6b).
- Citizen’s participation (6a).
- Audience reach (5d).
- Generalist Representation (5c).
- Specialist Representation (5b).
- Representation of the community (5a).
- Audience participation (4d).
- Professional/amateur media production values (4c).
- Not-for-profit status (4b).
- Independence in programming (4a).
- Oppositional power (3f).
- Alternative media literacy (3e).
- Internal democratisation & transparent governance (3d).
- Political media alternative (3c).
- Credible source of alternative/local content (3b).
- Alternative dialogues, voices & content (3a).
- Foreign language content (2d).
- Diversity of viewpoints - ideological diversity (2c).
- Content diversity (2b).
- Promote harmony and diversity in a culturally-diverse Australian community (2a).
- A resource for community cultural production (1f).
- Participatory democracy in society (1e).
- Community development and social outcomes (1d).
- Community information and community promotion (1c).
- Represent communities not represented by mainstream media (1b).
- Connection between the media and local communities (1a).
Appendix 5d: Mentions of Emerging Themes at Individual Stations

Figure 15: Mentions of Emerging Themes at Individual Stations
Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio

Preface

The narrative case studies for each community radio station have been appended here in Appendix 6. The richness and detail of the data was presumed to be far more appropriate in its complete form separate from the theoretical conclusions of the study. The narrative case studies, although a strong outcome of the research would also likely be of more interest in their complete form to a different audience than the theoretical conclusions. The personal at the stations involved in this thesis study are expected to be the primary audience of these narrative case studies because of their content.

The narrative case study summary descriptions reveal much about the operations of each station. This includes the history of the stations, unique characteristics, strengths, weaknesses and perceived areas for potential improvement. Perhaps most importantly, these case study summaries foreground the voices of the study participants, audience voices from a previous study (6RPH and RTRFM) and the ethnographic perceptions from the field researcher. Primarily, these documents draw from the voices of community radio stakeholders, the people that work in, and listen to the stations.

Each case study summary concludes with a series of recommendations to improve the station operation and services. These suggestions have emerged as commonly perceived themes among the study participants. These recommendations are viewed by this author as potential evidence to inform future station policy-making decisions. The narrative case summaries could be powerful documents in any strategic thinking about the operation of the station. It is also the case that this pilot research could form the basis of future strategic action-research exercises, conducted regularly by the station, in the manner of a continual operational improvement process.

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178 See 7.5.4 Audience Focus Groups (Chapter 7).
Introduction

Walking through the door of a community radio station as a green volunteer and proclaiming that I was a radio lecturer was bound to raise a few eyebrows. But that’s what happened on my first day at 990 6RPH Information Radio. I remember thinking, “I wish they hadn’t asked what I did”. However, it did prompt an immediate proclamation in return from the volunteer coordinator that underlines almost everything that happens at the station. “We don’t see ourselves as a radio station but a service provider to the print-handicapped community. Radio is just the medium we use”

And that is exactly the mission statement of the station. It permeates everything from the station décor to announcing style. Let me describe my initial impressions. I had been in a fair few radio stations and walking into this one the best way to describe it was: “quiet”. There was none of the usual hustle and bustle and the décor was very downbeat. No real pictures or colour in what was quite a large white-grey main congregating room outside of the broadcast studios. The room had a smaller partitioned research area with a large table, some labelled program shelves and some overly-stuffed newspaper racks. There was a box of pens and rulers in the middle of the table and some newspapers scattered on the table. On the edges of this room were two offices for the permanent staff and a cubby partition for the broadcast engineer.

I could just about hear someone reading a book out loud on the room speaker which was the on-air monitor for the live studio. Even this was “quiet”. Later on a couple of grey-haired mature ladies sat down at the table with some newspapers and started to make marks on the articles and cut certain ones out in preparation for them to be read on-air. This was a radio reading service for the print-handicapped but was there a community radio station in here somewhere as well?

Whilst I was taking in the greyness, I was ushered into studio C by the production manager who informed me that as a new volunteer I would have to undertake a reading test to ensure I could reach a certain standard of elocution and reading skills, before I would be allowed on-air. My immediate reaction was to baulk at the very prospect of having my academic
and radio skills tested but I sat down and was shown the first sheet of words to pronounce. It
dawned on me that this wasn’t going to be such a walk in the park. I even asked the production
manager how to pronounce one of the words…… embarrassing, but very humbling.

This wasn’t the radio I was used to where everything was written for the ear. This type
of radio meant taking widely published newspapers and magazines, reading them out loud
without alteration and endowing them with some life–giving expression that enhanced their
meaning and sonic pleasure. This was hard work and very challenging! The station’s tag line
was, “990 6RPH Information Radio, Bringing words to Life” or “Turning Print into Sound”
and this is what they do.

History

6RPH is part of a national network of Radio Print Handicapped stations that exist in all the
major cities of Australia. The network comprises 1RPH in Canberra, 2RPH in Sydney, 3RPH in
Melbourne, 4RPH in Brisbane, 5RPH in Adelaide, 6RPH in Perth and 7RPH in Hobart. The
first seeds of the RPH network were sown by Blind Citizens Australia, which was formed in
1975 and is the peak body for blind and visually impaired people in Australia. A major
objective was to improve their access to high turnover print material, i.e. newspapers and
magazines. There were braille services, but braille readers have tended to be few and far
between and availability of braille materials is limited.

With the establishment of the community radio sector in Australia by the Federal
Government in 1975 there was a move to utilise community broadcasting to bring printed
material to a wider audience than braille and talking books could hope to reach. Such a service
combined the immediacy of a daily newspaper and the reach of radio broadcasting: that day’s
paper, that day. It reduced the information time gap that tended to dominate print-handicapped
people’s news-life. It also meant that they could access whole newspaper articles and not the
normal ruthlessly edited radio news on other stations. In addition they got to hear books,
magazines, some sport and a smattering of chit-chat.

179 For further information, see http://www.bca.org.au/.
The RPH concept was very compelling but in Western Australia it took some time before a full-time station was on-air. In the mid 1970s, they started as the Foundation for Radio for the Print-Handicapped of Western Australia. At the same time, similar groups started in the eastern states, but the Western Australian group struggled to get a licence. Instead they bought air time off 6NR, which is now Curtin FM.\(^{180}\) However, they could only afford weekly half hour slots. Then the group split, with half going to 6UVS, which later became RTR.\(^{181}\) They hoped that perhaps two stations could give more airtime to print-handicapped material. At that time, these were the only two community radio stations in Perth and they were typical of the early community stations, which nationally had their origins within universities.

In the end both groups approached the Association for the Blind of Western Australia for help. The Association took them in under their umbrella as part of their public relations department and lobbied the Federal Government for a full-time licence. Unfortunately, at that time there was a moratorium on licences because of a review of community radio by the Department of Transport and Communications. The Association for the Blind bought a full hour a day of weekday air time back at 6NR and they stayed at an hour a day until 1990 when the Minister for Transport and Communications called for an expression of interest for an RPH licence. The Association for the Blind took the decision not to apply for the licence, but they did establish the Foundation for Information Radio of W.A., the organisation that exists today. This was pulled together by John Stokes, the president of the Association for the Blind in W.A, who found twelve people to form a board. They put together an application for the licence and were successful. The Association for the Blind continued to provide substantial support for the first five years in terms of housing and staff. The first broadcast was 25th October 1991 and the station was launched by Kim Beazley, the Federal Minister for Transport and Communications. Seventeen years later the station is still going strong and still working to its core mission.\(^{182}\)

\(^{180}\) Curtin FM is located at Curtin University (see [http://www.curtinfm.com.au/].

\(^{181}\) 6UVS was originally located at the University of Western Australia (see [http://www.rtrfm.com.au/]).

\(^{182}\) All historical information has been provided by the station manager at 6RPH.
990 6RPH Information Radio is unique in the community radio sector because of its mission. It caters to the very niche print-handicapped community and has many of the hallmarks of a disabled service provider rather than a typical community radio station. Nevertheless as part of the community radio sector, it still operates purely on the good will of volunteers and has exactly the same challenges as any other community station. What makes this station special in the context of the other case studies considered by this work is that its community is defined solely by disability and less by geography. The community of interest is very narrow indeed and it is the only station to demonstrate this characteristic of the three case studies in this research project.

As a reflection perhaps of its considered status as a service provider, the stylistic production *bells and whistles* that accompany most radio stations are less evident. Presenter opinion and presenter personality are notably low key, chat shows are virtually non-existent and station branding is conservative. The focus is on the broadcasting of read printed material that would otherwise be unavailable to the print-handicapped community rather than on slick production values or “listener-centric” presenters. The initial reaction of this researcher on arrival at the station was that the broadcast production values and the program offering needed a complete update, however subsequently, when examined in the context of the station’s unique core mission, the opinion was tempered.

Part of the rationale behind the community radio evaluation model in this research project was to ensure that the uniqueness of individual stations was embraced as a vital component and not stymied within the confines of any particular theory-driven template. It is worth mentioning one of the keystones of evaluation in this regard. *Community participation* in the community radio sector is normally seen as a vital characteristic of community radio stations, but at 6RPH the concept of participation has an inbuilt irony. The service of reading is founded on an activity that the blind, by definition, are excluded from. The newspapers and magazines are read by sighted people for a print-handicapped audience who can use their ears (not their eyes) to receive the information. How can the print-handicapped community
participate in their own radio station? As we shall see later, this very clearly demonstrates the need for any evaluation model for community radio to be flexible and adaptable.

**Representation of the Community**

Recent research shows that conservatively, ten percent of Western Australia’s population has a print disability of some kind – that’s over 330,000 people in total. This figure is expected to increase to 20 percent by the end of the first quarter of the 21st century (RPH6).\(^{183}\) Aging is a major factor that leads to a print disability and demand for an effective service such as 990 6RPH-Information Radio will increase as the population ages (990 6RPH 2010).\(^{184}\)

This section examines how 6RPH deals with the issue of representation of the print-handicapped community. Who are defined as the print-handicapped community? How does the core mission of 6RPH serve that community? How does the station provide content appropriate to the community? What kind of relationship does the station have with the community? The information used to answer these questions is drawn from the series of interviews conducted with staff and volunteers at the station by the researcher, from observation/participation at the station by the researcher and from qualitative audience data collected by Meadows at al (Meadows et al. 2007a).

**The Print-Handicapped Community**

When discussing the audience reach with station members, it became clear that the definition of print-handicapped was much wider than expected. The three main groupings included: the vision impaired, the literacy impaired and the hospitalised. Vision impairment could range from partially to completely blind, but also embraced people whose disabilities precluded them from physically holding a newspaper. This included conditions such as cerebral palsy, other shaking conditions and also arthritis. From an external researcher’s point of view, these less obvious

\(^{183}\) RPH is an abbreviation for “Radio Print Handicapped”. This identifies collected data from 6RPH Information Radio field interviews (2006-2008) with either station volunteers or station staff.

\(^{184}\) The statistics are on the 6RPH website (see www.inforadio.com.au). For the original research, see http://www.rph.org.au/our-community/what-is-a-print-disability/.

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conditions painted a more diverse picture of the print-handicapped community than previously realised.

Literacy impairment included all levels of reading challenges in the wider Australian community. Literacy impairment is a sub-group of print disability and is dealt with in some detail on the RPH national website, which cites the Australian Bureau of Statistics as the source for their statistics (RPH Australia 2003). It is beyond the scope of this work to describe the full statistical breakdown but 19.7 percent of Australians have “very poor skills, and could be expected to experience considerable difficulties in using many of the printed materials that may be encountered in daily life” (RPH Australia 2003). This group also included migrants to Australia who might understand spoken English but not written English. It was mentioned by several station volunteers that the RPH network was playing an important role in migrant integration, facilitating language development in this manner.

The largest group of announcers at the station were mature aged retirees who by the nature of aging came into contact with a larger proportion of hospitalised people. Judging by their first hand contacts and experiences, respondents felt that hospitalised people, whose condition made it difficult to read, found the service of great benefit. This included people convalescing at home or in care. It was additionally suggested that hard copy newspapers and written publications were more important to the older generation and reading them out on-air was particularly valuable to people whose traditional news-life had been dominated by printed material.

Outside of these primary groups there were yet more unexpected listeners who use the service for different reasons. One interviewee said:

Having met some listeners I discovered how important this is to the community, not just people who are vision impaired but people who listen to the news because they haven’t got the time to read a paper. People like taxi drivers who drive all day. MPs when they drive down to Parliament, they listen to the papers being read out. The core business is unique in Perth. No-one does what we do and that’s fantastic (RPH3).

For further information, see http://www.rph.org.au/our-community/what-is-a-print-disability/literacy-impairment/.
In this sense time-handicapped could be the new definition for the wider non-print-handicapped audience who do not have time to read the newspaper. Radio has always been a medium that can be consumed while doing other things. As Meadows et al note: “A mother or a father with two young children at home also fits into the category of print-handicapped because they can’t sit down and read the paper while they have toddlers running around” (Meadows et al. 2006, 3). These more unexpected listeners are certainly not the core audience for 6RPH, but in today’s fast-paced world, it constitutes a viable news and information alternative for some sections of the community.

_Serving the 6RPH Community_

The core mission of 6RPH is to represent the needs of the more defined print-handicapped community and for the majority of 6RPH listeners not being able to read is a huge challenge. There is a strong sense of social isolation from ordinary community environments where people are unable to discuss issues that have been aired in newspapers and magazines. The conversations over the office water cooler, the casual comments at the supermarket, or with friends at a barbecue, are all examples where we take it for granted that social dialogue on news and events occurs. It is possible to get the bare bones of news from brief mainstream broadcast news headlines, but the ability to interact with others is limited if one relies on headline news alone. The in-depth commentaries and detailed editorial content of newspapers, magazines and books would normally be unavailable to the print-handicapped audience.

There is an electronic library service operated by Vision Australia. This receives some electronic copies of newspapers/magazines and subscribers can, with a program called “NewsRead”, plug in an audio device and the computer will read material back to them. Unfortunately, the numbers of people with the skills, time and inclination are small. Furthermore, this service relies on a broadband internet connection. While accurate statistics are difficult to source on Australian broadband penetration, it is estimated that around 60 percent of the Australian population have the service (ABS 2009b; Lohman 2009). As such, it is not yet commonplace within the print handicapped community. This community is comprised mostly of

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mature adults. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2004) found that, “only 26 percent of adults aged 55 years or over used the Internet.” The likelihood of print handicapped people aged 55 or over using the Internet is small.

It also relies on the user having some degree of vision to operate the computer, or else have access to a helpful carer. As one station member commented wryly “You could alternatively send out thirty-thousand human readers to the living rooms of the print-handicapped community” (RPH10). At the moment, the medium of radio is still the most cost-effective way to reach the largest number of people in the print-handicapped community and give them the most detail possible.

Our original charter is to help the visually impaired and that to me is the main social benefit. We are helping people in the community with what they can’t do for themselves. What I think this service does is to allow people to fit into the broader community. They get a deeper understanding of the news because they get the full articles and this facilitates social interaction and they need social interaction (RPH1).

This aspect of community inclusion is at the centre of the RPH mission. It is about representing their target audience’s specific needs and interests rather than representing their voice, which has historically been a prime concern for community radio. Their voice is no different to anyone else’s in the wider community but having their normal visual mode of perception severely limited or completely absent can mean a sense of disconnection from the world around them. The absence of print media in their lives has serious ramifications. This same sentiment was expressed in one response from a qualitative audience research study carried out at 6RPH two years previously.

It’s been absolutely right from the beginning because for the first time ever, as a working person, I can also go to work and something like at morning tea time when everyone’s sitting around and saying “oh did you see in today’s ‘West Australian’ where such and such happened” … For the first time, well for the last ten years, I can actually join in … So I’m not alienated within the workplace by acting like the blind bunny who doesn’t know what’s going on in the world (Meadows et al. 2006, 3).

Effective representation of print-handicapped needs by the station has influenced the technical configuration of the service. The geographical location of a listener does not determine
whether they have a print-handicap. 6RPH broadcasts on an A.M. (amplitude modulation) medium wave frequency band to reach as many of the print-handicapped community as possible. A.M. radio stations can be heard at a far greater distance from their source transmitters than their FM counterparts. 6RPH on 990AM can reach all of metropolitan and regional Perth and even some of the more remote communities of Western Australia. This decision to broadcast on the AM band does however sacrifice some audio quality for the listener. Since ninety-five percent of the program material is talk, the intrinsic content of that talk is considered more valuable than the audio quality. To add to their reach, 6RPH also broadcasts nationally on radio channel 25 of the Optus C3 satellite service. Within the budget constraints placed on the station they are reaching as many people as possible, but how does the station provide content appropriate to their community?

The program content consists of station volunteers (readers) reading out newspapers, magazines, books and community information on-air. There is a mixture of live reads and pre-recorded programs. The live readers will present time-specific daily programs like newspapers, current affairs, editorials, weather and traffic, while pre-records are segments that may be weekly or monthly publications. To keep the radio day rolling along, there are live announcers who introduce the different segments and drive the broadcast desk. This is the closest the station gets to disc jockeys or show hosts. The overall output and styling is dry and conservative in contrast to other radio stations, but the non print-handicapped listener needs to understand that the focus is reproducing printed information rather than providing dynamic, slick entertainment.

There is definitely some attempt to make the format a little more entertaining with slices of music, teasers and promos but the result is mainly pure information and this is part of their call sign: “990 6RPH Information Radio.” One of the concerns voiced by many of the station members, however, was whether the overall style, format and branding could be a lot more vibrant.
I was listening to the ABC news program this morning and it does make ours look awfully dull. It is nowhere near as dynamic as the ABC. Two voices just reading one story after another is quite boring. I am very glad I am only listening to this occasionally and I am not forced to listen to this all the time. The ABC keeps you interested and on the rare occasion I listen to Info Radio I don’t know whether this is holding my interest (RPH7).

One of the younger announcers at the station also said quite bluntly that he found the announcing “tedious” because there was no personality involved. He wished he were back on commercial radio where he could actually do the job of a DJ. He pointed out that back-to-back reading from newspapers and magazines was very bland and the production strategy desperately needed a review.

Interestingly, nowhere in the qualitative audience study data from 6RPH does this sentiment occur (Meadows et al. 2006, 1-5). To non-print handicapped listeners the station may very well sound “awfully dull” but as an information service for anyone with a print disability, this may be beside the point. There are a plethora of other radio stations providing a more dynamic mainstream alternative. Nevertheless, as was pointed out by one station member, “it may make 6RPH a very clear alternative to mainstream media but why should those with a print disability have to bear less than dynamic radio” (RPH7)? Most of the station member interviewees agreed that a review of station branding and formatting was a good idea.

Away from the overall sound of the station, it was also important to ask whether the service gives as much program diversity as possible to the print-handicapped community. As a group they would have interests as diverse as any other part of the community. In 1990 when the station was first started, the management ran an audience sub-committee with a large range of print handicapped people with different types of disability. This committee met on a regular basis over their first five years of broadcasting.

