

2019-2020: Annual Report of the General Manager

It is a pleasure to present the annual report and to highlight the achievements of the past year. In doing so, I must recognise the tremendous commitment and contribution made by volunteers, staff and Board, particularly in the second half of the year, in maintaining our service and thriving across all areas of operation.

Programming

The media and technology landscape is rapidly changing and how that might drive our programming and direction over the next few years, is a key area of our focus. We commissioned McNairyellowSquares to undertake market research to quantify:

- the size of our existing market and how has that changed;
- what other needs can be supported across the community for new audiences (Time Poor, Language Support, Emerging),
- what is the future scope of this audience (growing, declining) and
- how these forces align with the media sector of the future.

It is pleasing that the resulting 2RPH Position Report substantially supports our audience reach, content creation and sector engagement activities, while at the same time providing guidance in relation to multiple listener platforms and technologies.

Continuing to broadcast depends on having our licence approved by the government. We were delighted that our application for renewal of our community broadcasting licence, was approved by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), for a further five years.

As our programs are our public voice, we were delighted to learn that (*Little Fictions*) was selected as a finalist in the Best Radio Program at the 2019 Community Radio Awards held by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA).

Notable programming elements added over the past year included new content such as: (*Meditative Moments*); (*Older Australians*) and (*New Voices*). Continuing collaborations included the New Year's Eve (NYE) fireworks in partnership with the ABC and RPH network stations. The keenly followed (*Focus*) program came to an end due to decisions taken by the publisher of the magazine.

Community Engagement/Profile

In seeking to foster our community of interest, we were very pleased to sponsor the Sydney Festival Access and Inclusion Program, for the first time. We supported the '*Big Anxiety Festival*' and Accessible Arts (*Arts Activated 2019 Conference*), as a media partner and partnered with IDEAS, leading to inclusion in the Land newspaper's magazine lift out '*PossAble*' (circulation 125,000 copies). Other key promotional activities included a feature in the *Global Gazette* (distributed to over 27,000 disability & community workers and read in over 100 countries) and inclusion in the June issue of the Seniors Card newsletter (circulation 350,000).

Presentations to community groups included: Wollstonecraft Probus Club; Beecroft Probus Club; and the Carlingford Allan Walker Village Aged Care. Our participation in external events saw us attend the Disability and Seniors Expo, Homebush and a National Volunteer Week Online Forum hosted by The Centre for Volunteering.

We have continued to build our profile through our own social media pages of Facebook and LinkedIn as well as through links with organisations with which we partner. We are looking to increase our profile and to commence work on a new website that will enable us to better profile the work we do and to better serve our listeners.

Sector Engagement

To further key relationships, we welcomed the Honourable Gareth Ward, MP., Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services for a visit and interview on 10 July 2019. Other key visitors and interviewees included Robert Fitzgerald AM NSW's first Ageing and Disability Commissioner and our Patron Governor of NSW Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AO QC on 30 October for her first visit to the station. The Governor and her husband Mr Dennis Wilson are Joint Vice Regal Patrons to 2RPH.

Strengthening our position as a funded Disability and Information Service, and a member of The NSW Disability Advocacy Alliance (the Alliance), is important for 2RPH. To this end we participated in a variety of forums to support the case for ongoing Government funding for Alliance members. We greatly appreciate the ongoing efforts of the Alliance for its advocacy on behalf of members. The Alliance has been instrumental in securing funding from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice for a further 12 months.

As part of the NSW Disability Advocacy Review (Review), conducted by Ageing and Disability Commissioner Robert Fitzgerald AM in the last quarter of 2019 we contributed to the Alliance's submission and provided our own independent submission. The Review sought to explore the purpose, functions and funding arrangements for independent specialist advocacy, including information and representative organisations for people with disability across NSW.

