Muslim Community Radio

Programming Policy

Policy title: 2MFM Programming Policy
Policy under Code 3 of the CBAA Code of Practice
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Summary: This document outlines the types of programs broadcasted on the Muslim Community Radio and the guidelines in which they conform. All guidelines will be reflective of best practice principles, values and meeting the needs of the organisation.
Reviewed by: President and Program Manager

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Reviewed: April 2020

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA) Code 3 underpinning general programming practice in order to achieve and maintain best practice in programming. This will reflect the interests and expectations of the Muslim community, The **Muslim Community Radio** and the CBAA principles of community broadcasting. This policy and guidelines will assist in the breakdown of prejudice and discrimination and prevent the broadcast of material which is contrary to community standards and expectations.

Furthermore, this policy aims to enable **2mfm's** volunteers, members and staff to understand and comply with the editorial and ethical principles that are fundamental to **2mfm** programming and quality practice.
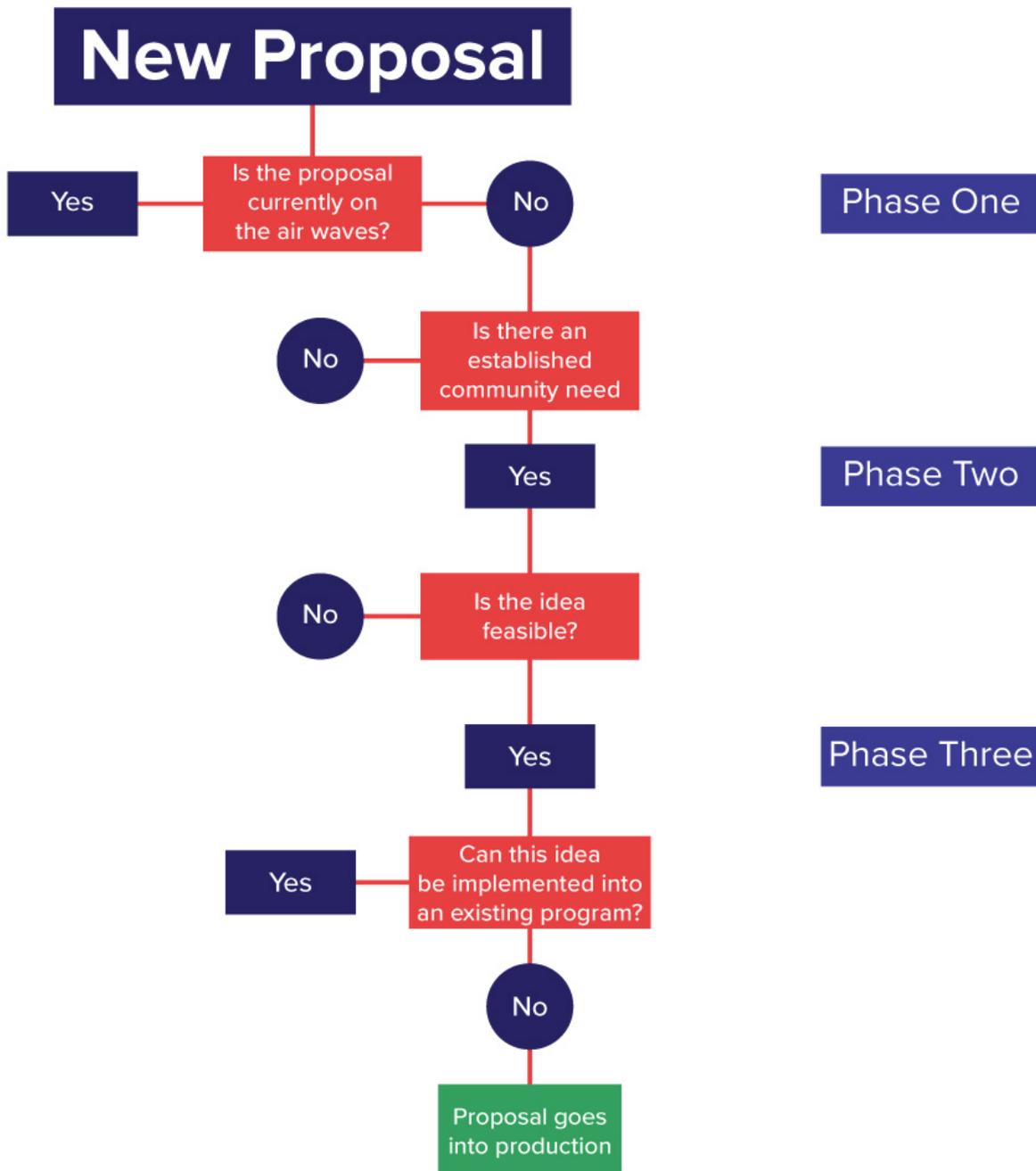
Guiding Principles and Processes