I think we did very well with our programming with consultation with the print-handicapped community. Unlike other community stations we developed an RPH protocol which is a broad map for planning our service. If you think about the sheer number of magazines, books publications that are out there, there is never enough time to read everything (RPH6).
The station carries around ninety-five programs every week on a very wide interest base. The morning staples are readings from the *West Australian* and *Australian* newspapers, the *Stock Market Report, Book at Brunch* and a variety of different daily morning shows across the week. At the time of writing examples included: *The Health Show, Off the Vine, Consumer Watch, Animal Focus, Veterans Affairs, Money Matters* and *What’s Cooking?* The afternoon schedule has a similar offering of special interest programs but with a regular *News Magazine* program which covers the lighter news stories from the *West Australian* and *Australian* newspapers. There is also a more traditional *Drive* show in the afternoons and this is the only smattering of chat on the station. The evening programming is predominantly repeats of some of the daytime shows, and overnight the station crosses over to the networked BBC World Service. The weekend programming is similar to the weekday evenings but the station also offers live West Australian Football League (WAFL) games and commentary which is a unique service for the whole of the community.

There are constant program changes/updates/reviews that tend to be volunteer-initiated because of a new enthusiasm or a waning interest, or volunteers leaving/starting. Commitment varies among volunteers and the transience of the volunteer community means the programming varies quite naturally over time. This natural attrition means program continuity can sometimes suffer, but on the upside the range of interests represented is generally very wide and variable. There is always something new on the horizon but geared to the original RPH protocol.

I really think they cater for quite a number of people and their tastes, and what they want to hear and what they want to learn and that sort of thing it’s quite important. It’s a good smorgasbord; you know like, for someone like me … I like to read the ‘Woman’s Weekly’ … I like to read ‘Time Magazine’, I like to read, as simple as that, I’ll just read anything and it’s an avenue to be able to do that (Meadows et al. 2006, 1, RPH Audience Focus Group).

This extract from the audience focus group certainly reflects the wide range of programming. The language also suggests the participant is truly reading in the normal sense of the word and 6RPH is providing that opportunity. Listening has become reading for this print-handicapped participant and the response shows that for this audience member the menu is satisfyingly
diverse. However, substituting the act of reading with listening, raises an interesting conundrum in relation to program material interpretation.

If anyone from the non-print handicapped community reads a book, newspaper or magazine in the normal way, there is nothing to come between the reader and the printed material. There is no need for translation or aural interpretation. For the print handicapped listener the station reader’s voice contains nuances such as personality, tone, phrasing, intonation and attitude. The information is mediated by the reader’s voice. These all have a bearing on the resultant meaning and the translation of previously print-only information.

As a way around this inherent semiotic issue, station editorial guidelines are stricter than expected to ensure a level editorial playing field. During the reader’s training course it is stressed that readers on the station are actively discouraged from bringing their personal opinions to the microphone. Readers are obviously not expected to read like automatons; far from it, since the station’s tag line is “990 6RPH Information Radio, Bringing words to Life”; but strong political, economic, religious, racial or social opinions are not welcome. This underscores the station’s mission to represent needs of the community by presenting unaltered or unflavoured news and information.

We are not a station of opinions, aside from the sports broadcasting; we are a station to voice other people’s opinions, i.e. the opinions of the editors of the West and Australian, whatever magazines we are reading. Our listeners by and large aren’t interested in what our announcers think. One of the main complaints about Newsmag (News Magazine) is that announcers will talk too much between articles and they want to hear the next article not the announcer’s opinion (RPH 5).

Occasionally a listener would call the station about this issue, and at the time of the above interview, there had been a minor stoush because one reader in particular had crossed the line with too much personal opinion on a news article. A listener had complained. It was a source of some gossip within the station at the time and it was surprising how strongly this principle was applied by management as a quiet word with the guilty party was forthcoming. It puts into sharp relief the difference between 6RPH and most community radio stations. Whilst most community stations try to encourage as much diversity of presenter or community opinion
as possible, the core mission of 6RPH is to read as wide a range of unaltered newspapers, books and magazines. The writers in the publications express their own inherent opinions. That is enough opinion. A non print-disabled reader would not have the added distraction of another opinionated translator, and nor should the print-handicapped listener.

**Relationship with the 6RPH Community**

Generally, station members held similar views to the audience focus group (Meadows et al. 2006) about the range of materials available to listeners and the high quality of the readers, but almost all station members admitted to having no idea whether the listeners were happy with the service. Station members, except management, were completely unaware that an audience focus group had even occurred in 2006 and they certainly had not been made aware of the feedback. Outside of this one focus group and very occasional phone calls to the station from listeners, station members readily accepted that there was no obvious knowledge of, or relationship with, their audience. There is a phone comment line but as one member responsible for this ventured, “We don’t really get any comments. We have very little contact with the community. They don’t really have a say in their programming. Very rarely do we get a suggestion to do this or that” (RPH8). Knowledge of whether the audience was happy with the service was generally ascribed to the station manager. “The chairman and station manager are involved with the PH community but unless you knew that, there would be no knowledge. Real evidence is mainly presumptive” (RPH5).

There are some very real knock-on effects to be considered by this lack of on-going information about the audience. First, and as an example, this takes the discussion back to the “awfully dull” programming tag mentioned by a station member earlier. Without adequate and regular feedback from the listeners this may well be an issue of which no-one is aware. The one audience focus group did not mention this as an issue, but those who have been alienated by the station style are unlikely to go to an audience focus group because calls for participants were made on-air and attracted current listeners. It is unlikely that the critics would be listening. The focus groups are far more likely to get advocates rather than critics of the station.
The focus group was carried out by the Griffith University researchers mentioned in the earlier chapter on this works’ methodology.187 This issue is raised in their own methodology. The outcomes are subjective already because they are talking to existing audiences of community radio. The objective of the focus group was to “ask them why they listened….what they appreciated about the sector; what they wanted to see improve”(Meadows et al. 2007, 20). The study was “not to find out why some parts of Australian society did not tune in” (ibid, 19). The focus group in this sense does not add any light to concerns about the production values.

Lack of information about the audience also meant most station members interviewed made assumptions about the audience demographic and without exception believed that they came from an “elder demographic” (RPH5). This belief is based on the presumption that most people with print-disabilities have come to this through natural aging and physical degeneration. The station style and programming is almost completely geared towards this age demographic.

There is stuff we have tried in the past that hasn’t worked, notably stuff for younger people, because they are not of the radio generation. They are far more into personal communication, computers. That is particularly so for print-handicapped younger people because they’re encouraged to use modern technology and they do to good effect (RPH6).

Some station members suggested that more youth magazines could be featured in segments on the station to try and represent the younger community, but as noted above, previous experiments along these lines had not appeared to work. Of course with no structured feedback it is unclear how such a judgement could have been made.

Besides the one audience focus group (Meadows et al. 2006) there has been little in the way of on-going communication with the station’s audience but there has been quantitative audience data collected that suggests some young people are aware of the RPH network. McNair and Balogh (2005, 5) suggests that while twenty-five percent of the over 55’s in Australian capital cities are aware of Radio Print Handicapped, there are also eight percent of the 18 to 24 age group and nineteen percent of 25 to 39 age group that are aware of the RPH stations. The assumption of a larger older demographic is certainly borne out by these figures.

187 See 7.5.4 Audience Focus Groups (Chapter 7).
but there are also components in the younger brackets that could be represented proportionately in the stations’ programming. One would also expect that this information would be available to all station volunteers, but not one member interviewed was aware of this data.

**Community Participation**

In most community stations, the notions of community participation and community representation are inextricably linked: community participation in a community station by its very nature leads to some form of community representation on the airwaves. Inversely if you want to represent some part of the community on the airwaves, then participation in a community radio station is one way forward. W. Barlow (1988, 81) describes “community orientated” radio stations as being in the forefront of a larger movement to democratise accessible segments of mass media by raising the level of *citizen participation* in their operations and broadening the range of viewpoints in their program formats.

Participation of the audience community in the station operation is a keystone objective of this community radio model. 6RPH is unable to satisfy this aspect of the evaluative model of community radio in this study. Although it is impossible to engage the print-handicapped community as participants in the station as readers, there have been print-handicapped announcers in the past and the station manager at 6RPH himself has a print disability. There was also print-handicapped representation on past committees at the station, but currently participation seems limited to the manager alone. At present there does not appear to be any enthusiasm for encouraging community participation and the community themselves have not expressed any interest, both presumably due to the inherent logistic difficulties. Also, as was stated at the beginning of this case study summary, the station does not see itself “as a radio station but a service provider to the print-handicapped community. Radio is just the medium we use” (RPH6). In contrast to most community stations the issue of community participation is just not a priority at 6RPH.

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188 For the first five years (1991-1996) the station ran a sub-committee that included a variety of print-handicapped people. This established the print-handicapped program protocol.
Motivations and Incentives

Thus, if members of the print-handicapped community are not able to participate in their own radio station, who are the 100-plus cohort of broadcasting volunteers that keep 6RPH on the air and why do they do it? Table 17 (6RPH Interview Sampling Rationale) provides some answers. The data was supplied by the volunteer manager in October 2006. Although this is slightly dated, this had been typical of the human resources breakdown over the life of the station.

Table 17: 6RPH Interview Sampling Rationale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles, Ages, Period of Volunteering</th>
<th>Approx number in a week</th>
<th>Approx % station staff</th>
<th>18-40 yrs</th>
<th>40-65 yrs</th>
<th>65+ yrs</th>
<th>POV &lt;1yr</th>
<th>POV 1-5yr</th>
<th>POV &gt;5yr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readers:</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcers:</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians:</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers:</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of volunteers definitely come from an older demographic and are “readers”. Only 19 percent are under 40. It also shows that most of the volunteers have provided a long-term commitment to the station. What motivates these volunteers at 6RPH?

This researcher assumed at the start of this study that community broadcasting volunteers were somehow motivated by an overwhelming sense of social responsibility that meant they wanted to help the print-handicapped community or give back to their wider community. Certainly this is a factor and it is mentioned, but the volunteers in general did not mention this as their first reason for volunteering.

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189 This Table acted as a guide when constructing the interview sample. The priority was to interview approximately the same percentages of people who acted in the different roles. For example, 27 percent of the volunteers were readers, so 77 percent of the interviews would be with readers. The next priority was to ensure that a wide age range and period of volunteering (POV) were considered in the sample.

189 Readers are volunteers whose primary role is to read newspapers, magazines and books on-air for the 6RPH audience. The readers generally have little contact with the recording or broadcast technology.
They are fairly selfish reasons. When I’m asked what I’m doing in my retirement, I can promote the radio station and listen to me. It has given me some purposeful identity outside being a retired person. I identify my retirement activity as reading on the radio. I’m aware of the community need to help visually impaired people and this is what the station provides but I am not consciously driven by the need to help them. It is purely egotistical (RPH1).

This was typical of the kind of comments given by 6RPH volunteers. The primary motivation was having a purpose and a sense of well being in life. For these hundred plus people they come from an age group where this can be very important (RPH5). It was a sense of identity that came from a regular broadcasting commitment. Many were retired or semi-retired and thrived on this activity to give structure to their week. It was also cited as a creative outlet where they felt they could hone their craft each week. *Bringing Words to Life* is a lot harder than it sounds and volunteers put considerable effort into producing/broadcasting their programs as best they can. For some, it was the sense of a job well done that they could continue into their retirement.

The camaraderie, the kindness and the friendship in this place is pretty unique. The moment you walk in the door, there is just a lovely atmosphere, there’s no bitchiness, there’s no fighting, it’s great. Our Christmas parties are some of the happiest I’ve ever been too, just a lovely group of people. I take it seriously, I do the best I can, I think I’ve improved. 990 definitely gives me a focus for the week. To be able to help our coordinators out is a good feeling. They are so good with managing people (RPH2).

A second theme that emerged as very important was the social interaction of the workplace. Almost without exception volunteers attested to the great atmosphere at the station. Many felt that volunteering engendered a better working environment than the normal workplace and although there was much less pressure there was still a sense of responsibility to perform well amongst the volunteers.

Volunteers also recognised the work that paid staff put in. Paid is very much a relative term in the context of community radio. The wages are very low and the hours can be long and unsociable. The paid staff were generally of working age and were certainly not motivated by the modest salary. They attributed their passion for the job to the great atmosphere at the station and the ability to be able to work at something they really enjoyed. Volunteers were generally

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191 "Bring Words to Life" is one of the station’s on-air tag lines
very happy with their paid supervisory counterparts and seemed very aware of their under-paid, overworked status.

Although the theme of helping the print-handicapped community is definitely present, no-one, except the station manager who is print-handicapped, expressed it as a primary reason for volunteering at 6RPH. There is also little visual evidence when you enter the station that this is a print-handicapped station, and some of the volunteers expressed a feeling of remoteness from their audience. They knew they were “out there” and some even knew a few of them but it was a background theme. This certainly underscores the lack of knowledge about the listener at 6RPH, discussed earlier.

Training and Development

The community radio framework of evaluation in this study also looks at community radio as a site for broadcast training: not just as a way to feed the mainstream media industry but also as an environment for personal self-development. Not everybody wants to become a media professional and the skills that radio offers are transferable to many other areas. Presentation skills, speaking skills, research skills, scripting skills and communication skills in general can be acquired in the radio sector. From these more specific radio skills flow secondary self-development outcomes. Better communication skills can develop increased self-confidence and greater self respect. Community radio is a relatively pressure-free environment in which to develop those skills at the individual’s own pace.

6RPH is distinctly different from other community radio stations when it comes to training and development. Most community stations encourage the development of a normal range of broadcasting skills. However, at 6RPH, 77 percent of the volunteers are readers and that is their only activity (see Table 17). Most programs on 6RPH operate either as completely pre-recorded programs or as live broadcasts with readers in the studio assisted by an announcer who operates the on-air desk. Very few readers will operate the recording technology for their own pre-recorded shows. Most will use the services of a technician. The live readers in the studio will generally have no contact with the technology beyond pushing a button to switch
their microphone on and off. Only around fourteen percent of volunteers have any contact with the technology. Lack of access to training was seen as an issue by some:

One of the big things we don’t do enough of here is train people; giving them help, empowering them to do it for themselves, bringing together the community to do the whole thing themselves, not just the couple of people that are paid (RPH10).

Age was cited as an important factor in determining volunteers’ enthusiasm for learning new technology and announcing skills. As older volunteers, it was suggested that most prefer to do things they are comfortable with. The table of roles above bears this out as, in contrast to the readers, nearly all the announcers were in the 18 to 40 age range. Announcing requires a good understanding of both the broadcasting desk and the recording technology, both of which older volunteers were happy to avoid.

I think I have let myself down a little there [on learning the broadcast technology]. I don’t have much confidence. I find it a bit frightening to be honest (RPH2).

Because I am so computer illiterate, it’s probably a bit more challenging for me (RPH4).

I tried but couldn’t do it. It’s not worth the effort of getting it through to my poor brain when other people could pick it up a lot quicker (RPH11).

Also cited as a reason to avoid technical production tasks at the station, was the state of the technology. The computer technology was pre-Windows. The interface is very idiosyncratic; a far cry from the intuitive drag and drop audio programs that most radio stations have been using for the last ten years. The researcher would consider himself a veteran with audio technology, but faced with the system at 6RPH, and struggling through the dated internal architecture, it was very clear why most were quite happy to avoid the system. Volunteers who were quite comfortable with the Windows or Apple P.C. systems in their home or work suggested they would more readily get involved when the station systems were upgraded.

Our workstations are 486 computers. You wouldn’t even give them away as anchors. Once they leave here, they are trash, they are that obsolete. New equipment would go a long way to solving some of our problems and that includes the way we sound. Ids, stings, the whole works and training people (RPH10).
The reluctant uptake of new skills and technology at 6RPH cannot just be attributed to the technological literacy of older volunteers and dated technology. It was also a question of time availability: allocating the appropriate experienced staff away from their already bursting workloads to train people.

There are only two full-timers and two part-timers and if we start doing in-depth technology and production training with over 100 volunteers that is a huge wack out of everybody’s time. I couldn’t afford to give up the time to give everybody the training they deserve (RPH10).

There are however two training courses available at the station. One is a reader’s course and one a technical course. The reader’s course consists of four two-hour sessions and concentrates on reading printed content on the air. This is the course most volunteers will attend and was described by volunteers as: “more like a gatekeeper into the organisation” (RPH1). “Pitched at the lowest common denominator. It was very basic but gave me confidence” (RPH5). Most volunteers expressed similar views. As a field researcher I attended the course and it gave some great training for the specifics of reading printed material within the Radio Print-handicapped protocol. It was a basic guide to the skills of reading printed material out loud with some vitality but nothing really about radio.

The technical course is run rarely and often the few enthusiastic volunteers will teach themselves. There was also an announcer’s course but this really meant the few enthusiasts were thrown in the deep end of an on-air program and supervised until they could swim solo. This was my experience and those of other announcers I spoke to. The general consensus from volunteers was that the training was rudimentary but appropriate for the task, but they would welcome more training. They were all keen to do a refresher course or something more advanced. One member suggested that getting industry professionals to do occasional workshops would be very welcome.

There was also another factor that probably stymied volunteer skills development. Because the station is regarded by management more as a radio reading service than a radio station, there was a sense that development of radio skills is almost frowned upon. As discussed earlier, the inclusion of personal opinion from readers and announcers is actively discouraged.
The pure content of the read material is of prime importance. This effectively puts the nail in the coffin of anyone hoping to develop some personality radio skills. Radio in the mainstream is about developing communication skills and some sense of style and format. Why would volunteers want to develop this aspect of their radio skills if they are not going to use it? It would be wiser to go to another station.

If I was offered the chance I would probably have a look at it. [Talking about becoming an announcer and encouraging some personality.] It’s a bit tricky with this particular station. I don’t like that personality business that comes in myself. I don’t think it comes across as appropriate (RPH4).

In conclusion, it would be very easy to point the finger at 6RPH and suggest their training was a more like a brief introduction to reading newspapers out loud than to broadcasting itself. The needs of the community definitely out-weigh the needs of the volunteers in this respect. It is more important to provide the broadcast material for the print-handicapped community in the short-term than consider the perhaps more secondary concerns of volunteer radio skills development.

**Governance**

Participation in community radio has historically been considered attractive if you prefer to volunteer or work within a less hierarchical or corporate management structure. This is one of the keystone objectives of the evaluation framework of values in community radio presented in this study. The framework suggests community radio should offer some degree of democratic governance from amongst its members. Station members in all roles can play an active part in station decision-making or there should be a mechanism for representation at all levels. This includes the operational level of the day-to-day running of the station and the strategic level of the station board.

