

**BAYSIDE COMMUNITY RADIO ASSOCIATION INC
'TUNING INTO COMMUNITY BROADCASTING'
SUBMISSION TO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE**

Scope and role of Australian community broadcasting across radio, television, the internet and other broadcasting technologies:

4BAY is operated by Bayside Community Radio Association and is based at Thornlands in the Redland Shire, south of Brisbane City, in Queensland.

The broadcast area covers the Bayside area of Redland Shire, islands in Moreton Bay, Wynnum-Manly district also situated on Moreton Bay, and in an arc through the south-east suburbs of Brisbane.

4BAY is operated by a team of about 104 volunteers. Age groups range from 17 to 85 years of age with an equal distribution of women and men carrying out the range of activities required to keep the station on-air.

A culture of access and participation pertains in that anyone has the right to seek opportunities to be involved in training as on-air announcers, interviews, talk segments, community announcements and so on. A group of Finnish people have been involved with the station since its inception about 12 years ago and broadcast a religious program in the Finnish language.

4BAY has no paid staff and all operational tasks are carried out by a Broadcast Team of volunteers who accept annual contracts to perform jobs of greater responsibility, e.g. Program Manager, Production Coordinator, Administrator, Admin Assistant, Skills Trainers.

There are about 140 members and about 80 community groups from the local area also take out annual membership. Most of these groups have been members in this category for the past 12 years. Some regularly avail themselves of their right to at least 26 promos per year about their activities and events plus an interview.

Promotion of community events is not confined to this group however as messages are prepared every week for every conceivable community interest material that arrives at the station, either by fax, post, email, taken from the local newspapers, or it arrives at the front desk from members of the public or from members of the station.

Religious groups who are welcome to present programs on BayFM are Christian-based groups, Redlands Community of Bahai's, Sound of Hope (Chinese culture news program). Our training program stresses the social justice aspects of the Code of Practice in that no-one is turned away from 4BAY in gaining access to the station at any time.

Local News bulletins are prepared for broadcast on weekdays (3 times per day) and the type of news selected is usually topics which may not be taken up by mainstream radio, with a special focus on local news. In addition Culture and the Arts topics are included in these bulletins, together with stories which reflect upholding human rights.

Over the past 12 years 4BAY has had a close association with the Redland Shire Council and its Counter Disaster program where broadcasting information about emergency issues has occurred during severe storms.

The station has also been involved on an annual basis with the Redlands Strawberry Festival (now known as the Redlands Spring Festival); the Redland Show; Mr. Gravatt Show; Terry Fox Fun Run; Relay for Life for the Queensland Cancer Fund; Flinders Day festival on Coochiemudlo Island; Dawn Service for the Cleveland RSL and so on.

Our outside broadcast unit has also appeared regularly at shopping centres, school fetes, Seniors Lifestyle Expos, Balonn Art Festivals, Indigiscapes Centre for environmental events, and Boatie Mart for Volunteer Marine Rescue group.

Over the past 12 years it's estimated that on average 15 new people have been trained each year for on-air announcing work or production panel work. 4BAY has two blocks of programs per year and it's usual for announcers to sign up on contract on an on-going basis (retention rate is high). However training new people is required when volunteers move on for whatever reason.

The three volunteer technicians involved with the station have been with 4BAY since before its inception. They were responsible for building the station and gradually installing equipment for two on-air studios, a production studio, and a mobile outside broadcast studio. Other volunteers with expertise in internet technology have been responsible for the internet and audio streaming.

The Administrator of 4BAY (who is also Secretary of Bayside Community Radio Association Inc) has written and edited the Local News items for the past eight years. She is also the Theory Trainer (6 modules of theory in the training course), including interviews, which she carries out with many people who come to the station including the local elected representatives.

Content and programming requirements that reflect the character of Australia and its cultural diversity:

4BAY is very popular with local listeners due to the Local News items which reflect what is happening in the Bayside area, together with the high number of local community group items played every day.

The community groups who are members are encouraged to advertise what they are doing, together with special events. We have very close links with the Redlands District Committee on the Ageing, Redlands Arts Council, Redlands Branch Queensland Cancer Fund.

With the latter a group of volunteers from the Redlands Branch of the QCF are also volunteers at 4BAY. Volunteers participate in a weekly segment which highlights the various fundraising activities being undertaken for QCF in the Redland Shire. The Branch also holds many of its planning meetings in 4BAY's meeting room for Terry Fox Fun Run, Australia Biggest Morning Teas, and Relay for Life.

The only program undertaken on 4BAY in a language other than English is the Finnish religious commentary program. This has been going to air for the past 12 years.

The station broadcasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week and until just recently all of these programs were presented live to-air by trained volunteers. It's only recently that 4BAY has been using Community Radio Satellite programs midnight to dawn.

4BAY is the only community radio station in our broadcast area, although our signal can be heard as far away as the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and out to Ipswich. We have listeners from all over Brisbane, not just the Redland Shire/Wynnum-Manly districts.

4BAY broadcasts a minimum of 25% Australian music and overall the Program Format comprises 80% music, 20% spoken word. The music played is taken from nearly every genre, with a particular emphasis on easy listening during the day-time programs. Two local Country Music Clubs have been members of BCRA since the station's inception and a total 20 hours of country music is played each week.

Technological opportunities, including digital, to expand community broadcasting networks:

The technical requirements of 4BAY are to provide two on-air studios, production studio and a mobile studio. There is a fully equipped control room which houses the switching and linking gear, digital logger, two satellite receivers and a TieLine for outside broadcasts.

The Transmitter site is at Mt. Cotton on private property and this control room is also fully equipped to receive the signal from the Thornlands studios. The transmitter mast is owned by Philcomm and we have an excellent working arrangement with this organization. BCRA has recently been granted a lease through the State Government for the mast to be transferred to a site only metres away which is on crown land. BCRA will be sub-leasing to Philcomm and a new transmitter control room and tower will be built by that organisation. BCRA will be able to cope with moving to the digital era without too many difficulties.

We have been audio streaming through our Internet Provider Quicknet (on Contra basis) for about four years. We have installed the necessary equipment for Music Point Centre which requires Broadband in our production studio at Thornlands.

Opportunities and threats to achieving a diverse and robust network of community broadcasters:

Our annual budget is about \$70,000 per year. Sponsorship and membership fees are the major sources of income; occasionally we apply for and receive a grant through the Community Broadcasting Foundation and the Gaming Community Benefit Fund (Queensland Government).

The main areas of expenditure are administration costs such as electricity, telephone and other administration costs such as stationery and postage.

At this stage there are no threats to the way BCRA successfully operates 4BAY. It will be necessary to increase sponsorship income if it's decided to pay a salary to a Station Manager some time in the future.