Social Impact at RTRFM
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This project was made possible through the support of Lotterywest and the contributions of WACOSS and Murdoch University.
RTRFM ‘The Sound Alternative’ is a Perth-based community radio station with a strong sense of purpose and an identity built over 40 years of successfully broadcasting a diverse range of innovative music and talks programing.

The station – its board; its management, staff and volunteers; its subscribers; its external stakeholders and its listeners – share an appreciation of that identity and support its purpose.

That purpose is to make an impact in the Perth community and beyond – whether in the promotion of local music arts and culture, or in awareness of and action in regard to, local, national and international issues.

After 40 years of operation, everyone involved believes that RTRFM is making an impact, but to date there has been little evidence about what that impact might be. As a result, RTRFM, with financial support from Lotterywest, commissioned a team from the WA Council of Social Service (WACOSS) to design a model for better understanding the nature of that impact.

The RTRFM Social Impact Report is the result of a collaboration between the station, WACOSS and Murdoch University. WACOSS designed the study and conducted workshops with RTRFM board members and volunteers, who then gathered the data required. WACOSS Project Leader Stuart Reid and Murdoch University researcher Dr Simon Order analysed the data from listener surveys, focus groups and stakeholder interviews to compile the Report.

The key finding is that there are significant social impacts in each of the areas we investigated. These areas are Local Representation, Influence and Change, Community Impact, Representation of Diversity, Education, Creativity, Economic and Personal Impact.

In each of these areas the impacts were overwhelmingly positive, with widespread agreement from study participants about the nature of those impacts.
If one feels isolated through whatever disadvantage or things that are going on for you then RTRFM is a source of not only company but information, so it’s really important. It brings a whole range of people together from various walks of life.”

Viv Palcic, Subscriber, 2018
Broadcasters, Listeners and the Community

One of the first things that became clear from the data was the extent to which RTRFM is a real community; a community inclusive of diverse stakeholders (volunteers, subscribers, industry partners and listeners).

Social impact is demonstrated externally with listeners and, at the same time, within the RTRFM station community. There is a relationship between the broadcaster and the listeners who both feel themselves part of the RTRFM community – a community with a set of shared values. They are echoes or ripples of one another, interrelated unlike any other medium.

Participation in the radio station leads to personal growth as people learn more about their interest in order to broadcast about it. They expand their knowledge, their understanding and share that knowledge and understanding with their audience. There is a shared experience between the volunteer broadcaster participant and the radio listener participant.

It’s a symbiotic relationship. The circular nature of the relationship means listeners and broadcasters are reinforcing the values and social impact of each other.

Significantly, there are a large number of these listeners. An estimated 262,000 people aged 15+, or 17% of all Perth people aged 15+, listen to RTRFM at some time in a month. That’s significantly more listeners than government-funded national broadcast stations such as ABC News Radio (16%) and ABC Radio National (10%).

In investigating the social impact of RTRFM, we are exploring the nature of this community of listeners and broadcasters, with a particular focus on what changes as a result of their participation in this community. What is it about this community radio station that is making a difference in people’s lives and in the society around them?

RTRFM creates meaningful connections

11.6 hours per week for your average RTRFM listener

42,000 wake up with RTRFM Breakfast radio

262,000 tune in to RTRFM each month.
So local. So relevant. I get to hear about people who fight to protect what I love.
Local Representation

As a broadcaster to the Perth metropolitan area, RTRFM’s major focus is on the local community. It reflects the culture, music, interests and issues of the local community to the local community.

As a broadcaster made up of diverse program presenters, many with global perspectives on their areas of interest, it brings the world to Perth audiences.

As an online platform and digital broadcaster, RTRFM represents Perth to the rest of the world.

RTRFM’s local identity was a recurring theme in interviews, focus groups and survey responses. It represents the diversity, the quirky and unique Perth character; it is the soul of not just the local arts scene, but every part of the community; it’s a one stop information hub for local culture. Others referred to it as binding the musical scene and culture, supporting the nurturing and discovery of independent art and being the community glue.

Representation of local music was the strongest theme to emerge across all stakeholders with many describing RTRFM as a platform for local musicians and their music.

In the industry and volunteer focus groups there was unanimous agreement about the significance of RTRFM as a launching pad for new and emerging musicians, bands and producers, with numerous specific examples quoted. Equally important, they also agreed on the significance of RTRFM in maintaining Perth’s vibrant local music scene through promotion of the local gigs and recordings of local musicians, both established and new.

