

# Community Media Destinations: Spotlight on Creative Industries

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We pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work -  
Jagarra/Turrbal country, and Kuarna country - and recognise that sovereignty has never  
been ceded in this nation now known as Australia

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<sup>1</sup> This report is a collective endeavour and the order of authors does not imply a hierarchy of authorship.



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## Executive Summary

Community broadcasting represents the largest independent media sector in Australia. The sector, established in 1978, is one of the longest running in the world. Over 26 000 people volunteer in the sector each year (CBAA 2019), however, little is known about their career trajectories. While we recognise people come to community broadcasting at many different points in their life - including as part of an active retirement - there is a common, unofficial narrative that describes community radio volunteers 'cutting their teeth' in the sector and then 'moving on' in their careers.

The Community Media Destinations pilot research project interrogates the experiences of people working in the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs), who spent significant time in the Australian community broadcasting sector. Examining the impact of community broadcasting participation on career pathways recognises the historical role that community radio stations and people have played in shaping the Australian media landscape. The decision to focus on employment pathways specific to the CCIs was, in part, pragmatic - community broadcasting belongs to that sector. Furthermore, the representational, communicative and cultural roles played by the CCIs suggest their employment profile matters (Luckman et al. 2020).

The research employed a collective case study approach to document community media destinations as one overarching case study, with individual cases - in this context, individual participants - examined in detail. The case studies were compiled through a multi-method qualitative approach that relied heavily on an in-depth interview with each participant, incorporated with background 'armchair' research and personal/professional knowledge of the sector. To define the CCIs we consulted the industry groupings listed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The research makes clear that the Australian community media sector plays an important and multi-faceted role in the professional development of its practitioners. It identifies four key themes:

- Career Pathways - while somewhat fluid, a direct and tangible contribution to employment opportunities.
- Skills development and training - a broad suite of skills which prepared for future employment and personal development.
- Connections and networks - central to shaping personal and professional pathways.
- Instilling a sense of social responsibility - influential on future career pathways and personal lives.

These themes constitute a framework for further research into the impact of community media on employment pathways and career trajectories.

## **Section One: Context**

### **Introduction**

The *Community Media Destinations* pilot research project applied a collective case study approach to interrogate the experiences of people working in the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs), who preceded this with volunteer work in Australian community broadcasting. This research identifies and discusses key themes describing the impact of community radio on the employment pathways and career trajectories of its practitioners.

### **Community Media in Australia**

Examining the impact of community broadcasting participation on career pathways recognises the historical role that community radio stations and people have played in shaping the Australian media landscape. Equally, the research inclusion of community 'media' acknowledges the challenges and future opportunities for the sector as it continues to adapt and innovate in an increasingly multi-platform 'post-broadcast' environment (Dreher, 2017). For the purposes of this research project, we have focused on participants whose career pathways included volunteering in community broadcasting, or to be more precise, community radio.

Community broadcasting represents the largest independent media sector in Australia. Formally enshrined in legislation in 1978, the sector is one of the most well-established and longest running in the world; an essential part of the Australian media landscape (Anderson et al., 2020). According to the Broadcasting Services Act 1992, Australian community broadcasting services are not-for-profit, freely available to the general public, and must be used for community purposes. Stations are further governed by the Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice which detail policies for programming, operational standards and the sector's guiding principles.

Radio dominates the Australian community broadcasting sector. The most recent figures suggest there are more than 450 community radio stations, drawing a listenership of almost 6 million people, or approximately 1 in 4 Australians (McNair yellowSquares, 2019). It is estimated over 26 000 people volunteer in Australian community broadcasting each year (CBAA 2016). Stations serve a range of communities of interest including First Nations people, youth, LGBTIQ and ethnic communities, as well as those providing services for people with print disabilities, senior citizens, religious communities and special interests such as music and fine arts (CBF, 2020). According to McNair yellowSquares research (2019), listeners tune in primarily to access local news and information, to hear local voices and personalities, and to listen to specialist music. Community radio also plays a vital service to rural Australians, with seventy-six percent of Australian community radio stations located in regional and remote areas, with one-third of these stations reporting that they are the only media outlet producing local programming in their area (McNair yellowSquares, 2019).

The sector is largely self-funded and faces significant challenges in terms of financial sustainability; under-funding and lack of resources are chronic problems for the sector (Forde et al., 2002; Price-Davies & Tacchi, 2001). A limited number of grants are made available through the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF), an independent, not-for-profit funding agency, which represents 7.5% of sector income (CBF, 2020). Stations are limited to five minutes of advertising per hour (ACMA, 2008), and rely on additional funding sources such as sponsorship, subscriptions, and selling air-time.

Despite struggles for sustainability, the Australian community radio sector has proved remarkably resilient to other challenges. Community radio is said to be under threat in many regions around the world, due to the rise of digital media, podcasting and neoliberal media policies (Miller, 2017; Cammaerts, 2009). Yet there are compelling arguments to suggest this is not quite the case in Australia, where community engagement and hyperlocalism remain key strengths of community radio, with

programs focused on grassroots community engagement proving resilient to the incursions of digital and commercial media (Anderson & Rodríguez, 2019). Research shows community radio continues to play an important role for communities who are ignored by mainstream media, acting as a source of information, social connection, and identity, as a site which seeks to intervene in the uneven distribution of value, voice and symbolic power (Fox, 2019; Anderson & Bedford, 2017; Meadows et al. 2007; Forde et al., 2002).

Another example, outlined in the *More than Radio* report (Social Ventures Australia, 2017), is a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of Indigenous broadcasting services which supports the economic case for investment in Indigenous community media, including Indigenous community radio. The SROI analysis found that, for every dollar invested in First Nations media (including broadcasting), \$2.87 of cultural, social and economic value is returned, and that Indigenous broadcasting services are crucial to building community resilience, increasing community cohesion and supporting people into meaningful employment. Furthermore, the report found Indigenous broadcasting services provide employment opportunities, technical training and 'contribute to the development of the Indigenous music and film industry, now recognised on the world stage' (Social Ventures Australia, 2017, p. 10).

### **Why the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs)?**

In Australia there has been strong interest in the role of 'cultural' and 'creative' activity in the economy, such as that highlighted by Australia's national cultural policy *Creative Australia* in 2013. The essential representational, communicative and cultural roles played by the CCIs makes them fundamental to the development of individual and community identities, the potential for intercultural understanding, and the cultivation of a sense of belonging. According to Luckman et al. (2020), it is for these reasons that the CCI employment profile matters.

The cultural and creative industries sector was one of the hardest hit following government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic (O'Connor & Eltham, 2020), with some parts of the cultural sector in particular already hurting from shrinking Commonwealth funding over several years (Eltham & Verhoeven, 2020). This has focused renewed attention on the social, cultural and economic value of the CCIs.