When discussing the sometimes thorny issues of station governance with members at 6RPH there were a wide range of opinions which included blithe acceptance of the status quo, acknowledgement of 6RPH as an egalitarian operation, and also strongly-felt dissatisfaction with current practice.
However, there is a clear distinction to be made here between members’ opinion of their individual daily governance at the *programming/operating level* and station governance at the *strategic decision-making level*. Two distinct strands of opinion emerged. Almost without exception station volunteers felt they had a fair degree of individual governance at the programming level and their input was always welcome and considered.

I’ve always found that any suggestion I’ve made has been listened to. I feel there is opportunity here. There have been a couple of times when a suggestion was knocked back but a good reason was given. Very receptive generally though (RPH15).

In conjunction with this receptiveness there was a feeling of equality among the volunteers. All the volunteers felt they were treated equally.

That’s why I like it here. There’s no hierarchy here, even when the manager comes in, I don’t like that in any organisation, the pecking order. What we have here is very egalitarian I suppose, which I really like. I can’t see any negative aspects to this for the volunteers but for the paid people it may have some (RPH4).

These sentiments of openness and equality at the programming level were expressed uniformly throughout the station. Members felt that they were generally left to exercise their own initiative with much of their program content, and any major format changes were open for discussion with supervisory staff. New program ideas were always well received and given appropriate attention. On a day-to-day level, this contentment certainly made the station a very happy to place to be and this was expressed by most members. This researcher’s experiences definitely attest to this easy-going sociable working atmosphere.

Where this study found discontent among members was in relation to representation at the strategic level of governance and the contribution, or lack of it, from the wider station volunteer community. Although some members were happy to accept strategy as it was handed down by the board, others had strong misgivings.
I would change the structure of the place. I would upend it. There is not enough communication from management. No information going up and none coming down. It produces the odd bit of frustration and other people get the same feeling. As a volunteer you can leave and do something else and that has happened to a degree. We wouldn’t have any idea, and maybe some people don’t care, what the board decisions are that run this place. I enjoy myself immensely working here but I have to divorce, it from my thinking about the running of this place (RPH 14).

This was typical of a number of comments from members that describe a sense of distance between the board and the station. Few of the volunteers knew who was on the board (besides the station manager) and what the board did. There was no mechanism for volunteer representation at the board level. The station manager was the only conduit. There was also no communication from the board about governance to volunteers.

This remoteness and lack of communication also led some members to feel that the well-spring of talent in the volunteer group was ignored and no attempt was made to empower this resource. Volunteers felt under-utilised and sometimes under-valued. It was an undercurrent of opinion and a symptom of the style of governance for some members. While for some this sense of disconnection was very frustrating for others it was a part of normal governance.

I don’t see how the larger volunteer membership can do the planning. You walk through the door as a volunteer. They have their own agendas and not the overview required when they first arrive. The best volunteers are the ones prepared to serve (RPH5).

In the context of a radio-reading service for the print-handicapped, there is no recognised precedent for the form of governance but for a typical community radio station this comment would be at odds with the norm of a more democratic style. Management will always stress this is a service provider for the print-handicapped community, not the operation of a more typical community radio station. Decisions are taken with this mission in mind, not with concerns for democratic governance. There are other community stations where a democratically-minded individual can go.

This study found it difficult to separate the noticeable discontent with strategic governance from the lack of active volunteer empowerment (above the daily programming level). Volunteers who were in favour of reviewing the governance mechanisms often spoke of
this in conjunction with the waste of the station’s human resources. “We have some very intelligent volunteers and we could tap these resources.”(RPH8). This will be discussed in more detail under Station/Service Improvements since it becomes clear that volunteer empowerment at 6RPH could be a key to moving the station forward in many respects.

Station/Service Improvements

With any evaluation there can be a sense of implied judgement by the evaluators on the evaluated. The methodology ensures that evidence was sourced from the station members, the station audience and the field researcher’s observations and participation. There is no judgement implied by the findings, only suggestions for ways forward for community radio to better achieve its stated mission and goals. The approach is intended to be proactive, positive and constructive. In this section we move from the retrospective snapshot to ideas for future improvement.

Representation of the Community

Youth and Production Values

6RPH provides a valuable service to the print-handicapped community and does so with a remarkable variety of programming. There is a much needed link to information for a community that could easily be socially marginalised and isolated by their disability. It is also valued by what has been termed the ‘time-handicapped’ community. The one audience focus group (Meadows et al. 2006, 1-5) found enthusiastic listeners who were very fond of the station. It had become essential for social interaction in their lives and greatly reduced the information time gap that the community struggles with. For some, listening had become reading, in the sense they had known in the past. This was testament to the success of 6RPH and was due in no small part to the strict editorial policy and the skill of the readers.

Although current station members and the audience focus group felt that the station provided a wide range of programs with a clear and appropriate editorial policy there was a complete lack of material for the younger demographic. The call for younger style programs came from station members, both young and old, who believed they should represent the
younger print-handicapped community and this dimension was sadly missing from the station. Quantitative audience statistics suggest there is a younger audience aware of the station so the demand for some youth development would not be wasted.

Younger voices, more enthusiastic voices; sometimes what is broadcast is a flat voice. It is a little bit sleepy sometimes; more music, younger newspapers and more culture for the younger listeners. More Drive type shows where they have also managed to include the community type news (RPH13).

There was a clear link here to programming and production values at 6RPH. It was notable that all members suggested a major review of the station branding and program formatting for all listeners, young and old.

I’ve listened at times and thought to my self, this is pretty dull stuff but I don’t think it’s the readers’ fault. I think it is possibly the format itself, the production (RPH3).

There was a need for more zest and energy about the station output:

At the moment nothing is really happening on the sound. It’s in the pipeline to change the sound of the station. I suppose update it more. A lot of our music beds are old. They sound dated (RPH10).

In terms of the formatting and production, younger audiences generally prefer a more dynamic style of radio. Improving the formatting and production may also help attract younger listeners and volunteers to the station as a side effect. The issue of production values and representing a younger audience are inextricably linked at 6RPH.

The researcher gained an additional accidental insight when he was called upon in his capacity as an official University exam invigilator to visit the homes of four younger print-handicapped students who were to sit their University examinations at home using specialised viewing equipment. Once the examinations were complete, and in the course of general conversation there was an opportunity to ask about their radio listening habits. It must be stressed that this was not intended as part of the original methodology, it was not under the normal research protocols and the information is purely anecdotal but it is worth mentioning here. Of the four students who were between eighteen and their mid twenties, two cited 6RPH as “boring” and “way too dull” and the remaining two were not aware of the station.
As an important conclusion to the topic of youth representation at 6RPH, it became clear in conversation with the station manager that the long-term future of the station was uncertain. He was of the view that the younger print-handicapped audience were “not of the radio generation” and thus 6RPH was unlikely to be attractive to them. This attitude may well have coloured the approach to expanding youth representation at the station.

However, without some investment in this younger listener and volunteer demographic, the long-term future of the station looks bleak. The station’s current stakeholders, listeners and volunteers alike, are primarily in the retired demographic. In twenty years, the station will have very few listeners or station staff, unless the youth demographic is considered. Station longevity is a real concern here.

**Relationship with the Community**

The one subject that regularly prompted blank looks and thoughtful sighs from station members was the question of any relationship with the 6RPH audience. Without exception all members felt a relationship with their audience was missing, they recognised the positive impact audience information could have on the station, and they were eager to share their ideas for collecting the information. Suggested ways of collecting on-going qualitative audience data to improve the relationship with the community included: talkback programs, outside broadcasts, a listener/and or subscriber database, station newsletters, and a more dynamic website.

Talkback radio was floated by a number of station members but was said by others to require technology that was too expensive, as well as active listeners, who would actually phone in. As a field researcher and presenter this author tried over a number of months to encourage listeners to phone in. No-one, however, took me up on my offer and other members reported similar results.

Outside broadcasts and community involvement however were something that could really be developed. One station member was particularly enthusiastic about developing relationships with the RPH community using a more outreach approach.
We need to engage our listeners more and we need to encourage them to engage with us. I would like to do things like a 990 quiz night; getting our listeners along to meet each other. A lot of these people are marginalised. They are not going to work and sitting around the water cooler for instance. Bringing them together would be nice. An outside broadcast one morning in the park when we put on sausage sizzles and read the news. Bringing a group of listeners together also gives us an opportunity to find out what they want and I am sure a lot of them are just shy. I reckon you would be pushing it uphill the first few times you did it but the more you keep going at it the more interest you would develop (RPH10).

The station did have a listener database that seemed to be under-utilised. It was a list of people who at some point over the years had subscribed with financial contributions or had some contact with the station. It was quite small but could have been the start of a list of people to whom a newsletter was distributed which might encourage more station contact, and also be a way of recruiting volunteers. As the list expanded it would in turn become another way to request subscriptions. There was a real opportunity here to develop the station-listener relationship.

However the biggest challenge for 6RPH was the website. Over the two year period of this study in 2005-2007, the station exhibited a blank temporary page as its web presence. For some station members this had became a source of anger and frustration. They felt the lack of a website in today’s world was a gross hindrance to the development of the station in many areas. A website was suggested as the ideal starting point to improve the relationship with the print-handicapped community. There would be space for on-line forums, newsletters, information, upcoming events and also an intranet space for communication within the station. It could also be a recognisable RPH presence in the wider internet sense of the word for all manners of station and community matters.

On the flip side of this, it was suggested that a website with all the modern interactive bells and whistles might not be the best investment to communicate with the print-handicapped community. First, there are the obvious visual impairment issues for the users, and second, there was the assumption that the “elder demographic” are much less inclined to use a website. It also meant that someone would have to constantly update the site at some cost to the station. How in fact would you deal with blind access?
The website issue remains on-going but browsing the other RPH station websites in Australia, it does seem that 6RPH is lagging behind. At the time of writing (December 2010) the website has just begun to take shape but still has a way to go (990 6RPH 2010).

**Participation**

While participation of the print-handicapped community in broadcasting was discussed with some of the members it was generally deemed a non-issue for the station. There was a unique irony in the scenario where it was virtually impossible for the community to be readers on the station. It certainly would have been considered if individuals from the community had come forward with pragmatic solutions, such as their own braille versions of program material, but prohibitive costs and logistical challenges made it difficult for the station to provide these resources.

There is some hope for the future though as technology has already made vast improvements to options available for the print handicapped. Adapted computer viewing screens and specialised display software are widely available, while “low vision aids” are a burgeoning field of technology especially in the on-line environment (Freitas and Kouropetroglou 2008, 135-156). There have also been dramatic developments in the field of bionic eyes (O’Neill 2010). While the ultimate goal is to restore sight to normal, in the medium term it may well be that technology makes it possible for the wider print handicapped community to participate in their own radio station.

While the RPH community waits for technology to advance, it does not reduce the urgency of finding indirect ways for the community to participate. In this instance it is more constructive to focus on more realistic representation of the community. At least the community should be able to voice their opinions about the station and participate in that sense. It highlights the urgent need to build meaningful relationships with the listening community at 6RPH and enable at least the spirit of participation if not the fact.
Governance

In summarizing the attitudes of the 6RPH volunteers towards day-to-day governance there was a strong sense of personal responsibility and satisfaction with individual levels of governance in their work. They had a fair degree of freedom to choose the content and production of their programs within the RPH protocols. They attested to gaining a sense of identity in their retirement, acquiring work experience in the media, honing their craft, giving structure to their week and gaining a sense of a job well done. They looked forward to their volunteering time for quite personal reasons. The camaraderie at 6RPH was also high on the list of positives for volunteering. Described as a very friendly, easy-going atmosphere where social interaction was very positive, all members reported a similar experience. Out of all the questions asked at field interviews this one had the most uniform response.

However, underneath the general easy-going camaraderie, there was a definite undercurrent of discontent from some members in one particular area: the strategic level of governance. The topic of station governance at the strategic level prompted some aggressive verbal reactions, some comments verging on the defamatory. The evaluative framework used in this study is not intended to serve as a conduit for that kind of expression but it must reflect a prevailing body of opinion as objectively as possible. The main issues that attracted comment were 1) lack of transparency from the board and 2) the waste of volunteer resources. These two issues were seen as linked by the respondents who made comment. From the twelve interviews six respondents made similar comment.

However, it is difficult to argue a case for unhappy volunteers when the table featured earlier in the chapter (see above page 105) shows a strong base of long-serving volunteers. Although there was definite discontent regarding democratic governance such feelings were only voiced in confidence, in the hope that some change could be brought about cordially, and for most it was not a strong enough reason for leaving. The author felt that on many occasions’ members felt some relief at being able to air their frustrations and grievances to an impartial but embedded researcher. This left the impression that these grievances, although serious, were
from people who valued the station and did not want to upset anyone. They wanted positive change in the area of governance and saw this as an opportunity to initiate that change.

There is a sense here that the status quo is better left undisturbed, but in the context of empowering volunteers it does not yield the best long-term outcomes for the station. Discontent and unhappiness can arise in a community organisation of volunteers when high level governance appears to be reserved for a select few: “The best volunteers are the ones prepared to serve” (RPH5). This statement suggests a hierarchical organisational structure rather than the more egalitarian structure of community radio where volunteers are valuable resources. In the former case the organisation becomes a one-way street of information and resources. Volunteer empowerment becomes redundant, ideas get lost, vibrancy is sacrificed and volunteers will, and have left. Instead of fostering a wellspring of human endeavour and enthusiasm, human resources are wasted and talent development stunted.

I don’t know much about radio. I just have a different view on how things should be run. We have some very intelligent volunteers and we could tap these resources. The volunteers have some great ideas and they could bring the station to higher level. While that isn’t happening, it’s just not going to be that crash hot (RPH8).

Several members felt entirely divorced from the level of strategic governance and kept in the dark about board decisions. There was no mechanism for volunteer representation at this level. There was no information going to the board or coming from the board. Members felt they needed, “more structure, more communication and more staff encouragement. I am finding the management scenario very difficult. People are very cautious about saying things though” (RPH8). It was also reported that there were no regular meetings and members privately joked about meetings.

The other day was one of the first times we actually had a meeting. It was almost a productive meeting. I really feel it needs much greater direction and I think something will have to happen very soon. I feel very uncomfortable with it (RPH8).

Other members were openly critical of the board as an entity and wanted change, for example:
There is an apparent disinclination to accountability and I felt that the board was run away from the board table. This was the most dysfunctional governance situation that I have ever come across (RPH5).

This study earlier explored alternative democratic governance as a keystone objective for community radio but this form of governance has to be adapted to suit the character of the station. It is not a question of its being imposed from the evaluative framework but of its evolving as a conscious choice for the station. It must be emphasised that there was no demand or rallying cry for an alternative democratic or collectivist style governance system from members at 6RPH. What they saw as a positive way forward was a means of setting in place mechanisms that allowed better representation of members at all levels of the station, and provided pathways for volunteers to contribute their unique talents. People and ideas are always worth the investment of time and consideration, especially when those people are cost free! This study strongly concludes there is a lot of potential to improve the channels of representation for the wider station volunteers at the level of strategic station governance and a huge space for volunteer empowerment at 6RPH. These two issues are not mutually exclusive but rather inextricably linked and as this study discusses later volunteer empowerment can may be provide solutions when money is not available.

Training

The standard of reading to air could improve. I would like to develop that more in the form of an advanced reader’s course. Maybe we need to actively recruit, in the university departments or community newspapers, or professional publications to attract literate and capable people. Retirement groups are a possibility. [There’s] not a lot of feedback on readers work. There used to be a station newsletter but that seems to have disappeared and it would be great to have that back. That was the only structured feedback that readers got (RPH5).

The reader’s training course at 6RPH was described as basic and rudimentary but adequate to get new readers started. Some volunteers felt another level of training would be welcome, with emphasis on the reading activity itself. They were keen to have training from voice professionals and also to receive regular feedback from supervisory staff.

There was also a fair bit of reluctance by older members to get involved with the recording and broadcast technology at the station. This causes quite a few problems with
supervisory staff spending far too much time on technical tasks that volunteers in other stations would have to learn. Reasons for this shortcoming included the very old technology which was difficult to navigate and a real lack of time from production staff to give in-depth training. It was felt that the state of the technology and the training deficit stemmed from a lack of funding in the station and was one area that was difficult to solve.

At various points along the way station members have pointed out to the researcher in similar terms, “all this stuff we’re discussing is wonderful and it would make the service even better than it is. But how do we pay for this?” Even suggestions, which on the face of it looked free to implement, cost staff time to administer. There is only so much money and as with all community stations it has to be allocated wisely. It was clear from discussions with volunteers, staff and management that some of the improvements discussed here (especially equipment and training) were already on hold because of the shortage of money. To give the print-handicapped community the service it truly deserves, regular and reliable funding is essential. It would allow the station to plan more effectively and budget in a more refined fashion. Projects beyond “keeping the ship afloat” could then be developed in a meaningful way.

However, not everything is about the money, and the training issue is just the tip of a larger cultural iceberg at the station. The one regular training course that was run at the station was given by a long-standing volunteer, so why not more of the same? Active volunteer empowerment might encourage a culture of more experienced and skilled readers, technicians and announcers offering training workshops to improve overall reading or technical skills at the station. There were some very talented readers, announcers and technicians, and also some past career teachers and academics at the station. The skills are readily available to plug these training gaps. It is a small change in approach to tap this available resource. It may take some time to shift the volunteer empowerment culture at 6RPH but the medium term benefits are rich and many.
Volunteer Empowerment

The examination of the training issue has illustrated an important point about empowerment which is also linked to the station governance concerns mentioned earlier. Empowerment is unlikely to come from a station governance philosophy of: “The best volunteers are the ones prepared to serve” (RPH5), but volunteer empowerment at 6RPH may be the solution to some of the challenges that face the station. This study suggests that activating the strength of volunteers via representation and training will empower them within the station and so empower the station.

The uncovering of this volunteer empowerment solution to the training issues, throws a much brighter light on the other suggestions for improvement at 6RPH. The issues of youth representation, production values, the website, the newsletter, relationship with the community and community participation identified here are at first sight station governance issues but they do not necessarily need more money/staff to be resolved. The solution may lie in the operational arena of volunteer management. Empowering the station volunteers, tapping into their skills and invigorating the internal station culture may be a more productive and cost effective course of action.

It is clear from the volunteers who described their motivations that 6RPH was already an important part of their week and was valued to give some extra structure and sense of responsibility to their retirement. By harnessing that existing goodwill and motivation it would be able to work for the station in even more ways, rather than being a wasted resource. From a management point of view this is only a small shift in governance priorities that may be enough to point to a better way ahead.

Key Recommendations

Representation of the Community

1. Attracting a younger audience by introducing programs targeting the younger demographic.
2. Increase the dynamism of the station sound by bringing more zest and energy into the programs.

3. Improve the relationship of the station with the community through greater interactivity via talkback programs, outside broadcasts, a listener/and or subscriber database, station newsletters, and a more dynamic website.

