

Southern FM Sponsorship Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this sponsorship policy is to ensure compliance with the requirements outlined in the Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice and relevant licensing conditions under the Broadcasting Services Act. This policy aims to ensure transparency, fairness, and adherence to ethical standards in all sponsorship activities at Southern FM.

2. Definition of sponsorship

Sponsorship refers to financial or in-kind support from individuals, businesses, or organisations provided to Southern FM in exchange for acknowledgment through on-air announcements. Sponsorship is distinct from advertising and must adhere to strict guidelines regarding its duration, content, and influence on programming.

3. Time limitations on sponsorship announcements

Southern FM will ensure that no more than **five (5) minutes** of sponsorship announcements are broadcast in any one hour of programming, in line with the licence conditions set forth in the Broadcasting Services Act. The Sponsorship Manager is responsible for ensuring adherence to this, and the Board is accountable for ensuring that these standards are being met.

4. Sponsorship identification

Every sponsorship announcement must be tagged to acknowledge the financial and/or in-kind support of the sponsor. The language used in the acknowledgment will make it clear that the message is a sponsorship announcement, distinguishing it from editorial or other station content. For live reads, this will be read out by the announcer somewhere within the message, and in most cases, at the end of the message. The acknowledgement itself counts towards the five (5) minute limitation per hour.

5. Independence in editorial decisions

- Sponsorship will **not** influence decisions about who can access broadcasting time on Southern FM. Sponsorship cannot be used to gain favourable airtime or programming slots. However, this does not preclude existing sponsors from participating in programming as a subject matter expert at the request of a presenter, so long as the content remains generic and doesn't stray into specific subject matter that favours the sponsor.
- Editorial decisions related to individual programs, including the content and style, will be made independently of any sponsor's input. Sponsors will not dictate the content or tone of any specific program.
- Similarly, editorial decisions affecting overall station programming will remain free of sponsor influence. All programming will be based on the station's mission, values, and audience needs, not sponsorship agreements.

6. Sponsorship Content Guidelines

- Sponsorship announcements must adhere to the general programming guidelines outlined in **Code 3** of the Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice.
- Content of sponsorship messages must comply with community standards and regulations, and not promote prohibited, offensive, or illegal products or services.
- Sponsorship messages should reflect the values of Southern FM, ensuring that all sponsors align with the station's community-oriented goals.

7. Sponsorship procedures

- Sponsorship on Southern FM is paid for in advance by the potential sponsor.
- The current sponsorship rates are outlined on the Southern FM website under the sponsorship page.
- Sponsorship rates for the public (as shown on the Southern FM website) are set by the Board and cannot be overridden by the Sponsorship Manager.
- Sponsorship rates set by agreement with Spots and Space, and LEBA (advertising agencies for ethnic broadcasters) and any other advertising agency, may be amended from time to time as needed, but typically the advertising agency takes 25-30% of the revenue, so the agreed upon rate should factor this in. The Sponsorship Manager can set these rates for advertising agencies.
- In situations where a variation to sponsorship rates is proposed, or the current standing policies don't apply to the proposed variation, a vote by the Board can accept or reject the proposed variation.
 - This vote can be conducted in the form of an email response from the applicable Board members, voting yes/no to the proposal.
 - The decision can then be ratified officially at the following Board meeting. This is to ensure bureaucracy doesn't slow down the process unnecessarily but also maintains record keeping standards of what was agreed upon.
- The Sponsorship mailbox (email) contains a record of sponsorship agreements that take place. This includes one off requests from advertising agencies such as LEBA and Spots and Space.
- Records for Sponsorship agreements contain the following information:
 - The name of the main contact, either email and/or phone number
 - The Australian Business Number (ABN) of the entity
 - The address of the business if it is a bricks and mortar style business, or a head office address if it is an online business
 - The type of sponsorship they are interested in proceeding with
- An invoice will be issued to the entity with the applicable information described above. The date of payment counts as the initiation of the Sponsorship, and the duration expires based on the terms of the Sponsorship agreement (28 days, 6 months, 12 months etc.).

- Sponsors will be provided with a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities, including the nature of their on-air acknowledgment and the extent to which they may be involved in station activities.
- Any complaints or concerns regarding sponsorships will be handled through Southern FM's existing complaints procedure to ensure accountability and transparency.

8. Commissions

The commission structure of the sponsorship plans is as follows:

- Major Sponsor – 10% of the value of the sponsorship
- Platinum Sponsor – 10% of the value of the sponsorship
- 28 days – no commission
- 6 month or 12-month single show sponsor – no commission

Presenters who obtain a sponsor for their program (or if they obtain a Major or Platinum sponsor for the radio station) will be exempt from paying studio fees, for the duration the sponsorship exists. If they qualify for a commission, they will receive a commission on top of this exemption.

While this policy acts as an incentive for presenters, it does not detract from the requirements of the sponsor having no influence over a program. In cases where a conflict of interest occurs or where a presenter is not showing impartiality to the sponsor, the sponsor may be reallocated to a different timeslot. The presenter would still retain the exemption but would be prohibited to discuss the sponsor's business, unless they underwent appropriate training and satisfy the Board that they won't breach the licensing requirements.

9. Monitoring and review

This sponsorship policy will be reviewed to ensure ongoing compliance with the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) regulations and to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in supporting the station's operations.

10. Independent research into code breaches

The ACMA publicly releases code violations radio stations in Australia commit. These investigations contain details about how breaches occurred and what the findings were. In cases where sponsorship breaches occur, the Sponsorship Manager is responsible for reviewing these code breaches and raising any concerns that may arise from these breaches with the Board.