

Evaluation of the Community Broadcasting Program: Final Report

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Social
Research
Centre

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List of abbreviations and terms

CBP	Community Broadcasting Program
CBF	Community Broadcasting Foundation
CBAA	Community Broadcasting Association of Australia
CMTO	Community Media Training Organisation
DITRDCA	The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
RPH	Radio for the Print Handicapped (This term has largely been superseded by 'radio reading for people with a print disability'. However, the acronym does appear in the text where it reflects conventions used in application data).
SRC	Social Research Centre

Executive Summary

Overview of the Community Broadcasting Program

Community broadcasters play an important role in Australia's media landscape, with around \$692 million contributed to the Australian economy annually.¹ Over the past decade, the sector and its listeners have grown, with around 461 current broadcaster licences and more than 5 million Australian listeners per week.² As Australia's largest independent media sector, community broadcasting provides an opportunity to reflect voices that aren't adequately represented in mainstream media, including First Nations communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and faith-based communities.

The Australian Government regulates the sector through the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and provides funding through the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP), with funds distributed via a third party the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF). In 2022-23, the Australian Government committed to delivering almost \$21 million through the CBP, with \$16.94 million for recurring activities and an additional \$4.03 million allocated to sector-wide development initiatives. Funding is distributed via three grant streams: Development & Operations, Content (including Specialist Programming funding for priority cohorts) and Sector Investment Grants. The CBP also provided \$3.4 million in COVID-19 Quick Response and COVID-19 Crisis grants in the first round of grants in the 2020/2021 period.

Evaluation overview

This evaluation was conducted between March and July 2023. It used a mixed methods approach to understand the effectiveness of the grant program. While past evaluations and reviews have focused on areas such as governance, the primary focus of this evaluation is on the program design, delivery, utility and impact. The Social Research Centre evaluation team drew on evidence and insights collected through program documentation and grant application data, thirty qualitative consultations and a sector survey with 211 stakeholders including grant applicants, non-applicants and sector bodies. Findings from across these sources were triangulated to present a comprehensive report that combines insights from all data sources to answer the key evaluation questions.

Several limitations were encountered in this evaluation. Tight timeframes for the evaluation limited opportunity for qualitative and quantitative methods to interact to explore emergent issues in greater depth. The diversity of stakeholder perspectives engaged in the evaluation has limitations due to the opt-in approach to recruitment for the online survey and qualitative consultations. The evaluation was limited in its ability to assess the extent of impact due to very limited availability of outcomes data and relevant benchmarks.

¹ Community Broadcasting Foundation – Annual Report 2021.

² Community Broadcasting Program Evaluation and Sustainability Review – Terms of Reference (November 2022).

Key messages

Utility

- Overall, the grant making processes was found to be mostly efficient and effective, while also identifying opportunities for improvements to address sector diversity.
- Awareness and engagement with the CBP were high, though some areas of the sector still had low awareness. This related to organisational capabilities indicating a need for awareness raising and outreach on an ongoing basis.
- The sector was largely satisfied with the application process with support from CBF staff adding value. There is still need for a more streamlined, accessible application process with a more direct focus on funding objectives and outcomes, particularly for core operational funding.
- Assessment could be enhanced through a more representative peer-assessment process and the incorporation of professional expertise for sector investment funding.
- Funding tended to go to NSW and Victoria as well as to metropolitan areas. Applications related to 'ethnic' communities, youth and RPH had the highest rates of approvals, whereas 'seniors' and 'religious' focused applications had the highest disapproval rates. This indicates key areas of unmet need.

Program Delivery

- Overall, the CBP has partially achieved its objectives of addressing the identified issues and needs of the sector.
- Funding continues to be important for the production and broadcasting of diverse, locally relevant content that is accessible and of high quality. Funding has supported the maintenance of diverse programming with some increases in online content production.
- There is significant reliance on funding to maintain core operations, particularly for smaller organisations and those without sources of consistent, significant revenue.
- Funding to remain responsive to community needs, particularly in the form of community engagement activities and marketing and promotion is of growing importance to remain relevant and develop revenue streams.
- Investment in sector-wide projects has partially supported sector needs though impact could be enhanced through increased sector coordination and tailoring services to specific sector needs.

Impact

- The program had a range of positive impacts for broadcasters related to the continuation of operations, support to achieve organisational priorities, community engagement activities and the delivery of diverse, representative, local and national news, information and content.

- Funding has not significantly contributed to sector sustainability, with minimal increases in organisations' capacity to undertake these types of activities without reliance on CBP funding. A substantial unintended outcome was identified in relation to the level of reliance on funding.
- Sector representative bodies have contributed to sector sustainability through cross-sectoral initiatives and sector-wide projects which distributed value to stations and tailored approaches at sub sectoral levels. Sector coordination could be increased, however.

Futures

- Future needs of the sector varied according to the organisational health, capacity and level of resilience, with a need for CBP grants to be inclusive and targeted to different needs among applicants. Of greatest importance is the need to secure operational costs to increase resilience and foster sustainability.
- Reliance on volunteers is unsustainable for the sector with the decline in volunteerism and the transition towards increased professionalisation in the sector.
- Targeted investment is needed to support capacity building and training, as well as revenue development for stations with lower resilience and self-sufficiency.
- There is a growing need for community engagement activities and fundraising to support the stations in building their visibility and relevance in the community and increasing sponsorship.
- The sector identified opportunities for CBP to adapt to current and emerging needs through longer-term, larger-value grants that allow for strategic initiatives to facilitate diversification and encourage sustainability.

Recommendations

1. Ensure awareness raising activities are undertaken regularly to build the sector's understanding of the CBP offering, and the expectations and process associated with application. In particular, this should target, smaller organisations in regional areas and those experiencing organisational change.
2. Continue investing in CBF staff outreach and engagement activities to continue building positive partnerships and support mechanisms for applicants. This may also include undertaking capacity building activities to help organisations to become 'grant ready'.
3. Consider how to balance the varied capacity of organisations in the sector through the grant allocation process. This could include better identifying organisational capacity and resilience to target support, removing barriers around core operational funding, and greater prioritisation of funding which builds organisational resilience, staffing, infrastructure and community engagement.
4. Streamline the application processes. Given year-by-year reliance on grants for many organisations, consider including a rolling application process whereby applicants

seeking ongoing funding can apply to renew funding rather than submitting new applications. Sector Investment activities can be consolidated into single applications. Core operational funding could be detached from some of the requirements of other activities.

5. Ensure sector representation is achieved in peer assessment process to build on equity and trust and involve professional assessors in sector-wide initiatives to bring adequate knowledge to bear and add value to the sector.
6. Increase the sector's capacity to create accessible content by targeting funding to support production and delivery costs including training and staffing, community engagement and fundraising, diversification and online delivery and the consolidation and/or development of alternate revenue sources.
7. Consider how the program can target funding to build resilience among applicants. The proposed resilience model that has already been endorsed by the CBF provides an opportunity to address this need by further embedding resilience principles in the CBP to align funding strategies with resilience building.³ This may also include a governmental review of legislative restrictions on sponsorship to help support sustainability in the sector.
8. Target capacity building initiatives for staff and volunteers in less self-sufficient organisations and those in regional, rural and remote areas to address knowledge and skill shortages, including training and development through sector-wide initiatives.
9. Prioritise grants that build sustainability and self-sufficiency, including funding strategic initiatives that support sector coordination and partnerships, knowledge and skills sharing, and initiatives which reduce financial burden on individual stations.
10. Prioritise longer term funding opportunities to foster greater security in the sector, and support longer-term strategic thinking for organisations.
11. Consider how sector-wide funding for key initiatives can better address and be responsive to the diversifying needs of the sector through partnership delivery models or greater distribution of funding across the sector, with intermediary bodies playing a key coordination role. Making funding available towards 'medium' sized sector projects would support this tiered approach to progressing strategic initiatives in a manner that is appropriate to different organisational capacities.

³ See [Granting to Support Station Resilience](#)

1. Introduction

1.1. Context

Community broadcasters play an important role in Australia's media landscape, with around \$692 million contributed to the Australian economy annually.⁴ Over the past decade, the sector and its listeners have grown, with around 461 current broadcaster licences and more than 5 million Australian listeners per week.⁵

As Australia's largest independent media sector, community broadcasting provides an opportunity to reflect voices among community members that aren't adequately represented in mainstream media, including First Nations communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and faith-based communities. Community broadcasters aim to provide a range of benefits to local communities including:⁶

- promoting harmony and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally diverse Australian community
- pursuing principles of democracy, access, and equity
- enhancing the diversity of programming choices
- demonstrating independence
- supporting local artists
- increasing community involvement in broadcasting.

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA, the Agency) is currently conducting a sustainability review of the community broadcasting sector, of which this program evaluation forms a part.

1.2. What is the Community Broadcasting Program?

The Australian Government regulates community broadcasting through the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) and provides funding through the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP), with funds distributed via a third party, the Community Broadcasting Foundation.

The Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) is a not-for-profit independent agency that supports and promotes the development and sustainability of the community broadcasting sector through sourcing, securing and delivering funding to the sector.⁷

In 2022-23, the Australian Government committed to delivering almost \$21 million through the CBP, with \$16.94 million for recurring activities and an additional \$4.03 million allocated to sector-wide development initiatives. The funding deed between the Australian Government and CBF sets out several funding allocations which ensure financial support is available to

⁴ Community Broadcasting Foundation – Annual Report 2021.

⁵ Community Broadcasting Program Evaluation and Sustainability Review – Terms of Reference (November 2022).

⁶ Community Broadcasting Association of Australia [About Community Broadcasting | Community Broadcasting Association of Australia \(cbaa.org.au\)](https://www.cbaa.org.au). Accessed on 14th February 2023.

⁷ DITRDCA – [Community Broadcasting Program](#). Accessed on 4th of July 2023.

priority groups including Ethnic community media, First Nations media and radio reading for people with a print disability. When assessing applications, CBF is responsible for determining which pool funding should be allocated from. Of note, core operational support for First Nations media organisations is provided through funding from the National Indigenous Australians Agency. Thus, CBP funding for First Nations largely relates to the Content stream.

Currently, the CBP has three distinct granting streams as described in the table below:

Grant stream	Allocation	Description	Eligibility
Development & Operations stream	\$6 million per year*	Development & operations grants provide financial support for salaries, organisational costs, and infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a community radio station • a community television station • an incorporated non-profit community media sector organisation • a Remote Indigenous Media Organisation or Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Service
Content stream	\$3.2 million per year*	Content grants provide funding toward the development, production and distribution of community created content in order to promote community participation, the diversity of voices and languages and enhance creativity and excellence in community media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a community radio station • a community television station • an incorporated non-profit community media sector organisation • a Remote Indigenous Media Organisation or Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Service • an incorporated not-for-profit organisation producing content or auspicing on behalf of an independent producer with an agreement for distribution via a recognised community media organisation
Specialist radio programming stream (Content stream)		<p>Specialist Radio Programming grants sit within the Content stream and support ongoing, regular or new programs that deliver a specific service to a local community that is not offered by other broadcasters.</p> <p>The three key areas of this stream are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations Australians programs • Radio reading (formerly RPH) programs to serve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a community radio station • a Remote Indigenous Media Organisation or Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Service • incorporated not-for-profit organisations auspicing applications for program groups broadcast on a community radio station

		people with a print disability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic programs to serve a defined local ethnic community 	
Sector Investment stream	\$9.4 million per year*	Sector Investment grants aim to strengthen and develop Australian community media. Funding is targeted to support two areas: sector organisations to undertake sector coordination, and sector-wide projects which include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amrap • CBOonline • National Training • National Training - industry skills & capacity development • Enhanced National News Programming • Multiplatform Distribution Project • Digital Radio Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • includes annual sector coordination applications from three peak sector organisations where funding is specifically provided • by tender invitation only for major sector project delivery • not available to individual stations • assessed based on necessity of contribution to sector, capacity to deliver, impact of activities for benefit of sector and plan for evaluating the success of activities/resources

*These figures are subject to indexation and may change each year.

The CBP also provided \$3.4 million in COVID-19 Quick Response and COVID-19 Crisis grants in the first round of grants in the 2020/2021 period. These grants were not ongoing but aimed to support as many stations possible with the resources available. These were non-competitive and awarded to all eligible applicants.

1.3. Evaluation aims and objectives

The primary aim of the evaluation is to understand the effectiveness of the grant program by exploring questions of:

- Value: whether the CBP is being delivered effectively and efficiently
- Delivery: whether CBP funding grant allocation addresses identified issues
- Impact: whether the CBP is meeting the sector's extant needs or has unintended consequences
- Future: whether the CBP anticipates and is responsive to emergent and/or unmet needs.

The analysis of these topics was conducted through a review of extant data, as well as stakeholder interviews and a sector survey. This evaluation examined data and information from between 2017 to the present period.

The purpose of the evaluation is to produce recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CBP with respect to each topic, and thereby to create value, improve administration and delivery, increase impact, and contribute to the resilience of the community broadcasting sector. While past evaluations and reviews have focused on areas of CBP such as governance, the primary focus of this evaluation is on the program design, delivery, utility and impact.

2. Methodology

2.1. Evaluation approach





In order to understand the effectiveness of the CBP, the Social Research Centre designed an evaluation approach that utilises a range of research methods and data sources. To guide the evaluation, key evaluation questions were developed in partnership with the Agency across four domains of interest: utility, program delivery, impact and futures. This also involved the review of the existing CBP program logic and program documentation.

The key evaluation questions across each of the domains is provided in the table below.

<p>Utility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the grant application process effective and efficient for the sector? • Are the grant assessment and decision-making processes effective and efficient? • Is funding distributed to the sector effectively and efficiently? • Are grant funding agreements and grant requirements managed effectively? 	<p>Program delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the program helped to create the conditions under which grantees can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - create and broadcast accessible, diverse, representative, local and national news, information, and content? - be responsive to community needs? - more effectively undertake day-to-day operations and development? - invest in sector wide projects?
<p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did the program achieve outcomes in terms of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increasing access to diverse, representative, local and national news, information and content? - promoting sustainability through attracting additional revenue streams? - building capacities of stations to deliver on their purpose? • What unintended consequences/outcomes have occurred as a result of the program and what implications do these have for the program delivery? 	<p>Futures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the program been able to identify unmet and emergent needs in the sector? • To what extent has the program been able to address emergent or unmet needs in the sector? • Are there areas of unmet or emergent need in the sector that has not been addressed through the program?

2.1.1. Evaluation methods

The evaluation of the CBP used a range of methods to answer each of the key evaluation questions. A more detailed description of the evaluation methods used for this evaluation is located in Appendix B.

 <p>Review of existing program documentation and materials</p>	<p>Provided contextual understanding of the origins and objectives of the CBP.</p>
 <p>Qualitative consultations</p>	<p>Consultations with two key informants and 28 stakeholders from the community broadcasting sector including grant applicants, non-applicants and sector bodies.</p>
 <p>Online survey</p>	<p>An online survey of community broadcasters, unsuccessful applicants and non-applicants. The survey sought opinions on issues associated with the utility, delivery, impact, and future of the grants program. Completion of the survey took 10 mins on average n=211 completed surveys</p>
 <p>Review of secondary data</p>	<p>Review of secondary data provided by the Department, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grant application data obtained through SmartyGrants - Relevant program reports and documentation

2.1.2. Analysis approach

Secondary data analysis

Secondary data provided by The Agency were reviewed to identify information relevant to address the key evaluation questions. The primary source used was the application data generated through SmartyGrants. Other documents including application forms and performance reports were reviewed to support the framing and interpretability of the other data sources. For the grant application data, a descriptive and frequency analysis was undertaken to determine the number and type of grant applications submitted, and the allocation and distribution of funding by grant program, location and community of interest. The Community Radio Listener Survey data was analysed to identify the key demographics of community radio listeners and how these compare to other radio listeners. However, this analysis was ultimately excluded from the evaluation due to the limitations in its power to derive and attribute trends to the evaluation questions. These quantitative analyses were undertaken in Microsoft Excel.

Qualitative data analysis

All qualitative data collected through stakeholder consultations was thematically analysed using a thematic coding frame organised around the key evaluation questions and domains.

Interview notes and transcripts were collated using this frame. The qualitative research was not designed to be statistically representative and thus the analysis is not generalisable to the broader population. Nonetheless, transcripts were analysed to identify themes, both common and divergent perspectives. To provide the reader with some indication of the salience of the findings, this report employs terms like, most, some, or a few to indicate the prevalence of opinion and perspectives.

Survey data analysis

Quantitative data analysis of the survey data was undertaken to address the evaluation objectives. Analysis was undertaken using Q Research Software. Frequency data tables (total level) and cross tabulations with an analysis banner (produced in collaboration with the Agency) were produced using Q Research Software and delivered in Microsoft Excel format. Significance testing was applied at the 95% confidence level, to flag and contextualise differences in survey responses between groups. It should be noted that any sub-group with a small base size of under 30 reverts to descriptive commentary in this report on the 'n=' cases, rather than percentages, and a caveat is footnoted throughout if data is presented on a small base size (under n=30).

Data triangulation

The findings from the key informant interviews, stakeholder consultations, secondary data analysis and survey data have been triangulated with the aim to present a comprehensive report that combines insights from all data sources. Triangulation allows multiple sources of data to be used to answer the specific evaluation questions, thus allowing more robust findings and recommendations to be made.

2.2. Limitations

The overarching limitations of the evaluation are described below. Greater detail is provided in Appendix B.

Overall evaluation limitations

- Tight timeframes for the evaluation required qualitative and quantitative data collection to happen largely concurrently, limiting opportunities to align methods to explore emergent issues in greater depth.
- The diversity of perspectives obtained through data collection has limitations due to the opt-in approach to recruitment for the online survey and qualitative consultations. This creates some limitations in the analysis and interpretability of data in relation to certain cohorts and areas of the sector.
- The evaluation was limited in its ability to assess impact due to very limited availability of outcomes data.
- The evaluation was limited in its ability to assess the extent to which the CBP had achieved its objectives due to a lack of available benchmarks. The evaluation assessed the program based on the broad objectives program logic models.

2.3. Ethical considerations and quality assurance

Ethical clearance was not obtained for this project as it was deemed low risk. Participants were given an opportunity to provide informed consent prior to notetaking and recording. All data has been de-identified to ensure that findings cannot be traced back to any participants.

All aspects of this evaluation were undertaken by SRC in accordance with the ISO 20252:2019, the Research Society code of professional practice, ISO 20252 standards, the Australasian Evaluation Society's Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations, the Australian Privacy Principles and the Privacy (Market and Social Research) Code 2014. This relates to SRC's quality assurance protocols for conducting evaluation activities.

3. Findings

This section of the report provides an overview of findings in response to the key evaluation questions across the four domains, Utility, Program Delivery, Impact and Futures.

3.1. Utility

This section discusses findings in relation to the key evaluation questions for Utility.

Table 1 Utility – Evaluation questions and findings

Evaluation question	Evaluation finding
Utility of the Community Broadcasting Program	
Is the grant application process effective and efficient for the sector?	Mostly achieved
Are the grant assessment and decision-making processes effective and efficient?	Partially achieved
Is funding distributed to the sector effectively and efficiently?	Mostly achieved
Are grant funding agreements and grant requirements managed effectively?	Yes

3.1.1. Grant application process

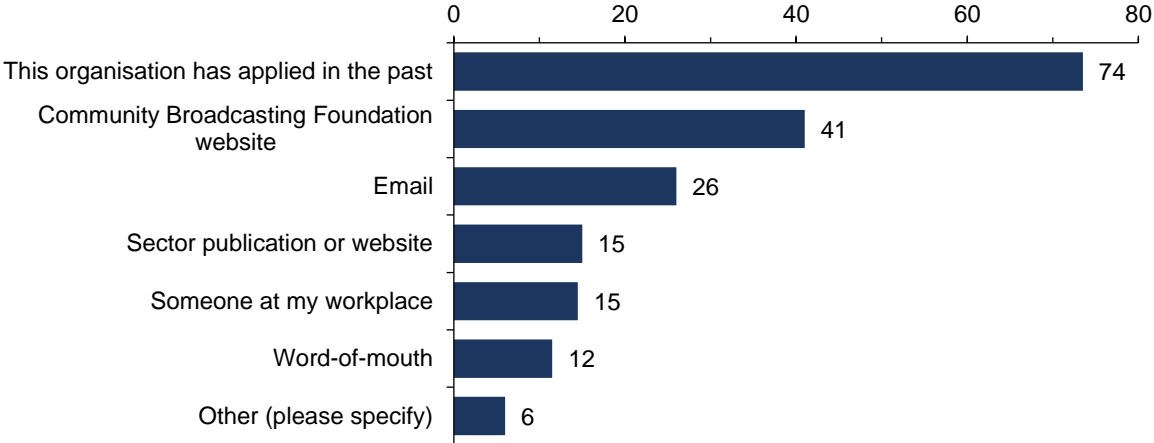
Awareness and engagement

Overall awareness and engagement with the CBP were high throughout the sector. Program awareness was observed to be driven by prior participation with the majority of applicants (74%) indicating that they became aware of grant funding through the CBF because their organisation had applied for funding in the past. Two-fifths of applicants (41%) found out about grant funding from the CBF website. Non-applicants surveyed was a relatively small number (n=4). Of these non-applicants surveyed three were aware, while only one was unaware of the CBP funding. Of those who mentioned ‘other’ source of awareness in Figure 1, it included items such as the CBAA Community Radio Conference, SACBA, social media, search engines (e.g. Google), C31 communications, and from CBAA / CBF in general.

Some sector stakeholders had lower awareness of the CBP, particularly those with less prior experience with grant applications, less sector knowledge or reduced resourcing due to staff and volunteer turnover and organisational change. Several of these stakeholders also reported limited engagement with sector representative bodies and CBF staff. These stakeholders were less aware of the type and extent of activities available through the CBP funding. Some unsuccessful applicants also attributed this result to a lack of understanding around the grant requirements. For example, one stakeholder was unaware of the requirement for financial contributions for Development & Operations grants over \$25,000.

There was a desire among non-applicants to apply for CBP funding, and a strong desire among stakeholders for more proactive and targeted outreach and promotion about CBP in order for them to better understand what opportunities the program offers.

Figure 1 How applicants became aware of grant funding



SmartyGrants application data suggested there was strong engagement across the various grant streams. Between 2017-18 and 2022-23, nearly 4,000 applications were submitted by more than 400 applicants. Nearly one in five (17%) applicants submitted a single application while approximately two-thirds (68%) submitted up to 10 applications. The highest number of applications submitted by a single applicant was 75. Based on the grant application data, provided, there were only 24 eligible licensees who did not apply for funding.

The majority of applications were submitted for Development & Operations grants (47%) and Content grants (41%) (Table 2). However, over this period, the annual number of applications has more than halved, dropping from 1,179 applications in 2017-18 to 395 applications in 2022-23. This was despite a spike in applications for Covid 19 Response Grants. The overall number of applicants appears to have also declined; there were 269 applicants in 2017-18 compared to 198 applicants in 2022-23 (a decrease of 26%). However, this year appears to be an outlier in the data as 2017-2018 was the first year the current grant programs were offered following a major restructure. According to the CBF, as a result of this restructure, several factors could be attributed to this decline. Firstly, applicants were able to submit more than one Development & Operations application in this first year of this period. However, from the second year onwards, this was changed so applicants could only submit one application which covered all their needs. Secondly, being the first year of the new grants program, increased awareness likely resulted in more applicants following sector engagement and consultation. The slightly lower rate of applications in recent years is possibly explained by the prolonged impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the financial supplement provided through the Covid 19 Response Grants. More research is needed to understand whether waning awareness and organisational capacity has also contributed to this decline.

Table 2 Number of applications by Grant Program, 2017-28 to 2022-23

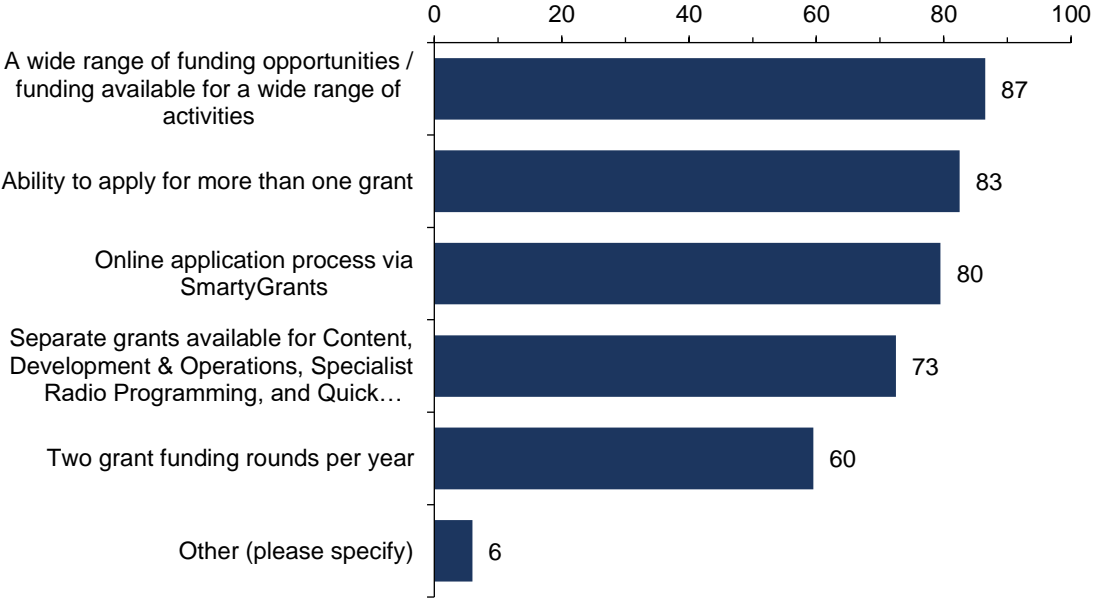
Grant Program	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	n/a*	Total
Content	522	269	272	172	197	188		1,620
Development & Operations	652	305	289	156	246	205		1,853
Sector Investment	5	4	3	3	4	2	8	29
Covid 19 Response Grants				453				453
Total applications	1,179	578	564	784	447	395	8	3,955
Number of Applicants	269	256	238	301	216	198	7	415^

Notes: *Refers to the following Grant Round funding which could not be attributed to a specific financial year: Quick Response Grants, Enhanced National News Programming, and National Training – Industry Capacity & Skills Development. ^Total number of applicants will not equal sum of individual components as some organisations will have submitted applications in more than one year. Source: Smarty Grants Application Data.

Application process

According to the survey results, the majority of applicants were satisfied (net 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied') with the process (66%) and overall experience of applying for the grant (68%). In terms of the features of the application process, the majority of survey respondents indicated a desire to maintain the availability of funding for a wide range of opportunities and activities (87%), the ability to apply for more than one grant (83%) and the online application process to remain via SmartyGrants (80%). Stakeholders commonly described the SmartyGrants system as straightforward and easy to use. Minor feedback indicated some dissatisfaction with the usability of SmartyGrants with one stakeholder who reported accessibility issues for vision impaired applicants, and another stakeholder that reported an inability to organise multiple applications chronologically in the system. The survey also indicated significant support for the separate grant streams (73%) and to a less degree, the two grant funding rounds per year (60%).

Figure 2 Aspects of the funding program or process applicants would like to see maintained



Sector Investment applications

Overall, Sector Investment applicants reported satisfaction with the tailored application approach, commenting that the process had become increasingly streamlined. Stakeholders were satisfied that the Sector Investment stream utilises an outcomes-based model in contrast to the other streams, and the process of designing detailed outcome maps in conjunction with CBF was a strongly valued component. These maps help to articulate sector needs and how initiatives seek to address this at different levels (at individual, station, and sector levels). The Sector Investment outcomes maps reviewed suggested good alignment with the overarching objectives of the CBP. However, Sector Investment applicants reported a desire to integrate separate applications for different sector-wide projects into a single application as part of their funding, particularly where different projects were already aligned in outcomes maps.

Challenges with the application

Applicants’ reported experience with the application process was greatly mediated by organisations’ financial situation, capacity, resourcing, as well as knowledge and prior experience with grant funding processes. The process was more challenging for smaller broadcast organisations, volunteer reliant organisations and ethnic and multicultural organisations where the application put a significant burden on resourcing. Challenges for the Content and Development & Operations grants included collecting and reporting information on demographics and diversity, financial reporting and preparing the required governance and strategic documentation. This was less feasible for organisations which did not already have this documentation prepared, which suggests both a need and desire for this type of capacity

building. Stakeholders commonly perceived there to be significant overlap in the information already required for licensing through ACMA and peak body membership with the CBAA.

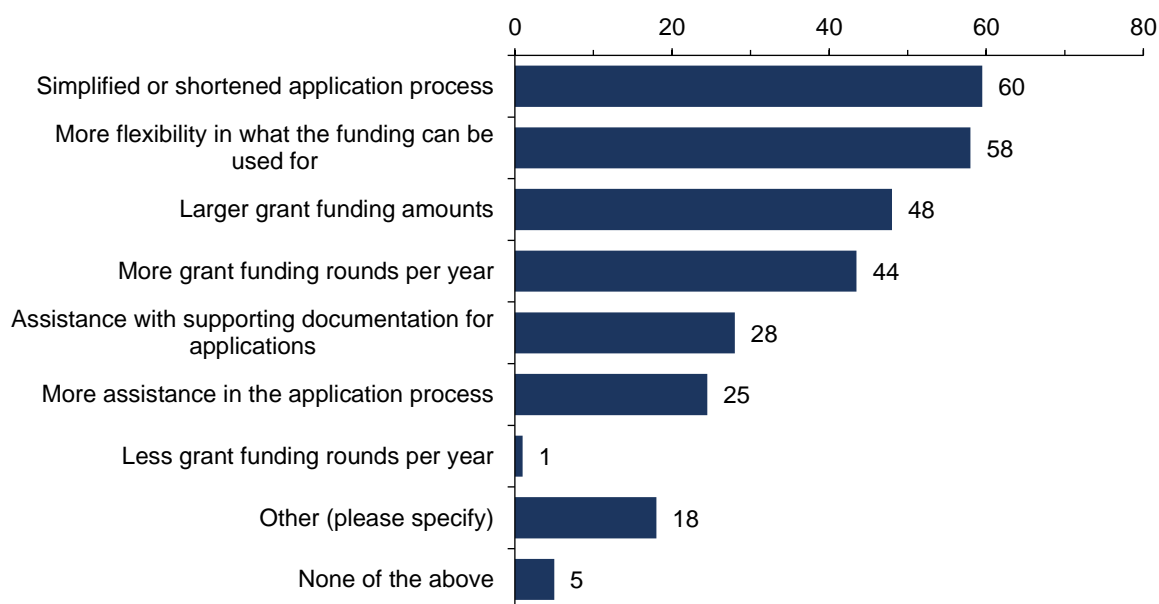
'Difficult application questions' was also cited as one of the key reasons for non-applicants in the survey. Linguistically diverse applicants reported additional burden due to complexity of language. Stakeholders who had not recently applied reported that the burdensomeness and resources required for the process was not commensurate with the outcome.