**Participation**

1. Increase the range of opportunities for participation by volunteers at the station.

2. Activate the strength of volunteers via representation in station governance and training.

**Need for Investment**

1. Investment in upgraded station computer hardware and broadcast software.
Appendix 7: Case Study Summary for RTRFM

Introduction

RTRFM is geographically located in Mount Lawley, Perth, Western Australia. Mount Lawley is quite a young and trendy suburb, about two kilometres north of the City of Perth. The shops, boutiques and restaurants in the suburb definitely cater to the hip crowd of arts, fashion and music lovers. Perth is a small city and the arts, fashion and music scene is tightly knit. Mount Lawley is definitely one urban focus for this undercurrent of slightly alternative-to-mainstream people and practices.

“RTRFM – The Sound Alternative” is the station’s on-air tag line, and it sits very comfortably in the Mount Lawley community. The station’s presenters are familiar faces on Beaufort Street, the suburb’s main thoroughfare, and the station can boast a considerable visual presence with a bright, funky red and black logo on their street frontage. Incidentally, this is next door to one of the city’s most popular independent book, DVD and music stores. Not surprisingly, this also has a very visually dynamic street frontage and between RTRFM and the book store they make a powerful and complementary independent branding statement in the main street.

If you venture off the street and inside to the reception area of RTRFM, you are struck immediately with the impression of a very professional station. The same red and black branding motifs are continued in the interior and pervade all the publicity and visual material. Even the office dividers are the same shade of vibrant red. There is a strange sense that you have entered somewhere cool and important to Perth when you arrive at RTRFM. It feels more like a hip commercial station than a normally down-at-heel community operation.

As you walk to the reception desk you can see staff working in an open plan office. All the regular presenters, sales, production and administration staff are at their desks, on show and accessible to the public. Even the manager’s office and meeting rooms are visible through glass walls. No-one is kept waiting long at reception as anyone in the office will talk to you if the
reception staff are busy. You could as easily end up talking to the breakfast presenter as the receptionist. Now that certainly isn’t like a commercial station!

In the background, and often quite loud, is the on-air broadcast. Staff listen throughout the day and are constant critics of their own output. The live presenters will often wander in and out of the studios into the front office during their off-air breaks to greet their guests or gather notes, but they are also likely to receive the jokes, heckling or praise from their colleagues on their last song or interview. Little is sacred, so a very open mind is a requirement at RTRFM. There is a sense of fluidity and community about RTRFM, an overall positivism and easy-going friendliness that exists in the office and on-the-air. As a volunteer I always thought RTRFM was a fun place to be.

History
Since RTRFM has an alternative youth focus it is not surprising that most of the current staff and volunteers were not born when the station aired its first broadcast in 1977. Only three current volunteers remain from the original 1970s staff, who can tell the station’s history from the very beginning. The following section is collated from their combined knowledge and generous sharing for this research. There are also contributions from Craig Liddell, author of *Perth’s Radio Revolution* (2003b).

The first prominent figure in the station’s history is John Burman who is described as an early organiser for the annual *Perth Arts Festival*. He was aware of the success of community and student radio in the United States (US) and he wanted the University of Western Australia (UWA) to have a radio station. Around the same time, in 1975, Kim Beazley Sr. (Education Minister in the Whitlam Government) lobbied for the FM bandwidth to be the new delivery format for radio stations in Australia (Liddell 2003a). Educational institutions were the first to be offered FM licences. As a result of this confluence of events 6UWA started on the campus of UWA on the 1st April 1977 and remained there until the beginning of 2004. It was named 6UWA at that founding point but Murdoch University got involved soon after its inception in
1979 as a partner. The partnership was known as Universities Radio Limited (Liddell 2003a) and the name changed to 6UVS which stood for “University Services”.

John Burman had managed to raise the money for the initial studios and equipment and he envisaged it as classical music station. When it started, the intended music content was similar to the present-day ABC Classic FM:

This consisted of 25 percent Classical music, which drew on the university’s strong music department and Conservatorium of Music. Fifty percent of programming was spoken word. However, that did not reflect the radio or media courses being taught on campus. There were also 25 hours of non-Classical music (NCM) programming on the station. “This was anything from Theatre Organ Half Hour to Christian rock, with everything else in between,” (Tonks, cited in Liddell 2003b).

In the early days, academics from both universities participated regularly in the talk content, giving the station a regular supply of expert interviewees to discuss issues of the day. The evening programming tended to be overseas material from Radio Netherlands, the BBC and Radio Canada. This format was maintained for a number of years (Liddell 2003b).

As more students got involved the forerunner of today’s Drive Time show began and also the programming began to diversify. “It [Drive Time] was an undergraduate show to begin with and was called Guild Stream and then we had a bit of jazz and then we had a punk show, London Calling” (RTR). Students were already generally more interested in music than talk and as more of the wider community outside of the two universities began to participate, even more music programs began. The diverse music and alternative programming that RTRFM is well known for today was evident even in the early days of 6UVS. One program has survived to this day with one of its original presenters still on-air.

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192 ‘RTR’ is an abbreviation for “Arts Radio”, which identifies the data collected from RTRFM field interviews (2006-2008) with either station volunteers or station staff. The participant identification numbers have been omitted to maintain their anonymity throughout the whole chapter.
We got a manager called Ann Tonks who now manages the Melbourne Opera and she was keen on women in music. We started ‘Drastic on Plastic’. It’s the longest running show still in the same format. 27 years of the same show (RTR).

Programming content at 6UVS also diversified in other ways to include communities in need of help:

The station [6UVS] started in 1977 and I got involved through the print-handicapped programs. Initially there were no programs in the morning and the idea was to put some print-handicapped material on (RTR).

At the time the Association for the Blind had no way of broadcasting to the print-handicapped community. The print-handicapped community relied on the good will of 6UVS to allow them airtime to broadcast before they managed to start their own station in 1991.

Community radio as a sector tends to be funded on a shoe-string and 6UVS was no exception. They relied heavily on the University of Western Australia to keep them afloat. In the early days at 6UVS most of the staff members were paid for by the university. Staff who survived the UVS years attested to the vagaries of university funding. As the station became more music-dominated the University academic involvement dwindled and UWA itself had no broadcasting or journalism courses. There was therefore little internal University support to keep funding the station. According to the sources interviewed, the University did not really take 6UVS that seriously and it was seen as a drain on resources.

UWA had started to pull the funding, but the manager had kept us in the dark. We all went to a meeting at UWA and while the meeting was on someone from the University came to tell us it was official. That was about 8.30pm. By 10pm the station was closed (RTR).

We were locked out and everything was switched off (RTR).

6UVS ceased being a University station in 1990 but UWA then realised they had breached broadcasting legislation by turning the station off so abruptly. According to one

193 “Drastic on Plastic” is a Saturday afternoon show on RTRFM that plays music by women and about women.

194 The station 6UVS was an early incarnation of 6RPH Information Radio. See Appendix 6: Case Study Summary for 6RPH Information Radio (Appendices).

195 This was corroborated by the manager at 6RPH Information Radio during an interview.
RTRFM staff member: “They were extremely embarrassed by that” (RTR) and were keen to find a way to keep the station going as long as it was not going to cost them anything. They also found themselves faced with protests from listeners and staff against closing down the station. “We had lawyers, newspapers and the whole shooting match to approach UWA” (RTR). What initially appeared to be disaster for 6UVS turned out to be a great step forward for the station. There were negotiations to restart broadcasting and one volunteer recalled that the University was actually very supportive. “They offered us the accommodation cheap and the equipment” (RTR).

A new board was formed, and an application was made to the then Australian Broadcasting Authority for a licence and also for a name change. Even though the station was still on the UWA campus, both the station and the University wanted to make it clear that there was no affiliation. Arts Radio was the new name, which soon became RTRFM as a clever play on words.\(^{196}\) The first manager of RTRFM, as it is now known, was Kath Letch.\(^ {197}\) The new station no longer relied on the support of the University and had to survive on its own merit. The station wanted to sever the association completely:

“There was a dream to get off the campus, to get away from the University (RTR).

They didn’t really want us on campus, we didn’t want to be there and they kept putting the rents up (RTR).

In 2004, 14 years later, RTRFM moved to its current Mount Lawley location. In doing so, RTRFM took on new community significance with a very visible local presence in the city (Liddell 2003b).

\(^{196}\) RTRFM is said to be a contraction of “Arty Radio” (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RTRFM/).

\(^{197}\) Kath Letch, a long-time stalwart of Australian community radio, was General Manager of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) from 2008-2012 and Chair of the Community Radio Digital Consultative Group in 2008.
Representation of the Community

The RTRFM Community

The key message that came out of the interviews conducted at RTRFM with staff and volunteers was their adherence to their mission, “RTRFM – The Sound Alternative”. This is the station’s on-air tagline and it says a lot about the RTRFM community on several levels. RTR was a shortening of their initial name Arts Radio and covering the arts is a part of their mission. It is clear from an examination of their daily program schedules, in comparison to the commercial and the ABC stations, that none offers the same variety or depth of Western Australian arts content. The RTRFM focus is on the alternative side of the arts community.

We give exposure to comedians, musicians, artists who would never get exposure on the mainstream media (RTR12).

We’re left, greeny, hippy, femmo, pinko, commo etc … we do a lot of local arts and instead of concentrating on the performance, I tend to look at the stuff behind, like the theatre company, the actors, the directors, where they have come from, etc. Also a lot of the talents we get to talk are new to radio interviews, so it’s my job to help them express their ideas and not flog their show too much. It’s a community focus more than anything (RTR7).

The word, “Sound” in the tagline “RTRFM – The Sound Alternative” refers both to the medium of radio, incorporating music and also to the high quality of the alternative they offer. The word, “Alternative” in the tagline is what really defines the station values and its core community. The content provides a recognised music and editorial alternative on the Perth radio scene. Alternative has been described by some staff as a sense of place at RTRFM where the disenfranchised, disconnected or marginalised can express their feelings on-air; or at least be represented in some way. RTRFM is described as almost like a hub or a meeting point. “It’s about the community interest groups, the community scenes in Perth. The broadcasting is almost secondary” (RTR12). It is a way for some groups within society to connect with like-minded individuals and feel that they are not so alone or have some voice in community. In a similar way it has been described as one of the few outlets that offer a way of:
Keeping that democratic voice out there going across to people, especially these days with all the corporate take-overs and the changes in the laws about who can own what. That’s the most important part about it, the democratic voice (RTR9).

That is the essence of community radio. We provide stuff for people who are already marginalised and without RTR wouldn’t be able to express their feelings on-air. A Perth without RTR would be a much less culturally rich place (RTR12).

No-one at RTRFM could give a definitive answer regarding the age or demographic of their audience. However, some did point to the *RTRFM 92.1 Listener Survey* (RTRFM 2011) report, as an indicator.\(^{198}\) Table 18 (*RTRFM 92.1 Listener Survey Report*) shows this data.

**Table 18: RTRFM 92.1 Listener Survey Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>Less than 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29 year olds</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 year olds</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 year olds</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 year olds</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 plus</td>
<td>Less than 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(RTRFM 2011)

These figures only take into account RTRFM subscribers, those that actually paid a small annual fee to help the station survive, but this tallied with staff anecdotal beliefs about the age of their listeners. What emerged from talking to staff about their perceptions of their audience was that most considered their core audience to be from 15 to 45 years old and their main assertion was they had some preference for alternative music or talk content, that is, an alternative to the mainstream media. This was of more interest to staff than how old listeners were.

However the weekend programming in particular has content that appeals to a much older age group. Some staff also knew listeners who had been continuous listeners from when

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\(^{198}\) Radiothon is an annual fundraising event that increases contact with the listeners. Listeners are encouraged to financially subscribe to the station and in that process offer demographic information. The data is not considered to give a true picture, since there is no data available on the people who do not subscribe but still listen. However, it does offer the station an insight that helps inform their programming strategy. The data on the number of subscribers was unavailable.
the station started in 1977. This also suggests much older listeners. In summary, the word *Alternative* is a good description of the community at RTRFM.

**Serving the RTRFM Community**

Interviews with staff suggest the program content mix is approximately eighty percent music and twenty percent talk and across this mix there is a wide range of programming. The question this study asked was: how does RTRFM divide the programming schedule amongst the diverse community interest groups? The weekday, daytime schedule has a regular daypart formatting similar in some ways to a commercial or local ABC station: *Breakfast* (6am-9am), *Morning Magazine* (9am-12am), *Out to Lunch* (12pm-3pm), *Full Frequency* (3pm-5pm), *Drive Time* (5pm-7pm). However, with the exception of the *Breakfast* show, there are different presenters each day on the other shows. *Breakfast* is the flagship show and presented by the station’s highest profile personality. He is the only daily presenter. This means that although there is some traditional commercial-style program formatting that listeners can easily hook into on a daily basis, they get different presenters on all the other shows.

*Breakfast* is a mix of local music, local comedy, arts, interviews, DVD/cinema reviews, weather, news and sport. *Morning Magazine* is the main RTRFM current affairs talk format dealing with mainly local issues and guests give an alternative view from that found elsewhere. *Out to Lunch* plays new music (no older than three months), local and otherwise, while *Full Frequency* is a daily offering of the various genres of dance music. *Drive Time* offers assorted music and a local gig guide.

The daytime weekday formatting provides more diversity of voices yet gives sponsors a definite program structure for positioning their messages, almost akin to commercial broadcasters. Outside of the weekday daytime schedule, the RTRFM program diversity really begins to shine through. Each weekday night has an entirely different offering of music or talk and weekends provide a similar schedule of alternative radio.
I love the diversity of RTR. We still have Drastic on Plastic and Burning Down the House as women’s issues programs, there’s still reggae, there’s still Difficult Listening (Avant-garde music), there heaps of different music type programs, there’s a current affairs program during the week, Morning Magazine, Bordak Bordak Nqalla (Indigenous music), the Indy Media (Independent media), Soulsides (soul and funk); I think the programming is in good shape at RTR. I’m one that constantly bats for Nostalgia (music from 1940s and 50s), Theatre Organ hour and Showbiz because the listeners of those shows have been supporters of RTR for a long time and still don’t get their needs met other places either. You have Full Frequency giving us ‘doof doof’ one day and then next morning you can hear, ”There ain’t nothing like a dame”. That’s great (RTR7).

**Local Focus**

Alongside the alternative content, RTRFM is known for its strong preference for local content. And it is not just Australian content but preferably Perth or West Australian content. There is a focus on local events, local music, local arts and RTRFM provides a good events listing service for the community. There is a sense that RTRFM provides knowledge and education about the community that is unavailable elsewhere. This was not only reported from station staff and volunteers but also audience members who participated in a focus group.

In December 2006, RTRFM participated in the nationwide community broadcasting audience survey. Participating stations were visited by researchers from Griffith University who organised and conducted audience focus groups about their respective station. The researchers collected qualitative data on what the focus groups thought about their community station. This study was able to source a summary of the data collected by the Griffith researchers, which was given to RTRFM in the form of a station feedback report.

RTR was described as a ‘local station’ and participants said it increased their knowledge about the local community and supported activities in the local area. Focus group members said they received information about the local music, art and theatre scenes. Participants said that RTR did a very good job at educating them about what was ‘going on’ in Perth and involving community was described as an important aspect of the station (Meadows et al. 2007b, 2).

Local music is also an essential part of the RTRFM station brief. One of the longer-standing members at RTRFM says:
I never understood why [commercial] radio stations play the same crap over and over again … I knew there was all this music out there … why wasn’t it being played? I thought I’d do something about it. I got very involved in the local music scene and was keen to promote that. It was basically a deep dissatisfaction with current radio that got me started (RTR3).

RTRFM is a centre where musicians come regularly with their instruments and CDs and will always get the chance to either have their music played on-air or conduct an interview with an RTRFM presenter. There is a focus on Perth artists but also on the rural, country musicians who have no other outlet for their work. RTRFM is an active player in the local music community, promoting and enhancing the careers of local contenders. The RTRFM music director is seen as an important figure for local musicians whose influence and promotion of local events is of great significance to the local community. There is definitely a sense here that the station is active in community development. Without their patronage of the local music scene there is no other media outlet, apart from the local entertainment free sheets, that cover local music with the same depth and passion.199

I’m a musical person and I’m very into the local music scene. The local scene in its present form couldn’t exist without this radio station. It’s one of the things that are necessary for a local scene to actually exist. You need the bands, the recording studios, the venues, the press and you need a radio broadcaster. If you don’t have access for local bands to get airplay for their demos or albums or whatever, it really limits it. If it’s very important for the local music community, it follows naturally that it’s really useful for the rest of community for whatever art form you can use in an audio format (RTR3).

It was also significant that someone with experience of the ABC who now volunteers at RTRFM and who was interested in the local music scene was struck at how RTRFM works for the community.

I wanted to be part of local music scene and how the administration of it all worked. I wanted to see how Perth bands get airplay and how struggling bands get helped out by RTR and also I had some work experience at the ABC. They [the ABC] are very interested in their listeners but RTR is more interested in serving the public that listens to them rather what the record companies were giving them (RTR5).

**Program Reviews**

Representing the alternative community of Perth is not an easy task. Questions need to be asked such as: What community or music groups should be given shows? How long should the current shows be allowed to run? Is there a use-by date on them? Are programming decisions based on quality of the program or fair community access to the airwaves? How does the station decide? The weekday more commercial style daytime program formatting at RTRFM, discussed earlier has been a constant for some time at the station and this ensures adequate sponsorship for survival of the station, but outside of these hours there has always been a battle for air time.

It’s not an easy issue and programming at RTRFM is the most contentious issue internally. We don’t work on ratings; we are not bound by those sorts of values. We have had some troubling times at this radio station when it comes to programming issues (RTR11).

This study found that the general feeling among students or aspiring broadcasters was that RTRFM was a very difficult community station on which to get a show. The hip reputation of the station made for a long waiting list and people on that waiting list felt that unless you were in the RTRFM clique you stood little chance. Aspiring volunteers felt they would spend most of their time at RTRFM sitting on reception or cataloguing the CD library. They felt other community stations provided broadcasting access more quickly. This was also emphasised by one RTRFM member.

Is that the public perception of RTR? As a clique that you can’t get into because you have to be a certain level or professional? It’s harder to get into these days. There’s kudos attached to RTR. It’s a sort after place for aspiring broadcasters, graduating students would like to come and be part of the place … cool … and that’s exactly how it should be. Are we a victim of our popularity (RTR11)?

There is certainly some awareness of these feelings amongst RTRFM staff and they have tried to address the issue of enabling fairer access to the airwaves. Several years ago the RTRFM board instigated a programming review committee which is made up of board members and the membership base. It sits once a year and collates information throughout the year. The review looks at the quality of the programs, whether they are being duplicated elsewhere, whether they actually meet their original brief, whether they are in the right time slot, whether their presenters need training. The review also considers whether they are giving a
Draft programs are circulated to all of the members and there is a period of comment. Programs slated for axing have an appeal process. About eighty percent of the appeals have been upheld. RTR really does try to be genuinely democratic in that process rather than having personal agendas. The board does try to discuss all the issues present (RTR8).

