

# Speak! The Community Listens

ABC Radio, Nova and Triple J are all household radio names. Between AM and FM core radio stations, we get our international and national news, entertainment and music. But for those of us who want something a bit closer to home, or something slightly out of the mainstream, there is community radio. Community radio first made its appearance in 1972, following the election of Gough Whitlam, whose government believed in developing grass-root social participation (Seneviratne 1993, pg. 4). In 1993, there were just 118 community radio services across Australia, with 2.5 million people tuning in each week (Seneviratne 1993, pg. 5). Now, Community broadcasting is Australia's largest media sector, with over 5 million people tuning into over 440 radio services each week (Community Broadcasting Association of Australia 2017). Community radio has been a major avenue for individuals to voice their opinions and experiences to a broader community. Even though community radio, due to its limited funding, is mainly staffed by volunteers, many of the community radio broadcasters have professional experience. The Australian community broadcasting sector is also recognised internationally as a successful form of grassroots media (Community Broadcasting Foundation 2017). As such, community radio should be considered in a professional light.

Earlier this year, a brave 14 year old radio host, Lilly Lyons, made headlines when she used community radio to reach out to other sexual assault survivors (Costello 2017). She described the radio as 'helping her get her voice out there', a voice that continues to inspire other survivors, reminding them that they are not alone. Universities such as Macquarie University and University of Technology Sydney, have developed their own joint radio station, 2ser 107.3, to be a voice for their students, and provide their media students with real work experience.

For this special report on community radio, I have interviewed two radio hosts, Siobhan Stollznow and Dave Roman. Siobhan has been volunteering with Asia Pop Radio since 2013, her first year in undergraduate media studies. Dave has worked with 2SSRFM, Sutherland Shire Community Radio, for nine years, hosting a specialist program 'The Mystery Train', a blues and roots music show. Siobhan's work experience will be the springboard for her entry into the Korean music industry. Whereas Dave's professional qualification in radio broadcasting and expertise in blues music steered him towards a career on community radio in the music field.

## Community Radio For Community Representation

The community radio industry is as diverse as the topics it covers. Community radio appears to be a very positive avenue for individuals to have their voices heard. Dave's radio station and his music field



Siobhan with Korean Pop group, 'Unicorn'

has a general profile of middle age and older hosts, and is mostly male dominated. Siobhan's experience, on the other hand, is quite the opposite. Her radio station is predominantly hosted by youths between 20-30, and there is an equal gender representation. In fact, their main rival station, SBS Pop Asia, was set up by a woman named Jamaica dela Cruz (Leong 2012).

The Global Media Monitoring Project (2015) found that women have a higher representation in radio (41%) compared to print media (35%). Yet, a recent study by Mumbrella found that men were three times more likely than women to present at breakfast radio in Australia (Apter 2017). The breakfast slot is the most commercially important and highest rated time slot of the day. At the dawn

The CBAA discusses community broadcasting as a tool to give 'voice to the voiceless' - those that aren't represented in mainstream media.

These include:

- Indigenous Australians
  - Ethnic Communities
  - Educational services
  - Religious Communities
  - People with a disability
  - Music, arts and cultural services
  - Youth and Seniors
  - LGBTIQ communities
- (CBAA 2017)

of the century female representation in radio was 28% compared to 72% of male representation. It had increased significantly between 2000 and 2015, from 28% to 48%. Community radio stations such as 3CER, a national station based in Melbourne, offers more diversity in their shows. 3CER's special show, 'Women on the Line', has been running since 1986 (3CER 2017). It discusses the social, political and cultural issues that women face. Another 3CER show, 'Accent of Women', focuses on women from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Recently the station partnered with the Australian Muslim Women's Services for Human Rights to offer workshops for Muslim women wanting to work in radio (3CER 2017). It is the voice of a multicultural Australia that is often missed from mainstream radio.

Seneviratne (1993, pg. 5-6) found that those with an 'ethnic' accent had an extremely difficult time finding work in radio broadcasting. He discussed how at the ABC, ethnic accents were 'deemed to be not of broadcasting standards' whereas 'Anglo' voices were considered 'professional'. He further examined how at the SBS, people from non-Anglo backgrounds were only employed for their language programs. Any discussions on culture and politics were strictly censored. It was during this time that many ethnic minority groups found solace in community radio. In 1993 the first Indigenous radio station, the Brisbane Indigenous Media Association, was launched in Brisbane. Today, Indigenous radio is a thriving sector. The National Indigenous Broadcast Service receives over 120 community radio broadcasts and 23 Indigenous radio stations. '3 Kool n Deadly' is a Melbourne based Indigenous community radio broadcaster. They air 24/7 and aim to provide a voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, arts, culture and politics (3KND 2017). A

study by Foxwell (2012, pg.170) finds that it is not just Indigenous listeners who enjoy '3KND' but also non-Indigenous people who feel that the station acts as a 'cultural bridge'. Interestingly, ethnic broadcasting actually began in the mid-1940s at the end of World War II. The immense number of immigrants created a demand for community specific