The most common change that applicants would like to see made to the grant funding program was a simplified or shortened application process (60%), which was most commonly reported with the Development & Operations grant stream (76%). This differed for the Content stream and the Specialist Radio Programming stream where applicants more commonly reported a desire for more flexibility in what the funding can be used for (57% and 55% respectively). The qualitative consultations indicated some possible reasons for this including more funding for training and salaries for those involved in content creation and production, and funding to support the development of production related costs such as building streaming platforms. Stakeholders also expressed wanting more clarity on what CBF was looking for when assessing content applications.

Survey respondents who selected that they would like to see 'other' changes elaborated on the nature of the changes they would like to see. These typically related to increasing access to funding:

- *"Longer term commitment like two three years"*
- *"Faster turnaround time, and for applications to be received according to need, not necessarily linked to specified funding rounds"*
- *"To be less competitive and more support for smaller totally volunteer run stations"*

Figure 3 Changes applicants would like to see to the funding program or process



Support and assistance with applications

CBF staff were commonly reported to provide significant support to applicants. Applicants reported positive relationships with CBF staff who were accessible and helpful. The survey also indicated that CBF’s supportive and helpful staff were one of the most common reasons for overall satisfaction with the funding program amongst applicants (23%). This was notably higher in regional locations with over one quarter of applicants nominating this reason for their level of satisfaction (27%), versus 23% in metropolitan locations and 15% in suburban locations. This aligned with consultation findings which indicated greater levels of support for smaller organisations outside of metropolitan areas. Sector representative bodies also reported providing support to member organisations to undertake applications.

3.1.2. Grant assessment and decision making

Assessment

The evaluation findings showed that the sector was largely satisfied with grant assessment and decision-making processes. There was general trust in CBF’s abilities to undertake this fairly and with transparency.

Stakeholders spoke to the value of having peer assessment, including bringing sector and specialist knowledge to inform decisions. This included bringing cohort-specific knowledge, notably for First Nations media, people with a disability and faith-based media. However, stakeholders from these areas, faith-based media in particular, did not always feel that this was adequately achieved. There was some concern that the process did not adequately reflect the diversity of the sector and better representation needs to be achieved and tailored to the

assessment context to ensure the assessment process is fair and informed. Others reported that this model involved a high workload and high turnover for volunteers.

Another concern held primarily by Sector Investment applicants and sector representative bodies was that peer assessment was not adequate to assess complex, larger scale sector wide projects. There was a perception that these required specific knowledge and skills that was not held by volunteer assessors from the sector. Stakeholders felt that professional assessors should be involved with more complex, larger scale sector wide grants.

While two-thirds of survey respondents were satisfied (net 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied') with the equity of access to grant funding (66%) and the transparency of the application assessment (66%), some stakeholders felt disadvantaged by the assessment criteria. Just over one-fifth of those in the Development & Operations stream reported dissatisfaction (net 'dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied') with the transparency of the application assessment (22%), and around one-fifth of those in the Content round stream (19%) reported dissatisfaction (net 'dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied') with the equity of access to grant funding.

Stakeholders expressed that the assessment process disadvantaged them primarily due to diversity and equity requirements in the Content grant and Development & Operations grant. Specific requirements include demonstrating how the application addresses gender inclusion and equity, and community participation and diversity. These were perceived to misalign with the applicants when:

- The community the applicant was targeting did not have sufficient access to diverse cohorts to feasibly target, while also meeting the needs of the organisation. This tended to occur for more regional, rural or remote organisations where demographic diversity was more limited.
- Organisations did not have capacity or resourcing to provide the necessary information and documentation required to effectively address the criteria. Typically, this related to the Development & Operations grant which requires documents such as a Diversity Policy and gender-related data.
- Organisations and their community's values did not always align well with the grant program's requirements on diversity and inclusion. This typically related to faith-based media, which felt systematically disadvantaged by this misalignment.

Survey findings indicated some similar issues with overall satisfaction for applicants with a religious focus impacted by the criteria being too narrow or restricted (n=3*) and that the grants were not approved (n=3*).

Some stakeholders who were more financially self-sufficient also felt disadvantaged, as they perceived the assessment process as unfairly prioritising applicants with lower financial resources.

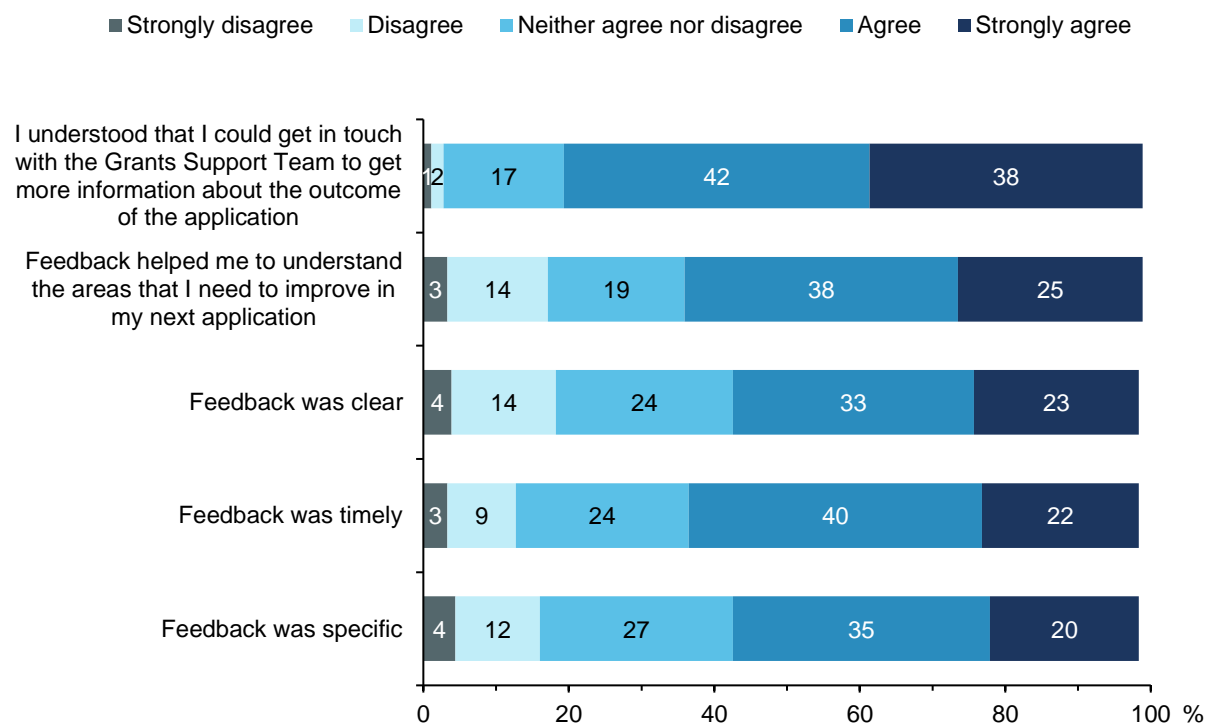
Concerns were reported around CBF's dual role as a social change agent and grant making body distributing government money, and the use of funding to prop up unviable organisations rather than prioritising sustainability. Stakeholders called for greater emphasis on the merits and outcomes of their applications, and for diversity requirements to be more closely reflective of the applicants' community interest.

Feedback

Overall, data sources indicated applicants were largely satisfied with the type and quality of feedback they received. The survey showed that the majority of both unsuccessful applicants and successful applicants agreed (net 'agree' and 'strongly agree') that the feedback they received was clear (56% for both cohorts) and specific (56% & 59% respectively). Over three-fifths agreed that feedback given helped them to understand areas they need to improve in the next application (63% & 66%) and that the feedback was timely (62% & 64%). In consultations, stakeholders described feedback as less valuable when it lacked detail and specificity, inconsistency between assessors, less constructive or was difficult to implement.

While there was some preference for formal written feedback, applicants were aware they could contact CBF staff to request further feedback and advice. Stakeholders found this to be constructive and provide deeper insights into how to interpret written feedback and action it for future applications. This was also supported by survey findings with four-fifths (80%) of both unsuccessful and successful applicants (including those who received partial funding) agreed that they understood they could get in touch with the Grants Support Team to get more information about the outcome of their application (net 'agree' and 'strongly agree').

Figure 4 Level of agreement with statements about feedback on unsuccessful applications



Base: Unsuccessful applicants and recipients who received partial funding (n=181).

Source: UN1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Note: Don't know responses not shown on chart, % varies per statement.

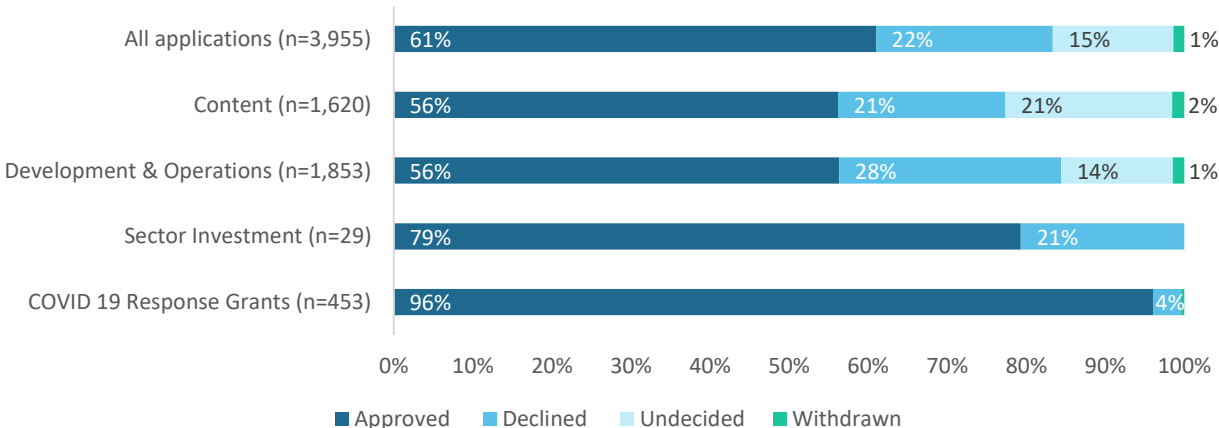
3.1.3. Grant distribution and approvals

Grant applications were analysed to explore the distribution of funding between 2017-2018 and 2022-2023. Of the 3,955 grant applications over this period, most (88%) were for Content and Development & Operations grants. Nearly four-fifths of applicants (78%) applied for at least one Development & Operations grant, while more than half (58%) also submitted at least one application for a Content Grant. For each of these grant streams, more than half (56%) of the submitted applications were approved (Figure 5). Thus, while approval rates are similar, the prominence of the Development & Operations grant stream speaks to its importance to the sector. In contrast, very few applications were submitted for Sector Investment grants. A total of 29 applications were submitted by 9 applicants. Of these applications, 23 (79%) were approved which speaks to the nature of these grants as sector-level partnership style initiatives, and for the major sector projects, which are by invitation only.

Of note is the high proportion of applications designated as ‘Undecided’, with 604 applications marked as this in the application data. A significant proportion of these relate to the 2017-18 grant year which accounts for 599 of these applications. Advice suggests that this anomaly relates to the particularities of the 2017-18 grant year discussed earlier. With applicants submitting multiple applications in a single stream, successful funding was allocated to a single application. Other successful grants from the same applicant were then grandfathered under a primary application for ease of grant management. The grandfathered applications were therefore designated as ‘Undecided’ in SmartyGrants but may in fact have been successful.

Applications for Covid 19 Response Grants offered in 2020-2021 were submitted by two-thirds (65%) of applicants, although they accounted for a much lower share of applications (11%). This is due to the limited number of grant rounds in which they were offered. Nearly all Covid 19 Response Grant applications (96%) were approved, indicating good responsiveness to the sector’s need during this period.

Figure 5 Number of grant applications ‘approved’ by funding stream, 2017-18 to 2022-23



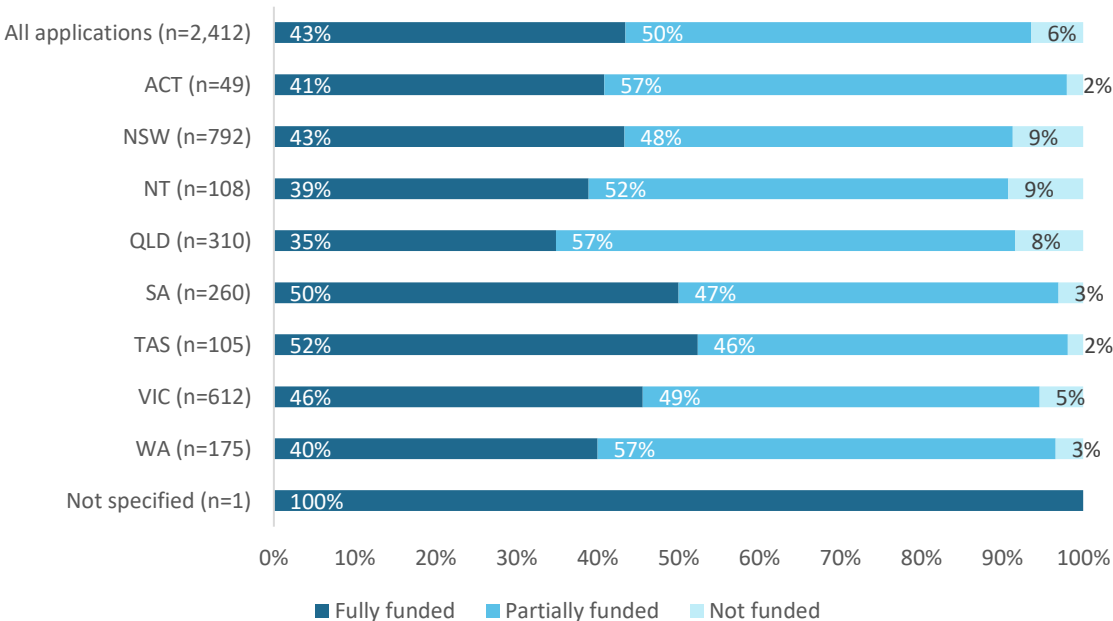
Source: Smarty Grants Application Data.

Across the four grant streams, almost \$190 million of funding was requested. Nearly half (46%) of this value was for Development & Operations grants, which is proportionate to the number of applications submitted for this grant stream (47% of applications). A disproportionately lower amount of funding was requested for Content grants; requests for funding under this grant

stream accounted for 41% of applications but only 22% of the total amount requested. This aligns with the average amounts requested in each stream with Content grants substantially lower (\$25, 541 versus \$46,984). Despite the low number of applications for Sector Investment grants, requests for funding accounted for nearly one-third (29%) of the total amount requested.

In terms of the overall level of funding, 43% were “fully funded”⁸ and 50% were “partially funded” (Figure 6). For applications that were partially funded, on average, 58% of the requested amount was allocated. The states with the highest proportion of applications that were fully funded were Tasmania (52%) and South Australia (50%). The lowest was for applications from Queensland, where only 35% of applications were fully funded. In NSW, which accounted for the largest number of applications approved by state (792 applications), 43% were fully funded. Nearly half (47%) of applications in regional areas were fully funded, while two-fifths (40%) of applications in metropolitan and suburban regions were fully funded. Approximately one-third (34%) of applications in remote areas were fully funded. This does not account for the spread and distribution of the number of licensees across locations.

Figure 6 Level of funding for ‘approved’ grant applications, by state, 2017-18 to 2022-23



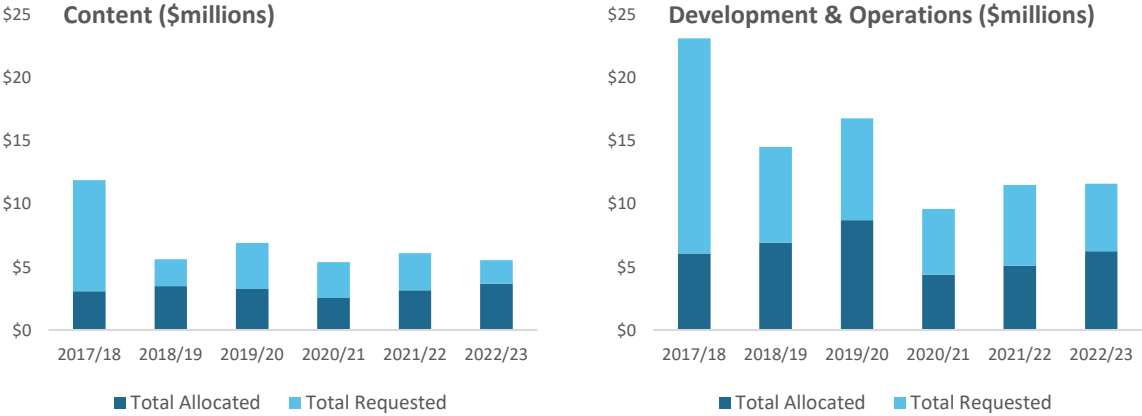
Notes: An application was denoted ‘fully funded’ if Total Allocated was equal or greater than the Total Amount Requested. An application was denoted ‘partially funded’ if Total Allocated was less than the Total Amount Requested. If an application was listed as approved but the Total Amount Requested was \$0 or blank, it was denoted ‘not funded’. Source: Smarty Grants Application Data.

In total, \$116 million in funds were allocated across the four grant streams. Nearly half (\$55.9 million, 48%) of funds were allocated to Sector Investment grants, followed by Development & Operations (\$37.4 million, 32%), Content (\$19.1 million) 16%) and Covid 19 Response Grants (\$3.6 million, 3%). Excluding 2017-18 which, as noted above was an outlier,

⁸ This includes 880 applications where the Total Amount Requested = Total Allocated. It also includes 168 applications where more money was allocated than requested, including 111 applications where no money was requested but money was allocated. Where more money was allocated than requested, the Agency advised that there were various circumstances in which these anomalies in the data could occur, including Quick COVID-19 Crisis grants where applicants weren’t asked to specify a funding amount and a formula was used to calculate how much they would be granted. See Appendix F for more details.

on average more than half of the amount requested for both Content and Development & Operations funding streams was allocated (Figure 7).

Figure 7 Total amount requested (\$million) compared to allocated for Content and Development & Operations grants



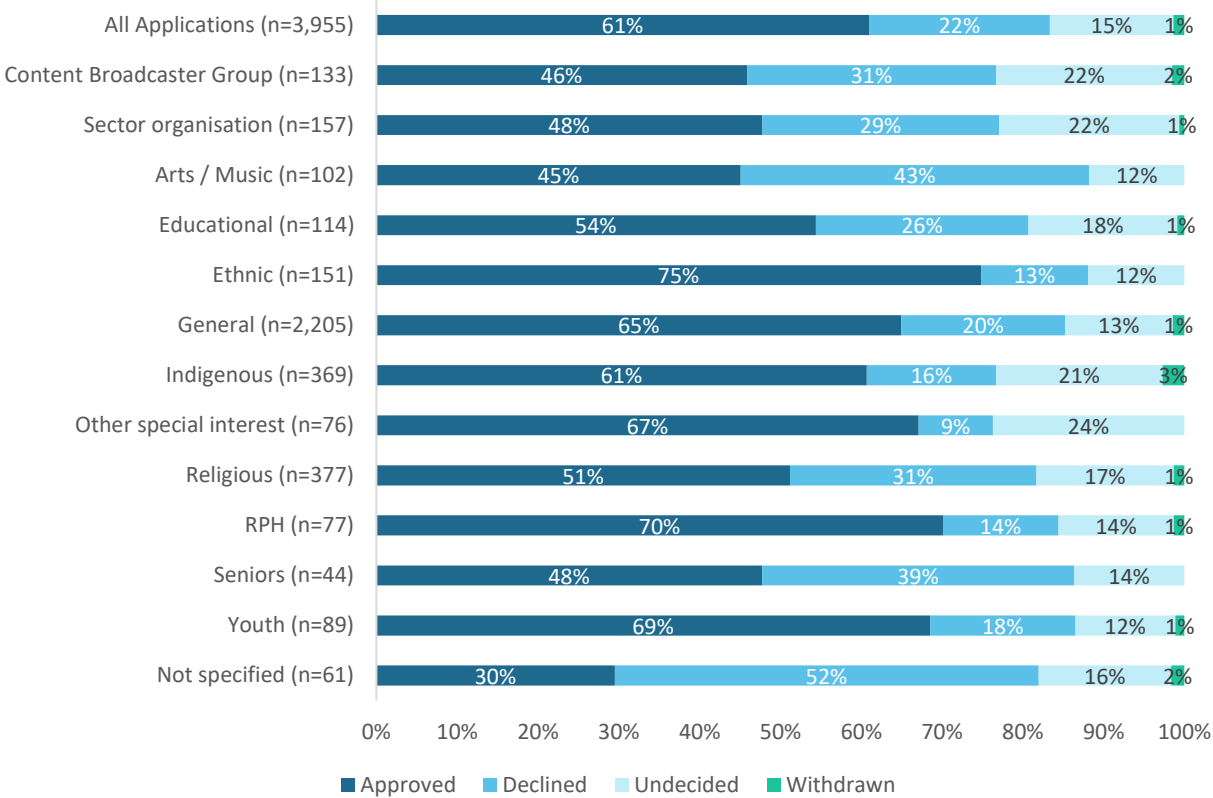
Source: Smarty Grants Application Data.

Funding through Sector Investment grants support initiatives which have a national scope meaning that geographic analysis is less meaningful for this stream; however, applications for this funding are predominantly from applicants based in New South Wales which skews the distribution of total funding when assessed by location. If Sector Investment funding (\$55.9 million) is excluded, the distribution of funds is more evenly allocated between New South Wales and Victoria, with each receiving 29%. Applicants from Queensland received 14%. Similarly, if Sector Investment funding is excluded, metropolitan based applicants received the largest share of funding (46%), followed by regional (29%), suburban (14%) and remote (7%) applicants.⁹

Nearly half (47%) of applications in regional areas were fully funded, while two-fifths (40%) of applications in metropolitan and suburban regions were fully funded. Approximately one-third (34%) of applications in remote areas were fully funded. In terms of community interests, applications related to 'ethnic' communities, youth and RPH had the highest rates of approvals, whereas Seniors and Religious focused applications had the highest disapproval rates (Figure 8). Data provides limited explanation as to why these community interests had higher success. This may relate to Government funding priorities as realised through specific funding allocations in the CBP for priority groups. However, qualitative data does highlight a common sense in the sector that applications aimed at diverse groups are more likely to be assessed positively over mainstream, faith-based and general interests.

⁹ Note that when analysed by 'Location', the remaining 4% of Total Allocated funds is associated with applicants from Broadcast Groups, Sector Organisations and other unspecified locations.

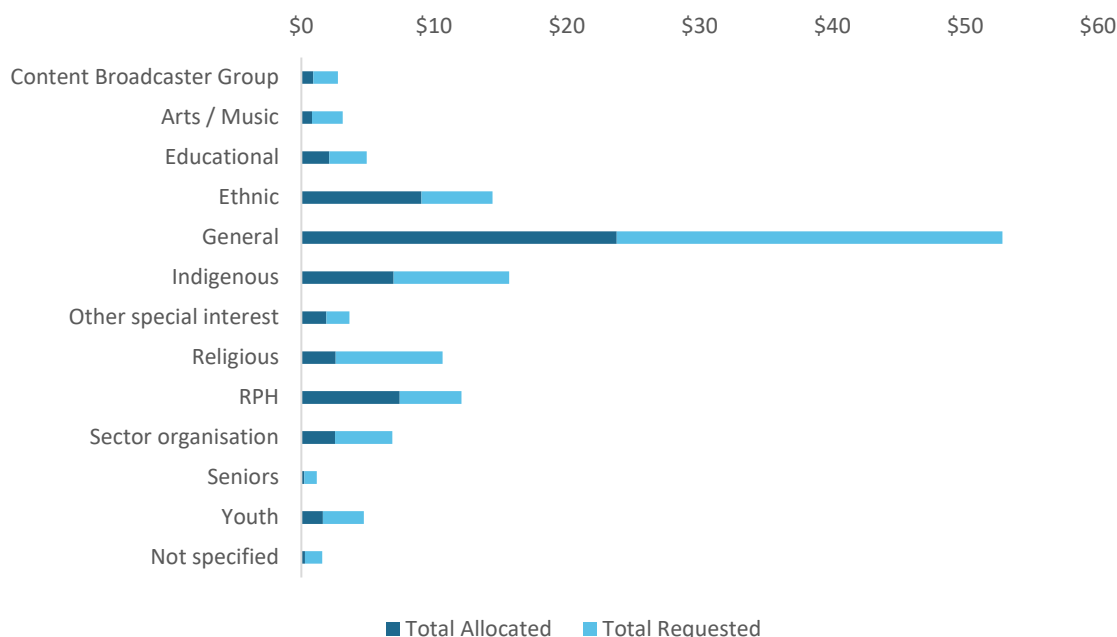
Figure 8 Number of grant applications ‘approved’ by Licensee community interest, 2017-18 to 2022-23



Source: Smarty Grants Application Data.

If Sector Investment applications are excluded, 40% of funding was allocated to applications targeted at ‘general’ communities (Figure 9). A further 15% of funds were allocated to ‘ethnic’ communities, with ‘indigenous’ and ‘RPH’ receiving 12% each, in line with the funding allocations set out in the CBP. Applications where the community interest was listed as ‘religion’ received 4% of allocated funds.

Figure 9 Total Amount Requested (\$million) compared to Allocated by Licensee community interest, 2017-18 to 2022-23 (Excluding Sector Investment)*



Notes: *Content, Development & Operations and Covid 19 Response Grants only (excludes Sector Investment applications). Source: Smarty Grants Application Data.

Content Grants - Distribution of Applications and Funding

For Content funding, 1,620 applications were submitted by 244 applicants. More than three-quarters (77%) of applications were submitted for funding in ‘Content Rounds’ with the remainder (23%) submitted in ‘Specialist Radio Programming Rounds’.

While the data shows that the number of applications submitted annually for Content funding has more than halved in recent years, declining from 522 applications in 2017-18 to 188 applications in 2022-23 (see Figure 10), this is again related to 2017-18 grant year being an outlier. Slightly lower rates of applications in recent years may be a result of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on applications operational capacity.

More than three-quarters (82%) of applications were submitted from applicants located in New South Wales (29%), Victoria (29%), Queensland (13%) and South Australia (10%). More than one-third of applications were from applicants located in metropolitan (37%) areas. Another third was from regional (32%) areas, followed by applications from suburban (18%) and remote (6%) areas. Approximately half (51%) of applications were for ‘general’ funding. Applications targeting ‘Indigenous’ communities accounted for 12%, with applications targeting ‘ethnic’ and ‘religious’ communities accounting for 5% each.

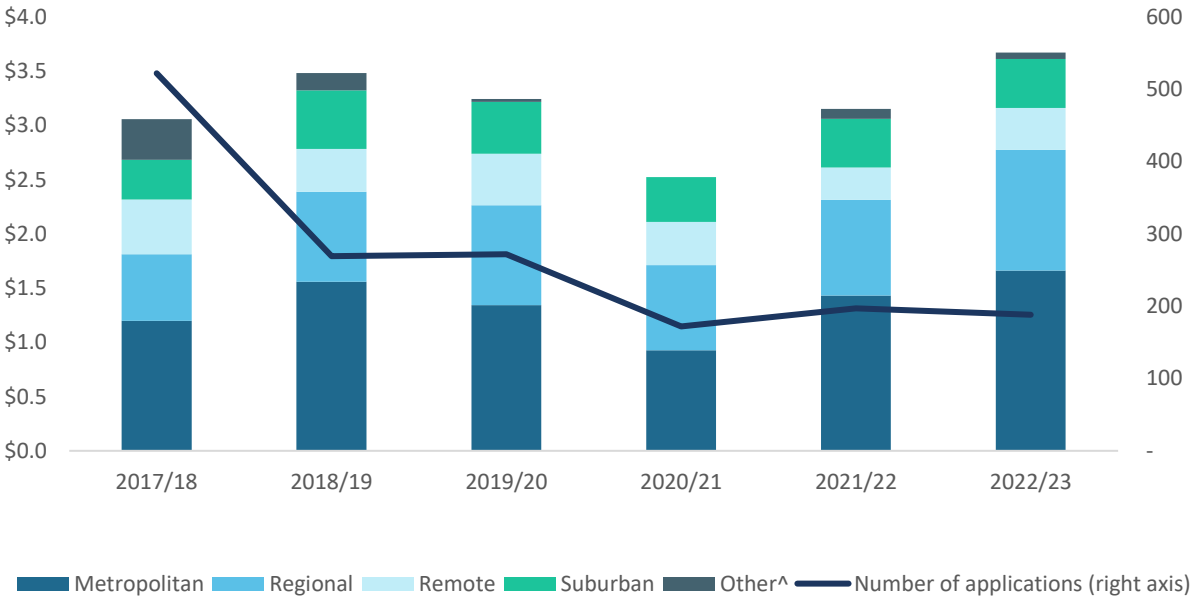
Overall, \$41 million in funding was requested through Content grant applications, with the individual amount requested ranging from \$21 to \$626,000.¹⁰ By state, the share of funds requested was roughly proportionate to the number of applications submitted. However, a disproportionately higher amount was requested from applicants located in metropolitan areas (46% of total amount requested compared to 37% of applications submitted) and those targeting ‘Indigenous’ communities (17% compared to 12%). This also speaks to both the

¹⁰ This excludes applications where the amount requested was zero (\$0) or blank.

importance for First Nations media and larger operational capacity of metropolitan broadcasters to invest in the development of content.

