

4ZZZ ANNUAL REPORT 2024



**A YEAR IN REFLECTION FOR
CREATIVE BROADCASTERS LTD**

PREPARED BY JACK MCDONNELL



CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT

RUTH GARDNER

I would like to begin by acknowledging the First Nations people as the enduring owners and custodians of the land and waterways that we live, work and broadcast on and to.

I pay my respects to the elders past and present and thank them for their care of this beautiful country. Their sovereignty has never been ceded.

Further to this, I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing plight of the Palestinian people and their right to live peacefully on their land without invasion, occupation and genocide. I stand with the Palestinian people and support calls for a ceasefire.

I extend this acknowledgement to all peoples suffering from the brutal occupation of colonialism worldwide.

For the 4ZZZ community, the past 12 months have been a milestone year on the precipice of another milestone year, a feat only possible for such a daring bunch. We have had incredible achievements and a sprinkling of challenges that have been met with the innovation and resources of a diverse and passionate organisation filled with talent and heart.

We literally hit the ground running with a brand new station manager and the collective disappointment of postponing the accessibility project to pay for and install a new transmitter to shore up our broadcasting capabilities for the next decade. If you are listening to the station on the radio today, you can be sure it is being broadcast to you on that new transmitter, paid for in full from station funds at a cost of over \$110,000. What an achievement for the village of people that have been a part of that project over the years.

Accessibility actions did not cease, despite the limitations of the wise building we call home. The funds raised by the Access All Areas events contributed to completing various items in our accessibility plan. I would like to acknowledge the fundraising efforts of the AAA crew and the work of Owen, Salty and the Accessibility Reference Group to formulate and enact a plan that supported both the strategic and financial goals for the station while achieving some improved outcomes for people with accessibility needs. The building subcommittee continues to work towards a long term plan for our ageing building.

CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT CONT.

RUTH GARDNER

In the middle of 2024 we signed off on our last strategic plan with many achievements, and began a new plan to take us beyond our 50th year of broadcasting. It was a lively room for the first planning meeting early in the year with board members, volunteers and staff communing together to debate and discuss who we are and where we're going in the next three years.

The 2024 - 2027 plan is brave and broad, giving scope for the station to explore an increasing digital media landscape along with affirming our commitment to activism, outreach and the amplification of the voices of our community. We were fortunate and appreciative to have the vision and input of Alethea Beetson and Tabatha Saunders leading and refining our strong commitment to our Pay the Rent strategy and First Nations broadcasting and engagement. I acknowledge their work and thank them for being our guide in this process.

4ZZZ has experienced rapid growth in the last 10 years as a result of excellent station management and effective governance and strategic vision. As a board we recognised the requirement to commit to increased staffing resources and improved policy and governance processes to support the management and continued growth of the station.

As of this year we have the highest number of people in paid positions in the station's history and we voted to increase wages above the standard yearly award increase at the beginning of this financial year.

We will continue the strategic plan's goal of staff and volunteer satisfaction and implementing and embedding the rights framework that underpins how we connect and work with each other. Actions are in place to develop terms of reference for a rights framework subcommittee to underpin the growing resourcing needs of the station and support the HR function of the station manager.

Looking ahead to our 50th birthday year, 4ZZZ is well placed to make the most of this achievement to engage even more listeners and communities, increase revenue and put on some cracking parties celebrating everything that has brought us to this point. We have a paid, very part-time 50th birthday coordinator on board in Denise Foley, whose position has been funded by the CBF grant, and although there is much to do, plans are in place for an epic celebration. Denise and the 50th subcommittee have already made some great inroads with their plans and I thank them for their work.

CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT CONT.

RUTH GARDNER

My first year as Chair has been rewarding with both achievements and difficulties. The year has reminded me of my first few years of announcing and what makes the community of 4ZZZ so strong and enduring. 4ZZZ consciously creates and supports community: it is a circular motion and that community is there when you need the support of it in return. For all my on-air confidence, I did not start out with any in this role. I learned a lesson or two along the way and persevered like only a 4ZZZ volunteer can.