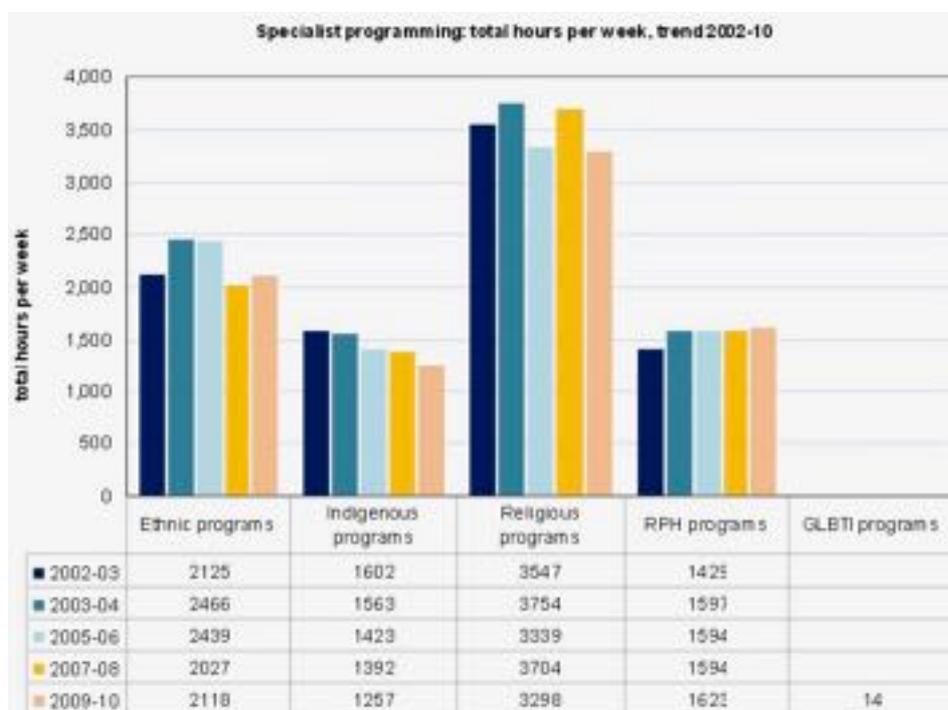
'What we are saying is that it's okay to speak our language...[we are] using modern technology to maintain our oral traditions' Margaret O'Shane, Co-ordinator of Catherine Community Radio at the 'Media and Indigenous Australians' Conference (1993).

radio. However, it was only in the 1970s that community radio for diverse communities emerged as we see it today (The National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters Council 2015, pg. 10). 3ZZZ is



Melbourne’s largest ethnic community radio. It has been broadcasting since 1975, with over 400,000 listeners each week (3ZZZ 2017). The station represents 63 ethnic groups and broadcasts in over 70 community languages.

Ewart (2012, pg. 127-129) analysed the results of two previous research studies and found community radio stations for ethnic minorities provide a multitude of benefits. These stations not just help them connect with Australian society, it also provides a sense of connection and social inclusion within their own cultural groups. It is an incredible resource in helping to maintain and transmit culture. In one study, some participants explained that they would engage with the radio to learn about their culture as they grew older. For others, the radio gave them a sense of their culture in a new home. This is particularly important for immigrants suffering from culture shock. Through the radio stations they are made to feel welcome. It also helps them gain confidence in participating in the Australian society. It can be argued the reason why community radio continues to provide a sense of comfort to ethnic communities is because mainstream media is still Anglo-centric (Ewart 2012, pg. 133).



The graph above shows the steady increase of interest in, and engagement with, ethnic broadcasting.

(CBA 2012 report, found in the ‘History of Ethnic Broadcasting’,  
The National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters Council 2015, pg.35)

## Personal Experiences

For both Siobhan and Dave, community radio gives them an outlet to discuss the type of music that they have had a lifelong interest in. Foxwell (2012, pg. 170) claims that specialist music programs are the main reason that Melbourne audiences tune into community radio stations. Individuals have a chance to engage with ‘their’ music, and feel part of a community. Meadows (2013, pg.48)

ventures even further, that both audiences and community radio presenters gain a sense of empowerment. They ‘reclaim’ mainstream journalism as their own, and create a form of journalism for themselves. In the case of both Siobhan and Dave, this is certainly true. They are able to use their respective radio programs to talk about their music, their day-to-day lives and the challenges and achievements they have experienced in radio broadcasting.

