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Wellington Access Radio - programming policy, strategy and implementation

Programming Policy

The programming policy at Wellington Access Radio comprises:

- Section 36 c) and c)a of the Broadcasting Act, and funding KPIs set by NZ on Air;
- The Rules of Wellington Access Broadcasting Society Incorporated; and
- Regional and Community Broadcasting Policy Framework of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

Section 36c of the Broadcasting Act:

To ensure that a range of broadcasts is available to provide for the interests of

A.1 36©

- women; and
- youth; and
- children; and
- persons with disabilities; and
- minorities in the community including ethnic minorities; and
- to encourage a range of broadcasts that reflects the diverse religious and ethical beliefs of New Zealanders

Followed by; A.2.1 Not-for-profit community groups.

- Smaller groups lacking resources
- Those wanting exposure, feedback or interaction
- Support groups for people with special needs (health, education, welfare)
- Minority political groups
- Hobby, special interest, recreational
- Sporting
- Larger local, regional, national organisations
- Educational and training institutes

A.2.2 Individuals with a cause, concern, message or interest

- Priority to talk back on specific topics
- With significant community interest
- Not be able to be easily disseminated in other media

- Community programming

A.3 Special Music Enthusiasts

- Non-derivative ethnic music
- Local and regional music
- New Zealand Music
- Other music categories, i.e. Jazz, Dance, World

NZ On Air KPIs 2015-2016:

- Minimum Broadcasting Hours in Region per week: 169
- Section 36(1) (c) Radio Broadcast Criteria per week: 64 minimum average hours per week of section 36 (1) (c) first run locally produced programmes, and 110 hours per week section 36 (1) (c) programmes
- Programme sharing: The station will use its best endeavours to share priority s36c programming with other NZ on Air funded radio entities. Such sharing may take the form of providing programmes to, or receiving them from, other station for broadcast.

Wellington Access Broadcasting Society Incorporated Rules:

2.0 GOALS

- 2.1 To provide and make available broadcasting facilities for the community.
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- 2.2 To ensure that the diversity of life in New Zealand/ Aotearoa is fully reflected on radio by the making and broadcasting of Access Radio programmes that reflect and develop New Zealand identity and culture.
- 2.3 To ensure that a range of broadcasts is available to cater for the interests of minorities in the community and of women.
- 2.4 To make Wellington Access Broadcasting available to all those who feel they are not adequately served by the mainstream established media.
- 2.5 To encourage and facilitate the dissemination of information and the expression of ideas by groups and individuals within the community to a wider audience through the medium of radio; to the benefit of the whole community and for the public good.
- 2.6 To encourage and enable groups and individuals to learn the necessary social, communication and organisational skills to advance the level of understanding of and tolerance for difference within the community.
- 2.7 To operate "The Society" to provide access programming services.
- 2.8 To seek continuing funding from New Zealand on Air and from other appropriate sources.

2.9 To represent Access programme makers in dealings with all other organisations and to facilitate communication between programme makers.

2.10 To enter into dialogue with and make submissions to Government Ministers, Government Departments, New Zealand on Air and any other group on Access broadcasting and related matters.

2.11 To become affiliated with other groups and bodies, incorporated or not, which subscribe to objectives and goals similar to those of Wellington Access Radio.

2.12 To frequently evaluate goals in the light of achievements so as to maintain an organisation that strives to meet its objectives and not an organisation that simply preserves itself.

2.13 To protect the right of any group or individual to present a programme uncensored within the Broadcasting Act and other laws of the land and within a recognised code of broadcasting practice.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

3.1 To offer an alternative to the existing media.

3.2 To demystify the broadcast media and to enable people to develop the skills of radio and media communication in a positive environment.

3.3 To maintain a high standard of programme content and presentation and to be innovative in radio programming.

3.4 To encourage people to be aware of the power of the broadcast media and how it can reinforce or change attitudes in society.

3.5 Not to discriminate on grounds of gender, age, race, sexual orientation or disability.

3.6 To support the presentation of points of view which may or may not be at variance with established views expressed through the existing media and established institutional thought.