More than half (56%) of applications for Content funding were approved. Of these, 43% were fully funded and 40% were partially funded. The remainder (17%) were approved but no money was allocated against them as similarly to the Development & Operations grants of 2017-18 all successful grants from the same applicant within a round were grandfathered under a primary grant application/agreement for ease of grant management for applicants. This practice has been discontinued over time and all applications now stand alone and each have their own grant agreement. In total, nearly \$19 million was allocated to applicants through Content funding. Those from New South Wales received the largest share of funding (31%), followed by Victoria (27%) and Queensland (14%). Metropolitan based applicants received the highest proportion of funds by geographical area (42%). These are roughly proportional to the applications submitted. The distribution of Content funding by location is shown in Figure 10. More than one-third (39%) of funds were allocated to ‘general’ funding grants. Applicants targeting ‘indigenous’ and ‘ethnic’ communities received 20% and 10% of allocated funds respectively.

Figure 10 Number of applications submitted and funds allocated (\$million) for Content grants, by year and location



Notes: ^Other includes applications where location was marked as Broadcast Group or where location was not specified. Source: Smarty Grants Application Data.

Development & Operations Grants - Distribution of Applications and Funding

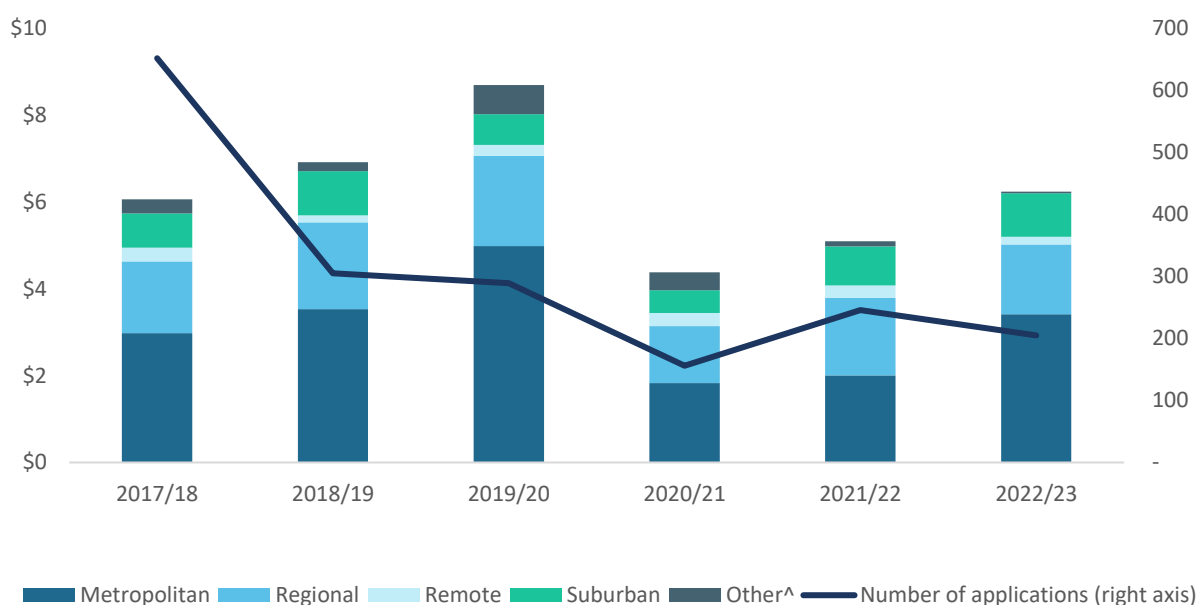
The highest number of applications were received for Development & Operations funding, with 1,853 applications submitted by 323 applicants. Similar to Content funding, the number of applications has declined in recent years (see Figure 11), which again relates to the 2017-18 grant year being an outlier, as well as sustained impacts of COVID-19 and the availability of Covid 19 Response Grants. Also similar is the distribution of applications by state, with more than three-quarters (80%) of applications submitted by applicants located in New South Wales

(33%), Victoria (21%), Queensland (14%) and South Australia (11%). However, in contrast, more than half (53%) were from applicants based in regional areas, with metropolitan applicants accounting for 21% of applications. More than half of applications (58%) were for 'general' funding. In contrast to Content grants, this may speak to the higher need among regional organisations to ensure operational costs are met.

The total amount of funding requested through Development & Operations grant applications was \$87 million. Applicants from Victoria requested a disproportionately higher share of funding compared to the number of applications (28% versus 21%), as did applicants from Queensland (17% versus 14%). Applicants from metropolitan areas also requested a disproportionately higher share of funding relative to applications (42% compared to 21%), which was offset by a lower share of funding requested by regional applicants (34% compared to 53%). More than half (58%) of applications were for 'general' funding, with applications targeting 'religious' communities accounting for 13% of applications.

Like Content grants, more than half (56%) of applications for Development & Operations funding were approved. However, there was variation in how grant funds have been distributed. Of the 56% approved, 40% were fully funded and 60% were partially funded. In total, \$37 million was allocated to applicants. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of this was allocated to applicants in Victoria (31%), New South Wales (28%) and Queensland (14%). Exactly half (50%) was allocated to metropolitan applicants. Regional applicants received 28% of allocated funds and suburban applicants received 13% (see Figure 11 for distribution of funding by location and year). Applications for 'general' funding received a disproportionately lower share of allocated funding (39% compared to 58% requested) while applications targeting 'ethnic' communities received a disproportionately higher share (13% of allocated funding compared to 3% of requested funding). This may again relate to the funding allocations for priority groups in the CBP.

Figure 11 Number of applications submitted and funds allocated (\$million) for Development & Operations grants, by year and location



Notes: ^Other includes applications where location was marked as Sector Organisation or where location was not specified.
Source: Smarty Grants Application Data.

Sector Investment Grants – Distribution of Applications and Funding

There were 29 applications submitted by 9 applicants for Sector Investment grants over the analysis period. Most applications (21) were submitted under annual Sector Investment grant rounds. Of the remaining applications, 7 were submitted for Enhanced National News Programming. Only one of these applications was approved. A single application was submitted for National Training – Industry Capacity and Skills Development which was approved.

The applications were predominantly submitted by applicants located in NSW (20 applications submitted by 5 applicants). The remainder were submitted by applicants located in Victoria (7 applications, 2 applicants) and Queensland (2 applications, 2 applicants). Note the latter 2 applications were each for zero dollars and were both declined. Excluding these, the amount requested ranged from \$180,000 to \$26.6 million. Overall, \$55 million was requested, which accounted for nearly one-third (29%) of all funding requested.

Twenty-three (79%) of the applications were approved. Of these, 12 were 'fully funded' and there were an additional 2 applications where the amount allocated was more than requested. The remaining 9 applications were partially funded, with the proportion of funding allocated averaging 84% of the amount requested. In total, \$55.9 million was allocated for Sector Investment, with nearly all this amount (95%) being awarded to NSW-based applicants. This includes \$47.4 million allocated to the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA).

Covid 19 Response Grants – Distribution of Applications and Funding

These grants were offered during the pandemic through specific Covid 19 crisis funding rounds. Applications for these grants were submitted under a Covid 19 Quick Response grant round and two Covid 19 Crisis 2020/21 grant rounds. In total, 453 applications were submitted by 269 individual applicants.

The highest number of applications were submitted by applicants based in NSW (37% of applications), followed by Victoria (22%) and Queensland (22%). More than half (61%) were submitted from applicants located in regional areas and nearly two-thirds (64%) were submitted for 'general' grants. Applications targeting 'religious' communities accounted for 15% of applications.

The total amount requested was \$5.8 million, with individual amounts requested ranging from \$197 to \$100,000. By state, the distribution of funds requested was proportional to the number of applications submitted (applicants from NSW accounted for 34% of funds requested, followed by Victoria 26% and Queensland (16%). More than half of the amount requested was from regional applicants (53%).

Nearly all applications (96%) were approved, and, of these, half (52%) were fully funded. In total, \$3.6 million was allocated to applicants under the Covid 19 Response Grant stream. Approximately three-quarters (77%) of the funding was allocated to applicants based in New South Wales (40%), Victoria (23%) and Queensland (14%). More than half (55%) was allocated to applicants from regional areas, followed by suburban (22%), metropolitan (19%)

and remote (4%) areas. Applicants targeting 'general' communities received the largest share of funding (63%), with religious applicants receiving 14%.

3.1.4. Grant management

Activities related to grant management, including reporting and the acquittal process, were largely observed to be working well for applicants. According to the survey, the majority of applicants who were successful in at least one application said they were satisfied (net 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied') with the reporting and acquittal (80%) and funding agreement management (85%). Those in the Content round stream and Specialist Radio Programming stream reported a high level of satisfaction (net 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied') with the following elements:

- funding agreement management (90% & 77% respectively)
- reporting and acquittal (80% & 84% respectively).

Stakeholders reported these processes as straightforward and reported CBF grant staff provided flexibility and support to applicants by troubleshooting problems, providing advice, and renegotiating project timelines and project scope. CBF staff were described as understanding and constructive when problems arose, which was perceived positively among applicants.

Some minor feedback indicated that satisfaction was impacted by delays in communication between CBF and the applicant (e.g., key dates around progress reports). One other stakeholder spoke to the added administrative burden on grantees in relation to collaborative partnerships. Where stations had partnered to deliver a project, the current arrangement only allowed one organisation to apply and manage the grant, resulting in unforeseen administrative burden on that organisation. The stakeholder indicated that allowing for an arrangement that formally distributes this could better incentivise and support cross-sector collaboration.

3.2. Program Delivery

This section discusses findings in relation to the key evaluation questions for Program Delivery.

Table 3 Program Delivery – Evaluation questions and findings

Evaluation question	Evaluation findings
Program Delivery of the Community Broadcasting Program	
To what extent has the program helped to create the conditions under which grantees can create and broadcast accessible, diverse, representative, local and national news, information, and content?	Mostly achieved
To what extent has the program helped to create the conditions under which grantees can be responsive to community needs?	Partially achieved
To what extent has the program helped to create the conditions under which grantees can more effectively undertake day-to-day operations and development?	Partially achieved
To what extent has the program helped to create the conditions under which grantees can invest in sector wide projects?	Partially achieved

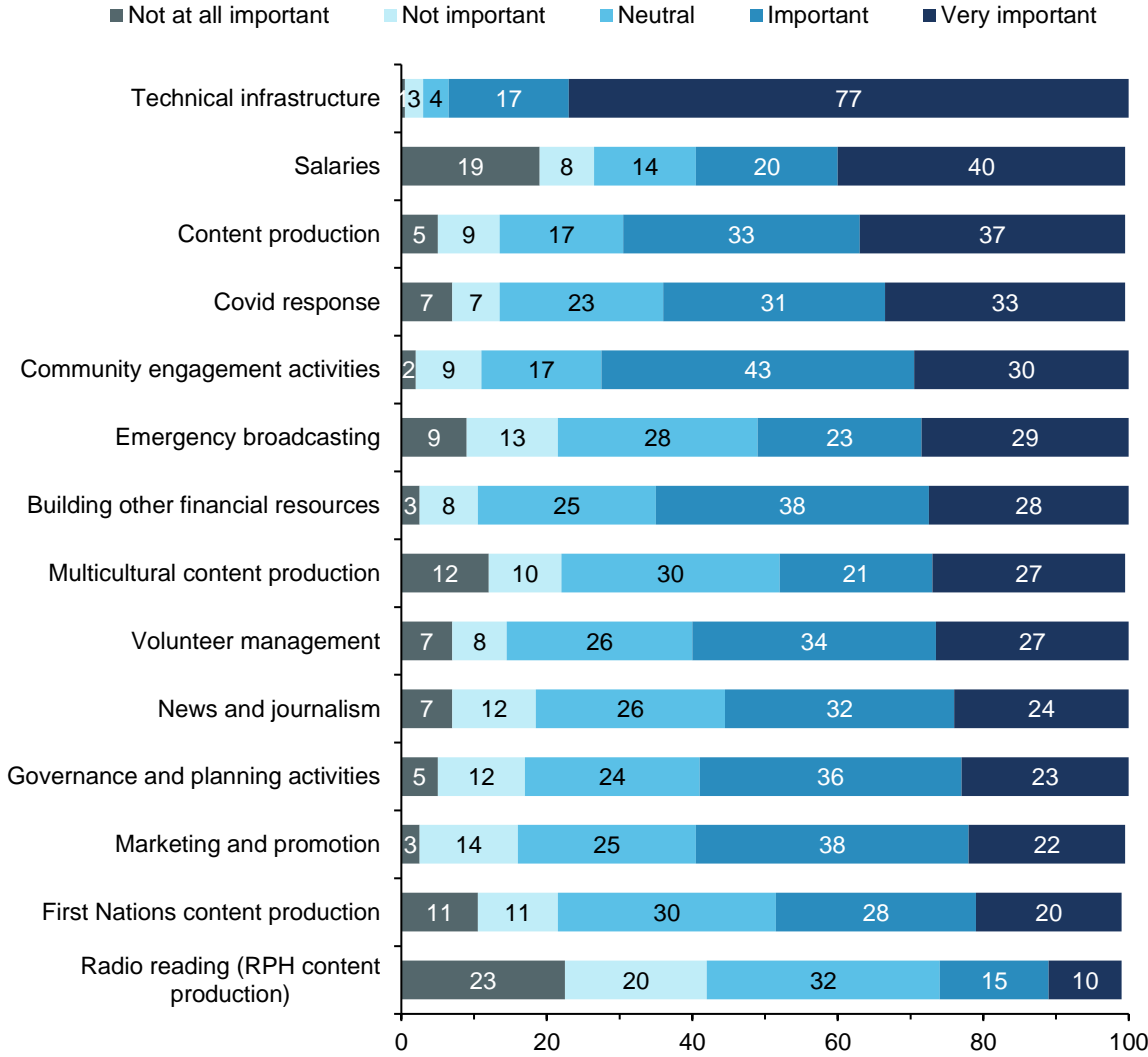
3.2.1. Accessible, diverse, representative, local and national news, information and content

Evaluation findings suggest that CBP funding has been of significant importance for the production and broadcasting of diverse, locally relevant content that was accessible and of high quality. However, there are limitations on organisations to expand on this in the face of challenges around operation and sustainability.

According to survey findings, funding for content production was of notable importance for the ongoing viability of applicants' organisations, with 70% of applicants indicating content production as important, just under half for multicultural and First Nations content production (48% for both), just over half for emergency broadcasting (52%) and almost two thirds for news and journalism (56%).

Just over half of applicants said funding was used to increase the volume or improve the quality or diversity of content produced by the organisation (56%). Those in metropolitan locations commonly reported using funding to increase the volume or improve the quality or diversity of content produced (82%). Content grants and Specialist Radio Programming grants were observed to be effective for enabling applicants to progress objectives related to content creation. Reporting the use of funding to increase the volume or improve the quality or diversity of content produced was high among those in the Content round (81%) and Specialist Radio Programming (87%) streams.

Figure 12 Importance of funding to various areas for ongoing viability of organisation



Consultations indicated that funding through Content grants and Specialist Radio Programming grants (which sits under the Content stream) have been a crucial staple for many stakeholders, needed to maintain and expand programming of First Nations content, radio reading content for people with disability, ethnic and multicultural content, youth media programs as well as other specialist content.

Stakeholders spoke to the importance of producing locally relevant content to ensure community needs were being met and the broadcaster remained relevant in their regions. According to qualitative consultations, this was particularly important in regional and remote areas, and areas where broadcasters were directly competing with other community and commercial broadcasters. Ensuring content promoted and aligned with community diversity was also another common priority. There appeared to be a growing desire for funding to develop high quality local news and informational content for their own communities and for

the broader sector. Stakeholders noted local news and emergency information as a growing need since the COVID-19 pandemic and had sought funding to develop journalistic content with varied success. Several stakeholders were also seeking funding to produce news content which could be shared with the broader sector, however again with varied success.

Applicants have also sought to use funding to increase the accessibility of content through the development of digital content for online streaming.

However, broadcasters often required broader operational support to successfully produce and broadcast content, particularly those experiencing resourcing and capacity challenges. For instance, ethnic and multicultural media described the significant burden on content producers to create multilingual content. Regional, remote and rural broadcasters required support with accessing and retaining technical staff in order to produce and broadcast content. Stakeholders also spoke to the need for more support with training and capacity building. In relation to First Nations content and programming, Broadcasters described the need for funding to not only support presenters, but also to build capacity for the volunteers that help to produce content.

3.2.2. Responsiveness to community needs

The evaluation evidenced the importance of funding for the sector to remain responsive to community needs, particularly in the form of community engagement activities and marketing and promotion. Almost three quarters of applicants indicated the importance of community engagement activities for the ongoing viability of their organisation (74%), and two thirds for the importance of marketing and promotion (60%). Community engagement was observed to be of particular importance to those in suburban and regional locations (82% of both cohorts).

Community engagement was commonly described as important for ensuring broadcasters were able to respond to community needs and preferences, encourage volunteerism and promote diversity and equity amongst volunteers. Funding was also sought for salaried roles dedicated to community engagement and programming aimed at supporting the aforementioned activities. Stakeholders spoke of the need to fund programs which facilitate participatory engagement opportunities with the community, including live, remote broadcasting, and educational initiatives. For example, initiatives for community to undertake media training and work experience opportunities for local school children which in turn builds community capacity to support broadcasting. Consultations also evidenced the relationship between community engagement and promotion. Stakeholders discussed the importance of broadcasters increasing visibility in their community, developing ways to demonstrate their reach and impact in order to increase sponsorships and revenue streams.

Community engagement activities were observed to be of particular importance for priority cohorts. The survey also illustrated this point with the vast majority of successful applicants in the Specialist Radio Programming stream reporting using funding to increase community engagement (90%). Findings also indicated that successful applicants whose application had an Indigenous focus commonly sought funding for community engagement.

3.2.3. Meeting operational and development needs

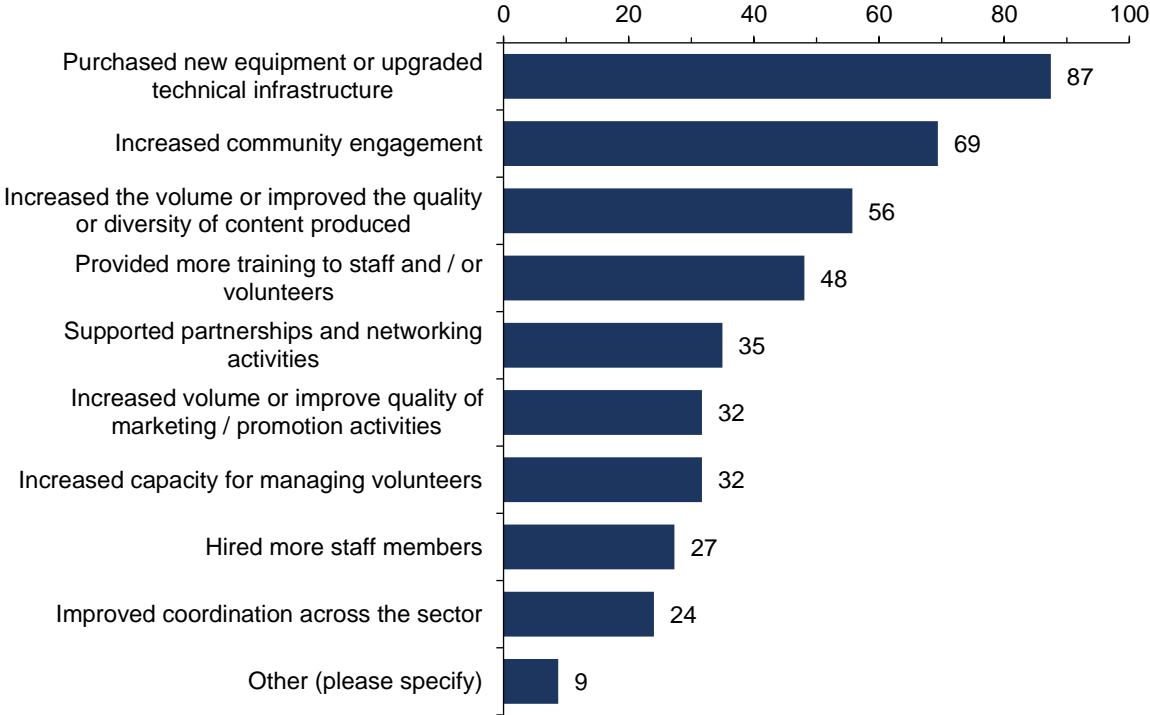
CBP funding, particularly through the Development & Operations funding stream has been of the utmost importance to the sector to undertake and maintain day-to-day operations, as well as for increasing organisational resilience and sustainability, and progressing organisational objectives. The survey showed that more than three-quarters of applicants (77%) indicated that funding for technical infrastructure, equipment and salaries was very important to the ongoing viability of their organisation. Evaluation findings indicate an ongoing need for funding to support core operations and maintenance, particularly for smaller organisations and those without other sources of consistent, significant revenue. The majority of successful applicants (87%) reported that the grant funding they received was used to purchase new equipment or upgrade technical infrastructure. According to survey findings, all successful applicants in the Specialist Radio Programming stream (100%) reported using funding to purchase new equipment or upgrade technical infrastructure, highlighting the importance of underlying infrastructure as a prerequisite for producing high-quality specialist programming.

The evaluation also demonstrated that funding for salaries was important for the sector. Two-fifths of applicants (40%) said that funding for salaries was very important for the ongoing viability of their organisation, and another one-fifth (20%) said it was important. Sector stakeholders described salaries as an increasingly critical component of their operational needs.

The decline in volunteerism, the variety of technical skills required for ongoing operations and diversification of content and modes of transmission were all reported to have contributed to the increased need for paid staff. Funding for salaries was necessary to ensure sufficient resourcing for the administration of organisations, to incentivise and retain staff to ensure ongoing viability, and to access technical skills and content knowledge to progress organisational objectives. Several stakeholders described their ongoing viability as uncertain due to being unable to fund salaries. Where funding has contributed to salaries, applicants have been able to ensure continuity of operations, upgrade and future-safe technical systems, increase the diversity, quality and accessibility of content, create career pathways in First Nations media, increase community engagement activities, progress strategic objectives and build revenue streams and sponsorship.

Stakeholders described some of the ongoing challenges with ensuring operational and development costs are met. An overarching issue for the sector is the increasing costs associated with operations, including costs related to digital and online transformation, development activities as well as the growing need for salaried positions. The limited access to multiyear funding for operational costs creates cyclical uncertainty for organisations at all levels of the sector. In particular, security around staffing is reduced, and consequently limits organisations' capacity to undertake organisational development activities and address strategic objectives. Applicants from the Sector Investment stream spoke of very similar issues, with an understanding of the growing operational costs largely missing from how funding is allocated. Feedback from ethnic and multicultural media stakeholders suggested that the current funding model had made it more difficult to access funding for core operational costs compared to in the past, with increased competitiveness for technical infrastructure funding.

Figure 13 How grant funding was used



3.2.4. Sector investment

Sector representative bodies

Sector representative bodies also reported the importance of funding to support both ongoing operations as well as adding value to their members and the sector more broadly. To this end, funding was accessed from across all streams, including sector coordination funding through the Sector Investment stream. In the survey, all successful applicants whose organisation was a sector organisation reported using funding for improved coordination across the sector (n=5*). Other uses of funding for this group included increasing community engagement (n=4*), providing more training to staff or volunteers (n=4*), and supporting partnerships and networking activities (n=4*). Sector representative bodies reported that sector coordination funding for their organisations was working well to support normal operations and add value for members through support and advocacy activities. One peak body reported being unable to access this core funding which they felt was illegitimate and disadvantaged their organisation and the sub-sector they represent. With access to this funding, this organisation felt they would be able to play a more significant role as a sector leader through enhanced sector coordination with members to support initiatives around news and content and station sustainability.

Sector representative bodies also used funding from the Development & Operations and Content grant streams to undertake initiatives to add value to the sector including cross sectoral projects aimed at developing and sharing content between organisations and broadcasters, as well as partnership projects with external partners aimed at coordinating and progressing shared objectives beyond the community broadcast sector.

However, stakeholders from these organisations reported that access to Sector Investment funding was limited for these organisations to identify strategic needs of their sub-sector and lead larger scale initiatives which could add significant value to the broader sector. Examples included building networks and partnerships internally and externally to the sector, capacity building with stations, tailoring services to sub-sectoral needs, and strategic projects to more effectively progress subsector interests. While these organisations do coordinate with CBAA on sector-wide initiatives and receive funding through, for instance, the Enhanced National News Project, it was argued that sector-wide services and initiatives were not adequately tailored to the specific needs of the sub-sectors. Stakeholders called for the program to consider how to better leverage sector bodies' ability to coordinate important strategic, cross-sector and sub-sector projects and better tailor services.

Sector investment grants

Feedback from sector investment applicants indicates that funding is largely supporting investment in sector-wide initiatives, however there are certain areas where delivery can be better supported. Funding has been effective in supporting applicants to consult with the sector and identify needs and priorities, and develop and deliver initiatives to progress sector needs, including increasing access to quality Australian information, news and content, online and digital transformation and training and development.

However, some challenges have limited the reach of these initiatives for the sector. Stakeholders spoke to the challenge of increasing costs associated with sector-wide initiatives. Operational costs were reported to be increasing at the organisational level, and delivery costs increasing in order to meet the diversifying needs of the sector. Furthermore, operational costs are commonly attached to the yearly funding cycle which contributes to staffing insecurity and limitations on longer-term development activities. Stakeholders expressed that better visibility of the organisational costs, as distinct from the delivery costs, is becoming increasingly important to understand the true costs of delivering sector-wide initiatives. Applicants are also seeking longer term certainty through better alignment of funding with strategic and operational planning cycles, and longer-term core operational funding. Stakeholders suggested alignment with the four-year term of the government deeds.

Stakeholders also spoke of the limited reach that initiatives achieve with priority groups and in regional, rural and remote areas. Addressing the needs of these cohorts has unique challenges due to accessibility and the diversity of needs. It is therefore highly resource intensive and costly to ensure initiatives are responsive and tailored. Limited funding is left available to be responsive to other emergent sector needs which are identified by sector organisations. Digital and online transformation was seen as important in relation to delivering sector-wide initiatives to stations in addressing this challenge. Organisations have also targeted other government funding sources to target different priority groups, however this is limited by additional resourcing requirements.

3.3. Impact

This section discusses findings in relation to the key evaluation questions for Impact.

Table 4 Impact – Evaluation questions and findings

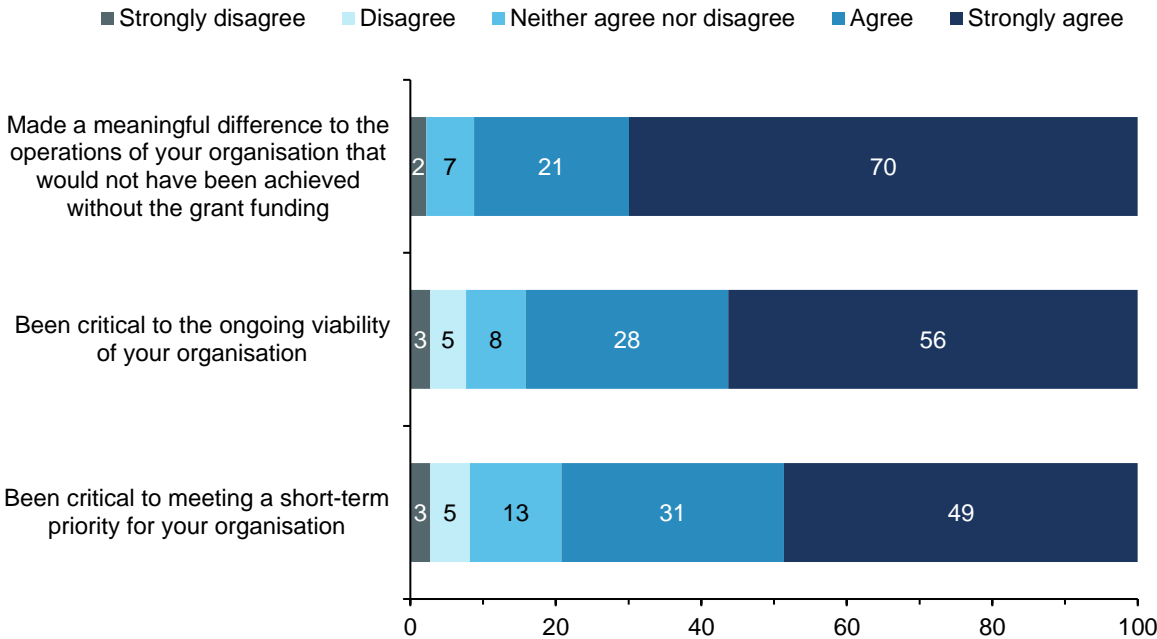
Evaluation question	Evaluation findings
Impact of the Community Broadcasting Program	
To what extent did the program achieve outcomes in terms of increasing access to diverse, representative, local and national news, information and content?	Mostly achieved
To what extent did the program achieve outcomes in terms of building capacities of stations to deliver on their purpose?	Partially achieved
To what extent did the program achieve outcomes in terms of promoting sustainability through attracting additional revenue streams?	Minimally achieved
What unintended consequences/outcomes have occurred as a result of the program and what implications do these have for the program delivery?	Unintended consequences are described in 3.3.5

3.3.1. Overall impact

The evaluation findings demonstrated that the program had a range of positive impacts on applicants and the sector more broadly, notably the importance in maintaining the viability and operations of organisations. More than two-thirds of successful applicants (70%) strongly agreed that grant funding received made a meaningful difference to the operations of their organisation that would not have otherwise been achieved, with a further fifth of applicants that agreed with this statement. Furthermore, more than four-fifths (84%) reported that the grant funding had been critical to the ongoing viability of their organisation. A similar proportion (80%) reported this had been critical at meeting a short-term priority of their organisation.