RTRFM’s local impact was not limited to the music scene. RTRFM is one of the main voices for arts and culture in WA and breeds and grows that all the time was a view frequently expressed. In particular, RTRFM’s role as ‘curator’, making selections and providing reviews of local music, arts, culture and cinema, was a recurring theme.

Respondents and interviewees also identified RTRFM’s importance in local community activism and awareness-raising around issues in the local community. [RTRFM is...] the voice of the local residents delivering information (music, news, and everything else) to other locals.

As a result of listening to RTRFM,
I feel proud of my city / state

When I listen to RTRFM,
I learn what is going on in my community
RTRFM most-played tracks 2018

73% WA artists
63% female artists or female-fronted acts

10% interstate artists
27% male artists or male-fronted acts

17% overseas artists
10% male/female duos
Influence and Change

RTRFM’s role as an active, engaged, progressive and influential community agent was identified by Board members and volunteers as being an important part of the station’s identity and its values.

But how much impact does it have in bringing about social, political cultural or environmental change? Does it ‘add value’ to other organisations or does it initiate or sustain change?

For a radio station, the key indicators of influence would be changes in the behaviour of, or action taken by, listeners. Indications from RTRFM survey respondents indicate a very high level of response to hearing things on the station.

For example, more than half of respondents (57%) had taken action on a social justice or political issue as a result of listening to RTRFM. This is an extraordinarily high percentage given the generally ‘passive recipient’ nature of radio listening. It indicates something about the listeners attracted to RTRFM. They say they appreciate RTRFM as a platform for ‘open conversations’ and ‘for voices that are often unheard’, as a ‘mind-engaging media which fosters a sense of community’ and as an ‘alternative to mainstream media’. But it also indicates that the broadcasting was sufficiently engaging to lead 489 of the 855 respondents to take action – at least once and mostly a few times.

With social media becoming increasingly important for social and political engagement, it was also significant that 29% said they had taken part in a social media campaign ‘a few times’.

Another indicator of influence is the degree to which listening to RTRFM leads people to discuss what they have heard on air with a friend or colleague (less than 3% of the 856 respondents had never done so!) Similarly, nearly 88% of respondents had taken the effort to find out more about a subject or issue as a result of something they heard (and 79% had done so more than once.)

While it is not possible to measure how much change in society has come about from RTRFM broadcasts, it is clear that by providing an outlet for people and organisations working on change to reach like-minded people willing to take action, RTRFM has played an influential role and continues to make significant impact.
RTRFM delivers mind-engaging media which fosters a sense of community.
Community Impact

As a broadcaster to the Perth metropolitan area, RTRFM’s major focus is on the local community. It reflects the culture, music, interests and issues of the local community to the local community.

The SPIRIT that flows through the whole organisation and out into the listening community - it flows through all the disparate contributors, including all office staff, volunteers on phones, and the extraordinary volunteer program presenters with their very different specialties. It’s a quintessential manifestation of ‘community’ that unites a huge range of elements into a joyful vibrant mix.

These poetic and expressive words of one RTRFM interview respondent are echoed by the online survey responders, 747 out of 936 (or almost 80%) of whom said they ‘feel part of a community’ – which is a remarkable response.

Interview respondents also talked about RTRFM as a local family, bringing like-minded people together, a sense of unity and collaboration for the greater good by a group of committed and passionate people.

Of all the themes to emerge within community impact, a sense of connectedness among RTRFM study respondents, was by far, mentioned the most often. One interviewee talked about the glue which binds all the disparate elements of art in Perth. Others mentioned the station as a focal point... for events, as a volunteer organisation [and] as a training hub.

RTRFM is an open community forum, where listeners, volunteers and stakeholders can positively engage at various levels. It’s a quintessential manifestation of ‘community’ that unites a huge range of elements into a joyful vibrant mix. There is a perceived collaborative power, connecting and enabling those with similar interests.

In a similar vein, there is evidence of the reduction of community loneliness and the ‘Joy of Social Connection’ that community radio offers. A number of RTRFM interviewees indicated a sense of belonging, togetherness and support. Others stated a more obvious reduction in loneliness:

As a migrant I don’t have many people that I can share nice moments with but I know that RTRFM is always there for me.