1. The following principles guide the decisions of the Independent Programming Committee and management. These include program selection, timeslots, genre, style, content and responses. These Principles also guide live presenters to appropriate responses and language style during live talk-back programs. Listening to *2mfm*…

    1.1 Audiences expect a reflection of Islam in Australia

    1.2 Audiences expect an awareness of the ideals of Islam

    1.3 Audiences expect to experience open dialogue and interaction

    1.4 Audiences expect to become aware of how Islam fits in with the Australian way of life

    1.5 Audiences will discover the cultural diversity of Australian Muslims

    1.6 Audiences will be exposed to moderate views reflecting the true and pure position of Islam against terrorism and extremism

    1.7 Audiences appreciate being appropriately exposed to a wide range of opinions, values and perspectives that constitute the diverse community of Australian Muslims

    1.8 Audiences appreciate being exposed to cultural and social debates that enhance the quality of life in Australia, reveal an informed society, and celebrate Islam's justice, fairness and promotion of knowledge and progress.

    1.9 Audiences appreciate being exposed to programming that can be controversial but not offensively provocative, radical and/or extremist views.

    1.10 Audiences expect *2mfm* to represent those of the Muslim community who are under-represented by mainstream media, like women and youth.

    1.11 Audiences expect *2mfm* to present diversity carefully and responsibly, ensuring a balance of views over time.

    1.12 Muslim audiences expect their Islamic beliefs and opinions, to be reflected on *2mfm*

    1.13 Audiences should expect the number of hours of Australian content including Australian music broadcast on *2mfm* to be either in par or
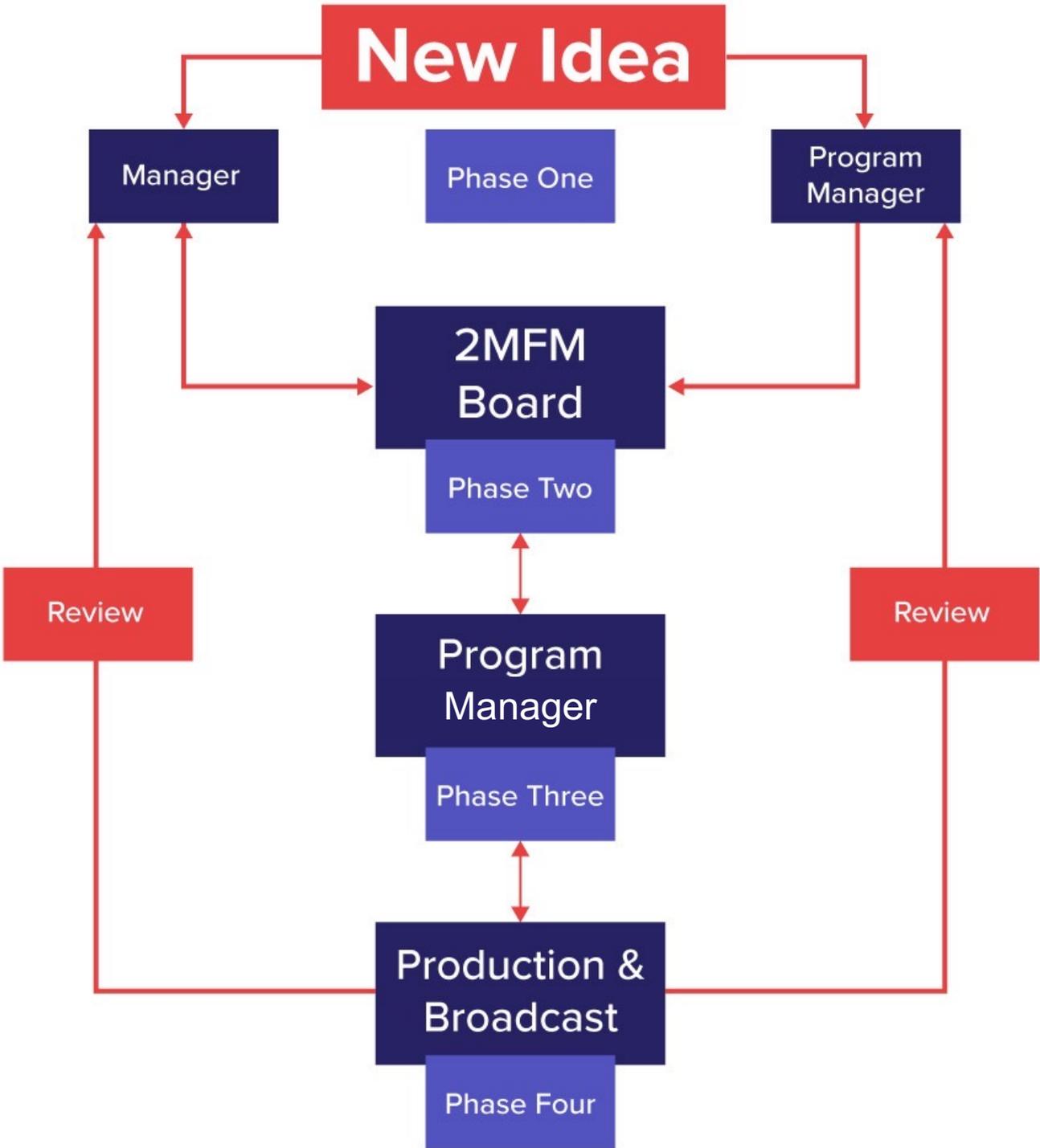
above the average national benchmark for community radios established in periodic sector research reports.

