

Business Plan

2017-2021

Prepared and maintained by Committee of Management, Mallacoota
Genoa Broadcasting Association, Inc. Last updated 26/9/16

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BACKGROUND

About this Business Plan

This plan is intended to communicate 3MGB's vision, to assist the Committee to make decisions to achieve that vision and to help track and measure the progress of our Association.

The plan is created for the period 2017-2021. It will be updated when considered necessary.

The contributors to this Plan were the 2015-16 Committee of Management, Mallacoota Genoa Broadcasting Association Inc.

About the Association

Mallacoota Genoa Broadcasting Association Inc. (3MGB) is the owner and operator of the community radio station 3MGB, serving the districts of Mallacoota and Genoa in remote Far East Gippsland. It is a non-profit organisation managed by an elected committee, and staffed entirely by volunteers.

It began as a cooperative between 1983 and 1988 for the purpose of gaining a community broadcasting licence. The main motivation for establishment of the station was a community desire to improve communications in times of emergency, in particular during bushfires. The licence was obtained in 1992, and regular broadcasting commenced in that year. The entity was incorporated in 1994.

For many years 3MGB has been in a joint venture with Mallacoota Arts Council Inc. (MAC) for the purpose of building and operating a dual-purpose centre in Mallacoota to suit both parties' needs. The centre, called Croajingolong Centre For Communications And The Arts, was opened in October 2015.

Products and Services

3MGB provides an independent public access broadcasting service for listeners within its catchment – the communities of Mallacoota and Genoa and surrounding areas. This is achieved using 2 transmitters -

- Mallacoota Terminal Site 101.7MHz
- Genoa Princes Hwy Site 96.9MHz

3MGB provides the community with

- diverse community-based programming to the maximum extent possible
- promotion and information on local community events and services
- the opportunity to be involved in the administration of the station

3MGB has been recognised as a valuable resource for the provision of emergency communications in times of need. Working closely with the local CFA we received the status of Emergency Broadcaster in October 2016.

MISSION STATEMENT/GOALS/OBJECTIVES

Vision

To be a community-supported broadcasting association, which draws upon community resources to inform, entertain and educate.

Mission

The 3MGB radio station pledges to provide community information and entertainment which is broad-based and offers the opportunity for as wide a community involvement as possible.

Staffed by volunteers, 3MGB makes local content, current affairs and local community news our top priorities.

Statement of Purpose

1. To provide, promote and advance independent, apolitical, non-profit, non-religious public access broadcasting facilities to service the Mallacoota and Genoa region.
2. To provide a programme of information, education and entertainment reflecting the needs and demands of the community within the defined region.
3. To provide a forum for communication and discussion of any matters of interest relating to the community.
4. To provide the education services an outlet for
 - a. distribution of information and
 - b. development of instruction programmes suitable to a large range of age, national and interest groups.

The entertainment programmes will be a balance of professional and local performances via the media of spoken word, music, variety and sporting events.

5. To apply for and maintain a licence for VHF-FM radio broadcasting and transmitting station.
6. To publish regular and informative programme notes.
7. To promote and carry out any charitable purpose.
8. To do all such things calculated to improve community life, as prescribed by regulation.
9. To carry out our responsibilities as Emergency Broadcaster by providing accurate, timely and (particularly) local emergency information to the Mallacoota community and surrounding district.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

Financially viable

The organisation has been operating continuously for 24+ years. We have a healthy reserve in the Bank (\$25,000), and no liabilities.

Mallacoota Genoa Broadcasting Association Inc., in its joint venture with Mallacoota Arts Council Inc. (MAC), now jointly owns the land and building at 66 Maurice Ave, Mallacoota. Combined value of this fixed asset is \$980,000.

High involvement by community members

We offer a broad selection of programs, presented by a wide selection of the community. Our 40+ presenters, with family members, comprise 10% of the population of Mallacoota. Since moving into our new studio in the Croajingolong Centre there has been an increasing interest shown by our public in becoming presenters.

Involvement with 3MGB is an interesting activity, and a satisfying way of contributing to the community. "Incomers" are surprised and delighted that a community radio exists in such a small town, and give support when asked.

Retirees

Mallacoota has become an increasingly popular retirement location. This is evidenced by the 2011 census which shows that 69% of its population is over 50, up 19% from the 2006 census figure. This sector brings with it a wealth of experience, which has positively impacted on the tone of the town and its socio-economic standing. Most of our recent presenter and committee recruitment is from this group of people.

