



These guidelines are to help Southern FM presenters prepare their programs for broadcast. The Programming Guidelines are updated from time to time. It is your responsibility to make sure that you have read and understood the current version of the guidelines.

Background

Southern FM is a community radio station licenced by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to provide a local radio service to the inner-southern suburbs of Melbourne.

As a sub-metropolitan (local) community radio station, Southern FM has an obligation to produce and present programs that are relevant to our local community. We are required to broadcast programs that are different to those that are readily available on other broadcasting services.

Community Radio

Community radio is a third model of radio broadcasting, next to commercial radio and government-funded radio (ABC, SBS). Community radio stations are legislated under the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 and guided by the Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice. Community radio stations must operate as independent not-for-profit organisations.

The aim of community radio is to provide listeners with a more diverse range of music, information, news and opinions than would otherwise be available from commercial and government-funded or public radio stations. Community radio also gives communities locally-produced programs that are relevant to their daily lives. It also provides members of the community (and community groups) with the opportunity to participate in producing their own programs to cater to a specific community need.

Codes of Practice

The Broadcasting Services Act sets out the legal framework for community broadcasting and outlines the role community radio plays in delivering a service that reflects a sense of Australian identity, character and cultural diversity.

The Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice outline the guiding principles and policies for programming on community radio stations. They also outline the operational standards for stations that hold a community broadcasting licence. The Codes of Practice do not replace the licence conditions in the Broadcasting Services Act, they work hand in hand. We are legally obliged to follow both the licence conditions and the Codes of Practice. As a presenter, you must be familiar with and understand the Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice.

Membership and Studio Fees

Southern FM is an independent, non-profit community radio station. To maintain our independence we raise annual membership fees from our members and studio fees from our presenters.

We rely on the income from membership and studio fees to maintain our independence and to continue our broadcasting operations. Therefore, presenters are required to keep their membership and studio fees paid up to date.

Membership fee notices are sent out on February 14th each year. The membership fee is aimed to be paid for on or around the 2nd of March. The cut-off date is the 31st of March, at which point the membership would be considered lapsed if no payment has been received, or if no arrangement has been reached with a Board member prior to the cut-off date.

Studio fee invoices are distributed twice yearly:

1. On the 2nd of December (to cover January-June) the cut-off date is the 16th of January.
2. On the 2nd of June (to cover July-December). The cut-off date is the 17th of July.

Studio fees not paid prior to the cut-off date, and where an arrangement hasn't been reached with a Board member prior to the cut-off date, will result in an automatic suspension of the show, with no guarantee of the time-slot remaining available to the presenter(s) of that show.

These strict timings and guidelines are in place due to the way in which the station must fund itself since the Grants program changed in late 2016. The studio fees are now considered a primary source of income for the station, with membership fees a close second.

Program content

As a community radio station, we will not broadcast any material which may:

1. incite, encourage, or present for its own sake violence or brutality,
 2. mislead or alarm listeners by simulating news or events,
 3. present as desirable the use of illegal drugs, the misuse of tobacco or alcohol as well as other harmful substances, and
 4. glamorise, sensationalise, or present suicide as a solution to life problems. In particular, broadcast material should not provide explicit details about the method and/or location of a suicide attempt or death.
- We will attempt to avoid censorship where possible. However, in our programming decisions we will consider our community interest, context, degree of explicitness, the possibility of alarming the listener, the potential for distress or shock, prevailing Indigenous laws or community standards and the social importance of the broadcast.

We will not broadcast material that is likely to stereotype, incite, vilify, or perpetuate hatred against, or attempt to demean any person or group, on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, race, language, gender, sexuality, religion, age, physical or mental ability, occupation, cultural belief or political affiliation. The requirement is not intended to prevent the broadcast of material which is factual, or the expression of genuinely held opinion in a news or current affairs program or in the legitimate context of a humorous, satirical or dramatic work.

We will broadcast material that reflects the diversity of our local community and produce programs that are different to those that are available on other broadcasting services.

Music

Community broadcasters are renowned for supporting new, local, independent and particularly Australian music. Many musicians have had their first airplay and interviews on community radio. Southern FM is in a position to play and engage with a broad range of musical styles. We should support the music industry and strive to play a diverse range of music to better engage with our local community.

We should support local musicians and play a diverse range of music throughout all of our programming. We should aim to exceed the Codes of Practice (Code 5) minimum Australian music quota of 25%.

Presenters are encouraged to incorporate a range of musical styles into their programs.

Community engagement

As a community radio station, our programs need to reflect the needs of our local community. We should be producing radio programs responding to their needs.

We should be encouraging the community to become involved with Southern FM. Listeners should be encouraged to become members of the station and community leaders, local artists/musicians and others who make a valuable contribution to our local community should be interviewed on air to highlight their community involvement to our listeners.

