

**RADIO READING  
RESOURCES FOR  
VOLUNTEERS**



# Be heard

Pitching your disability-related program



# Contents

Introduction .....	3
What stations are in your area? .....	4
How do you join a community station?.....	4
How do stations decide what goes to air?....	5
Program applications .....	7
Making a pilot show as part of your pitch.....	7
Tricks for reading out loud .....	8
Template show application.....	11
About this resource.....	14
About us.....	14



If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone us on **0417 453 643** or email **admin@rph.org.au**

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**.

## Introduction

- Do you have a burning story to tell about people or events in your community?
- Do you love talking to people, or are you interested in music or have a hobby you think others would be interested in too?
- Do you want to meet people in your community and do useful and interesting work together?

## Volunteering at a community radio station may be the thing for you!

The community broadcasting sector prides itself on being open to volunteers from the community. As a media outlet, we are one of the most diverse in Australia. We include people from all parts of the community that otherwise might not have a voice.

We are also good at upskilling community members to be their own media, write their own stories about their communities, write their own news and play the music that interests them and the community of listeners.

Community radio is an important source of connection to the social life of your community.

Listening, and producing community radio brings joy, meaning and information to people from all walks of all life, and all abilities. Unlike commercial stations, you can usually walk in off the street and join up to volunteer at your local community station, often with only the cost of membership.

This guide aims to share the basics you need to know if you are a person with a disability, or support someone, who wants to start participating in community radio.

**Pictured below:** Emma Ross is a volunteer at Vision Australia Radio in Perth. She produces programs and announces. She also has a vision impairment.



## What stations are in your area?

There are over 450 community radio stations in Australia, and very likely one near you.

To find your nearest station you can look at the website of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA). The CBAA represents over 70% of community radio stations in Australia, but they have provided [this map](#)<sup>1</sup> where you can search for your nearest stations, whether they are a member or not.



*Picture Source: CCBYSA Open Street Map contributors, CBAA (2018)*

For instance, I typed in my suburb in Queensland and found 15 stations in a 50km radius, and seven within 10km. If you live in a rural area, there may be just one station.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbaa.org.au/station>

You might already be listening to community radio and didn't realise you can participate!

The map is not fully screen reader accessible, so if you need to use a screen reader to find the location of your station, try emailing them at [office@cbaa.org.au](mailto:office@cbaa.org.au) and explaining your needs.

## How do you join a community station?

You can join any community station by filling out a membership form on their website or at the station. Community radio stations are usually partly funded by membership or "subscribers" in addition to government grants and sponsorship. Most stations will also require that you become a financial member before you are allowed to volunteer, but this is not always the case. Find out what your station requires by calling, visiting their website or emailing them directly.

Once you have become a financial member you should be able to:

- Ask about volunteering openings
- Ask about in-house announcer training
- Be eligible to apply for your own program (after training)
- Volunteer with an existing program
- Attend Annual General Meetings
- Be eligible to apply to join committees or the board

If you don't have success volunteering through the administration channels, it can sometimes be effective to contact one of the program announcers and ask them directly if they would let you help out. Many community radio announcers are keen to give others the same opportunities they had in learning and becoming skilled in radio production.

When applying for volunteering opportunities emphasise your skills!

- If you are good with graphics programs or can draw well, you can do designs for station t-shirts, stickers, events and online;
- Many stations struggle with keeping their social media and websites up to date, if this is your thing, tell them!
- Do you have a head for numbers? You might be good selling merchandise at a station stall or running events
- Are you very sociable and well spoken? You could volunteer with production, helping voice station identity announcement and sponsorship announcements
- Do you prefer to take your time learning things in a hands-on way? Ask if you can sit in with another volunteer and have them tell you about what they do before you decide what will suit your skills
- Think about the time of day or night you are available, what supports or transport you need before you volunteer



**If you plan to present a vision impairment-related show, you would be representing the 20% of people in your community who have a print disability, and 35% of community radio listeners!**

However, such programming may be a new idea for your prospective station and they might want to be prepared in case adjustments need to be made to accommodate your needs. Show them these resources to help them think about the issues.

In the meantime, you can plan your pitch. You will need to “sell” your idea to the station, and we hope this guide can help you.

## **How do stations decide what goes to air?**

Programming decisions at community radio stations are sometimes made by a programming committee, the board or the station manager, or a combination of all three.

When stations are deciding what sort of content they want to present to their audiences they consider what is called their “community of interest”.

