Program Policy

A. Overall Programming

1. **MAINfm** encourages programming that reflects our community interests. We facilitate direct participation in programming by community members including individuals and interest groups.

2. It is our intention in **MAINfm** programming, to break down prejudice based on ethnicity, race, language, gender, sexuality, age, physical or mental ability, occupation, religious, cultural or political beliefs. Practically, **MAINfm** will not broadcast material that is likely to stereotype, incite, vilify, or perpetuate hatred against, or attempt to demean any person or group, based on ethnicity, nationality, race, language, gender, sexuality, religion, age, physical or mental ability, occupation, cultural belief or political affiliation.

3. **MAINfm** will defend freedom of expression. In our programming decisions, we will consider our community interest, context, degree of explicitness, the possibility of alarming the listener, the potential for distress or shock, prevailing Indigenous laws or community standards and the social importance of the broadcast. This is not intended to prevent the broadcast of material which is factual, or the expression of genuinely held opinion in a news or current affairs program or in the legitimate context of a humorous, satirical or dramatic work. The programming committee will seek a broad range of opinions before withdrawing or not allowing content. This will include the committee of management.

4. **MAINfm** will not broadcast material that may:

    a. incite, encourage, or present for its own sake violence or brutality,
    b. mislead or alarm listeners by simulating news or events,
    c. present as desirable the use of illegal drugs, the misuse of tobacco or alcohol as well as other harmful substances, and
    d. glamorise, sensationalise, or present suicide as a solution to life problems,
    e. broadcast material should not provide explicit details about the method and/or location of a suicide attempt or death.

5. **MAINfm** will have programming practices that protect children from harmful material but will avoid concealing the real world from them.

6. **MAINfm** will follow applicable privacy laws by:

    a. respecting people's legitimate right to protection from unjustified use of material which is obtained without consent or through an invasion of privacy,
    b. only broadcasting the words of an identifiable person where:
    (i) that person has been told in advance that the words may be broadcast, or
    (ii) it was clearly indicated at the time the recording was made that the material would be broadcast, or
    (iii) in the case of words that have been recorded without the knowledge of a person, that person has indicated his/her agreement prior to broadcast

B. News and Current Affairs

1. **News, current affairs** (including news updates and promotions) documentaries, feature programs and interviews shall:

   a. provide access to views not adequately represented by other broadcasting sectors,
   b. present factual material accurately and ensure that reasonable efforts are made to correct substantial errors of fact as quickly as possible,
   c. clearly distinguish factual material from commentary and analysis,
   d. present news in such a way that it does not create public panic or unnecessary distress to listeners, and,
   e. represent viewpoints fairly without having a misleading emphasis, editing out of context or withholding relevant and available material.

C. Indigenous Program Content

1. **MAINfm** acknowledges the unique status of Indigenous peoples as the first Australians and continually seeks ways to demonstrate respect for their cultures and customs.

2. **MAINfm** will seek to involve and take advice from Indigenous Australians in the production of programs focusing on Indigenous Australians and issues. MAINfm will engage, consult and involve the Dja Dja Wurrung, also known as the Jaara or Jajowrong people.

3. **MAINfm** will take care to verify and observe the best way to respect culture and customs by:

   a. considering regional differences, that is, be mindful of differences between Indigenous local groups,
   b. using appropriate words and phrases in referring to Indigenous peoples and their regional groups,
   c. seeking proper advice on how to best respect Indigenous bereavement customs when reporting on people who are recently deceased, and
   d. using suitable words and phrases when reporting on the social and emotional well-being of Indigenous people.

D. Suicide

1. Suicide is a prominent public health issue in Australia with over 2,000 people dying by suicide each year. The **MAINfm** footprint has several organisations that are focused on suicide prevention.

2. **MAINfm** presenters will refer to the attached Mindframe resource for media when dealing with the topic of suicide on air. Basic considerations include:

   a. Should I run the story?
   b. Be careful with the language you use.
   c. Don't be explicit about the method or location of suicide.
   d. Discussion of celebrity suicide can glamorise suicide.
   e. Consider the angle (or positioning) of the story. Should you interview the bereaved? Is it necessary? Place the story in context. Reduce prominence.
   f. Include helpline contacts in your story.
   g. Additional resources are available from: www.mindframe-media.info/

E. Codes of Practice for Programming

1. **MAINfm** will broadcast at least one on-air announcement each week that contains information about the Codes and where listeners can get a copy. A copy of the announcement is to be made available to ACMA on request.

F. Programming Committee

1. Programming can change quickly for a variety of reasons. The following mechanisms are designed to ensure a balance of efficient decision making about program gaps, considered feedback for presenters and an accountable overview of the program grid and content gaps.

   There is always a lag between receiving a new program proposal, reviewing it and training the presenter in studio operations. We aim to minimise repeats and the broadcast of play lists to fill emergent gaps. The program decision making system comprises a community based Program Committee who have the final say and a delegated internal program group of people who are at the station on a day to day basis. Their role is to maintain quality content and set new programming in motion.

