

President's AGM Report 2020

We are all aware of the Covid-19 restrictions that have been in place during most of the year.

Unfortunately this has overshadowed many of our achievement since our last AGM, but I thank all staff for helping implement the Covid-safe plan that has kept everyone healthy while keeping the station running effectively.

Our licence renewal application was lodged in mid January this year and gave us the opportunity to demonstrate to the ACMA the progress we had made, and continue to make, relating to Community Engagement, and associated programming policies and procedures that encourage community participation. We were able to show with empirical evidence many satisfying facts relating to the current five year licence period such as;

- We had 82 volunteers working at the station as at the end of last year,
- Close to 80,000 Community Service Announcements were read out over the past five years,
- We conducted over 2,500 on air interviews over the same five year period,
- More than 100 outside or onsite engagements to help expand our listener base during the preceding 4 years, such as outside community and sports broadcasts along with many visits to community groups to help expand awareness of our services.
- 100 hours of live broadcasting every week,
- Supplemented with another 57 hours of Australian-produced, mostly or locally produced, pre-recorded programmes,
- We play nearly 300 songs every day. While we understand that not every programme we produce suits everyone all the time, we aim to provide benefit to all by ensuring diversity in our programming,
- Our Talent Search Competition now in its 3rd year is further proof of our endeavours to maintain 25% Australian music content. The Talent Search also supports unsigned and new Australian musical talent, and engages the local community in our music.

We have not heard back formally from the Government yet on the outcome of the licence application, but we expect this shortly. Members will be advised as soon as we know more.

As our Treasurer has indicated we are in a strong financial position, and have been consistently in the black throughout the year. Our Sponsorship area within the Finance Group has had successes recruiting new sponsors, while spending has been limited to only necessary capital and maintenance spending on equipment, and essential running costs.

Further work by our Promotions Group including our newsletter and increased membership numbers has helped us considerably to penetrate our local listening area. Whilst we have a listening boundary determined by the ACMA, our signal is broadcast widely and we maintain an acceptable signal quality throughout most of the metropolitan area. We reach places such as Sorrento in the south, Geelong and Tarneit in the west and our northern most suburbs such as Reservoir and Thomastown, not to mention the coverage from our internet streaming platform.

Surveys by independent pollsters put listener levels at around 20,000 per week. This broadcast reach can be attributed to the endeavours of our Presenters and their programming, and to our Technical Support Group who have used donations received to ensure signal quality and our power output remain at the maximum level allowed by the Regulator.

A challenge for our Technical Support Group has been the maintenance and upgrade requirements of our ageing IT platform and some of our broadcast equipment. With the speed of progress in the electronic world, the evolution is exponential. The redundancy of broadcasting equipment and cessation of support given by vendors to older equipment also makes it difficult to maintain broadcast services unless we continually stay on top of modernisation. This situation always creates forced upgrades in both equipment and software which places challenges on our Information Technology and Technical Support Groups. Our presenters are also impacted during times of changeover but the results have been rewarding.

The Production Group are always kept busy generating programme material and supporting our many loyal sponsors, without whose financial support we would find it difficult to maintain our broadcast standards. Our Human Resources Group continue their contribution by being the first point of contact when a listener phones in for further information or to ask for a musical number during a request programme. Their assistance to presenters is always valuable and much appreciated.

In the coming year our focus will be to:

- Maintain member and listener satisfaction by understanding what they want while implementing improvements in programming already in the planning stages
- Expand our presenter numbers with a proactive recruitment and training programme
- Plan to recover our community engagement, which had been going really well until the state closed down with the virus restrictions.

During the final session of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia conference just concluded Jon Bisset (CEO) made the following comments. With over 60 speakers covering all aspects of community broadcasting the following items have stood out;

- Diversity,
- Responsibility,
- Pursuing change,
- Structural reform,
- Young people being involved,
- The need to be adaptive,
- We do not need to be commercial,
- It is important to have people connection and
- Social cohesion.

All these items reflex Radio Eastern values as we head into our 30th year of operation.

Finally to our members and listeners, thank you for your ongoing support, for your Membership and the many kind words given.

Keith Jessup,

President.