RTRFM is like family to me. It is also the main source of events for my social life.
When I listen to RTRFM, I feel like I am not alone

The research finding that ‘Community broadcasting in Australia should be valued as a medium to reduce social isolation and enrich community cohesion,’ is clearly confirmed from the listener survey and stakeholder interviews as applying to RTRFM, and is an important aspect of RTRFM’s social impact.

Collaboration for the greater good by a group of committed and passionate people.
In line with the codes of practice for community radio in Australia, RTRFM is committed to ‘promote harmony and diversity and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally-diverse Australian community’.

Representation of cultural diversity is seen by all stakeholders – the station’s board, its volunteers and the listeners and others surveyed – as a significant component of RTRFM’s social impact.

Diverse representation of gender, sexual orientation, people of colour, ethnicity, Aboriginality, music taste and many other communities of interest is widely perceived as integral to the station’s identity and as a vital component in its vibrancy.

In the words of one survey respondent,

*I love that RTRFM doesn’t try to have one voice, but makes space for a multiplicity of voices and champions diversity.*

In comparison to mainstream media, community radio offers a space for the representation of all and championing of diversity is a common feature of global community media. At RTRFM, inclusivity, and giving a voice to the voiceless, are mentioned on numerous occasions. RTRFM is cited as a place of cultural refuge for the voiceless, offering access to the marginalised, minority ethnic, political or other groups not adequately represented by the mainstream.

The diversity found at RTRFM is applauded by survey respondents who talk about the celebration of diversity because it widens your world view. It encourages you to celebrate different things and people and you start to explore different parts of yourself. Representation of diversity at RTRFM has the power to make listeners, volunteers and stakeholders alike, enjoy a sense of inclusivity, equality and respect. There is support for difference between people that makes us all unique, and this is the commonality that binds.

The station is also seen as pragmatically reflecting the diverse music and arts scenes in Perth and Western Australia. It creates a conversation and discussion through the feedback loop of presenter and listener, a unique two-way aspect of community radio. The needs of local music, arts and issues are represented, hearing from those who are making Perth great in whatever way they can.

Perhaps its greatest impact in relation to diversity is in modelling the positive benefits of diversity through its broadcasters, its programming and in its openness to diverse communities of listeners.
RTRFM’s always active in looking for different viewpoints, in being progressive, in the solidarity, in the alternative views and culture... All these alternative points of view means that everybody gets a voice.

Harvey Rae, X-Press Magazine, 2018
Education

Community radio is unique. As well as informing listeners, it ‘enables active participation by [the] community in station management, programming and general operations’\(^6\), including broadcast education for volunteers\(^7\). This two-fold educational impact of community radio is highly visible at RTRFM.

For the listeners, RTRFM’s ability to raise their awareness of music, stories and events came through as a positive social impact.

Increased music awareness was easily the most common message from study participants and is a recurring theme in the 10,000 online messages received by the RTRFM studios over the past couple of years.

Listeners said they heard life-changing music and were passionate about the specialty music programs. RTRFM created awareness on all issues music, represented diverse sounds, the promotion of original local music and growing local music. The listener surveys tell a clear story with 91\(^9\)\% indicating they were better informed about the local arts/music scenes.

Increased awareness of stories also featured strongly with interviewees saying that RTRFM was bringing the community together to discuss issues people otherwise wouldn’t bring up. They were spreading little stories...discussing our local content.

An important point of difference about RTRFM for study participants was they were able to get views unbiased by commercial consideration with local and international content. Listeners clearly want to be informed, especially about local issues.

According to the online listener survey RTRFM is informing well. 67\(^9\)\% agreed or strongly agreed they were better informed about current affairs, the environment and social issues (surprisingly high given the assumption that significant numbers are tuning in for specialty music programs.)

Without the support... in my formative years at the station, I’m certain I would not be where I am today.

Gemma Pike, Triple J, 2016
RTRFM informs listeners

67% were better informed about current affairs
91% were better informed about local arts and music
36% listen to RTRFM due to talk-based, informative content

Focus groups identified a number of high profile national and WA broadcasters who began their careers at RTRFM.

Like many community radio stations, RTRFM has strong links with University and TAFE courses to facilitate radio internships for students. One member describes RTRFM as playing an essential paddling-pool role that people wouldn’t be able to swim if we didn’t paddle first. The station is a radio talent development hub, not only for presenters, but also for producers, sound designers, journalists, marketers, business developers and administrators. Many go onto to full blown careers in the media industry.

RTRFM’s education role is a major contributor to its overall social impact.