Most at RTRFM are happy that a diverse range of community programming/content is the priority rather than an adherence to professional broadcast values. Not everybody wants to be, or can be a radio professional, but their community voice is much valued. RTRFM takes due care with this policy and does not marginalise community members by demanding radio experience before considering a program submission. RTRFM offers training to aspiring broadcasters that covers driving the broadcast desk, on-air etiquette and some basic journalism. There is also a healthy culture of mentoring new volunteers by more experienced staff.

RTRFM members also believed it was important that the station move with the current musical trends. They had recently started a program called Pocket Disco which was “electro-clash kinda stuff” (RTR4). This was a genuine response to community suggestions and the fact that the new music genre was not being represented on the airwaves anywhere in Perth. A lot of the specialist music programs are changed in response to current trends. Members believed that overall the reviews undertaken by the programming committee are comprehensive and a fair process is applied.

I sat on it last year and two submissions had no radio experience whatsoever and they got up. What weighed most on the committee’s mind was the need of the community to hear what they wanted to present. It was two genres of music that didn't have coverage on RTR and we felt had a big enough audience to deserve coverage on the radio. From RTR's point of view, content over quality is ok with the assumption that quality can be worked on. Better that, than a slick presenter playing something that is non-RTR in character (RTR6).
Relationship with the RTRFM Community

The RTRFM Family

When RTRFM members talked about their relationship with the community it was with passion and pride but as one member put succinctly:

If I went into Dianella\(^{200}\) plaza and asked the butcher whether he had listened to RTR, I don’t know if there would be positive response (RTR7).

Their audience functions outside of the mainstream and the popular. RTRFM have an audience that is keyed into local arts, local music and alternative culture. The relationship with their community seems confined within these interests. RTRFM members suggested they had no desire to widen this community since:

If we played more popular music or talked about less stuff that was left wing, more people would listen to us but what would be the point because we wouldn’t be the alternative (RTR 4).

The RTRFM audience demonstrates a sense of a homogeneous community of interest in its diversity and alternative nature and because of this it is likely they will have strong bonds with the station. Nearly all the members interviewed at RTRFM talked about a feeling of belonging to the RTRFM family and they believed this extended to the listeners as well who felt they also had some sense of community ownership as part of the family.

I get quite a lot of feedback when I’m out and about when people discover I work for RTR … It’s like RTR is a community station and the listener is part of the station community. Well, once they have found someone from RTR, it’s their opportunity to express their opinion and make some changes to ‘their’ station (RTR14).

The concept of the RTRFM family is very powerful notion of community inside and outside the station and the notion is underpinned by strong evidence demonstrating a two-way street between the station and its community. Lines of communication are active and open.

\(^{200}\) Dianella is a Perth suburb, and is being used as an example to illustrate the “RTR family” reach.
Phone and Email Culture

As a listener to RTRFM you would quickly notice any presenter’s zeal for giving out the studio phone number but since there are no talkback shows on RTRFM, you maybe wondering what the point is. The station does not do talkback because it avoids emulating what other stations are doing and “we can’t put callers to air without a delay or defamation insurance” (RTR6). But RTRFM wants to hear from its listeners regardless. Presenters all spoke of a desire to hear from their listeners and if possible voice their listeners’ opinions. Some presenters said they received eight to twenty phone calls a show.

So you get this lovely rapport with the listeners (RTR1),

It’s the warm fuzzies and that's maybe what you get out of it (RTR10).

You get a good feeling on what to play. They will tell you if they didn’t like something as well. It’s quite good (RTR1).

On the receiving end of programming, the audience focus group echoed similar sentiments.

Most, if not all focus group participants said they had rung the station for a variety of reasons including to ask for names of songs or about the music, for prizes, to make requests or ask for further information about an issue or event being discussed. Participants said they felt comfortable with calling the station and were made to feel welcome when picking up prizes. One participant also said they felt announcers liked being phoned during their programs (Meadows et al. 2007b, 2).

RTRFM also gets many phone calls because of its popular feature album policy. Each music show has a weekly feature album and there is normally an album to be given away on each daytime show, each weekday. These are not competitions as such. Once the feature album has been announced on the show, the presenter will give the album to the first person to get through to the studio phone line. This is something that really enhances the day-to-day contact with the listeners. If you are a winner, you simply go to the station and collect your album when it is ready for collection. RTRFM give away a lot of music in this way and it does promote a very strong relationship with the community. Listeners initially get to talk to the presenter, and then actually go to the physical radio station to pick up a free album.
When RTRFM members were asked about community contact via the internet and email, neither stimulated the same passion as phone contact. One of the reception staff said,

We get one or two negative emails a week but probably 5-6 positive (RTR5).

It was apparent however, that of the emails they did receive, there was a fair amount from overseas.

We have people from Perth who live overseas who sometimes send us emails (RPH10).

We get a lot of feedback on-line from people all over the world (RTR13).

It would appear that RTRFM retains contact with some of its listeners even when they are overseas via the station’s web stream and online archived programming. This adds further weight to that sense of an RTRFM family discussed earlier.

Requests

Something which was very fashionable on 1970s radio was the idea of listener music requests or even whole shows devoted to listener requests, but in recent years this has dwindled as a broadcasting fashion. However at RTRFM some staff have been putting this to good use as a production technique and also as a way of developing interaction with their listeners.

On Woodstock Rock we actually ask for requests. Sometimes people make requests for really strange stuff and it challenges us basically. Requests are an interesting thing, because they give you a flavour of what people are after and you can do some interesting things like building brackets around requests and it changes your way of working … Sometimes you can play a piece that you get a feel will generate a phone call and then occasionally they will ask where they can get it and that’s really good to hear (RTR3).

From this quote it is easy to see the passion that presenters have for their shows and their listeners. They are enthusiastic about talking to their listeners. After all it is the listeners who are a measure of the program’s popularity.

Radiothon

Apart from the anecdotal evidence through direct audience contact, one way the programming committee garners information about how programs are being received is from information
collated during the annual Radiothon. As already noted, Radiothon is a fundraising event to encourage listeners to become financial subscribers to RTRFM. As RTRFM members boldly state themselves, it is a period when listeners are asked for money to ensure the continued survival of the station. For some members it is a difficult period as they feel they have to go to extremes to entice people to subscribe.

We used to go on-air at Radiothon back in the old days and say “support your local community station, we are here for you, we’re bringing you what you want, show us your love” and ring, ring the phone rings and they subscribe. Now we say that and the phone stays dead. And then I say, “And to sweeten the deal, a pack of CDs to the next subscriber and then ring, ring.” It’s made Radiothon more of an ordeal and devalued and cheapened the community aspect of the station. Doing it for a whole week feels icky (RTR11).

There are different levels of Radiothon subscription from concession through to business subscriber and each level gives appropriate benefits. At the lower levels subscribers receive concessions at certain retail outlets, while at the business levels subscribers receive on-air sponsorship. Radiothon subscription cajoling is also accompanied by a swathe of Radiothon prizes given to lucky subscribers. If you subscribe, you may be lucky enough to win anything from a CD (as described above) to a sound system. One year there was even a car.

Among RTRFM members Radiothon was cited as the primary way to judge how the station was performing according to its listeners. Subscription can be made to a particular program and the statistics on the number of subscribers to each program is one measure of program popularity. There is also a Radiothon survey which all subscribers are asked to complete which is a combination of quantitative demographic information and also qualitative data on programming/general station feedback. The Radiothon survey is collated and distributed to program coordinators to help them plan for the future.

The number one way we get to gauge how we are doing as a station is Radiothon. If Radiothon goes well, we beat our targets from last year, and then we know we are sounding good. Most years we beat our targets. We can look at it program by program and presenter by presenter. It’s an interesting way of finding out whose attracting people to their show. It changes year by year. It’s who subscribes to what program. There is a friendly competition among the presenters (RTR12).
Radiothon is an occasion when the strong relationship between the station and the community is demonstrated. Its success showed the level of support that its community was willing to give to RTRFM.

If commercial radio did something like Radiothon, I don’t think anyone would put their hands in their pockets to hand out even a dollar. A person handing out $120 for a gold membership shows their love and dedication towards the station as a member of community that has never set foot in the place. That’s a superficial way of looking at it but when they are struggling to give the money and they go for a concession membership, it shows what they are willing to do for the station (RTR9).

**Relationship with the Local Music Industry**

If you were keyed into the local music and events scene in Perth but never listened to the radio, it would still be hard to avoid RTRFM. They have a strong presence on the live music and dance music scene. Staff at RTRFM are also responsible for organising RTRFM events and fundraisers and this is something that has recently expanded.

For a long time RTR only did three to four fundraising events a year but last year we did sixteen. It really has grown (RTR12).

There are long-standing relationships with music venues and also long-standing institutional events which have run for some years.

We have a very solid relationship with the local music industry, involved in things like the *Fresh Blast Program* which assists local bands with their new releases. ‘In the Pines’ which is probably the biggest one we have, is an institution in itself. *In the Pines* is also seen as a major event on the local music calendar. If a band gets to play ‘In the Pines’ it’s a major event for the band (RTR4).

We’ve a Radiothon opening party and that opens the 10 day fundraiser and then we’ve a Radiothon closing party. We also just had our 3rd winter music festival in Fremantle. We had *Jazz in July*, Rockabilly events, *Homegrown, Latin, Full Frequency* club nights and this year we are having a 30th anniversary fundraising event for our reunion (RTR12).

However, it is not just about raising money for RTRFM. Station members believed that a lot of people find out about the station through these events and once they had been exposed to RTRFM they start listening to the station.
RTR is very difficult to market in a conventional way unlike mainstream radio. We aren’t the MacDonald’s of radio where you know what you are going to get, because our programs are all over the place but our events hit different niche markets over the year and once we get people listening to their niche they often listen to other programs as well. Suddenly they find themselves hooked on RTRFM … how cool is this; this weird and wonderful station that has all these different things (RTR12).

By going out into the community, organising music events and meeting the listeners RTRFM has helped develop a unique station brand. Many of those same listeners and musicians end up at RTRFM as the station has become an alternative media hub, fuelling the local music scene. The time that this author spent at the station as a volunteer at RTRFM was constantly punctuated by a flow of local musicians and artists who had come to drop off their latest CD, chat with staff, arrange interviews, discuss events and often just to hang out. The front office was a place to meet and greet the up and coming, the wannabees, the veterans and the local stars. For a community radio station its importance to the local music scene is immeasurable.

**Community Participation**

RTRFM has never had a shortage of volunteers who want to get involved with the station. The local cachet of the station, the RTRFM family and the fun working environment make it a top destination for media students or keen broadcasters. The website encourages people to get involved and there are regular on-air promotional announcements offering radio training with a view to participating at the station. There is a constant stream of people wanting to volunteer at RTRFM. Although not all of them wish to be broadcasters, this is what the vast majority would like to be. Unfortunately as has already been mentioned there are not enough hours in the broadcast day to accommodate everybody and allocation of programming becomes an issue. As one staff member put it:

> Are we a victim of our popularity? There’s only 24/7 hours of broadcasting to fill. There are more people who want to get involved than there is hours, but is that our fault for allowing people to stay here for a very long time as opposed to making program changes to allow more access? (RTR11).

RTRFM does however often need non-broadcasting volunteers; reception, the CD library and sponsorship are areas where volunteers can often go to get their foot in the door. Volunteers with some media experience can also help out with producing shows, doing
interviews, arranging guests and prerecording items for other shows. Volunteers may well start in non-broadcasting roles but progress to broadcasting later. It is a fluid environment and those with the potential and the passion tend to move to the appropriate roles.

Motivations and Incentives

Music

This research was keen to uncover what really drives the volunteers and staff at RTRFM, given that the volunteers receive no financial reward for their time and paid staff receive only a modest salary. One volunteer had been involved with the station for almost thirty years. So what is the attraction? The volunteers broadly fell into three groups when they were asked about their motivations and incentives. Love of music was the most cited motivation followed by a love of the broadcasting process and also an interest in being part of a community organisation like the RTRFM family.

Eighty percent of the RTRFM output is music-based programming, but the station will rarely play music played on commercial radio stations. Presenters pride themselves on playing local, alternative and culturally diverse music. Members talk about a certain intangible quality that makes music very RTRFM or not. Radio is really just the medium that allows these music enthusiasts to explore their interests. Not one of the music enthusiasts interviewed said they initially had a driving passion for radio. It was the music that moved them naturally into that medium.

I’ve always had a love of music; my family has always been involved with music … I was sick of mainstream music and culture and wanted to do something different and RTR seemed a cool thing to get involved with. I never thought I would end up working for RTR or becoming a radio announcer (RTR12).

There is a lot of cross fertilisation between the local music/club community and RTRFM. They help to fuel each other’s success. Volunteers described this as adding to their motivation for working with RTRFM. They had maybe started in the local music scene or wanted to be part of the local music scene.
I was getting into DJing at the time. I was a 17-year old getting into something new and having an outlet for a passion. I bought heaps of music and played in clubs and then one of the graveyard shifts came up here and it just kind of grew from there. It morphed over time into more interest in radio and then I started doing other shows (RTR6).

The Broadcasting Process

Although none of the members at RTRFM actually said, “It is my love of radio that motivates me”, there was strong emphasis on enjoyment derived from the actual process of broadcasting. There was a sense of achievement gained from successfully managing the process and producing a good show and it stroked their own egos.

There is a sense of fulfilment when everything goes right and that is in quite a selfish way. Primarily that’s what drives me through the course of the day, there’s the pressure of producing a show, lining up stories minutes before a show goes to air, finding the right person to talk about it, the interview goes well, the show goes well; there is a sense if satisfaction in the wheels running smoothly on the machine, that’s the primary satisfaction and reward that you get. When people phone up and say they enjoyed listening to you that’s always nice. It is quite selfish isn’t it? (RTR6).

Members also enjoyed the processes of broadcasting and the way it contributed to their self development.

I really enjoy the process of broadcasting, the ethereal nature of it; it comes and it goes. I like that I prepare, that I present and then it’s gone, I kind of like that sense. I always feel like I could do better but once the interview is over and I have enjoyed it, it’s gone. I don’t beat myself up over that one. I think it takes some time before one might get to that point. It’s like a continual self improvement process but I like to think other people are enjoying what I am doing too. I try to think that it’s about the message and not the messenger so my ego doesn’t get caught up in it (RTR7).

Community

As already mentioned, RTRFM members felt the station serves as a local focus for a community of alternative culture, accommodating local events and those who may feel marginalised by the mainstream. The alternative media environment can be very attractive for those who seek some way to express their niche views. There are also those who genuinely want to help the local community and see a community radio station as an effective way to do that. Then, there are those who prefer the working environment that a community organisation tends to offer. All RTRFM members spoke very fondly of the community within the station and the RTR family.
For those who want to express themselves RTRFM provides some very diverse and
niche programming opportunities, and for some, this opportunity is the main motivation. The
diversity and alternative community representation is exceptional. RTRFM is offering a
platform to those socially marginalised groups who would like their voice heard:

I’ve always been interested in social justice, been a member of Amnesty
International since year eight so I guess it really began as an experiment to
marry these other interests onto radio. The ability to talk about things that I
think should be talked about (RTR6).

From talking with members at RTRFM, this sense of service to the community is an important
motivator. It is a common goal:

From a personal level I feel like I’m doing something for the community itself.
It’s, without sounding too corny, for the greater good (RTR9).

For those who did not articulate that sense of social responsibility, RTRFM as a
community organisation simply provides an enjoyable working environment. This was
mentioned many times. Some staff had worked in commercial radio and found RTRFM by
contrast to be a more enjoyable workplace. Some staff had worked in more corporate or
hierarchical organisations and again in contrast found RTRFM to be the better alternative. From
his own observations on site, this researcher experienced a good working atmosphere at the
station with staff sharing common community objectives.

If you took my role at a commercial station it’s reminiscent of a sausage
factory. There’s just not that sense of fun. Financially I would be better off but I
might be in worse mood when I got home from work. If you enjoy your work,
you’re not really working. It doesn’t feel like work here and I know I’m doing
something good (RTR13).

I enjoy belonging to this community. It feels like a big family, that’s important
(RTR10).

Being part of a community organisation was important for some of the RTRFM members but a
common thread running through all the member interviews was the desire to be part of the
specific RTRFM community. In the previous section on Relationship with the Community it was
mentioned that the sense of an RTRFM family was felt in the listening community but members

For further information, see http://www.rtrfm.com.au/shows.
felt it even more within the station. Although the RTRFM community is certainly not homogeneous when looking at the diversity of its output, its members demonstrate an extremely strong sense of homogeneity when it comes to the station: its community value; the RTRFM family; a sense of fun; a great working environment; a good work ethic; a good industry; and “a kind of homeliness that is RTR” (RTR6).

… like there is always the music playing through the station. It’s a good environment, like everybody’s hearing it. It’s a positive reinforcement of what they are all doing and things are getting done. Also everybody’s very approachable and there is a lot of camaraderie. … Everybody really understands what the station is trying to do, so nobody is out there trying to do their own thing, they are there working for the station, they want the station to be held in high regard (RTR5).

It’s bloody awesome being here. That changed my whole life. There’s a real community around this place. When I first started as a volunteer I was a nervous kid and really wasn’t part of the community but that has changed and I really am a part of this place. That certainly keeps me going here and wandering the streets, it’s like being in ‘Summer Bay’. You run into people that dig RTR and what it does and it’s a good feeling (RTR11).

**Governance**

In most businesses, you just don’t have a voice but community radio does provide some opportunity for internal voices to be heard (RTR15).

The people at RTRFM almost uniformly exhibit the sense of an organisation that is working well. A look at the governance structure may explain more. RTRFM’s organisational structure comprises five main groups: the members, the board, the staff, the volunteers and program collectives.

**Members**

The members constitute the largest group comprising everyone who takes an interest in participating or having a voice in the running of the station. You do not have to volunteer or work at the station to be a member but you normally have some interest beyond that of a simple listener. There is a fortnightly members’ news compiled by the station manager which keeps everyone informed of events, announcements and governance issues. Members are encouraged

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202 Summer Bay is a fictional, fantasy, sleepy coastal location on the popular Australian soap opera, *Home and Away*, which attempts to depict the Australian dream.
to voice their opinions to the board via the station manager and board members. The RTRFM Annual General Meeting is the time in the calendar when all members are invited to be present and participate in board elections and raise general issues of business.

**The Board**

The board members can only be elected for a two year term but they can have a maximum of three consecutive terms as a member. Effectively, no-one can sit on the board for more than six years. The board sits once a month and makes decisions about the strategic direction of the station and high level management decisions in areas such as finance. It maintains a watching brief on programming, although a subcommittee advises on what action should be taken following each programming review. The nature of RTRFM as a community organisation means the board has a mix of strategic and operational involvement. It is in touch with members, rather than remote from them:

The members are broadly represented by the board. They elect the board. The members receive the members’ news every fortnight and we encourage members to feedback on that. For every member’s news I send out and I get an average of 6-10 replies on station issues. It can be all sorts of stuff. I try to encourage members to thank people for doing things around the station, publicly in the member’s news. If they want to select someone for outstanding presenting we encourage that. They also get correspondence from the board. It’s an update on decisions from the board. Members can also send correspondence to the board or to me but most of the members have contact with the board anyway. We also intend to have a member’s only login on the website which will be an exciting thing (RTR15).

