

**RADIO READING
RESOURCES FOR
STATIONS**



Get reading
How to start a radio
reading program



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If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone us on **0448 377 549** or email **admin@rph.org.au**

RPH Australia acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands on which we work and live and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We embrace diversity in working to build inclusive and connected communities.

These resources have been created by **Kim Stewart** and Bek Pasqualini for RPH Australia utilising original materials developed by the Community Media Training Organisation (CMTO). Produced with the assistance of the **Department of Communications and the Arts** through the **Community Broadcasting Foundation**.

We also thank our project partners: **Tagged PDF** and the **CMTO**.



What is an RPH Radio Reading service?

RPH Radio reading is the on-air live reading of newspapers, magazines and other publications that otherwise might be inaccessible to people with vision-impairment, blindness or other print disability. This valuable community service provides access to information for people who might otherwise be unable to access it.

RPH programming can be:

- Radio Reading of news and feature articles from newspapers
- Subject based programs that feature readings in an identified topic area – from newspapers, magazines, and other publications, including from reliable sources on the internet.
- Interviews, presentations and other content that relates to subjects that are of particular relevance to an audience with a print disability.

Could your station provide information radio programs to empower local people with a print disability?

¹https://www.rph.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/RPHA_Standards_for_RPH_Programming_on_Community_Radio_2018_359KB.pdf

But what about Copyright?

Normally, under the Copyright Act (1968), the broadcast of verbatim text from newspapers, magazines, books or other print publications would breach the rights of the copyright owners. The Act also protects recorded music, songs, and audio books from being broadcast without permission.

Special relaxation of the Copyright Act allows community radio stations providing Radio Reading services to read print publications on-air as long as they follow RPH Australia's [Standards for RPH Programming on Community Radio](#)¹ that specifies that:

“Print items must be read in full, without alteration or comment, and correctly identified”

Who's listening?

Since 1978, community radio reading services have worked to meet the information needs of people with a print disability.

The Radio Reading Network has 23 dedicated RPH services on AM, FM and digital radio that, together, broadcast to 70% of the Australian population (Ipsos Australia, 2014).

Our loyal audiences include: people with vision, physical or learning impairments; people with literacy issues, such as those from non-English speaking backgrounds; as well as 'hand-busy' people who listen while they are working, driving, or at home, simply because they enjoy the programming.

We all know that Australia's population is ageing, and that age can make it harder for people to read printed information in newspapers, books and magazines.

But did you know?

5 million Australians, or 22% of the people in your local community have a print disability

44% of Australian adults struggle with low literacy

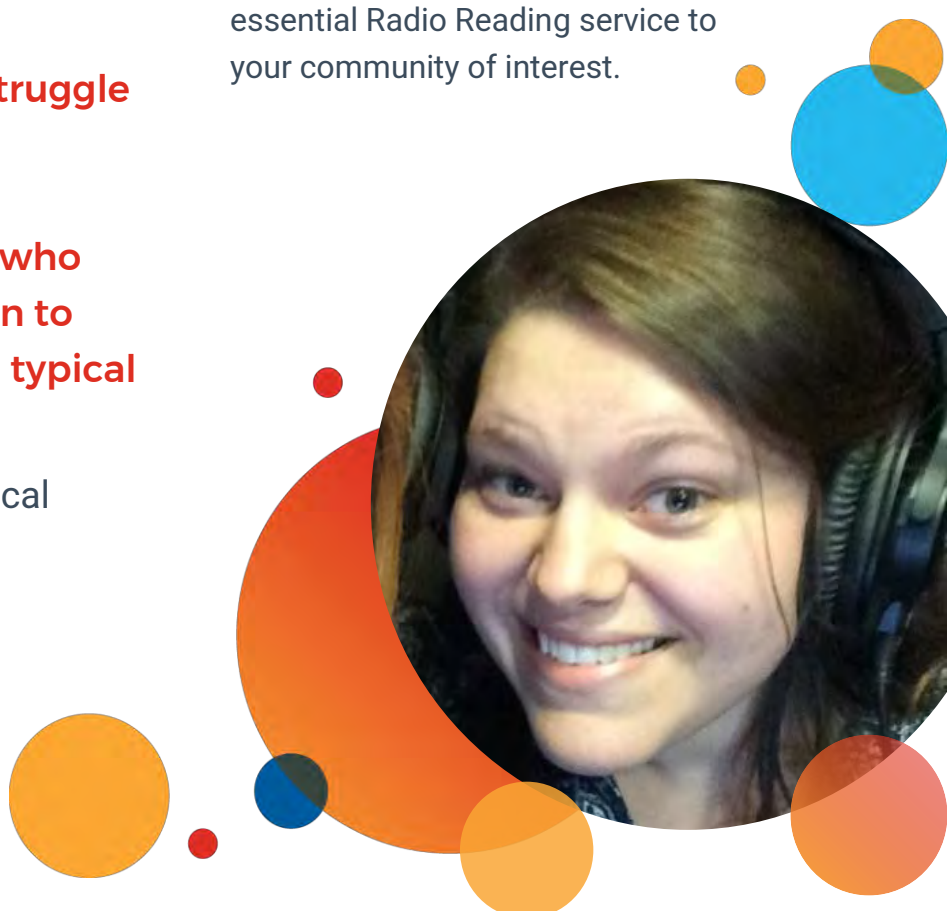
One third (35%) of people who have a print disability listen to community radio during a typical week²