Applicants indicated that CBP funding was important in achieving organisational priorities, with the majority of applicants stating this was important for maintaining core operations (net ‘important’ and ‘very important’). Other organisational priorities that were identified as important in Figure 11 are discussed in the following sections. Consultations suggested that applicants’ abilities to do this, however, was mediated by access to longer term funding, organisational resourcing and higher self-reliance.

Figure 14 Level of agreement with statements on impact of grant funding



3.3.2. Increasing access

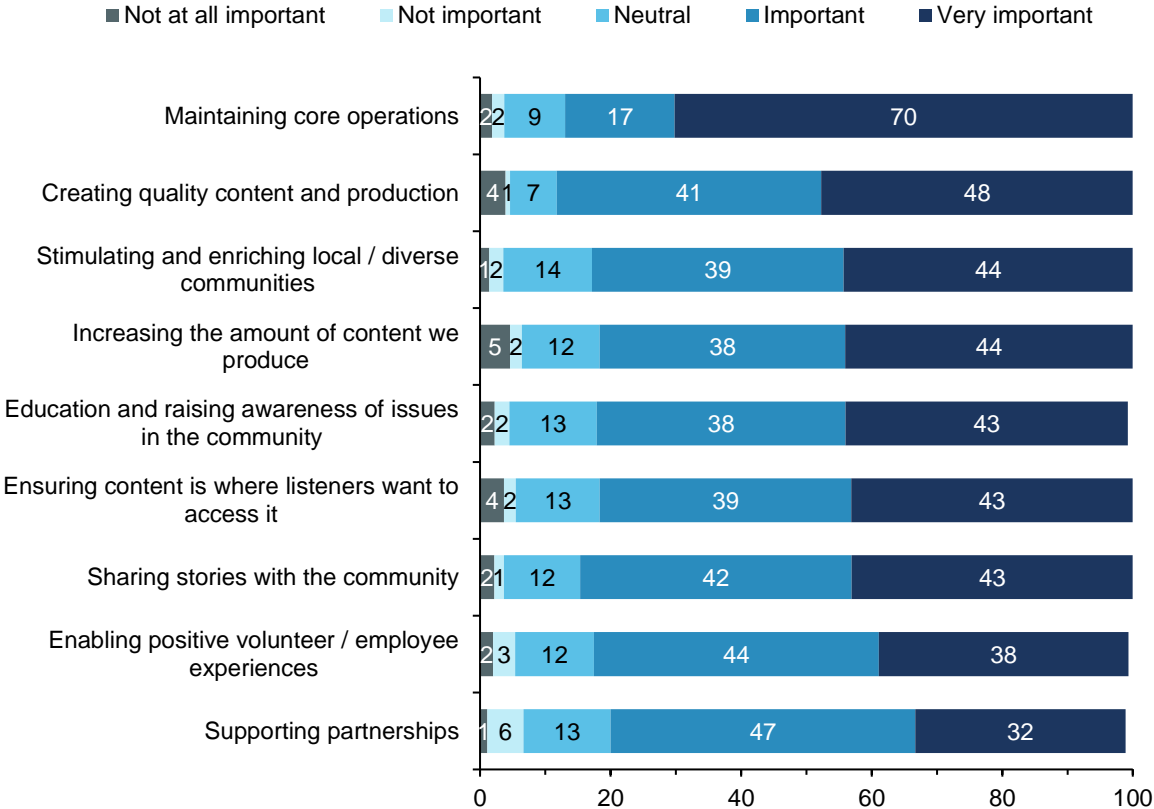
The evaluation findings demonstrated that the program allowed for the continuation of the development and delivery of diverse, representative and localised news, information and content, as well as increased access in some cases to content by listeners via the diversification of modes of broadcast. Applicants who reported an improvement in access commonly discussed improvements in relation to development of new local and representative content, community engagement and relationships, and improving reach through delivery of online content or streaming. However, the evidence suggested minimal increases or growth in organisations’ capacity to undertake these activities. With exception to this, the evidence did suggest positive impacts in the sector’s investment in accessibility of content, with improved reach through the development of online and streaming platforms and the development of pre-recorded and online content.

Development of local and representative content

In the survey, more than half (56%) of applicants reported they used grant funding to increase the volume or improved the quality or diversity of content produced. Similarly, when identifying organisational priorities, around four-fifths (82%) of applicants reported that the funding was important in increasing the amount of content produced. Some applicants noted that the program had allowed them to create new localised and representative content, which was perceived to be crucial for stations to remain relevant to communities and improve engagement among current audience. There was also evidence of funding allowing more general

broadcasters to produce First Nations and ethnic and multicultural content for a broader community audience.

Figure 15 Importance of funding in achieving organisational priorities



Nearly nine-tenths (89%) of applicants reported that funding was important in creating quality content and production. In consultations, applicants expressed that the funding allowed for greater resources towards enhancing quality of content, which was perceived to positively impact audience reach and engagement. The ways in which the program supports delivery of accessible, diverse, representative content is further discussed in Section 3.3.1.

In Figure 15, 'Other' has not been displayed on the chart due to a low number of responses (n=11). These focussed on themes such as: keeping technology up to date, continuing to provide a community platform, rebuilding sustainability and technical reliability after COVID, maintaining a 24-hour broadcast, encouraging youth involvement, increasing numbers of volunteers, and providing training for people interested in pursuing a career in broadcasting. More than two-thirds of successful applicants (69%) said that funding was used to increase community engagement. Stakeholders described specific activities, such as Development & Operations funding used for mobile or remote broadcasting events in community, which was

noted as particularly impactful for First Nations and ethnic and multicultural broadcasters engaging with community.

A few applicants noted that funding directed towards hiring staff or payment of salaries often contributed to community engagement, with roles and responsibilities of staff often directly associated with community development and engagement. A few applicants reported hiring staff to address diversity and equity gaps and improve representation (e.g., non-male presenters and youth presenters).

The Community Radio Listener Survey, coordinated by the CBAA, was also commonly accessed by broadcasters to better understand their audience and community and how to best engage them. However, stations often found this service to be too expensive to be a sustained resource.

While the grant funding had a positive impact on community engagement for some applicants, stakeholders identified this was an area in need of future support due to the growing need for community visibility and community engagement in the wake of declining rates of volunteerism and relevance.

Delivery of online content

Some applicants reported using funding to deliver online content (e.g., podcasts, streaming services) which led to improved accessibility, maintaining relevance and engagement with new audiences. These applicants reported broader impacts on sustainability due to opportunities for multiple broadcasts, collaboration and sharing of content between broadcasters. A few applicants from multicultural organisations described large-scale expansion as a result of online content delivery. The new format led to international reach which created strategic opportunities for connection with diaspora communities. Similarly, stakeholders from the community television sector demonstrated positive impacts from the development of online streaming platforms, which contributed to increased accessibility, reach, and ongoing relevance with the Australian community.

3.3.3. Building capacity

The evaluation findings demonstrated some positive impact in relation to capacity building of stations to deliver on their purpose, however, this did not occur equitably across the sector and several applicants identified this as an unmet need. Furthermore, the CBP funding has been limited in addressing emergent needs for staffing and volunteer security and as an initial step toward increasing accessibility of workforce pathways.

Around half (48%) of applicants reported that they used the grant funding to provide training to staff and/or volunteers indicating that direct funding to stations is helping to address the need for training and capacity building. Of those applicants who reported improvements in capacity among staff and volunteers, they commonly reported using funding to address specific skill gaps within staff or volunteers (e.g., technical skills, business acumen, governance and financial reporting) and/or had accessed training and development through sector-wide initiatives.

Stakeholders had varied experiences with the training provided through the CMTO. Subsidised training had provided important opportunities for capacity building and skills development for

stations accessing this. Typically, metropolitan stations reported ongoing relationships and use of these services. However, not all stations were aware of the initiatives, had limited contact with CMTO or felt that the training did not cater to their organisation. This related to stations who felt their capacity/needs were at a lower level than the level addressed through CMTO, or that the training was not sufficiently tailored to sub-sectoral needs such as faith-based and ethnic and multicultural media, and regional, remote and rural priorities. This also reflects findings which suggest delivering such initiatives are limited in their ability to sufficiently cater to the diversity of needs in the sector, particularly for priority groups. This related to the limited scale of the initiatives and resourcing constraints to be sufficiently responsive to the sheer diversity of needs and the complexity of needs for some groups (e.g., accessibility of initiatives for remote organisations).

In the survey, around one-third (32%) of applicants said that they used the grant funding to increase capacity for managing volunteers. A smaller proportion (27%) of applicants said they had used funding to hire more staff. As discussed in section 3.2.3, funding salaries was an important component of continuation of operations and sustainability, particularly in the context of high turnover of staff and volunteers within the sector.

3.3.4. Promoting sustainability

The evaluation findings demonstrated that the funding has been vital for continuation of operation, however, it did not have the intended impact of promoting sustainability through attracting additional revenue streams for the majority of applicants. Generally, the short-term nature and scope of grant funding was reported to largely prohibit applicants from undertaking strategic initiatives that focus on self-sufficiency and developing future revenue sources. While Content grants were also noted to be important for sustainability, the evaluation suggests that funding for technical infrastructure, equipment and salaries that was facilitated through the Development & Operations grants was fundamental and vital for sustainability and capacity building across the sector, and indeed a prerequisite for stations to have the capacity to be responsive to community and expand the diversity of their content.

A few applicants identified some improvements in sustainability that related to diversification and investment in staff. Those applicants who used funding to diversify content delivery (e.g., streaming or podcasts) had, in some cases, led to selling content or increased sponsorship. A few applicants also indicated that the investment in staff (i.e., salaries) had positive impacts on growth and sustainability due to greater organisational security, consistency and resources to deliver strategic initiatives to improve reach, engagement and attracting alternative revenue sources.

Of note, some applicants from organisations that were larger, metropolitan and/or demonstrated less reliance on funding emphasised challenges in accessing support and funding related to sustainability. According to these applicants, there was less funding available for strategic initiatives or capital projects that would promote sustainability, diversification and self-sufficiency. Furthermore, these applicants highlighted challenges in relation to legislative caps on sponsorship, which restricted their ability to attract or grow their additional funding sources.

Diversifying sources of income was reported to be a priority for organisations, with 39% indicating it was a high priority and 48% indicating it was a priority. This aligns with findings from the consultations and demonstrates a high level of need across the sector to support diversifying sources of income.

Sector representative bodies discussed instances where larger scale partnership models and cross-sectoral initiatives had contributed to sector sustainability. This included initiatives aimed at leveraging the capacity of larger, more resilient organisations to distribute value and benefits to smaller, less resilient broadcasters. Examples included building strategic partnerships external to the community broadcasting sector to increase revenue streams (e.g., sports bodies and relevant government portfolios such as foreign policy), centralising the production of news and content and distributing this to broadcasters, activating regional or sector networks and partnerships through which stations could be supported through knowledge sharing, content sharing, mentorship and advice. However, access to larger scale funding to foster these types of initiatives has been limited.

3.3.5. Unintended outcomes

The evaluation identified a substantial unintended outcome related to the reliance on funding, with a few other applicants also raising concern with the potential exclusion due to misalignment with funding priorities.

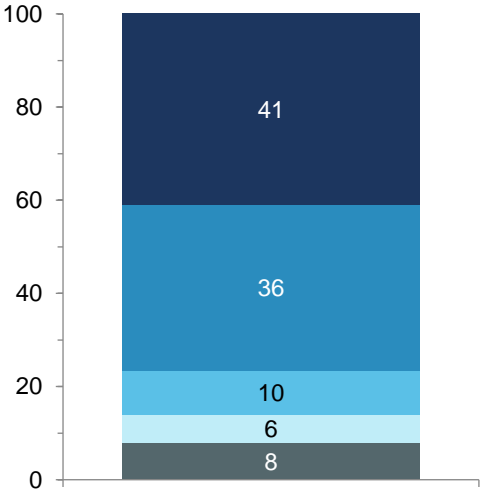
Reliance on funding

Two-fifths of applicants (41%) indicated that their organisation was very reliant on grant funding in order to continue operating, and more than one-third of applicants (36%) reported that their organisation was somewhat reliant. This was corroborated by the relatively small proportion of applicants that reported access to other major sources of income (36%), compared to more than three-fifths (62%) who reported having other minor sources of income. A small proportion (3%) indicated they had no other sources of income apart from CBF grants.

Reliance on funding demonstrated a high need for CBP funding. However, this raises concern about self-sufficiency and long-term sustainability. Furthermore, negative consequences were reported when applicants did not receive any funding or only partial funding, particularly among smaller volunteer-led organisations that had fewer revenue sources.

Figure 16 Organisational reliance on grant funding to continue operating

■ Not at all reliant ■ Not very reliant ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat reliant ■ Very reliant



Exclusion due to misalignment with funding priorities

As discussed in 3.1.2, a few applicants raised concerns about potential exclusion of access to funding due to misalignment with funding priorities, notably diversity and inclusion requirements. These applicants perceived the CBF to have a social change agenda that did not align with their community interests which led to disengagement or perceived exclusion. For others, the enactment of social change priorities through the grant process did not sufficiently take into consideration the variation in organisational capacity to meet these requirements.

3.4. Futures

This section discusses findings in relation to the key evaluation questions for Futures.

Table 5 Futures– Evaluation questions and findings

Evaluation question	Evaluation findings
Futures of the Community Broadcasting Program	
To what extent has the program been able to identify unmet and emergent needs in the sector?	Partially achieved
To what extent has the program been able to address emergent or unmet needs in the sector?	Minimally achieved
Are there areas of unmet or emergent need in the sector that has not been addressed through the program?	Yes, as described in 3.4.1

3.4.1. Unmet needs

In the consultations, applicants noted a range of needs that were not currently supported by the program. Unmet needs varied according to the organisational health, capacity and level of resilience, with a need for CBP grants to be inclusive and targeted to different needs among applicants. Unmet needs have been summarised below, with differences in organisational needs identified where relevant.

Operational costs

As discussed throughout the report, several applicants were highly reliant on funding to continue operation and had limited resilience or self-sufficiency, particularly those broadcasters and organisations that were volunteer led, located in regional, rural and remote communities and/or target priority communities. These applicants commonly expressed unmet needs around operational costs, including transmission costs, aging equipment, and salaries.

Capacity building

As discussed in Section 3.3.3, a range of applicants across the sector expressed unmet needs related to training and capacity building of staff and volunteers, particularly business development and technological skills. While this was identified as a need across the sector, the evaluation findings suggest a need for targeted investment to support capacity building for stations with lower resilience and self-sufficiency, including support for governance processes, grant writing and development of revenue streams and staff and volunteer attainment and upskilling.

Self-sufficiency

As discussed in section 3.3.2, the program currently has minimal impact on promoting sustainability and self-sufficiency through the development of additional revenue streams, with this identified as an unmet need among several applicants who expressed interest in support to attract and develop additional revenue sources, including sponsorships and fundraising activities. Currently, stakeholders noted issues with additional revenue sources due to low

general awareness of community radio, low organisational capacity in business development and legislative restrictions around sponsorships and community engagement activities.

While many organisations with poor organisational health, capacity or levels of resilience did not report self-sufficiency as a need due to prioritisation of operation, the evaluation findings suggest that there is an opportunity for the program to better support sustainability and self-sufficiency regardless of organisational capacity or reliance on funding.

Fundraising, promotion and community engagement

In the survey, around one third (32%) reported that they had used the grant funding to increase the volume or improve quality of marketing or promotional activity. However, nearly half of applicants (48%) reported they would like to see the CBP focus on fundraising support. Of note, those organisations that reported only having other minor sources of income more commonly reported that they would like more focus on fundraising support (56%) compared to those who have other major sources (34%). There were also some differences identified between streams, with this highest proportion of applicants desiring fundraising support among the Development & Operations (54%) and Specialist Radio Programming (55%) streams.

In the consultations, fundraising was identified as an important way to increase revenue for organisations, as well as raising awareness among communities. Several applicants highlighted a need for support with promotion, advertising and outreach in order to build awareness, engagement and promote their relevance among communities. Similarly, some applicants, particularly those that were smaller organisations, located in regional, rural and remote areas, reported a need for funding and support to lead community engagement activities to build visibility in community, increase listenership and maintain or improve relevance within the community.

In the consultations, applicants emphasised that financial investment and support to undertake promotional and community engagement activities were vital to address challenges related to perceived relevance of community broadcasting, as well as build awareness, interest and engagement among the younger generation of listeners. A few applicants suggested that increased fundraising and community engagement support may also increase visibility in the community and raise awareness about volunteer opportunities.

3.4.2. Emergent and future needs

Decline in volunteerism

The decline in interest and engagement of volunteers in the sector was a key concern among many applicants, with the view that the reliance on volunteers was an unsustainable approach for the sector. Some issues related to the recruitment or retention of volunteers were evident, as well as a growing expectation among community members to be remunerated for their contribution to the station. A few applicants noted they were beginning to transition away from the volunteer framework, however, most noted a need for support and guidance on how to address the decline in volunteerism.

A few applicants suggested that increased fundraising and community engagement support may increase visibility in the community and raise awareness about volunteer opportunities. However, most applicants noted a need for a sector-wide reform of the workforce, with

guidance from government and the broader sector about future direction. A few suggested a need to look at international best practice or consider the feasibility of a not-for-profit structure.

The CBP will need to consider the viability of wage subsidies, funding of incentives or other mechanisms to support the professionalism of the sector workforce. Furthermore, a few stakeholders identified a need for greater governance support and monitoring during the transition.

Relevance of community radio

Saturation of contemporary media and the changing demographics of community radio listeners were identified as key contextual changes which have led to concern among stakeholders and applicants about the perceived relevance of the sector. Of note, applicants emphasised that they had to compete for the engagement of local audiences with a wide range of media sources (i.e., podcasts, online streaming) rather than only commercial radio and public broadcaster stations as had been the case historically. Furthermore, many applicants noted that there was a change in the level of interest in traditional radio formats among younger demographics who tend to value digital formats.

Given this, there was substantial concern about the perceived relevance of the sector among local communities, with an emerging need to promote the value and relevance of the sector at a national and local level. Several applicants held the view that CBF could play a greater advocacy role in the promotion of the value and relevance of the sector, with particular focus on the diversity and representation of community voice, increase in digitalisation of the sector, and access to content that is relevant and engaging. While applicants identified opportunities related to promotion and advocacy, it was also recognised that there is a need to diversify to maintain relevance (further discussed below).

Digital transformation and infrastructure

Rapid technological change and digital disruption have transformed the media landscape in which community broadcasting operates, with stakeholders reporting an increased competition, saturation of the market and need to diversify. Digitalisation offers potential benefits for expansion and sustainability of the sector, yet stakeholders identified a range of emerging and future challenges associated with digital transformation, notably around digital infrastructure, digital radio and the capacity of staff and volunteers.

The transition from traditional analogue to DAB+ digital radio was raised as an important emerging need. The sector's transition to DAB+ was seen as important for the future to maintain and expand audience connection and engagement. The CBAA's Digital Radio Project was thought to be critical for progressing this, yet a few applicants highlighted challenges associated with implementation and cost-effectiveness of digital radio. Applicants noted that the required infrastructure would need ongoing significant investment, such as transmission equipment, studio upgrades, and digital broadcasting licences.

The perceived importance of developing DAB+ capabilities differed between applicants, with this commonly a higher priority for metropolitan broadcasters and larger organisations as this was seen as an important transition for the future of the sector. Those located outside of metropolitan areas expressed greater uncertainty about the feasibility and utility of DAB+ in regional Australia in the short to medium term future. These stakeholders cited reasons such

as the significant cost, lower interest from listenership and/or accessibility challenges (e.g., poor reception/coverage).

In terms of digital transformation beyond DAB+, smaller broadcasters, and broadcasters outside of metropolitan areas tended to be more focused on the development of streaming services as new mediums to reach audience.

As discussed in Section 3.4.1, capacity building for staff and volunteers was largely reported to be an unmet need, with skill gaps reported in relation to technical and digital skills. In order for the sector to deliver more online and digital content, there was an emerging need for training for staff and volunteers to improve technical and digital skills.

Economic challenges

Broader economic pressures (e.g., cost of rent) and inflation were reported as serious concerns when considering the future financial viability of individual stations and broadcasters, as well as the sector as a whole. This was predominantly related to increased costs of operation and delivery, with minimal changes to funding amounts or other revenue sources. Commonly, applicants reported a need for more investment into the sector, support for organisations to attract additional revenue sources and increased grant amounts.

3.4.3. Opportunities to address needs

Stakeholders identified a range of ways that CBP could be adapted to better address current, emerging and future needs of the sector, including changing scale of grant funding, scope of grant funding and focus on strategic cross-sector initiatives and partnerships.

Tailored funding to organisational needs

There is an opportunity for CBP grants to be more targeted to the different organisational needs, capacity and level of resilience of applicants. Commonly, applicants outlined the need for CBP grants to be inclusive, with a need for funding and support that addresses different needs between organisations across the sector.

Broadcasters and organisations that were smaller, located in regional or rural areas, volunteered and/or target priority communities tended to report higher reliance on funding to continue operation, with greater challenges related to volunteers, aging equipment, and sustainability. There was also greater need for support during the application and grant-writing process.

In contrast, broadcasters and organisations that were larger, located in metropolitan areas and had full-time staff tended to have a higher level of organisational capacity and/or resilience. While they reported fewer challenges with maintaining operations, there was a range of unmet needs that inhibited their growth, sustainability and self-sufficiency, particularly digital transformation and infrastructure, trialling new content delivery approaches, and other strategic initiatives.

Of note, many applicants highlighted the need to more effectively balance funding priorities between the conservation of the sector and innovation and development. Stakeholders spoke to the need for the CBP to address operational needs to ensure survival of broadcasters, without limiting support for larger, metropolitan organisations to develop self-sufficiency, as well as contribute to broader outcomes for public good, community cohesion and return on

investment. Stakeholders called for a greater emphasis on funding initiatives at a station and sectoral level which clearly contribute to station sustainability.

Scale of grant funding

Stakeholders identified a need for long-term, larger-value grants that allow for strategic initiatives to facilitate diversification and encourage sustainability by building additional revenue streams, with three-fifths of applicants (60%) who reported that CBP should focus on larger grant funding amounts. There were notable differences between streams in the prioritisation of larger grant funding amounts, with this highest among those applicants in the Specialist Radio Programming (71%) stream and Development & Operations stream (65%), with just over half of those in the Content round stream (54%).

In the consultations, applicants noted that larger grants with a longer duration mitigate many of the current issues experienced due to yearly grant rounds (as outlined in section 3.2.1). Long-term funding was seen as fundamental for supporting resilience and self-sufficiency as it would allow for continuation of projects, increase organisational security, reduce turnover of staff/volunteers and would prioritise strategic initiatives related to sustainability or diversification.

However, a few stakeholders identified the importance of continuation of funding in a manner that does not increase reliance on the CBP funding and ensures monitoring for community and sector outcomes.

Scope of grant funding

While applicants were generally satisfied with the scope of funding streams, a few additional areas for funding support were identified as opportunities for expanding the scope of CBP grants, particularly in relation to fundraising support (discussed in section 3.4.1), news and journalism and emergency broadcasting.

Nearly two-fifths also reported that CBP should focus on news and journalism (38%). Stakeholders commonly spoke of the desire to increase access to local interest news and public interest information, with a reported need for funding to support new and existing initiatives in this space. In the consultations, investment in news and journalism was perceived as important due to ensuring a diversity of voices in this space (e.g., covering multicultural issues that are not covered in mainstream news), as well as an opportunity for diversification within the sector.

A similar proportion of applicants reported that CBP should focus on emergency broadcasting (38%). In the consultations, applicants reported a mixed level of interest in emergency broadcasting, which was often related to their location, perceived vulnerability to natural disasters and/or need among priority community members for tailored emergency broadcasting information.

Strategic cross-sector initiatives and partnerships

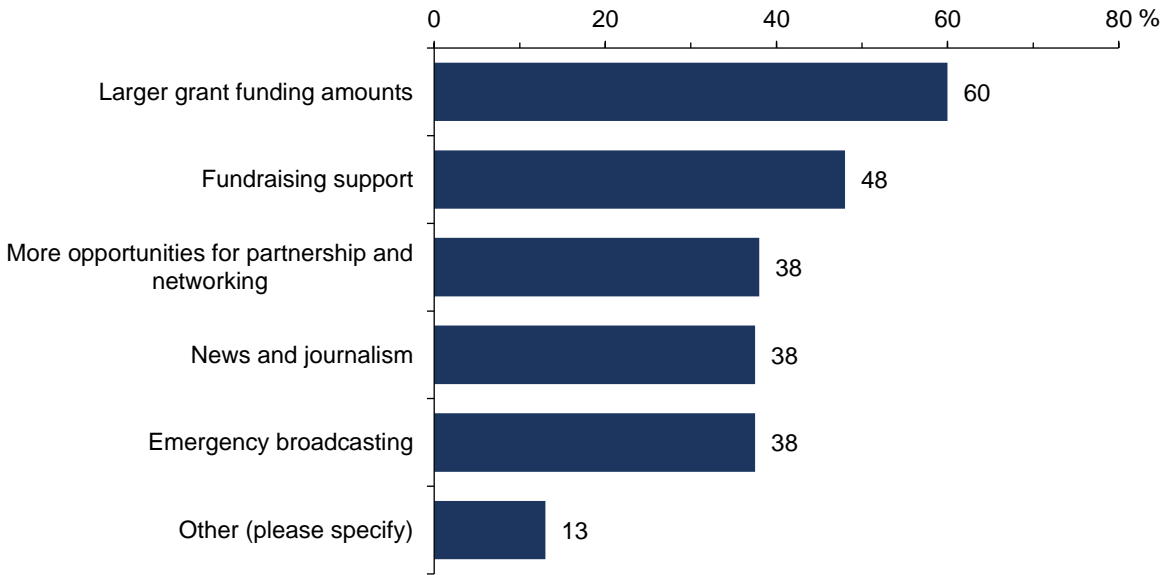
Among applicants, nearly one-quarter (24%) reported that they had used grant funding to improve co-ordination across the sector. Several stakeholders and applicants expressed an opportunity for increased funding and scope for larger organisations (e.g., sector bodies) to deliver strategic cross-sector initiatives and partnerships. While many applicants noted

awareness and engagement with CBAA and CMTO sector initiatives, these broader sector initiatives were commonly perceived to be less accessible for smaller organisations or those with poor organisational health, with a need for more inclusive networks and partnerships.

Nearly two-fifths of applicants (38%) indicated a preference for CBP to focus on opportunities for partnership and networking. Several stakeholders expressed that sector coordination initiatives and funding would enhance opportunities for networks and partnerships across the sector, particularly at the local level to better support knowledge, content and skill sharing between broadcasters. Improved partnerships, networking and collaboration was perceived to benefit organisations and sectors through creating efficiencies, reducing duplication and relieving cost pressures.

While this was perceived to add value across the sector, a few stakeholders were concerned about duplication of initiatives and equity of access to initiatives across the sector, with a need to focus funding on leveraging sub-sector networks to increase collaboration, create impact and better coordinate sector services to consolidate pathways through which organisations can access support. Furthermore, some applicants expressed the need for sector-wide initiatives to be tailored to sector needs, with opportunity to ensure this aligns with the Sector Roadmap currently being developed for 2023-2033.

Figure 17 Aspects applicants would like to see more focus on



Base: All applicants (n=200).
Source: F5. Which, if any, of the following should be focussed on more under the Community Broadcasting Program?
Note: Don't know (5%) and Refused (1%) responses not shown on chart.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Summary of findings

This section of the report provides a summary of the key findings of the evaluation as they relate to each of the evaluation domains and objectives.

Utility

The evaluation found the CBP grant making process to be mostly efficient and effective. The evaluation examined the sector's awareness and engagement with the CBP, the application process, assessment and decision making, grant management and acquittal, and the distribution of funds. The evaluation identified opportunities for substantive improvements in the grant making process to better meet the diversity of needs and capacities for organisations in the sector. Opportunities for improvement related to awareness raising, capability building, streamlining of applications, representative and fit-for-purpose assessment processes, and greater strategic distribution of funding to address sector needs.

Awareness across the sector was high, with awareness and engagement being driven largely by previous experience with the CBP. Some sector stakeholders had lower awareness of the CBP. This tended to be those with less prior experience with grant applications, less sector knowledge or reduced resourcing due to staff and volunteer turnover and organisational change. This indicates a need for awareness raising and outreach with the sector on an ongoing basis. While application data was skewed for 2017-18, there appeared to be a slight decline in applications in recent years. More research is needed to understand whether factors such as waning awareness and organisational capacity has contributed to this decline. Qualitative data indicated that some former applicants also become demotivated as a result of being repeatedly unsuccessful with CBP, and stop applying.

The sector was observed to be largely satisfied with the application process. The use of the SmartyGrants system is effective and the support provided by CBF staff across streams has added significant value. However, there was some indication for more accessible application forms for applicants with visual impairment and lower English proficiency. A more streamlined application process was generally desired, particularly with Development & Operations grants, with greater focus on the core funding objective and outcomes. For the Content and Specialist Radio Programming streams, applicants desired more flexibility in what funding could be used for. In part, this was seen to be related to development and operation costs associated with production and delivery of content.

A key finding in the evaluation was that varying levels of organisational knowledge and capacity disproportionality impacted the sector's ability to effectively engage in the process, particularly in the Development & Operations stream. This was more challenging for those most in need including smaller broadcast organisations outside of metropolitan areas, volunteer reliant organisations and ethnic and multicultural organisations where the application put a significant burden on resourcing. Challenges included collecting and reporting information on demographics and diversity, financial reporting and preparing the required governance and strategic documentation. Given the sector's reliance on core operational support, barriers around the Development & Operations stream have been ineffective in addressing this. This

indicates a strong need to reduce the barriers for applying for core operational funding, as distinct from development and content production activities. Security around resourcing and operations would support stations to take the first steps to building their organisational resilience.

