

**RADIO READING
RESOURCES FOR
STATIONS**



Who's out there?

Getting to know your community of interest



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RPH Australia acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands on which we work and live and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We embrace diversity in working to build inclusive and connected communities.

These resources have been created by **Kim Stewart** for RPH Australia utilising original materials developed by the Community Media Training Organisation (CMTO).

Produced with the assistance of the **Department of Communications and the Arts** through the **Community Broadcasting Foundation**.

We also thank our project partners: **Tagged PDF** and the **CMTO**.

Who is your community?

“Community radio stations are operated in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community.

Communities can be geographical – for example based around a city, suburb or town – or they can be centred on a particular area of interest, like religion, ethnicity or age.” –

Community Broadcasting Association of Australia¹

You probably reckon you know the answer to that question already! And you are probably right when it comes to yourself, the reader. We can usually list the communities we belong to, like:

- Our school community
- The community of people who play the same sports as we do
- The people who also attend the local library, Rotary or Lions Club
- The language or cultural group we belong to
- People of our own age group who are likely to have shared values and interests

That’s us, and we feel pretty comfortable with people who are like us.

Picture Right: Some of the community of interest at 4ZZZ

However, your personal community, or ‘comfort zone’, is not the same as your actual community, the one you live in. You may not have much contact at the moment with people outside of those who are much like you, but your community likely contains other communities whose circles don’t touch yours. These people are also your station’s community of interest.

They might include:

- Young unemployed people
- People living in poverty
- Indigenous people
- Single mothers
- People with health problems
- People from different ethnic groups
- People with disabilities who you may not typically see



¹ <https://www.cbaa.org.au/resource/promoting-community-radio>

People with disabilities in particular can often be more isolated from mainstream social life, especially if they live in institutions or group homes, or face mobility and transport issues. You may already have older volunteers at your station who have had to stop volunteering as they became less mobile or their cognitive skills declined.

Reaching out as a station to people who you don't know is essential. You'll find they often don't know they can even participate in community radio. As the Community Radio Toolkit notes, the people most likely to participate first will be, "DJs, ... experienced community activists, local councillors, politicians and the other people who, in many ways, need your facilities least", because many of them are well-educated and well-funded, and can just as easily access commercial media outlets. You can read more about the value and importance of including a diverse community at the UK produced [Community Radio Toolkit website](#)²

The Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA), that allocates community radio licences, has guidelines about your obligations under the *Broadcasting Services Act* (1992) to include your local community. They make decisions about your ongoing licensing based on:

- Your station's continuing capacity to "encourage members of the community...to participate in the

operations of...the service" including the selection of programming

- Your station's capacity to "continue to represent the community interest"

(ACMA, 2010)

Check out the [ACMA Community Broadcasting Participation Guidelines](#)³ (PDF) to learn more about your participation obligations and how to improve your performance in this area.

Who is your untapped community of interest?

If you think about the parts of your town or city that you never go to, the people you never meet, you likely have identified some latent communities of interest that your station could mobilise.

If your station is experiencing low rates of volunteering or losing aging volunteers, it is especially important that you motivate previously untapped communities of interest to participate in your station. Connecting to new communities and engaging them at the station can revitalise a small or declining station and may have flow on effects in audience, sponsorship, membership, donations and grant success.

Think back to the more 'invisible' or isolated groups we listed earlier. Each one of those groups probably has their own support organisations, community meeting places or

² <http://www.communityradiotoolkit.net/community/communities/>

³ <https://www.acma.gov.au/-/media/Community-Broadcasting-and-Safeguards/Advice/pdf/Community-Broadcasting-Participation-Guidelines.pdf?la=en>

networks, as well as families, friends and carers that your station has yet to tap into.

Think of the ways you could reach those groups. You will likely say, and you are right, that advertising for new volunteers on-air is how you reach your community. But think of the ways that certain genres of music, talk shows or sport shows are only the interests of some of the community and you will have identified a gap in programming and information provision that is not useful to other groups in your community. They are probably not listening if they don't like country music, or play sports! If that is the case, you need to find some creative ways to reach out and engage them.

Thinking outside the box you are familiar with is key to finding your untapped communities of interest.

The [Community Media Training Organisation](http://cmtto.org.au)⁴ offers training to help your think about more creative ways to visualise untapped potential in your community.

Think of the ways that certain genres of music, talk shows or sport shows are only the interests of some of the community and you will have identified a gap in programming and information provision that excludes other communities of interest

⁴ <http://cmtto.org.au>



This happy group of people would never have known they could be on the radio if it weren't for outreach

The People of the Air radio group began in 2015 after a 4ZZZ radio representative visited their disability service organisation.

Since then, they have interviewed scores of local community members, musicians, experts and each other about issues that interest them. They've learned presenting skills, gained verbal and social confidence and become more knowledgeable about their local area.

People with disabilities may be able to contribute their spare time to community radio if you reach out.

Make yourself known to your community

On-air announcements for new volunteers are only part of the picture of reaching your community of interest. There are people not currently engaged with your station that could be if they knew such an opportunity existed. Bringing them into the fold can revitalise your station, make life more interesting and increase sponsorship, membership and even grant success!

Below are some suggestions how you might reach communities of interest that you are not currently serving.

Young people:

Working with young people under 18 requires a [Working with Children Check](#). If parents or teachers are present, it can be easier to ensure safety while providing young people with volunteering opportunities.