### **What is meant by 'Creative and Cultural Industries'?**

Horkheimer and Adorno (2012, originally published in 1944) introduced the term 'Culture Industry' to describe the industrialised, homogenised, market-driven mass production of culture. They argued that mass production and commercialisation of culture destroys creativity and artistic value, and presented the Marxist concept of a 'Culture Industry' as a means of mass deception and oppression rather than as a result of creative expression of the masses. Since the 1970s, there has been a significant shift from this notion of a singular 'culture industry' as a critical concept towards a descriptive concept of plural 'Culture Industries'.

The term 'Creative Industries' can be traced to policy developments in the UK under New Labour in the late 1990s, and was in part influenced by Australia's 1994 national cultural policy statement *Creative Nation: Commonwealth Cultural Policy*, developed by the Keating Labor Government (Luckman, 2017; Flew, 2011). Under Tony Blair's Third Way policies, the Creative Industries Taskforce was created and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) established, which marked a new focus on the knowledge and culture-driven economy as the means of replacing traditional manufacturing industries in post-Thatcher Britain. This policy agenda strategically positioned—and championed—the cultural and creative industries as key to Britain's economic development, prosperity and regeneration (Belfiore, 2020; Hesmondhalgh & Pratt, 2005).

The shift from ‘cultural’ to ‘creative’ industries—what previously came under the remit of the cultural or ‘arts’ sector—saw the reclassification away from cultural policy-focused funding for primarily ‘high culture’ and elite art forms (museums, opera and the like) to a whole range of popular culture and creativity (Luckman, 2017). It also allowed for the inclusion of digital technology which marked the biggest economic growth sector at the time. The DMSC’s 1998 *Creative Industries Mapping Document* identified several fields of cultural and creative activity that, it stated, held the potential for ‘wealth creation through the generation of intellectual property’.

Today, the terms ‘Creative’ and ‘Cultural’ industries are often used interchangeably (or referred to together as and/or) and embrace an expanding constellation of cultural production, vernacular forms of creativity and cultural/creative labour. The internationalisation over the last 25 years of the British creative industries model and associated discourses and policies, including in Australia, has broadened to embrace the notion of the ‘creative economy’. The creative industries sector is recognised as a dynamic sector in world trade by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, n.d.). In Australia, Canada, the UK and beyond, government policy and discourse highlight the creative economies as ‘source(s) of economic growth, with growing employment and revenues’ (Campbell, 2020, p. 524). In other words, the cultural and creative economy has become big business.

There are various overlapping definitions of the employment sectors that constitute this business. The CCIs broadly include advertising, architecture, the arts and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software, music, performing arts, publishing, software, television and radio (DMSC, 1998, p. 3). Australian Bureau of Statistics’ data captures a broad area of cultural and creative activity including museums, environmental heritage, libraries and archives, literature and print media, performing arts, design, broadcasting, electronic or digital media and film, music composition and publishing, visual arts and crafts, fashion, other culture goods manufacturing and sales. The *Australian National Accounts: Cultural and*

*Creative Activity Satellite Accounts* (ABS, 2014) outlines an arbitrary set of industry groupings, based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) codes, on which this research has based its definitions. Regardless of the set of classifications one draws upon, community media and the community broadcasting sector clearly sit within the parameters of a CCI. While community broadcasting is Australia's largest independent media sector—larger than both public and commercial media—attention to this sector within the rubric of the Cultural and Creative Industries, and CCI research more broadly, is notably absent.

### **Scholarly overview of CCIs policy and practice**

Over the past twenty-odd years, CCIs have attracted increased scholarly interest owing to their contribution to the social as well as economic fabric of society. Theory has shifted from a focus on the plight of creative artists to concern with the character of CCIs, and from how capitalism impacts on creative work to how capitalism manages, organises and provides the conditions for creative production (Negus and Pickering, 2004, p. 51). Negus and Pickering argue that this reconstruction of the CCIs focuses on enabling policy makers to intervene economically and ideologically. This shift in focus reflects the recognition of cultural production as a powerful force in a post-industrial, knowledge based, global economy at a time when these industries have moved closer to the centre of the action (Hesmondhalgh, 2002, p. 1).

However, there is lively debate in scholarship and practice on the rise of creative industries policy and discourse in the UK and beyond, including Australia. O'Connor (2015) argues that contrasting imaginaries underpin the cultural and creative industries — specifically, that the former can be understood as 'the culturalisation of the economy', while the latter imagines an 'economisation of culture'. This shifting relationship between 'culture' and the 'economy', while sometimes in tension, is not always so, and can lead to new forms of innovation, cultural production and vernacular creativity.

Garnham (2005), in his analysis of the implications of the ‘creative industries’ approach to arts and media policy in the UK—with its emphasis on the economic importance of innovation and information—argued it legitimates a supply side, artist-centred defence of state cultural subsidies that contradicts another major aim of cultural policy – wider access. This is salient when considering community media pathways into the cultural and creative industries sector (and setting aside the fact that community media itself is a destination). If community media is a site which seeks to intervene in the uneven distribution of value, voice and symbolic power, how might this translate when people shift ‘out’ into other creative and cultural industries whose spaces may not be comparatively accessible or participatory?

On the one hand, embrace of the cultural and creative industries in policy and public discourse has expanded what ‘counts’ as valuable and legitimate in the eyes of funders and decision-makers—embracing more democratised and participatory forms of culture and creativity not confined to ‘high culture’. On the other hand, this shift raises critical questions around the politics of cultural measurement—what Goldbard (2015) terms the metrics syndrome—competing systems of value, and cultural indicators for ‘making culture count’ (see MacDowall et al., 2015). Luckman (2017, p. 341) similarly notes the predominance of creative industries as a ‘commercially focused championing of entrepreneurial creativity, at the expense of arts and cultural policy as social goods with value beyond that which can be economically defined’. In reality, of course, this issue is complex and entangled. Making culture and cultural production ‘productive’ within economic and marketised frames of value may be instrumentalising policy imperatives; but such activities can be taken up in unexpected ways by practitioners on the ground and leveraged for community, collective or social benefit. Community media—and community broadcasting in particular—at times, does this very well (Meadows et al., 2007; Forde et al., 2002); and it is a key feature of the sector’s Guiding Principles and Codes of Practice (CBAA, 2008).



## Section Two: Method

### Introduction

We use a collective case study approach to document community media destinations as one overarching case study, with individual cases—in this context—individual participants, examined in detail. By working to understand each specific circumstance, identifying which factors are unique to each situation and those common to the larger picture, we tease out themes that are common across the instances. The case studies were compiled through a multi-method qualitative approach that relied heavily on an in-depth interview with each participant, incorporated with background ‘armchair’ research and personal/professional knowledge of the sector. According to Stake (1995), case study selection should consider how the selected samples represent the population alongside their typicality and their potential to foster a better understanding of the phenomena under examination.

