

FBI RADIO

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THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY RADIO IN AUSTRALIA'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE: A CASE STUDY OF FBI RADIO, SYDNEY

Submission to National Cultural Policy consultation, August 2022

INTRODUCTION

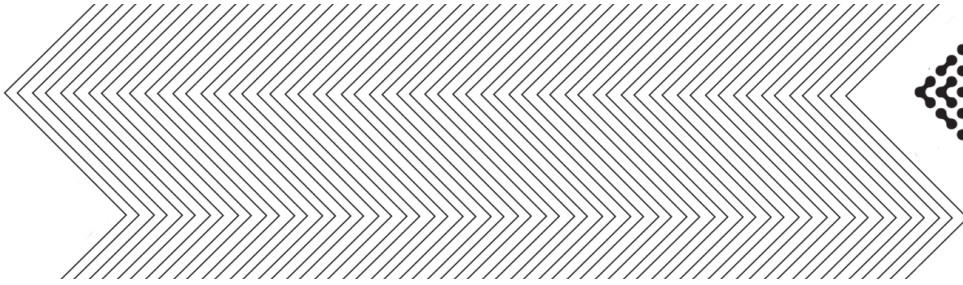
FBI Radio welcomes and supports the submission by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia to the National Cultural Policy, and their recommendation to recognise the importance of Community Radio to the cultural landscape of Australia.

This submission should be read as a case study of one of Australia's leading independent youth, music, art and culture stations based in Redfern, NSW to deepen the image of how community radio is embedded within culture and creativity.

ABOUT FBI RADIO

FBI Radio is an independent, non-profit youth broadcaster specialising in music, arts and culture. We believe in the transformative power of music, arts and culture; to inspire young people, to foster community, amplify independent culture and to bring positive change to Sydney and the world.

FBI Radio nurtures and platforms artists, creative content makers and future creative industry workers – uniting cultural communities to amplify Sydney's under-represented cultural voices. We've been broadcasting 24/7 since 2003, and play 50% Australian music, with half of that from Sydney on 94.5 FM, DAB+ and streaming live and on demand via fbiradio.com. Additionally FBI's podcast and video offerings provide multi-platform access, broadcasting Australian and Sydney-specific content more broadly. As a not-for-profit organisation, FBI Radio's main source



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of funding is via its membership that costs around \$10 per month. In addition FBI Radio attracts sponsors and relies on irregular donations and philanthropic giving to sustain operations.

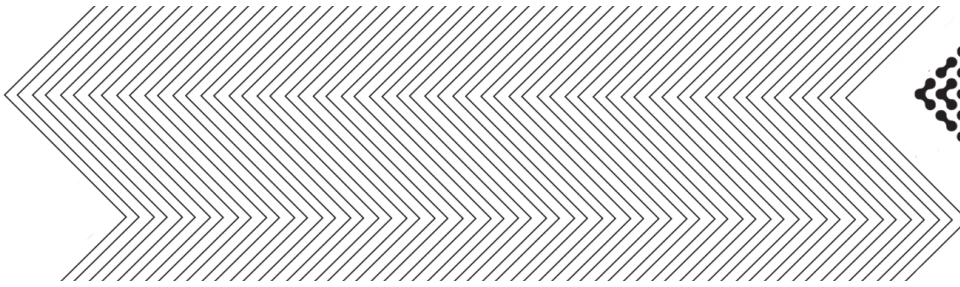
FBI Radio operates as a non-profit incorporated association in accordance with the community broadcasting criteria in the Broadcasting Services Act, regulated by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), to:

- provide Sydney with an innovative and unpredictable community radio station committed to representing and involving itself in youth, arts and emerging culture;
- maintain a large and diverse audience and membership base as measures of success, and to provide members with opportunities to participate in station activities;
- broadcast a wide range of contemporary music genres as core programming, as well as providing a forum for arts, emerging culture, public affairs and youth issues;
- achieve a minimum of 50% Australian music content in music programming, half of which will be sought from artists resident in Sydney.

FBI Radio is registered with the NSW Department of Fair Trading, the Australian Charities and Not-For Profits and Commission (ACNC) and is a member of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA). We note and welcome the CBAA's submission to the National Cultural Policy and its call for the new National Cultural Policy to "recognise and refer to the critical role played by community radio in nurturing Australian artists and strengthening creative and cultural industries in Australia."

FBI RADIO MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Management Committee (governing body) consists of 11 volunteers. Two positions on the Committee are reserved under the constitution as being "youth" i.e. must be filled by people 25 years or younger. This recognises the role FBI plays in nurturing the next generation of cultural leaders and providing them with governance experience.