Broadcast education is a feature of RTRFM. Volunteers attend training and feel supported as aspiring broadcasters. Volunteering at the station can give students a real life experience and offers anyone who is looking for an opportunity to explore the world of radio.

When I listen to RTRFM, I am better informed about current affairs, the environment and social issues
Creative Hub

What’s critical to [the] wellbeing of communities and cities [and] how can they function most successfully, [is] we develop that sort of creative milieu... Vibrancy, connections and your talent pools and quality of place, those are... really critical factors. RTRFM plays a really important role in the connectivity of the sector and how it then also connects with other factors, sectors and audiences.

RTRFM functions as a vital showcase and enabler for creativity in Western Australia. There simply isn’t another radio outlet for local creative arts, independent national arts and music. WA would be a much poorer place culturally without the station. Some have described RTRFM as acting as a forum/launch pad for...artists and genres, or a cultural gang for everything that’s happening locally and the bringing together of creative peoples.

The station has definitely launched careers and continues to shed light on...the local music community and songs that people might not have heard. The reach of the creative hub at RTRFM is extensive but unquantifiable because of the array of networks of connectivity that exist and spring into being because of the station. One particular story exemplifies this connectivity and grass roots creative development. One of the long-standing presenters explains:

We would talk a bit about jazz [Giant Steps Jazz program] and then one day she said ‘my son’s learning piano’ and we talked a bit about what teacher he might go to... From there he...got into WAAPA, into the jazz program... got plugged into the right teachers, into the right people, and [now] is this great... awesome young musician, great player and composer. And then [he] came back to the fold, [as a] Giant Steps presenter... where he also did a really good job.

This kind of local opportunity, connection and talent development is the hallmark of RTRFM. They are creating culture in some senses. For example, the station operates the RTRFM Local Music Hub10, where local artists can upload biographies, photographs, discographies, music links and contacts. The Hub also links to other stories about the artists that exist on the website. It provides instant exposure and free listing for any artist. The portal also provides an important archive of local music culture that otherwise might get lost.

RTRFM has a real role in... providing publicity and reach but also supporting with events, spotting and identifying new talent and... that supportive recognition and [the] growth of careers.
The View from Here is another example of in-house creativity at the station, where local bands, RTRFM and website Fremantle Story, have teamed up to produce a ‘long-running video series to highlight local bands in unique and special locations’.

The Artbeat program also exemplifies the commitment to creativity found at RTRFM. Artbeat is a weekly look at the world from the perspective of the artist, the curator, the viewer, the people that fund it and those who cannot live without it... it’s the intersections between art and all aspects of life that we love.

RTRFM takes pride in coverage of all things arts at the local and global level. Like its passion for local music, its commitment to the arts helps sustain a vibrant community of local practice and creative development.

The social impact of the creative hub at RTRFM most definitely exists for the participants in this study, in a variety of ways, but as one member points out, it also appears at the more obvious public level. Creativity is shown in the way there’s always a turnover of really interesting new shows, really interesting new shows and niches, even within shows, shows within shows. The impact is tangible for all, as demonstrable positive outcomes in lives, and importantly, the creative milieu of Western Australia.

RTRFM has a real role in... providing publicity and reach but also supporting with events, spotting and identifying new talent and... that supportive recognition and [the] growth of careers.

Rebecca Eggleston, FORM, 2018

RTRFM promotes local artists

841 artists were promoted via live sets at RTRFM events

728 artists were promoted via on-air interviews or live sets

52 local feature albums were promoted
Economic

The primary economic impact of RTRFM is in the music, visual and performing arts industries in Perth.

These industries represent a very small proportion of the employment in Western Australia – with about 5,000 people (including administrators and other ‘non-artists’) employed in the Perth metropolitan area. However, the total economic impact is considerable with the total economic effect being $331 million made up of an initial $126 million and a flow-on of another $205 million.

The small scale of the local industry means that a broadcaster that makes local music and arts promotion a priority can have a disproportionate impact on the sector. We don’t have major record labels, major recording studios, publishing houses; we don’t have a Harbour Agency or Premier Artists, where people who work for those companies are hanging out in our live music venues checking out the talent. Therefore the best chance they have is of having a great profile, loads of radio play, people coming to their shows, which they will do if they’ve heard them on the radio.

RTRFM’s ‘strong focus on the arts (and) culture’ and its commitment to ‘champion local music’ is key to its identity and purpose. It is very clear from the survey responses, stakeholder interviews and focus groups that this role is recognised and highly valued. A scan of nearly 10,000 interactions on the studio email further confirms its importance, particularly to musicians seeking airplay and to listeners who bought music they heard.

