



SENATOR THE HON MATHIAS CORMANN

Minister for Finance

Leader of the Government in the Senate

Key Point

- *Members of the House of Representatives representing a Rural or Provincial electorate may now also use office expenses for regional community and open narrowcast radio services.*

MIN 2020/12

Rural and Regional Members of the House of Representatives

USE OF OFFICE EXPENSES FOR REGIONAL COMMUNITY AND OPEN NARROWCAST RADIO SERVICES

As a further response to the impact of COVID-19 on regional print media services, subsection 66(2A) of the *Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017* has been amended. From today, members of the House of Representatives who represent a *Rural or Provincial* electorate, as determined by the [Australian Electoral Commission](#), may also use their annual budget for office expenses to produce or place content for broadcast on regional community and open narrowcast radio services.

Open narrowcast services are broadcast radio services whose reception is limited in some way, such as by location or specific events.

These amendments, in effect, extend amendments made in May 2020 which allowed members of the House of Representatives representing regional electorates to use their office expenses for regional commercial radio broadcasting services (please refer to [Ministerial Circular 2020/10 – Use of office expenses for regional radio broadcasting services](#)).

These amendments will enable members who are eligible to use their office expenses for commercial broadcast radio services to also use their office expenses to communicate with constituents using community and/or open narrowcasting radio services.

In order for broadcasting expenses to be met from a member's annual budget for office expenses:

- the broadcasting services must be provided by the licensee of a regional community radio broadcasting licence or a class licence under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* for the provision of an open narrowcasting radio service, and

- the regional licence area of the regional community radio broadcasting licence or the coverage area of the open narrowcast radio service must be at least in part within the boundaries of the member's electorate, as defined in section 4 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017 and not in the Australian Capital Territory. Information on broadcasting licence areas is available at <https://www.acma.gov.au/broadcasting-licence-areas>.

The amendments do not alter the prohibition on broadcast television. Nor is there any change to eligible members' ability to produce or place content for broadcast on regional commercial radio services. Members who represent a metropolitan electorate and Senators remain ineligible to use office expense for broadcast radio services.

Eligible members may use a maximum of one-third of their annual budget for office expenses to produce and place content for all categories of broadcast radio services, including on regional commercial radio services. Members are not permitted to share the cost of producing or placing broadcast radio content with another member.

Guidance on the use of office expenses for broadcast radio is available on the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services website at <https://maps.finance.gov.au/guidance/annual-budget-office-expenses/office-expenses-restrictions>. For further advice, please contact Ministerial and Parliamentary Services on mpshelp@finance.gov.au or 02 6215 3542.

Kind regards



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26 June 2020