

4ZZZ ANNUAL REPORT 2025



**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 Elders past and present and thank them for their care of this beautiful country. Their sovereignty has never been ceded.

The 2024–2025 financial year has been a year of steady momentum and deep preparation – a bridge between the achievements of our last strategic cycle and the preparations for celebrations of our 50th birthday. It has been a year marked by careful planning, organisational renewal, and the collective energy and amplification that defines 4ZZZ community.

With purpose the year was already awash with preparation on the ground for one of the biggest milestones in our history. Behind the scenes, staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly on events, archives, partnerships, and projects that are still revealing themselves as we hold this AGM to acknowledge half a century of people powered broadcasting.

All people working on the 50th celebrations spent the year hard at work mapping events, liaising with artists and alumni, and curating both a celebration of our history and opportunity for thought and discussion about the future. This has sparked a surge of reconnection across our 4ZZZ community and all the delights and debates that arrive with something as amplified and vibrant with diversity and passion as we all are.

This was the first full year of our 2024–2027 Strategic Plan, and it's been a powerful reminder of how far 4ZZZ has come along with highlighting some of the challenges we face in to the future.

The plan's focus on digital innovation, accessibility, community engagement, and governance renewal has guided much of the Board's work this year. We've made meaningful progress in embedding the Rights Framework creating a terms of reference to assist a subcommittee to be able to thoughtfully and collaboratively resolve complex situations within the station. These steps strengthen our accountability to the people who keep 4ZZZ running, staff, volunteers, and the broader community.

CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT CONT.

RUTH GARDNER

The board secretary implemented a new record keeping portal that assists with document & decisions making record keeping. The portal also hosts board member induction documents and is a great reference for new board members to access historical information on board activities and meetings. Governance transparency remains an important and continued goal.

Our First Nations engagement and Pay the Rent strategy remains a priority. With the 50th on our doorstep it was a sharp reminder that we have a deep responsibility as broadcasters and within the board to create space and opportunity for First Nations voices and leadership within 4ZZZ.

Birthday planning opened up opportunities for more paid positions and partnerships within the station. The talented, passionate and resilient folks that control the day to day operations of the station both paid and volunteer have truly driven the station forward with vision and dedication. The board acknowledges all the incredible work of these folks and their contribution to a great foundational year.

Given the heart of the station beats strongest in its people and we continue to acknowledge that there is much to do make the station fully accessible. The accessibility road map still has a lot of unchecked boxes on it and with the new transmitter in place and the 50th done and dusted it will be time to renew the focus on doing better for our friends that require access assistance.

Our broadcast infrastructure remains solid thanks to last year's major transmitter upgrade, a significant investment that now underpins the reliability of broadcasting. The transmitter needs people so we will continue to look for innovative ways to meet the strategic goal of reaching out to communities that we might not be aware of and make sure that transmitter is reaching all the ears it can.

4ZZZ remains in a stable financial position. Despite increased costs and the challenges of declining sponsorship at the start of the year, our fundraising, subscriptions, and grant income have remained consistent. Careful financial management by station management and a renewed sponsorship plan delivering income targets has ensured the station avoided a poor financial result.

The 4ZZZ community continues to inspire me with its commitment, compassion, and courage. Every day, this station proves that independent media made by and for the community can thrive against the odds. I am both challenged and inspired by the accountability I have to each of the members of this wildly diverse organisation. Zed people are the best people and I am also humbled by the opportunity to contribute to the volunteer community.

CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT CONT.

RUTH GARDNER

I'd like to acknowledge Jack McDonnell, our Station Manager, for his steady and creative leadership and wish him well as moves on to his next chapter. And to our board members that are and are not continuing, thank you for your contribution to the strategic direction of the station and support for myself through the year.

What will the next 50 bring, these are the musings for us all no doubt. Onward and long live the Zeds.

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TREASURER'S STATEMENT

ANTHONY RUTHERFORD



There is no sugar-coating the fact that 2025 was a difficult year for Creative Broadcasters Pty Ltd trading as 4ZZZ. Operational costs continued to increase, and revenues proved ever more difficult to grow. Income from Donations, Merch Sales, Sponsorships and Grants actually decreased over the course of 2025. The shining beacon of light was the fact that despite these tough times, Subscriptions Revenue increased – underlying the truth that we, as a community support each other and support this great collective that is 4ZZZ.

Our Statement of Financial Performance shows a loss for the year of \$90,857.

Over half of this amount is attributable to depreciation.