The board members are also active at station functions:

"We dig in and help out at fund-raisers. This is part of being in the RTR family whether you are a board member or not. We pull beers or take or money at the door. You just wouldn’t find this in a company of our size [elsewhere] (RTR8)."

**Staff**

The group of paid staff at RTRFM involves itself with the daily operations of the station. Staff meetings are held at least once a week and were described by one staff member as “idea generating situations; continuous improvement” (RTR11). There is a continuous improvement document that is available to staff and the station manager and appropriate issues are taken to
the board via the station manager. The job of station manager at this level is very much as a conduit to the board.

The only real person who is above anyone else is the general manager [station manager] but in an operational sense, there is no feeling of that, he doesn’t wield his authority or anything, so it feels very much like a collective effort (RTR6).

The station manager has regular open opportunities for vollies [volunteers] to discuss ideas or suggestions to take further … He particularly is more approachable and more willing than his predecessor to listen to ideas about the place (RTR11).

**Volunteers**

At the volunteer level of RTRFM, there have historically been some governance concerns. Several volunteers commented that presenters who did programs out of office hours had little or no contact with staff or the board and thus tended to feel marginalised from station governance, not intentionally but by circumstance.

It’s something that’s not really new in community radio. There can be an ‘us and them’ situation between staff and volunteers. “I’m a staff member, therefore I’m in the entertainment business and I’m being paid to do this, therefore, I am more professional than you.” There is a little bit if that here but it’s not too bad at the moment. There’s also a lot of networking that goes on in during office hours and you can be ‘part of the office gang’ but if you do a night time program then you have very little relationship with on-going staff members. Out of hours people feel left out and they get the raw end of the stick. It does depend on the manager and our present manager is looking to change the situation. It’s not the ‘us and them’ that it was (RTR3).

This was a major concern for the station manager. He understood that for staff, broadcasting was their work, for volunteers it was a hobby. That contributed to a vast range of contextual differences. For example, it was mentioned by the station manager that staff felt naturally more knowledgeable about the operation of the station; they may have more of their careers invested in the station and often would demonstrate that feeling of superior knowledge sometimes unconsciously. In the face of a one-show-a-week, part-time volunteer, who in theory has an equal say in the station, it often called for some creative management and mediation skills from the station manager.
We all have an equal stake in the station. We are all here because we love RTR and even if there are disagreements, there’s usually the general understanding that that’s what binds us, is that we want the best for the station (RTR6).

**Program Collectives**

At the individual level of operational governance within RTRFM, production decisions, music decisions and content decisions come from the individual or the program collective. With the exception of the breakfast program all programs operated via a program collective. Programs can have five or more presenters in a collective who rotate the presenting duties. Within this there was personal/collective freedom to produce whatever content they desired. The single common denominator for all programs was a sense of “RTRness” and this came from the way they represented diversity and alternative values to the mainstream. Presenters and producers were enthusiastic about their freedom to do what they wanted.

It’s basically just down to me making the decisions you know. There’s the freedom between me and the presenter on any given day to decide what we talk about and what music we play. There is a real sense of liberty about it. The only time anyone intervenes is if the music director thinks some music is inappropriate. The manager could intervene if he thought the talk’s content was inappropriate but it’s never happened. It’s pretty good (RTR6).

In summary, RTRFM members had few negative comments regarding station governance. Reference was made to problems in the past, but the current manager seemed very popular and inclusive. However, some of the longer-standing members of the station remarked that different management styles had been required at different times in the station’s history. During the financially difficult periods, democracy has its drawbacks and as one member commented there have been times when survival was more of a priority than maintaining democratic processes.

I feel like I can say what I want. But democracy has its problems; things don’t get done so fast. That’s the nature of it. The last manager was quite autocratic without much consultation but he got things done. That was the good and the bad thing about him. We now have the complete opposite. Things don’t get done quickly. At the time we needed the last manager to pull us out of trouble, our ‘war time prime minister’ and now we are in ‘peace time’ we have a much nicer and fluffier prime minister (RTR12).
Governance can be a controversial area for any organisation but RTRFM demonstrates a mature state of affairs and all members interviewed seemed aware of the salient issues. This study did not encounter any disaffected or disgruntled members but rather garnered constructive opinions on improving an already favourable environment.

**Station/Service Improvements**

**Community Participation**

Without a doubt RTRFM was the happiest community station this researcher encountered, in this study or elsewhere. The sense of a common mission was felt among all the people this study spoke to. It was a tangible presence at the station. As a volunteer mentioned earlier, they really do try and put the station and community first rather than personal agendas. This culture is driven by good governance. Good governance sets the stage for a happy and positive workplace but it does not happen randomly.

RTRFM has a transparent governance structure and allows as much representation of internal and external community voices as is reasonably possible. There are defined avenues to contribute ideas, share opinions and be a part of the station consensus. Access to board members and the station manager is clear and straightforward. In this environment it is easy to see why staff members were generally happy. And if there was a small concern from members, it would be that governance by consensus takes time. This is a small sacrifice to make.

One frustration that was expressed by a number of staff and volunteers was the difficulty in solving an issue ironically caused by the station’s popularity and kudos. The one downside to the popularity of RTRFM was that it cannot give broadcasting space to enough members of the community. RTRFM operates 24 hours of daily broadcasting with aspiring presenters taking the graveyard shifts or working on reception to get their foot in the door. It was definitely the case that some presenters had become part of the furniture at the station. But if the established presenters continued to offer quality programming which listeners continued to want to hear, what is the station to do with the queue of eager, and likely equally talented aspiring presenters, consistently at their door? Anecdotally, it was felt keenly by radio
broadcasting students this author spoke to, who were sometimes disparaging of the RTRFM clique because it felt like a community station that was very unlikely to offer them a presenting slot. One member of RTRFM alluded to an understanding of this but did not offer a solution.

The programming committee has an onerous task in deciding how to take this issue further. This study concluded that there would need to be a rigorous application of defined time periods of program and presenter longevity; otherwise the situation will remain the same. The ramifications were this suggestion to be taken up, were difficult to predict in the long-term. For instance, would these limited radio lifespan rules apply equally to staff and volunteers? Since many of the paid staff are the ones that contribute to station continuity, branding, marketing, long-term strategy and so on, and their own programs, it may dramatically alter station operations. It is outside of the scope of this work to design a new radical staffing and programming longevity scheme but it is something that RTRFM could consider to solve this problem of popularity and community participation.

**Funding**

There’s only X amount you can do on your own back before you reach the limit of a community station (RTR13).

So, if all is well at RTRFM what was it that people believed would improve the station and the service? Adequate community representation and participation are the key areas that normally fall under scrutiny from community radio stakeholders, but at RTRFM, stakeholders were very happy with both and this study would generally concur with that conclusion. The main theme to emerge from this research was the perception from staff and volunteers that more funding would improve their service.

Under current guidelines, community radio is permitted only five minutes of sponsorship in every hour of broadcasting and any other funding comes from listener subscription and events. The sector operates under a not-for-profit policy with all monies being ploughed back into the station to improve their service to the community. The sponsorship

203 The author is a program coordinator and lecturer at Murdoch University teaching radio broadcasting.
restrictions put a cap on total funding that can be generated, while subscription drives and events are time-consuming to organise. Guaranteed funding from government would make life much easier:

If we got a regular amount from the government, it would mean I could take a back seat from worrying about money all the time and concentrate on programming and production type stuff which would improve the quality of the station. It would also mean I could spend more time looking at the community involvement which would be absolutely incredible but at the moment I have to make the books balance. Taking away that reliance on sponsorship, fundraising and basically begging would be such a great thing. We could add so much more community value to better serve the community. A hundred thousand a year in the bank would make an unbelievable difference to what we could do (RTR15).

There was understandably a rash of suggestions from all when asked how they would spend money to improve the service. Staffing was a big concern for some, lying at the root of improvement issues. The main station technician only works two days a week at RTRFM, so this means infrastructure improvements can be very slow. Production staffs are all part-time so, again, things can be slow in this department. There were calls for a program director to be employed as someone to improve the sound of the station. Several staff mentioned that a permanent office trainer would be a valuable addition to the station. At present it fell to anybody available to help with volunteer training. Although there is a presenter’s course that is run regularly, the amount of time spent training volunteers in other office jobs was considerable. It was even more frustrating because the turnover of volunteer office staff was high.

The volunteers we get on reception vary a lot. The good ones we can’t keep very long because they get jobs elsewhere very quickly. Sometimes we get five new volunteers in a month and I often found myself running through the basic reception training, wondering whether they will come back the next day. Am I wasting my time? Most are here for some work experience as office admin or some time in the entertainment industry and we can’t ask much of them. A lot of people will use RTR as a training ground (RTR14).

Outside of staffing, there were plenty of calls for better hardware at the station. This included mainly broadcast equipment but also simple things, like air conditioning in the office. Under broadcasting equipment came suggestions to digitise the CD library to make room for more CDs, upgrade the studios to include talk-back facilities and email/SMS systems for
presenters to interact with listeners. Also presenters did not have access to the Internet in the studios, which for such a progressive station seemed an oversight.

Very much connected with the broadcast equipment and facilities was the fact that the station had outgrown the space available to them in just five years. The CD library was tiny and the station had regular ‘kick out’ sales because they had no room to store them. There were calls for a production studio, a recording studio, a gig space and a larger social area. Of course this naturally led to the bigger issue of the station control of its accommodation. This had more funding consequences.

Ultimately the station management wanted to own their premises but without funding it seemed unlikely.

If we owned our own station that would be nice; security of tenure. We wouldn’t be hassling for money so much. Hassling for money is something I really dislike; radiothon and the like (RTR3).

Someone said to me that community radio is trying to work to professional standards with amateur wages (RTR6).

Many people this study spoke to were also made uncomfortable by the annual fundraiser Radiothon, as they preferred not to have to beg for money. There was a feeling that, if RTRFM was providing such a valuable service to the community, where was the recognition in terms of community or government funding?

Key Recommendations

**Participation**

1. Improve participation opportunities by setting defined time periods for programs and presenters to increase community involvement.

**Need for Investment**

1. Employment of a permanent general office trainer.

2. Employment of a program director.
3. Investment in a digital music library.

4. Investment in improved station accommodation.
Appendix 8: Case Study Summary for Radio Fremantle

Introduction

Radio Fremantle is perched high on the top of a hill on a suburban road about two kilometres south of the main city centre of Fremantle, the port suburb of Perth. It’s on the first floor above a recruitment agency and next door to a catering company. It’s nestled in the heart of the out-of-town industrial community Hamilton Hill, alongside the panel beaters, car part specialists and other industrial warehouses. Its display hoarding, which is visible from the road, strangely enough fits right in with the other industrial concerns along that road.

Once you go through the front door to the stairs leading up to the station, what dominates is the chair lift for the disabled. Fortunately, I am able to use the stairs but this struck me as a unique and significant facility for a community radio station. No-one is denied access. There is an open door policy at the station. Anyone from the community can drop in and engage with the station as a community resource. No appointment is required.

At the top of the stairs or lift, there are three main rooms. To your immediate right is the station office, normally populated by the station manager, station administrator and whoever is passing through the station. To the left, a bit further in, is the production studio and to the right of this, the main broadcasting studio. All of the rooms have glass walls facing onto the central corridor area. You can see what is going on in all the work areas. If you go a bit further down the corridor there is a small kitchen, washrooms and technical area. It’s a very compact and work focused space. There isn’t really a space for social interaction at the station.

The current program can be heard through fairly quiet communal speakers. You can see the presenter’s mouth move through the glass and hear the words being broadcast to the community. For anyone visiting the station, this is a great image to remember. People stop by the station office to say hello or conduct some business and there is always a flow of people in and out of the studios: presenters, guests and interested parties. However, there is always a relaxed pace and quiet ambience about the station. Fremantle has the reputation of being a laid back city. The radio station is in keeping with that image.
History

Almost all of the information in this history section came from the Station Manager at Radio Fremantle, who has been with the station since its early days. The Station Manager is also the Chief Engineer who physically managed the construction of the station from a technical perspective and continues to ensure a smooth technical operation. Apart from a small contribution from one other member interviewed, he was the only serving member who described the beginnings of the station in any detail.

In 1982 the area’s community radio scene was much smaller. There were only two other stations in the Perth area, both of which were university based. 6UVS; based at the University of Western Australia, and which later become RTRFM (second case study in this research) and Curtin 927 AM which was based at Curtin University. These were, however, essentially Perth-based stations. Fremantle is the second main population centre in this area of Western Australia, the two cities separated by only fifteen kilometres. Although Fremantle is essentially a Perth suburb, it has a unique identity as a geographical location with a very active port. The port, although mainly a container port now, saw a lot more passenger ships at that time. The opportunities for tourism and development of the community were abundant, yet there was no local newspaper or local radio station to support the community.

East Fremantle was about one square mile in total and was devoid of local media. The initial drive for the establishment of local community media originated with Mervin Cowan, the town clerk at the time, who felt the port and the East Fremantle area needed some kind of media outlet to distribute community information to the locals and tourists. The two ideas initially floated were for a community newspaper and a radio station. Mervin Cowan, along with two town councillors, Eric Delasandro and Ken Ferguson, put the idea of a community radio station to the town council (the community newspaper was to come later). Mervin Cowan was
described as the man who “really got behind the idea and it went from there” (RF). He ultimately became a life member of the station.

Once the council reached an agreement on the radio station idea, it needed to work out how to bring the idea to fruition. There was no funding available and the broadcasting authority at that time, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal (ABT), was reluctant to grant another community radio licence. It took three years from conception in 1982 to make the community radio station a reality. The broadcasting authority eventually granted a temporary licence and this was the beginning of Radio Fremantle.

The first broadcast was in 1985 from the highest hill in East Fremantle. The station was an old caravan underneath a tall test broadcasting mast. It was all very ad hoc. All the equipment was begged and borrowed but there was a steady stream of volunteers who came to do test broadcasts. Most of the initial broadcasts were handled by a single desk operator who trained the volunteers on the broadcast desk as they arrived to do their first ever Radio Fremantle programs. The story was recounted almost nostalgically by a current member who remembers training the very first Radio Fremantle volunteers in this makeshift caravan, high on that windy hill in East Fremantle (RF). In 1986 the temporary licence was renewed but this time the volunteers had the use of an old police station in East Fremantle as a broadcast studio which was described as “a bit more upmarket” (RF). This remained their home for some years and saw their full licence become a reality.

Their first official full-time licence allowed them to permanently switch on the station on the 3rd October 1987. However, because of an initial lack of volunteers, Radio Fremantle only broadcast on weekends until the 11th January 1998 when the station finally went full-time. They had slowly built up their volunteer base, until the station’s programming was guaranteed by a steady stream of volunteers. The station was run as a not-for-profit small business from the

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204 RF is an abbreviation for Radio Fremantle. The anonymity of participants was agreed upon as part of the research. No distinction is made between types of station members (volunteers, staff, or board members), unless they came from the Radio Fremantle audience focus groups when the abbreviation RFFG is used. The participant identification numbers have been omitted in the History section to maintain their anonymity.
very beginning; open to the general public as a community resource. The station manager has always seen the station in this way, ensuring as much of the community can access the airwaves as possible. In July 2000, they moved to the building in which they are now located, in Hamilton Hill, another part of Fremantle.

They are proud of the fact that they managed to fund the purchase of their current premises mostly from their on-air sponsorship income. This is quite a remarkable achievement for a community station and has provided them with other financial advantages:

We were able to spend our ‘rent money’ on outside broadcast gear to do the football or the Royal Show or whatever. It all costs money. It has really given us some financial freedom (RF).

There was a real desire to be independent as a community group. They are one of the few community stations in Australia to own their building. The station building was described as “really owned by the community and if the station ever ended, the money from the sale of the building should go back into the community” (RF). Representation of the community, participation by the community and programs for the community have been the station’s mission from day one. This research wanted to assess how they were doing.

Representation of the Community

Serving the Radio Fremantle Communities

A constant topic of discussion at Radio Fremantle is their approach to representing their community. The Fremantle community is extremely diverse. There are ethnic, musical, religious, social, industrial, and even medical communities of interest in the Fremantle locale that are accessing the station. The station’s objective is to offer representation to as many parts of the community that desire it. Access and representation are the guiding principles above all other concerns.

While this approach to representation is admirable, there is a price to pay. They are described by their own presenters as a “switch on, switch off station, because of all the different programs we have. Our programs aren’t arranged to keep one type of listener” (RF7). Presenters
at the station say because of this diversity each program is like a mini radio station in itself: “I
turned on Radio Fremantle the other day, and heard opera for two hours and then show tunes for
two hours” (RFFG1). And this is typical of the way the program schedule operates: jazz
programs next to punk rock, next to religion, next to country music. From a listener’s point of
view, this eclecticism has its issues, as this comment from one of the focus group participants
illustrates:

Radio Fremantle is like a tray of gems, uncut stones or even polished stones but
they are not arranged in any order as yet. If you can get it in order, it sounds
good, it resonates and the community likes it and then you’ve got something
tangible (RFFG1).

Although this approach to community radio is a wonderful way to implement diverse
representation of the community, there are drawbacks for the audience, who at Radio Fremantle
lose out on the polished and well produced radio listening experience. In an extremely
competitive media market place, this raises concerns of survival for a community radio station.
One member explained the constant dilemma that Radio Fremantle faces:

People often say to me, “your station plays some rubbish. One minute you’re
speaking in Spanish and the next English, it’s all over the place.” I say, yes, just
think about it! Some people just want the flavour strawberry. The station has to
be strawberry every week and that’s what you get when you listen to
commercial radio. It’s strawberry or lime but when you listen to us, you get a
big fruit salad, you know, all mixed together. And that is very hard to attract
sponsors, because people want strawberry or lime, its slick, cool, the latest hits
by the famous artists. And this is to the detriment of the dollar. We could turn
the station upside down, make it real slick and make two million dollars a year
but we would be an anti-community station. You can’t have it both ways. Our
charter is to give access to groups who may be not your flavour! (RF9).

Over the years there have been a number of people who have come in and suggested a move
towards a more commercial approach.

They have suggested we get rid of forty percent of our announcers and have the
same people do the prime time shows. This would attract more sponsors and a
study even suggested we would treble our income (RF9).

Amongst the members interviewed for this study there was a definite opinion that they approved
of the current approach to the truly diverse representation of the community, but felt there were
some adjustments to be made towards developing an overall station identity and some continuity that would give the station a better profile in the community at large.