1.14   Audiences should expect that this policy will not prevent the presentation of genuinely-held opinion or material that is factual or presented in the context of a humorous or dramatic work.

2.   The following new proposal process flowchart guides the decisions of the Independent Programming Committee and management.

New Proposal

Is the proposal currently on the air waves?	Yes / No

Phase One

Is there an established community need — No / Yes

Phase Two

Is the idea feasible? — No / Yes

Phase Three

Can this idea be implemented into an existing program? — Yes / No

Proposal goes into production

3. The following new idea process flowchart guides the decisions of the Independent Programming Committee and management.

New Idea

Manager | Phase One | Program Manager

2MFM Board

Phase Two

Review | Program Manager | Review

Phase Three

Production & Broadcast

Phase Four

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POLICY of Best Practice

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Violence and Offensive language

2. The reporting of violence, horrific or offensive matter requires careful consideration from *2mfm* management, its presenters/journalists and programming committee. The aim is to strike a balance between excessive censorship and to downplay the significance and necessity of portraying violence for legitimate reasons, including informing the public and/or making a point. The *2mfm* standard on portraying violence aims to determine what little is necessary to achieve honest ends without causing alarm or panic. Portraying violence to test how much violence listeners will tolerate on air, is unacceptable. To encourage best practice in the portrayal of violence, horror and offensive language on air, *2mfm* will avoid:

    2.1   Whenever applicable, the broadcast of sounds of horror in the event of reporting deaths, wars, battles, violence and conflicts, unless the sounds add value to the report and if omitted, will compromise on the portrayal of reality.