The incredible and unwavering thing about our 4ZZZ community is that when someone embarks on a new journey with 4ZZZ, whether it be as station manager, new volunteer, announcer or chair of the board, there are people there ready to support you, to support your continued engagement with the station and help you build the pathways for your journey. I thank my fellow board members for their support and their work in the past year. We have achieved many of the goals we set.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Sam Kretschmann who has decided not to nominate for re-election. She had provided valuable input and work during her time and we thank you Sam for that and for continuing to share your skills as part of the 50th birthday team.

I am consistently in awe of the 4ZZZ community. We are leaders in engagement with a growing subscriber base of people that want to come along into our historic reign on the cultural and media landscape of Meanjin / Magandjin. Our people are our strength and on behalf of the board I would like to extend our deepest thanks to Jack our station manager, the staff and volunteers for their extraordinary efforts in what was a challenging but ultimately very rewarding 12 months.

TREASURER'S STATEMENT

ANTHONY RUTHERFORD



With operational costs again on the increase, and economic issues contributing to a tightening of sponsors' belts, 2024 was another year of challenge for Creative Broadcasters Pty Ltd trading as 4ZZZ. That having been said, it was again a year in which the organisation rose to meet those challenges – as is our way.

Our Statement of Financial Performance shows a loss for the year of \$28,916.

Subscriptions, Grant income, Event income, Donations, and Merchandise sales all increased from the 2023 levels, and whilst offset by a drop in Sponsorship income, our revenues were up overall in comparison to the 2023 year.

Employment expenses increased over the course of 2024 year, as a number of roles transitioned from being grant-funded to internally funded.

These operational costs, combined with our ongoing programme of paying down our QRIDA loan obligations, and investment in new assets and infrastructure resulted in a decrease in our overall cash position over the course of the year.

The QRIDA loan remains our largest liability. This loan was offered by the Queensland State Government to assist businesses during the early stages of the COVID pandemic in 2020. The loan has a 10-year term with a 0% interest rate for the first 12 months and 2.5% thereafter. Loan repayments were not required until the third year. Accordingly, the repayment process commenced during the 2023 year, continuing through 2024.

Unfortunately, we encountered a number of unforeseen issues during the 2024 year, necessitating some notable expenditure in relation to air-conditioning equipment.

Our investment in new assets and infrastructure is arguably the most exciting development of the 2024 financial year. We now have two new transmitters and associated broadcasting equipment – which means that we have the technology on hand to secure our broadcasting ability for the foreseeable future.

The financial statements and associated records have been audited by AMW Audit. No significant issues were reported to management during this examination.

TREASURER'S STATEMENT CONT.

ANTHONY RUTHERFORD

Numbers are not the “be all and end all” of any organisation – but they are the paints that we use to provide a picture of where that entity sits, how it arrived there, and where it is going. Our 2024 numbers underscore the fact that 4ZZZ continues to face challenges, continues to find innovative ways to meet them, and continues to lay down the framework to continue to do the amazing things that we do together.

Many thanks to each and every one of you who has appeared in the 4ZZZ picture for the 2024 year. Subscribers, Staff, Volunteers – you are what drives this amazing organisation. I would also like to extend a special thank you to my fellow Board Members, and 4ZZZ Finance Administrator Ann Ashton for their assistance, guidance and support during my first full year in the Treasurer role.



MANAGER'S STATEMENT

JACK MCDONNELL

The 23/24 year saw a completion of the Strategic Plan and a focus on what the next few years of 4ZZZ looks like.

There were a lot of significant changes and developments in the world over the last year and 4ZZZ was no different. There were moments of great achievement, reflection and planning as we head towards our 50th year and beyond.

Looking back over the year has shown the resilience and strength of the station. The economic environment that our communities faced was extremely tough and the cost of living impacted everyone.

Our Treasurers Report paints a realistic picture of our current state. We have challenges ahead and will continue to be strategic as we move forward into the next few years.

There is however excitement in our growth of subscriptions and a record breaking Radiothon in 2023. Subscriber numbers grew 6% over the year and even in the tough climate we were able to see growth each month in subscriptions.

This is thanks to the great work done by our on air announcers who are doing an incredible job representing communities, playing great music and amplifying voices that don't often get heard.

Through the new training and hard work from people like Programming Coordinator Ian Powne we have seen announcers continue to do amazing things on air. The community out there continues to see the value in supporting independent community media.