Employment expenses continued to increase over the course of the 2025 year. A number of roles that in previous years were Grant funded are now met solely by 4ZZZ.

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 and 2025.

Our investment in new assets and infrastructure during the 2024 year reaped benefits during the 2025 year, with costs in relation to new equipment, and repairs and maintenance well down when compared to prior years.

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

Clearly the 2025 numbers demonstrate the difficult times in which we live, and underline 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 all who have contributed to this amazing organisation throughout the 2025 year. Subscribers, Staff, Volunteers – you are the beating heart. 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 throughout the year. The true power of zeds is the power of community, and that is demonstrated repeatedly whenever there is a job to be done or task to be completed.



MANAGER'S STATEMENT

JACK MCDONNELL

The 24/25 year was a year of growth and reflection while also wrestling with the realities of being an independent community broadcaster.

Beginning with a new strategic plan in July of 2024 and quickly moving into our 50th year of broadcasting had challenges and while there is still a lot of work to be done, there has been movement and progression in a lot of areas.

As highlighted in our Treasurers report we have faced struggles in revenue in an ever changing media climate. We will continue to try new ways of engaging with sponsors and highlighting the importance of supporting independent media in our local community.

People Powered is more than just a saying and is highlighted in our growth in Subscription revenue and a record April Atonement. The growth in our number of subscribers each month, into April Atonement and with the release of the 50th program has shown that people are investing in our community.

We've had people subscribe for the first time compelled to support the station and people return after decades to join the subscribing pool again.

As we prepared to enter our 50th year we also successfully had our broadcasting licence renewed by the Australian Communications Media Authority with our new licence expiring in July 2030.

We have continued to create space for communities and improve our processes for better inclusion. In terms of our Accessibility Roadmap continuous small works in the aid of accessibility were made as well as developing a Flexible Pathways program. In a post grant environment we took the learnings from our past training and created a program that focuses on more of a flexible training model. We will continue to refine this experience as we create more pathways for people with accessibility needs into broadcasting.

We have continued the progression of the Pay The Rent plan and still have a lot of work to do in how we Pay The Rent to our First Nations communities.

In line with the Strategic Plan we have ensured the current First Nations shows are maintained and are continuously looking at developing more announcers and building teams around these shows.

MANAGER'S STATEMENT CONT.

JACK MCDONNELL

We have continued the Pass The Mic program in 2024 and took the learnings and made arrangements for a streamlined training model for 2025.

There have been continued outside broadcasts from our First Nations shows as they engage with the community and have now cemented annual events to broadcast from.

Plans for celebrating and recognising our history and future of First Nations broadcasting at the station was developed thanks to guidance and leadership from our First Nations volunteers.

I want to thank all of our volunteers and community members for their commitment to the station as we continue to Pay The Rent.

In a year where a lot of communities are under attack I want to highlight the strength of our broadcasting with outside broadcasts at snap protests for Trans youth, coverage and reports from rallies calling for the end of conflict in Palestine, recordings from panels and conferences on important causes and collaborations with other broadcasters in creating content for the incarcerated community.

When we look back at the year and the big issues impacting our local and global communities our broadcasters have covered, interviewed and platformed many of these stories and I thank them for keeping the listeners informed.

Over the year the commitment to promoting local independent music has again been a core part of our broadcasting and I want to highlight the rise of interviewing across the grid as it has been incredible to listen to.

There is a lot of exciting programming across 102.1fm and Zed Digital and to all the volunteers who curate amazing shows and to the coordinators, thank you for being such a connection to the community.

All of our volunteers who come into the station and contribute are incredible and the life force of the organisation. Without them the station can not function and actively make the community a better place. I can never thank them enough for all of their support, commitment and passion as working in such an environment has been an honour.

I do want to acknowledge the members of our community who passed this year and pay my respects to Knox Lovell, Denise Gibbons, Dan Callaghan and Yellong Bulla (Dan Roe). Their contributions to the community will never be forgotten.

The end of 2024 and the first half of 2025 had a lot of development, planning and organising of our 50th Birthday program. Picking up from the work of the 50th Sub Committee and the suggestions from the community the coordination started thanks to the appointment of our 50th Birthday Coordinator Denise Foley.

MANAGER'S STATEMENT CONT.

JACK MCDONNELL

The program that was developed and that we are in the midst of celebrating recognises our history, our communities and also looks towards our future.

It's been a tremendous collaboration between many venues, partners, organisations, producers and people and is a credit to everyone involved.