### Case Study Selection

To guide this research we have used the, somewhat arbitrary, industry groupings listed by the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) codes in the ABS (2014) report, *Australian National Accounts: Cultural and Creative Activity Satellite Accounts*. Accordingly, Australia’s CCIIs include:

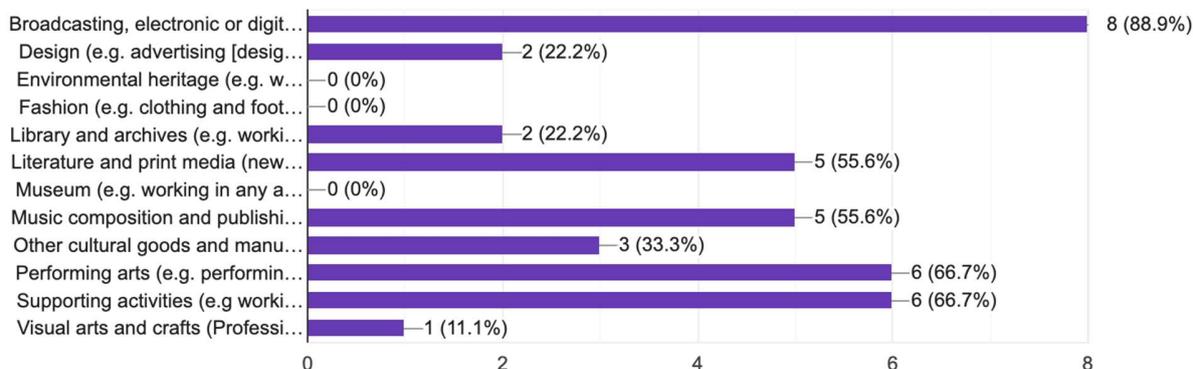
- Broadcasting, electronic or digital media, and film (e.g. motion picture and video production, post-production and distribution, motion picture exhibition, software publishing, radio, TV, cable and other subscription broadcasting [including journalism produced for broadcast], internet publishing and broadcasting, Video and other electronic media rental and hiring)
- Design (e.g. architectural, advertising, computer system, and other specialised design services)
- Environmental heritage (e.g. nature reserves and conservation parks, zoological and botanical gardens operation)
- Fashion (clothing and footwear manufacturing, wholesaling, retailing)

- Library and archives
- Literature and print media (newspaper, magazine, periodicals, book and other [non-software, music and internet] publishing [including journalism and other writing for print], book and magazine wholesaling, printing and printing support services, newspaper and book retailing)
- Museum (museum operation)
- Music composition and publishing (music publishing, music and other sound recording activities)
- Other cultural goods and manufacturing and sales (reproduction of recorded material, entertainment media retailing)
- Performing arts (performing arts operation, creative artists, musicians, writers and performers, performing arts venue operation)
- Supporting activities (arts education, arts administrator )
- Visual arts and crafts (Professional Photographic Services, jewellery and watch wholesaling and retailing)

Appendices 1 and 2 (pp. 38-40) of the Australian *National Accounts: Cultural and Creative Activity Satellite Accounts* provide further details of the aforementioned industry categories.

To determine which industry categories to focus on, a survey was sent, via email, to 21 staff at the following peak body organisations: First Nations Media Australia, the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, the Community Media Training Organisation, Community Broadcasting Fund, National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council, Australian Community Television Alliance, Technorama, Radio Reading Network, Goolarri Media and various State-based organisations. The survey asked which of the Cultural and Creative Industries (listed above) most align with the career pathways of community media volunteers (with the option to select up to six). Based on these selections, we did not seek participants working in environmental heritage, fashion or museums. The results of the survey are outlined in Figure One.

Figure One: Survey of perceived career pathways in the CCIs for community broadcasting workers



A second question in the survey asked for specific suggestions for appropriate people to interview regarding their career trajectory, from which 31 potential interviewees were identified. This list was classified in terms of industry, occupation, location and six people were selected that the research team believed would create as broad a sample as possible for our collective case study.

Two people from our original sample selection declined to participate and, as such, only one male or male-identifying participant was included in the research pilot. In addition, as our selection process focused on the current status of the participant (that is, where they were currently based, both geographically and occupationally) we inadvertently selected three participants who started their community radio experience at the same radio station, and two at another. As a result, while the participants' experiences were richly varied, only three community radio stations were represented in the pilot findings. One participant identified as First Nations.

## Analysis

The interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed, and then independently analysed by three investigators (who each conducted two interviews). This data analysis consisted of reflexive thematic coding influenced by Palmer-Wackerly et al. (2020). After familiarising themselves with the interview transcripts, each investigator

generated topics ‘through inductive reading of each interview transcript, memoing after each interview, and analysing transcript readings to link codes to possible theoretical ideas’ (Palmer-Wackerly et al., 2020, p. 3). The investigators shared the topics and patterns they had identified regarding the topic of research, combining and refining them to construct key themes. These were written up, and the findings compared with insights from the current literature.

## **Section Three: Case Study Descriptions**

### **Participant One**

Participant One is Head of Audio and Podcasts for a national Indigenous owned and operated media outlet. She also freelances as a journalist and in a wide range of public speaking roles and curates, moderates and speaks at panels and other events. P1's broadcasting career began at an Indigenous community radio station, located in a capital city, in the early 1990's, where she first volunteered in the newsroom for work experience during her journalism tertiary studies. This led to paid employment at the radio station, where she worked in the newsroom, as a breakfast announcer and a sports announcer for several years. P1 also worked for a peak body for Indigenous media and as a Communications Officer with a State Government department, before securing a cadetship in public broadcasting where she worked as a broadcaster for nearly 20 years across a range of stations and programs.

### **Participant Two**

Participant Two works for a major national commercial broadcasting network as a technology engineer, a position that encompasses broadcast systems, audio engineering and outside broadcasting. He is also a venue booker, musician, and runs his own record label and recording studio. While he was always keen to pursue a career in audio engineering, P2 did not undertake formal college or university training. He began volunteering at a capital city community radio station in the late 2000s as an announcer, which he continues to do at the time of writing. In the mid 2010s, P2 was employed at the same community radio station to produce a program showcasing live performances that broadcast nationally through the Community Radio Network. He went on to work at a commercial radio station as an outsider broadcaster, panel operator and technology engineer, before moving across to the company with which he is currently

employed. Prior to employment in radio, P2 worked in a wide range of jobs including warehouse work, office temping and graphic design.