The Broadcasting Services Act (1992) and the [Community Radio Codes of Practice](#)<sup>2</sup> refer to “community interest” – that community radio should serve the community interest, not commercial or economic imperatives.

The Community of Interest is:

- People with whom one shares common goals and interests
  - People with an interest in participating in community radio<sup>3</sup>

Diversity is important to community radio and this includes encouraging many communities of interest to participate.

Some of these communities include: ethnic groups, Indigenous groups, LGBTIQ groups, women’s groups, older Australians, and people with disabilities.

When the station’s programming committee looks at applications for programs (in some stations this can include re-applying for existing programs) each six to twelve months, they consider how well each program fits with the community interests the station represents.

**Picture left:** Steve Richardson has been at 4RPH for over 20 years, where he produces a program “Access All Areas”. Steve and his 4RPH colleagues Paul Price and Steve Sparrow, (pictured on the cover), are experienced radio producers and have held board and other roles at the station and in the wider RPH sector. All of them are blind.



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cbaa.org.au/resource/community-radio-broadcasting-codes-practice>

<sup>3</sup> As above

A successful program application has to make sure it reflects the mission statement of the station and the principles in the Codes of Practice.

It should show how the program serves a group of listeners not already well represented in the media or locally.

Providing a pilot and letters of support from community groups or leaders is very helpful.



## Program applications

Writing a program application is a bit like writing a job application, you need to

convince the reader that your idea is so great they want to give it a try! So, doing your homework for a new show application is essential!

If you are a person with a disability, and you want to start a program about disability issues, the uniqueness of your idea will not be a problem. There are not many programs made by or for people with a disability on community radio yet, except for the dedicated RPH stations in the [Radio Reading Network](#)<sup>4</sup> who serve a specific community – the estimated 5 million Australians with a print disability.

Despite the fact that there are so few programs by and for people with disabilities amongst the 450 stations Australia-wide, you will still have to prove your connections to your community to succeed.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.rph.org.au/network>

## Making a pilot show as part of your pitch

The best sell for your great new program idea is proof that you can do it already. If you are already an avid podcaster, this will be pretty easy. If not, or if your idea is very much like something the station is already doing (like a music show) you will need to demonstrate how your idea is different.

Below is a summary of the steps in getting yourself ready to make a pilot program, including:

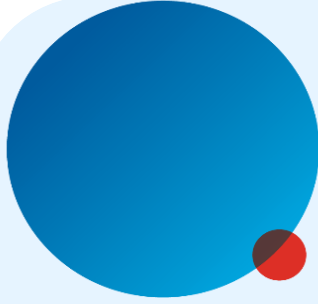
- Practicing your voice
- Planning a show
- Finding supporters
- Finding music
- Recording your pilot
- Editing your pilot (or not)
- Storing it for distribution

Some of these topics are covered in more depth in our other [Radio Reading Resources for volunteers](#).

### 1. Practice your speech

Radio is all about speech, and community radio is about diverse, local voices. If you have never recorded yourself before, start practising by reading aloud.

You can listen by recording yourself with your phone or computer. Try to be natural – you don't need to put on a "radio voice", commercial radio is full of 'samey voices' - we don't need to imitate them!



## Tricks for reading out loud ...

### **\* Be yourself \***

- Warm up with some practice poems
- Try to speak slowly (nerves will speed you up)
- Stand up when you are reading aloud to give your lungs room to move
- Don't put your mouth too close to the recorder/microphone
- Read something that has only short sentences so you don't get puffed

**You can practice your reading voice every day, even in the shower!**

## **2. Plan your pilot show**

What will be the parts of your pilot?

- Will it be one in depth interview?
- Will it feature a number of segments?
- Will some of it be read out by you?
- How long will it be?
- How will you use music?

These are your decisions to make. However, there are a few parts you are best include in any pilot:

- An "intro" with music announcing the name of the show
- An introduction to the topic of the show/pilot, including your own name
- Introductions to any guests or interviews you have
- Mention of the station name and number on the radio dial (e.g. "four R.P.H. twelve-ninety-six AM" or "Two S.E.R. One oh seven point three FM" as examples), perhaps once every 15 to 20 minutes
- Announcing the names and artists of any music you play
- An "outro" announcing to your audience what they have been listening to, the website of the station and what time you will next be on air, (make that last bit up for your pilot!)



### 3. Find a co-host or interviewee

It is always easier to talk with someone else than by yourself on air. If you have a friend who can share the reading, you will get less puffed, have more fun, and it will sound better for listeners.