Little competition from other community radio stations

Considering only broadcast radio, the only other community radio station which can be received, only in higher parts of Mallacoota, is 2EAR Eden. The ABC has a Mallacoota outlet with 2 frequencies – ABC Regional from Sale (250km distant) and Radio National.

Excellent transmission quality

We broadcast in stereo (in Mallacoota) using high-quality reliable equipment from studio to antenna, maintained by a broadcast engineer.

Effective management structure

Our management structure is flexible enough to involve members (or non-members from the community) as and when required.

Loyal and diverse audience

Formal surveys are not practicable, but verbal feedback is normally encouraging. There is anecdotal evidence that people of various ages and backgrounds listen to 3MGB for many hours a day, every day. Many value the companionship this provides.

Loyal sponsors

Our major sponsors have been with us for many years. Three have been with us for at least 17 years.

Weaknesses

Not enough sponsors

The Abalone Fishermen's Co-Operative is the only large business operating in the Mallacoota area. Most others are small family-operated businesses which rely on the influx of tourists in December/January to get them through the rest of the year.

It is difficult to attract new sponsors, and hold them. Not all local businesses are sponsors, and most of those that take up sponsorship take up the bare minimum. Sponsorship of 3MGB is probably seen by them as an act of charity rather than being of benefit to their businesses.

Recent experience is that potential sponsors in Eden, Merimbula and Bega are apparently put off by our rates. Local community radio stations in their area seem to be offering "reads" at much lower rates than ours (which have been unchanged for 15 years).

Not enough listeners

This is a sparsely populated area, except during the Summer holiday season.

Low exposure to potential audience

Not all local businesses have us tuned in at all times.

Signage. Due to adverse bylaws and cost there is one only roadside sign advertising our existence – in Mallacoota itself.

Not enough training in many areas

PC and general technical skill levels are low, due mainly to the advanced age and background of many presenters. We do not have enough effective trainers, and they have insufficient time to deliver other than very basic presenting and console operation skills.

Volunteer burnout

Committee people. In this small town with the usual collection of non-profit organizations, the small number of people prepared to offer their administrative or technical skills is spread thinly.

Programme Managers. We currently have a keen and effective program manager, who with the assistance of another does her utmost to replace presenters who take leave or cannot attend on any given day. She also keeps a close eye on standards.

Opportunities

To increase our coverage

Genoa and Beyond

Our Genoa site has long been problematic. We are licensed to operate on 96.9Mhz at 100w but have had to limit this to <10w to placate the property owner whose farm shed we occupy. This still gives adequate coverage to the residents of Genoa, but not beyond.

From the outset Mt Maramingo (close to Genoa) was seen as the site from which to broadcast but the costs involved were not affordable. All the emergency services (including Victoria Police) have a presence there so there is good backup power on site.

Recently representations were made by local CFA to Victoria Police to gain permission to setup our equipment in the Police area.

Operation at 100w from Mt Maramingo will not only service adequately the township of Genoa but extend our listening area into the remote pockets to the North and East of Mt Maramingo, to Gipsy Point and possibly Cann River. This will be of significant benefit during the bushfire season.

To improve training

Find effective, willing trainers within the radio community.

To increase our sponsorships

As we become known as the area's Emergency Broadcaster, and with the greater range possible along the Princes Highway broadcasting from Maramingo, there is an opportunity to appeal to a wider group of sponsors.

Threats

Mains power supply has too many interruptions and brownouts

It has been necessary to protect our essential equipment with domestic battery UPS systems. This allows about 30 min. of operation before battery exhaustion. The issue of not infrequent power outages and voltage spikes, particularly in 2010-11, was the subject of an aggressive campaign by the local Business and Tourism Association.

Some improvements have been made in the last 5 years but interruptions still occur from time to time. We have the use of a dedicated 5KVa generator for in an emergency.

Increasing costs

Our operating costs have been kept within manageable limits for some years, and our current situation – in a new, energy-efficient building which we own jointly – is making this easier to achieve.

Transmitter sites are not our own

Our Mallacoota transmitter is in the Telstra Exchange building. The rental at the moment is affordable, especially with a CBF subsidy, but there is no guarantee on future costs or tenure.

At Genoa the transmitter is in a farmer's shed, at no cost to us other than electricity.