### **Participant Three**

Participant Three is a freelance investigative journalist, producer, media lecturer and trainer. Her involvement in community radio began in 1979 while studying communications at university during the early years of a major metro station. Since then, she has worked with media outlets including *The Sydney Morning Herald* and ABC TV, Radio and Online, and her television and radio documentaries have been broadcast on the BBC, major US networks, and throughout Africa. A four-time winner of the prestigious Walkley Award for journalism in Australia, she has also won awards at the New York International Radio Festival, Chicago's Third Coast Festival, and the United Nations Media Peace Prize on four occasions.

### **Participant Four**

Participant Four is a freelance journalist and Head of Partnerships with a national music education provider. She is an award winning broadcaster, journalist, Executive Producer, and author, with over 30 years experience in Australian and international radio, television, online and print. Her work includes an ABC radio series and book on 1980s Australian music, SBS TV talent producer and scriptwriter; commercial television current affairs reporter; and a weekly opinion column for the *Saturday Age* as well as writing on social justice, environmental and Indigenous issues. A long-term and ongoing community radio broadcaster, she presented her first show in 1983 on a capital city station, worked as Program Manager with another major metro station throughout the 2000s, and currently presents a show on a regional station in her hometown.

### **Participant Five**

Participant Five currently manages a visual arts association. Her involvement in community broadcasting began at a major metro community radio station while she was working at a news wire service and studying at university in the late 1980s. During her time at this station, she was involved in a number of programs, including a series that was a finalist in the New York Festivals' Radio Awards. From there P5 worked in commercial radio and at the ABC before transitioning into broadcast and journalism education at a number of institutions across the country. Her work in higher education led to extensive travel around Australia promoting educational pathways for Indigenous Australians. Since then she has worked in a range of roles in marketing, sponsorship, and event management, and has maintained a mentoring role in the community broadcasting sector.

### **Participant Six**

Participant Six is a new media artist and designer who has exhibited creative technology experiences around the world. She is also a project management consultant who works with both individual stations and sector peak bodies on training and governance. P6 began her career in street press magazines while also performing and releasing music in a band in the early 2000s. She then took on a role at a major metro community radio station in the late 2000s where she worked in sponsorship and marketing before becoming the station manager. After nearly ten years as station manager, she moved into freelance consulting in the sector and focussing on her visual arts practice. P6 is also the co-founder of a creative technology arts collective that offers training and mentorship to improve the accessibility of digital arts practice.

Figure Two: Overview of participants

	Current profession	Started in CR
P1	Works for a national Indigenous owned and operated media outlet	Early 1990s
P2	Technology engineer for a major national commercial broadcasting network	Late 2000s
P3	Freelance investigative journalist, producer, media lecturer and trainer	Late 1970s
P4	Freelance journalist and Head of Partnerships with a national music education provider.	Early 1980s
P5	Manages a visual arts association	Late 1980s
P6	New media artist and designer and project management/CR consultant	Late 2000s

## **Section Four: Findings**

### **Introduction**

All research participants strongly agreed that participation in community broadcasting is inarguably beneficial to professional development for a broad range of reasons, which can be divided into the following major themes: career pathways, skills development and training, connections and networks, and instilling a sense of social responsibility. This section explores each of these themes in detail and highlights potential areas of future research.

### **Career Pathways**

I was doing a lot of academic stuff around media, but I couldn't really see what the career path might be out of that. Whereas the radio station itself sort of offered a career path. (Participant Three)

A key theme that emerged throughout the interviews was the direct and tangible contribution of community broadcasting to career pathways. All interviewees had diverse and non-linear careers that they attributed in various ways to their experiences in community broadcasting. This research found that community broadcasting was seen as a 'foot in the door' of the creative and cultural industries and also an important space within which to develop the foundational skills and networks that facilitate broader career pathways.

Career pathways in the CCIs are relatively under-researched. The creative industries sector employs more than 600,000 people in Australia, around a third of which are embedded creatives in non-creative industries (SGS Economics and Planning, 2013). Research, however, focusses on educational pathways, with recent studies exploring creative graduate pathways (Bridgstock & Cunningham, 2016, 2014; Bridgstock et al., 2015); skills for creative industries (Bridgstock, 2011); and the relationship between social connectedness (professional networks and social capital) and creative graduate

employability (Bridgstock et al., 2019). The non-linear nature of career pathways in the CCIs highlights the importance of research that explores beyond traditional educational pipelines to employment.

The interviewees had varying levels of educational and professional experience before becoming involved in community broadcasting. Some volunteered while they were undertaking tertiary education, others transitioned from different careers into the sector, while others volunteered in addition to their paid employment. Taylor and Luckman (2020b, p. 267) note multiple entry points into the CCIs, including vocational training, higher education, or more individualised, self-directed ways based on personal interests, enthusiasms, and amateur activities. Careers have traditionally been conceptualised as a linear progression, bounded by occupation and advanced by employing organisations. The nature of work, however, has undergone radical changes, with the notion of a 'job for life' replaced by multidirectional careers, non-linear pathways, precarity, multiple employers, and a variety of working arrangements (Crawford et al., 2013).

Taylor and Luckman (2020b, p. 268) note that a 'pathway' implies a 'transition that is both knowable and known'. Yet for many contemporary creative and cultural workers (depending on their specific field), there is often no single, clear—or indeed linear—pathway. Instead, they may be 'improvised, relatively informal and serendipitous' (Taylor & Luckman, 2020a, p. 2). The findings of this research support this observation: none of the six interviewees followed a 'linear' pathway, with participants working in the same industry taking very different routes to develop their careers.

Two participants explicitly said they had aspired to work in the creative industries, and three pursued journalism careers, which included tertiary education studies. All participants described a rich and varied history of employment, influenced by their involvement in community radio at all points of their career trajectory. The majority

either worked as freelancers, simultaneously held multiple positions and/or described themselves as under-employed.

This aligns with Daniel, Fleishman and Welters's (2017) claim that most creative industries practitioners are freelancers or work in small-medium enterprises. Daniel (2016, p. 93) identifies three 'typologies' of artistic careers: portfolio, protean and boundaryless. A portfolio career involves multiple job holdings, the protean career describes an individual who is highly adaptable and responsive to changing employment opportunities and environments, while a boundaryless career type involves an individual working non-linearly across different sectors and without the restraint of existing structures or norms (Bridgstock, 2011; Savickas, 2013). The case studies in this pilot research certainly represent all three of Daniel's typologies.

Despite the range of pathways, for the majority of participants, involvement in community broadcasting emerged from chance opportunities and networks of contacts. In all cases though, involvement in community broadcasting was seen as a way of improving skills and positioning to support career development.

Without [community radio station] I would not have been afforded an opportunity to be on air at the Js (Triple J). It wouldn't have happened. I mean, it was such a formative ... It is the founding block of my career and my professional practice. (Participant Four)

A common experience of career progression in community broadcasting among the research participants was the transition from volunteer to paid employment (either at the station or elsewhere). Volunteering was recognised as an important stepping stone, with all participants volunteering in community broadcasting prior to gaining paid employment. One participant observed that the skills and networks developed through volunteering were important to the notion of adding value to volunteer experiences.