We saw the completion of a one year Volunteering QLD Grant which aimed to see more people with disabilities get inducted and trained in broadcasting at 4ZZZ. This program saw 68 people inducted and 26 trained in broadcasting with a result in 5 new shows on Zed Digital. Thanks so much to Salty, Owen, Ben and everyone who participated in what was an amazing project.

The current economic scenario has put larger accessibility infrastructure plans on hold however, we remain committed to progressing further our Accessible Zeds strategy.

MANAGER'S STATEMENT CONT.

JACK MCDONNELL

We have continued the progression of the Pay The Rent plan and in line with the concluding Strategic Plan continued the Pass The Mic program, First Nations Carpark Show and developed the Pay The Rent subscription model.

The ways in which we Pay The Rent will develop as we head into our next Strategic Plan and will do so alongside the guidance and support of our amazing First Nations volunteers who continue their great work at the station.

This year we also saw the purchase and installation of two new transmitters which ensures our broadcasting capability for hopefully the next few decades. There will be more on this later in the report but this project spanned across many boards, managers and staff so a lot of thanking needs to be done and in particular to our current technology team of Pat King and Ben Ryan and our advisors in Rob Harling, Gavin Unsworth, Alastair Reynolds and Steve Exton.

It's been quite a big year and one that showed a lot of change. This is my first report as Station Manager and I want to thank Stephen Stockwell for his amazing work, dedication and continued support in my first few months as manager. This support was also magnified by an incredible staff team of Ann, Ian, Sass, Pat, Alison, Salty, Ez and Liz. It's been such a joy to work alongside all of you who have such amazing spirit and passion for our station.

We were also lucky enough to receive grant funding for three new roles at the station which are a Volunteer Coordinator to ensure our vollies have the best experience possible, a 50th Birthday Project Coordinator to ensure we appropriately recognise our anniversary and a Tech Assistant to boost our overall tech capacity. I am very much looking forward to working with all of these fantastic people.

This year I also attended the CBAA Conference and a conversation that we kept returning to was just how incredible volunteering is. 4ZZZ is an incredible institution for volunteering and to work with every single one of you in whatever capacity it is, is such an honour for me. Everyone who donates their time at the station or remotely is a part of our history and contributes in making our community a better place. The amount of work it takes to keep a station running is substantial and the fact that our volunteers do so much to engage, connect and promote all things community is outstanding. We can never take for granted just how special our volunteers are and I want to thank each and every one of the volunteers for their contribution this year.

We also have to pay our respects to those volunteers and Zed Heads that we have lost this year and I want to acknowledge the sad passing of Chris Cobcroft, Michael 'Lugs' Lugton and Cameron Davis.

MANAGER'S STATEMENT CONT.