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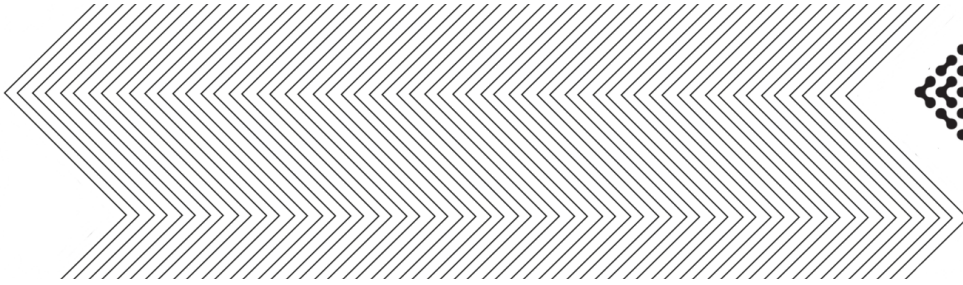
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COMMUNITY RADIO AS A CULTURAL INCUBATOR

1. Community radio makes an important contribution to [building safe and contributing societies and reinforcing cultural vibrancy](#). It does so by amplifying the voices of local communities not adequately catered for by other broadcasters, many of whom have commercial interests. Community radio has a key role to play as Australia and its creative and cultural industries rebuild from the impacts of COVID-19. A thriving community radio sector ensures this rebuild reflects diverse voices, encourages community participation and adequately meets different local needs and preferences.
2. Community radio in Australia is often the first to play an Australian artist and facilitates a community of interest, need, and passion. For FBI Radio that community is young people, and the artists that got their start on the station are countless. The Kid LAROI, Flume, Gang of Youths and Sampa The Great all received some of their earliest radio support on FBI Radio.

FBI Radio provides a unique platform to not only see emerging and breakthrough artists get their first-ever radio play, but to support their growth ongoing. One of the only community radio stations with playlisted prime time programs (Breakfast, Mornings, Lunch and Drive), approximately 30 songs are added to rotation on FBI Radio each week, translating to over 350 Sydney tracks and almost 700 Australian tracks being added to FBI Radio's playlist in FY21 alone. At a time when artists' access to new audiences is increasingly individualised and algorithmically led, FBI Radio relies on a passionate and knowledgeable music team translating into consistent and considered support for hundreds of local artists each year.

Outside of playlisting support, FBI Radio has created several initiatives aimed at developing and recognising the next generation of local music-makers. Music Open Day provides a monthly opportunity for musicians to come to FBI's studio and meet with the



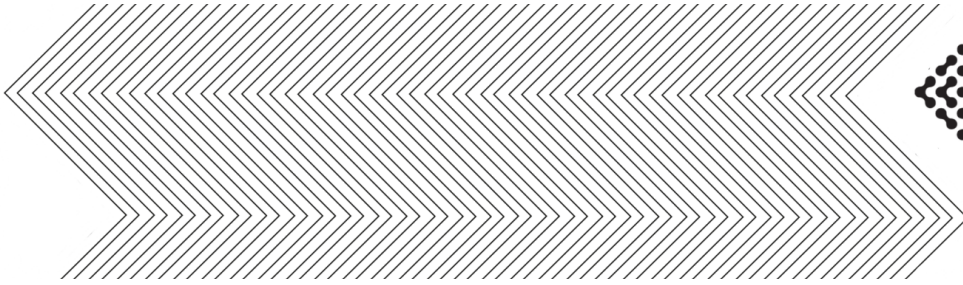
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station's music director for one-on-one advice; Dance Class is a DJ training and mentorship program to support women, non-binary and trans talent in electronic music; Independent Artist of the Week spotlights 50 Australian artists a year, giving them dedicated editorial coverage and often their first ever live-to-air interview. Some FBI Independent Artist of the Week alumni include Alice Skye, Mallrat and Tasman Keith.

Since 2008, FBI Radio has run an annual awards night celebrating the best in Sydney's Music, Art and Culture or the 'SMACs'. Previous winners include The Presets, Barkaa, ONEFOUR, Sarah Blasko, Ziggy Ramo, Vivid Live, Laneway Festival, Sissy Ball, Gelato Messina and Cornersmith. The SMACs also include a 'SMAC of the Year' award providing a nod to a notable individual that has contributed to the cultural community. Previous winners have included Amani Haydar (artist, activist and writer), Jimmy Sing and Hana Shimada (Goodgod Small Club), Millie Milgate (MusicNSW, Sounds Australia) and Ben Marshall (Sydney Opera House).

FBI Radio consistently celebrates and drives innovative cultural thinkers forward on air, at events and across its platforms, providing amplification to voices that make Australia's cultural landscape more vibrant.