People in our community have spent hours of their time for months organising events to create an opportunity for people to celebrate in this 50th and with so many events I thank everyone who has been involved in curating an awesome program.

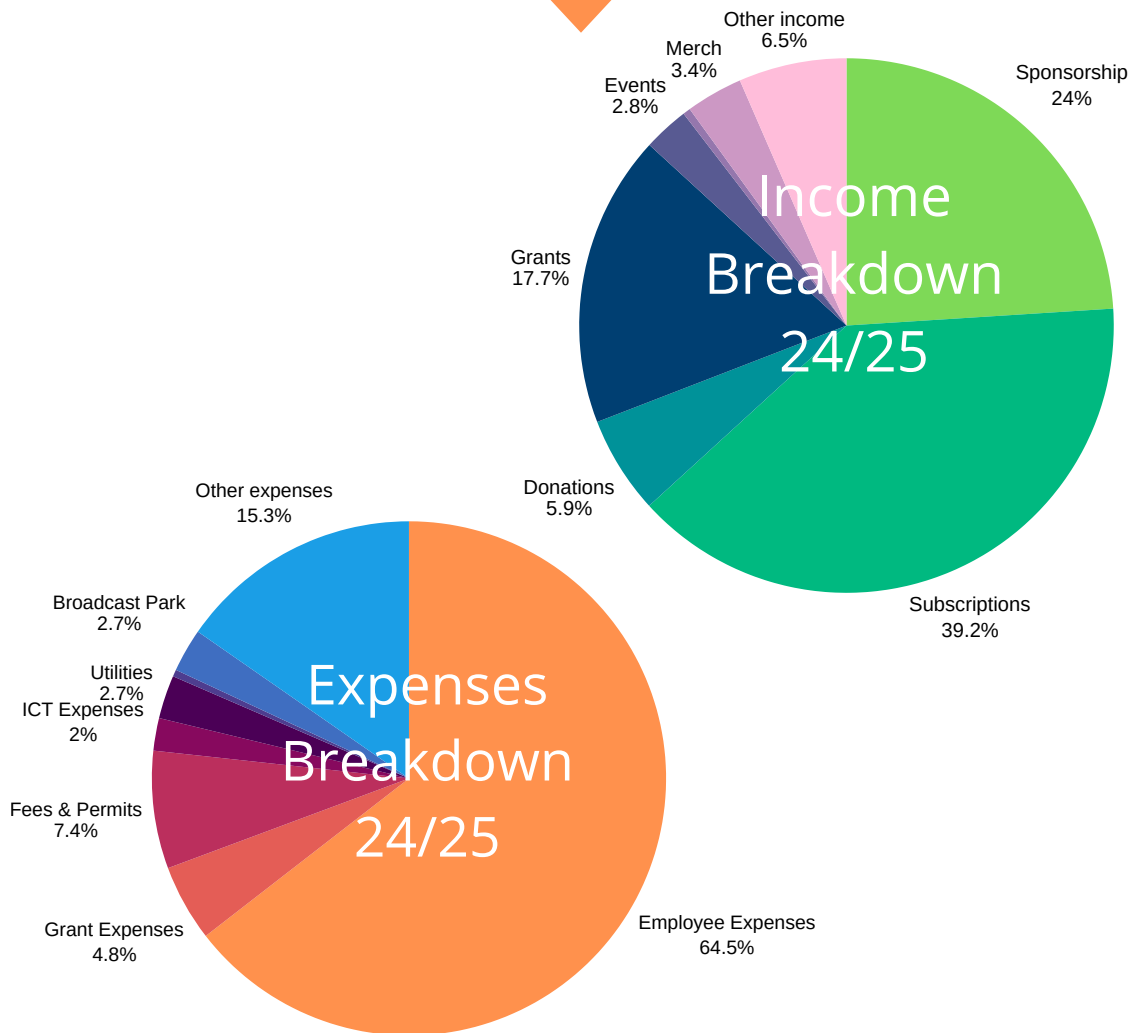
It's taken a lot of effort and work and the Zed community has been lucky to have the current staffing group to deliver this program. I want to personally thank the team of Ann, Ian, Pat, Luke, Salty, Liz, Denise, David and previously Sass and Alison who finished up this year. Their passion, dedication and support has meant everything to me and I am so grateful to have been a part of the team.

I also have to thank the board for their support, guidance and governance over the last year. To the outgoing members you have been a part of a massive year and I appreciate all you have brought to the station. I need to thank Ben Ryan for his wisdom and for always answering calls warmly at 3am and to our Chair Ruth Gardner for her kindness, empathy and teachings.