Presenters are encouraged to have at least one community engagement interview per month per program. Having more than one is even better.

Sponsorship

The Broadcasting Services Act prohibits community radio stations from broadcasting 'advertising'. However, we are permitted to broadcast up to five minutes of sponsorship announcements per hour, provided that every sponsorship announcement is clearly 'tagged' with words similar to "a sponsor of Southern FM". Sponsorship will not be a factor in determining access to broadcast time or editorial decisions affecting the content and style of programs.

Social media

Social media accounts that belong to Southern FM, and social media accounts that belong to programs currently airing, or programs previously aired on Southern FM, must adhere to the principles outlined in the Community Radio Codes of Practice. For example, advertisements on social media profiles are strictly prohibited, unless they refer to an existing Sponsor of Southern FM, and the post(s) explicitly state that.

Presenters who are currently broadcasting on Southern FM who identify themselves as a presenter on 88.3 Southern FM on any or all of their personal social media accounts, should exercise good judgement on their personal social media accounts, and in general terms the social media posts should adhere to the principles of the Community Radio Codes of Practice and/or the station's Constitution. The Board of Management will review posts made on personal social media accounts, only if an official complaint is received from a member of the public in relation to that social media account, or a post made by the social media account. Actions taken by the Board in response to a complaint will be in alignment with the rules of the Constitution.

Training

Before you start presenting a program on Southern FM you must complete the appropriate level of training as determined from time to time by the Program Support Group (PSG) and Board. Existing presenters, including long-term presenters, may also be required to undertake additional training at times in order to continue presenting a program.

Communication

The PSG and Board will need to communicate with you from time to time. It is a requirement for all presenters to check their primary email before every show. It is your responsibility to make sure we have your current email address and mobile phone number. To keep costs down, the Board and PSG almost exclusively communicate with members via email or internal communications available within the station.

General Meetings

It is an expectation that all members (especially presenters) attend at least two General Meetings per year, or submit an apology if they are unable to do so. Meeting attendance is a factor of consideration whether a program will continue broadcasting on Southern FM.

Program development

We are open to new programming ideas, especially programs promoting new music, local talent and / or community engagement.

If you have any questions about the Programming Guidelines please contact a member of the PSG or Board.

Mandatory membership

Any guest who has either spoken on, managed, or produced content for a program on more than four occasions in a calendar year, must become a member of the radio

station. At the request of a program presenter or of its own motion, the Board of Management may exempt a guest from the need to become a member.

Studio usage

Studio usage needs to be shared among presenters of the station throughout the week. There is an online booking system which presenters can use to book studio time for off-air usage, such as pre-recording. Presenters preparing to go live on air have priority over the off-air studio, and any presenter pre-recording must vacate the studio upon request. However, the presenter preparing to go live to air may only require a studio to be vacated up to 15 minutes prior to their program start time.

Speaking on behalf of Southern FM

Only the President can publicly speak on behalf of Southern FM to other media entities, such as newspapers or television stations, unless the President has provided authority for you to speak for a specific circumstance. In some cases where you need to speak on behalf of Southern FM, a Media Release form must be signed prior to the activity taking place. The President will advise you whether or not this is necessary.

Programming Etiquette

Starting a show

Cooperate with the presenter in the studio opposite you, for a smooth change over. Work out how you will cross between programs, and how you will know when it is time for you to go on air. Ensure you have the 'On-Air' button switched 'ON' ready for you to start.

News Service

The news service plays Monday to Friday between 6am and 6pm. If you are about to start your program, the expectation is that you start the news in your studio, unless you have otherwise agreed with the presenter in the opposite studio to play the news.

Commercial endorsements on air

A business entity, or a topic expert, who appears as a guest on your program to provide an opinion on a matter they are proficient in, should only give general advice regarding the topic that is being covered. The content should stay general and not stray into specific items that they sell or services they provide, which could be considered advertising. An example of this is a landscaper giving gardening tips. Speaking about methods of gardening is okay, but mentioning specific products or services they sell, is considered advertising, and would breach a licence condition of the radio station.

In cases where the business entity or guest in question is a sponsor of the radio station, there is a limit of five minutes per hour of sponsorship announcements that can go to air. You should speak to a Board Member prior to bringing your guest into the studio, so you can be advised what requirements must be upheld for the interview not to breach a licence condition of the station.

Being absent from your program

If you can't attend your program, contact the presenters in the time-slots before and after you, to see if they can cover your program. If neither can, contact the Program Manager, who will then attempt to organise coverage for your program. Being absent from your program three times in a row without notifying the Program Manager or a Board Member, will be considered an abandonment of the time-slot.

Acceptance of terms

Presenting a program on 88.3 Southern FM is considered as accepting the terms within these programming guidelines.