When I listen to RTRFM, I am better informed about the local arts and music scenes

![Bar chart]

Typical of responses from interviews and surveys were comments about RTRFM:

- **Creating a music scene and community.**
- **Showcasing amazing local music and talent to a global audience.**
- **It mirrors the vibe of the new and constantly amazing local Perth music scene, plus allows for the old.**
- **It’s a big part of the music scene, even with the gigs RTRFM put on, it’s all really important because what it does, it promotes local bands, artists.**

The industry focus group was more concrete about specific economic benefits.

- **Obviously RTRFM is a major component... in driving tours - export tours if you want to call them that - for local bands going national or international and generating revenue through tours that come inbound from overseas or interstate. Without being able to quantify the impact that RTRFM has, I’d say it’s a very big component of the music industry success in WA contributing to the local economy.**
As a result of listening to RTRFM, I bought tickets or went to a concert, play or other cultural event

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As a result of listening to RTRFM, I bought music that I heard on air

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Anybody who gets played on RTRFM is more likely to sell tickets to a show; anyone who gets talked about in an arts sense is probably going to create some more interest and drum up more interest. It’s a real grassroots thing much in the way much in the way social media is, I think, RTRFM, it helps you build an audience from the bottom up and that in turn creates financial impact and financial impact in turn employs a lot of people and keeps the wheels of the economy turning over even in tough times like the tough economic climate we’re in now.

The industry focus group pointed to an increasing importance for RTRFM with the decline in WA street press and changes to arts and music reviewing in The West Australian.

The closeness of the relationship between broadcasters and musicians/performers was also clear as a number for participants in interviews and focus groups were both presenters and industry participants. As one focus group participant said, you find a lot of people leaning on RTRFM to promote their services and in essence it’s a community bonding thing because everybody holds hands, everybody subscribes to Radiothon, RTRFM supports them in return and it becomes a community building scenario and if that’s not good for the economy I don’t know what is.

Over 2,500 musicians a year engaged with RTRFM – performances, interviews, sponsorship and local feature albums. Many more have their music played.
The value of RTRFM is not limited to individual musicians and bands promoting their music. The Perth Symphony Orchestra, for example saw a unique value in RTRFM.

“(Our) challenge was to be able to reach a much broader audience and also an audience that loved music. We’ve performed with Helen Shanahan, for example, and Justin Burford, and Matthew Allen, and many, many more, shortly performing with Timothy Nelson, and so knowing that your listeners like those artists and that we can connect with them means that I have a direct link already; that the audience that listen to RTRFM are probably going to be slightly more open to the idea of Perth Symphony Orchestra because we’re aligning with people they know.”

– Bourby Webster, Perth Symphony Orchestra

The other area of potential economic impact is in the opportunities provided to commercial businesses to promote themselves through sponsorship of the station. It certainly has the ability to reach a really wide audience... but something quite tailored if you know what I mean, something quite specific.

The audience profile as identified in the McNair Anderson Survey confirms the potential of the station to be a major contributor to the growth of businesses that take out sponsorship on the station. With 72,000 listening each week (and 262,000 individual people listening in a month), RTRFM is reaching 5% of Perth over-15s each week and 17% each month.

More importantly, the listener profile is significantly different from the overall Perth demographic in ways that make them a more economically relevant audience for potential subscribers. Significantly more listeners are: male (70% compared with 50% for Perth); married/partner, no children (29% cf. 16%); work full time (52% cf. 38%); professional, business manager or executive (32% cf. 21%). They are also significantly over-represented in the income brackets $40,000-$59,999 (22% cf. 13%) and $60,000-$99,999 (29% cf. 22%).

It was beyond the scope of this study to determine an economic value or return on investment to former and current sponsors of RTRFM. However the continued use of the station, particularly by commercial and other promoters of music arts and other cultural events, including independent cinema, is an indication that it is working for them.

It’s obviously a lot more affordable for small businesses to be able to market through RTRFM than it is through some of the bigger players.

– Mark Partridge, Badlands Bar, 2018

In summary, the economic impact of RTRFM (especially in the music, visual and performing arts) is clearly significant but very difficult to quantify. The impact in business growth through use of sponsorship as a component of commercial marketing, while probably important for some sponsors, is likely to be much less than the potential value of the audience to marketers would imply.
It’s a very big component of the music industry success in WA.
Personal Impact

One of the core values of RTRFM identified by volunteers and board members was the notion of character, with passion, integrity and engagement being components leading to trust in the station. Those participating in this social impact study confirmed the importance of these themes, revealing the astonishing personal impact of RTRFM.