There is a tremendous amount of energy and excitement around the station at this time. There is a great mix of intergenerational collaboration, learning of history and excitement for the future ahead. I have no doubt that Nick Stephan with his understanding of the station, great community values and strong sense of Zed, will do fantastic in his take up of the manager position. I look forward to celebrating his success at the next AGM.

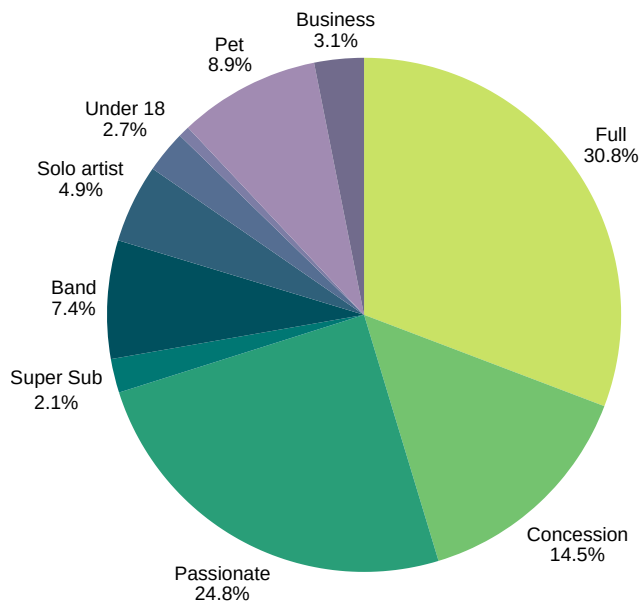
Finally, in my last report as manager I want to thank the entire Zed community for their support during my time. To work in such a community and values driven environment is a rarity and to be trusted to be a custodian of such an institution has been an honour. As I mentioned the tagline of 'People Powered Radio' has never been so accurate. It's everyone who volunteers, subscribes, interacts and participates in this great station that makes it so powerful. We are at a pivotal time to harness the power of our history and continue to carve our way as a leader in community radio.

FINANCIALS



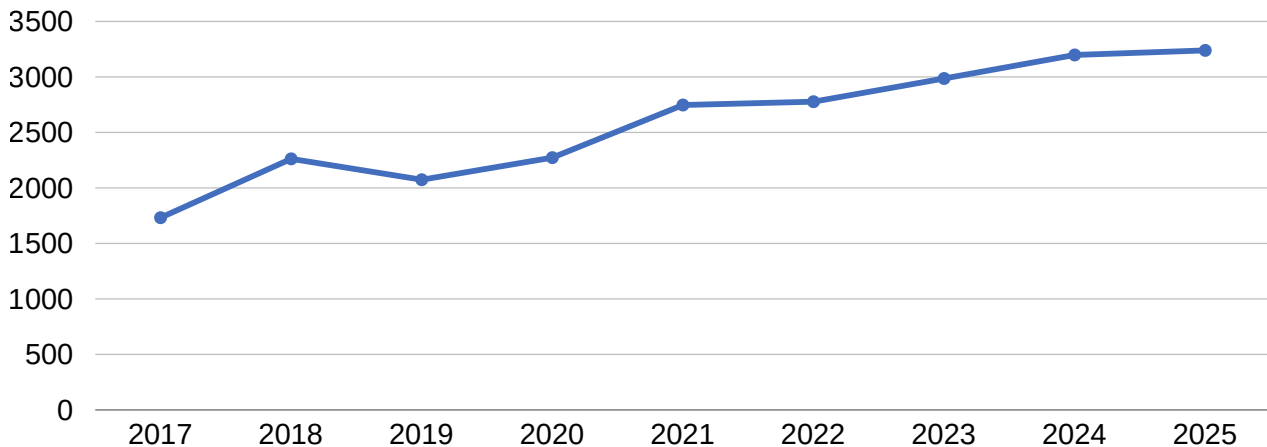
- **Subscription growth continues** - Our subscriber numbers grew again over the 24/25 financial year delivering an 9.2% increase in subscription revenue.
- **Revenue struggled in 24/25** - Sponsorship income has been harder to secure however there has been some positive uptakes of more long term sponsors coming on board.
- **Cash position** - We were unable to meet our cash reserve by the levels we had set but significant planning of maximising the potential of the 50th Birthday
- **Depreciation** - As noted in the Treasurers report the investment of the Transmitters in April of 2024 has resulted in greater depreciation in the budget.