How is your station serving local people with a print disability?

The **National Listener Survey³** (McNair Yellow Squares, 2018) found that the 450+ community radio stations in Australia have listeners from Indigenous, ethnic, educational, religious, arts and cultural, youth and senior, LGBTQI+ and disability communities.

The dedicated RPH-licensed stations within the Radio Reading Network provide life-changing information services for people with a print disability. However, there are large populations outside our existing broadcast footprint with unmet information needs.

If your station is in a regional, rural or remote location, you could provide a unique and essential Radio Reading service to your community of interest.



² <https://www.cbaa.org.au/broadcasters/get-data-national-listener-survey-station-census/national-listener-survey-fact-sheets>

³ [https://www.cbaa.org.au/sites/default/files/media/McNair yellowSquares - NLS - Main Report 2018 - FINAL-nopg13.pdf](https://www.cbaa.org.au/sites/default/files/media/McNair%20yellowSquares%20-%20NLS%20-%20Main%20Report%202018%20-%20FINAL-nopg13.pdf)

Finding your new audience

Potential listeners to Radio Reading include:

- People with vision impairment, low vision or blindness
- People with cognitive, learning or attention impairments
- People with physical impairment
- People for whom English is not their first language, including students who tune in and read along with print to develop their English skills
- 'Hands busy' people, like drivers, parents at home, or retirees, who may not be able to read the papers because they are using their hands for other tasks.

Radio reading services can be for anyone who would benefit from being able to listen to printed information.

Find new audiences by contacting local aged care and residential facilities, disability service providers, English language schools, RSL's, and your local Council. Stations in the Radio Reading Network know that many hospitals and nursing homes play their broadcasts 'in-house'.

Radio Reading can provide much needed local news programming – don't forget:

1 in 4 Australians listen to community radio... and 48% of those listeners tune in for local information and news! ⁴



For three years, Brigida Desebrock has volunteered as a reader on 'Perth Today' at Vision Australia Radio.

She says: "I have enjoyed finding out how panelling works and how programmes are put together. My reading skills have certainly improved and my pronunciation of "unusual" names or words. We learned to look up how to pronounce words, not just relying on our colleagues! I am more confident now... and learning all the time. I recently did some reading in public, which I am sure I would not have been confident enough to do before starting on the radio!

I have made a lot of new friends. It makes for a very good working atmosphere. I love going in and catching up with other volunteers – it is not all about work!"

⁴ <https://www.cbaa.org.au/broadcasters/get-data-national-listener-survey-station-census/national-listener-survey-fact-sheets>

Who are your radio reading volunteers?

Clear, coherent reading is a skill that many prospective radio readers may be keen to develop. Students of public speaking, teaching, media and creative arts including acting, can benefit from practicing their reading talents as a radio reading volunteer.

Radio reading is a great entry point into community radio

Starting out reading is a good way to develop your on-air presence before moving on to learning the technical skills required of a radio producer. The benefits of reading aloud don't just stop at those wanting to be public speakers, or to start a career in radio.