    2.2   Whenever applicable, the broadcast of sounds of horror included in the context of domestic violence, street violence, gang brawls and war on a national scale, like bombings and shootings, unless omitting them will jeopardize the context of the message or reality factor of the report.

    2.3   Sensationalizing news stories, exaggerating facts or taking them out of context to mislead listeners or provoke alarm.

2mfm will not broadcast material that may:

    2.4   Incite, encourage, or present - for its own sake - violence or brutality

    2.5   Mislead or alarm listeners by simulating news or events

    2.6   Present as desirable the use or dealings of illegal drugs, the misuse of tobacco, the prohibited use of alcohol as well as other harmful substances

    2.7   Encourage, promote or aggrandise extremist terrorism acts or behaviour.

2.8 Be considered Blasphemous. If content is blasphemous and is deemed to be necessary to broadcast, a warning shall be mentioned before and/or after the mention of the blasphemous content.

Reporting Suicide and Mental Illness

3. *2mfm* understands that reporting on suicide and mental illness is a serious and sensitive matter and should be handled responsibly. A report on suicide or mental illness which is broadcast without consideration and care to the afflicted or the listener may induce copycat behaviour leading to negative consequences, even the loss of life. *2mfm* has adopted Australian Press Council (APC) guidelines and mind frame media recommendations to report on suicide and mental illness in a way that is less likely to cause harm, induce copycat behaviour, or contribute to the stigma experienced by people with mental illness. When reporting on suicide, *2mfm* presenters **will not**:

3.1 Add to the pain of relatives and friends of the deceased

3.2 Report in a way that might encourage copy-cat suicide or self-harm

3.3 Make unnecessary reference to details of method of place of a suicide

3.4 Use language or presentation that trivialises, romanticise, or glorifies suicide, particularly in programs that target a youth audience

3.5 Use loose or slang terms to describe various forms of mental illness, and the risk of stigmatising vulnerable people that may accompany such labels.

3.6 Glamorise, sensationalise or present suicide as a solution to life problems

3.7 Provide explicit details about the method and/or location of a suicide attempt or death.

3.8 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 mental ability

2mfm presenters **will** whenever possible:

3.9   Inform listeners of the availability of local community services through community service announcements.

3.10   Seek new information about mental disorders, symptoms, and treatments. Keep reports on mental illness updated

2mfm presenters and editors will consider the following **use of language** when reporting on suicides and mental illness:

3.11   Do not refer to someone with a mental illness as a 'victim', 'suffering with' or 'afflicted by' a mental illness.

3.12   Do not use language that implies people are their illness, e.g. schizophrenic. Better to say, e.g. they 'are currently experiencing' or 'being treated for' schizophrenia.

3.13   Do not say, 'failed suicide attempt' rather say, 'non-fatal attempt'

3.14   Do not say, 'committed suicide' or 'successful suicide'. Rather use, 'died by suicide', 'took own life' or 'ended own life'.

3.15   Place the story in context

3.16   Use medical terms correctly

Censorship

4. *2mfm* will attempt to avoid censorship where possible. However, in deciding on editing and censorship matters, program producers and live on-air presenters will be advised to consider the following:

5.1   The interests and expectations of the Muslim community

5.2   The Islamic rules and judgements

5.3   The program context

5.4   The degree of explicitness of offensive content

5.5   The possibility of alarming the listener

5.6   The potential for distress or shock

5.7   Any prevailing indigenous laws

5.8   The community broadcasting standards

5.9   The importance of the broadcast to Muslims

The requirement in clause 4 above is not intended to prevent *2mfm* from broadcasting material which is factual, or to express genuinely held opinion in a news or current affairs program, or in the legitimate context of a humorous, or dramatic work.