The evaluation also raised questions around equity in assessment, with access to funding mediated by organisational resourcing, values alignment, and geographical distribution. Applicants desired improved representation in the assessment process, better aligned criteria in relation to diversity and inclusion priorities with the sector's diversity, and a call for the sector to grapple with the dichotomy of sustaining reliant applicants versus supporting self-reliant applicants to develop and innovate.

In terms of distribution, the evaluation indicated some areas of unmet need. Overall, funding tended to go to NSW and Victoria across streams, with other states receiving a lower proportion. Higher proportions of funding go to metropolitan areas, than suburban, regional and remote applicants. Furthermore, a lower proportion of applications are fully funded in remote areas. In terms of community interests, applications related to 'ethnic' communities, youth and RPH had the highest rates of approvals, whereas Seniors and Religious focused applications had the highest disapproval rates. Content funding tended to be focused in metropolitan areas with a higher proportion of applications and allocated funds. This is in contrast to the Development & Operations stream, where funding was sought more from regional applications. However, metropolitan areas requested and were allocated a greater proportion of funding. 'General' funding through the Development & Operations stream was a disproportionately lower, compared with applications targeting 'ethnic' communities which received a disproportionately higher share. This may indicate alignment with the intention of priority funding allocations.

Sector investment applicants reported the need for greater streamlining of the application process to better consolidate their projects in a single application and align this with outcomes mapping. Sector Investment applicants including those leading sector-wide initiatives, called for greater professional input to ensure sector-wide initiatives are effectively assessed.

Program Delivery

Evaluation findings indicate that CBP funding has partially achieved its objectives of addressing the identified issues and needs of the sector. In relation to the production and broadcasting of diverse, locally relevant content that was accessible and of high quality, the evaluation found that funding continues to be of significant importance. Content and Specialist Radio Programming funding had been a crucial staple to maintain and expand programming of First Nations content, radio reading content for people with disability, ethnic and multicultural content, youth media programs as well as other specialist content. However, there is minimal evidence indicating significant increases in content production for the sector more broadly. This is related to challenges faced by organisations around operation and sustainability which remain a priority and a prerequisite for increasing content and accessibility. Funding has been observed to support an increase in the accessibility of content through the development of digital content for online streaming. Online streaming has been of widest significance to organisations.

The evaluation evidenced growing importance of funding for the sector to remain responsive to community needs, particularly in the form of community engagement activities and marketing and promotion. With emergent sector needs (such as declining volunteerism and maintaining relevance of community broadcasting) applicants have sought funding to increase visibility in their community, increase engagement, and demonstrate their reach and impact in order to increase sponsorships and revenue streams. Community engagement activities were observed to be of particular importance for priority cohorts.

A key finding for the evaluation has been that there is an ongoing reliance on funding to support core operations and maintenance, particularly for smaller organisations and those without other sources of consistent, significant revenue. The Development & Operations funding stream has been of the utmost importance to undertake and maintain day-to-day operations, as well as for increasing organisational resilience and sustainability, and progressing organisational objectives. However, funding has only partially addressed this need due to the extent of the need, accessibility funding and the complexity of organisations increasing their resilience. Of particular importance for longer term security are salaries and technical infrastructure costs. Funding for salaries was observed to be necessary to ensure sufficient resourcing for the administration of organisations, to incentivise and retain staff to ensure ongoing viability, and to access technical skills and content knowledge to progress organisational objectives. Ongoing/longer term funding is needed to increase resilience to then be able to build sustainability.

Investment funding in sector-wide projects was partially successful in supporting sector needs through the grant program. The impact of these initiatives could also be enhanced through greater awareness and increased focus on tailoring services to specific sector needs. There is also opportunity to increase sector coordination through broader distribution of this funding to ensure the sector's diverse needs are addressed. Sector representative bodies were observed to be well placed to undertake larger scale projects which could add significant value to their sub-sectors. Examples included building networks and partnerships internally and externally to the sector, capacity building with stations, and strategic projects to more effectively progress subsector interests. Identifying areas where intermediary bodies can utilise funding to support stations in these ways would help to broaden the distribution of benefits to the sector.

Sector Investment funding was observed to be largely supporting investment in sector-wide initiatives, however there are certain areas where delivery can be better supported. Funding has been effective in supporting applicants to consult with the sector and identify needs and priorities, and develop and deliver initiatives to progress sector needs, including increasing access to quality Australian information, news and content, online and digital transformation and training and development. However, initiatives have been limited in their ability to effectively tailor services to the sector's diverse needs due to increasing operational and delivery costs associated with meeting the sheer scale of needs and the complexity for some cohorts (e.g., remote broadcasters). A better understanding of this is needed to adequately fund initiatives to be responsive and tailored to the diversifying needs of the sector.

Impact

The evaluation findings demonstrated that the program had a range of positive impacts which largely coalesced around the continuation of operations and maintenance of organisational viability. Other areas of impact included support to achieve organisational priorities and continue accessing, producing and delivering diverse, representative, local and national news, information and content. However, the evidence suggested minimal increases or growth in organisations' capacity to undertake these activities without reliance on CBP funding. With exception to this, the evidence suggested increases in accessibility of content, with improved reach through the development of online and streaming platforms and of pre-recorded and online content. There was also evidence of funding allowing more general broadcasters to produce First Nations and ethnic and multicultural content for a broader community audience.

Funding also contributed towards community engagement activities, including hiring dedicated staff which significantly increased stations' capacity to maximise engagement, mobile or remote broadcasting events in community, which was noted as particularly impactful for First Nations and ethnic and multicultural broadcasters engaging with community. While CBAA's Community Radio Listener Survey, allowed broadcasters to be more targeted with audience and revenue development, this service was too expensive for many. Overall, there is growing need for stations to engage with community in order to maintain their relevance, grow volunteerism and build revenue streams. This requires funding towards staffing, remote broadcasting and fundraising events. Beyond the CBP, consideration also needs to be given to how stations can maximise the use of sponsorships to build self-sufficiency.

The evaluation findings demonstrated that while funding has been vital for continuation of operation, it has not achieved a significant impact in terms of promoting sustainability through reducing reliance on grant funding and building station resilience. Generally, the short-term nature and scope of funding reduced the feasibility of undertaking strategic initiatives focused on self-sufficiency, revenue development and innovation. The evaluation also suggests that funding for technical infrastructure, equipment and salaries through the Development & Operations stream is fundamental for building resilience in order to address sustainability and capacity building across the sector. Where funding had supported sustainability, this was achieved through diversification of content delivery (e.g., streaming or podcasts), partnership and skill sharing initiatives, and investment in staff (i.e., salaries) which contributed greatly to organisational security, consistency and resourcing to deliver strategic initiatives to improve reach, engagement and attracting alternative revenue sources.

Sector representative bodies also undertook larger scale partnership models and cross-sectoral initiatives which contributed to sector sustainability through the distribution of value across stations and tailored approaches at sub sectoral levels. However, access to larger scale funding to foster these types of initiatives has been limited.

A substantial unintended outcome was identified in relation to the level of reliance on funding. Reliance on funding demonstrated a high need for CBP funding, raising concern about short-term viability of organisations and long-term sustainability.

Futures

The evaluation findings have identified a range of unmet, emerging and future needs among applicants and the sector more broadly. Unmet needs varied according to the organisational health, capacity and level of resilience, with a need for CBP grants to be inclusive and targeted to different needs among applicants. Of greatest importance was the need to secure operational costs to increase resilience and foster sustainability. The evaluation findings also suggest a need for targeted investment to support capacity building and training, as well as revenue development for stations with lower resilience and self-sufficiency, including support for governance processes, grant writing and development of revenue streams and staff and volunteer attainment and upskilling. The evaluation identified growing need for community engagement activities and fundraising to support the stations in building their visibility and relevance in the community, and increasing sponsorship.

Other emergent needs for the sector related to the decline in volunteerism and the transition towards increased professionalisation. Reliance on volunteers is largely seen to be unsustainable for the future of the sector. The sector is already facing challenges with declining numbers, growing expectations around remuneration, and increase and diversification of technical skills required for stations to remain viable and relevant. This was of particular concern with the growing saturation of the contemporary media environment in which community broadcasting is competing. This is also accompanied by rapid technological change and digitalisation which is transforming the media landscape in which community broadcasting operates. Community broadcasters are vying to remain relevant and viable across an increasingly broad range of modalities, both locally and beyond, in a competitive environment alongside commercial interests. The sector will need to consider the value proposition of community broadcasting in this environment and consider how funding for the sector can best support the delivery of this value to audiences.

The sector identified opportunities for CBP to adapt to current and emerging needs including tailoring funding to organisational need, changing the scale and scope of grant funding, and focusing on strategic cross-sector initiatives and partnerships. Stakeholders spoke of the need to ensure funding was set up to address the range of needs and diversity of the sector. A need for long-term, larger-value grants that allow for strategic initiatives to facilitate diversification and encourage sustainability by building additional revenue streams was also commonly reported. Increased funding and scope of funding was also seen as a priority for larger organisations (e.g., sector bodies), to deliver strategic and tailored cross-sector initiatives and partnerships.

4.2. Recommendations

The table below presents the key recommendations developed by the evaluation team. These recommendations are derived from the key findings from this evaluation and attend to the primary objectives of the evaluation.

1

Ensure awareness raising activities are undertaken regularly to build the sector's understanding of the CBP offering, and the expectations and process associated with application. In particular, this should target, smaller organisations in regional areas and those experiencing organisational change.

2

Continue investing in CBF staff outreach and engagement activities to continue building positive partnerships and support mechanisms for applicants. This may also include undertaking capacity building activities to help organisations to become 'grant ready'.

3

Consider how to balance the varied capacity of organisations in the sector through the grant allocation process. This could include better identifying organisational capacity and resilience to target support to applicants to be 'grant ready', removing barriers around core operational funding, and greater prioritisation of Development & Operations funding which builds organisational resilience, staffing, infrastructure and community engagement.

4

Streamline the application processes. Given year-by-year reliance on grants for many organisations, there is opportunity to streamline this process. Consider including a rolling application process whereby applicants seeking ongoing funding can apply to renew funding rather than submitting new applications. Sector Investment activities can be consolidated into single applications. Core operational funding could be detached from some of the requirements of other activities.

5

Ensure sector representation is achieved in peer assessment process to build on equity and trust and involve professional assessors in sector-wide initiatives to bring adequate knowledge to bear and add value to the sector.

6

To increase the creation and accessibility of content, prioritise funding which supports production and delivery costs including training and staffing, community engagement and fundraising, diversification and online delivery and the consolidation and/or development of alternate revenue sources.

7

Consider how the program can target funding to build resilience among applicants. The proposed resilience model that has already been endorsed by the CBF provides an opportunity to address this need by further embedding resilience principles in the CBP to align funding strategies with resilience building.¹¹ This may also include a governmental review of legislative restrictions on sponsorship to help support sustainability in the sector.

8

Target capacity building initiatives for staff and volunteers in less self-sufficient organisations and those in regional, rural and remote areas to address knowledge and skill shortages, including training and development through sector-wide initiatives.

9

Prioritise grants that demonstrate capacity to build sustainability and self-sufficiency, including funding strategic initiatives that support sector coordination and partnerships, knowledge and skills sharing, and initiatives which reduce financial burden on individual stations. The capacity of larger organisations and sector representative bodies could be leveraged to better distribute value to the sector and tailor to sub-sectoral needs.

10

Prioritise longer term funding opportunities to foster greater security in the sector, and support longer-term strategic thinking for organisations. This funding should also be targeted at initiatives which build sustainability including staffing, organisational capacity building, community engagement and initiatives which have the potential to deliver impacts beyond individual stations.

11

Consider how sector-wide funding for key initiatives such as sector training and news services can better address and be responsive to the diversifying needs of the sector through partnership delivery models or greater distribution of funding across the sector, with intermediary bodies playing a key coordination role. Consider how all intermediary bodies can contribute at different levels to progress sector priorities, differentiating between development and innovation, and operation and sustainability. Making funding available towards 'medium' sized sector projects would support this tiered approach to progressing strategic initiatives in a manner that is appropriate to different organisational capacities.

¹¹ See [Granting to support Station Resilience](#)

Appendix A Conceptual evaluation framework

The primary focus of the evaluation is centres on four key domains:

- **utility** – the extent to which the program is effective and efficient.
- **program delivery** – the extent to which the program meets identified needs of the sector.
- **impact** – the intended and unforeseen outcomes the program has for the sector.
- **futures** – the extent to which the program identifies emergent and future needs of the sector.

Evaluation Questions

The table below outlines the evaluation domains mapping them to the key evaluation questions which guided the evaluation, and to the methods by which the evaluation assessed these questions.

	Evaluation Questions	Secondary data	Stakeholder interviews	Survey of Community Broadcasters
Utility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective and efficient delivery. 	<p>Is the grant application process effective and efficient for the sector?</p> <p>Are the grant assessment and decision-making processes effective and efficient?</p> <p>Is funding distributed to the sector effectively and efficiently?</p> <p>Are grant funding agreements and grant requirements managed effectively?</p>	<p>Review quantitative program application data and documentation, previous reviews and other collateral shared by the Agency.</p>	<p>To analyse what sector representatives and other stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know and want to know about the way the grant program operates. • perspectives on improvements to processes re application, management, and reporting. 	<p>To understand and analyse experience of program administration among applicants and recipients, including reporting processes for the latter group.</p> <p>To understand and analyse perceptions of broadcasters who have not recently applied to the Fund.</p>
Program Delivery	<p>To what extent has the program helped to create</p>		<p>To analyse sector representatives and other stakeholders' views on whether funding promotes</p>	<p>To understand how grant recipients utilise funding and whether they perceive that funding</p>

	Evaluation Questions	Secondary data	Stakeholder interviews	Survey of Community Broadcasters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding grants address identified issues. 	<p>the conditions under which grantees can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) create and broadcast accessible, diverse, representative, local and national news, information, and content? b) be responsive to community needs? c) more effectively undertake day-to-day operations and development? d) invest in sector wide projects? 		improvements and supports diversity in the sector	received advanced projects or addresses other needs.
<p>Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcomes address sector needs. Explore unintended consequences. 	<p>To what extent did the program achieve outcomes in terms of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) increasing access to diverse, representative, local and national news, information and content? b) promoting sustainability through attracting additional revenue streams? c) building capacities of stations to deliver on their purpose? 		To analyse sector representatives and other stakeholders' views on whether funding increases sustainability, promotes adaptation and innovation and resilience	<p>To understand how grant recipients have been affected by funding allocations across the different streams.</p> <p>To understand the impact of participating in the application process and to ascertain insights about the impact on unsuccessful applicants.</p>

	Evaluation Questions	Secondary data	Stakeholder interviews	Survey of Community Broadcasters
	What unintended consequences/outcomes have occurred as a result of the program and what implications do these have for the program delivery?			
Futures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unmet and emergent need. 	<p>To what extent has the program been able to identify unmet and emergent needs in the sector?</p> <p>To what extent has the program been able to address emergent or unmet needs in the sector?</p> <p>Are there areas of unmet or emergent need in the sector that has not been addressed through the program?</p>		To explore sector representatives and other stakeholders' views on unmet and emergent needs	To identify unmet needs and explore broadcasters' expectations about their future needs for funding support.

Appendix B Evaluation methods

Review of secondary data

Analytical approach

Secondary data provided by The Agency were reviewed to identify information relevant to address the key evaluation questions. The primary source used was the application data generated through SmartyGrants. Other documents including application forms and performance reports were reviewed to support the framing and interpretability of the other data sources.

For the grant application data, a descriptive and frequency analysis was undertaken to determine the number and type of grant applications submitted, and the allocation and distribution of funding by grant program, location and community interest.

Quantitative analyses were undertaken in Microsoft Excel.

Online Survey of community broadcasters and CBF grant recipients

Survey development

The main phases in the survey design included the following:

- Workshopping with the Department to clearly understand and map strategic organisational data needs,
- Developing a survey 'skeleton' to address the primary areas of inquiry in the survey: Utility, Delivery, Impact, Sustainability/Futures, Unsuccessful applicants, Non applicants,
- Due to the exploratory nature of the research, the survey consisted of bespoke items developed to meet the objectives of the research.

Sample frame and recruitment

The sample frame for the online survey was identified as those organisations who had applied for CBF grant funding in the past, or organisations who had not applied but who were eligible for funding.

The sample of CBF applicants and non-applicants was provided by the Department as potential participants for the survey. The sample lists were cleaned, to ensure invites were only sent to unique email addresses.

Fieldwork

An initial email was sent to participants by the CBF to introduce the SRC and the survey. The primary survey invite was then sent on the 24th April, 2023 to a sample of n=1,333. A reminder schedule was also developed to encourage participation in the survey:

- Email invite #1 was sent on 1st May, 2023.

- Email invite #2 was sent on 9th May, 2023.
- Email invite #3 was sent on 12th May, 2023.
- The survey was closed on 15th May, 2023.

A final sample size of n=211 was achieved.

It should also be noted that while a sample size of n=211 was achieved, for analysis purposes this was made up of the following:

- Applicants who confirmed, 'yes' they have submitted an application (at S1), n=200
- Applicants who confirmed 'no', they had not submitted an application (at S1), n=5
- Applicants who confirmed 'not sure', if they had submitted an application (at S1), n=2
- Non-applicant sample: n=4
- Total: n=211

Survey data analysis

Quantitative data synthesis and descriptive analysis of the research findings was undertaken to address the research objectives. Analysis was undertaken using Q Research Software.

Frequency data tables (total level) were produced using Q Research Software and delivered in Microsoft Excel format. An analysis banner was produced in collaboration with the Agency, and cross-tabulation data tables containing the analysis banner were produced. Significance testing was applied at the 95% confidence level, to flag and contextualise differences in survey responses between groups. It should be noted that any sub-group with a small base size of under 30 reverts to descriptive commentary in this report on the 'n=' cases, rather than percentages, and a caveat is footnoted throughout if data is presented on a small base size (under n=30).

Stakeholder consultations

Qualitative instrumentation

Interviews were structured in a single modular style discussion guide which was developed in consultation with the Agency. As agreed with the Agency, interviews conducted with grantees focused the discussion on participants' recent grant experience with grantees as much as possible.

Sampling and recruitment

The qualitative consultations used a purposive sampling approach to recruit participants for interviews. The Agency nominated organisations and/or individuals for the research and communicated with stakeholders ahead of recruitment activities to provide information about the SRC's work on the evaluation and related research activities. The Agency provided the SRC with information for nominated organisations for recruitment purposes. A sample was generated with contact details of 34 potential participants. Individuals who expressed interest were then contacted and invited to take part in a research discussion. To further bolster the qualitative sample, survey respondents were invited to be recontacted to take part in further

research. Those who consented to being recontacted were added to the qualitative sampling frame and were invited to take part in a qualitative discussion. All participants were provided with a research information sheet ahead of their consultation outlining the key details related to participation.

Qualitative consultations were undertaken with two key informants and 28 stakeholders from the community broadcasting sector including grant applicants, non-applicants, and sector bodies. The table below summaries the key characteristics covered in the consultations. There is some overlap, as some stakeholders represented organisations which covered multiple interests.

Key characteristic		n
Organisational focus/type	Training and education	5
	Community television	1
	General community broadcasting and media	18
	Sector peak bodies	4
	First Nations media organisations and broadcasters	2
	Faith-based broadcasters	2
	Radio reading for people with print disability	2
	Ethnic and multicultural broadcasters	3
Location	Metropolitan	11
	Suburban	6
	Regional	9
	Rural/Remote	2

Consultations engaged with organisations across all states and territories. Consultations with broadcasters involved organisations that served a broad range of community interests including:

- Local news, information and content
- Music and arts
- Faith-based
- First Nations
- Ethnic and multicultural or culturally/linguistically diversity
- Reading radio and disability focused
- Age-based demographics (including youth and elderly communities)

Organisations had a variety of experience with the CBP, including organisations that:

- regularly applied for funding
- occasionally applied for funding
- had not recently applied for funding
- had never applied for funding

Fieldwork

The SRC conducted 30 one-hour qualitative consultations with relevant sector stakeholders, including key informants, sector representative bodies, grant applicants and eligible non-applicants. Interviews were conducted by members of SRC's dedicated Evaluation and Qualitative Research team as both one-on-one and mini-group discussions. All interviews were completed online via videoconference (Teams or Zoom).

Qualitative data analysis

All qualitative data collected through stakeholder consultations was thematically analysed using a thematic coding frame organised around the key evaluation questions and domains. Interview notes and transcripts were collated using this frame. The qualitative research was not designed to be statistically representative and thus the analysis is not generalisable to the broader population. Nonetheless, transcripts were analysed to identify themes, both common and divergent perspectives. To provide the reader with some indication of the salience of the findings, this report employs terms like, most, some, or a few to indicate the prevalence of opinion and perspectives.

Triangulation

The findings from the key informant interviews, stakeholder consultations, secondary data analysis and survey data have been triangulated with the aim to present a comprehensive report that combines insights from all data sources. Triangulation allows multiple sources of data to be used to answer the specific evaluation questions, thus allowing more robust findings and recommendations to be made.

Limitations

The evaluation encountered a range of limitations related to each component of the project, as described below:

Overall evaluation limitations

- Tight timeframes for the evaluation required qualitative and quantitative data collection to happen largely concurrently, limiting opportunities to align methods to explore emergent issues in greater depth.
- The diversity of perspectives obtained through data collection has limitations due to the opt-in approach to recruitment for the online survey and qualitative consultations. This creates some limitations in the analysis and interpretability of data in relation to certain cohorts and areas of the sector.
- The evaluation was limited in its ability to assess impact due to very limited availability of outcomes data.
- The evaluation was limited in its ability to assess the extent to which the CBP had achieved its objectives due to a lack of available benchmarks. The evaluation assessed the program based on the broad objectives program logic models.

Secondary Data

- In relation to the grant application data provided, there were several fields where information was not provided for all applications; hence data were not able to be analysed by these characteristics. This included: Project Title (which contained information about what the funds would be used for), Project Beneficiaries, Content Funding Objectives, volunteer numbers and organisation type. Year of allocation was also not available for all Sector Investment grants.
- Changing practices in reporting application data in the SmartyGrants system have led to inconsistencies and anomalies in the data, particularly around the high number of applications and applications designated as 'Undecided' in 2017-18. This limited the ability to analyse the program longitudinally.
- The level of detail provided on 'community of interest' in the grant application data was limited and thus limited the depth of analysis able to be conducted on key areas of interest such as applications from different religious and ethnic groups, and specific special interests.
- Similarly, no information was provided on the size or financial structure/status of individual applicants. Hence, the ability to analyse application data to determine whether funding was effectively and efficiently distributed was limited.
- The grant application data did not include any information on why an individual application was approved or declined, or why an approved application was partially or fully funded. As a result, there was limited ability to measure the impact of the program with this data.
- Due to recent changes in the Community Radio Listener Survey, the survey data was not readily comparable over time. In initial analysis a 'point in time' approach was adopted and only the most recent wave (Wave 2, 2022) was analysed. Ultimately, this data was excluded from the final analysis as it did not allow for a longitudinal outlook to assess changes in listenership overtime.

Survey research

- A limitation of the research is the restriction of certain sub-groups for further analysis, based on the available sample sizes in the final sample achieved in the quantitative survey. Throughout the report any small sub-groups are indicated with a footnote for bases under n=30.
- In the approach for the survey, the primary method of contact was via email. Whilst some telephone numbers were available in the sample, these were limited (did not cover the entire sample). This meant that SMS reminders were not a viable option to explore due to lack of coverage.
- It should also be taken into consideration that this survey is a 'point in time' approach, in that the survey design will not track applicants (or non-applicants) on future grant applications or outcomes via a longitudinal method.

Qualitative research

- Qualitative sampling relied on an opt-in process. While a joint communication strategy was developed between the SRC and the Agency, the recruitment approach was limited in its ability to tailor the final sample because of varied rates of participant response. Thus, sample diversity is limited across some cohorts, limiting the interpretation of the qualitative data in relation to specific cohorts.

Appendix C Secondary data analysis

Grant Application Data

The Agency provided individual grant application data for all CBP grant applications submitted from 2017-18 to 2022-23. Each application was denoted by a unique identifier (Application ID) and data was provided on the Grant Program and Grand Round for which the application was submitted, the outcome of the application (approved, declined, withdrawn or undecided), and the amount Requested, Allocated and Paid. Information regarding project beneficiaries, progress status and reporting, content funding objectives and volunteer numbers was also included, although this was not specified for all applications.

A second data set was provided with details about the organisation who submitted each grant application (the 'applicant'). For each application, denoted by the same unique identifier, the applicant's name, its ABN and ABN status, and the organisation's primary postcode and office postcode were provided. Information about the organisation's entity type, its location (geographical area) and community interest were also included.

Using the unique identifier, these two data sets were merged. Applications for which information was not listed in both data sets were excluded from further analysis. These additional variables were derived from the data set:

- 'Year': This was derived from the 'Grant Round' variable by extracting the year in which the application was made (e.g., 2017/18 was derived from Content Round 1 2017/18). For Grant Rounds where a financial year could not be derived, Year was listed as "n/a". This applied to the following Grant Rounds: Quick Response Grants, Enhanced National News Programming, and National Training – Industry Capacity & Skills Development,
- 'State': This was derived from the 'Applicant Primary Postcode' variable, or where not specified, the 'Applicant Office Variable'. If no postcode was specified for either variable, State was listed as "not specified".

The merged data set was analysed to determine the number of grant applications submitted between 2017-18 and 2022-23 and the associated value and outcome of these applications. The distribution of applications and applicants by key characteristics (e.g., grant program, location, and community interest) were also explored.

To be consistent with the data collected from the online survey of community broadcasters and CBP grant recipients, the analysis was restricted to applications made for funding under the following four Grant Programs: Content, Development & Operations, Sector Investment and Covid 19 Response Grants. This excludes data relating to Quick Response grants.

Number of Grant Applications, by Grant Program and Year

Grant Program	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	n/a*	Total
Content	522	269	272	172	197	188		1,620
Development & Operations	652	305	289	156	246	205		1,853
Sector Investment	5	4	3	3	4	2	8	29
COVID 19 Response Grants				453			0	453
Total	1,179	578	564	784	447	395	8	3,955

* Refers to the following Grant Round funding which was not attributed to a specific financial year: Quick Response Grants, Enhanced National News Programming, and National Training – Industry Capacity & Skills Development.

The total number of grant applications submitted over the period 2017-18 to 2022-23 was 3,955. Nearly half of these applications (47%) were for Development & Operations grants. Content grants accounted for 41% of applications, while Sector Investment grants accounted for less than 1%. Covid 19 Response Grants, which were offered in a Covid 19 Quick Response Grants Round and two Covid 19 Crisis Grant Rounds 2020/21, accounted for 11% of applications over this period.

The annual number of applications submitted over the analysis period has more than halved, dropping from 1,179 applications in 2017-18 to 395 applications in 2022-23. This decline has been driven by the anomaly year of 2017-18 being the first year of the program following a major restructure and a decrease in both Content and Development & Operations grant applications in more recent years.

Number of Grant Applications, by Grant Program and State

State	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Not specified	Total
Content	31	475	95	218	166	44	462	112	17	1,620
Development & Operations	55	616	72	255	212	86	394	160	3	1,853
Sector Investment	-	20	-	2	-	-	7	-	-	29
COVID 19 Response Grants	8	168	11	62	54	20	98	31	1	453
Total	94	1,279	178	537	432	150	961	303	21	3,955

Applicants located in NSW submitted the largest number of grant applications over the period 2017-18 to 2022-23 (32% of total applications), followed by Victoria (24%). Applicants in these two states accounted for more than half of all grant applications (57% combined). The least applications were submitted by applicants located in ACT (2%), Tasmania (4%) and Northern Territory (5%). Further analysis outside the scope of this evaluation could be conducted to explore these distributions in relation to the distributions of licensees across locations.

Number of Grant Applicants

Number of Grant Applications submitted by an Applicant	Number of Grant Applicants	% of Total
1	72	17%
2	42	10%
3	26	6%
4	27	7%
5	19	5%
6	21	5%
7	23	6%
8	17	4%
9	25	6%
10	8	2%
11-20	86	21%
21-30	35	8%
31-40	7	2%
41-50	3	1%
More than 50	4	1%
Total	415	100%

Over the period 2017-18 to 2022-23, grant applications were submitted by 415 applicants. Of these applicants, 72 (17%) submitted a single application over the period. Approximately two-thirds of applicants (68%) submitted no more than 10 applications. The highest number of applications submitted by a single applicant was 75. For this applicant, 62 grant applications (83%) were for Content funding.

Number of Grant Applicants, by Year

Grant Program	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	n/a*	Total
Content	145	128	132	103	110	108		244
Development & Operations	237	218	206	144	182	156		323
Sector Investment	4	4	3	3	4	2	7	9
Covid 19 Response Grants				269			0	269
Total^	269	256	238	301	216	198	7	415

* Refers to the following Grant Round funding which was not attributed to a specific financial year: Quick Response Grants, Enhanced National News Programming, and National Training – Industry Capacity & Skills Development. ^ Total number of applicants will not equal sum of individual components as some organisations will have submitted applications under multiple Grant Programs.

The number of applicants declined from 269 in 2017-18, being the first year of the current grant program after a major restructure where multiple Development & Operations grant applications were able to be submitted by the one applicant, to 198 in 2022-23 (a decrease of 26%). There was a spike in the number of applicants in 2020-21 but this was due to the large number of organisations applying for Covid 19 Response Grants.

Number of Grant Applications and Number of Grant Applicants, by Grant Program

Grant Program	Number of Applications	Number of Applicants
Content	1,620	244
Development & Operations	1,853	323
Sector Investment	29	9
Covid 19 Response Grants	453	269
Total	3,955	415[^]

[^]Total number of applicants will not equal sum of individual components as some organisations will have submitted applications under multiple Grant Programs.