3.7 To heighten awareness and appreciation of diversity in our community.

3.8 To foster and encourage involvement in community affairs and community activities.

3.9 To provide ethnic groups with the means of communicating in their own language through their representatives and/or other individuals.

3.10 To promote local performing and creative talent and to act as an outlet for cultural groups to express themselves to a wider audience.

3.11 To provide an outlet for alternative music not played on other stations.

3.12 To encourage children to produce their own programmes.

3.13 To cater for the needs of such groups as the unemployed, the elderly, the disabled, and the homebound and those with increasing amounts of leisure time.

3.14 To encourage schools and other educational organisations to participate in the making and presentation of programmes.

3.15 To enable the broadcast of educational programmes on subjects of social and political importance and interest to help facilitate the process of positive social and political change.

3.16 To build and maintain a strong and cohesive volunteer force to take active interest in the running and responsibilities of Wellington Access Radio.

3.17 To encourage active social contact among all groups and individuals involved in "The Society".

3.18 To produce such publications as considered necessary to the community and members of the society.

3.19 To provide the opportunity for people of all religions and faiths to express their beliefs on air.

MCH Regional and Community Broadcasting Policy (Sections related to Wellington Access Radio are included; Ministry specific sections unrelated to the scope or operation of Wellington Access Radio are omitted)

Goal

To enable a range of broadcasting services, content and formats for regional, local and community and minority audiences including ethnic minorities, communities of interest and students.

The goal covers services and programmes, geographic spread and communities of interest, and it complements the nationwide and international focus of network broadcasting.

Objectives

The objectives relate to the broadcasting environment for regional, local, community and minority audiences. The objectives are to:

- Promote local broadcasting services (local broadcasting);
- Promote innovation and a diverse range of content and formats for different audience identities and interests (diversity);
- Facilitate wide technical, cultural and social access to broadcasting (accessibility); and

Features of Objective a, To promote local broadcasting services (local broadcasting), are that:

1. broadcasters are supported to reflect and develop regional and local character and identity, and to maintain a sense of local mission and place amidst the global broadcasting environment;
2. coverage of regional and local news, current affairs, information, sport and cultural events is supported;
3. broadcasting is used to enhance democratic and civic participation among regional and local populations;
4. broadcasters have a strong and ongoing local physical presence and involvement;

Objective a. responds to the licensing needs of local and regional audiences, the gaps left by network programming, and the need for a strong local broadcaster presence that promotes audience participation.

Features of Objective b, To promote innovation and a diverse range of content and formats to reflect audience identities and cater for their interests (diversity), are that:

1. a range of content and formats is supported in order to suit regional, local, and community audiences and ethnic, linguistic, and other minorities and other groups with shared interests;
2. innovation in broadcasting is promoted and supported;

Objective b. promotes the broadcasting interests of ethnic minorities and communities of interest.

It also promotes innovation and originality as regional and community broadcasting offers some opportunities often outside the ambit of network broadcasting.

Features of Objective c, To facilitate wide technical, cultural and social access to broadcasting (accessibility), are that:

1. broadcasting reaches underserved regional, local, and community populations, and ethnic, linguistic, disabled and other minorities and other groups with shared interests;
2. technology and other means are exploited to make programmes more widely available to audiences;
3. communities of interest or ethnicity have stronger communication links;
4. community participation in programmes and programme-making is supported;
5. broadcasters are strongly involved with their community and support community activities; and

Objective c. promotes participation, technical accessibility, and communication links among social and cultural groups. It enables regional and community broadcasting which is not defined by advertising markets and therefore can provide a voice and shared public space for those often not well catered for.

Programming Strategy Goals – As outlined in Wellington Access Radio Strategic Plan 2015-2019

Wellington Access Radio adopted a strategic plan in 2015. The following programming goals are taken from the strategic plan. A move to FM may see a need for revision to the strategic plan.

