



**PROGRAMMING  
&  
MUSIC  
POLICY  
2026/2027**



## PURPOSE

The purpose of this Programming Policy is to ensure VOICE FM:

1. Delivers high-quality, diverse, accessible and community-centred programming that serves the needs and interests of its community in Ballarat and surrounding areas;
2. This policy sets out the principles and operational requirements of the Voice FM community radio station, and supports compliance with licence conditions and responsibilities under the [Broadcasting Services Act \(1992\)](#) and the [Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice](#).
3. Implements best practice in music programming, news and current affairs, spoken word, emergency broadcasting, and inclusion.

## POLICY STATEMENT

- Programming refers to the decisions around what goes to air on VOICE FM
- These decisions are made by a Programming Committee which reviews program applications and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors.
- The Programming Committee also monitors VOICE FM content to ensure compliance with this policy.
- This policy provides guidance in relation to Programming decisions at VOICE FM.

## PRINCIPLES

Programming at Voice FM is led by the following principles:

1. Voice FM will present a diverse range of community radio programs consistent with the organisational mission and audience profile.
2. Voice FM will encourage innovation and experimentation with radio while pursuing a listener friendly format and programming which acknowledges how people listen to radio.
3. Voice FM programming will:
  1. Explore areas of debate, information, music, and cultural activities not adequately covered in the broadcast area.
  2. Ensure minimum duplication of program content with that provided by other broadcast media in its service area.
3. Work to enhance the diversity of programming choices available to the public and present programs that expand the variety of viewpoints broadcast to the Greater Ballarat region.



4. Make sure content is inclusive, fair and respectful;
5. Emphasise and encourage Australian and Local content.
6. provide training programs to potential volunteers to enhance their involvement in the radio broadcasting
7. Seek to promote public awareness of the potential of community broadcasting, encouraging the community to produce its own programs
8. Ensure the stations programming (in terms of quality and content) and scheduling shall not be undertaken to meet the needs of current or potential station sponsors.

Voice FM will not broadcast material that may:

- Incite, encourage, or present, for its own sake, violence or brutality.
- Mislead or alarm listeners by simulating news or events.
- Present as desirable the use of illegal drugs, the misuse of tobacco or alcohol as well as other harmful substances, and
- Glamorize, sensationalize, or present suicide as a solution to life problems. In particular, broadcast material should not provide explicit details about the method and/or location of a suicide attempt or death.

Voice FM will attempt to avoid censorship where possible, however, 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.

Voice FM will not broadcast material that is likely to stereotype, incite, vilify, or perpetuate hatred against or attempt to demean any person or group, on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, race, language, gender, sexuality, religion, age, physical or mental ability, occupation, cultural belief or political affiliation. The requirement is not intended to prevent the broadcast or material which is factual, or the expression of genuinely held opinion in the news or current affairs program or in the legitimate context of a humorous, satirical or dramatic work.

#### **PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE**

- The Programming Committee is a sub-committee of the Board of Directors. At least one member of the Board will be on the sub-committee.
- The sub-committee membership should as much as possible reflect the diversity of the community we serve – for example, those with broadcast experience (e.g. presenting, technical/production, programming/scheduling), of varying ages, varying program interests across varying timeslots.
- Station volunteers, interested listeners, and program makers/presenters are invited to apply to serve on the Programming Committee.



Members of the sub-committee are selected by the Board of Directors based on the following criteria:

1. A demonstrated commitment to the station and the values of the organisation.
2. Have a broad knowledge of, and understanding and respect, for the community we represent.
3. Be well acquainted with Voice FM guidelines, policies, CBA Code of Practice and relevant legislation.
4. Members of the committee attend regular meetings as requested. Members of the committee are required to be financial members of Voice FM.

The role of the Programming Committee is to make programming decisions and to shape on air programming. Its responsibilities include:

- Providing creative and effective programming advice to ensure program content is appropriate and aligned to Voice FM's mission and community interest.
- Monitoring and advising on the balance of program content across the program grid.
- The scheduling of all programming across the program grid.
- Monitoring quality of on-air presentation; conducting program review and air-checks as appropriate.
- Analysing listener feedback and surveys.
- Monitor and oversee programmer training in on air presentation and production
- Reviewing new program proposals.
- Prioritise program proposals that bring content that is relevant to the broadcast area AND are not being met by current programming on Voice FM
- Ascertain a presenter's time availability to accommodate a preferred timeslot for their program to air.
- Developing and maintaining policy and procedures for the submission of programming ideas.
- Sharing programming feedback with the Board of Directors and referring any programming or other complaints to the Board.
- Communicating programming recommendations and ideas to the Board of Directors.
- Reporting and communicating with station volunteers and programmers via the stations volunteer meetings.



## **OTHER PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS**

If more than one proposal for community programming is received in the same program grid (schedule) period, and the grid is heavily subscribed, consideration will be given to prioritising proposals based upon whether:

- There is already programming on Voice FM in one of the community interests or music styles, in which case other kinds of programming may be prioritised
- A significant number of residents are interested in the issue, as determined from community feedback to the station or the station's own investigations
- Space on the grid can be freed up, in which case more of the community interests may be accommodated.
- Training of new presenters who wish to present on community issues on an ongoing basis will be facilitated whenever possible, depending upon the number of proposals received and the number of presenter trainees in an intake.
- Making room on the grid may require moving some programs temporarily or permanently, with due consultation with the program makers concerned. Consideration will be given to spreading any temporary suspended programs across the grid and to not focusing suspensions on one timeslot or one program.

## **MUSIC POLICY**

Key music programming policies:

- The station encourages diverse musical content and formats, aiming to avoid duplication with other media in the service area.
- While providing a framework, Voice FM generally allows for a variety of music programming that reflects the diverse tastes of its volunteers and the local community.
- Voice FM commits to playing at least 25% Australian music across its total music content, unless specific exceptions are approved by the Programming Committee for specialized musical styles or non-Australian cultural programs.