‘What drew me to blues music was a passion to understand where the incredible music of the early and mid 60’s came from (Rolling Stones/Eric Clapton/John Mayall/the Paul Butterfield blues band etc.). I was 14 when I was introduced to this type of music through my neighbour, a good friend who was a road manager to a Sydney band playing at the time. That was 1965. I became infatuated with the music and went to as many live gigs as I could and bought heaps of records, magazines, music papers etc to learn as much as I could.’ (Roman 2017)



Siobhan and Dave took very different paths getting into radio, but they were both introduced to it through their love for the music genre. For Siobhan, she was introduced to her manager at a Korean Pop flashmob event in the summer of 2013. She followed him on Facebook, and answered his advertisement for a job on his radio station to review anime (Japanese animation). She had a 15 minute segment once a week reviewing an anime that she had been ‘assigned’. Six months later, she expressed to her manager her interest in Korean pop music. Since the channel was rebranding itself to focus solely on Asian music, her boss was very excited and she was quickly offered opportunities to interview Korean pop stars and travelled to Korea. She has since developed her YouTube channel with her friend Bridget, called ‘How to Chopstick’ (a bit tongue in cheek, I know) to discuss Asian culture. The aim of the channel is to bridge the cultural knowledge gaps between the East and the

K-Pop girl group tries Australian food! + Giveaway

How to Chopstick

Subscribed 107

1,095 views

+ Add to Share More

36 0

West, and currently has over 100 subscribers. This has also developed into their own primetime radio slot, 'How to Chopstick with Siobhan and Bridget' at 7pm on Saturday and Sundays on Asia Pop Radio livestream. The program runs for an hour, and discusses all the latest Kpop news and gossip. Between the two of them they spend between 4-6 hours a week preparing for the show. Siobhan ultimately aims to work in the music industry in Korea. She believes that she will gain invaluable work experience and networking opportunities with her work at 'Asia Pop Radio' and her YouTube channel, which will be a springboard for her to embark on the Korean music industry.

Dave was approached to host his show shortly after a long and incredible holiday to America pursuing blues music in 2008. For four weeks he visited as many live blues music festivals and acts as he could, travelling through Chicago, Texas, Louisiana and Memphis - the blues heritage trail. Shortly after returning to Sydney he was approached by a staff member of 2SSRFM for an interview about his music experience. The interview was so well received that the station asked if he would want to present his own show. His show, 'The Mystery Train', runs every Tuesday night between 8-10pm, and markets itself as 'If you love real, authentic music, Get on Board the Mystery Train' (Sound of the Sutherland Shire 2017). Dave takes over 10 hours a week preparing for his show. He chooses music from his own extensive library, as well as samples sent to him from bands, artists and managers from within Australia and all over the world. His show also regularly includes interview segments, and additional time is needed to prepare questions, research the guest and create promotional materials. Even though Dave's program is a community radio program based in Sutherland, NSW, he has listeners all over the world. Dave says he always knew that after getting

his diploma on radio broadcasting, there would be a perfect time to get into the music industry. A combination of his academic qualification and his immense knowledge of the blues music made it a perfect professional field for him to enter into.



Dave on his incredible trip around America.

**'Nearly everyone I know who has pursued a professional career (and we have many success stories here at 2 SSRFM) get on the ladder at community radio! They learn all the basic skills at community radio. Community radio is the life blood of commercial radio, we do all the early "hard yards" for the industry. Commercial radio "polish" the presenters! And that is how it should be!' (Roman 2017)**

## Issues Facing the Industry

Radio in Australia can be divided into two broad categories; privately owned and government funded. Privately owned radio stations run at a low cost, and use a syndicated satellite service to fill up air time -making it a real threat to localised commercial radio, which cannot compete against these 24/ 7 services (Seneviratne 1993). Government funded radio, on the other hand, is exactly as the name implies, they receive funding from the government. The government funds two full networks - the ABC and the SBS. Government funded radio also includes community radio. However, as most government funding goes towards the ABC and the SBS, community radio often relies on donations from listeners. To put this in perspective, the Australian Government's funding budget in the next three years for the ABC and the SBS are \$3.1 billion and \$814.2 million respectively (Commonwealth Budget 2016-2017). Yet, in the 2015-16 Commonwealth Budget, community radio funding was cut by \$1.4 million from the \$15 million they received in the previous year. As community radio stations are already running at a low cost, any funding cuts hit the ethnic community broadcasters the hardest, as they comprise of 80 out of the 300 supported channels (Jovic 2014).