Of all the data collected via the interviews and the focus groups, the theme of personal impact, generated the most positive comment. In particular, the word real was a repeated motif.

*Reality... real people, reaching out and being real!* **IT’S PERTH! IT’S REAL.**

Hearing real people on air who are not selected for irrelevant reasons allows young kids to grow up in a community where ideas are more honest, open and educational.

*That raw and real ‘human’ feeling that certain presenters really nail. Their style and their delivery, more often than not, has me saying, ‘That’s so bang on’.*

Listeners and volunteers alike, were also keen to talk about the comfort, nurture, compassion and support that RTRFM brought to them personally. This positive personal impact was also emphasised in the online listener surveys. Eighty-six percent¹⁶ ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that RTRFM made them feel better.

The RTRFM feel-good factor is experiential, life-affirming and strongly positive. Some go as far as saying:

*RTRFM has changed my life. RTRFM is like my own personal radio station, [and] it brings colour to my life. It provides a soundtrack that genuinely, no hyperbole, makes my life a more beautiful thing.*

These kinds of comments were common among interviewees and focus groups during the study. Those involved had a sincere belief that RTRFM made their world a better place. They mentioned their strong links with presenters who bring forth a fantastic, expanding and infectious love of our community, who keep it honest and true.

*As a result of listening to RTRFM, I felt relaxed and happy*

The online listener surveys reinforce these kinds of sentiments. As a result of listening to RTRFM 84%¹⁷ of all participants indicated they felt relaxed and happy [often or very often].
The impact can be especially important for otherwise isolated listeners. One volunteer broadcaster summed up an experience common to the others in the focus group: I have folks who call regularly during my show and you just know that whoever they’re listening to on air is their family and that’s pretty special.

In summary, the evidence shows that RTRFM has a tangible and overtly positive personal impact on the lives of its stakeholders, volunteers and listeners alike. Out of 849 respondents, 339 actually said that as a result of listening to RTRFM they had made a decision that changed their lives. With 262,000 people listening every month, this kind of personal impact amounts to a significant social impact in its own right.

It consistently and frequently, via the extensive knowledge and expertise of the programmers and presenters, provides a soundtrack that genuinely makes my life a more beautiful thing. I really do have a lot of pretty meaningful moments to thank RTRFM for. Demelza Rogers, Listener

RTRFM content impacts its audience

84% felt relaxed and happy as a result of listening to RTRFM
84% said they learned something they now use in everyday life
40% were prompted to make a decision that changed their lives

With 262,000 people tuned in each month – that’s a lot of lives changed.
RTRFM by the numbers
Statistics derived from RTRFM 2017 Listener Survey

RTRFM listeners tune in because...

- **75%** alternative to commercial radio
- **92%** listen for the music
- **41%** listen for the talks content
- **57%** listen for the community focus

I have subscribed to RTRFM for...

- **21%** less than one year
- **26%** between one and three years
- **21%** between four and six years
- **31%** for seven or more years

90% of listeners take out subscriptions solely to support the station. Legends.

57% of listeners took action on a social justice or political issue as a result of listening to RTRFM.
88% of listeners bought music that they heard being played on air.

95% of listeners say they enjoy music played on RTRFM which they would otherwise not hear.

When I listen to RTRFM...

- 66% feel better informed about current affairs
- 60% feel like they are not alone
- 86% learn more about the music they like
- 90% learn about local culture and arts

85% say listening to RTRFM makes them feel like part of a community.
Appendices

Study conducted by:
Western Australian Council for Social Service [WACOSS]

Research Methods

1. **RTRFM Values and Impact workshops** conducted by WACOSS with RTRFM board members and volunteers to establish the core values of RTRFM and the areas of recognizable social impact. These core station values and social impacts would inform the open-ended interview (2) and focus group (3) questions. See ‘RTRFM Values and Areas of Impact’ below.

2. Nineteen open-ended interviews with community radio stakeholders were conducted on the perceived social impact of RTRFM in Perth, Western Australia (2017-2018). Participants were also asked about how social impact and aspects of the station’s performance could be improved. Participants came from the following groups: local music industry, community organizations, RTRFM sponsors, RTRFM subscribers, RTRFM members, local musicians and RTRFM listeners.