Discrimination

6. *2mfm* shall not broadcast material which may stereotype, incite, vilify, or perpetuate hatred against, or attempt to demean any person or group on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, race, language, gender, age, physical or mental ability, occupation, cultural lifestyle or political affiliation.

Protecting Children

7. *2mfm* will have programming practices that protect children from harmful material but will avoid concealing the real world from them.

6.1   *2mfm* will schedule children's programs in timeslots established by internal community questionnaires and surveys to reach the maximum number of children listeners on the day

6.2   Children's programming will include educational, entertaining, trivial and social content and all content relevant to the concerns and interests of Muslim children.

6.3   *2mfm* will take care not to schedule news breaks, reports or updates before, during and directly after children's programs to avoid exposing children to news items that may involve violence or disturbing incidences.

Diversity of Views and Perspectives

8. *2mfm* is a service dedicated to all Australian Muslims. However, it is within the Muslim nature and ethos of *2mfm* to be considerate to the interests of the mainstream Australian society. This is why *2mfm* is committed to broadcasting programs that reflect Islam and the diverse cultures of its followers. It attempts to encapsulate these diverse representations through aesthetic and linguistic methods, to suit a wider Australian listener base.

    8.1   *2mfm* will seek to represent a range of relevant viewpoints on issues of public interest, subject to available resources.

    8.2   *2mfm* may broadcast programs, such as documentaries, which are presented from particular points of view or explore a specific aspect of an issue. Such programs may legitimately be seen as advocacy to Islam and are not required to present every viewpoint or all available material relating to a particular issue or allocate equal time to different viewpoints.

    8.3   *2mfm* will seek to broadcast in as many languages as possible subject to the needs of the ethnically/linguistically diverse Muslim population in Sydney and the availability of resources.

Privacy

8. *2mfm* will follow applicable privacy laws by:

    8.1   Consider people's legitimate right to protection from unjustified use of material which is obtained without consent or through an invasion of privacy

    8.2   Only broadcasting the words of an identifiable person where:

        8.2.1.1 That person has been told in advance that the words may be broadcast, or

        8.2.1.2 It was clearly indicated at the time the recording was made that the material would be broadcast, or

8.2.1.3 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

News and Current Affairs

9. At *2mfm*, news, current affairs (including news updates and promotions), documentaries, feature programs and interviews shall:

9.1 Provide access to views relevant to Muslims, not adequately represented by other broadcasting sectors

9.2 Present factual material accurately and ensure that reasonable efforts are made to correct substantial errors of fact as quickly as possible

9.3 Clearly distinguish factual material from commentary and analysis

9.4 Present news in such a way that it does not create public panic or unnecessary distress to listeners

9.5 News reports should include little violent sounds and none at all in the late afternoon and early evening.

9.6 Represent viewpoints fairly without having a misleading emphasis, editing out of context or withholding relevant and available material

9.7 Have a local focus, though may enlighten listeners with state and national news that may be for various reasons significant to the Muslim population in Sydney

9.8 Meet the needs and expectations of the Muslim community when reporting on world news and events

Emergency Reporting

10. *2mfm* acknowledges its vital role in broadcasting emergency information. When able to provide emergency broadcasts, *2mfm* will:

10.1   Have procedures in place to enable appropriate local emergency broadcasts,

10.2   Liaise with appropriate emergency and essential service organisations, and

10.3   Ensure the accuracy of emergency information.

Emergency Reporting-Procedure

11.   In the process of reporting on emergencies such as destructive storms, power black-outs, weather warnings, road accidents, aeroplane accidents, robberies, neighbourhood safety or criminal warnings; *2mfm* presenters are advised to adopt the follow procedure:

11.1   To determine the credibility of the warning report or the emergency brief:

11.1.1   Determine the source credibility, the accuracy and the relevance of the report

11.1.2   If the source is a press release, contact the media officer to double-check accuracy of the information and updates since release