Nearly four out of five applicants (78%) applied for at least one Development & Operations grant, while more than half (58%) also submitted at least one application for a Content grant. Only 2% of applicants applied for a Sector Investment grant which are by invitation only. Applications for COVID-19 Response Grants were submitted by 65% of applicants.

Number of Grant Applications and Number of Grant Applicants, by State

	Number of Applications	% of Total	Number of Applicants	% of Total
ACT	94	2.4%	7	1.7%
NSW	1,279	32.3%	123	29.6%
NT	178	4.5%	19	4.6%
QLD	537	13.6%	56	13.5%
SA	432	10.9%	42	10.1%
TAS	150	3.8%	15	3.6%
VIC	961	24.3%	94	22.7%
WA	303	7.7%	40	9.6%
Not specified	21	0.5%	19	4.6%
Total	3,955	100.0%	415	100.0%

More than half of grant applications (57%) were submitted by applicants located in New South Wales and Victoria. Similarly, more than half of grant applicants (52%) were also located in New South Wales and Victoria.

Number of Grant Applications and Number of Grant Applicants, by Location

Location	Number of Applications	% of Total	Number of Applicants	% of Total
Metropolitan	1,056	27%	69	17%
Suburban	698	18%	56	13%
Regional	786	45%	197	47%
Remote	222	6%	29	7%
Other [^]	193	5%	64	15%
Total	3,955	100%	415	100%

[^] Refers to applications where Location was listed as Broadcast Group or Sector Organisation, as well as applications where Location was not specified.

Nearly half (45%) of grant applications were submitted by applicants located in regional locations. A further 27% were from metropolitan locations, while 18% were for suburban locations. Only 6% of grant applications were submitted by applicants from remote locations.

Similarly, nearly half (47%) of grant applicants were based in regional locations. However, a disproportionately higher number of applications were submitted from applicants located in metropolitan and suburban areas – 17% of applicants were located in metropolitan areas but submitted 27% of applications, while 13% of applicants were located in suburban areas but submitted 18% of applications.

Number of Grant Applications and Number of Grant Applicants, by Community Interest

Community Interest	Number of Applications	% of Total	Number of Applicants	% of Total
Arts / Music	102	3%	9	2.2%
Broadcast group	133	3%	40	9.6%
Educational	114	3%	6	1.4%
Ethnic	151	4%	6	1.4%
General	2,205	56%	199	48.0%
Indigenous	369	9%	38	9.2%
Other special interest	76	2%	3	0.7%
Religious	377	10%	38	9.2%
RPH	77	2%	5	1.2%
Sector organisation	157	4%	14	3.4%
Seniors	44	1%	8	1.9%

Community Interest	Number of Applications	% of Total	Number of Applicants	% of Total
Youth	89	2%	9	2.2%
Not specified	61	2%	40	9.6%
Total	3,955	100%		

More than half of applications (56%) were submitted for grants targeting a 'general' community interest. These applications were submitted by 48% of applicants. Applications for grants targeting 'religious' and 'indigenous' community interests accounted for 10% and 9% of applications respectively. These applications were submitted by a proportionately similar number of applicants (9.2%).

Number of Grant Applications, by Decision and Year

Decision	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	n/a*	Total
Approved	375	447	357	646	291	294	2	2,412
Declined	198	123	193	124	149	92	6	885
Withdrawn	7	3	14	14	7	9	0	54
Undecided	599	5						604
Total	1,179	578	564	784	447	395	8	3,955
% Approved	32%	77%	63%	82%	65%	74%	25%	61%

* Refers to the following Grant Round funding which is not attributed to a specific financial year: Quick Response Grants, Enhanced National News Programming, and National Training – Industry Capacity & Skills Development.

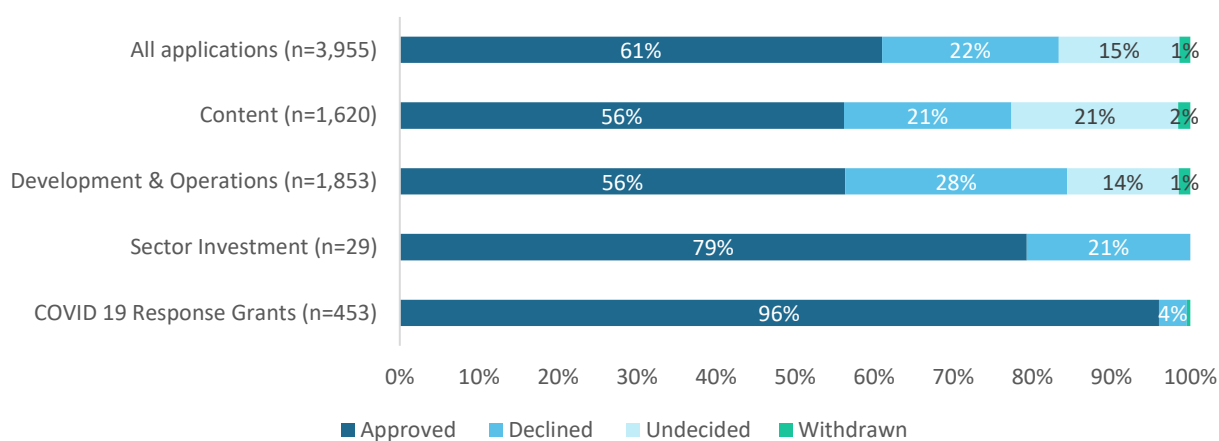
Of the 3,955 applications submitted, 2,412 (61%) were approved. Of the remaining applications, 885 (22%) were declined, 604 (15%) were undecided and 54 (1%) were withdrawn.

The highest rate of approval was in 2020-21, when approximately 4 out of 5 applications (82%) were approved. This was influenced by the high rate of approval for applications submitted under the Covid 19 Response Grants program, in which 435 of 453 applications were approved. This is expected given these grants were non-competitive for eligible applicants. The lowest rate of approval occurred in 2017-18, when only 32% of applications were approved. Of note is that the approval rate for this year was affected by a large number of 'undecided' applications (599 applications). However, this again relates to the unique factors at play associated with the 2017-18 period and do not necessarily reflect normal grant making processes.

Number of Grant Applications, by Grant Program and Decision

Grant Program	Approved	Declined	Undecided	Withdrawn	Total
Content	910	343	342	25	1,620

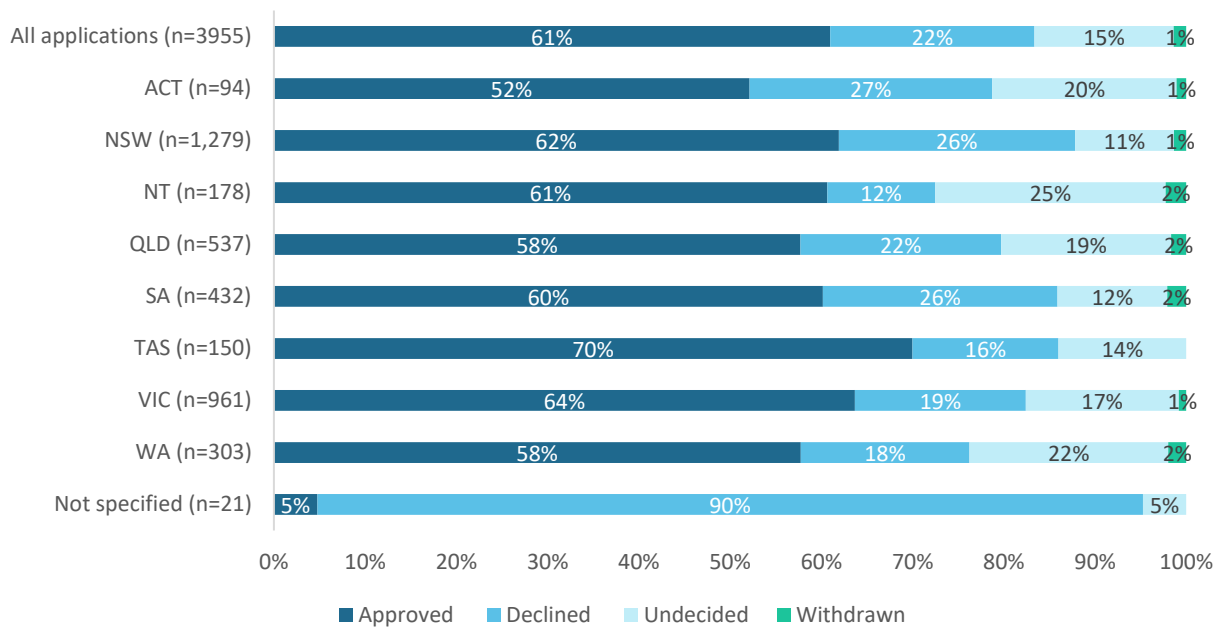
Development & Operations	1,044	520	262	27	1,853
Sector Investment	23	6			29
COVID 19 Response Grants	435	16		2	453
Total	2,412	885	604	54	3,955



Approximately half (56%) of Content and Development & Operations grant applications were approved. The rate of approval for Sector Investment grants and COVID-19 Response grants was higher (79% and 96% respectively), although applications for grants under these programs account for a much lower proportion of total applications (12% combined).

Number of Grant Applications, by State and Decision

State	Approved	Declined	Undecided	Withdrawn	Total
ACT	49	25	19	1	94
NSW	792	331	139	17	1,279
NT	108	21	45	4	178
QLD	310	118	100	9	537
SA	260	111	52	9	432
TAS	105	24	21	-	150
VIC	612	180	161	8	961
WA	175	56	66	6	303
Not specified	1	19	1	-	21
Total	2,412	885	604	54	3,955

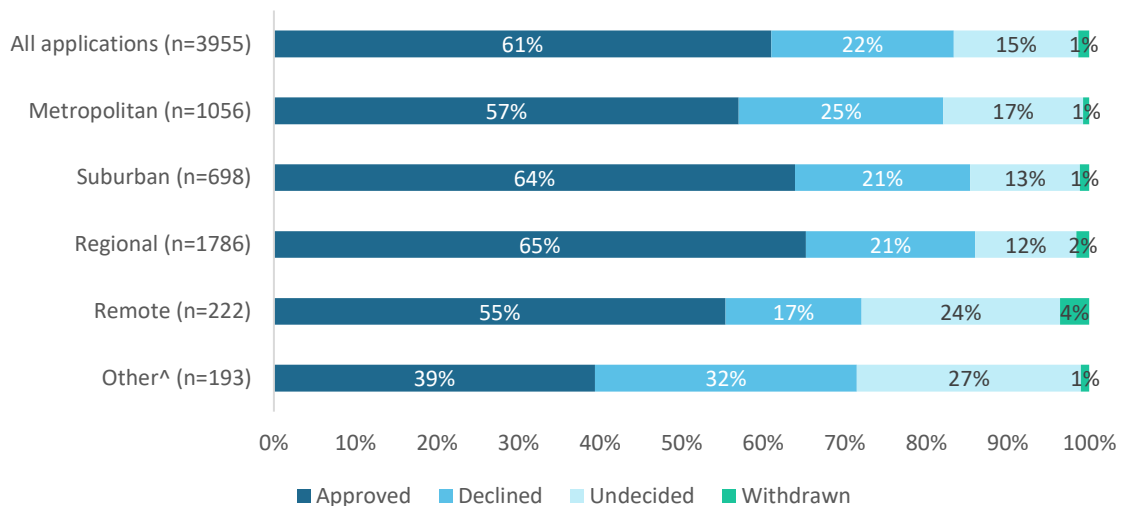


The rate of approval for grant applications (excluding those where the applicant postcode was not specified) ranged from 52% in the ACT to 70% in Tasmania. For NSW and Victoria, which together accounted for more than half of grant applications submitted over the period, their approval rates were 62% and 64% respectively.

Number of Grant Applications, by Location and Decision

	Approved	Declined	Undecided	Withdrawn	Total
Metropolitan	602	265	181	8	1,056
Suburban	446	150	94	8	698
Regional	1,165	371	222	28	1,786
Remote	123	37	54	8	222
Other [^]	76	62	53	2	193
Total	2,412	885	604	54	3,955

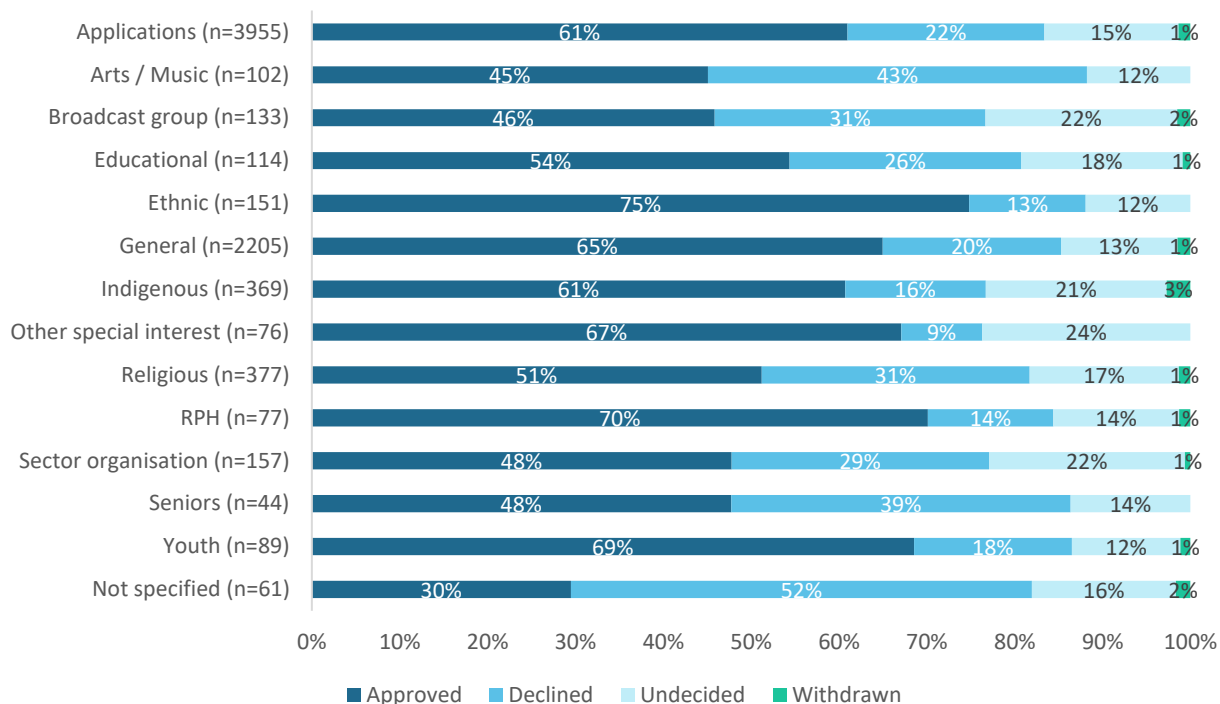
[^] Refers to applications where Location was listed as Broadcast Group or Sector Organisation, as well as applications where Location was not specified.



Approximately two-thirds of applications for suburban and regional areas were approved (64% and 65% respectively). The approval rate for applications for metropolitan and remote areas was lower but still greater than 50% (57% and 55% respectively).

Number of Grant Applications, by Community Interest and Decision

	Approved	Declined	Undecided	Withdrawn	Total
Arts / Music	46	44	12	-	102
Broadcast group	61	41	29	2	133
Educational	62	30	21	1	114
Ethnic	113	20	18	-	151
General	1,433	447	293	32	2,205
Indigenous	224	59	76	10	369
Other special interest	51	7	18	-	76
Religious	193	115	64	5	377
RPH	54	11	11	1	77
Sector organisation	75	46	35	1	157
Seniors	21	17	6	-	44
Youth	61	16	11	1	89
Not specified	18	32	10	1	61
Total	2,412	885	604	54	3,955



The rate of approval for applications by community interest ranges from 75% for grants targeted at ‘ethnic’ communities to 45% for grants targeted at ‘arts/music’ communities. For ‘general’, which accounts for more than half of applications submitted, the approval rate is 65%.

Total Amount Requested (\$), by Grant Program and Year

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	n/a*	Total
Content	11,864,757	5,608,109	6,893,122	5,382,517	6,093,242	5,534,264		41,376,012
Development & Operations	23,107,977	14,502,399	16,773,624	9,596,923	11,484,312	11,595,477		87,060,712
Sector Investment	7,040,837	9,782,888	1,846,590	2,777,981	29,040,100	680,000	3,873,000	55,041,396
COVID 19 Response Grants				5,838,190				5,838,190
Total	42,013,571	29,893,397	25,513,336	23,595,611	46,617,654	17,809,741	3,873,000	189,316,310

* Refers to the following Grant Round funding which was not attributed to a specific financial year: COVID-19 Quick Response Grants, Quick Response Grants, Enhanced National News Programming, and National Training – Industry Capacity & Skills Development.

For grant applications submitted over the period 2017-18 to 2022-23, the total amount requested was \$189.3 million. Across this period, 46% of the amount requested was for Development & Operations grants, which is proportionate to the number of applications submitted (47% of total grant applications). In contrast, applications for Sector Investment funding accounted for less than 1% of total grant applications but 29% of the total amount requested. Content grants accounted for 41% of total grant applications and 22% of the total amount requested.

Out of the 3,955 applications submitted there were 147 applications where the total amount requested was zero (\$0) or the field was blank. Of these, 112 are listed as 'approved' with money allocated against them. The majority of these (108) were for COVID-19 Response Grants. The Agency advised that a zero or blank for the total amount requested may have occurred if an application was incomplete or deemed ineligible. They also noted that for some applications, 'Total Amount Requested' was not included as a question in the application form and a 'CBF grant' line from the Income table is used in grant processing. In some instances (such as COVID-19 Quick Response grants) it may not be filled in if they were trying to get it paid promptly. Another situation in which this could occur was for Covid 19 Crisis grants where applicants were not required to specify an amount of funding and a formula was used to calculate how much they would be granted.

Grant Program	Number of Applications	Amount Requested (\$)			
		Total	Average	Minimum [^]	Maximum
Content	1,620	41,376,012	25,541	21.64	626,402
Development & Operations	1,853	87,060,712	46,984	352	2,717,499
Sector Investment	29	55,041,396	1,897,979	174,981	26,570,100
COVID 19 Response Grants	453	5,838,190	12,888	197	100,000
Total	3,955	189,316,310	47,868		

[^]This excludes value of zero (\$0) or blank fields.

The average amount requested across the four streams was \$47,868. The minimum amount requested was \$21.64 (for a Content grant), while the maximum amount requested was \$26.6 million (for a Sector Investment grant).

Total Amount Requested (\$), by Grant Program and State

State	Content	Development & Operations	Sector Investment	COVID 19 Response Grants	Total
ACT	370,090	2,442,226	-	85,661	2,897,977
NSW	13,241,826	23,873,718	52,181,969	2,007,124	91,304,638
NT	3,648,647	4,216,183	-	272,269	8,137,100
QLD	6,447,310	14,592,113	-	928,005	21,967,427
SA	2,884,995	7,085,413	-	486,146	10,456,554
TAS	575,052	3,348,437	-	244,550	4,168,039
VIC	11,077,685	24,294,770	2,859,427	1,534,143	39,766,025
WA	2,519,725	7,129,337	-	275,292	9,924,353

Not specified	610,682	78,514	-	5,000	694,196
Total	41,376,012	87,060,712	55,041,396	5,838,190	189,316,310

Nearly half of the total amount requested (\$91.3 million, 48%) was for applications where the applicant was located in New South Wales. More than half (57%) of this amount was for Sector Investment grants. The next highest proportion of funding was for applications where the applicant was located in Victoria (\$39.7 million, 21%).

If applications for Sector Investment grants are excluded, NSW still accounts for the highest proportion of funds requested (29%), followed by Victoria (27%) and Queensland (16%).

Total Amount Requested (\$), by Decision and Year

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	n/a*	Total
Approved	25,473,549	26,504,333	18,626,220	19,196,762	42,007,222	14,529,928	3,873,000	150,211,014
Declined	5,938,001	3,167,698	6,628,703	4,066,393	4,561,548	3,019,324		27,381,667
Undecided	10,547,996	46,142	-		-	-	-	10,594,138
Withdrawn	54,026	175,224	258,413	332,455	48,885	260,489		1,129,492
Total	42,013,571	29,893,397	25,513,336	23,595,611	46,617,654	17,809,741	3,873,000	189,316,310
% Approved	61%	89%	73%	81%	90%	82%	100%	79%

* Refers to the following Grant Round funding which was not attributed to a specific financial year: Quick Response Grants, Enhanced National News Programming, and National Training – Industry Capacity & Skills Development.

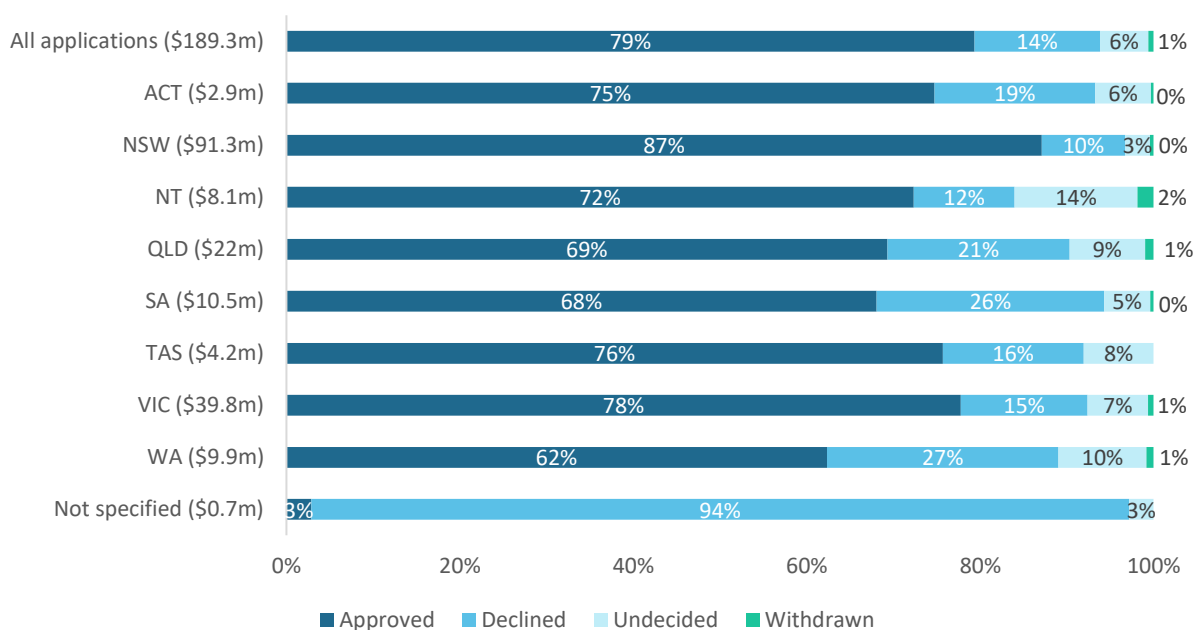
For grant applications submitted over the period 2017-18 to 2022-23, 79% of the total amount requested was approved. Excluding Grant Rounds in which funding was not attributed to a specific financial year, the highest level of approval was for grants submitted in 2021-22, where 90% of the total amount requested was approved. The lowest level of approval was for grants submitted in 2017-18, where 61% of the total amount requested was approved. As previously discussed in the report, this was influenced by a large proportion of applications (599 applications for a total amount requested of \$10.5 million) which were listed as ‘undecided’ for this year.

Total Amount Requested (\$), by Decision and State

Including Sector Investment applications

Row Labels	Approved	Declined	Undecided	Withdrawn	Total
ACT	2,165,742	537,450	185,616	9,170	2,897,977
NSW	79,534,662	8,742,109	2,651,694	376,173	91,304,638
NT	5,887,431	943,939	1,155,081	150,649	8,137,100
QLD	15,223,198	4,612,075	1,920,355	211,799	21,967,427
SA	7,115,369	2,746,048	553,253	41,883	10,456,554

TAS	3,155,200	676,347	336,492		4,168,039
VIC	30,924,285	5,817,949	2,767,267	256,524	39,766,025
WA	6,185,126	2,651,254	1,004,680	83,294	9,924,353
Not specified	20,000	654,496	19,700		694,196
Total	150,211,014	27,381,667	10,594,138	1,129,492	189,316,310



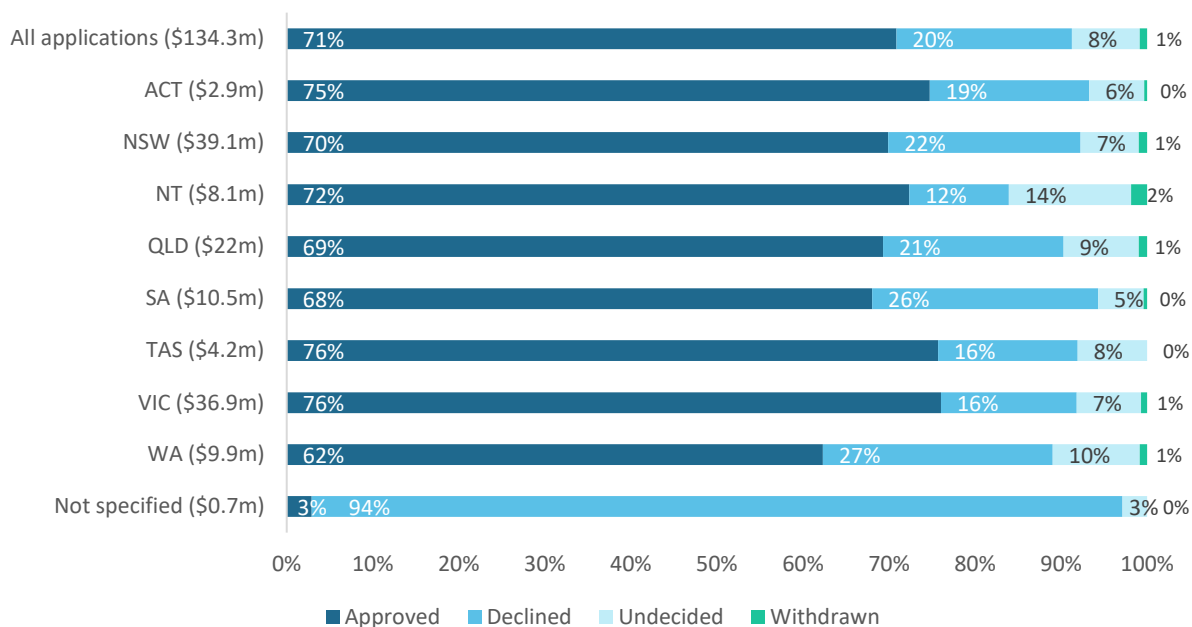
By state, the proportion of requested funds that was approved ranged from 62% (WA) to 87% (NSW). In terms of the distribution of approved funds, applications from NSW received approximately half (53%) of the total funding. Victoria and Queensland received 21% and 10% respectively.

Excluding Sector Investment applications*

	Approved	Declined	Undecided	Withdrawn	Total*
ACT	2,165,742	537,450	185,616	9,170	2,897,977
NSW	27,352,693	8,742,109	2,651,694	376,173	39,122,669
NT	5,887,431	943,939	1,155,081	150,649	8,137,100
QLD	15,223,198	4,612,075	1,920,355	211,799	21,967,427
SA	7,115,369	2,746,048	553,253	41,883	10,456,554
TAS	3,155,200	676,347	336,492		4,168,039
VIC	28,064,858	5,817,949	2,767,267	256,524	36,906,598
WA	6,185,126	2,651,254	1,004,680	83,294	9,924,353

Not specified	20,000	654,496	19,700		694,196
Total	95,169,618	27,381,667	10,594,138	1,129,492	134,274,914

* Applications for Content, Development & Operations, and Covid 19 Response grants only. Does not include applications for Sector Investment Grants.



Of the \$189 million of funds requested, 29% (\$55 million) was for Sector Investment grants. This accounted for less than 1% of total applications and the majority were from applicants located in NSW. If applications for Sector Investment grants are excluded, the total amount of funds requested was \$134 million, of which 71% (\$95 million) was approved. The proportion of funds approved ranges from 62% (WA) to 76% (Victoria and Tasmania). For NSW, 70% of the amount requested was approved.

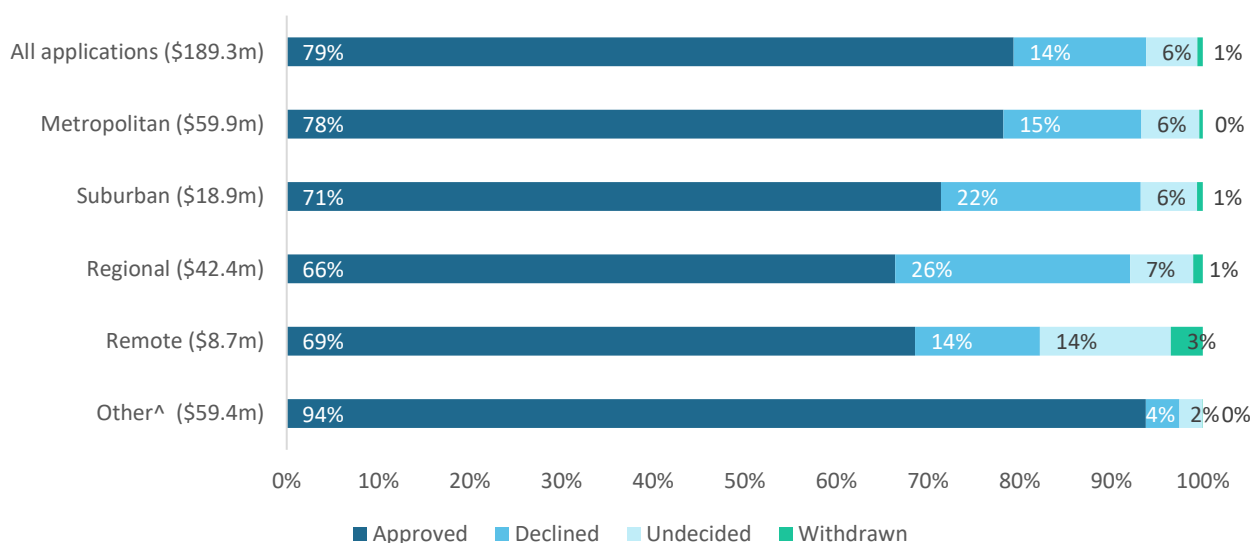
In terms of the distribution of approved funds, applications from NSW and Victoria were allocated 29% each. Queensland received 16% with the remaining states receiving less than 10% each.

