

**RADIO READING
RESOURCES FOR
STATIONS**



New volunteers

Pitching volunteering to
a new group



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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**.

Making contact with a new volunteer group

Your first approach to getting new volunteers should always be on-air announcements. However, as we identified earlier in this series, there is probably a section of your community that you aren't reaching, they don't know they can be involved. We might need to take extra steps to engage those groups of people.

Collating a list of all the prospective groups and organisations you have not yet engaged at your station is your first step.

- Search the internet for disability or other support groups in your region
- Search your local newspapers
- Look at local library or other noticeboards
- Ask your current volunteers if they have contacts with community organisations that serve the community you are targeting. It is always easier if you already have a contact person inside an organisation.

Picture right: the 'People of The Air' radio group is held in a visible place in a community hall, to provide access for people who may not be able to get into the station buildings at 4ZZZ.

Pictured: Mel, guest MC Wheels, Donna, Kim and Paul.

In the previous guide, "Who's out there?", we talked about writing and leafleting organisations that might have clients or members who could benefit from volunteering opportunities at your station. We also provided document templates to get started.

Follow up on your written approach with a phone call a week or so later. Set up an appointment to meet one of the organisers to present your case for volunteering and to outline what support your station can offer new volunteers.

Outreach: Make your station visible

You might think that your town already knows you exist because you have been broadcasting for X number of years and you have long-



standing sponsorship arrangements. But to outsiders and listeners, the content of your station may be indistinguishable from local commercial stations, and they may not know the difference.

The [Community Broadcasting Association of Australia](#)¹ encourages you to be ready to differentiate your station to community leaders. This is their check-list:

Community Radio is:

- Not-for-profit
- Income goes into developing station
- Large numbers of volunteers
- Restricted sponsorship (no advertising)
- Funded by a mix of subscribers, sponsors, fundraising and govt. grants
- Primarily local content
- Independent / community run
- Run by locals
- Easy for community to get involved
- Collaborative

Community radio has an excellent record for developing marginalised communities. You can enhance your station's capacity to do that by being both visible and approachable to encourage community members to engage, especially ones from disadvantaged

groups that are not used to participating or speaking up.

You can make yourself physically visible through outreach activities including:

- Outside broadcasts
- Stalls at local events
- Information nights at the station
- Information sessions outside of the station (at community organisations)
- Leafletting and advertising
- Advertising in the newsletters of community organisations or networks
- An accessible website that makes it very clear how people can volunteer and become presenters. See [2DRY FM](#)² as a good example of this. Informative social media posts.

Some of these activities will be face to face, others will require a re-assessment of the accessibility of your electronic resources and other messaging as described in the first guide of this series, "Why include people with a disability at your station?"³

Presenting your case for volunteering

Once you have your date with an organisation, preparing your presentation is

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

² <https://www.2dryfm.com/>

³ <https://www.rph.org.au/radio-reading-resources-for-stations/>

important. While you might be motivated by gaining more volunteers to keep your station sustainable, volunteers will also be motivated by benefits to themselves as well as for the community interest they are most passionate about. It's your job to make the motivation planets align!

A persuasive presentation to recruit new volunteers should include talking about:

- The role of community radio in the context of Australian media – ie. It exists to give voice to marginalised groups in our communities and present an alternative view to mainstream commercial media.
- The importance of volunteers in maintaining community radio's connection to the community and freedom from commercial influences.

- The diverse range of voices already participating in community radio Australia-wide – language and ethnic groups, Indigenous people, women's and gender-diverse groups, people with different abilities, capacities and voices.
- The skills and benefits other volunteers have said they get from participation like: feeling connected to their communities and less lonely or isolated; feeling empowered to have a voice; learning or improving technical and communication skills that are transferrable to other settings; being part of something important and meaningful; and being part of a team with common goals.

Community radio is powered by the efforts of 22,000 volunteers around Australia!

The things you can offer to support volunteer participation and membership:

- On-the-job training
- Connection to local community
- Development of communication and other skills
- A way to connect with and promote issues that are important to them
- Mentorship by other announcers
- Membership conferring rights to participate in announcer training, vote at annual general meetings, apply for on-air programs, nominate for the board etc.



- Codes Of Practice that support participation, voice and equality

You can put these things into a slideshow or a leaflet, or simply talk to them as they refer to your station's circumstances.