Besides government support, community radio can gain funding through six other methods: support from the community; patronage from a large organization; commercial advertising; grants; service contracts; and support by the non-government organisations (Gordon 2016). One large organisation is the 'Community Broadcasting Foundation Ltd'. The CBF is an independent non-profit funding agency that secures and distributes donations to community broadcasting. Each year they provide \$17.6 million to 230 community groups and over 800 program productions across Australia (CBF 2017). In January 2017 they awarded a grant to 2MFM in Bankstown, NSW, to develop a 'Community Connect' program. During the funded period, the program interviewed more than 50 people over a diverse range of social and cultural topics. Many educational institutions also act as patrons to radio stations, for example, The University of Adelaide has been a patron of 'Radio Adelaide' since 1972 (Radio Adelaide 2017).



Dave with Simon Kinney Lewis, a guitarist promoting his album, 'Street Blues' on air

Dave's radio station 2SSRFM, receives a small amount of money from government organisations. It mainly relies on the volunteers who run it, and assistance from local businesses (Sound of Sutherland Shire 2017). As Dave explains, 'upgrading equipment, meeting professional broadcasting standards, proper training and getting our message out to the community, all cost money and it is hard to find'. Volunteers can have any number of roles, from presenter to finance officer, for example, Dave, along with his show, works with Finance and the Policy and Procedures Committee. 2SSRFM also offers sponsor packages, where businesses will pay for their products and services to be featured on event branding, on air and on the website. As Dave said, most professionals start the ladder climb with community radio, it is indeed a springboard for the commercial radio broadcasting. Siobhan's radio station was unable to maintain under the immense financial pressure, and has transferred itself to being an online only radio station, with podcasts and live streaming. Interestingly, she says that since they are currently unable to find any sponsors, they play 'fake ads'. These 'fake ads' help to legitimise her station, and give it a sense of being "big enough and good enough that people would want to advertise on it" (Siobhan's interview 2017). It is a dire situation and an unusual strategy. Despite the setback, Siobhan has no doubt that her work experience with the Asia Pop radio will be the stepping stone for her career in the Korean music industry.

'At first, you will enjoy every part of it and want to spend more hours doing it. But then you have that blockage where you say no more...burnout they call it. Getting things done in time is by far the hardest. Radio is hectic, amazing, but hectic. So make sure you make time for other important things - exercise, friends and sleep!'

'Definitely learn how to work with others as much as you learn how to speak for radio and produce for radio. If you want to be a presenter, you must be able to work with a co-host. If you can find your perfect co-host other half early on, someone you can bounce ideas with, has similar and also different views, it makes it easy.'  
(Stollznow 2017)

## So Switch on that Mic!

Community radio is a wonderful field to get into. A professional qualification in media and radio is great. It will provide the technical knowledge and people skills necessary for a career in radio. It will also give you the confidence in speaking on air and develop your own opinions of the field. As Siobhan said above, it is important to learn to work with others. Both Siobhan and Dave agree, that an open mind to learning new things, whether it is how to present yourself, or new technologies, is essential in the industry. But ultimately, it is that deep passion for your field that will give you that step ahead. It is a fantastic tool for one to connect with those that share the same interests, culture and experiences. Ultimately community radio is made for and done by the community, and fundamentally reflects the diversity in the Australian society. As Dave said, it is an essential step on the ladder to commercial radio, as such, its importance cannot be overlooked. Despite the budget cut and resource challenges, community broadcasting plays a vital role in media practices, it reaches out to various communities, occupies a niche and fills a gap of commercial broadcasting. Its significance cannot be ignored.