- At school, in places they frequent, on the internet and social media. Letting schools know that older students are able to do work experience or learn some communication skills while playing their favourite music is an easy way to find new volunteers who may stay long after they have left school. If you are running a radio reading service through RPHA you can encourage them to improve their public speaking and confidence by reading on-air for people with a print disability

- Students at TAFE studying community welfare may be keen to participate in a work-like environment where they can help older volunteers or volunteers with a disability who would like some help preparing and presenting their shows

People who are not working, or only working part time:

People who are not working for any reason may have time and motivation to volunteer at your station. You can reach them by making flyers and leaving them at other community groups, libraries or playgroups. You can also visit organisations that serve those communities: mental and community health services, employment agencies and disability support organisations for instance, and let them know that you are interested in providing meaningful, mutually beneficial volunteering and training opportunities. You could reach:

- Unemployed people needing help to improve their skills and confidence, the latter often being key to finding paid work.
- Young parents whose children are just entering school needing to improve their confidence and skills in preparation to re-enter the workforce. They may also be alone with small children a lot of the time, and this can be isolating.
- People with disabilities or with health problems that may exclude them from full time work, but are keen to contribute to their community.



- People with disabilities, or older Australians who you may not typically see in the community because they live in a care facility.

Become highly visible in your community

Being highly visible in your community is a great way to engage more volunteers and attract sponsorship. Many stations do this by having outside broadcasts at community events like fetes, fairs and shows.

There are many other ways you can reach those in communities you are not currently broadcasting to. Here are some examples:

- Holding outside broadcasts in conjunction with a community group – letting them have lots of air time to talk about the issues for their organisation at an event they are running. For instance, 4ZZZ in Brisbane has held “Joint Efforts” where the station and a community group both play a part in organising an event, which is then promoted through the station. It would include interviews with people involved in the event, such as musicians and speakers
- Doing a lot more recording in the field, to reach people who can’t get to a station. People get to know you, know that your station is interested in them, and their issues.

- Engage a community liaison coordinator who makes sure you have a presence at as many events, big and small, as is practical. A student or volunteer who is very good with people would be ideal in this role.
- Flyers, posters, postcards and advertisements in local papers can provide even more opportunities to reach your latent community of interest.
- Meet with your local council, or with community leaders, staff or organisers at disability and other community services to get support in your push for new and diverse volunteers.
- In-person meetings and conversations are especially important if you are engaging with people who are blind or vision-impaired, who may face issues around access to printed information.
- Below are some suggestions of how to persuade your new target community of interest that you provide them with a great opportunity.

Template flyer & letter of introduction

Try these templates to get you started in reaching your new community of interest.

[INSERT PICTURE HERE]

- * do your friends tell you that you have the “gift of the gab?”
- * are you involved in your community and want to let everyone else know about the great work of your organisation?
- * do you have a story to tell about people or events in your community?
- * do you like to read aloud?

You can join [our station] community radio!

At [our station] you can join with people who love to connect with community, learn new skills, and help keep this vital community service bringing important information to your town.

It doesn't matter how old or young you are, where you come from or what your abilities are. if you are part of our community, we want you!

Like:

- * reading the newspaper on-air for people with a print disability *
- * graphic design * administration * fund-raising and events * social media *

As a volunteer we can offer you free announcer training to improve your communication skills, your technical skills and your on-air presence. You can improve your job skills and confidence too!

We can help you and your community have a voice.

Check out our website at [www.\[our station\].org](http://www.[our station].org) or call [INSERT NUMBER HERE]

To: Local Community Organisation
Our Town
Australia

Dear [Community group],

[OUR STATION] is a community radio service in your town. Community radio is grassroots, volunteer-driven media. We believe in open access and community participation. We give a voice to people who aren't visible in the mainstream media. There are 450+ community radio stations around Australia that do this!

We exist to give organisations like yours air-time. You can spread awareness of your activities or services, or around important issues. You can encourage your members or clients to become station volunteers and make radio themselves.

We would like to come to your service to talk to you about volunteering opportunities at our station. People who volunteer report increased wellbeing and social connection, and many community radio volunteers feel it gives them a voice they otherwise would not have.

Volunteering at our station is available to people from all walks of life, of all ages and abilities.

Some of the skills a volunteer can develop at [OUR STATION] include:

- Administration
- Communication and voice
- Writing
- Graphics
- Social media and website design
- Fundraising and event management

We offer a work experience program, or regular volunteering. We also offer free on-air skills training for financial members. Volunteering can give people more confidence and they learn useful transferrable skills that they can take to other settings.

If you think your members or clients would be interested in the opportunities at [OUR STATION] please call us or email us today to arrange a meeting.

Thanks for your time and I look forward to our future collaboration!

About this resource

You can find more [Radio Reading Resources for stations](#) and for [volunteers](#) on our website.

We developed these community media training resources to support the Regional Development project, which aims to broaden the national reach of Radio Reading services to reach people with a print disability living in regional and remote areas.

RPH Australia is supporting stations, outside the current Radio Reading Network, to produce new, diverse, quality local programming made by and for people with a print disability in their community.

[Contact us](#) to find out more.

About us

RPH Australia is the peak body for the Radio Reading Network; community radio services dedicated to providing access to information for the estimated 5 million Australians with a print disability. We champion the rights of all people to access printed material, empowering equal participation in cultural, political and social life.

Radio Reading programming aims to meet the information needs of people with a print disability (those who are unable to effectively access printed material due to visual, physical or cognitive impairment, age or low literacy).

It provides a voice for people in our community with a print disability and caters directly to their information needs and interests.

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RPH
AUSTRALIA
the radio reading network



Turning print into sound

Tune in or support your local Radio Reading station via the **RPH Australia website**