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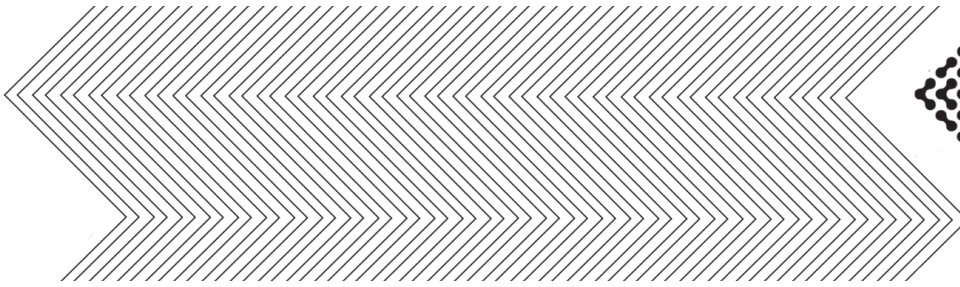
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3. FBI Radio is run by hundreds of young volunteers, and operates as a talent pool for the broader embedded creative workforce, while also serving as a volunteer community for those wanting to give back and contribute to culture in Sydney. The recognition of the role of the volunteer in the cultural space including their economic contribution, is important to understanding the community led and positive engagement of the independent arts, culture and creative ecosystem. FBI Radio welcomes the following recommendation in the bipartisan report of the [2021 Parliamentary Inquiry into Creative and Cultural Institutions](#), which should be progressed as a priority in the National Cultural Policy, to create a rich data point on paid and unpaid workers in the creative industries,

The Committee recommends the Australian Bureau of Statistics add questions to the Census which better account for the professions of those working in gig economies, and across the creative and cultural industries with recognition of paid and unpaid work. (6.83)

4. Community Radio as a training group provides a ladder up for artists and workers in their creative careers. Volunteers, staff and artists who got their start with FBI have flourished in careers in the public and commercial broadcast sector, music and arts industries and beyond, including across finance, legal and tech industries. Staff and volunteers have won Walkleys, CBAA Awards and Kennedy Awards. FBI Radio operates as a hub for talent to build hands-on experience across a number of practical and creative roles, including producing and presenting, team and volunteer management, content creation, curation and creative partnerships.

FBI Radio is not unlike other community radio stations who often are able to provide multiple access points into the creative sector and can help fuel future talent and job creation. Without a flourishing community radio sector, we miss out on future talent for Australia.

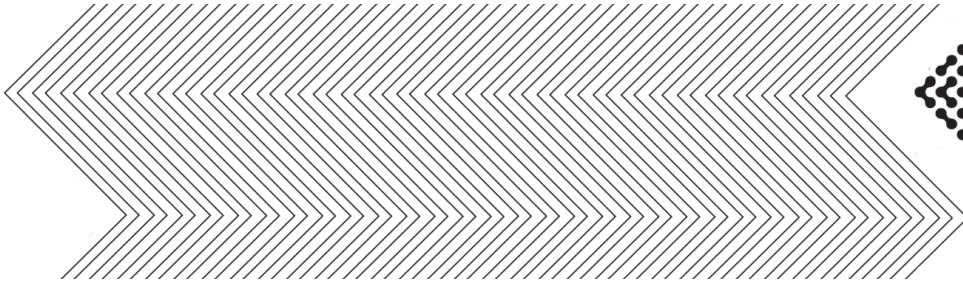


5. Globally, [independent radio is seen as a complement to algorithmic streaming platforms](#) to enable audiences to diversify their music reach and increase content consumption. More and more, FBI Radio is able to draw an international audience through its programming, content and staff and volunteer output.

However, over the next 10 years the biggest challenge will be transitioning the community radio landscape into digital broadcasting as digital radio grows, particularly for Australian radio to continue to connect with audiences, compete on a global landscape and to continue to prioritise and amplify new and innovative artists and talent.

FBI Radio streams live via fbiradio.com and is on DAB+ but the limitations in these platforms and the station's own resources mean that FBI Radio is still dependent on expensive hardware tied to an FM broadcast.

Increasingly, FBI Radio is seen as a cultural institution broader than the FM band. Like many FM radio stations, providing our content on a range of platforms ensures we are accessible and can engage with our listeners and communities. To continue to broadcast Australian stories to new audiences, community radio should be included in policies that shape digital growth strategies for radio, and should be recognised, supported, shepherded and welcomed into digital broadcasting through its growth and change.



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KEY ELEMENTS FOR THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY TO CONSIDER

The purpose of the NCP is *“to establish a comprehensive roadmap to guide the skills and resources required to transform and safeguard a diverse, vibrant and sustainable arts, entertainment and cultural sector now and into the future.”*

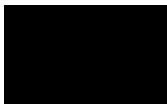
FBI Radio believes that the role of community radio is integral to the arts, entertainment and culture sector and welcomes the following key considerations for the National Culture Policy.

A National Cultural Policy should:

1. Be across portfolio and jurisdiction, and bipartisan in its engagement and breadth,
2. Be action led with a multi-decade view,
3. Welcome opportunities for artists in the earliest stages of their careers,
4. Recognise the role of volunteer and unpaid workers to a thriving cultural space,
5. Support and invest in the growth of digital broadcasting for all players, and
6. Recognise the role of community radio as an incubator for arts, culture and creative industries.

Thank you for the opportunity to put forward this submission. If you'd like any more information please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Regards,



Tanya Ali
Managing Director
FBI Radio