JACK MCDONNELL

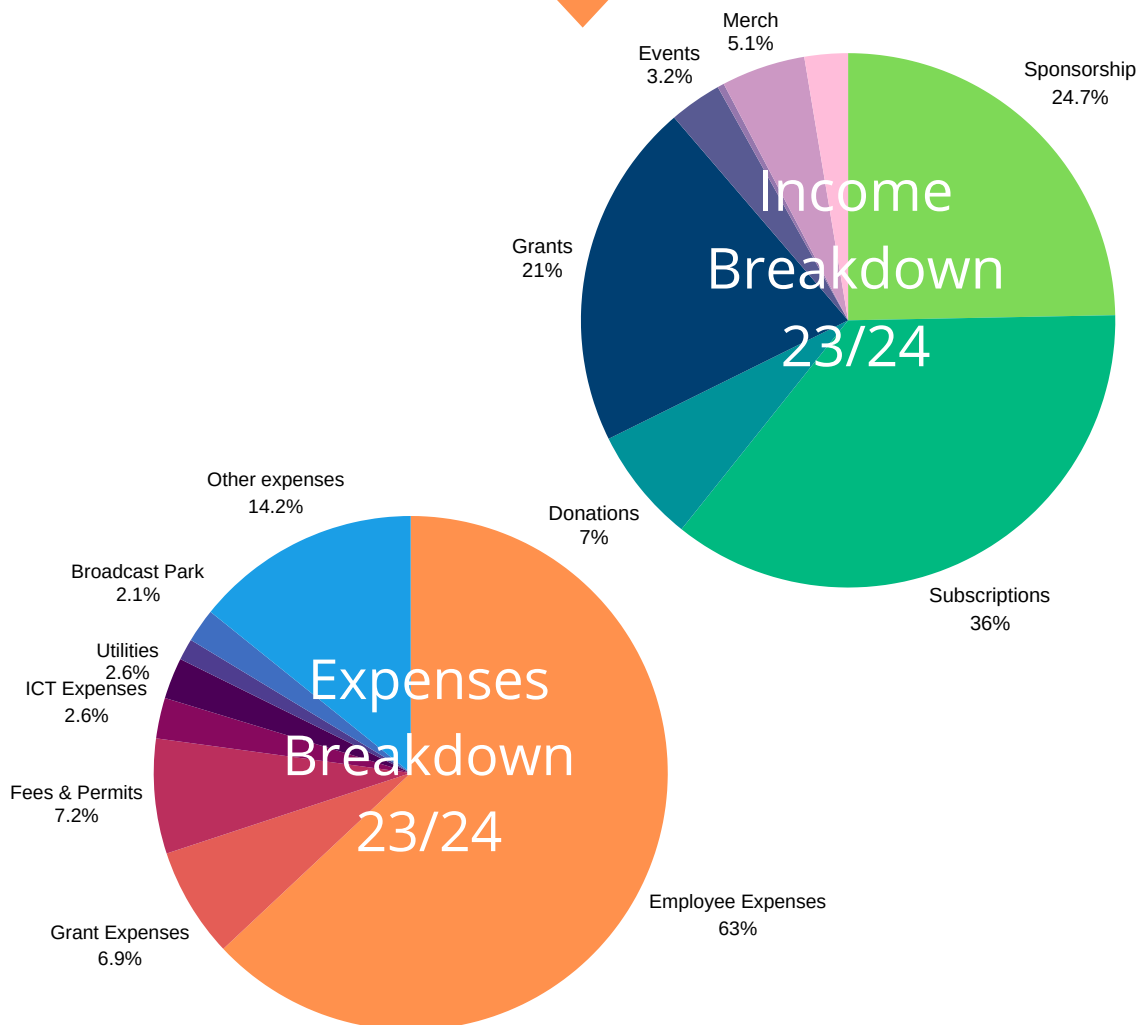
With a change of management, concluding Strategic Plan and heading towards our 50th year, there has been a lot of discussion about the direction of the station. While we are aware of our challenges and need to be prepared for them, I am confident that the people and community we have around the station will continue the great work that it does and continue to connect with the communities we exist for.

I'd also like to thank the board for their constant support, endless phone calls and guidance throughout my year as manager. I would also like to thank our Chair Ruth Gardner for her incredible work with the station and also myself as I have learnt so much from her strength, expertise and kindness.

We know in tough times how important it is for people to have access to community and feel a part of something. 4ZZZ creates space both on and off air for communities that need representing and it is an extremely exciting time to be a part of the station.

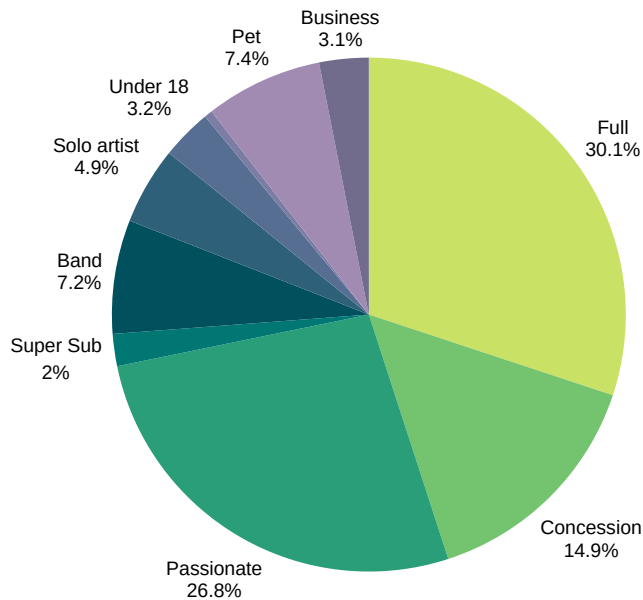
Thank you everyone for reading this report, whether you are a volunteer, subscriber or casual listener you are all apart of the 4ZZZ community and I hope you all get some warm-inner glow from being a part of it.