I rarely check Facebook these days, but you know, when I do go on and I see someone that used to be a volunteer and then they've got, you know, 'I've just got this job blah blah' and I'm like 'Oh my God, that's so good'. Because it makes you feel like that their time volunteering, if they weren't paid, really was beneficial in some way. Because, you know, that's ... been an issue of, you know, 'do I volunteer because I just get something out of it emotionally or is it going to lead to something better?' (Participant Six)

The transition from volunteering to paid employment represented, in many cases, evidence of community broadcasting offering career development. It was also a marked shift in the development of professional identity.

They used to pay us 25 bucks a show, like 'ka-ching', you know it's nothing right, but it felt like you were suddenly a professional. You've gone from, you know, volunteering to enough skill to be regarded as worth giving some dollars to. (Participant Five)

Another common career pathway among interviewees was the transition from community broadcasting to mainstream media. For many interviewees, community broadcasting was seen as a pathway or a training ground for work in the mainstream media. Several interviewees spoke of colleagues 'going over the road' with reference to the location of 2SER in Sydney, across the road from the ABC.

Everybody in community radio wanted to get paid more or be regarded as more than ... But for some reason there was a sense that you graduated out of community. That's how you became professional in the game, and people were always in Sydney terms, trying to go across the road, which was where Ultimo and ABC were. (Participant Five)

Every one of us that worked at [program] ... wanted to get into media, into mainstream media and get paid. We got jobs ... [Colleague] walked out of there into Triple J and was immediately on air. Given an on air roll. [Colleague] walked out of there, started at 2BL immediately. [Colleague] walked out of there, got into the ABC TV. [Colleague] walked out of there, started at the women's unit at ABC Radio Coming Out show ... it was 40 years last year since that program started and we had a get together in my front yard and everyone in that front yard that had been with us had jobs in media. (Participant Three)

The drive to 'progress' from community broadcasting to mainstream media outlets was, however, not universal. Participant One explicitly rejected the assumption that mainstream media was more desirable or professional, arguing that community broadcasting, particularly Indigenous media, has an invaluable role to play.

It really excites me because I think there's still this feeling that in order to be validated for the skills that you have, you have to work in mainstream. But if mainstream are not providing you a culturally safe environment to be able to do that, or a culturally safe workplace to be able to do that—I'm already seeing colleagues leaving to come back to Indigenous media because they feel safer there, and they feel like ... they can do so. I think the time is right at the moment and I think there is definite change that is going to come because of everything that has happened in the last year or so. (Participant One)

This aligns with Meadows et al.'s (2007) observation that, in the case of remote Indigenous broadcasting, there was a hunger for training and employment to work in media organisations within their own sector. Furthermore, Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2009, p. 146) note (albeit a decade ago):

Audiences want better training opportunities for emerging broadcasters with a career path for those who want to continue to work with their own communities. There is a strong feeling that despite an increase in the number of young people training within the sector to undertake skilled jobs, there are few paid media options for them to pursue without moving into the mainstream.

Participant One's insight also highlights the different career pathway experiences of those who do not fall into the dominant normative standards of those working in the CCIs. Despite the range of pathways into the sectors, the stratification and inequality in the CCI workforce in Australia must also be noted, including the highly unequal structure of cultural labour markets and unequal distribution of culture (Eltham & Verhoeven, 2020; also noted in the context of the UK, see O'Brien et al., 2016; Ashton, 2015). Luckman et al. (2020) highlight the gender inequality in Australia's film, television and radio industries. There is also an identified lack of cultural diversity in media more broadly, with white professionals more likely to be in decision-making positions than people of non-white backgrounds (Media Diversity Australia, 2020). These inequalities serve to reinforce creative industries' employment practices which 'tend to implicitly reinforce hegemonic hiring practices' (Luckman, 2017, p. 349). Inequality in career pathways within the CCIs represents a vital area of future research, one that is discussed in more detail in Section Five.

### **Skills development and training**

It's like everything you know, like, everything that I do is grounded in that. I learned how to research. I learned how to write. I learned how to produce. I learned how to be a presenter. You know, I learned how to interview. All of those skills were developed in community media.  
(Participant Three)

Participants in this pilot research project all agreed their time in community broadcasting developed (and for those still in the sector, continues to develop) a broad suite of skills, which prepared them for future employment. As mentioned above, there is no one clear 'pathway' into the CCIs, and hence no one story of training and skills development (Taylor & Luckman, 2020a). Creative skills in the CCIs can be acquired formally (through industry-specific education and training) or informally via 'collaboration, networking and cross-pollination of industries' (Trembath & Fielding, 2020, p. 46). Likewise, in their sector-wide study of the community radio sector—conducted almost two decades ago—Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2002, p. 63) found that essentially all of the stations surveyed conducted some form of training, whether informal, formal, or a combination of both, investing considerable time, resources and expertise into these activities.

Skill sets tend to be considered as either hard skills—those relating to technical knowledge required for specific tasks or industries—or soft—both intra and interpersonal skills that are transferable across a wide range of activities. Increasingly, it is the transferrable 'generic' skills which are valued across the CCIs. The skills most prevalent across the CCIs are predicted to be in 'high demand in the future' (Trembath & Fielding, 2020, p. 75), and demand for 'creative skills' across the creative economy is only expected to increase (BCAR, 2019). Research by the World Economic Forum in 2018 found that 'creativity, originality and initiative' was the foremost emerging skill category in Australia. Creative skills in this sense are highly transferrable, if somewhat nebulous, but are therefore 'valued across a range of industries and roles' (Trembath & Fielding, 2020, p. 76). Figure Three lists the specific skills developed through community media, as identified by participants in this research. It is evident participation in community radio provides opportunities to develop both hard and soft skill sets, many of which can be classified as transferable and creative in nature.

Figure Three: Skills developed through community media

Producing	Interviewing	Grant writing	Understanding IT (especially digital)	Risk assessment	Teaching/training
Presenting/announcing	Reporting on large events	Digital editing	Time management	Managing volunteers	Audio mixing
Programming	Producing quality journalism	Policy knowledge	Communication skills (with people)	Conflict resolution/management	Multi-tasking
Administration	Researching	Panelling	Outside broadcasting	Storytelling	

Participants reported that skills acquisition occurred both formally and informally, and predominantly through practical, hands-on practice. This aligns with Meadows, Forde and Foxwell's (2002, p. 67) findings that the vast majority of training reported across the community broadcasting sector was practical, 'functional and on-the-job', noting that few stations were in a position to allocate specific funds for training purposes. They found that about half of station managers coordinate this training, and most training is on a one-to-one basis, rather than in groups. The opportunity to learn on-the-job, and the value of 'learning through doing' was stressed by participants in this research.