## References

2SER 107.3 2017, *About*, viewed 19 April 2017, <http://www.2ser.com/about>

2SSRFM, Sound of the Sutherland Shire 2017, *About*, viewed 19 April 2017, <http://www.2ssr.com.au/about/>

2SSRFM, Sound of the Sutherland Shire 2017, *Presenter: David Roman*, viewed 19 April 2017, <http://www.2ssr.com.au/presenter/david-roman/>

2SSRFM, Sound of the Sutherland Shire 2017, *Sponsors*, viewed 19 April 2017, <http://www.2ssr.com.au/sponsors-2/>

3CR 855am Community Radio, *Women on the Line*, viewed 19 April 2017, <http://www.3cr.org.au/womenontheline>

3CR 855am Community Radio, *Young Women's Training*, viewed 19 April 2017, <http://www.3cr.org.au/news/young-womens-radio-training>

3KND Kool N Deadly 2017, *About Us*, viewed 19 April 2017, <http://www.3knd.org.au/about-us/index.cfm?loadref=1>

3ZZZ, *About 3ZZZ*, viewed 20 April 2017, <http://www.3zzz.com.au/about-3zzz.html>

Adelaide University Union 2017, *Listen to Student Radio*, viewed 21 April 2017, <https://www.auu.org.au/Common/ContentWM.aspx?CID=100>

Apter L 2017, 'Revealed: Three times more men than women present breakfast radio in Australia', *Mumbrella*, 13 March 2017, viewed 17 April 2017, <https://mumbrella.com.au/metropolitan-breakfast-shows-third-presented-women-mumbrella-reveals-421344>

Asian Pop Radio 2017, *About*, viewed 20 April 2017, <http://www.asianpopradio.com/about.html>

Asia Pop Radio 2017, *Shows*, viewed 20 April 2017, <http://www.asianpopradio.com/shows.html>

Commonwealth of Australia 2016, *Budget Measures, Budget Paper No. 2 2016-17*, viewed 20 April 2017, [http://www.budget.gov.au/2016-17/content/bp2/html/bp2\\_expense-07.htm](http://www.budget.gov.au/2016-17/content/bp2/html/bp2_expense-07.htm)

Costello M 2017, '14-year-old radio host reaches out to other sexual assault survivors', *SBS*, 30 March 2017, viewed 16 April 2017, <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/thefeed/article/2017/03/29/14-year-old-radio-host-reaches-out-other-sexual-assault-survivors>

Community Broadcasting Foundation Ltd 2017, *About Us*, viewed 20 April 2017, <http://www.cbf.com.au/about-cbf/>

Community Broadcasting Foundation Ltd 2017, *Connecting Communities*, viewed 20 April 2017, <http://www.cbf.com.au/success-stories/connecting-communities/>

Donaldson, S 2017, Interview with David Roman, 15 April 2017.

Donaldson, S 2017, Interview with Siobhan Stollznow, 12 April 2017.

Ewart, J 2012, 'Exploring the unity in Australian community radio', *Media International Australia*, vol. 142, no.1, pp. 123-134.

Foxwell, K 2012, 'Community radio in an Australian city: The Melbourne experience', *Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media*, vol.10, no.2, pp. 161-172.

Global Media Monitoring Project 2015, *The Global Media Monitoring Project 2015*, viewed 16 April 2017, [http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports\\_2015/highlights/highlights\\_en.pdf](http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports_2015/highlights/highlights_en.pdf)

Gordon, J 2016, 'How community broadcasting is funded – a useful resource for community broadcasters', *Community Broadcasting Association of Australia*, viewed 21 April 2017, <https://>

[www.cbaa.org.au/article/how-community-broadcasting-funded-%E2%80%93-useful-resource-community-broadcasters](http://www.cbaa.org.au/article/how-community-broadcasting-funded-%E2%80%93-useful-resource-community-broadcasters)

Jovic, M 2014, 'Ethnic Community Radio Funding Risk', *Neos Kosmos*, 13 May 2014, viewed 21 April 2017, <http://neoskopos.com/news/en/Ethnic-community-radio-funding-risk>

Leong, T 2012, 'Jamaica dela Cruz carves out a career in Asian Pop', *Meld Magazine*, 30 April 2012, viewed 19 April 2017, <http://www.meldmagazine.com.au/2012/04/sbs-popasia-jamaica-dela-cruz/>

Meadows, M 2013, 'Putting the citizen back into journalism', *Journalism*, vol.14, no.1, pp.43-60.

Morris, G 2016, 'A balanced media? Not when it comes to gender', *ABC News*, 8 March 2016, viewed 16 April 2017, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-08/morris-a-balanced-media-not-when-it-comes-to-gender/7228262>

National Indigenous Radio Service 2017, *About the National Indigenous Radio Service*, viewed 20 April 2017, <http://www.nirs.org.au/About-NIRS/About>

Seneviratne, K 1993, 'Giving a voice to the voiceless: Community radio in Australia', *Media Asia*, vol.20, no.2, pp. 66-74.

The National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council 2015, *History of Ethnic Community Broadcasting – 30 Years Anniversary*, viewed 20 April 2017, <http://www.nembc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/NEMBC-EB-Spring-2015.pdf>