People who read aloud experience growth in their vocabulary, attention span and understanding, excellent ways to keep older volunteers' minds sharp as they age. A 2017 University of Waterloo study found that when people speak text aloud it helps the information to enter long-term memory.

Teachers, librarians and parents all have practice reading to an audience and may be interested in volunteering as a radio reader to contribute to their community. Victoria's Alpine Radio observed that "Most of our readers aren't presenters, they're a different type of radio person. The program is less intimidating, they rarely become presenters."

When recruiting radio readers consider approaching these groups:

- Students of media, teaching journalism, or performing arts
- Retirees who have spare time and want to be involved in the community
- People seeking to improve their confidence in public speaking
- People with a disability who want to be involved in the community

At 4RPH in Brisbane, prospective volunteers are given an audition to assess their potential for reading aloud, following the RPH Standards and being part of a team.

For more information on how to recruit new volunteers for radio reading, take a look at our [other Radio Reading Resources](#)⁵

What training do volunteer readers need?

Reading aloud comes naturally to some people, for others it is a skill that can be developed. Being able to speak clearly and at a speed that others can comprehend is a key criteria for being a good radio reader.

The suitability of your new volunteers can be assessed at an audition, and developed through practice and training. RPH veteran Stephen Jolley says you should practice your voice at every opportunity, even in the shower!

⁵ <https://www.rph.org.au/radio-reading-resources-for-stations/>

The [Community Media Training Organisation](#)⁶ offers one day workshops on presentation skills for community radio stations, with resources specifically tailored to help volunteers meet the Radio Reading Standards.

Other training

New volunteers of all stripes will require your regular station induction and awareness of the expectations of participants. This is a good time to make them aware of the requirements of the [Standards for RPH Programming on Community Radio](#)⁷.

Radio reading volunteers will often want to move on to your in-house announcer training covering matters such as media law, health and safety, working in the studio and governance of the station.



⁶ <http://www.cmto.org.au/courses/pathways-courses.html>

⁷ https://www.rph.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/RPHA_Standards_for_RPH_Programming_on_Community_Radio_2018_359KB.pdf



Spencer Howson was ABC Brisbane's highest rating breakfast presenter and now teaches radio at the University of Southern Queensland. He started his career in Radio Reading.

"I volunteered at 4RPH for 18 months before being employed part-time as manager Brendan Taggart's offsider. I was in that paid role for a year.

Looking back, it was such a short period, but 4RPH will always hold a special place in my heart. I regularly tune in, I pop in when I get the chance, and I'm forever recommending the station to potential listeners and volunteers."

Pictured left: Brendan Taggart and Spencer Howson at 4RPH in 1992.

Above: Spencer Howson teaching.



What should we read?

Radio Reading programming is all about providing equity of access to information. So, the best way to approach this question is to put yourself in your listeners' shoes.

What important information would you miss out on if you couldn't read the local newspaper and council newsletter, or see the community noticeboard? Think outside the square and consider other local, relevant printed publications that might be of interest, such as from not-for-profit organisations and community groups.

Better still, get out and about in the community and ask your audience what they'd like you to read! You can also check in by running listener surveys or providing your phone number and email address so people can give feedback and ideas to help you best meet their information needs.

Reading items that are of local relevance, and that may not be accessible in another medium should be your priority in choosing what to read. While choosing what publication/s to read might be the decision of station or program managers, choosing which articles to read is usually the job of the Radio Reading production team.

To help build a team that can produce quality local Radio Reading programming, take a look at our [Resources for Volunteers](#).⁸

⁸ <https://www.rph.org.au/radio-reading-resources-for-volunteers/>

⁹ <https://www.cbaa.org.au/crn>

What day or time works best?

There's no 'golden rule', but many stations align the program with the day that the paper is published so the news is fresh. Others schedule to catch their existing audience for broadcasts of [national RPH programming via the CRN](#).⁹

The [RPH Programming Standards](#) state that broadcast should be "between the hours of 6.00 a.m. and midnight".

Do we tell the local paper?

Talking to the local newspaper/s can involve explaining the community value of providing essential information radio for those who can't access the printed publication.