Programming GOAL 1

To increase by at least ten programmes a year, net, for the next three years, the number of programmes that are defined as being within the seven categories referred to in Section 36c (A1) of the 1989 Broadcasting Act, and which are first-run programmes produced and broadcast from our studios. Simultaneously introduce a measure of quality control of all aspects of transmission. Ensure that no less than five programmes are offered for broadcast to other ACAB stations by Wellington Access Radio.

Outcome

This will consolidate the station's very reason for existence; it will broaden both the audience and profile of the station; it will improve the overall sound and presentation quality of the Station; it will offer more variety to listeners; it will meet, in time, the requirements under our funding agreement with NZ On Air; it will offer more opportunities for income from sponsorship and advertisements; it will increase the membership of the Society.

Process

1. Value the programmes that are currently on air, especially those that fall into the 36c categories." It is much easier and cheaper to retain an existing customer than to find a new one" – that same commercial imperative applies to Access Radio with regard to programmes and programme makers. Some of the actions referred to in other Goals will help achieve this. Above all it is a relationship exercise that will require constant nurturing of programme makers by Council, management and staff. Communicate with them regularly as a group and as individuals, encourage them, empower them, offer them feedback and suggestions, ask if they need help of any kind and respond quickly and fully to their requests. Make them feel wanted!
2. Review the scale of programme fees, in particular to make provision for additional criteria for reduced fees, in particular in relation to time of broadcast.
3. Convene a think-tank that, each member having done prior research which they bring to the meeting (obviously Google is the first place to look at), suggest as many possible organisations of whatever kind that are thought may have an interest in and could benefit

from hosting an Access Radio programme. That information should, if possible, include contact names and details so they can be followed up.

4. Put together a 'sales package' that will promote the opportunities and benefits of an organisation having a programme on Access Radio and then, in-person, promote the opportunity to each on the list that the think-tank has decided on. A negative response is never a 'no' for all time – re-visit after a while to those who initially turn it down and propose again. For those who show interest, follow up quickly with incentives to get them on air (e.g. discount for the first three months, a formal training package etc).
5. Increase Youth participation by introducing the station to schools at the beginning of each school year, and maintaining Youth Zone programming to develop young broadcasters.
6. Utilize Community Zone as a training ground and recruitment tool for programme makers.
7. Refresh training materials and ensure that training is standardised and comprehensive. Ensure continual training through weekend workshop refreshers. Constantly monitor programmes while editing podcasts to identify struggling programme makers for whom targeted training would be of benefit.
8. Once new members have signed up and are on air, re-read (1) above of this process. Treat them very well!
9. As a measurement of the quality of programmes, ask an experienced (retired?) broadcaster (who otherwise has no association with the Society or Station) to voluntarily listen regularly over a period of time and each month (or bi-monthly) offer, to the Manager in the first instance, a critique of the overall sound, flow, content and quality of programmes with a view to constantly improving the effectiveness, sound and presentation standards of the Station.
10. List programmes made available by WAR for sharing on central ACAB spreadsheet and touch base with other stations each quarter to encourage programme sharing.
11. Check programmes shared by other stations each quarter, giving broadcast priority to programmes lacking in the Wellington Access Radio schedule. Use trailers of shared programmes as a recruitment tool by providing information to the associated community on to become a programme maker at Wellington Access Radio.

Timelines and Responsibilities

This is a matter of urgency so action should be well underway by early 2015. Working with the Station Manager, this will require additional personnel to work on the 'sales package' and then sell it to potential programme makers. The Station Manager and present staff should be the team who are responsible for retaining existing programmes while the additional resource builds on the existing programme base. A target may be: 4 new programmes by 31 December, another 5 by June 30, and then 5 new programmes every 6 months thereafter. There should be a budget allowance for promotional print material.

Programming GOAL 2

To broaden the variety of programmes, platforms and programme formats available so offering alternatives to programme makers and potential programme makers.

Outcome

It will offer a wider choice of programmes, platforms and formats so opening airwaves to programme makers who otherwise would not think of Access Radio; it will give an audience flexibility, surprise and unpredictability; and it will give a wider profile and on occasion physical presence in the community to increasing potential audiences.