3. Two focus groups comprising eight mixed RTRFM stakeholder participants asking about the perceived social impact of RTRFM (2017-2018). One focus group was comprised of industry participants and one of RTRFM volunteers. Participants were asked about the ‘unique value proposition’ of RTRFM, the social impact of RTRFM, the ways that RTRFM is important to the local music and arts industry, listeners, venues and events. The focus groups were framed as organic free-flowing conversations, exploring examples and anecdotes about the social impact of the community radio station. Participants were also asked about how social impact and aspects of the station’s performance could be improved.

4. **Online listeners’ survey** conducted post-2017 Radiothon with subscribers, who were asked a range of questions with limited (tick-box style) answer options. Questions were primarily listener-orientated such as: How do you engage with RTR? Why do you listen to RTRFM? There were also questions that directly addressed the perceived social impact of RTRFM with space for open-ended text entry on certain questions such as: As a result of listening to RTRFM, I… The most important impact RTRFM has in our community is...

5. ‘Listening to RTR FM 92.1 (FM/DAB+)’ – The National Listener Survey McNair Ingenuity Survey 2017 Wave #1 July 2017. This survey examined the audience reach of RTRFM, the audience demographic including such things as: gender and age demographic, occupational status, education and intent to purchase. This data is significant because it represents a realistic population segment, reached by RTRFM. Social impact is rendered visible by the other methods (1, 2 and 3 above) and represented by the relatively small number of study participants. This listener demographic data, however, indicates how that same social impact is actually affecting the much bigger listener reach.
Social Impact at RTRFM
RTRFM’s ‘strong focus on the arts (and) culture’ and its commitment to ‘champion local music’ is key to its identity and purpose.
RTRFM Values and Areas of Impact

RTRFM Values and Impact workshops were conducted by WACOSS with RTRFM board members and volunteers to establish the core values of RTRFM and the areas of recognizable social impact. These core station values and social impacts are initial themes that would inform the open-ended interview and focus group questions.

Consolidation of Values and Social impacts

In the process of data analysis a review of the twenty initial values and social impacts was conducted to consolidate salient ideas under ‘higher level meaning constructs’. This consolidation followed a generic descriptive interpretative approach. As a general guiding principle, the researchers agreed that the preservation of meaning from the source studies was essential. The final group of eight social impact values encompassed the initial themes and took account of emerging themes occurring during the data analysis process. This final group of eight was the Social Impact Framework that researchers used to structure the data and give a coherence to the final report.

RTRFM Core Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Informative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Diversity</td>
<td>• ‘family’</td>
<td>• Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inclusivity</td>
<td>• Local focus</td>
<td>• Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Equality</td>
<td>• Compassion</td>
<td>• Educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Acceptance</td>
<td>• Nurturing</td>
<td>• Aim to uplift our audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Openess</td>
<td>• Kindness</td>
<td>• Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open minded</td>
<td>• Supportive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unheard viewpoint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• LGBTIQ</td>
<td>• Friendship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Indigenous</td>
<td>• People</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Radical</td>
<td>• Importance of unique personality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Platform for obscurity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respect/Respectful</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Creative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Integrity</td>
<td>• Independence</td>
<td>• Creative expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Curiosity</td>
<td>• Free from inappropriate</td>
<td>• Artistic merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engaged</td>
<td>• commercial influences</td>
<td>• Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Passionate</td>
<td>• Investigative</td>
<td>• Local arts/culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Common sense</td>
<td>• Informed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive</td>
<td>• Freedom of speech/views</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aware</td>
<td>• Media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coolness</td>
<td>• Content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community</td>
<td>• The alternative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social</td>
<td>• Alternative views/media/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>culture</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

• Respect/Respectful

• Outside the mainstream
• Challenging mainstream
• Leftist
• ‘Socialist’
• Solidarity
• Environment
• Custodianship

• Coolness

• Community

• Social

• Supportive

• Openness

• Open minded

• Unheard viewpoints

• LGBTIQ

• Indigenous

• Radical

• Platform for obscurity

• Respect/Respectful

• ‘family’

• Local focus

• Compassion

• Nurturing

• Kindness

• Supportive

• Friendship

• People

• Importance of unique personality

• Trust our listeners

• Independence

• Free from inappropriate commercial influences

• Investigative

• Informed

• Freedom of speech/views

• Media

• Content

• The alternative

• Advocacy

• Progressiveness

• Outside the mainstream

• Challenging mainstream

• Leftist

• ‘Socialist’