FINANCIALS



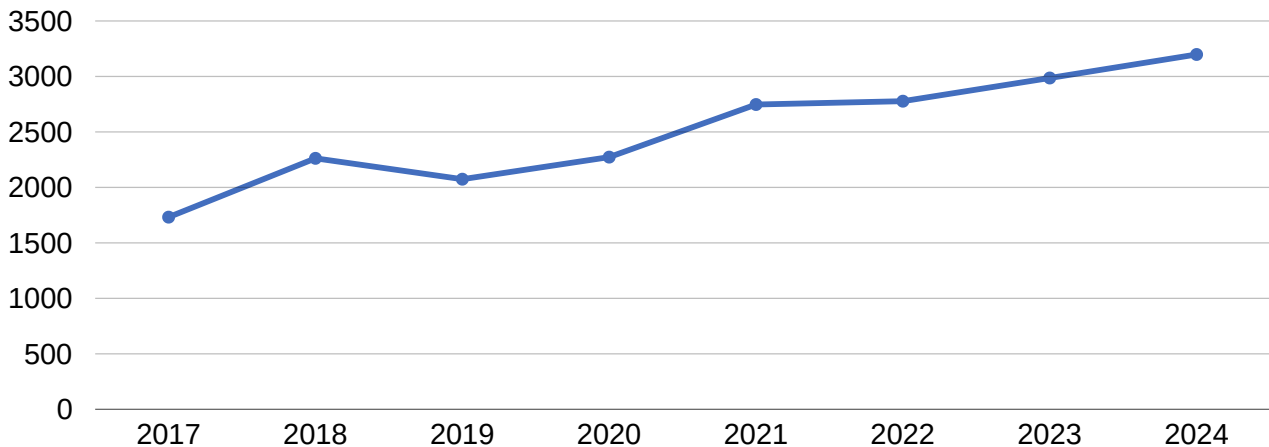
- **Subscription growth continues** - Our subscriber numbers grew again over the 23/24 financial year delivering an 3.5% increase in subscription revenue.
- **Revenue growth continues** - The growth in subscription income as well as merch and events led to another year of revenue growth in 23/24. We did see our expenses increase as well in terms of Employee Expenses. We also hit the target of increasing income growth by 10% by 2024 on 2021 levels.
- **Cash position** - 4ZZZ's cash position fell short of the goal of 38% increase on 2021 levels reaching 28% of growth. Significant investment in technical infrastructure meant this target was not achieved.

SUBSCRIBERS



4ZZZ had approximately 3,198* subscribers at June 30 2024.

4ZZZ subscriber numbers 2017-24



- Subscriptions have grown again in the 23/24 financial year, continuing the upward trajectory and the growing connection with our audiences.
- We ended the 23/24 financial year achieving the strategic plan goal of 3000 subscribers.
- Through the training modules and a developing culture, subscription growth has been driven by better on-air and social media messaging. The announcing group is doing a great job articulating the value of the station, how we connect with communities and why that needs support.
- * This includes the total including long expiry subs - the total of subs paid in the financial year was 3,128.

PROGRAMMING

4ZZZ has continued to amplify the voices of our local communities.

4ZZZ continued to prove its value as a strong independent community station by increased subscription levels in the 23/24 financial year.

We have seen some incredible new people come to air representing new communities and in particular some exciting new voices in our 18-24 demographic.

The revitalised training program introduced in 2023 has seen our announcer pool grow and for us to be in an incredible position to introduce new people to some of the important legacy shows we have at 4ZZZ.

There has also been a continued emphasis of connecting with communities and we have seen a number of live broadcasts at marches, gigs and community events across the year.

We have seen an awesome new array of Zed Digital programs and will continue to grow this platform thanks to the great and diverse programming. I'd like to thank Blair Martin for all of his work coordinating Zed Digital.