Even pre-recorded or live interviews can provide relief to the ear of the listener that keeps them engaged. If you are planning a pilot with a disability sector focus, why not find someone who works in the sector and ask them about their organisation?

### 4. Find music

If you are making a pilot at your station, they should have a music library (either physical with CDs and records) or electronic (digital library on a computer). You can use this music to fill out your show.

If you are planning a music show, and it is a niche area, you will have to source your own music for your pilot. Be aware that Radio Reading Network stations have limitations on how much music they can broadcast.

If it ever goes to air, the copyright will be covered by the station. **However, you cannot upload your pilot to the internet if it contains copyrighted music.**

### 5. Recording it

You may be able to borrow a recording device from your station if you feel confident about recording and editing for your pilot.

If not, get someone to help you, OR book recording time in the station production

studio if they have one. You should not have to pay for this service if you are a member of the station.

In Brisbane, the [State Library of Queensland](#)<sup>5</sup> has a free recording studio for public use. See what your local library has to offer, or talk to local tertiary education organisations to see if they loan or hire out studios.

### 6. Editing your pilot (or not)

Learning to edit well takes time. If you want or need to edit the parts of your pilot, enlist the help of someone who knows how.

You can also access tutorials for free editing software like Audacity on video sharing websites. [Audacity has an extensive Wiki](#)<sup>6</sup> to help people to learn to use the software. There is also a mailing list, “audacity4blind: Audacity recording software and how the Blind can use it” for people with blindness vision impairments. Audacity 2.3.0 is accessible and compatible with NVDA. You can [download Audacity here](#)<sup>7</sup>.

[Studio Recorder, electronic recording software](#)<sup>8</sup> was designed by the American Printing House for the Blind. It is not free, but it may be worthwhile asking your station to purchase if you will be doing a lot of editing.

Another alternative is to script and prepare well, and record the whole thing in one sitting in the production studio at your station.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au>

<sup>6</sup> [www.wiki.audacityteam.org/wiki/Audacity\\_for\\_blind\\_users](http://www.wiki.audacityteam.org/wiki/Audacity_for_blind_users)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.audacityteam.org/download/>

<sup>8</sup> [https://tech.aph.org/sr\\_info.htm](https://tech.aph.org/sr_info.htm)

Once again, technical help from other production volunteers may be needed.

More advice about editing, including a step by step recorded [tutorial for Studio Recorder](#) by veteran producer Steve Richardson, is available in another of the guides in this series.

## 7. Store it

Store or mix down your final pilot into high quality Mp3 files (preferably 320bps). Mp3 files are generally quite small and good for emailing or sharing through Google Drive or Dropbox online storage services.

Training provided by the [Community Media Training Organisation](#)<sup>9</sup> (CMTO) will help you develop the skills needed to do these tasks. CMTO training can be accessed via your local community radio station.

<sup>9</sup> <http://cmtto.org.au>



### Jack Missen is the Breakfast Talks Manager at SYN Media.

Jack produces “Get Cereal”, a weekday breakfast program on Melbourne’s SYN FM. He is also advising on SYN’s revised Disability Action Plan. He has a vision-impairment.

“SYN hasn’t allowed my disability to be a barrier, looked past that and seen me for me and the abilities that I have learnt through working in the space.

If you verbalise you’ve got a vision impairment or a disability then they are very confident in assisting you and that you are fully capable of exploring the spaces.” **Jack has some advice for vision-impaired people wanting to do radio...**

**“Just do it, it’s one of those things. You’ll make mistakes throughout the journey. Even sighted people make those same mistakes. So just make the mistakes, just jump off that cliff.”**



## • **Template show application**

Below is a template of a typical show application (this one borrows heavily from 4ZZZ and a recent application for the “Only Human” program).

### **PROGRAM APPLICATION - YOUR COMMUNITY RADIO STATION**

**1.0 Announcer details:** All announcers and co-hosts must be current subscribers who have completed announcer training.

**Name:** Newson Voluntera

**Subscription No:** 12345

**Email:** n.voluntera@no.email.com

**Year of announcer training:** 2020

**1.1 Backup announcer:** Please list 2 other trained announcers who will be your first point of contact for shift fill-ins.

**Name:** Ace Voluntera

**Subscription No:** 12346

**Email:** n.voluntera@no.email.com

**Year of announcer training:** 2020

**Name:** Bruce Voluntera

**Subscription No:** 12347

**Email:** n.voluntera@no.email.com

**Year of announcer training:** 2020

**2. Show name:** Only Human

**2.1. Synopsis:** Provide a brief synopsis of your show, detailing the sort of topics, guests, and segments you will cover. Tell us what makes you special!