I mean, you can sit there and read a bunch of paperwork about what it might look like and smell like and all that sort of stuff. Until you finally get hands-on and then learn the pitfalls, you rarely make those same mistakes twice, because you've realised what the consequences were. So community radio was perfect for those kinds of things ... if we didn't have that ... I wouldn't be here today. Thanks, community radio. (Participant Two)

Informal training was by far the most prevalent approach identified in the interviews. This approach was highly valued by the participants, who described it as providing the opportunities to learn new skills on-the-job using trial and error, with the freedom to learn from mistakes in safe (including culturally-safe) environments. It was common for participants to attribute their training to specific people - mentors, colleagues and friends<sup>2</sup>.

Just working with the people that I worked with was a constant infusion of new knowledge. (Participant Six)

Participants mentioned finding themselves in 'sink or swim' situations working outside their comfort zones and in areas they didn't expect or think it possible for them to succeed in.

We made it work. Sometimes it didn't work, and we totally learnt from all that. And that was valuable information for... to get me where I am today, absolutely. (Participant Two)

When you realise something is not out of your reach—that's a revelation. (Participant Five)

Participants also emphasised that community radio provided them opportunities to learn new skills under a variety of conditions, and this was integral to their professional and personal development.

It gave me such a great grounding ... just always felt that I was way ahead of where I needed to be, because of what I'd been given at [the community radio station]; in terms of the training and in terms of what I got to do ... when I got put into a situation that was challenging or something

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<sup>2</sup> The value of networks and connections is discussed as a separate theme below.

completely different for me (at their new job), it didn't phase me because I'd already kind of done that in community radio. (Participant One)

Taylor and Luckman (2020b, p. 270) suggest preparation for work in the CCIs is 'likely to involve an extended up-and-down process of learning and further learning, personal rebranding, the transferring of skills and their continuous upgrading to keep up with technological change'. We found that participants credited the training they received in the community broadcasting sector for being 'ahead of the game', particularly when it came to using digital technologies ahead of other broadcasting sectors.

So the fact that I had come to [my new employer] with skills of being able to multitrack and to do packages and on a digital editing system—which was a very new thing at that time—I was streets ahead of a lot of the people that I had started my cadetship with. (Participant One)

Some participants also referred to formal in-house training at their radio station. This included Australian Association Press newswire training, inductions, and announcer training. While vital for discipline-specific capabilities, formal training and skills development alone are often not sufficient to develop the full set of workforce capabilities required in CCIs. For instance, QUT JMC (journalism, media, and communications) graduates surveyed in Bridgstock and Cunningham's study (2014, p. 236) found that those employed as specialist creatives reported a high relevancy of the skills they acquired through their courses, including discipline-specific knowledge. However, they also found that embedded creatives 'were more likely than specialists to talk about the importance of verbal communication and interpersonal skills, particularly interdisciplinary communication skills and team management skills'. Formal training certainly was not foremost in the minds and memories of the case study sample. This may be influenced by the era during which the participants cut their teeth on community broadcasting, before the Community Media Training Organisation (CMTO) and similar

training bodies had been established. More recent community broadcasters may report a differing experience.

A few participants applied formal training they had, or were receiving, often through tertiary studies they were undertaking at the same time as their community radio commitments. Whilst tertiary studies in journalism were most common, participants also pursued degrees in history and multimedia studies (or similar). All three journalist participants praised their experience in community radio news and current affairs production. The sector was described as a training ground for journalism and almost vital for a successful broadcasting career.

The first thing I say to people when I'm doing journalism training at the university is 'go and join that radio station up there', because quite seriously, you won't get your foot in the door if you want to do media unless you've got some experience now because community radio is the training ground. (Participant Three)

Forde, Meadows and Foxwell (2002, p. 64) found news and current affairs workers, involved in community radio training, reported a higher focus on formal rather than informal methods, with the report authors suggesting 'this is most likely to do with the importance placed on the need for specific knowledge of topics like broadcast law' (p. 65)

Finally, it is also worth noting all of the participants were clearly passionate and positive about their experiences in community broadcasting with many using the word 'love' to describe their feelings towards community radio and their 'craft', be that storytelling, promoting local music, journalism and/or the technologies themselves.

So I'm back in community broadcasting, working at a little station (in a regional area) ... It's my hometown. And it's my happy place. It's still my

happy place. You know, there is no other place that makes my heart sing more than being on air. (Participant Four)

This pattern of passion for community broadcasting should not be dismissed. The majority of participants still volunteer in the sector, and report that maintaining their involvement in community radio was a form of ongoing professional development, particularly because of its innovative nature. This extended to keeping them connected to 'what's happening' in the community, both locally and through the lens of a community of interest, in ways that other media could not achieve.

I'm still part of it, I do summer fills, and so in terms of informing my professional development .. that ability to come in and out of community broadcasting around my professional work has enabled me to stay connected to developing ideas and concepts in shows. (Participant Four)

Daniel, Fleishman and Welters (2017, p. 114) note 'there is a limited body of research that specifically explores the ways in which creative industries workers engage in professional development', noting also few studies focused on the Australian context. More broadly, a recent UK research paper on skill needs, mismatches and development in the creative industries makes the broad point that, in a rapidly changing and dynamic marketplace, lifelong learning is increasingly required in the creative economy to keep skills relevant and up-to-date (Giles, Salsbury and Carey, 2020, p. 5). We argue that, because community broadcasters tend to stay connected with the sector even after moving to other careers, the opportunities for lifelong learning through community radio extend well beyond initial involvement.

## **Connections and Networks**

So when I left the country and came to Sydney, I didn't know anyone. No one was going to help me get a job. [Community radio station] gave me a

network of people who had some influence who were prepared to recommend me. And I wouldn't have got 2GB without that, I wouldn't have got ABC or inside the door without that, I wouldn't have been able to teach at a university. (Participant Five)

The recent *Culture and Related Industries IRC's Skills Forecast* (PwC's Skills for Australia (Skills Service Organisation), 2019, p. 19) found stakeholders who worked in live production noted a vocational skills deficit when it came to building networks and highlighted the importance for new entrants into the CCIs to develop transferrable skills around communication, networking, and relationship-building. For all of the research participants in this project, community radio involvement was central to this process, providing the space to build and strengthen the networks and connections which have shaped their personal and professional pathways.