**Voice of the People**

Radio Fremantle has 83 different announcers and they cover a diversity of subjects and genres of music not normally possible on commercial radio or the ABC. They have reggae, country, three jazz programs, youth programs, classical music, local music, opera, show tunes, easy listening, soul, 40s, 50s, 60s and onwards. There are no musical limits. On the chat schedule there are health programs, alternative living, arts, theatre, community issues, a trade union show, religious, spiritual and sports. Sports can include speedway, bowls, rugby and of course Australian Rules football. Radio Fremantle sometimes covers live local games with an outside broadcast unit.

Of all the local community stations, Radio Fremantle is best known in the Fremantle community for its ethnic representation. Fremantle has been historically dominated by Italian migrants, but in recent years a wider ethnic diversity has become apparent. Radio Fremantle has an unpaid ethnic coordinator and the station devotes a whole day a week to ethnic programming.

I like the idea of a United Nations type station where all the different groups come in (RF8).

Our Sundays are completely ethnic or religious, Portuguese, Spanish, Persian, Italian, Greek, Serbian, Ethiopian, Afghan, Iranian, Macedonian, we got the Russians and the Croatian Roman Catholic church comes in on a Sunday night (RF7).

The ethnic programs not only represent the minority groups within Fremantle but they can also provide a link with news and culture from their country of origin. In some cases, according to anecdotal accounts, the ethnic shows archived on the Radio Fremantle website were listened to by an equal number of people in their home country.

We are achieving a lot. Culturally we work to present a lot of things back from home, from Afghanistan. When Taliban were in power, it was a very hard time for Afghan people. My duty was to bring news from home. Fresh news is the important part of journalism and truth to bring to the people. We had a lot of interviews from Afghanistan and my shows became very famous [here and in Afghanistan] because it [the news] was happening on this show (RF6).
In this example the announcer explained further that as Afghanistan fractured into different factions during the first years of Taliban reign, the Fremantle Afghan community experienced similar challenges. His show tried to represent all points of view and bring some unity to a disrupted community. He was very proud to be able to help his community in these dark days.

Ethnic communities also benefit in other ways from ethnic community programming. For example, children growing up in Australia with ethnic parents will sometimes find their parent’s culture at odds with, or different from, Australian culture. This is a challenge facing most migrant families new to Australia. The same member had decided to incorporate this challenge into his radio show. He was using community radio to positively address social issues within his community.

In my show for example we have different shows; we have regular show for youth every two months. We are going to present Australia and Afghanistan where we compare two cultures. It’s beneficial for them I think; they get a lot from that. We decided in the beginning that if we only did shows for those people speaking Persian, we are going to loose them, the second generation of our society, those speaking English. They like to have cultural stuff from the country in which they are living (RF6).

Within the Perth metro area there is another community radio station, 6EBA, which is a completely ethnic station. Its mission is to cater for small ethnic and language minorities in Perth. When asked why the ethnic broadcasters at Radio Fremantle weren’t broadcasting at that station the reply was:

We came to Radio Fremantle from 6EBA because there was less competition for shows. It also meant there were more opportunities for the people to listen to more than one Afghan show, twice a week for their own language and culture, and that’s about 4,500 people in community (RF6).

One thing that occurred to this author was that Fremantle’s ethnic programs were a part of the larger community’s programming. They weren’t ethnically segregated to their own ethnic station. It shows some sense of ethnic integration on the airwaves and perhaps can be taken as a positive reflection on the community as a whole.

**Sponsored Air Time**

Community radio is traditionally a not-for-profit sector with programs and broadcasters being given access to the airwaves on the basis of community representation. However, there are certain community groups at Radio Fremantle that could be said to be paying for their air time. If a community group approaches the station with a view to representing their niche group and they are able to provide advertising sponsorship for their program, they are better value to the station. Two examples of these kinds of shows are one sponsored by a trade union body (overtly political) and another sponsored by a church group (overtly religious), both wishing to spread their message. All the announcers have to do the Radio Fremantle training course or demonstrate equivalent community broadcasting levels of competence. The station does issue a disclaimer that the views expressed on these shows are not those of the station.

If an advertiser sponsors the program, they get a private program in some sense. For special interest programs they are in a sense buying air time. I’m quite dismayed by what goes over the air sometimes from these kinds of programs on community radio. I went to radio school and you have a responsibility to put out accurate and good things. People believe what they hear (RF2).

The researcher also heard some particularly virulent views being expressed on these kinds of shows, which clearly paid no regard to Australian broadcasting ethics. There is a conflict here for the radio station, which on the one hand wants to retain community representation, but on the other needs to be profitable. By selling air time it creates a situation where contributors may feel they are paying for their right to more extreme expression.

The issue of ‘pay to play’ was not just restricted to shows where religious preaching or politicizing was an obvious feature. Sponsorship of programs also extended to the ethnic shows and as this comment from one of the ethnic broadcasters shows, has created its own problems.

Sponsorship is a big problem for ethnic communities and their shows. The bigger communities have more businesses and they can sponsor their shows. The smaller ethnic communities have a lot of difficulty and their future is uncertain because of this. The government doesn’t provide any help at all for ethnic shows. Shows have been stopped because there is no money, you know (RF6).
There was a feeling of irritated ambivalence among most members about this issue because financial concerns weighed against community representation and the two were difficult to reconcile.

**Alternative to Mainstream**

Questions about community representation at Radio Fremantle were often answered by members with references to how community radio gives “the listening public a choice outside the mainstream” (RF10). There was a dominant feeling of dissatisfaction with commercial radio and an understanding that the scope of the ABC (national broadcaster) was limited. Music featured heavily as desirable alternative program content. Local music and talent were seen as largely unrepresented elsewhere.

It all started because the commercial stations wouldn’t play local artists. I approached a colleague on a commercial country show to play a really good local artist and he said, “I would love to but I’m not allowed. I have to play this playlist” (RF8).

It gives a chance to get alternative music played. I hate the term alternative because it’s alternative to what? It’s just something fresh and new. It gives you an option outside the mainstream. I’m not saying there’s anything wrong with the mainstream but not everybody wants to be there (RF10).

As well as music, community radio allows access to an array of alternative programs. Radio Fremantle was the first radio station on which this author had ever heard live sports broadcasting of lawn green bowling. Commercial radio is unlikely to suggest this as a revenue generation programming idea.

Some members at Radio Fremantle also felt that the station was an outlet for radio that did not need to be well polished and slick. They felt more comfortable with what could be termed non-mainstream programming formats, where traditional production values were dispensed with. This was especially true of one talk show presenter who was infamous for his almost anti-radio style.
I had a lady instructor from the Meeting Place [Fremantle social help centre] who wanted to come on to talk about Feldenkrais. It was hilarious because for four months, every week we had a live Feldenkrais exercise session on the radio. It was “lift the left cheek of your bottom, hold it in the air, and lower it onto the seat, right onto the right cheek of your bottom.” I used stand up at the microphone and do the exercises. It was a fun thing. That’s not something you could do on commercial radio. They just don’t have the spontaneity. We can talk about something and if it drifts onto something else, big deal, nobody cares. The audience enjoys it (RF8).

Most presenters exhibited this relaxed style of programming which showed few of the polished production values of commercial or public service radio. Of all the announcers this researcher spoke to, none made the kind of thorough preparations for a show expected on commercial or public service radio. Some made a rough playlist, but no scripts or segment timings were ever seen. There were several suggestions from announcers that if there was some financial remuneration for their time, they could afford to make their shows more professional. The relaxed programming formats were said to probably stem from this fact more than anything else.

**Relationship with the Radio Fremantle Community**

**Relationship with the Local Music Industry**

Fremantle has a lively and vibrant arts scene and this includes local musicians and entertainers. There are some local venues that cater for live performances, but no available and cheap broadcasting space on commercial or public broadcaster radio stations. Not only do these artists want to get their material played on the air waves but they also need affordable promotional opportunities for their live performances and recorded material.

Community radio is so important for local music artists or entertainers. They can’t afford to pay for a TV commercial to market themselves or even a commercial radio ad. Community radio is the only place for them to come to get exposure sometimes and that can be free. Without stations like us, they would never get heard in Australia (RF8).

There are also local clubs that specialise in music appreciation or cultural events. The Jazz Club of Western Australia has strong links with the station, with members volunteering as announcers on Radio Fremantle and can thereby share information about relevant music events and performances. Like most local musicians, they can’t afford the advertising rates on
commercial radio either, so community radio is the perfect platform. Jazz fans constitute a big
community in Fremantle, illustrated by three shows on the station.

The station also has strong links with the Irish and Italian clubs in Fremantle, both of
which represent large cultural and music groups in the city. There are other cultural social clubs
linked to most of the ethnic programs that broadcast on a Sunday. They are keen to use their
radio shows to promote not just their cultural events but also the music available at their events.

The station has a local only music show, which specialises in Australian music and
more importantly, music from Fremantle. It is one of the longest running shows on the station. It
has been presented by the same announcer who initiated the program in 1985 as he saw no other
avenues for local music to be promoted on local radio. He is a collector and historian of West
Australian music in his own right and saw the show initially as a way to play his collection.

I think that Radio Fremantle realised that someone who is dedicated to playing
local music every week is a big asset. It’s a very community based thought. I’ll
play anything in that framework. If someone gave me a local classical piece I
would play that. I wouldn’t care if it was being played between a reggae track
and a heavy metal track. It doesn’t bother me. I’m just interested in what gets
released locally. It never ceases to amaze me, the quality and diversity of the
local music scene. I think it’s a mission of mine to air as much of that music as
possible so the public get an opportunity to experience what I experience
(RF10).

The local only music show has developed plenty of friends over the years. The relationship with
the local music industry is a two-way affair which extends out into the community as well as
into the station. There have been outside broadcasts from the town centre where the station has
put concerts on, and from country music gigs at local fairs. The station has provided free public
address systems and lighting at a variety of events. The station is fairly well equipped
technically and “usually you can rustle up some equipment and put things on” (RF10).
However, there is room for improvement.

In actual fact, it’s not the money that stops these happening more regularly; it’s
the organization of them. It’s very time consuming. To organise a gig in the
Square for instance can take weeks and weeks of organising. If the resources
were here, they would probably put more events on (RF10).
The station provides an excellent resource for volunteers to represent their musical community interests and while these music events do happen most volunteers wanted to see more of this kind of community outreach to strengthen the relationship with the community. Volunteers can only give so much of their time. And members felt overall that the station could allocate more paid human resources to improve things.

**Relationship with Murdoch University: Training**

Few universities can boast that their students broadcast live radio on a local radio station as an integral part of their radio studies. Murdoch University is conveniently located about ten kilometres from Radio Fremantle and has a strong relationship with the station. Each year in February about thirty radio students are formed into programming teams of three or four. They take over the weekday three o’clock to five o’clock afternoon slot for eight weeks. Each group produces a one hour magazine style show which goes out live each week. The shows are full of interviews, news, reviews and music. Academic staff mentor students, debriefing them on every detail of their shows. At the beginning of the eight weeks the shows are of average quality, but by the end, the students are producing professional-sounding radio shows. Students often go on to volunteer at the station in more permanent roles, normally as presenters. From the students’ and academics’ point of view, they get a real broadcasting experience on a very established station. The broadcasting and learning that takes place is a very positive and rich experience.\(^{206}\)

From the station’s point of view, it gets a substantial input of fresh enthusiastic talent during that period. One thing which distinguishes the student programming content from the station’s normal programming is that the students follow professional production protocols and they are being formally assessed on that work. Few of the station’s normal volunteers have the time to prepare their shows in so much detail, so the student shows are a fresh sound for the audience. It is a perfect avenue of access for the student community and a regular annual event on the station and the University calendar.

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\(^{206}\) The author is an academic on this course. During the period of this research, the author was a tutor on this unit, and since February 2010 has assumed the role of program coordinator.
There is an added dimension to the station’s relationship with Murdoch University as the University runs Radio Fremantle’s community radio training courses. At regular intervals the station advertises on-air for new broadcasters who wish to participate in the training courses. Murdoch University provides the classrooms, studios and academic staff.

Through our relationship with Murdoch, we are a conduit for training. Without Murdoch we wouldn’t have the training course that we now run. Unless you want to do a full degree, our courses are the only option for people wanting a short course in radio. Our main charter as a community broadcaster is to offer access. Number one we can offer training as a first port of call to further their hobby or even start a career. A lot of people have gone through those courses (RF9).

As well as the relationship with the University, Radio Fremantle has also developed relationships at a different academic level. There is a folder in the studio office full of certificates of thanks from schools in the area. Radio Fremantle at various points has invited high school students to come into the station and have a go at making programs. Station volunteers have donated some of their time to help out with the students and they may have initiated the careers of some of today’s professional broadcasters.

Looking at Radio Fremantle from the training point of view, they offer an excellent community service for both their own broadcasters, Murdoch University and some of the local schools. All the volunteers spoken to as part of this study were very happy with the training aspects at the station.

Relationship with the Listeners

What I especially liked about Radio Fremantle when it first started was they would go into nursing homes and hospitals and have a special hospital request program for one or two hours a week. The guy here, Noel, had a lady who was an orderly who would collect all the requests and send them to him. He would put them to air. You can picture it, on a Tuesday afternoon in the nursing home, the old ladies with a glass of wine, listening to Noel who would play their music which I thought was terrific. For me, that was reaching out to the community (RF5).

It became clear to this researcher that Radio Fremantle’s connections with its listeners were many and diverse with reciprocal tendrils reaching into many different parts of the community. At the beginning of this section on representation it was noted how “each program
is like a mini radio station in itself.” These programs are one end of the tendril linking up with the audience community relevant to that show at the other. Other than the individual listener, these tendrils can be seen as reaching *events* or *organisations*. The events category comprises festivals, fairs and shows and the organisations category comprises sports, schools and social clubs.

**Events**

Radio Fremantle has been involved with numerous events over the years and the motivating link is normally a presenter on the station or a guest who is involved with the event in some other way. Radio Fremantle does not have a dedicated marketing or business development volunteer, so involvement with events tends to be on a fairly ad hoc basis. Nevertheless,

> We get involved in all sorts of things. We have done a country concert for all the community, providing all the PA and lighting free of charge, so live community entertainment. We have also done a lot of judging at meat and livestock fairs. Other things we have done is the Fremantle festival, the George Street Festival mixing with the community up there, We have also been to the Royal Show, where we had a caravan broadcasting live and encouraged people to get involved (RF9).

The events allow a face-to-face engagement with the community and give the station a chance to encourage people to come into the station, talk about issues and at a very basic level realise that there is a way to get messages out to the community.

**Organisations**

Ethnic broadcasting takes up most of the Sunday schedule at the station and, as has already been noted, the links back to the community are very strong indeed. Fremantle boasts a diverse collection of cultural social clubs. In some cases the social clubs are the organising drive behind the radio programs, so it is to be expected that the radio station often gets involved with these organisations outside of their studios.

> We did a live broadcast at the Italian club which was fun. The Portuguese Club is looking good this year to celebrate their 100 years celebration. We did the Fremantle Primary school 100 year celebrations (RF9).
Radio Fremantle also used to share its studios with Sport FM which was a part-time sports station for local events. There was a natural synergy here because Radio Fremantle has always been involved with sporting organisations. The local sports community has a strong relationship with the station.

We get asked to assist with community functions that are happening. We’ve just been approached to do something for the speedway racing in the eastern states. We have a local rider going over and our charter will be to send an announcer over to call the race. We also supply announcers to call the WAFL football. Local football wasn’t getting any coverage. You had wait until the results came out in the newspaper. We have been doing that on and off for 15 years (RF9).

While some felt the station’s relationship with the community was good, others were of a different view and there was a definite undercurrent of dissatisfaction within the station about Radio Fremantle’s involvement with community. They had doubts that the station even had an audience.

From my perspective this is all great but is it effective? Is it working? In your mind it might be doing the service but if there’s no-one listening? Or it’s not doing the job, is it effective? In a lot of ways, I have my doubts (RF4).

Most presenters this study spoke to were quite despondent about their audience. They just did not get the phone calls or audience involvement they attempted to generate on their shows. From experience as a broadcaster at Radio Fremantle, the author of this study would agree with these sentiments. Members suggested ways of building audiences such as advertising or marketing initiatives, conducting some sort of audience research, however limited, and using the website as a more interactive portal. These are typical of the comments made by many of the volunteers.

Where I think things could be better is that it would be wonderful if the general public supported things a bit more. That’s always a catch 22 and if you want them interested you have to let them know about things and if they’re not listening they’re not getting to know about it (RF10).
Having worked at RTR, where the audiences are very active in contacting the radio station, Radio Fremantle audiences aren’t so active; we could definitely do better at knowing who our audience is. Advertising would be a good start, any kind of advertising at all. Doing surveys and interacting with the audience. I’m not au fait with what the board is doing but maybe on the website is a perfect example of where we could capitalise on possibilities, people participating (RF3).

There were lots of ideas about how to improve the station’s relationship with the community.

One idea was to develop a better relationship with the local newspaper so the day’s news and views from around Fremantle could be plugged into the station.

One of my ideas is to get the show played in local businesses, offices etc, to give news you can’t get in the West [West Australian newspaper], news about Freo [Fremantle] that isn’t available on a daily basis. We’ve talked about the Herald [local newspaper] feeding us a bit of news every day, you know, like about Freo, the little things, even getting readers letters that are interesting and suggesting that if you want to be interviewed on Radio Fremantle, you can call here. Maybe we can interview the journo about the latest news that they are running. If we do this regularly, we will pick up an audience (RF4).

This would also help to improve the station profile because issues would be more current and relevant. On the back of this better profile would come more involvement with local business and then of course more sponsorship. The station profile in the community was a big issue for some volunteers. They saw this as the next big step to attaining the station’s full potential and were asking why this was so slow in coming.

In conclusion, there were two contrasting views of the Radio Fremantle’s relationship with the community. This research found evidence to support both the representation of the community in station programs and the station’s involvement in the community. However, there was a feeling that the station had been a lot more active in the past than it currently was. There was a lot of potential for improvement.
Community Participation

Motivations and Incentives

There is an assumption that the primary goal community radio has is to serve an audience. I don’t think that is necessarily true. I think that community radio can serve the participants as well and Radio Fremantle is the only station in Perth that is like that. Radio Fremantle is the only station you can walk into and have a chance of getting a show and feel supported in that by the station. That is just as significant a reason for funding a community station [in contrast to representing the community] (RFFG1).

Outside of the ethnic broadcasters, very few of the volunteers spoken to for this study, mention any great altruistic passion for the community radio station, as a service to the community. There were no mentions of democratic values and social benefit, on the contrary one member went as far as suggesting, that “the foundation of community radio is built on a bit of an illusion” (RF4). People may come and put their time and energy into presenting a show to their community of interest but “there are a lot of hard questions that people need to ask themselves if they are to make the claim that they are providing a community service” (RF4). The reasons volunteers gave for their participation at Radio Fremantle seemed to corroborate the view that the station was as much about the personal motivation of participants as it was about service to the community.