We have also seen the growth of the amount of shows creating podcasts and this is an exciting area we will look to pursue more going forward.



Dave and the Eco Radio Team



Genesis and Jaxom live on Labor Day



Exit Stage Zed/Soul-Jah Sisters OB

STRATEGIC PLANNING

This financial year saw the completion of the 21-24 Strategic Plan. A lot of work was done in trying to achieve the goals that were set and give us a platform in how to grow as an organisation going forward.

The strategic plan is split across two key areas, **Engagement and Broadcasting** and **Organisational Capacity**

Engagement and Broadcasting

Connect with people who need zed but don't know they do

Over the year 4ZZZ hosted and participated in many events both on and off air to better connect with other audiences. There were events, like Evil Zed, Sounds Like Community Radio, Access All Areas, carpark shows and a lot of outside broadcasts. We have continued to offer opportunities for new people to discover the station and connect with communities we try to make space for.

Better integrate online offers across all content initiatives

4ZZZ continued to develop more shows into podcasts in particular the content heavy shows across our 9-1pm grid. These shows were migrated as the Google Podcast service was concluded. We saw new pushes of video content integrated with Zedlines and news stories which saw great uptake and reach.

We saw Ezarco Dos Santos wrap up his tenure as Community Engagement Coordinator and thank him for his incredible work and passion in connecting with communities and showcasing that across various forms of media. We welcomed Liz Witt into the role in July 2024 and look forward to their creativity and innovation in continuing the great work of this role.

Develop a holistic Pay The Rent plan as a model for First Nations connections

In the 23/24 financial year we continued to develop the ways in which 4ZZZ Pays The Rent to the First Nations people of this land. The First Nations Carpark Show, Pass the Mic training and participation in the Converge Conference continued in the year.

We also saw the increase of outside broadcasts connecting with First Nations communities like the North Coast Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health, Winter Solstice Festival and Goolwal Goolwal Bigsound Event. The year also saw the introduction of the Pay The Rent subscription program and continued collaboration of simulcasts with Triple A.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Organisational Capacity

Develop a sustainable staffing model

Volunteers have continued to be our strength and we have continued to see a steady stream of volunteers come into the station from our news internship, promotion online and other internships. We have seen the continued implementation and look to develop a Rights Framework Sub-Committee to create better support for all of the people who are involved at the station. We have also sought new multi-year funding grants to support the growth of the station for new roles

Rethink the zed space to reflect core values and culture

We have seen volunteers do incredible maintenance in keeping the building functional and also some works in making the station more accessible. We saw the installation of 'Deanna's Door' which was a great step in making the first floor more accessible. The current economic state has stalled a few larger projects but the Building Sub-Committee continues to meet to plan on how to best manage 'Barry' as we go into the next few years.

Improve financial sustainability

4ZZZ's financial position was impacted this year by the economic climate, rising costs and significant investment in infrastructure. We did pass our strategic plan goals of 10% income growth by 2024 and fell short of the 38% increase in cash reserves finalising at 28% due to that investment in the transmitters.

Boost station's overall tech capacity

The biggest change in our tech capacity of the station was the boosting of our broadcasting equipment as two new transmitters were purchased. This provides a brand new transmitter and provides us broadcasting redundancy with the ability to switch between the transmitters remotely. This managed through our Technology team should ensure our broadcasting capability for the next decade. Upgrades to our infrastructure at Broadcast Park also means we are making the best out of having the new transmitters. This stability allows us to in the future to continue developing our internal systems with a number of great developments being made to our database over the year.

PEOPLE

The greatest strength of 4ZZZ is the people that work tirelessly to make the community a better place by keeping the station on air.

4ZZZ sees around 200 people come into the station each week to help out in a variety of different ways across many departments..

We have continued to develop ways of engagement for First Nations people and will continue to solidify our processes in how we continue Paying The Rent.

The station completed a one year funded training program called Accessible Zed which saw 68 people with disabilities inducted into the station, 26 of those people were trained in broadcasting. This program provided a template for how we can run training for people with accessible needs in the future.

We were successful in a few grant funded roles to increase the support for a growing station with those roles starting in the early parts of the 24/25 financial year.

One of which was a Volunteer Coordinator who was appointed as Salty Otton. The role is aimed for the coordination and improving the overall experience for all the volunteers at the station.