JUDGEMENT OF TRENDS

Slow growth potential – proportional to population growth

For the last several years 3MGB has managed to maintain a healthy financial situation with only a little growth in permanent population. The population of Mallacoota (3892 postcode area) increased slightly between the 2006 and 2011 census [+53]. There has been an increase in property development in the last 5 years, so it is expected that the 2016 census will show more growth. The aim of 3MGB is to hold that financial situation and exploit any opportunities that arise for growth.

Benefits that a permanent studio will bring

The new building is on a central block of land in Maurice Avenue, the main street of Mallacoota. It houses two studios and an office for 3MGB, a large public gallery and ancillary rooms for the Mallacoota Arts Council. The design is attractive and unusual, is a place of interest to the community, as well as a meeting venue for town organizations.

The increased visibility this is giving us will yield more members, volunteers, donors and sponsors.

Costs have reduced – rent and energy.

EVALUATION OF COMPETITION

Other broadcasters/other media

Given that commercial surveys show that rural listeners tune to community radio mainly for the local content, 3MGB has no competition for that audience.

We do have competition for the under 50 year old audience from strong FM commercial stations in NSW. Streaming radio does attract a few listeners.

Competition for sponsorship and fundraising

NSW broadcasters

50% of our major sponsorship comes from across the border. This has been so for many years. The fact that we have retained these sponsors, even after the commencement of 2EAR Eden some years ago, speaks volumes for our perceived effectiveness.

The problem is we are now having difficulty attracting new sponsorship in that area because of our rates. We need to make our rates more attractive without losing income and goodwill from existing sponsors.

Other non-profit organisations in Mallacoota

We compete for the discretionary dollar with many other non-profit bodies in town.

We are fortunate that our major ongoing biennial fundraiser, our District Telephone and Trade Directory, is well-established and not likely to be subject to competition. Raffles are conducted when required and always produce a good result.

In the past 3MGB conducted yearly special events to raise funds – a Blues Festival, Classical Concerts, Trivia Nights etc. That was more than 10 years ago, when the average age of committee members was a little lower, the proponents were also foundation members and energy levels and motivation were higher. The station has survived well without these efforts but the time has come for renewal of interest.

PLANS

Sponsorship

Outcomes that have to be achieved

Maintain or increase our income from sponsorship.

Last financial year the income from sponsorship was \$15,908 (incl. GST).

Steps needed

- Attract an effective sponsorship manager.
- Restructure sponsorship packages to make sponsorship more competitive.
- Increase sponsorship fees if necessary

Schedule for these to be done

The search for a (volunteer) sponsorship manager, who has no other volunteer duties related to 3MGB, is ongoing.

Fundraising

Outcomes that have to be achieved

Maintain or increase our income from fundraising, as necessary, to supplement our sponsorship income.

Last financial year the income from fundraising was \$732 (incl. GST), comprising residual phone book sales and book stall proceeds.

It was not seen necessary to make any special additional fundraising effort. The 2017 edition of the 3MGB Mallacoota and District Telephone Directory is currently under way, expected to be published by Christmas 2016.

- Our 2015 edition grossed \$7279 to date. This is a normal, satisfactory result.

Steps needed

Maintain the existing fundraising efforts.

The **local telephone directory** is our major ongoing fundraising activity, which requires intensive work by mainly one person. A way of sharing this load has been found. Advertising rates will be reviewed for the next edition.

Conduct more special event fundraising efforts

It has not been considered necessary to organise special events of the scale and frequency as in the early years of this radio station. However, we will possibly need to return to this scenario, if only every second year.

Schedule for these to be done

Special Events

- Consideration will be given to staging a Music Trivia Night biennially.
- All opportunities to conduct other fundraising activities, such as catering for events staged by Mallacoota Arts Council, will be considered as they arise.

| | 2016/2017 | 2017/2018 | 2018/2019 | 2019/2020 | 2020/2021 |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| Sponsorship | | | | | |
| Sponsorship Manager – recruit | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Restructure fees | Assess and revise | Assess and revise | Assess and revise | Assess and revise | Assess and revise |
| Fund-raising | | | | | |
| Phone Directory | Collect changes Compile and publish | Collect changes | Collect changes Compile and publish | Compile and publish | Collect changes Compile and publish |
| Special Events | | | | | |
| Trivia Night | Winter, as required. | | Winter, as required. | | Winter, as required. |
| Raffles | As required | As required | As required | As required | As required |
| Other | As opportunity arises | As opportunity arises | As opportunity arises | As opportunity arises | As opportunity arises |