• Solidarity

• Environment

• Custodianship

• ‘Socialist’

• Solidarity

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• Free from inappropriate commercial influences

• Investigative

• Informed

• Freedom of speech/views

• Media

• Content

• The alternative

• Advocacy

• Progressiveness
Influence and Change

Entertainment – I enjoyed it

Education, Information, Self-Improvement –
I learnt something

Engagement with Music –
I heard music I was interested in

Platform for relevant/important discussion –
I heard something I thought I should know about

Influence & Change –
My views shifted and I did something as a result

Representation –
I recognised my story on the radio

Economic

• business – I grew my brand and made some money
• arts industry – We increased patronage of and interest in the arts or particular artists/art events
• music industry – We got more people to our gigs, more downloads, more sales

Companionship, isolation/connected to a community – I feel a part of something when I listen

Promotes WA stories to the rest of WA & the world – Where is this place? I’m interested

Challenge & Comfort – Sometimes it makes me feel good, other times it makes me think

Nurturing local talent – I got some new skills and more people interested in what I do

Opportunities for work/volunteer roles – I learnt new skills, built my CV and had fun

Adding to the event culture of Perth – Perth is a better place because RTRFM connects us with all that is going on

Personal Impact – Listening to RTRFM makes a difference to me

Framework of Social Impact

1. Representation of Diversity
   a. Inclusivity and respect
   b. Equality
   c. LGBTIQ, Indigenous, Radical

2. Community Impact
   a. RTRFM ‘Family’
   b. Companionship, reduction in isolation
   c. ‘Connectedness’
   d. Independence, freedom of speech
   e. Alternative/challenging to the mainstream
   f. Environmental

3. Creative Hub
   a. Enable creative expression
   b. Showcase artistic merit
   c. Development of creativity

4. Educational
   a. Story awareness
   b. Events awareness
   c. Music awareness
   d. Training/self-improvement/volunteering

5. Influence and Change
   a. Ideas, views
   b. Direct action

6. Economic
   a. Business sponsors
   b. Arts industry
   c. Music Industry

7. Local Representation
   a. Music
   b. Arts
   c. Cultural
   d. Issues

8. Personal Impact
   a. Comfort, nurture, compassion, support
   b. Challenge
   c. Entertainment
   d. ‘Character’, trust
As a result of listening to RTRFM, I took action on a social justice or political issue

As a result of listening to RTRFM, I bought tickets or went to a concert, play or other cultural event

As a result of listening to RTRFM, I took part in a social media campaign

As a result of listening to RTRFM, I found out how to make contact with others who share my interests

As a result of listening to RTRFM, I felt relaxed and happy

As a result of listening to RTRFM, I discussed what I heard with a friend or colleague
As a result of listening to RTRFM, I bought music that I heard on air

As a result of listening to RTRFM, I feel proud of my city / state

As a result of listening to RTRFM, I learnt something I used in my own life

As a result of listening to RTRFM, I took the effort to find out more about a subject or issue

As a result of listening to RTRFM, I made a decision that changed my life
When I listen to RTRFM, I enjoy music I would not otherwise hear

When I listen to RTRFM, I feel part of a community

When I listen to RTRFM, I hear interesting stories

When I listen to RTRFM, I learn what is going on in my community

When I listen to RTRFM, I feel like I am not alone

When I listen to RTRFM, I am better informed about current affairs, the environment and social issues
When I listen to RTRFM, I am better informed about the local arts and music scenes

When I listen to RTRFM, I am better informed about the local cultural and artistic activities and events

When I listen to RTRFM, I feel better

When I listen to RTRFM, I learn important information about the music I'm interested in

When I listen to RTRFM, I hear points of view that I agree with

When I listen to RTRFM, I learn about local cultural and artistic activities and events

Social Impact at RTRFM
Endnotes

3. Ibid.
8. 779 out of 854 ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’.
9. 578 out of 859 ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’.
16. 729 out of 845.
17. 720 out of 856 participants.
20. Sponsors are individual, or companies who pay for promotion of their services on-air and online.
22. RTRFM members are those who generally have an association with RTRFM, such as a presenter, an employee, or a volunteer.
24. RTRFM volunteers are those who volunteer their time in the operation of RTRFM.
This project was made possible through the support of Lotterywest and the contributions of WACOSS and Murdoch University.