Answer: It's a show about social justice, mental wellbeing and disability rights interviews and news, with topical music and guests from the local community.

**2.2 Show duration:** 1 hour

**2.3 How does your program connect and amplify our local communities?** (The 4ZZZ Mission Statement: Connecting and amplifying our local communities)

**Answer:** The show “connects and amplifies” by representing and including people and issues that are marginalised in our communities and are treated generally poorly or not at all by the MSM. Including: People with a disability and/or mental health issues who represent 35% of community radio listenership (CBAA Listener Survey 2018); 1 in 3 people will experience a mental health issue in their lives; Suicide is a close second to car accidents as the leading cause of the deaths of young people; People with disabilities (physical or intellectual) are disproportionately affected by mental health issues.

The show will prioritise local music, especially that by people with disabilities. It will often play CSAs including CBAA's National Suicide Prevention Project.

**2.4 Who is the target audience for the show?** Answer: Everyone! But especially that 35% currently not represented on our station.

**2.5 What social media or promotional tools do you use (or will you use) to promote your show and the station?**

Answer: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter. (INSERT LINKS HERE)

**2.1.7** New shows should provide either a **demo** OR a mock playlist OR mock run sheet to give an example of what their show will sound like. You are only required to submit one of these, if you have a file that won't fit in this document, please send it along with your application.

**2.1.8. Timeslot preferences** (FM applications only): Please include 3 preferences for your show timeslot, 1 being the most preferable and 3 being least. This section needs to be filled even if you are reapplying for the same timeslot. If you are reapplying for your timeslot please indicate that as Preference 1.

Preference 1: 10am

Preference 2: 6pm

Preference 3: midday Sunday

**3. Volunteer contributions:** please list your contributions outside of announcing, that you have completed at the station in the last 12 months. These can include being a member of a station committee, a regular task you perform outside of announcing, station fundraiser you have put on, regularly helping on merch stalls, writing grant applications, contributing reviews to the website etc.

**Answer:** Newson regularly fills in for Bruce, supports events at stalls and vacuums every Friday morning. Betsy has been working in station admin for 6 months.

**4. Policy requirements and expectations:** The information below describes various policies, procedures and important station information you need to be aware of and agree to before submitting your show application. Please read through them and carefully consider how they apply to your show.

**4.1 Station wiki:** read the station policies and the Community Broadcasting Codes of Practice before applying.

**4.2 Sponsorship plays:** Our station plays no more than 4 minutes of sponsorship in an hour. Always check your spot roster at the beginning of each show – no matter what time slot you have - and play your rostered spots. All promotion is to be organised through the Sponsorship Manager, and promoting events or products that are not current financial sponsors is not allowed.

**4.3 Music quotas:** All general music and current affairs shows are required to meet the quota floor, and are encouraged to move toward the quota target during this grid. Specialised shows will have an exemption form available to negotiate their quota targets. They are: 40% Australian music, 5% local music, 30% new music, 50% female music, 5% indigenous music.

**4.4 Studio care:** Any equipment or tech faults in either studio must be reported immediately to the station manager. There is strictly no food or drink in the studio. Inside the station building - especially the studio - is a strictly no smoking zone

**4.5 Participation:** All announcers must maintain a current, financial subscription throughout the duration of their shift.

We understand that not everyone is able to contribute volunteer hours outside of their program, and even if you aren't able to commit to extra activities it is important to show that you are engaged with the station Whether it's making it to a few station catch ups, responding promptly to emails, keeping up to date with policy and procedure changes or even just doing the dishes once in a while, we need to see that folks are contributing what they can to keep the station running.

## **5. Announcer Agreement:**

I acknowledge that: [insert station name here]

owns all airtime on the station and my time allocated is conditional on compliance with the Broadcasting Services Act (1992), the Community Broadcasting codes of Practice (2008) and station policies.

## 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.

### RPH Australia Co-operative Ltd

ABN: 99 882 516 319

Address: PO Box 89, South Hobart TAS 7004

Phone: 0417 453 643

Email: [admin@rph.org.au](mailto:admin@rph.org.au)

Web: [www.rph.org.au](http://www.rph.org.au)



Turning print into sound



Tune in or support your local Radio Reading station via the [RPH Australia website](#).