Total Amount Requested (\$), by Decision and Location

Including Sector Investment applications

	Approved	Declined	Undecided	Withdrawn	Total
Metropolitan	46,863,864	9,011,108	3,791,906	232,198	59,899,076
Suburban	13,514,904	4,127,187	1,165,837	119,341	18,927,269
Regional	28,178,890	10,873,287	2,916,374	449,730	42,418,280
Remote	5,942,585	1,180,046	1,239,573	301,223	8,663,426
Other^	55,710,771	2,190,039	1,480,448	27,000	59,408,259
Total	150,211,014	27,381,667	10,594,138	1,129,492	189,316,310

^ Refers to applications where Location was listed as Broadcast Group or Sector Organisation, as well as applications where Location was not specified.



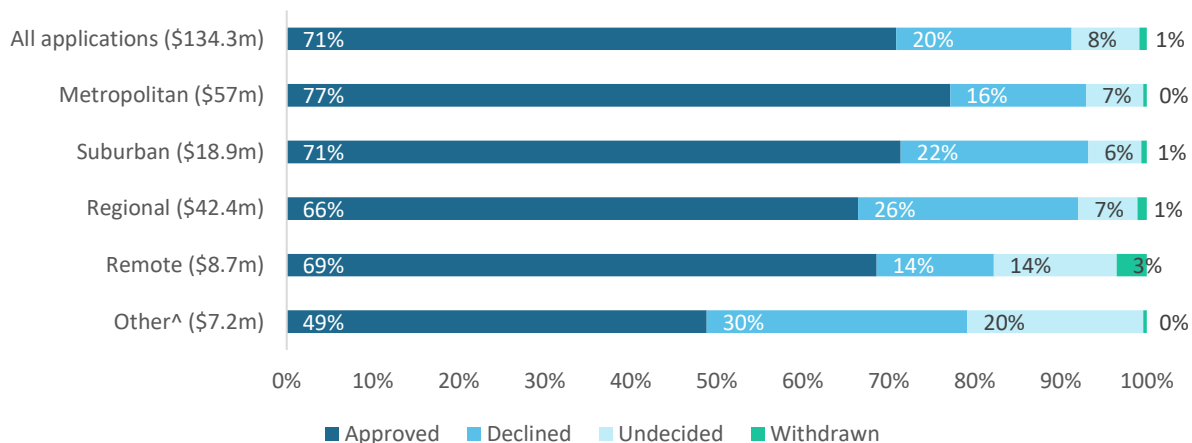
For applications submitted by applicants located in metropolitan locations, more than three-quarters (78%) of the amount requested was approved. The proportion of the amount requested that was approved was 71% for suburban applicants, 66% for regional locations and 69% for remote locations.

In terms of the distribution of approved funds by location, applications from applicants in metropolitan areas received 31% of approved funding. Regional applications received 19%, suburban 9% and remote 4%.

Excluding Sector Investment applications*

	Approved	Declined	Undecided	Withdrawn	Total
Metropolitan	44,004,437	9,011,108	3,791,906	232,198	57,039,649
Suburban	13,514,904	4,127,187	1,165,837	119,341	18,927,269
Regional	28,178,890	10,873,287	2,916,374	449,730	42,418,280
Remote	5,942,585	1,180,046	1,239,573	301,223	8,663,426
Other^	3,528,802	2,190,039	1,480,448	27,000	7,226,290
Total	95,169,618	27,381,667	10,594,138	1,129,492	134,274,914

*Applications for Content, Development & Operations, and Covid 19 Response grants only. Does not include applications for Sector Investment Grants.



^ Refers to applications where Location was listed as Broadcast Group or Sector Organisation, as well as applications where Location was not specified. * Applications for Content, Development & Operations, and Covid 19 Response grants only. Does not include applications for Sector Investment Grants.

Level of Funding Received for 'approved' Grant Applications

Of the 2,412 applications that were approved over the period 2017-18 to 2022-23:

- There were 880 applications (36%) where Total Amount Requested = Total Allocated.
- There were 168 applications (7%) where more money was allocated than requested. This included 111 applications where no money was requested but money was allocated. The Agency advised that there were situations in which this could occur, including for Covid 19 Crisis grants where applicants were not required to request an amount and a formula was used to calculate how much they would be granted. Another situation where this could have occurred is when applications for multiple grants were bundled together, thus boosting the amount allocated to a single grant.¹²
- There were 1,209 applications (56%) Total Allocated < Total Amount Requested. For these applications, on average 58% of the requested amount was allocated. For the purposes of this analysis, these applications are considered to be “partially funded”.
- There were 155 applications (6%) where the application was approved but no money was allocated (Total Allocated = 0).

For the 1,209 applications that were partially funded:

- On average, 58% of the amount requested is allocated.
- 11 applications were effectively fully funded (different between Total Amount Requested and Amount Allocated is negligible).
- 491 applications received less than or equal to 50% of the Total Amount Requested.

¹² The Agency advised that this no longer occurred and they now use one grant agreement and one set of data per grant.

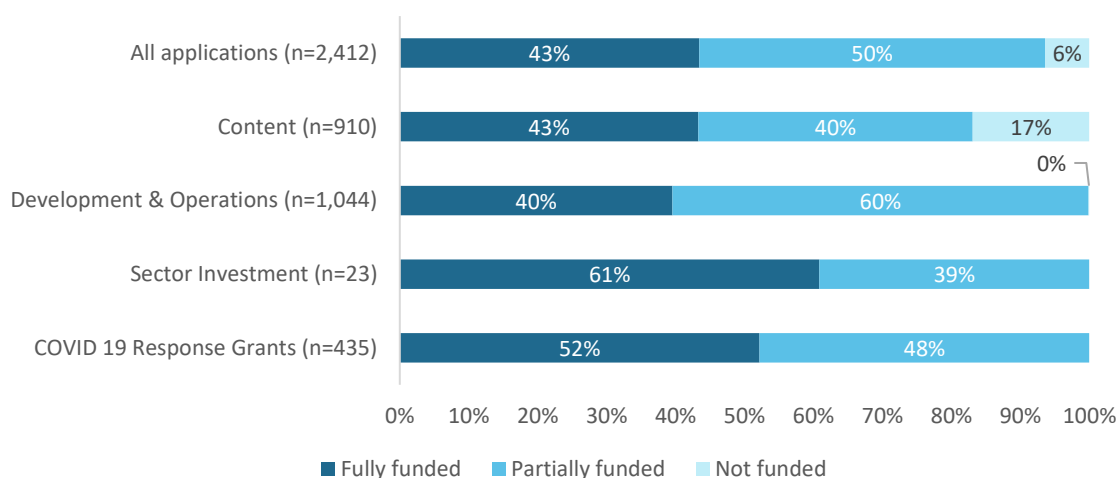
- 718 applications received more than 50% of the Total Amount Requested.
- The lowest percentage allocated was 0.5% of the Total Amount Requested (Total Amount Requested was \$93,250, Total Allocated was \$500).

Level of Funding Received for 'approved' Grant Applications, by Grant Program

	Fully funded	Partially funded	Not funded	Total
Content	394	362	154	910
Development & Operations	413	630	1	1,044
Sector Investment	14	9	-	23
COVID 19 Response Grants	227	208	-	435
Total	1,048	1,209	155	2,412

Notes: Fully funded refers to applications where the Total Allocated was greater than or equal to the Total Amount Requested. Partially funded refers to applications where the Total Allocated was less than the Total Amount Requested. Not funded refers to applications where the application was approved but no money was allocated.

Approximately two out of five Content and Development & Applications grants were fully funded (43% and 40% respectively). Nearly half of Covid 19 Response Grants and 61% of Sector Investment grants were fully funded.



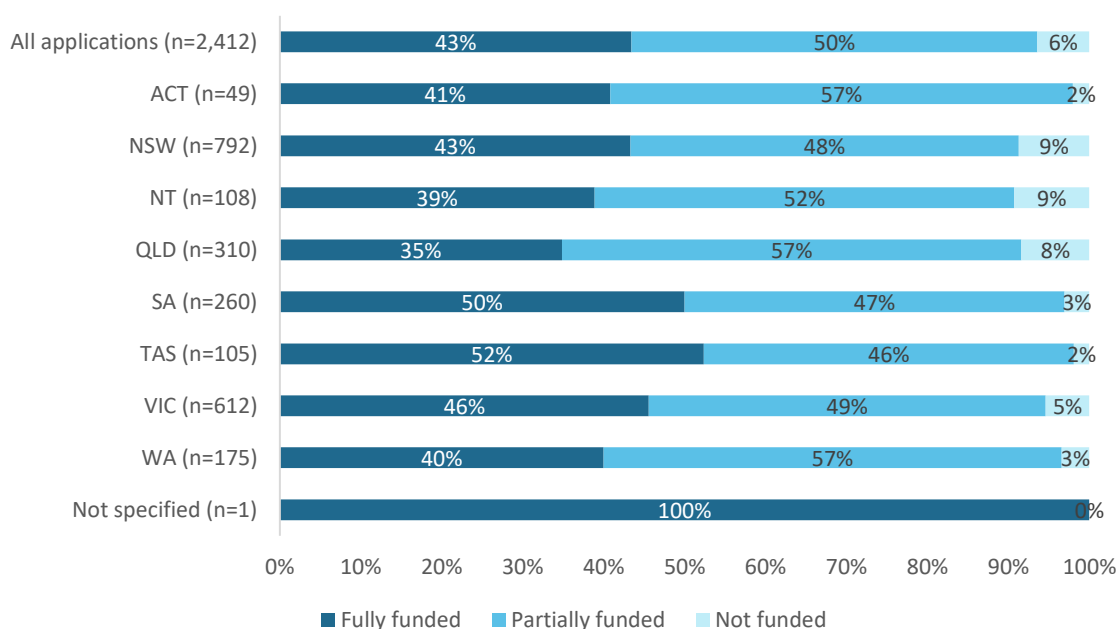
Level of Funding Received for 'approved' Grant Applications, by State

	Fully funded	Partially funded	Not funded	Total
ACT	20	28	1	49
NSW	343	380	69	792
NT	42	56	10	108
QLD	108	176	26	310
SA	130	122	8	260

TAS	55	48	2	105
VIC	279	300	33	612
WA	70	99	6	175
Not specified	1			1
Total	1048	1,209	155	2,412

Notes: Fully funded refers to applications where the Total Allocated was greater than or equal to the Total Amount Requested. Partially funded refers to applications where the Total Allocated was less than the Total Amount Requested. Not funded refers to applications where the application was approved but no money was allocated.

The states with the highest proportion of applications that were fully funded were Tasmania (52%) and South Australia (50%). The lowest was in Queensland, where 35% of applications were fully funded. In NSW, which accounted for the largest number of applications approved by state (792 applications), 43% were fully funded.



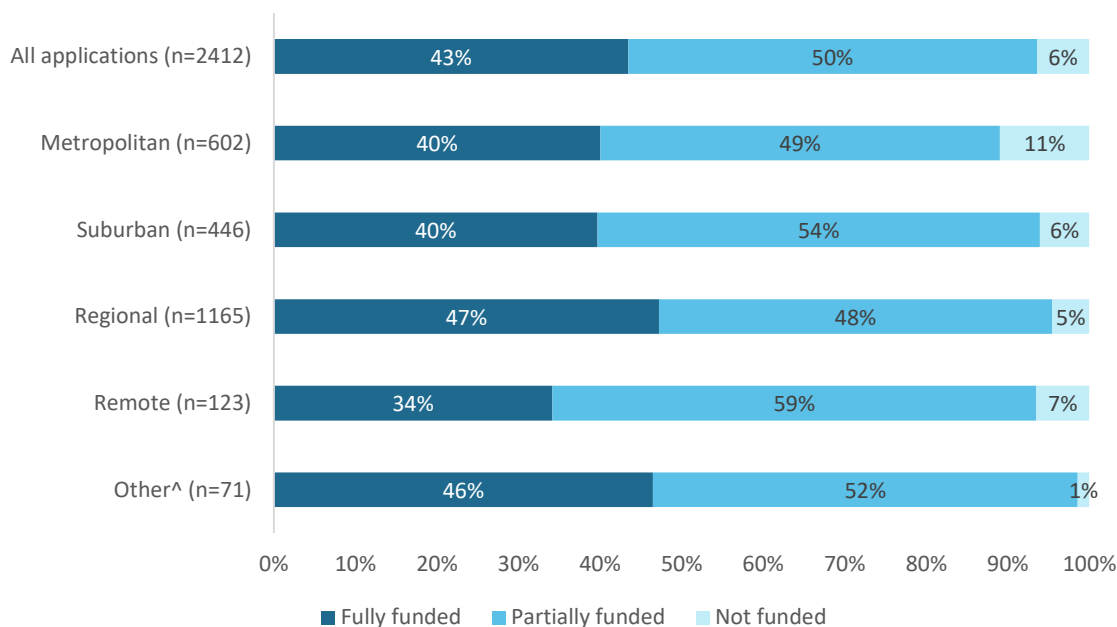
Level of Funding Received for 'approved' Grant Applications, by Location

	Fully funded	Partially funded	Not funded	Total
Metropolitan	241	295	66	602
Suburban	177	242	27	446
Regional	550	562	53	1,165
Remote	42	73	8	123
Other^	33	37	1	71
All applications	1,048	1,209	155	2,412

Notes: Fully funded refers to applications where the Total Allocated was greater than or equal to the Total Amount Requested. Partially funded refers to applications where the Total Allocated was less than the Total Amount Requested. Not funded refers to applications where the application was approved but no money was allocated.

applications where the application was approved but no money was allocated. ^ Refers to applications where Location was listed as Broadcast Group or Sector Organisation, as well as applications where Location was not specified.

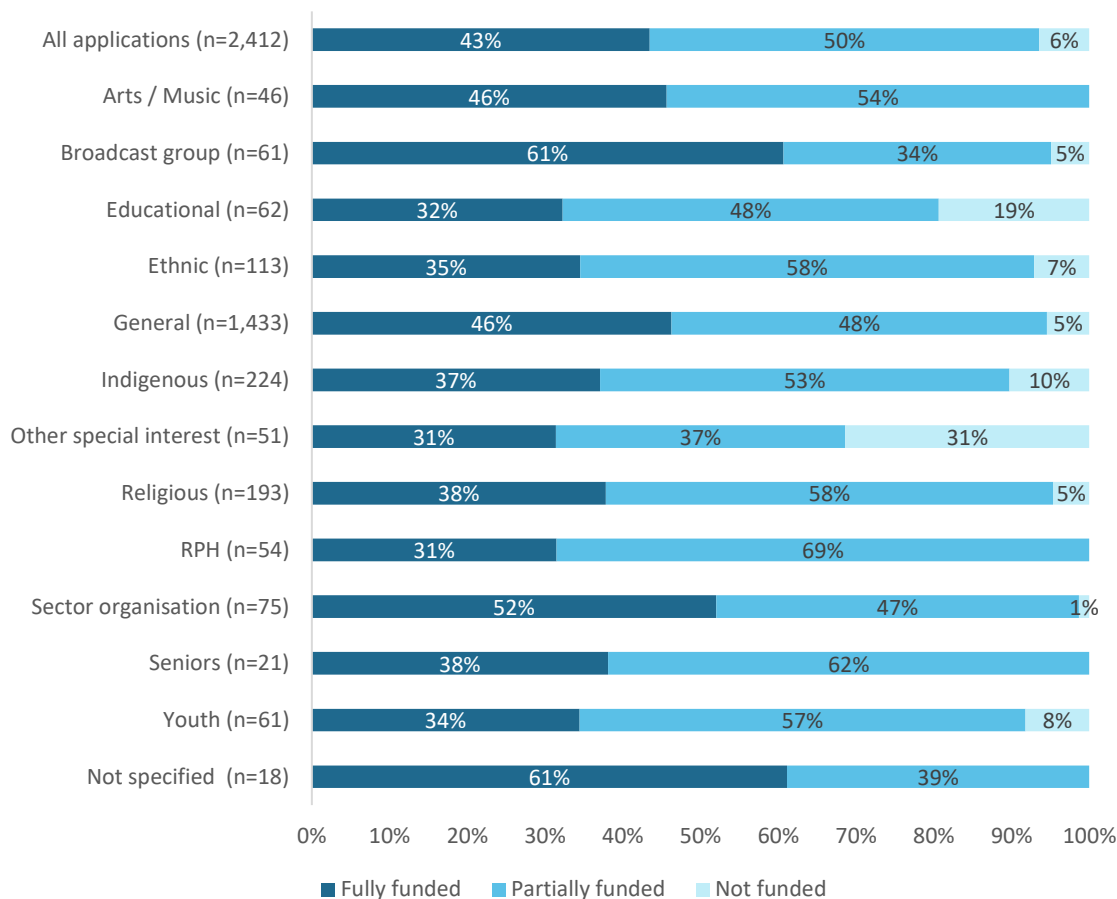
Two-fifths of applications in metropolitan and suburban regions were fully funded. Nearly half (47%) of applications in regional areas were fully funded. Approximately one-third (34%) of applications in remote areas were fully funded.



Level of Funding Received for 'approved' Grant Applications, by Community Interest

	Fully funded	Partially funded	Not funded	Total
Arts / Music	21	25		46
Broadcast group	37	21	3	61
Educational	20	30	12	62
Ethnic	39	66	8	113
General	663	692	78	1,433
Indigenous	83	118	23	224
Other special interest	16	19	16	51
Religious	73	111	9	193
RPH	17	37		54
Sector organisation	39	35	1	75
Seniors	8	13		21
Youth	21	35	5	61

Not specified	11	7		18
Total	1,048	1,209	155	2,412



Broadcast Groups and Sector Organisations received the highest proportion of fully funded applications by community interest group. (61% and 52% respectively).

Total Allocated (\$), by Grant Program and Year

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	n/a*	Total
Content	3,056,544	3,480,867	3,244,582	2,524,260	3,150,875	3,671,078		19,128,206
Development & Operations	6,063,277	6,915,537	8,696,519	4,380,448	5,100,163	6,237,711		37,393,655
Sector Investment	6,582,437	20,164,517	1,841,751	3,892,981	19,367,330	680,000	3,358,000	55,887,016
COVID 19 Response Grants				3,575,498				3,575,498
Total	15,702,258	30,560,921	13,782,852	14,373,187	27,618,367	10,588,789	3,358,000	115,984,374

* Refers to the following Grant Round funding which was not attributed to a specific financial year: Quick Response Grants, Enhanced National News Programming, and National Training – Industry Capacity & Skills Development.

Total Allocated (\$), by Grant Program and State

	Content	Development & Operations	Sector Investment	COVID 19 Response Grants	Total
ACT	101,322	999,760		65,071	1,166,153
NSW	5,991,887	10,314,215	53,171,546	1,421,747	70,899,395
NT	2,225,711	2,416,353		77,934	4,719,998
QLD	2,644,918	5,088,987	-	494,265	8,228,170
SA	1,314,308	3,240,996		334,058	4,889,362
TAS	322,729	1,527,339		135,697	1,985,765
VIC	5,200,826	11,505,451	2,715,470	818,378	20,240,125
WA	1,306,505	2,300,554		228,348	3,835,407
Not specified	20,000	-		-	20,000
Total	19,128,206	37,393,655	55,887,016	3,575,498	115,984,374

Total Allocated (\$), by Grant Program and Location

	Metropolitan	Suburban	Regional	Remote	Other^	Total
Content	8,120,752	2,698,314	5,141,175	2,459,008	708,957	19,128,206
COVID 19 Response Grants	673,814	784,406	1,960,114	152,164	5,000	3,575,498
Development & Operations	18,750,132	4,951,723	10,431,413	1,498,738	1,761,649	37,393,655
Sector Investment	2,715,470	-	-		53,171,546	55,887,016
Total	30,260,168	8,434,443	17,532,702	4,109,910	55,647,152	115,984,374

^ Refers to applications where Location was listed as Broadcast Group or Sector Organisation, as well as applications where Location was not specified.

Total Allocated (\$), by Grant Program and Community Interest

	Content	COVID 19 Response Grants	Development & Operations	Sector Investment	Total
Arts / Music	58,500	114,853	618,038		791,391
Broadcast group	901,474		-		901,474
Educational	1,466,542	69,571	558,048	-	2,094,161
Ethnic	1,992,194	132,147	6,930,195	-	9,054,536
General	7,365,007	2,252,636	14,148,943	-	23,766,585
Indigenous	3,890,669	226,645	2,832,912		6,950,226
Other special interest	1,341,950	49,471	498,387		1,889,808
Religious	334,977	499,589	1,746,378		2,580,944
RPH	300,432	80,711	7,018,288		7,399,431
Sector organisation	707,357	5,000	1,834,601	55,887,016	58,433,974
Seniors	-	55,300	174,335		229,635
Youth	537,389	89,575	994,656		1,621,620
Not specified	231,715	-	38,874		270,589
Total	19,128,206	3,575,498	37,393,655	55,887,016	115,984,374

Comparison of Total Amount Requested, Amount Allocated and Total Paid

Year	Total Amount Requested (\$)	Total Allocated (\$)	Total Paid (\$)
2017/18	42,013,571	15,762,227	15,596,104
2018/19	29,893,397	30,560,921	30,172,248
2019/20	25,513,336	13,782,852	13,335,120
2020/21	23,405,536	14,205,597	12,890,983
2021/22	46,617,654	27,638,367	18,928,816
2022/23	17,809,741	10,809,372	8,311,824
n/a*	4,063,075	3,786,360	3,514,360
Total	189,316,310	116,545,696	102,749,455

* Refers to the following Grant Round funding which is not attributed to a specific financial year: Covid-19 Quick Response Grants, Quick Response Grants, Enhanced National News Programming, and National Training – Industry Capacity & Skills Development.

Over the period 2017-19 to 2022-23, Total Paid is less than Total Allocated (difference of \$13.8 million). The Agency advised that this may be due to grants still being “in train” and not all of the allocated funds have been paid yet. They also noted that in some instances funds are returned.

Appendix D Online survey of community broadcasts and CBF grant recipients results

General

Table 6 Number of applications submitted in the past six years

Number of applications	%
1	10
2	6
3	12
4	14
5	9
6	11
7	4
8	5
9	2
10	7
12	5
13	2
14	2
15	4
16	1
18	1
19	1
20	2
22	1
24	1
25	1
26	1
30	3
NET 1-5	50
NET 6+	49
Not sure	1
Prefer not to say	1

Base: All applicants (n=200).

Source: S3. How many Community Broadcasting Foundation grant funding applications has your organisation submitted over the past 6 years (since 2017)?

Table 7 Number of grant applications approved in the past six years

Number of applications	%
0	6
1	14
2	10
3	12

Number of applications	%
4	14
5	8
6	7
7	2
8	4
9	3
10	4
11	2
12	4
14	2
15	1
16	1
18	1
19	2
20	1
22	1
24	1
25	1
30	1
NET 0-5	63
NET 6+	35
Not sure	2
Prefer not to say	1

Base: All applicants (n=200).

Source: S4. How many Community Broadcasting Foundation grant funding applications has your organisation had approved (been successful in receiving grant funding) over the past 6 years (since 2017)?

Table 8 Whether approved applications were partly or fully funded

Number of applications	%
All fully funded	22
Mostly fully funded	36
An equal mix of fully and partly funded	22
Mostly partly funded	14
All partly funded	6
Not sure	0
Prefer not to say	0

Base: Successful applicants (n=183).

Source: S4a. Of those Community Broadcasting Foundation grant funding applications that your organisation has had approved since 2017, were they fully or partly funded?

Table 9 Organisational priorities

Priorities	%
Maintaining core operations	87

Priorities	%
Creating quality content and production	84
Enabling positive volunteer / employee experiences	80
Stimulating and enriching local / diverse communities	74
Sharing stories with the community	74
Education and raising awareness of issues in the community	73
Increasing the amount of content we produce	60
Ensuring content is where listeners want to access it	58
Supporting partnerships	49
Receiving industry recognition	17
Other (please specify)	6

Base: All applicants (n=200).

Source: IMP1. Thinking about the mission and goals of your organisation in general, which of the following, if any, are priorities?

Table 10 Expectations of the grant funding that were not met by the program

Expectations	%
Successful grant application	6
Flexibility of funding	5
Support for multicultural programs, broadcasters or activities	4
Fair allocation of funding	4
Simplified or shortened application process	3
Support for a broader range of programs / stations / broadcasters	3
Larger grant funding amounts	3
Feedback on (successful/unsuccessful) application	2
Support for regional stations / broadcasters	2
More grant funding rounds per year	1
Timely response of outcomes	1
Support for indigenous programs, broadcasters or activities	1
Other (please specify)	5
None	69
Not sure	1
Prefer not to say	3

Base: Successful applicants (n=183).

Source: IMP3_Coded. What expectations did you have of the Community Broadcasting Foundation grant funding that were not met by the program?

Sustainability

Table 11 Sources of income apart from grant funding

	%
We have other major sources of income	36
We have other minor sources of income	62
None - we have no other sources of income, or are reliant on grant funding from the Community Broadcasting Foundation	3

Base: All applicants (n=200).

Source: SUS2. Which of the following statements best describe the extent to which your organisation has other sources of income, apart from grant funding from the Community Broadcasting Foundation?

Table 12 Whether diversifying sources of income is a priority for the organisation

	%
High priority	39
Priority	48
Neutral	9
Low priority	4
Not a priority at all	1
Prefer not to say	1

Base: All applicants (n=200).

Source: SUS3. To what extent is it a priority or not a priority for your organisation to diversify its sources of income in the future?

Table 13 How challenging it is to generate income streams for various areas

	Very challenging	Challenging	Neutral	Not challenging	Not at all challenging
	%	%	%	%	%
Salaries	41	27	20	3	8
Technical infrastructure or equipment	39	45	10	5	1
Marketing and promotion	23	42	24	11	1
Volunteer management	18	38	30	10	3
Community engagement	16	44	22	15	2
Content production	16	43	25	14	2
Governance and strategic planning	15	34	33	17	1
Training	15	39	29	14	3

Base: All applicants (n=200).

Source: SUS4. How challenging is it for your organisation to generate income stream(s) for each of the following areas?

Table 14 Further comments about applicants' experience with the grant funding program or process

	%
More support from CBF (applications / reviews / feedback)	7
Simplified or shortened application process	4
Funding for regional programs, broadcasters or activities	4
Broader application categories	4
Fair / equal access to funding	3
Funding for multicultural broadcasters or activities	3
Funding for Indigenous broadcasters or activities	2
Larger funding amounts	2
Implement a non-competitive funding model	1
More grant funding rounds per year	0
Other (please specify)	25
No, nothing else to add	54
Not sure	2

	%
Prefer not to say	4

Base: All applicants (n=200).

SUS5_Coded. Is there anything more you would like to share about your experiences with the Community Broadcasting Foundation grant funding program or process?

Futures

Unsuccessful applicants

Table 15 Reasons for unsuccessful application or ineligibility for funding for Development & Operations grants

	%
Application assessment score against the criteria was lower than other applicants	40
Not enough detail in the application	20
Measures of success unclear	17
The funding need was not clearly identified	11
Key supporting information was not provided in the application	8
Organisation's annual income is greater than \$700,000	6
No co-contribution from your organisation	4
Item ineligible for funding (e.g. membership fees)	4
Application for a salary did not demonstrate a plan to build financial sustainability	4
Budget unclear / didn't balance	3
Project / activities outside the grant period	3
Funding outcomes/activities didn't align with your organisation's strategic priorities	3
Letters of support from partners unclear on benefits or don't demonstrate commitment to the project / activity	1
Other (specify)	14
I didn't apply for Development and Operation funding	15
Not sure	3
Prefer not to say	2

Base: Unsuccessful applicants and recipients who received partial funding (n=181).

Source: UN2a. Thinking about the most recent time you had one of these outcomes for Development & Operations funding, please indicate the reason you were ineligible or the main areas for improvement communicated to you by the Community Broadcasting Foundation.

Table 16 Reasons for unsuccessful application or ineligibility for funding for Specialist Radio Programming or Content grants

	%
Specialist radio programming business case not well enough explained	11
Didn't meet accessibility requirements	6
Didn't demonstrate engagement with new and diverse audiences	6
Established program receiving long-term content funding didn't develop own income source	4
Didn't demonstrate creativity and excellence in content production	4
Established program didn't demonstrate outcomes and impact to date	4
Didn't consider formats for online audiences	4
Didn't meet gender diversity requirements	2

	%
I didn't apply for Specialist Radio Programming or Content funding	57
Not sure	8
Prefer not to say	4

Base: Unsuccessful applicants and recipients who received partial funding (n=181).

Source: UN2b. Thinking about the most recent time you had one of these outcomes for Specialist Radio Programming or Content funding, please indicate the reason you were ineligible or the main areas for improvement communicated to you by the Community Broadcasting Foundation.

Non applicants

Table 17 Whether non-applicants are aware of the grant funding program

	<i>n</i>
Yes	3
No	1

Base: Non applicants (n=4).

Source: Z1. Are you aware of the Community Broadcasting Foundation grant funding program?

Table 18 Reasons for not having submitted an application for grant funding

Verbatim response

The questions are difficult, there was software issues on the CBF side for logging in and helping me.

We have never had the need to seek grant money for our station, but we will be in the future be looking for funding for an ongoing position of a journalist.

The CBF has not made us aware of the availability of funding or the circumstances in which <station name> might qualify to access funding. Through our own approaches to the CBAA, we have discovered that funding may be available to help offset the costs of <station name> transitioning in 18-24 months' time to DAB+ digital free-to-air transmission.

Base: Non applicants who are aware of the Community Broadcasting Foundation grant program (n=3).