2. The Program Committee, recruited through on-air and internal calls, is made up of 6-9 volunteers, with the following responsibilities:

   a. To ensure that programming content reflects the general programming guidelines as outlined above.

   b. To ensure that a balance of spoken word to music is maintained at a minimum 25% spoken word to 75% music when measured across all programming.

   c. To bi-annually listen to programming blocks (as rostered voluntarily) and provide structured critique for presenters, the station trainer/s and the Program Manager. Feedback will be based on a standardised recording form and be delivered to presenters in a manner to be determined by the Program Committee.

   d. If any program is recommended to be taken off air two additional Program Committee members will be asked to review the program ahead of a final decision made by the Committee of Management.

   e. With reference to the stations Community Engagement Strategy (updated annually) review the overall grid for relevance, balance, compliance and diverse community participation. When program gaps are identified the Program Committee will determine how they could be addressed. This might involve approaching local groups, organising special training or any other action required to facilitate participation.

   f. To meet at least bi-monthly to review new program proposals that have been received by the station. If at the time of receiving proposals, they are deemed by the internal program working group to meet the station's program guidelines, new presenter training can be scheduled ahead of proposal review by the program committee. The Program Manager can also work with the presenter/s to develop the program concept. In the unlikely event of the program committee not meeting to review the proposal and the new presenter having completed training, they may go to air on a two month trial basis, pending approval.

G. Program Manager

The Program Manager is a volunteer with the following responsibilities:

a. To ensure that programming content reflects the general guidelines as outlined above.

b. To maintain an overview of the program grid and advise the Program Committee when volunteers pitch a new show.

c. To ensure each program has a completed Program Description Form on file before being put to air.

d. To liaise with the station trainer/s to ensure that presenters are on-air ready and receive follow up training if required.

e. To manage the decision-making process for new shows when gaps arise so that a decision by the Program Committee can be taken in a timely manner.

f. To manage the behind the scenes program development process including following leads, identified needs and community liaison.

g. In consultation with the Program Committee, arrange content across the day to encourage listener engagement. For example, talk shows until 11 am followed by music programming in the afternoons. Programs containing more adult content is broadcast after 8 pm.

h. To work with the Program Committee to distribute and act on the critiques from the bi-annual program review process. To manage a register of feedback to be provided to the Committee of Management following program reviews.

i. To convene bi-monthly face to face meetings of the Program Committee to review the overall grid for relevance, balance, compliance and community participation.

j. To ensure the Program Policy is available on the MAINfm website and that it is reviewed annually or as needs be, by the Program Committee.

k. To manage the monthly production and distribution of the Program Guide.

Reporting suicide: a quick guide for the media

This resource provides quick advice to support media professionals when reporting suicide

Recommendations for reporting a suicide death

Decide whether to report. Ensure a suicide has been confirmed by official sources to avoid speculation or interfering with investigations. Assess if there is a clear public interest in the story, consult your editorial policies and seek advice from experts.

Reduce prominence. People vulnerable to suicide may be drawn to stories about suicide, so consider placing a story on the inside pages of a newspaper or further down the order of broadcast reports and removing 'suicide' from headlines and search terms.

Modify or remove information that may increase risk.

- Consider whether to use content from a suicide note.
- Limit promotion of public and online memorials.
- Avoid images that may glorify the death in some way.
- Minimise details about method and location of death (*see overleaf*).

Take care interviewing family and friends. Respect people's grief and privacy in the period immediately after a death. Consider delaying interviews as people bereaved by suicide may be vulnerable or at risk of suicide themselves.

Apply cultural considerations. Naming or depicting an image of a person who has died can cause great distress in some communities. Seek advice before using the name or image of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.

Mindframe
for media professionals

Handle celebrity suicide with care. Coverage of a celebrity suicide can glamourise and normalise suicide. To decrease risk, minimise details about method and location, consider focusing on the wastefulness of the death, and add information about risk factors for suicide and help-seeking options for people who may be affected.

Promote help-seeking

Add 24/7 crisis support to stories:

- **Lifeline 13 11 14** www.lifeline.org.au
- **Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467** www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au
- **Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800** www.kidshelpline.com.au
- **MensLine Australia 1300 78 99 78** www.mensline.org.au
- ✓ Add two crisis services to any story about suicide.
- ✓ Match service information (e.g. age, gender, illness).
- ✓ Provide direct links to services in online content.

Self-care for journalists: If you are affected by a story on suicide consider alerting a manager, talking with someone you trust, or contacting a support service. For more information visit the *Mindframe* website.

Reporting any story about suicide

Minimise details about method and location. If it is important to the story, discuss the method or location in general terms only (e.g. 'a cocktail of drugs' or 'at a nearby park'). Explicit depictions have been linked to increases in the use of that method or location and overall suicide rates.

Place the story in context and ensure accuracy. Take care not to imply that a death was spontaneous or due to a single event as there are usually underlying risk factors. Seek expert advice for comments, accurate interpretation of statistics and assistance placing situations in context.

Choose appropriate language. To avoid causing offence, glamourising or sensationalising suicide consider the following:

Issue ❓	Problematic ❌	Preferred ✅
Presenting suicide as a desired outcome	'successful suicide'	'died by suicide'
Associating suicide with crime or sin	'committed suicide'	'took their own life'
Sensationalising suicide	'suicide epidemic'	'increasing rates'

Apply recommendations to online content. Consider implementing procedures to manage message boards for posts that may be harmful or from people in crisis.

Present information about suicide in ways that may be helpful:

- Reporting the broader issue of suicide, including policy, practice, research, rates, trends and other areas of public interest.
- Information about risk factors and warning signs, the importance of taking suicidal thoughts seriously and how to seek help.
- Personal stories about people who have overcome suicidal thinking, to promote hope and encourage others to seek help.
- Reports that show the impact of suicidal behaviour on individuals and communities to increase understanding about these experiences.

For expert advice on reporting suicide and mental illness contact:

Mindframe
02 4924 6900
www.mindframe-media.info
🕊 @MindframeMedia

SANE Media Centre
03 9682 5933
www.sane.org
🕊 @SANEAustralia

This quick guide is supported by more detailed information online.

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