11.1.3   If the report is from a secondary source (e.g. media), double check relevance and proximity and determine original source

11.1.4   Always gather updated information from the source and double check accuracy with credible second party, if applicable

11.2   When reporting on emergencies, presenters are expected to:

11.2.1   Use non-alarming language in broadcast report

11.2.2   Confine reporting to factual information

11.2.3   When a warning to listeners is necessary and the tragedy or distressing event will significantly affect a local population, invite an official speaker from the appropriate emergency or

relief department to break the warning to the listeners on *2mfm.* The presenter can then repeat the warning and follow-up on it.

11.2.4   Restrict the use of emotive language unless it is part of the dialogue of affected people during interviews

11.2.5   Keep updating listeners about the progress or regress of the emergency by conducting live interviews with credible sources such as the NSW State Emergency Service (for storms) or the Police Department (for criminal issues) or being on the field to report in person.

11.2.6   The process of emergency reporting should follow a series of reportage, starting with reports on the emergency, who is affected, warnings, how they are affected and lastly the solutions and effectiveness in implementing the solutions.

Election Campaigns – Sponsorship

12.   The Broadcasting Services Act (1992) stipulates broadcast law regarding media coverage of local, state and federal elections. It is the responsibility of *2mfm* to ensure that these laws are observed, as a condition of the station's licence.

12.1   Under the BSA, *2mfm* has the right to refuse to participate in any promotion of election campaigns.

12.2   *2mfm* is not obligated to provide free air time of a sponsorship characteristic, to any political party promoting their campaign

12.3   If *2mfm* rejects the sponsorship of one or any party, it shall reject the sponsorship of all to avoid bias and prejudice.

12.4   *2mfm* will endeavour to provide equal access and opportunity to all political parties promoting their election campaign

12.5   *2mfm* is not obligated to seek out sponsorship of political parties during political campaigns, however if *2mfm* does take proactive steps to seek

out such sponsorship, ***2mfm*** will make the same opportunity available to all competing parties.

12.6 ***2mfm*** will cease the broadcast of political sponsorship three days prior to the polling day. This applies to local, state and federal elections.

12.7 If the election is to take place on a Saturday, ***2mfm*** will cease sponsorship announcements at the end of the Wednesday and only re-commence after the polls are closed on Saturday.

12.8 ***2mfm*** shall announce the details of the party that has authorized and sponsored the political advertisement.

12.9 ***2mfm*** shall "tag" the political sponsorship announcement with words to the effect of: "This political announcement was sponsored and authorized by the XXX party".

Political Material

13. ***2mfm*** understands that 'political material' is matter concerning elections or any political issue that can be broadcast on community radio and could be of interest or benefit to the targeted listeners and does not resemble the characteristics of sponsorship announcements. This material is broadcast for free and may include current affairs, brief interviews with politicians, commentary, statements, news, debates or live discussion forums. If ***2mfm*** participates in the broadcast of political matter it shall observe the following:

13.1 ***2mfm*** may broadcast political content during the entire election period provided that "the broadcaster give reasonable opportunities for the broadcasting of election matter to all political parties contesting the election"

13.2 When broadcasting political material excluding sponsorship announcements, ***2mfm*** broadcasters and presenters will be advised to allow political comment that is of benefit to the listeners and to avoid providing extended air time (in the form or commentary or other) to politicians solely in favour of political campaigning.

13.3 *2mfm* shall make sure that all broadcast material in the forms mentioned above, are logged for 6 weeks from the date on which the matter was broadcast.

13.4 If during these 6 weeks a complaint was made about the matter, *2mfm* is responsible to keep the log of the matter in question for 60 days from the date on which the matter was broadcast

13.5 Logs of such matter shall be kept for longer as requested by the, Australian Communications and Media Authority's (ACMA) in special circumstances.