SUBSCRIBERS



4ZZZ had approximately 3,239* subscribers at June 30 2025.

4ZZZ subscriber numbers 2017-25



- Subscriptions have grown again in the 24/25 financial year, continuing the upward trajectory and the growing connection with our audiences.
- We achieved our biggest April Atonement subscriber drive with 516 subscribers.
- The culture of highlighting the value of the station and why it needs support is growing and it is showing results. The announcing group has also leveraged the 50th year milestone to increase support for the station.
- * This includes the total including long expiry subs - the total of subs paid in the financial year was 3,131.

PROGRAMMING

4ZZZ has continued to broadcast the voices of our community into its 50th year.

Heading towards and into our 50th year of broadcasting the station has continued to be a pivotal voice in our community.

Every show highlights our values and continues to bring quality, informative and entertaining content to our audience.

When our communities are under attack the programming has responded with interviews, promotion and even outside broadcasts live from rallies.

The interviewing across the board from a range of shows has been outstanding and a real mark of the talent and passion of the announcers.

In an age of algorithms people are calling for real voices who are curating independent music that matters to them. A big thank you to Programming Coordinator Ian Powne for his dedication to broadcasting.

We have also seen this year inclusions of Youth Announcer Training, Flexible Training Pathways as well as continuing Pass The Mic to ensure we are providing pathways for more announcers to represent communities we are making space for.

We have seen diverse and exciting programming continue on Zed Digital. I'd like to thank Blair Martin for all of his work coordinating Zed Digital.

The work of our announcers is working with more people choosing to support independent community media.



Sounds Like Community Radio 2024



Photo of the Youth Week Gig



Tab chatting to Uncle Roger Knox

STRATEGIC PLANNING

This financial year saw the first year of work in our 24-27 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 and Capability**

Engagement and Broadcasting

Integrate radio and online offerings

This year as a part of growing our online presence there was a continued focus on more video content and empowering shows to create their own content to connect with various communities. Our social media practices were redeveloped in preparation for the 50th and the website revamped with a visual overhaul making the processes of listening and subscribing prominent on the front page.

Creative and diverse programming that connects

4ZZZ this year held broadcasts at snap rallies and protests representing different communities across the year. There was a lot of content recorded at rallies with speeches and seminars being recorded and then played on air to a broader audience. Over 50 people went through our training program throughout the year with more voices and increased interest in applications. The focus on getting people trained up and confident on using the equipment has created more opportunities for interviews and the quality and amount of interviews across the grid has increased. The programming has shown results with a record April Atonement campaign and more subscribers joining the station each month in comparison to previous years.

Understanding our community

Thanks to our tech team of Pat and David, work was developed on understanding our subscribers through database records so we can better communicate with our subscriber base. Subscribing patterns during campaigns has created data for us to review in programming discussions. Work on a listener census was started but then moved due to the weight of the 50th birthday program development.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Engagement and Broadcasting

Pay The Rent to First Nations People

This year we continued the process of implementing our Pay The Rent plan. Processes of Culturally Safe Induction and connection were worked on and current shows were maintained as we introduced succession plans and more people on air.

First Nations music has continued to be amplified with the percentage of First Nations music growing. The work in this space will continue to develop as we know that we can always do better in recognising our role as a broadcaster that exists on stolen land.

Build connections with people who we are making space for

Specific training programs for communities we are making space for were developed like the Youth Announcer Training and Flexible Pathway program. Identifying we need to create more involvement from these communities we developed engagement strategies to grow. We collaborated with youth organisations to develop a youth week program including a gig and open day which led to a training program. Following on from previous accessibility programs a Flexible Pathway was developed and promoted at open days, with organisations who have toured the station and with volunteers who have been through previous trainings. We have also continued the Pass The Mic training to continue to introduce more First Nations voices to the air. We continue to look for areas where we can improve and in line with the strategic plan will continue to make space.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Organisational Capacity and Capability

A supportive internal culture

Volunteers have continued to be the heart of the organisation and we have had monthly inductions of new people wanting to get involved at the station. Through formal internships and collaborations with institutions we have also maintained a stream of people who are interested in media. The Rights Framework sub-committee was formalised and endorsed providing a way to support navigating complex situations. There has also been revision and updating of the Accessibility Roadmap.