Source: Z2. Please explain the main reason(s) that you haven't submitted an application for grant funding as part of the Community Broadcasting Foundation?

Table 19 Whether non-applicants are aware of the grant funding program after reading a description of the program

	<i>n</i>
Yes	1
No	0

Base: Non applicants who indicated they were not aware of the Community Broadcasting Program when no definition was provided (n=1).

Source: Z3. Based on this description, are you aware of the Community Broadcasting Foundation grant funding program?

Table 20 Whether non-applicants are interested in applying for grant funding in the next application round

	<i>n</i>
Yes	4
No	0

Base: All non applicants (n=4).

Source: Z4. Would you be interested in submitting an application for the Community Broadcasting Foundation grant funding program in the next application round?

Table 21 Areas non-applicants would want funding for

Verbatim response
Equipment Management pay.
Journalism.
Transmission infrastructure. Our FM transmitters are 20 year-old analogue units that are at end-of-life.
Outside broadcasting infrastructure.

Base: All non applicants (n=4).

Source: Z5. What areas would you be interested in applying for funding?

Appendix E Online survey materials for communication activities and maximising participation

A.1 Primary approach emails (from CBF and CBAA)



Australian Government
Department of Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts

Invitation to participate in the evaluation of the Community Broadcasting Program

06 April 2023

Dear Community Broadcaster

The Government has a long record of supporting community broadcasting, with financial support provided through the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP). The CBP is a grants program administered by the Community Broadcasting Foundation. The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts (the Department) is the Australian Government agency that oversees the CBP. As part of that role, we periodically evaluate the performance of the CBP, and the assistance provided to licensees to ensure value for money and that the needs of community broadcasters and listeners are met.

I write to encourage your organisation to participate in the evaluation of the CBP soon to be conducted by the Social Research Centre on behalf of the Department. You will receive an invitation to participate in an online survey by email within the next 10 days. The email will be from the Social Research Centre. It will take around 10 minutes of your time to complete the survey. You will be asked questions about your experiences with the CBP and your ideas about how Government assistance can best support the future directions and needs of community broadcasters.

Insights gained through survey responses will contribute to an independent evaluation of the grants program informing our understanding of organisations that are eligible to access financial support through the CBP. The evaluation is part of a broader review of the sustainability of the community broadcasting sector which is being undertaken by the Department.

More information about the research is on the next page including what it means to be involved and how you can opt-out if you choose not to participate.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Your participation in the survey will mean the Department best understands how to support community media organisations around Australia to communicate, connect, and share knowledge through independent radio, television, and digital media.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam Carlon".

Adam Carlon

Assistant Secretary, Media Industry & Sustainability Branch
Online Safety, Media and Platforms Division

About the research

The evaluation of the grant program will also inform the Roadmap2033 project which is jointly sponsored by the Community Broadcasting Foundation and the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia. For more information about the review, please visit the Department's website [Community Broadcasting Program | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts](#).

The Department has engaged the Social Research Centre to undertake an evaluation of the CBP including a survey of licensees so that we better understand the experience of community broadcasters and to hear your ideas. As part of the research, the Social Research Centre will analyse survey data to provide insights into community broadcasters' experience. This information will help us to better understand the experience of community broadcasters. The Department will use this research to evaluate the CBP and understand how to best support community broadcasting. The survey will run during April 2023.

How are people selected to participate in the survey?

The Department has provided contact details of community broadcasters to the Social Research Centre for the purposes of approaching and conducting the survey. All eligible contacts will be invited to participate.

About the Social Research Centre

The Social Research Centre is a fully accredited research company which complies with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and has ISO quality accreditation.

Your privacy

The Social Research Centre is collecting your personal information on behalf of the Department. As part of the survey, we will conduct an analysis of available application information and your survey responses. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the survey at any time. We would really value your feedback, however if you would prefer not to participate, please call 1800 023 040.

All feedback obtained through the survey will be deidentified and anonymised and data will be handled in compliance with the *Privacy Act 1988*. Your information will not be disclosed unless required by law. At the end of the research your information will be de-identified and no-one will be able to link your answers to you. For further information about the handling of your information please visit: www.srcentre.com.au/privacy

Further information

If you would like further information or have any queries about the research, please visit www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/media-industry-programs/community-broadcasting-program > or contact the evaluation team by email on communitybroadcasting@infrastructure.gov.au. You can also contact the Social Research Centre on 1800 023 040 or cbp-survey@srcentre.com.au.

CBAA newsletter

Check Your Inbox

Government Evaluation of the Community Broadcasting Program

Community Broadcasting Licensees will be contacted in the coming days and invited to participate in the evaluation of the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP) – the grants program administered by the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF).

The research is being conducted by the Social Research Centre on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts – the Australian Government agency that oversees the CBP. The evaluation is part of a broader review of the sustainability of the community broadcasting sector which is being undertaken by the Department.

The Department has provided contact details of community broadcasters to the Social Research Centre for the purposes of approaching stations about the survey being run throughout April. Eligible participants will be asked questions about their experiences with the CBP and for ideas about how Government assistance can best support the future directions and needs of community broadcasters.

The CBAA encourages members to participate in the evaluation which is important to the program ensure the program delivers value for money and that the needs of community broadcasters and listeners are met. Insights from the evaluation will also be shared with the CBAA and CBF to inform sector planning through [Roadmap 2033](#).

For more information about the review, please visit the Department's website: [Community Broadcasting Program | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts](#)

Email from CBAA

I'm emailing to let you know that the Australian Government is conducting a review of the Community Broadcasting Program. This is the grants program administered by the Community Broadcasting Foundation.

This review is an important opportunity to help shape the future of Government funding in support of community broadcasting and I encourage all stations to participate in this process.

The [Social Research Centre](#) is conducting the research on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts – the Australian Government agency that oversees the funding program. The evaluation is part of a broader review of the sustainability of the community broadcasting sector which is being undertaken by the department.

Social Research Centre will be contacting all community broadcasters in the coming weeks to participate in a short, ten-minute survey.

The email is likely to go to the email address 'Station name' uses to apply for grants through the CBF, or a generic station email address. Keep an eye on your inbox and if you don't hear from Social Research Centre, you can reach out via 1800 023 040 or cbp-survey@srcentre.com.au to make sure your views are heard.

To find out more about the evaluation and your participation, please read [this letter](#) from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts.

Insights from the evaluation will also be shared with the CBAA and CBF to inform sector planning through [Roadmap 2033](#).

A.2 Survey invitation email (Applicants / Grant Recipients)

SUBJECT LINE: Invitation to participate in the evaluation of the Community Broadcasting Program



Australian Government
**Department of Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts**



<00> April 2023

Dear grant applicant,

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts (the Department) invites you to take part in a survey about your experiences with the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP). The CBP is a grants program administered by the Community Broadcasting Foundation.

You were contacted last week via the Community Broadcasting Foundation – you can see this letter here <HYPERLINK>.

Take the survey here: {%%srvylink_1%%}

The survey will take around 10 minutes of your time. You will be asked questions about your experiences with the grant program and your ideas about how Government assistance can best support the future directions and needs of community broadcasters.

More information about the research is on the next page including what it means to be involved and how you can opt-out if you choose not to participate.

Your participation in the survey will mean the Department best understands how to support community broadcasters around Australia to communicate, connect, and share knowledge through independent radio, television, and digital media.

Yours sincerely

Social Research Centre (on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts)

Trouble accessing the survey? Try copying and pasting the URL below into your browser.

%%srylink_1%%

About the research

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts (the Department) is the Australian Government agency that oversees the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP). As part of that role, we periodically evaluate the performance of the CBP, and the assistance provided to licensees to ensure value for money and that the needs of community broadcasters and listeners are met.

The CBP is administered by the Community Broadcasting Foundation and is a key government commitment that provides vital support to the community broadcasting sector. The evaluation of the grant program will also inform the Roadmap2033 project which is jointly sponsored by the Community Broadcasting Foundation and the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia. For more information about the review, please visit the Department's website [Community Broadcasting Program | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts](#).

The Department has engaged the Social Research Centre to undertake an evaluation of the CBP including a survey of licensees so that we better understand the experience of community broadcasters and to hear your ideas. As part of the research, the Social Research Centre will analyse survey data to provide insights into community broadcasters' experience. This information will help us to better understand the experience community broadcasters. The Department will use this research to evaluate the CBP and understand how to best support community broadcasting. The survey will run during April 2023.

How are people selected to participate in the survey?

The Department has provided contact details of community broadcasters to the Social Research Centre for the purposes of approaching and conducting the survey. All eligible contacts will be invited to participate.

About the Social Research Centre

The Social Research Centre is a fully accredited research company which complies with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and has ISO quality accreditation.

Your privacy

The Social Research Centre is collecting your personal information on behalf of the Department. As part of the survey, we will conduct an analysis of available application information and your survey responses. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the survey at any time. We would really value your feedback, however if you would prefer not to participate, please call 1800 023 040.

All feedback obtained through the survey will be deidentified and anonymised and data will be handled in compliance with the *Privacy Act 1988*. Your information will not be disclosed unless required by law. At the end of the research your information will be de-identified and

no-one will be able to link your answers to you. For further information about the handling of your information please visit: www.srcentre.com.au/privacy

Further information

If you would like further information or have any queries about the research, please visit www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/media-industry-programs/community-broadcasting-program or contact the evaluation team by email on communitybroadcasting@infrastructure.gov.au. You can also contact the Social Research Centre on 1800 023 040 or cbp-survey@srcentre.com.au.

A.3 Survey invitation email (Eligibles / not submitted a grant application)

SUBJECT LINE: Invitation to participate in the evaluation of the Community Broadcasting Program



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts



<00> April 2023

Dear broadcaster,

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts (the Department) invites you to take part in a survey about your experiences with the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP). The CBP is a grants program administered by the Community Broadcasting Foundation.

You were contacted last week via the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia – you can see this letter here <HYPERLINK>.

Take the survey here: {%%srvylink_1%%}

The survey will take around 10 minutes of your time. You will be asked questions about your experiences with the grant program and your ideas about how Government assistance can best support the future directions and needs of community broadcasters.

More information about the research is on the next page including what it means to be involved and how you can opt-out if you choose not to participate.

Your participation in the survey will mean the Department best understands how to support community broadcasters around Australia to communicate, connect, and share knowledge through independent radio, television, and digital media.

Yours sincerely

Social Research Centre (on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts)

Trouble accessing the survey? Try copying and pasting the URL below into your browser.

%%srylink_1%%

About the research

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts (the Department) is the Australian Government agency that oversees the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP). As part of that role, we periodically evaluate the performance of the CBP, and the assistance provided to licensees to ensure value for money and that the needs of community broadcasters and listeners are met.

The CBP is administered by the Community Broadcasting Foundation and is a key government commitment that provides vital support to the community broadcasting sector. The evaluation of the grant program will also inform the Roadmap2033 project which is jointly sponsored by the Community Broadcasting Foundation and the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia. For more information about the review, please visit the Department's website [Community Broadcasting Program | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts](#).

The Department has engaged the Social Research Centre to undertake an evaluation of the CBP including a survey of licensees so that we better understand the experience of community broadcasters and to hear your ideas. As part of the research, the Social Research Centre will analyse survey data to provide insights into community broadcasters' experience. This information will help us to better understand the experience community broadcasters. The Department will use this research to evaluate the CBP and understand how to best support community broadcasting. The survey will run during April 2023.

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The Department has provided contact details of community broadcasters to the Social Research Centre for the purposes of approaching and conducting the survey. All eligible contacts will be invited to participate.

About the Social Research Centre

The Social Research Centre is a fully accredited research company which complies with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and has ISO quality accreditation.

Your privacy

The Social Research Centre is collecting your personal information on behalf of the Department. As part of the survey, we will conduct an analysis of available application information and your survey responses. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the survey at any time. We would really value your feedback, however if you would prefer not to participate, please call 1800 023 040.

All feedback obtained through the survey will be deidentified and anonymised and data will be handled in compliance with the *Privacy Act 1988*. Your information will not be disclosed unless required by law. At the end of the research your information will be de-identified and

no-one will be able to link your answers to you. For further information about the handling of your information please visit: www.srcentre.com.au/privacy

Further information

If you would like further information or have any queries about the research, please visit www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/media-industry-programs/community-broadcasting-program or contact the evaluation team by email on communitybroadcasting@infrastructure.gov.au. You can also contact the Social Research Centre on 1800 023 040 or cbp-survey@srcentre.com.au.

A.4 CBF email to align with survey invitation email

Subject: Survey of Community Broadcasters

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts (DITRDCA) is the Australian Government department that provides CBF funding to distribute to the community media sector via our grants programs.

The Social Research Centre is conducting the 'Survey of Community Broadcasters' on behalf of the DITRDCA. CBF provided your contact details to undertake the survey and we are fully supportive of this research.

The survey invitation was sent today. If you haven't received it let the Social Research Centre know on 1800 023 040 or cbp-survey@srcentre.com.au.

Your participation in the survey will mean the Australian Government best understands how to support community media organisations around Australia to communicate, connect, and share knowledge through independent radio, television, and digital media. It's voluntary and you can opt out of the survey or reminder emails but we hope you will participate so the Australian Government can better understand the experience of community broadcasters and to hear your ideas.

A.5 Reminder email 1 (applicants and eligible)

SUBJECT LINE: Let us know your experiences with the Community Broadcasting Program



Australian Government
**Department of Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts**



**Social
Research
Centre**

Dear <%%grant applicant%% / %%broadcaster%%>,

Last week we invited you to complete the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP) survey – the only independent source of national data on broadcasters’ experiences with the CBP. Your input is very important as this helps to ensure the results of the survey accurately represent the views of community broadcasters across Australia.

Insights gained through survey responses will contribute to an independent evaluation of the CBP. Specifically, the survey responses will inform our understanding of future funding or support opportunities for licensees and organisations who are eligible to access financial support through the CBP. The survey will take 10 minutes and we really appreciate your time.

Take the survey {%%srvylink_1%%}

Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the survey at any time. If you would prefer opt out, please call 1800 023 040. Your information will not be disclosed unless required by law. At the end the research your information will be de-identified and no-one will be able to link your answers to you.

If you would like further information or have any queries about the research, please visit www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/media-industry-programs/community-broadcasting-program or contact the evaluation team by email on communitybroadcasting@infrastructure.gov.au. You can also contact the Social Research Centre on 1800 023 040 or cbp-survey@srcentre.com.au.

Thank you in advance for being part of the CBP survey.

Yours sincerely

Social Research Centre (on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts)

Trouble accessing the survey? Try copying and pasting the URL below into your browser.

{%%srvylink_1%%}

A.6 Reminder email 2 (applicants and eligible)

SUBJECT LINE: Help shape future Community broadcasting in Australia



Australian Government
**Department of Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts**



Dear <%%grant applicant%% / %%broadcaster%%>,

You are invited to take part in a survey [%%about your experience with applying for a grant under%%] (IF GRANT APPLICANT) [%%of organisations who are eligible to access financial support through%%] (ELGIBLES) the Community Development Program (CBP) so that we better understand the experience of community broadcasters and to hear your ideas.

[Start survey {%%srvylink_1%%}](#)

We wrote to you earlier in the month and realise that this may be a busy time. It is still important that we continue to collect feedback on licensees' experiences with the CBP.

The survey takes about 10 minutes and includes questions about your experience and ideas for the future. Community media organisations around Australia communicate, connect, and share knowledge through independent radio, television, and digital media. Participation in the CBP survey is the perfect way to give back to the industry and help inform what future government support looks like.

We would really value your feedback, however if you would prefer not to participate, please call 1800 023 040.

More information about the research is below, including contact phone numbers if you would like further information or have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Social Research Centre (on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts)

Trouble accessing the survey? Try copying and pasting the URL below into your browser.
[%%srvylink_1%%](#)

Further information

If you would like further information or have any queries about the research, please visit www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/media-industry-programs/community-broadcasting-program or contact the evaluation team by email on communitybroadcasting@infrastructure.gov.au. You can also contact the Social Research Centre on 1800 023 040 or cbp-survey@srcentre.com.au.

A.7 Reminder email 3 (applicants and eligible)

SUBJECT LINE: Final chance to have your say in the Community Broadcasting Program survey



Australian Government
Department of Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development,
Communications and the Arts



Social
Research
Centre

Dear <%%grant applicant%% / %%broadcaster%%>,

This is the very last email we will send you about the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP) survey. We appreciate that you may be busy but it's important for the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts (the Department) to get your feedback about your experiences with the CBP. The evaluation is part of a broader review of the sustainability of the community broadcasting sector which is being undertaken by the Department.

Completing the survey will take most people 10 minutes and is the best way to ensure your voice helps inform our understanding of organisations who are eligible to access financial support through the CBP.

It is important that you participate even if you have not applied for a grant in the past through the CBP.

Take the survey {%%srvylink_1%%}

Remember, complete the survey before 14 May 2023.

More information about the research is provided on our website {HYPERLINK:
www.srcentre.com.au/our-research/cbp-survey}.

Thank you in advance for being part of the independent evaluation of the CBP.

Yours sincerely

Social Research Centre (on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts)

Trouble accessing the survey? Try copying and pasting the URL below into your browser.

{%%srvylink_1%%}

Further information

If you would like further information or have any queries about the research, please visit www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/media-industry-programs/community-broadcasting-program or contact the evaluation team by email on communitybroadcasting@infrastructure.gov.au. You can also contact the Social Research Centre on 1800 023 040 or cbp-survey@srcentre.com.au.

A.8 CBF email to align with reminder email 3

Subject: Last chance to have your say on CBF funding

The Survey of Community Broadcasters closes on Sunday. As a community media organisation, you are in a unique position to contribute your views and experience to the Australian Government as part of the Survey of Community Broadcasters. This is the last opportunity for you to pass on your thoughts and experiences and help shape future government support. You should find the email in your inbox from cbp-survey@srcentre.com.au. Thank you in advance for participating.

A.9 Website materials

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, and the Arts (the Department) is the Australian Government agency that oversees the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP). As part of that role, we periodically evaluate the performance of the CBP, and the assistance provided to licensees to ensure value for money and that the needs of community broadcasters and listeners are met. The evaluation of the grant program will also inform the Roadmap2033 project which is jointly sponsored by the Community Broadcasting Foundation and the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia. For more information about the review, please visit the Department's website [Community Broadcasting Program | Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts](#).

You can also view the approach email we sent to you [here](#) or [here](#).

About the research

The Department has engaged the Social Research Centre to undertake an evaluation of the CBP including a survey of grant applicants and eligible broadcasters so that we better understand the experience of community broadcasters and to hear your ideas. As part of the research, the Social Research Centre will analyse survey data to provide insights into community broadcasters' experience. This information will help us to better understand the experience community broadcasters. The Department will use this research to evaluate the CBP and understand how to best support community broadcasting.

In April, you may be asked to participate an online survey (approximately 10 minutes depending on your experiences).

Insights gained through survey responses will contribute to an independent evaluation of the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP) informing our understanding of organisations who are eligible to access financial support through the CBP. The evaluation is part of a broader review of the sustainability of the community broadcasting sector which is being undertaken by the Department.

Further information is available on the Department's website.

How are people selected to participate in the survey?

The Department has provided contact details of community broadcasters to the Social Research Centre for the purposes of approaching and conducting the survey. All eligible contacts will be invited to participate.

Although the Department values your views and would very much like your input and feedback, you do not have to take part in this research; it is your choice. If you are happy to receive a survey invitation, you don't need to do anything for now. The Department would really value your feedback, however if you would prefer not to participate, please free call 1800 023 040.

About the Social Research Centre

The Social Research Centre is a fully accredited research company which complies with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and has ISO quality accreditation.

Your privacy

The Social Research Centre is collecting your personal information on behalf of the Department. As part of the survey, we will conduct an analysis of available application information and your survey responses. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the survey at any time. We would really value your feedback, however if you would prefer not to participate, please call 1800 023 040.

All feedback obtained through the survey will be deidentified and anonymised and data will be handled in compliance with the *Privacy Act 1988*. Your information will not be disclosed unless required by law. At the end of the research your information will be de-identified and no-one will be able to link your answers to you. For further information about the handling of your information please visit: www.srcentre.com.au/privacy

Further information

If you would like further information or have any queries about the research, please visit <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/media-communications-arts/media-industry-programs/community-broadcasting-program> or contact the Department at communitybroadcasting@infrastructure.gov.au or on 02 6271 1142. You can also contact the Social Research Centre on 1800 023 040 or cbp-survey@srcentre.com.au.

Appendix F Qualitative research materials and instrumentation

Qualitative research information sheet

Evaluation of the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP)

Stakeholder discussions

Research Information Sheet

Thank you for taking the time to read this Research Information Sheet. This document tells you about the evaluation and explains what is involved in participating in a research discussion. Please read this information carefully and feel free to ask any questions before taking part in the research.

What is this research project about?

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts has commissioned the Social Research Centre to conduct an evaluation of the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP). The CBP is a grants program administered by the Community Broadcasting Foundation. The primary aim of the evaluation is to understand the effectiveness of the Community Broadcasting Program (CBP) grant program by exploring questions of whether the funding is:

- delivered effectively and efficiently
- addressing identified issues in the sector
- meeting the sector's needs
- responsive to emergent or future needs of the sector

As part of this evaluation, the Social Research Centre will be conducting research discussions with representatives from the community broadcasting sector. Insights from these discussions will help to inform our understanding about how well the funding works for the sector.

Who is conducting the research?

Discussions will be conducted by researchers from the Social Research Centre on behalf of the Department. The Social Research Centre is an independent Australian social research organisation based in Melbourne and owned by Australian National University.

Why am I being asked to take part?

You have been invited to participate as you have been identified as a stakeholder in the Australian community broadcasting sector. Please note participation in this interview is completely voluntary.

What does participation in this research involve?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to share your insights on the funding of the community broadcasting sector with a researcher from the project team. As we are interested in hearing about your experience, there are no right or wrong answers.

Interviews will be conducted by videoconference (MS Teams) or telephone and will take up to 60 minutes.

What are the possible benefits?

Taking part in this research is an opportunity for you to share your perspectives on the sector's funding. Your feedback will help to shape our understanding of whether the funding meets the sector's needs now and into the future.

What about my privacy?

Research discussions are private and confidential. Insights gathered during the discussions will be anonymised and your responses will not be shared with the Department. With your permission, we will audio-record our discussion and later transcribe it for analysis purposes. All data will be de-identified in any report arising from this research so that no names or other identifying information can be attributed back to you.

How will my information be stored?

All information collected will be stored under secure password protected conditions at The Social Research Centre and will only be accessible to members of the research team. All information will be handled in compliance with the Privacy Act 1988.

More information, queries, or concerns:

If you have any queries or concerns about the research, please contact:

Dr. Stephen Cuttriss, Senior Research Consultant

Evaluation and Qualitative Research Unit, The Social Research Centre

Email: stephen.cuttriss@srcentre.com.au

Qualitative research consent form

Evaluation of the Community Broadcasting Program

Research Discussion Consent Form

- I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.
- I consent to take part in this study, which involves participating in a discussion with researchers from the Social Research Centre.
- I consent to the discussion being audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis purposes.
- I understand that the discussion is confidential and that my details will not be shared outside of the Social Research Centre project team.
- I understand that no information I provide will be attributed to me in any reporting.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time from the study (and do not need to give a reason for this).



Evaluation of the Community Broadcasting Program

Qualitative Stakeholder Consultations

Discussion Guide

Final version – 20 April 2023

Background note: the guide should be viewed as an aide-memoir to ensure exploration of key topics, rather than a list of set questions that will be read verbatim or need to be answered sequentially. The objective of these discussions is to gain in-depth insights relating to the four evaluation domains (utility, program delivery, impact and future issues) from the perspective of sector representatives and stakeholders.

Set-up and consent (5mins)

- **Thank you** for making time to speak with us about the CBP funding.
- **Introduce** interviewers. The Social Research Centre (SRC) is conducting the evaluation on behalf of the DITRDA.
- **Explain project.** The SRC is conducting consultations with stakeholders and representatives from the community broadcasting sector to understand:
 - The sector's awareness and understanding of CBP
 - How organisations and broadcasters use the funding
 - How well the funding program works overall for organisations and broadcasters.
 - Understanding the outcomes for organisations and broadcasters as a result of the funding
 - The key issues and needs for organisations and broadcasters in the sector.
- **Use of the discussion.** With your permission we will take a recording of the discussion. This recording and any notes taken will be stored securely with access limited to those working on the project. All findings from the discussion will be de-identified and will be used to inform the discovery stage of the evaluation.
- Any questions before starting?
- Seek informed consent, then start recording and note-taking.

Introduction (5 mins)

- To begin with, could you please introduce yourself, and tell us a little bit about your organisation and the main responsibilities of your role?
 - Where is your organisation currently located?
 - What are the main activities of your organisation?
 - Who is the target audience/community of your organisation?
 - (If non-grantee) What services/activities does your organisation undertake on behalf of the sector?
 - How big is your organisation in terms of paid employees and volunteers?
- Has your organisation applied for CBF funding recently or in the past?

Utility (10 mins)

- Was your organisation aware of CBF funding?
 - If so, how did your organisation become aware of CBF funding?
- What is your understanding of the funding provided by CBF to the community broadcasting sector?
- **(If applied)** Can you tell me about your most recent experience applying for funding through CBF?
 - Which stream of funding has your organisation applied for funding through? (*prompt: Development & Operations, Content, Sector wide investment*)
 - Did you receive full or partial funding for this activity?
 - What was the main motivation for your organisation to apply for CBF funding?
- How did you find different aspects of the process, including:
 - Application process
 - Assessment of your application
 - Notification of funding decisions
 - Transparency of funding decisions
 - Funding agreements and management
 - (Where partial funding only) Rescoping of funded activity in light of partial funding
 - Acquittal process and reporting outcomes
 - Receiving feedback

- **(If not applied)** What are the main reasons you have not (recently) applied for CBF funding?
Prompt: Under what circumstances might your organisation apply for funding?
- **(All)** In your organisation's experience, what possible improvements could be made to CBF funding to better enable your organisation/the sector to apply and access funding?

Program delivery (15 minutes)

- What role does CBF funding play for the sector more broadly? *Prompt: for individual broadcasters, for sector as a whole, for Australian communities, for organisations like yours?*
- What are your organisation's main needs in terms of funding?
- **(If received funding)** What recent activities or initiatives has your organisation used CBF funding for?
 - *(If clarification needed)* which funding stream did you receive this funding through?
 - What were the main objectives/aims of these activities/initiatives?
 - How did the funding help your organisation to undertake these activities?
 - What other contributing factors/funding enabled the achievement of the activity?
(Prompt: Has this been compatible/complementary with CBF funding? Why/why not?)
 - If you had not received funding for these activities/initiatives, what would this have meant for your organisation? *Prompt: would you have been able to undertake these anyway? To what degree?*
 - What has it meant for your organisation more broadly being able to undertake these activities/initiatives?
- **(If only partial funding)** What has it meant for your organisation only receiving partial funding for the activities/initiatives?
- **(All)** Have there been any activities that your organisation has been unable to undertake due to a lack of funding/financial constraints?
- **(If unsuccessful)** What activities/initiatives has your organisation sought CBF funding for?
 - What did it mean for your organisation not receiving funding for those activities/initiatives?

Impact (15 minutes)

- Thinking broadly, what benefits have you seen for community broadcasting as a result of CBF funding?
 - What other changes have you observed in the sector related to CBF funding? *Prompt: any unexpected/unforeseen changes?*

- **(If received funding)** What has it meant for your organisation being able to access CBF funding?
 - Overall, what has CBF funding allowed your organisation to achieve? What needs have you been able to address? *Prompt:*
 - *Financially (sustainability)*
 - *Operationally (sustainability, adaptation & innovation)*
 - *Audience reach and meeting your community's needs (resilience and adaption/innovation)*
 - What other changes have occurred in your organisation as a result of CBF funding? *Prompt: any unexpected/unforeseen changes?*

[If organisation is First Nations broadcaster or has significant First Nations language content]

- To what extent has CBF funding supported your organisation to work towards *Target 17 of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap* and the *Indigenous Digital Inclusion Plan*. *This might include:*
 - *Increased ability to access information, media and news for First Nations communities through various platforms*
 - *Increased audience reach for First Nations Broadcasters*
 - *Affordability and access to infrastructure for broadcasting activities for First Nations Broadcasters*
 - *Increased participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in broadcast and media activities*
 - *Opportunities for skills and training development in media and broadcasting for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders*
 - *Increased diversity of First Nations voices in the community broadcasting sector*
- **(All)** Is your organisation a member of a peak body? If yes, which one?
 - Do you access information or resources through your membership body or other sector bodies (e.g. CBAA, FNMA, NEMBC, RPHA). (*prompt: For instance, have you attended conferences run by those peak or sector bodies, accessed online resources or attend webinars?*)
- **(All)** Are you aware whether your organisation has been involved in any of the sector-wide services or initiatives funded through the CBF? *For instance (provide list):*
 - Community Radio Network [CBAA]
 - Community Radio Plus App, streaming, website and/or podcast services through CBAA
 - Amrap (Australian Music Radio Airplay Project) [CBAA]

- Training delivered by the Community Media Training Organisation [CMTO]
 - Training delivered by CMTO for development of governance/business skills (e.g. *Think Big* mentoring series)
 - Enhanced National Radio News Programming (including National Radio News, Collaborative News Network) [CBAA]
 - Community Radio Listener Survey [CBAA]
 - Digital Radio Project (CBAA)
- If yes, how have these initiatives/services contributed to your organisation? *Prompts: What needs have they addressed for your organisation?*

Futures (10 minutes)

- Thinking broadly again, what new challenges and needs do you see the community broadcasting sector facing?
- What challenges or needs do you think are still not being addressed in the community broadcasting sector? *Prompt: Why is this?*
- What could be done to best address these challenges and needs and best support community broadcasters?
 - What changes or improvements could be made to the CBF funding program to help address these challenges and needs?

Wrap up

- Are there any concluding comments you wish to make about CBF funding or the community broadcasting sector in general?

Thank and close