Financial

To secure our financial future we have undertaken several initiatives. Firstly, we welcomed Nova Employment as our main studio sponsor, as well as the newly established Disability and Ageing Commission sponsored program (*Ageing with Attitude*) and Brazier Mobility's sponsorship of (*Disability News*). Our thanks to them and the following program sponsors who renewed their annual sponsorships: Seniors Rights Service (*Optimal Life*); Communication Radio (*Vantage Point*); Gospel Broadcasting (*The Lord's Challenge*); and Lutheran Media with (*Messages of Hope*).

We were fortunate to secure our annual Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) grant and a CBF COVID 19 Crisis grant. The COVID grant of \$5,000, has assisted us as we seek to transition from a centralized, paper-based operation to a decentralised and digitized station. We also received a City of Sydney Community Services Grant of \$12,534 (Covid-19) to purchase equipment (microphones, headphones) and to provide training to pre-recorders to produce their programs at home during the pandemic.

It was exciting to develop a pilot initiative of converting a manuscript to audio-book quality for a reasonable and competitive price. Known as the Audio Book pilot project, we worked with the Department of Communities and Justice on converting their senior stories to audio form. We will be reviewing the overall project to determine whether this is

a viable future business stream to provide alternate pathways to publishing for underrepresented writers.

While we already have the required status for tax deductibility (DGR) and Public Benevolent Institution (PBI), we applied for and were granted an authority to fundraise in the wider community. This enables the station to innovate and expand our public fundraising efforts in addition to receiving donations or applying for funding grants. To manage our anticipated fundraising activities, we appointed a Sales and Sponsorship Officer; held our first Christmas donation Appeal; and launched our Bequest brochure.

Technical

Our technical equipment and capability have been tested over the past year. However, our response to the challenges that continue to arise has been fantastic. Our Technical Manager, Peter Worthington was a finalist in the 2019 Community Radio Awards held by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA). Peter was recognised in the Excellence in Technical Innovation category for reconfiguring our technical infrastructure. His significant skill and knowledge have been critical in enabling both our live-to-air and recorded programs to continue, with little disruption.

Fortunately, our technical capacity was also boosted by newly acquired ability to broadcast from multiple studios and activate multiple configurations. Furthermore, listeners are now able to hear the breakfast program, (*Features Forum*) and (*Sunday Papers*) as demanded, adding to the suite of live-to-air programs available after being broadcast.

The challenges faced in meeting the social distancing restrictions of Covid-19 have opened many new ways of presenting our programs. As a result, we can look forward to providing more flexible opportunities for current and future presenters to contribute to the station.

Volunteers

It is always a joy to see and hear the 2RPH volunteers when we get together for major events. The mid-year event held in August at the Glebe Town Hall was no exception. It was attended by over 100 members, volunteers, with special guest the Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP, Shadow Minister for Education and Training and Federal Member for Sydney. The Shadow Minister was on hand to present certificates for notable years of service to 20 recipients. This Christmas Party held on 30 November at the Glebe Town Hall was equally successful.

Several workshops took place throughout the year to add to the professionalism of volunteer readers. We partnered with the Community Media Training Organisation (CMTO) to host two Voice and Presentation workshops. In all over 85 volunteers attended and reported the training sessions both informative and inspiring. To provide a forum for exchange of ideas and to maintain a consistent 'sound' across our programs we hosted the first in a series of workshops for pre-recorders. An Announcer Review Forum was held in September which resulted in a manual for use by existing and new Announcers, and an 'Introduction to Announcing' session was held for those interested to become an announcer.

To better support our volunteers, we undertook a comprehensive Volunteer Survey, for which 76 responses were received. This response rate represented 41% of volunteers from a possible 185 responses. A key finding has been the need for additional technical support and equipment. As a result, a three-year Technical Plan was developed to address the identified technical issues, and which now forms part of the work of the Service Delivery committee

Thanks

A special thanks to our core funding organisations: the Community Broadcasting Fund (CBF); the Department of Community and Justice (DCJ); and the City of Sydney Council, whose support enables us to continue to develop 2RPH as a key source of information and as a leading radio reading service.

Finally, I would like to thank the 2RPH staff for their work during the year, the 2RPH Directors for their continued guidance, our volunteers, listeners, sponsors and committees for their ongoing support.

Sancha Donald
General Manager