

ACCESS & EQUITY

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Drafted by		Approved by C of M on	July 2012
Responsible person	Chairman	Scheduled review date	

Introduction

EMFM as a community-based organisation acknowledges that it has an obligation to have policies in place that promote involvement in the station's operation by as many sections of the community as possible, as well as ensuring that individuals seeking to become involved with the station do not face barriers that would hinder that involvement.

This Access and Equity (A&E) policy has, in common with similar policies in any community organisation, two aspects: making sure that services are provided¹ in an environment in which all involved feel comfortable; and ensuring that disadvantages groups are not excluded or discouraged from involvement with EMFM, either as volunteers, guests, or in any other capacity.

Provisions detailed in this A&E document need to be viewed in relation to other EMFM policies, most particularly policies relating to the rights and responsibilities of volunteers. In this sense responsibility for ensuring the A&E policies are enforced and monitored is the responsibility of all members of the EMFM team, regardless of their role within the organisation. However, the formal responsibility for implementing, monitoring and enforcing the provisions of the A&E policy, resides with all members of the management team. On a day-to-day basis, it is the responsibility of the Board of Management to implement, monitor and ensure compliance with this A&E. There are a number of what could be described as guiding principles that have informed the creation of this Access and Equity Policy. In formulating this policy, EMFM has resolved that its provisions shall address the following:

1. Policies should encourage the **active participation** in all functions and activities of the station by all members of EMFM's management team, station volunteers, Association members, our audience as well as the wider community
2. EMFM policies seek to promote and facilitate the **self and skill development** of all participants in its activities. This includes the **encouragement** of all volunteers at all levels to make decisions, provide input and to contribute what they are able to the operation of the station
3. This A&E policy in conjunction with other EMFM policies, is designed to allow for the maximum amount of **choice** for all those who participate in the stations' operation and activities.
4. EMFM with this A&E policy and all its policies seeks to ensure that the **rights** of all who are involved with EMFM in whatever context and at whatever level, openly acknowledged and are respected
5. EMFM with this A&E policy and all its policies seeks to ensure that the **needs** of all who are involved with EMFM in whatever context and at whatever level, are acknowledged and as far as is possible will endeavour to meet those needs
6. EMFM strives to provide a quality service that meets the highest possible standards in its management, operation and activities

¹ 'service delivery' or 'services' in the context of this document refers to EMFM's core business which is the broadcasting of radio programs and needs to be viewed in light of all other station policies and operational procedures

Purpose

EMFM aims to ensure that individuals have equal opportunities to participate effectively in programs and services whatever their age, gender, indigenous culture, ethnic group, ability, economic circumstance, religious or political affiliation. By providing an open and accessible environment, EMFM aims to enhance life opportunities for people in our local community.

Broad Guidelines

1. Inclusiveness is a key aspect in EMFM's program delivery, management policies, volunteer recruitment and management policies, as well as being an important feature of the day-to-day operation of the station and its activities. Where necessary affirmative action² strategies will be used to increase participation of individuals and specific communities
2. Planning of all EMFM activities and services will ensure a whole-of-organisation approach. This includes
 - a. a flexible approach to the delivery of programming (within the constraints placed upon EMFM by other policies, the Codes of Practice and other operational considerations);
 - b. an openness by the management team to input, feedback, ideas and suggestions from everyone involved with the station in regards to programming, management and other activities undertaken by EMFM;
 - c. flexibility with regard to the ability of individuals seeking to be involved with the station to pay membership fees or to provide any required equipment
 - i. The Board of Management reserves the right to waive membership fees either temporarily or permanently in cases of financial or other hardship which would otherwise be a barrier to an individual's involvement with the station
 - ii. Equipment, such as headphones, when required will be, again at the discretion of the Board of Management be provided on a 'loan' basis to individuals who demonstrate financial or other hardship as a barrier to their involvement.
 - iii. Any such equipment remains the property of EMFM and is to be stored on EMFM premises, unless authority to remove it has been given by management.
3. Quality training and mentoring programs as well as effective communication strategies that increase the capacity of individuals to participate in all areas of EMFM's activity in such a way that allows for the effective and continually improving capacity of EMFM to deliver its services to the community

Implementation

EMFM will develop and implement a range of strategies in its management planning and operational activities that include

1. Actively recruiting members of the community to the Board of Management, Sub Committees, volunteer roles (including but not limited to on-air presenting roles) and other positions that arise within EMFM, so that the station reflects the diversity of the communities it serves

² 'Affirmative Action' in the context of this A&E policy refers to actions or strategies in which EMFM will actively seek the involvement with the station of specific groups if it is felt we are not adequately representing that group in our programming and other activities

2. Providing training and mentoring to EMFM management and volunteers in managing diversity and encouraging them to be pro-active in improving the quality of the activities of, and services provided by EMFM, both internally and externally
3. Providing a physical environment that is accessible to all
4. Rewriting policies in plain English

Codes of Practice

The Codes of Practice which govern community broadcasting in Australia are very specific with regard to issues of access, equity, rights and responsibilities and inclusion. The relevant sections of the Codes are reproduced here. They form an integral part of EMFM's A&E policy and form part of this document and the policy

Code 2: Principles of diversity and independence

Purpose: To make sure that community radio stations have written policies and procedures in place that promote diversity and encourage community participation

1. Our station will make sure that people in our community who are not adequately served by other media are encouraged and assisted to participate in providing our service. We will have in place policies and procedures to support this commitment. We will document evidence of our efforts to encourage community participation.
2. Our policies and procedures will include mechanisms to enable active participation by our community in station management, programming and general operations.
3. We will have policy documents in place that outline:
 1. the principles of volunteering,
 2. the rights and responsibilities of volunteers within the organisation,
 3. the rights and responsibilities of the organisation to volunteers, whether they are members or not, and
 4. grounds and procedures for the dismissal of volunteers.
4. All policy documents will be freely available.
5. In all station activities and our behaviour, we will oppose and break down prejudice on the basis of ethnicity, race, language, gender, sexuality, age, physical or mental ability, occupation, religious, cultural or political beliefs.