

Radio Eastern FM 98.1

McNair CBAA Survey Analysis

Release of survey results



FM 98.1 is very pleased to be able to spread the word about the responses we received from the McNair CBAA surveys.

We thank all the members and listeners who took the time to participate in our survey. You contribute to the improvement of the station so we can continue to respond when listeners tell us what they like. The Committee of Management has been taking the responses into consideration in its forward planning endeavours.

How we did the Survey

We have put together the responses received during surveys collected in 2018 and 2019. Participation in the survey was invited on-air and on the FM 98.1 web site.

We asked members and listeners why they listened to the station, what they liked about their listening time and what they might like to see improved.

Listeners should be aware that the survey was a management tool, and that the minute details were never intended for general release. However, it is important to the station to know that listeners receive feedback, and the station has therefore collated the following summary of the responses from the survey to distribute publicly that communicates the main findings.

Listeners are also welcome to provide feedback on the phone, by email or letter. We often receive feedback from listeners who drop in to the station offices and studios at Wyreena in Hull Road, Croydon.

Station Communication Strategy

The station has recognised that we need an improved multi-pronged communication strategy.

One listener very sensibly wrote:

“If possible more frequent Newsletters - they don` t have to be glossy (so less expensive)”

There were a number of comments from listeners that raised questions for which there were answers, and it became apparent that the questions had been asked because the station had not already effectively communicated its reasons for technical upgrades, and for programme formats, content choices and presenter styles, including music, the news and sport. The station recognises that improvements in communication strategies are needed. We need to advise listeners why we have certain formats, including:

- explanations about cost reasons for why we present the news the way we do
- why we take the news from Bathurst, and the benefit gained by the students at Bathurst from doing it this way
- one outcome however that news may have seemed NSW-centric, but this is slowly changing because of feedback from FM 98.1 to CBAA/CRN
- communicate better with listeners, station workers and other members
- explain on air what has happened to our signal strength

In future we will improve the use of emails, verbal feedback, the web site, on-air broadcast and a re-vamped newsletter, to help explain our approaches to news, football, broadcast strength, music genres, community engagement, etc. This will also encourage more people to provide their feedback more regularly.

General comments

Many listeners made general comments to give a feeling for what they enjoyed about the station. Comments included a fair amount of constructive criticism.

The topics raised in these constructive criticism comments varied widely. Some recurring examples included:

“Good to have the opportunity to make comment”

“Suggestions - Not really. I think the programmes generally, are well presented. They don't all suit my taste but, as a dear friend of mine used to say, ‘it takes all sorts.’ And I mean the listeners.”

“As a "glued-on" listener I believe Radio Eastern meets my needs, but could do with some fine-tuning”

National news coverage

Comments about news coverage were generally unfavourable. The station considers that the negatively leaning balance of these comments is understandable, but that they have arisen from a breakdown in communication from the station to its listeners. The reason for receiving the news in its current format was for financial reasons. The newsreaders are young communications and journalism students who are practising their on-air skills and being assessed by their university, Charles Sturt University at Bathurst, NSW. The station has provided feedback to Charles Sturt University about the news content, and the University has responded positively by including more nationally focussed news and sport in their coverage.

There were a number of complaints about the station's broadcast signal strength, including from locations close to the station, such as Ringwood, Donvale, Lilydale, Heathmont, Wantirna, Wantirna South, Mt Evelyn and Ferntree Gully. It was felt that the station should explain to listeners:

- That the broadcasting licence limited the range over which the station was allowed to broadcast free-to-air
- That the tower had recently been upgraded
- That there were ways to improve reception, including purchase of an inexpensive aerial that could be fitted to the radio
- Installation of a regular antenna could also help

Presenters

There was a mixture of comments about presenters. There were a large proportion of generally positive comments about presenters and about some presenters in particular. There were many comments thanking presenters for their commitment to the station.

What negative comments there were (only a handful in total over the two years) were about specific issues. One issue was the “sound of the voice”, about which you will agree a presenter cannot change much! Comments about grammar and pronunciation were probably fair enough. Technical problems occurring during presentations were raised, about which the listeners mostly decided may indicate a need for some specific further technical training.

There were, however, a number of comments that there were not enough “younger” presenters.

Community Engagement

There were quite a number of comments over the two years praising the station's efforts in Community Engagement, and asking for continued efforts in this regard. This was a pleasant surprise as the survey did not ask specifically for comments about community engagement. We received comments such as:

“Keep up the good local involvement and music Variety and regular Community Announcements for local non profit groups”

“More programs and interviews with local interest groups. More Knox content (A high percentage of Knox listeners)”

“Please stay ‘for the people’”

Music – “Reason for listening - The music mainly”

Far and away most comments received by the station were about music content, with hundreds of such comments over the two years of both surveys. Comments were mostly positive. There were a number of comments with specific suggestions that ranged from “don't change anything” to “there should be a lot more content for younger people”.

- There were comments asking for either more or for less ‘country and western’.
- There were comments asking for either more or for less ‘jazz’.
- There were comments asking for either more or for less ‘easy listening’.
- There were comments asking for either more or for less music for ‘younger people’.

If we had asked specifically we probably would have received the same range of views about any and every music style.

Survey results relating to Eastern Football League broadcasts

There were strong views in the survey both in favour of and against football broadcasts and other sporting content. Listeners should know that in principle the station is in favour of EFL broadcasts, provided commercial relationships between the EFL and commercial broadcasters do not prohibit us from remaining involved.

The reasons the station remains in favour of broadcasting the footy are that:

- The EFL is a local Australian Rules Football carnival, run by volunteers and played only on weekends, with local players and local supporters.
- After the games, fans listen to FM 98.1 to gather scores from all EFL games.
- The EFL contributes significantly to the variety and Community Engagement at the station.

In closing, this seems to sum up a lot of the feelings about FM 98.1:

“Thank you for the radio service. Well done to all who contribute and make it happen.”

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