As Felton, Collis and Graham observe (2010), the role of networks and their contribution to the creative industries is well documented (Landry 2012; Howkins 2001), primarily focused on specific industries or on specific inner-urban metropolitan regions. For instance, Charles Landry's work was amongst the first to place creative industries at the centre of urban regeneration strategies, contributing to the New Labour UK cultural policy outlined above. In *The Creative City – a toolkit for urban innovators* (Landry, 2012), he describes a process of bringing together disparate disciplines and people to widen horizons and generate new forms of creativity:

Networking and creativity are intrinsically symbiotic, as the greater the number of nodes in a system the greater its capacity for reflexive learning and innovation (2012, p. 126).

This is reflected in the career accounts of the participants, who all describe the development of their creative practice as interdependent with the people, connections, and networks made through community radio involvement. They discuss community radio networks as central to career progression, crucial for discovering and leveraging new opportunities. For most, their introduction to community radio came about through

existing creative networks, with three participants highlighting connections with music scenes.

So you know that's the lifeblood ... We shouldn't rely on the big internationals... You know, a lot of the stations rely on those small community shops and cafes to bring in money, which is yeah where I had a lot of connections - from fashion to virtual reality! (Participant Six)

Importantly, the accounts illustrate the supportive nature of these relationships, with participants highlighting the role of peers who recommended work opportunities or encouraged them to apply for jobs. All named colleagues who had inspired and supported them throughout their careers and displayed an obvious pride in the achievements of their peers. For most, professional networks were described interdependently with long-term personal friendships.

...that was actually really important for forging incredible friendships as well. That lasted ... we still maintain, that lasted forever and will last forever. (Participant Three)

Whilst there is no single agreed upon definition, social cohesion can be thought of as the bond or glue that binds people together through a shared sense of community. Social cohesion refers to both 'individual level behaviours and attitudes such as volunteerism and participation, or through group level 'conditions' and outcomes such as evidence of supportive networks and social solidarity' (Friedkin, 2004, p. 410). This focus on social values, support, and solidarity was reflected in each of the interviews, and illustrated by Participant Four's account of the enduring nature of intersecting community radio and social justice networks throughout a varied career:

But it was fundamental to, you know, shaping everything else. And so, yeah, JJJ wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for [community radio station]. And then later on in my career ... when I held down that show at

[another community radio station] for eight years and built an incredible network of people who are still really important in my personal and professional life ... they're the same people, you know, they're similar people intersecting at that point as they were then. So it is fundamental to who I am. I have a very profound belief in and commitment to community radio. (Participant Four)

Order (2017b, p. 2) notes a shift in policy focus from 'social inclusion' to 'social cohesion' over the last decade has seen the term used mostly in 'multicultural contexts and more recently in the addressing of religious radicalisation'. This shift can also be noted in some the literature that focuses on community radio: where social cohesion is mentioned, it is often discussed with reference to 'integrating' non-white and racialised communities into the dominant (white/Anglo-European) culture (Lewis, 2008). This includes racialised migrants (refugees/asylum seekers) and 'ethnic' minority communities engaging with community radio (Forde, Foxwell and Meadows, 2009), and for specific faith-based communities. Here, participation in community media is valued for skills and capabilities which can support successful 'settlement' and citizenship, as well as fostering a sense of social wellbeing.

Community radio, and community media more broadly, is widely recognised as contributing to social cohesion. Sector-based research in Australia repeatedly highlights community radio's positive role in this regard (Forde et al., 2009; Lewis, 2008; Forde, Meadows and Foxwell, 2002) and as a cultural resource 'contributing to social gain' (Meadows & Foxwell-Norton, 2011, p. 98). Research has also found community radio can contribute to countering loneliness and isolation, facilitating social connection and enhancing social cohesion (Order, 2017a, 2017b). It is a site for both community radio volunteers and their listeners to connect to a station community (Order, 2017b, p. 12). It must also be noted that overall, much of this research is interested in community media audiences and listener engagement, rather than the experiences of community media practitioners or station workers (whether volunteer or paid).

However, in her research, Fox (2019, p. 115) found that for some community radio volunteers at 3CR, 'unity and cohesion within the on-air community is akin to a solidarity movement', through and across the airwaves. While this is not discussed in terms of social cohesion *per se*, she argues social connections are forged through on-air and off-air relationships, and can feed into larger solidarity struggles and grassroots organisation. This theme was reflected in each of the case studies, with community radio involvement described as playing a formative role in developing the personal friendships, creative networks, and social values that have shaped professional pathways.

### **Instilling a sense of social responsibility**

I probably landed the best job in the world at that time, I was pretty determined to get there. But I also was really driven by this sense ... that community radio had sort of instilled this incredible sense of the power of music and the power of great journalism too ... my association with the role of community broadcasting and community media was really about giving voice and a platform to people who would otherwise not have that voice. (Participant Four)

The passion felt by participants for community radio, especially in relation to the sector's commitment to social justice, represents a less tangible, yet (we argue) equally important theme emerging from the case studies. The majority of research participants said their involvement in community radio fostered a deep sense of social justice and community.

We forget a lot of the time community media is a huge social advocate, it doesn't even matter what kind of station you might be—a Christian station, might be an ethnic station, these are all part of communities that are trying to encourage and support aspects of social inclusion and social justice, ...

that aspect was really strongly ingrained in me while I was at [the community radio station]. (Participant Six)

This connects to debates around ‘cultural value’ that have been a prominent feature of policy and scholarly debates around the CCIs, touched on in Section One. For example, Belfiore (2012) argues, the UK’s New Labour’s cultural policies and their justification of arts and culture based on social and economic impact fails to elaborate a positive or more sophisticated notion of cultural value beyond appeals to their ‘intrinsic’ and ‘instrumental’ values (not to mention ‘institutional’ values) (see also O’Connor, 2015). Belfiore (2020, p. 384) is less convinced about the celebratory discourse around what she calls the creative industries, arguing ‘it effectively obscures, and thus shelters from scrutiny, power imbalances, unequal distribution of cultural authority in society, and unequal access to the means of symbolic representation and meaning-making’. Writing in the wake of the UK’s vote to leave the European Union and creative economy discourse over the last fifteen years, Oakley (2016, p. 166) argues what was once a forward-looking agenda is no longer:

...the absorption of previously progressive cultural policy aims such as increased cultural diversity, an ending of artificial barriers between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture and a recognition of the importance of markets in cultural production, into a much narrower focus purely on ‘jobs and growth’ has meant that many culture-led developments across the world simply reproduce the sort of heightened inequality associated with the ‘knowledge economy.

The effect of this, Belfiore (2020, p. 385) argues, is that ‘substantive issues of cultural value, access and justice, are under-explored and unchallenged’. If we consider what this might mean for the community media sector—a sector which, at the grassroots level, shares many of the qualities and values of community-based and participatory arts sector which Belfiore primarily addresses—we can get a sense of what is at stake.

There is a need to pay attention to and address 'unequal distributions of value, voice, and symbolic power' (Belfiore, 2020, p. 385) in the context of the creative industries.