Running an information session

At an information session for prospective volunteers you not only want to convince them to participate, but offer tangible ways that they can join in as soon as possible. Strike while the iron is hot, as they say!

Think about the entry-level tasks you can appoint people to before you schedule the information session. An entry-level range of tasks is a practice-proven way of engaging new volunteers.

For those planning or already running a Radio Reading service for listeners with a print disability, becoming a proficient reader is a good place to start. 4RPH in Brisbane runs auditions for prospective radio readers, to ensure they can read and enunciate clearly, and advise them on the [Radio Reading Standards](#)⁴

Radio reading can give new volunteers the immediate satisfaction of hearing their voices on-air, without a lot of training regarding planning, preparing and presenting a show, as they usually don't do it alone. They can also practice their reading aloud

skills by recording themselves on their phones out of volunteer hours.

Other entry-level or trainee tasks that can suit the commitment level and capacity of most volunteers, and could lead to more complex tasks include:

- One shift a week answering the phone and running the front desk
- Helping digitise your music library
- Finding local community events to include in your community notices
- Updating your social media and website with station news
- Shadowing and assisting your CSA and sponsorship producer, and providing an alternate voice
- Any other tasks you have been putting off for lack of volunteers!

Most important is to figure out what the new volunteer is good at, as well as what they want to learn or be better at.

A typical in-house information session for new volunteers should include:

- A tour of the station noting emergency exits, first aid kits and introducing them to station staff and volunteers
- Awareness of the Community Broadcasting Codes of Practice

⁴ https://www.rph.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/RPHA_Standards_for_RPH_Programming_on_Community_Radio_2018_359KB.pdf

- Volunteer agreements (states the rights and responsibilities of volunteers at your station). The CBAA has good advice on [volunteer rights and obligations](https://www.cbaa.org.au/resource/volunteer-rights-and-obligations)⁵
- Awareness of station policies and complaints processes and where to find this information
- A list of important people and contacts for emergencies and enquiries, and who to contact for complaints
- Notification of board or volunteer meeting days, or subscription to an email list or newsletter where this information is made available
- Any information necessary for volunteers undertaking activity requirements for Centrelink
- All these documents should be available both in hard copy and accessible electronic format (made easy to read by people with cognitive issues, eyesight issues or who use a screen reader)

Make sure you get everyone's contact details and follow up with them within a week. The sooner you get them engaged, the sooner they become a committed part of your community radio family!

⁵ <https://www.cbaa.org.au/resource/volunteer-rights-and-obligations>

⁶ <http://www.openhouseworldwide.org/>

⁷ www.idpwd.com.au

Be an open house!

One way that you can make your station more visible to the community is to participate in the [Open House](http://www.openhouseworldwide.org/)⁶ movement. Many community radio stations are located in historic or otherwise notable public buildings that are intriguing to visitors and encourage civic participation.

Open House is a worldwide yearly event coordinated by local city councils that opens the doors of public and private institutions to interested members of the community. If there isn't already one in your town, you can be the trendsetter by holding the first!

An Open House can help ease some of the nervousness prospective volunteers might have about participating in community radio by showing how approachable and accessible your station is. Your open house can be staged as part of your yearly fundraising week or Radiothon, or some other event in your town like a festival.

Inviting people to join an open-station celebration for the [International Day of People with a Disability](http://www.idpwd.com.au)⁷ would send a powerful message! Open House also gives your existing volunteers a chance to be creative and hospitable.



For an example, check out the Open House entries of 4ZZZ⁸ and 3CR.



Pictured above: Some of the many radio groups that have come together under the Ability Radio Project banner. ARP members invited local member Wayne Swan along to one group!

⁸ <https://brisbaneopenhouse.com.au/building/4zzz/>



Ability Radio Project

Being visible and accessible to the disability community was the impetus for the Ability Radio Project, run in Brisbane through 4ZZZ.

Coordinator Kim Stewart reached out to disability organisations WWILD, Community Living Association, OzCare and West End Community House. This has allowed many fruitful local community collaborations including regular content for Only Human, and radio series Women on the Edge, Voiceability and Home Truths.

Since 2017, the groups have been run with songwriter Tom Smith and the Whoopeedo Crew singing as well as storytelling and interviewing locals. Groups toured local media such as the ABC and other community radio stations.

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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