There were three main themes that emerged at Radio Fremantle with regard to participant motivations and incentives. First, and this was seen as foremost for only the ethnic community, was a real sense of serving their community (in contrast to other members at the station). After all, the once a week slot on Radio Fremantle was probably the only broadcast program in their native language that their communities received. It was a service that undoubtedly enriched the niche ethnic communities within Fremantle.

207 RFFG is an abbreviation for Radio Fremantle focus group. Of the three case studies, Radio Fremantle was the only station audience not previously surveyed in the Griffith University community radio audience study. The Griffith University methodology was employed to conduct the Radio Fremantle audience focus group.
The Afghan community here, they need a radio show. I like my people, to help them, to give them a bit of something and as a journalist I have been living here seventeen years and I am happy to present this show. During the Taliban years, our community divided into two. We had a very hard time as a community. We tried to tell the truth as a show and we had some part of community against us but when things calm down, it has become easy. Our community is in peace now (RF6).

The Portuguese, Spanish, Persian, Italian, Greek, Serbian, Ethiopian, Afghan, Iranian, Macedonian, Russian and Croatian communities all have, or have had, shows at some time on Radio Fremantle. The motives for participation on these shows seemed genuinely community based.

A second motivation for volunteering at Radio Fremantle was a sense of personal expression. Some volunteers on the talk shows at the station felt they were able to express their own views on-air and some felt it was a mixture of their views and what the audience might want to hear.

I ask questions I feel like asking and answering and playing the music I feel like playing. I probably get on my soap box some of the time. I think I’m catering for, or representing the community and also my own views at times. It’s a bit of both I think. Hopefully I’m asking the questions that the audience wants to be asked (RF8).

There were some very strident presenters who definitely had a point to push as well.

I’m quite passionate about making sure listeners know about the unproven nature of alternative medicines. People believe what they hear. Some of them are things that I don’t think the public should be hearing as legitimate. It’s like I’m my own program director. In this way, I am able to express myself (RF2).

There were also some self-appointed mass communicators who see community radio as an avenue for spreading their own beliefs. These were discussed earlier with reference to the religious groups and trade unionists that sponsor their own air time. Community radio as a sector must walk this line between allowing participation for the greater good of the community and encouraging a possibly unbalanced open microphone mentality. Freedom of expression can be a double edged sword.

The third motivation for participation was by far the most cited reason and this was simply broadcasting music. Members loved the idea that they could play what they wanted;
they could even just play their own record collections. They could play local music, they could
specialise in whatever genre they wanted and they felt they could help the Australian local
music industry.

A love of music, particularly of jazz, and a desire to encourage other people to
get to like it. It’s a hobby I suppose. I play what I enjoy and hope people
listening enjoy what I like to listen to. Selfish of me really, isn’t it (RF5)?

I just enjoy it, the fact that especially with community radio you’re not stuck to
a playlist or anything like that. It’s not like a commercial station where you
have to do a specific agenda (RF1).

My main focus was somewhere to air local product. I had started collecting
local music as part of Western Australia’s music history for the bands that were
around at the time. It was thinking it would be great to play this collection
somewhere (RF10).

The love of music was a pervading force within the station. Volunteers were passionate about
their music and by playing the music they like on-air they are able to share their passion with as
many people as possible. This is not that far from the rationale of the other broadcasters
discussed earlier, those who need an outlet for the spreading of their particular belief systems.

**Station-Based Training**

Training can be seen as a key part of the community radio participation opportunity. Not only
can interest groups or individuals use the station as a resource but they are provided with some
professional training to hone their radio broadcasting skills. This ensures their message or
programs have some of the professionalism expected by an audience.

A big part of the Radio Fremantle charter is to allow new people into the station, who
may not have any broadcasting experience, but who want to get involved. As mentioned earlier
Radio Fremantle has a training relationship with Murdoch University (which has its own
training studios) but the trainees go to the station to eventually broadcast. Over the years, they
have had a wide range of interest groups who have gone through the training and then used the
station as a conduit to get their message out. They subsequently bring their own people into the
studios for interviews and they can talk about the issues that face them or ideas or
announcements that are important to their community. The training is the beginning of the road.
We have an African guy who is training at the moment so he can come back to represent his African Community here in WA. We have 13 languages here on the station. Generally speaking community groups get to know we have an open door policy and we are willing to listen (RF9).

Participation and training in community radio also provides some volunteers with professional broadcasting career pathways. It is a scenario where you can hone your skills safe in the knowledge that mistakes are tolerated and even encouraged as part of the learning process. Radio Fremantle boasts a few success stories.

We’ve actually had 36 people come through Radio Fremantle who ended up working in commercial radio or TV. Glen Mitchell who is now a very professional sports commentator for the ABC did five years with Radio Fremantle before he went to the ABC. Part of the charter, as I see it, is to have the open door policy, take the ‘rough around the edges people’ in and some of them turn out really well (RF9).

Training for the disabled is also something unique to Radio Fremantle. At the most basic level of physical access, the station provides a wheelchair lift for those in need or those who just struggle with stairs. For a community radio station this is quite a bonus. But the support does not end once you are physically inside the station. This research encountered a number of disabled broadcasters at the station. One member with a hearing disability and a spatial recognition disability gave glowing reports of the help she received and she was now a regular broadcaster. She described how she struggled with coordinating her failing hearing and spatial recognition difficulties on the broadcast desk, but with considerable support and patience from volunteers she was now able to work unassisted. The station also plays host to volunteers with more restrictive disabilities who needed continued support but love broadcasting.

We also have a young guy with cerebral palsy on Friday who does a show for an hour of music that he likes. We get someone to operate the panel for him. This is one way we can help someone to have a chance to do something that they have always wanted to do, that they know normal people can do, but they wouldn’t get a look-in at commercial radio. Radio Fremantle is probably the only station that will help people in this way (RF7).

The station is quite proud of the training opportunities it provides. The station runs regular newspaper and on-air advertising offering their community radio training course at a minimal cost. However, it was admitted that the station could not always immediately find broadcasting
slots for everyone who went through the course. This leads to the issue of participation management.

**Participation Management**

There are only so many broadcasting slots available in a day. How does a station manager/administrator/board decide who has a show, at what time and for how long? The station’s charter states that no-one will be excluded by taste or style or target audience. “If someone comes in and wants to do a Heavy Metal show, we might not like Heavy Metal, but we try to accommodate them” (RF9). One way of maximising participation was program-sharing. This meant some shows would have rotating presenters on a weekly basis. They may only do one show a month to represent their club or society. There were regular programs with several people on one show where they shared the presenting. There were also opportunities for new volunteers to help existing disabled members where they might need technical support, for example, operating the broadcast console. These new volunteers are actually learning as they assist the disabled volunteers. It is a slower integration into the station and may be necessary while they are waiting for a broadcasting slot of their own to become available.

In principle, the station wants an open door broadcasting policy for all volunteers but in practice this is difficult to achieve. Training was the first port of call for many, and others with prior broadcasting experience were fitted in as slots became available or as described above. This research did not find any evidence of a formal program review process, but it was stated by volunteers that they believed new program ideas were all considered fairly.

**Community within the Station**

One of the things that is lacking is any clear picture of who anybody is at the station. There are no pictures of who is on the board and no pictures of any of the presenters. I think that would go a long way to starting some semblance of community within the station. To breed that community within the station, I also think it only happens when there is a great sense of pride about the station (RFFG1).

Volunteers at Radio Fremantle are fiercely devoted to the principles of representing and developing the diverse communities across Fremantle, but they all felt there was something
important missing. There is no social community within the station itself. “No, I don’t know anybody who does a show except for the person who does a show before me and after me, which is quite telling” (RF3). This feeling was common among all of the volunteers interviewed, and it also had wider implications for the station and listeners.

The lack of a station community produces a scenario that can only be described as a disparate heterogeneity. Each program is an isolated community in itself, operating from the physical community resource of Radio Fremantle. The lack of internal social cohesion between programs and presenters at Radio Fremantle impacts on the overall station branding and identity. There is no sense of overarching station style or image. In turn, branding and identity impact on the programming. There is little or no programming continuity. “How do you give a sense of continuity [for the listener] when you have two hours of jazz and then two hours of gardening and so on?” (RF2). This was typical of the “tune in, tune out” (RF2) schedule, where listeners will only stay tuned in for their favourite show. However, some felt this was the true message of community radio where continuity, branding and popularity were sacrifices that had to be made.

We don’t need to be anything like commercial radio. It gives the opportunity for special interest groups and we don’t care about ratings, but we are paying for it with lack of listeners. The people that run this feel we are not popular, but we are doing the right thing by the community (RF2).

Volunteers and management described the station as an enabling community resource rather than a cohesive, brand-defined media organisation. The effects of this community resource access as a priority over all else creates challenges elsewhere. There are clearly some issues apparent to volunteers.

There is generally no community within the station. I don’t know how you would remedy that except for more events. Organising local gigs sponsored by Radio Fremantle would be an idea. Mirroring some of what RTR does would be fantastic but it really does need staff because organising gigs is a lot of work, doing that sort of PR and valuing your place in the community. I’m not sure Radio Fremantle does that. We don’t self promote, which is its biggest flaw (RF3).
Radio Fremantle has built the foundations for an incredible potential, which isn’t being tapped at the moment. What’s missing is another level of guidance. It has these very diverse groups that no other station really has but it needs to take it to another level and it could go to a level no-one else has been able to achieve (RF4).

**Governance**

The station is run at the top level by a board of nine directors with a typical corporate structure. Each member is elected for a period of three years and they can be nominated for re-election. If there are more than three people nominated at any one time there are elections. Major decisions can only made by the unanimous decision of the board which sits monthly or as required. The station is run on a day-to-day basis by the station manager and the station secretary. There is no visible representation of the wider membership.

We found at Radio Fremantle that because we have so many programs that if people are able to do their show, they are happy with the board. There are no disagreements on the board and I have been on the board for five and half years. We haven’t had one argument. We make decisions on spending funds and applications for programs. But generally the station runs itself (RF7).

When this study asked volunteers for their opinions on the governance at Radio Fremantle, there are three main conclusions.

First, members felt they did not really know how to voice or direct their ideas about the station if they wanted a change or something new to be considered. There is no avenue of representation for members. There are no station meetings or committees other than the board, but no-one seemed to view this lack of representation as a major issue. It goes hand in hand with the weak station community culture discussed earlier and was another symptom of the pragmatic use of the station as a community resource.

I had a lot of ideas early on about what I want to do here but there’s no real avenue for saying “I’m thinking of doing this, say making posters and doing flyers off my own bat.” You know, I needed to know, how do I do that, who do I talk to, can I get support from admin, can I use the photocopier, the phone? That connectedness and internal culture plays a massive part to know you are supported. I didn’t even know who was on the board until I turned up and met them. You could find out if you wanted but it’s not posted up on the walls or anything (RF3).
The second view about governance expressed by volunteers was that although there were no democratic opportunities to get involved in governance, they felt that they could talk to the station manager and he would take their issues or ideas to the board. No-one in this study felt they weren’t listened to. Although admirable, this is one very narrow human conduit for nearly 100 volunteers. The situation revealed by these two opinions demonstrates a relatively low level of democratic governance.

The third view from some volunteers is that the management of community organisations is fraught with challenges and that this is quite natural. There is an acceptance by some that the traditional corporate structure of governance is the norm. The guidelines and corporate structure are clear, but over time certain people acquire more power than others. People who attend board meetings and put more time into the organisation have more personal investment and they tend to have more influence, or as one volunteer put it, “People who have been around a long time think they know it all” (RF4).

It was also suggested that it is natural to have negative reactions to new ideas from people who have been around a long time. The people with the new ideas have to be prepared to have their ideas tested before anything happens.

They have to take the time to work out where the influences are around the station and spend the time on a one by one basis if they have ideas they want to get going. You have to use the processes that work in a corporate organisation (RF4).

This third view gave a sense that alternative and more democratic governance, as described previously, was not an option at Radio Fremantle. What emerged in opposition to this was that some wanted to feel their ideas were considered and they did not want the tedious politics of the typical corporate organisation: “A lot of people don’t want to be part of a corporate organisation” (RF4).

In summary, there were some concerns about governance, but it did not emerge as a burning issue. At Radio Fremantle there does not seem to be the drive to implement this wider form of participation at the level of governance. It seems that the lack of station culture or
internal community and the station’s status as purely a community resource has resulted in its present structure of governance. Without community desire for wider participation in station governance, things will stay as they are.

Station/Service Improvements

**Representation: Relationship with the Community**

There are some at Radio Fremantle who would say that they are giving as much representation as possible to a very diverse community and it is not physically possible to include any more of the community in one month of programming. The same people would say that this is the true goal of community radio: representing as many different parts of the community as possible. Since *representation* is a vital objective of community radio, by this measure the station is a great success. This research would not argue with this extremely successful aspect of Radio Fremantle. It is a great achievement.

However, some of the stakeholders interviewed have said resoundingly that this is not enough. There is much more potential to engage the community, “to take it to another level and it could go to a level no-one else has been able to achieve” (RF4). Part of *representation* of the community, as defined in this study, is the station’s overall relationship with the community. Stakeholders felt this relationship was not strong enough and there were some obvious causes.

This summary has mentioned several times that the programs at Radio Fremantle are like a collection of mini-radio stations and communities of interest within the physical resource of the station. Unfortunately, when viewed as a larger coherent global station entity, there is no continuity, no community presence, no identity, no station brand, no publicity and no marketing.

Sometimes when I contact people that I’m going to be interviewing [in Fremantle], they haven’t heard of the station (RF2).

It’s all well and good having a voice but if no-one’s listening what’s the point (RF1)?
Community radio has to understand that it’s not just enough to exist, just to have the studio; there has to be strong marketing part and I don’t think Radio Fremantle has that. I believe it has the potential to be a critical part of the community, an almost irreplaceable part of the community if it reaches a certain level. Whether it has or not, I doubt it (RF4).

How can the station effectively represent the community if large parts of the community do not know it exists or do not see it as actively engaged in the wider community?

I think one thing the management should look at is the branding of the product. Most of the times you don’t even know you are listening to a community station (RFFG1).

This opinion, although taken from the audience focus group, was also prevalent amongst the volunteers. There was a call to develop station marketing, publicity, branding, identity and a strong community presence. There was a call for change in culture.

Employing someone part-time to work on marketing and publicity is great, but it’s more about getting people at the station who have been at the station a long time to understand what that could possibly mean. That it’s not such a massive outlay or a big change. It’s going to take quite a change in culture and thinking to get people to understand that it doesn’t necessarily mean that people with disabilities, language programs or shows that don’t meet a commercial standard are going to get knocked off. They’re not; it’s not what we’re saying. It’s about getting that participation in the community and recognition in the community. It’s a two way street, rather than us just telling everybody “Radio Fremantle’s great, I hope you listen” (RF3).

Volunteers identified other community stations in Perth, who manage to “have a bit of an image and a bit of marketability about it” (RF1), and also represent the diversity of the community. The two were not mutually exclusive. There were numerous suggestions to improve the situation, most of which included going out into the community and developing useful relationships. Outside broadcasts at music festivals, the Sardine festival, the Tomato festival, developing stronger bonds with the council, the Fremantle Herald (local newspaper), the local hospitals and other social groups were all suggestions.

Other stations do a lot of events and concerts. Community radio can attract people by actually going out there. There are plenty of events in summer in Freo [Fremantle], so plenty of opportunities there. If you look at commercial stations, they have effective marketing strategies and community radio can learn from that. It comes down to appealing to more than your small demographic. How can you grow listenership without attracting them somehow (RF1)?
The practicalities of organising these kinds of events and relationships were not lost on volunteers who realised that this is very time consuming and required resources. There was an opinion that none of this was possible without employing a dedicated part-time member of staff. Although this may cost in the short-term, the increased medium term gain in station profile and listenership would bring increased sponsorship revenue. Radio Fremantle would become a much more valuable part of the social and economic fabric of Fremantle and thus bring economic returns.

It’s like a regional development model; I think Radio Fremantle can be an essential part of that. If we can get the message of local businesses out, then we are moving forward. But it gets back to numbers. They will come to us if we have the listenership. The community business development side of it is not as strong as the broadcasting side of it. It needs to be measured like any service, like a commercial station, it needs to get feedback and develop its local audience. I think they do a great job but they are missing opportunities (RF4).

Listeners also felt that simple marketing tasks were not being attended to by the station. There was a lack of direction or information being provided by the station. This was typical of responses garnered at the audience focus group, which was scathing about the station profile in general.

They really need a decent program guide. It’s just a bit of a mess. On the website, it’s called a “Grid”. That’s a classic case of web incompetence. I want to see a program guide. There’s one program on there called “Soul Exposition”. Is that a program about Soul music or some New Age religion? This is typical of the lack of information about the programs. It just needs three sentences on what it’s about. Is it for the God Squad or people who like Soul Music? It seems such a simple thing to do. It doesn’t cost any money (RFFG1).

As is obvious in this response, it was the lack of an overall station identity and profile that caused the most concern among all the stakeholders. Although this is the most visible challenge to surmount, this study believes there are other issues that contribute to the situation, not directly tackled by stakeholders.

As discussed previously, this research found no evidence of a vibrant internal community within the station. It is unlikely volunteers will feel motivated to organise events or station projects especially if no internal support is obviously communicated. In turn, this is likely to contribute to a weak external station identity.
In addition, this research found no evidence of strong volunteer representation in station governance. As commented by volunteers, there were no obvious forums to present new ideas. There were no station meetings outside board meetings and many volunteers did not know who was on the board and what they did. This was part of the weak internal station community and again would likely contribute to a weak external station identity.

Within station governance, this study also found no evidence of a formal program review. Station programming policy was directed for diverse representation and community access, not for establishing a strong brand for the station. As discussed previously, this has its issues in relation to getting and keeping an audience. A strong station brand in the local community can only be beneficial for the station. Volunteers have suggested that maintaining a strong station brand and maintaining diverse community representation are not mutually exclusive. The two can live happily alongside each other. There is a lot of potential for future success here.

In summary, Radio Fremantle excels as a provider of radio broadcasting access, community representation, broadcasting participation and training to diverse parts of the Fremantle community. However, there is great potential to improve the relationship with listeners.

It would do well to consider vitalising the internal station community and reviewing governance methods to widen participation at a management level. These would feed through positively, contributing to a dynamic external station profile, which is where the focus of improvement lies. It has the potential to develop a more coherent community presence, a recognisable station brand and, in the long-term, forge a much stronger relationship with the Fremantle community.
Key Recommendations

Representation of the Community

1. Investigate methods for enhancing station identity and profile within the community.

2. Investigate methods for improving the relationship with listeners.

Participation

1. Vitalic the internal station community.

2. Review governance methods to widen participation at a management level.

Need for Investment

1. Employment of part-time breakfast producer/marketing manager.
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