It is beyond the purview of this pilot research project to claim evidence that community radio successfully addressed the inequalities Belfiore, and others, write concern for. However, there is a clear connection between engagement in community media and interest and issues of social justice. Because of their involvement in community broadcasting, participants said they were exposed to a wide range of opinions, ideas, and perspectives, and provided opportunities to learn more about the world and generally become more socially aware and politically active.

It was an incredible show and really helped, I think, set a benchmark for social justice broadcasting, ... which shaped me. (Participant Four)

I loved how much power a microphone gives a person and how immediately, as you've got one, you can ask anybody pretty much anything. And I just fell for it—hook, line and sinker. (Participant Five)

For one participant, it was through her community radio station that she learned about local Indigenous communities and their histories, which was extremely important to them, as a First Nations person relocated from another part of the country.

I'd grown up in a very small mining town ... and then moved to Brisbane. So it wasn't necessarily my community ... it was a really interesting time of just learning about the history of the place, learning about the history of Brisbane and Indigenous people. (Participant One)

For another, their understanding of the value of community broadcasting equipped them to accept a job offer, where they worked in South Africa for four years, on a project

establishing community radio stations around the country and providing training for journalists and other broadcasters.

But see that all comes back to community radio, (what) I understood because of the work that I've done at [the community radio station]. I understood how important radio was in a country like South Africa, for so many things. For education ... All that sort of stuff could be done through community media, through community radio. (Participant Three)

Community media, more broadly, is a space that attracts people who want to promote a wide range of social justice issues and there are clear associations between community radio in Australia and themes of social justice. Australia's community broadcasting sector has a strong tradition of democratising the media and acting as a cultural resource (Forde, Meadows, & Foxwell-Norton, 2002). *The Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice* (CBAA 2008) set out the operational standards and guiding principles and policies for programming. Three codes, in particular, encourage socially just conduct:

- Code Two outlines principles of diversity and independence
- Code Three - General Programming - requires access to views not adequately represented by other broadcasting sectors
- Code 4 encourages best practice in Indigenous programming and with coverage of Indigenous issues.

In Section One we asked, if community media is a site which seeks to intervene in the uneven distribution of value, voice and symbolic power (clear tenets of social justice), how might this translate when people shift 'out' into other creative and cultural industries, spaces that may not be accessible or participatory in the same way. From the comments above, it is clear community radio has the capacity to expose people to social justice issues in ways that resonate and remain with them regardless of their career trajectories. Such positive and enduring exposure to the importance of social

justice has influenced and informed participants' lives, both professionally and personally.

I think that work ethic that I started in community radio was definitely the work ethic that I kept when I was ... in a mainstream media organisation.  
(Participant One)

## **Section Five: Conclusion**

### **A framework for mapping impact**

It is clear the Australian community media sector plays an important and multi-faceted role in the professional development of its practitioners. This research identifies four key themes that provide a framework for further research into the impact of community media on the employment pathways and career trajectories.

Firstly, we can examine the specific ways in which a community radio volunteer moves into paid employment, either within the community sector or elsewhere. It is important to recognise the fluid career trajectories of community media workers (volunteer and paid). Secondly, attention must be paid to skills development and training that occurs both informally and formally within the community media sector and the ways in which those skills - including those designated as 'soft' - benefit future ventures (in employment and otherwise). Furthermore, we should not ignore the passion that community broadcasters have for their craft, the lifelong connections many have to the sector, and the role this plays in professional development. Thirdly, we can consider how networks and connections, established through a volunteer's time in community broadcasting, produce lifelong opportunities and foster professional development. Finally, we should include a focus on the role played by community radio in inculcating social justice values that influence community radio volunteers' attitudes towards both employment and lifestyle choices.

### **Limitations**

This pilot study focused on the experiences of six people who worked in community radio, as volunteers and as employed staff, and then moved to employment in other creative and cultural industries. Only three community radio stations were represented in the findings, all of which were based in large capital cities. While attempts were made to select a diverse range of participants, this was limited; the majority of participants in this research are white, none are non-binary, and none (bar one) have accents that are

designated as non-white or overtly connected to disability. This is symptomatic of a broader problem in the creative and cultural industries as discussed by Cunningham and Flew (2019, p. 9), who observe:

The continuing – and perhaps growing – barriers to effective participation in the creative industries based upon class, gender, race and disability speak to the limits of ‘business as usual’, as do movements such as #MeToo, Black Lives Matter, #CommunicationSoWhite and others that are challenging the domination of these industries by white, middle-class males and the effects this has on equitable engagement with the arts, media and culture (Campbell et al.. 2018; Saha 2018; Chakravartty et al.. 2018).

As ostensibly Australia’s most diverse media sector as well as acting as important feeder institutions into the creative and cultural industries, issues of equity and inclusion are essential to critically analyse and address. Future research should prioritise the experiences of those in community broadcasting who do not fall into the dominant normative standards of those working in the creative and cultural industries in order to highlight and critique the barriers to entry and advancement in career pathways.

Another noteworthy limitation is that no-one from the sample had (or reported to have) participated in formal training through the Community Media Training Organisation. We suspect this may be due to the eras during which the participants were first involved in the sector and suggest more recent community broadcasters may report a differing experience. An extension of this research could investigate, explicitly, the employment pathways of graduates of CMTO courses.

### **Suggestions for future research**

We propose two major directions for research in this area:

- A national research project that focuses on the career trajectories of graduates of the Community Media Training Organisation, leveraging off the CMTO Graduate

Destinations survey and employing the above mentioned framework. Again, a collective case study approach would be appropriate and/or a survey of graduates.

- A national large-scale research project employing the above mentioned framework that further maps the experiences of community broadcasting volunteers. This could be achieved through case studies into a diverse range of community radio stations, supported by a quantitative/mixed methods survey promoted by the CBAA and other peak bodies in the sector.

For both proposed projects, attention should be paid to diverse and inclusive representation.

Furthermore, each of the four key themes suggest discrete research projects, for example:

- Mapping career paths of community radio volunteers as they move into paid employment, either within the community sector or elsewhere.
- Examining the impact of the fluid nature of the career trajectories of community media workers (volunteer and paid), on individuals and broader society.
- Mapping and evaluating skills development and training, with separate focus on formal and informal training and those with tertiary education qualifications connected to their community broadcasting activity.
- Exploring the connection between community broadcasters' passion for their craft and professional development.
- Similarly, applying social network theory to explore the connection between relationship building, opportunities and professional development within the community broadcasting sector.
- Examining the role played by community radio in inculcating social justice values and its influence on community radio volunteers' ongoing attitudes towards both employment and lifestyle choices.
- Interrogating the contribution of community media to more diverse and inclusive Cultural and Creative Industries.

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