Process

1. Broaden the diversity of programming at Wellington Access Radio by identifying gaps in section 36 © content and actively pursuing programme makers in these areas. Of particular importance are Youth, Women and Religious Groups.
2. Devise alternative options* to existing offerings and establish budget (both I & E) for this.
3. As some new options may involve live or recorded broadcasts from outside of the studios (i.e. outside broadcast - OB), acquire 'retired' OB equipment from such as Radio New Zealand or purchase the same.
4. Seek out a volunteer (retired Radio NZ technical producer?) to assist with the technical side of any innovation that requires technical assistance (e.g., OB).
5. Prepare and budget for promotional material for any OB site.
6. Allow costs for use of transport to and from OB site.
7. Include in the Agreement with regular programme makers the possibility that their programme may be temporarily moved on occasion, to accommodate a one-off programme event.

*Examples of such programmes may include:

- a. Outside broadcasts of the Regional Big Sing, selected gigs from venues of an evening, broadcast of free lunchtime concerts from venues around the cities (St Andrews, Old St Pauls, Wesley Church), commentaries on local events and/or openings, etc.
- b. Offer, for a fee, a weekend's transmission to a charitable cause for a 48-hour radiothon during which we encourage people to visit the studio and go on air.
- c. Have a full day's programme or daypart focussed on one subject, ideally for a celebratory day within a particular community: e.g. Christmas Day/Easter, Rosh Hashanah, Eid al-fitr, Diwali, Matariki, Chinese New Year, etc. etc.

- d. For National Days of countries that have diplomatic presence here, make a feature of their day and include something/somebody from the Embassy/High Commission concerned.
7. Plan to acquire video cameras and editing software so that programme makers may diversify their broadcast output. Design training materials in video editing. Videos will be hosted on the website.
8. Harness social media for each programme. Design training materials for effective social media promotion.

Timelines and Responsibility

Management initially and then delegate tasks to volunteers and possibly staff. This is a Goal that is not one to be fulfilled early; maybe by year 2 or 3. It is however an option that, fulfilled, will demonstrate that Access Radio is moving forward into new and audience-involving programmes and that will inevitably increase interest, listenership, profile and income. Our presence and broadcast at such outside events would be pro bono for us and for the event producers.

Programming Strategy – Implementation

Wellington Access Radio's programming and community outreach team comprises of Station Manager, Kristen Paterson, and Programme Development & Community Liaison staff member Esther Taylor.

They are supported in training and mentoring programme makers by programme operators/technicians Nik Whitfield, Tony Kemp, Armando Baudin, and a team of volunteers.

In translating programming policy into strategy, particular interest is paid to:

- The census representation of Wellington Region demographics to identify potential 36 c programme maker groups.
- The expected amount of section 36c output outlined in NZ on Air KPIs.
- Identifying local community groups, educational institutions, and organisations operating in the area.
- The amount of media coverage of diversity/minority and community groups in the Wellington Region .
- The need for coverage for particular diversity/minority and community groups
- Which groups actively approach the station and which groups need to be approached.
- Emerging issues that would benefit from minority group input.

Programme Maker Recruitment/Community Outreach – Developments 2015

- A half-price airtime rate was introduced for a trial period of three months for new programmes.
- A review of the programme airtime rate saw a reduction from \$50 per hour to \$40 per hour, or \$70 for a two hour programme, as of July 1st 2015.
- Half price off-peak rates were introduced between the hours of 11pm and 6am
- The part time Community Liaison and Programme Development staff member role was created in August 2015 to assist the Station Manager in bringing in more programme makers to Wellington Access Radio and increasing awareness of the station across the Wellington Region.
- A community database was developed to identify potential programme maker groups.
- Monthly and quarterly reviews of programming were established to evaluate the schedule content and output
- A new newsletter was designed, and regular newsletter is sent to programme makers.
- The station held numerous programme maker meet-and-greet events to encourage a greater sense of community at Wellington Access Radio
- The station established a public presence at events such as Cuba Dupa and Newtown Festival, with Kilbirnie Festival and Out In The Park lined up for 2016 also.

