



Community Participation Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines MAINfm's approach during its five-year licence period to ensure that it encourages a broad cross-section of the licence area community and community organisations to participate in the operations and programming of the service. It is to be read in conjunction with MAINfm's current Engagement Program at all times.

This Policy:

- Augments the opportunities that community members have to participate in the station as volunteers, presenters and community representatives
- assists the Committee of management (CoM), sub-committees and staff to conduct effective community consultation
- ensures that consultations obtain relevant information, opinions and data from members of the licence area community and community organisations and
- provides a clear guide for the CoM, sub-committees and staff on the various consultation methods to be used to obtain optimum outcomes from their consultations.

MAINfm has three (4) sub-committees, which meet to address matters specific to their respective areas of responsibility. The sub-committees are: Program Sub-committee, Listener Feedback Group, Technical Sub-committee and Finance Sub-committee. These Sub-committees constitute a formal mechanism which enables MAINfm to facilitate participation by members of its community interest in the operations and programming of the service.

While consultation is used to obtain information and opinions on a variety of issues relating to the service, including operations and programming, the CoM remains the determining authority in general.

2. Background and scope

This policy applies to:

- CoM members
- Sub-committees and
- Staff and volunteers
- Members of the community within the MAINfm broadcast footprint

Community consultation and participation is an interactive process between MAINfm and the community in the Mount Alexander licence area, which promotes the exchange of ideas and information and the identification of relevant issues and options. This enables MAINfm to continue to represent its local community interest and involve members of the community in the decision-making process relating to the operations of the service and in the selection and provision of programs.

While the information and opinions held by members of the community and community organisations are varied and may be conflicting at times, community consultations help to bring about shared views and outlooks. To achieve this, community consultations are to be conducted according to the following principles:

Community consultations are to be –

- community focused and targeted
- interactive and inclusive
- responsive and constructive and
- timely and documented.

3. The Mount Alexander licence area community

For the purpose of MAINfm, representing the Mount Alexander Shire community interest in the region means providing a service that meets the needs of people who:

- live or spend a substantial amount of time within the Mount Alexander Shire licence area or
- share an ethnic or cultural background or
- share religious beliefs or
- share, or identify with, some other particular characteristic or interest.

In addition to the general community within a licence area, community organisations provide fertile ground for community consultation. Community organisations encompass institutions such as schools, universities and churches, as well as agencies representing sections of the community such as youth groups, women’s groups and senior groups within a licence area.

4. Matters for community consultation

MAINfm will:

- identify the needs and interests, including key issues and specific areas, of significance and priority to the community interest in the Mount Alexander Shire licence area
- consult on the most efficient ways and the most appropriate strategies to respond to those needs and to meet those interests
- identify and consult new and emerging communities within the Mount Alexander Shire licence area to ensure that MAINfm is responding to their needs and meeting their interests
- distribute questionnaires and undertake surveys of listeners and the wider community to ascertain how well MAINfm is responding to their needs and meeting their interests
- identify and remove barriers to participation by members and volunteers in the operations and programming of the service and
- make available operations and programming opportunities within the service to broaden the scope for participation by members and volunteers in the service.

5. Methods for community consultation

Information may be distributed to community organisations and members of the licence area community in emails and letters, newsletters or brochures. Seeking their opinions and ideas, however, is done in a range of ways. The methods for community consultation include but are not limited to the following:

- having a presence at key community events
- holding or participating in workshops and seminars
- holding or participating in discussion forums and community meetings and
- administering questionnaires and surveys.

6. Community consultation process

The most appropriate method will be selected for each community consultation to allow for the open exchange of information and ideas between MAINfm and the relevant community organisation or members of the community participating in that consultation.

This will entail the following process:

- identify the issue or area requiring community consultation
- identify who will participate in the consultation
- identify when and where the consultation will take place
- identify how the consultation will take place
- implement the consultation and gather results
- analyse the results against the issue or area for consultation
- make recommendations for responding to the issue or addressing the area consulted and
- implement the approved response and/or actions.

7. Community consultation protocols

In undertaking community consultation, the CoM, sub-committees and staff will operate according to the following protocols:

- the issue or area for consultation will be specified
- information will be conveyed simply and concisely
- all information and opinions will be canvassed and heard
- those from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds will be able to participate

- adequate time for input and feedback will be allowed
- time made available and input provided will be acknowledged
- all input will be collated honestly and analysed fairly and
- the community will be informed of the results and actions for implementation.

8. Review

The Community Engagement Program that accompanies this policy is a living document that should be reviewed quarterly by the Committee of Management. It can be updated anytime but must be reviewed for currency annually.

9. Relationship to other documents

All MAINfm policies will be aligned with those set out in this policy and the Engagement Program, as amended from time to time.