People development and support

We have over the last year refined our induction processes of volunteering and have established reporting methods so that we are receiving data and information about peoples volunteer journey. This allows us to continue to find meaningful pathways for connection and refine our processes so that people have a positive experience volunteering. We have also done work in identifying specialty shows across the grid and introduced new voices to ensure longevity of the program.

Improved organisational sustainability

It was a tough year for many of our financial goals however there was still progress. We managed to secure an Energy Efficiency Grant to conduct thermal insulation work in Studio 3 which is having an impact on the running of our air conditioning units. A lot of work was done in creating a program and merch strategy for the 50th which so far is providing positive results.

Equipment and technology is current

Our tech team of manager Pat King, tech assistant David Shaw and Ben Ryan have continued to make substantial technological developments while also finding innovative ways of upgrading and maintaining equipment. Plans for the future of our equipment has been prepared and grants developed to keep applying for in the future.

Good governance is practiced

New Board management software was introduced to provide sustainable and consistent governance for our board members. The platform will be a valuable resource for onboarding new members as they join the board.

PEOPLE

The fact that for 50 years this station has been running powered by the passion and effort from volunteers is a remarkable effort.

While many stations around the country syndicate content and playlist, for a community station to be running 24 hours a day solely on volunteer belief is something to be massively proud of.

There are volunteers in every aspect of the running of this station from maintaining and improving our beloved building Barry, to inputting music into our system, working at merch stalls, creating content for on and off air and so much more.

Each and every volunteer is a vital part of our history and we are so lucky that we continue to have new people come into the station alongside people who have been here for decades.

Processes for inductions and follow ups for new volunteers have been developed to ensure we are providing pathways and meaningful experiences for our Zedders.

A report will be prepared and available on the website towards the end of November surveying our vollies and staff.

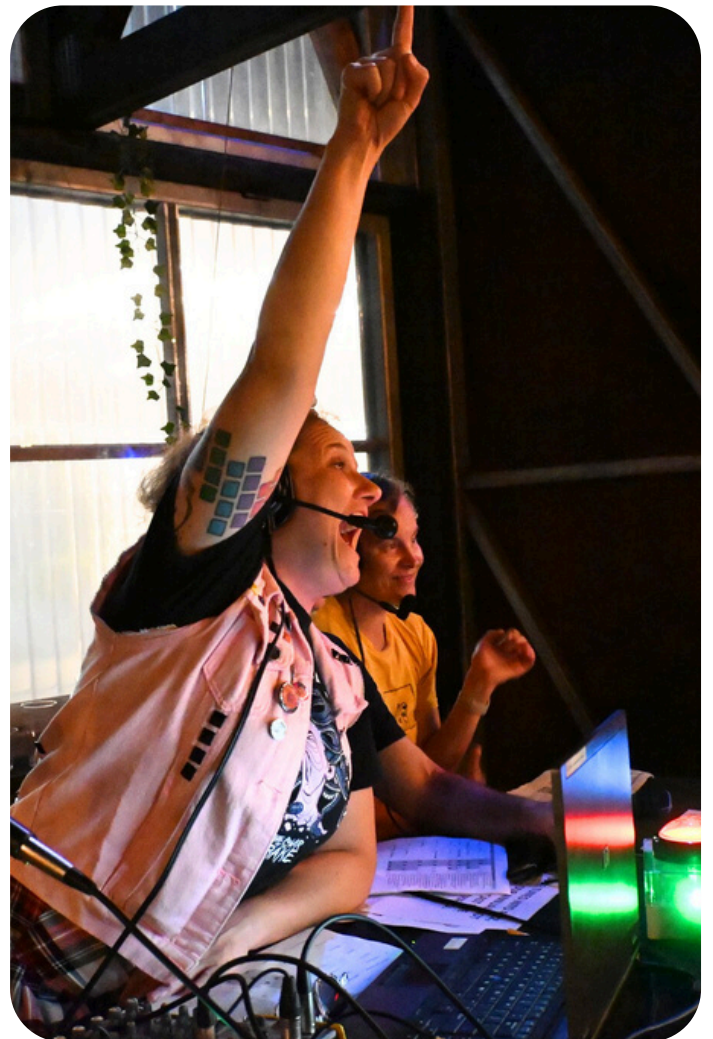
4ZZZ continues to be a strong station and is growing thanks to our people and I can not thank you all enough for your passion.

7 volunteer directors

9 paid staff

8 volunteer coordinators

250 broadcast and non-broadcast volunteers





**Connecting and broadcasting
the voices of our communities
since 1975.**

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