Regional stations report varying relationships from strained..."they won't advertise that we do it and they don't give us any special rates for advertising or buying the paper."

to... "Excellent – they advertise our program for free – they see it as an asset."

"Our relationship with the local newspaper... offers us cross promotional opportunities.

The editor is given air time and the newspaper provides free ads for our station.”

Partnership benefits definitely go two ways, as one station discovered: the “Quality of journalism has improved...Now it is well written, is easy to read out.”

Who else should we involve?

Radio Reading is also about equality of access to the airwaves, and community inclusion. Starting a Radio Reading program is a golden opportunity to reach out to local organisations that support or represent people with a disability. You might also approach community arts organisations or literary groups for volunteers.

Such partnerships can provide your station with access to new volunteers, talent, knowledge and resources. Importantly, they'll also help you engage with your new audience.

8CCC 102. 1FM¹⁰, in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek, are seeking community involvement to recommence their long-running (12 year!) Radio Reading program.

“We plan to partner with a disability support organisation to involve local people with a disability in the program production.” 8CCC

¹⁰ www.8ccc.com.au



Trax-FM 105.1 in Port Pirie, South Australia, are planning their first Radio Reading program.

The station is developing a partnership with a local organisation, PaperTalk, to produce their new program.

For many years, 'PaperTalk' has been supported by the Royal Society for the Blind SA to serve their community by delivering newspaper readings via posted SD cards to people with vision impairment.

Trax-FM's new alliance with Paper Talk means that local news and information will now reach their new, broader audience right after the newspapers are released.



RPH Programming Standards

The [Standards for RPH Programming on Community Radio](#) establish a framework for the production of RPH programming by community radio stations with a non-RPH broadcast licence.

The Standards aim to encourage local, new, diverse programming made by and for people with a print disability and contain:

- **Programming Standards**—criteria outlining what RPH programs should contain and how programs should be produced and broadcast
- **Community consultation and engagement Standards**— criteria to ensure RPH programs are relevant and accessible, to best serve people with a print disability.

Radio reading programs need to engage with listeners with a print disability and organisations that support them. Efforts to include people with a disability in program production are also desirable.

Adhering to the Standards is a condition of:

- accessing CBF funding for RPH programming; and

- participating in RPH Australia's [National Sponsorship Scheme](#).

To find out more, take a look at the complete [Standards](#)¹¹ or contact RPH Australia.

Funding your radio reading service

Developing Radio Reading programming will require station resources. You might need newspaper subscriptions, some new equipment to make your studio more accessible, stationary supplies or in-house training. You might need funds for broadcaster consultation meetings or to hold an open station event or outside broadcast to better engage with your new audience.

You can support local programming made by or for people with a print disability by potentially accessing [Community Broadcasting Foundation](#) Content grants and/or participating in RPH Australia's National Sponsorship Scheme. To access this support, your station needs to sign a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) agreeing to follow the RPH Standards.

Learn more about CBF Specialist Radio Programming grants on the [Community Broadcasting Foundation](#) website.¹²

[Contact us](#) here at RPH Australia for more information on funding for RPH programming via admin@rph.org.au

¹¹ https://www.rph.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/RPHA_Standards_for_RPH_Programming_on_Community_Radio_2018_359KB.pdf

¹² <https://cbf.org.au/grants/grants-available/content/specialist-radio/>

About this resource

You can find more [Radio Reading Resources for stations](#) and for [volunteers](#) on our website.

We developed these community media training resources to support the Regional Development project, which aims to broaden the national reach of Radio Reading services to reach people with a print disability living in regional and remote areas.

RPH Australia is supporting stations, outside the current Radio Reading Network, to produce new, diverse, quality local programming made by and for people with a print disability in their community.

[Contact us](#) to find out more.

About us

RPH Australia is the peak body for the Radio Reading Network; community radio services dedicated to providing access to information for the estimated 5 million Australians with a print disability. We champion the rights of all people to access printed material, empowering equal participation in cultural, political and social life.

Radio Reading programming aims to meet the information needs of people with a print disability (those who are unable to effectively access printed material due to visual, physical or cognitive impairment, age or low literacy).

It provides a voice for people in our community with a print disability and caters directly to their information needs and interests.

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