8 volunteer directors

8 paid staff

8 volunteer coordinators

250 broadcast and non-broadcast volunteers



PEOPLE

4ZZZ Volunteer Survey insights

To help track engagement at the station 4ZZZ sends around a survey asking how people find volunteering at the station and what could be done to make their time at zed more enjoyable. Here's what we found.

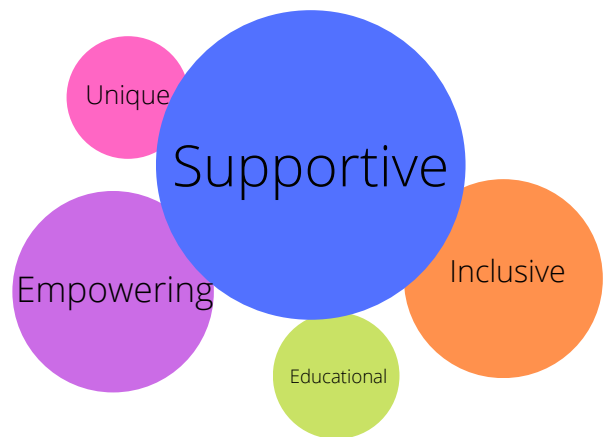
83% were satisfied with their volunteer experience at 4ZZZ - 8% decrease on previous survey

100% of the respondents felt appreciated by their volunteer supervisors - 5% increase

78% of respondents would recommend volunteering at 4ZZZ to a friend or colleague - 18% decrease

95% of respondents expect to continue volunteering at 4ZZZ for the next year

Words 4ZZZ volunteers used to describe the station



How some 4ZZZ volunteers described their involvement at the station

After Volunteering at Zed for over 12 Years It's like I have a new family

Everyone has been so lovely, and I love being part of the community.



Full of Air Carpark Show

TECHNOLOGY

4ZZZ has made some great changes technologically over the year.

This year saw a lot of exciting technological advances which will keep us growing into our 50th year and beyond.

After many years of discussion and planning it was signed off by the Board to begin the process of replacing our transmitters at Broadcast Park.

Through a lot of discussion and advice it was decided to purchase two 3.5kw GatesAir Flexiva Transmitters. This not only replaced our old transmitter which was in its end of life stages but also provides tech redundancy and the ability to switch between the two transmitters.

Over a period of a few days the installation process took place which saw a few technical improvements to ensure we are making the most out of our space and the best out of our new transmitters.

At around 3:50pm on the 5th of July the signal started again and the song being broadcast was The Dirty Three's "Love Changes Everything I".

Special thanks to our team of Pat King and Ben Ryan for all their work and consideration in getting us ready for this moment.

We also owe a massive thank you to the experts and radio titans of Rob Harling, Gavin Unsworth, Alastair Reynolds and Steve Exton who gave a lot of their time in planning meetings and hard graft over the last year to make this moment happen.



Installation of the Transmitters



Transmitters being switched on



Alastair, Steve and Rob at Broadcast Park

TECHNOLOGY

4ZZZ has made some great changes technologically over the year.

Over the year we have also seen the installation of 'Deanna's Door' on the Reception Level of the station.

Deanna has programmed over 100 episodes of Randomizzed on 4ZZZ and with thanks to her, Paul and the construction industry a new electronic sliding door was installed as a measure to increase accessibility on the ground floor.

There was improvements made in our Broadcast Room at the top level of the station seeing insulation, a new air-conditioner and a completed ceiling in the room that is essentially the brains of the station.

Special thanks to Adrian and Joe who help so much in the maintenance and upkeep of the station and in these special projects.

In terms of the internal systems a thanks to Jack Webster who volunteers his time and knowledge in keeping our phone and internet systems running.

Tech Manager Pat has continued to do incredible things in maintaining and developing new features of the database making it an incredible asset to our volunteers across every department.

The creativity, development and hard work in these areas is often done silently and without recognition but is so crucial to our station so to everyone thank you so much for what you do for us all.



The opening of Deanna's Door



Ceiling work in the broadcast room



Stained glass 4ZZZ light box



**Connecting and amplifying the
voices of our local communities
since 1975.**

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