Current methods

- The programming and community outreach team contact between two and three potential programme maker groups or individuals per week, to bring them in for a meeting and introduce them to the station to discuss the possibility of becoming a broadcaster.
- Partnerships between programme maker groups and potential grant funders are researched to assist communities with the airtime cost of broadcasting on Wellington Access Radio. Grant writing skills are taught to groups to facilitate their own future applications.
- The Community Zone series of programmes, 5-6pm Monday to Friday, works in tandem with the community outreach and programming team both by assisting with community contacts and by interviewing guests brought in by the coordinator to get a taste of radio.

These shows are used to cater to the micro-communities of Wellington by interviewing community groups about events, campaigns and issues. The shows function as a community hub for individual Access broadcasters to promote upcoming special broadcasts, and as a source of information about Access radio community events.

- Refugee and new migrant programmes, funded by the Settling In Grant from the Office of Ethnic Communities, introduce refugee and new migrant groups to the station. The long term plan is to increase the ethnic diversity of programmes by encouraging participants to become individual programme making groups in the future.
- Youth Zone is used to provide young people with gain media experience and develop a youth media focus in the region. Relationships are being developed with local schools to encourage them to include Wellington Access Radio as a school activity.
- Content blocks are planned across the year for culturally significant celebrations and commemorations are planned: All Pacific Language weeks; Pride Week; International Women's Day; International Refugee Day etc.
- Social media is used to push programmes to a wider community, both by the station and by individual programme makers. This aids in informing the community about Access radio as a community broadcaster.

Programme maker retention

- Training materials are constantly refined and training is offered for as long as needed.
- Refresher training workshops are offered via the newsletter and ongoing programme making support is undertaken by station staff.
- Absences are followed up to make sure the programme maker is happy and supported.
- Consistent interaction with programme makers via the newsletter and meet-and-greets.

Increased multi-media offerings

- The station acquired two video cameras to facilitate the videoing of programmes. The footage can be captioned for the deaf community and for speakers of other languages, with the footage being hosted on the Access radio website via YouTube.

- Dictaphones allow for interviews to be conducted when interview subjects are unable to attend the station.
- Junior logins for the website have been generated to allow programme makers to edit their own page, for example adding blog writing and photo.
- The provision of accessradio.org.nz website logins to facilitate blogging.
- The station streams live 24/7 at accessradio.org.nz.
- Podcasts are delivered through the newly improved NZ on Air funded Access Internet Radio platform, with the option to either stream or download them. Podcasts are pushed through social media.

Off site content

- Portable dictaphones are available for programme makers and station staff to capture audio at events, seminars and off-site interviews.

Live to airs

- Music recitals and concerts are recorded in the region, and programmed for listening by those unable to physically attend events.
- The music room is used to broadcast live-to-air with local musicians, to enhance the local profile of NZ music and inform listeners about the local scene.

NZ Music

- The station's New Zealand music catalogue is being steadily built up, and programmed rotations of NZ music are used to fill vacant slot in the schedule.

Further networking and outreach

- Wellington Access Radio is a member of Community Networks Wellington, a networking group for not-for-profit and community organisations.
- The Community Communications Collective is currently working with the station to enhance its profile, and improve social media presence to enhance interaction with the wider community.
- Wellington Access Radio hosts an open day and a stall at Cuba Dupa, a music stage at the Kilbirnie festival, and a stall at Newtown Festival each year. Programme makers from the station promote their shows to the community at the annual Pacifica Festival.
- Station presence at events in Lower and Upper Hutt (Petone Winter Carnival,

Access station content sharing

- The station schedules at least five programmes from other Access stations at all times. Programmes are selected to fill 36c gaps in our schedule (for example a Mandarin language show). This ensures that the local audiences are catered to despite the lack of a local programme maker, and the shows are trailed with an invite to local listeners to create a similar local programme.

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