



## 2020 Report of the Chair to the 2RPH Annual General Meeting

The achievements of the 2019-2020 financial year could easily be over-shadowed by the impact of the current pandemic, and the overall interruptions to life that it has caused. However, it is important to remember that the operations of 2RPH were affected only in the last few months of the financial year and until then it had been full steam ahead.

If there has been one theme for the past year it has been that of unexpected massive change. Change continues to be a driving force throughout the community broadcast sector and that includes us here at 2RPH.

Before I detail the work of the Board over the past year I want to recognise the huge efforts of volunteers and members.

### **2RPH members and volunteers**

I want to firstly and sadly mention two stalwarts, Vic Cohen (*ShowBuzz*) and Marie Curtis, who died during this past year. Both contributed in different ways and were much loved at the station and will be fondly remembered by those who worked with them. So too will Ron Ogier who retires from 2RPH after 25 years of volunteering. Thank you for the memories and contribution.

I am mindful that many of our volunteers have experienced economic recessions, bushfires, floods, and drought. It isn't surprising then that our members and volunteers have demonstrated great resilience and daring in addressing the challenges that the changing circumstances of the past year have wrought.

In particular, adhering to the policies and procedures that the pandemic demanded including temperature checks, studio-distancing protocols, and the endless sanitizing routine. Everyone has willingly complied with the requirements that a zero-transmission approach demands. At a time when many stations ceased live broadcasting, 2RPH volunteers have adapted, improvised and helped keep the station on air and broadcasting live.

It is notable that many stations could not do this and had to revert to taking live programs from other stations or broadcasting pre-recorded programs. So it is impressive, and humbling that we were able to adapt and continue. A huge thank you to everyone for this achievement.

In turning to the work and composition of the Board, we too have changed.

### **The Board**

The Board welcomed two new directors at the 2019 Annual General Meeting, and more will be sought as we add to the skills and experience needed to guide the station into the future. The role of the Board is to: devise and drive the strategy of the station; ensure effective oversight of its operations and guarantee financial probity and well-being. In addressing these matters the Board met seven times during the year with further Board Committees



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meeting in the non-Board months. These Committees were: The Finance and Risk Committee; the Engagement Committee; the Program Advisory Group; the Service Delivery Committee; and then from March the COVID Committee and the Technical Advisory Group; which have been all chaired by a member of the Board and included volunteers.

I'm pleased to report that the 2RPH Board: has fulfilled its fiduciary and governance responsibilities and that despite the changing circumstances 2RPH is on a strong financial footing; has adhered to governance and regulatory requirements; and implemented the overall strategic direction of the station.

I want to thank **Deputy Chair, Maria Issaris** for her enthusiasm, support, and ideas to ensure 2RPH remains the vibrant energised broadcaster that it is. Maria's work on the Program Advisory Group; her initiatives in producing the award-nominated New Voices Program; and her tireless efforts for a new business initiative, audio books, have been and will continue to be, of future benefit to the station.

**Geoff Caban, as Secretary**, has been assiduous in making sure our governance and board procedures are appropriate and timely. His attention to matters such as board agendas, papers, minutes, and the AGM are critical to having the work of the Board meet strict governance requirements and to ensuring meetings run smoothly. Geoff has chosen not to stand for a further period on the Board after the AGM, and I want to acknowledge Geoff's notable contribution and thank him for his work.

**Robert Estcourt, Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee** is a member of the Board whose experience and skill in the finance and investment sector ensures that the funds in the 2RPH account are well-invested and return a regular income to the station. This income supplements the funds from sponsors, government grants and donations and forms part of the overall 2RPH budget. Thanks to Robert our funds have earned a very respectable 5% over the past year and are set to reach as similar goal over the next 12 months..

**Brian Ollerton, Chair-Engagement Committee** has been instrumental in helping keep the Board, members, and volunteers in touch. Brian and the Committee arranged the mid-year and Christmas functions as well as instituted a first Zoom meeting for volunteers. Additionally, the Committee initiated the important volunteer recognition programs which publicly value the contribution that long-serving members make to the station. Although Brian has decided not to stand again for the board at this AGM, I am delighted he has offered to continue his involvement with the Engagement Committee.

The station has also benefited from the contribution of two new members who formally joined the Board at the last AGM. **Geraldine Menere's** experience, knowledge and skills in the legal profession have been a guiding hand on all matters requiring a legal perspective. Gerry has been a great source of advice and guidance on governance, including the necessary changes to 2RPH Rules, contracts, and policies. Additionally, Gerry has kept the



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Board updated regarding the associated changes in the legislative framework and environment we operate in. We are fortunate to have her on the team.

**John Martin** has joined Gerry on the Board and has been the Board's guiding adviser on all matters technical. John's extensive experience in the broadcast sector has made him a natural to chair the **Service Delivery Committee** and also that of the **Technical Advisory Group**. While both committees deal with technology matters, it was the Technical Advisory Committee which was instrumental in advising and guiding volunteers in broadcasting amid the pandemic. John is also driving discussions with Broadcast Australia regarding a future move to FM and our plans to broadcast to Wollongong. I am personally grateful to John for his knowledge and support in all these matters.

### **The Management Team**

In all this the Board has been more than ably assisted by the work of the Management Team, which has risen to the challenge of the changing circumstances. As a Board we are very grateful for the work of the team which has kept the station operating throughout the year.

As **General Manager, Sancha Donald**, has overseen the expansion of the station's programs and services and has been more than ably assisted in this by **Danielle Hanrahan**. Sancha has kept in touch with key stakeholders and raised the profile of 2RPH throughout the community broadcast and disability sectors.

To do this Sancha has hosted various dignitaries; renewed the all-important broadcast licence; extended our reach into the disability sector; provided guidance to the Board, and importantly has been the driving force to keep the station running smoothly. At the same time Sancha has been a key member of the RPH network and has regularly met with, and briefed, her counterparts online.

Importantly, Sancha has been at the centre of our efforts to ensure the station and all who attend the studios remain COVID safe. Implementing protocols and equipment to ensure zero-transmission has been enormously important to those who wished to continue to work in Glebe. Sancha has been tireless in her efforts to stay up to date with advice from NSW Health, key broadcasting groups, colleagues in other states, and the COVID Committee by implementing processes that will keep volunteers safe.

Sancha has been supported in the running of the station by the part-time members of the management team: Danielle Hanrahan, Chelsea Deeley, Catherine Maitland, and Katie Brooks, along with those fabulous volunteers who do so much in sorting the complexities of the reader and announcer rosters.

**Danielle Hanrahan's** support has been pivotal in supporting Sancha and keeping members and volunteers informed about many aspects of the work of the station. Danielle has strongly promoted the station via our communications to members and volunteers with



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regular newsletters and social media to reach a wider audience. Regrettably, Danielle has advised she will be leaving 2RPH shortly after the AGM to focus on establishing a new life on the Central Coast. We will miss her warmth and efficiency and wish her well in her new adventure. Our thanks and best wishes go with her.

The legendary **Peter Worthington** continues to be at the critical nerve centre of the station and has done a sterling job as the station rose to the challenge of broadcasting remotely to remain on air. His efforts, along with those of Barbara Sullivan, John Martin, Maria Issaris, Colin Payne, Greg Richardson, John Berry, Natalie Shea and Fran Telec were inspiring and impressive. It was wonderful to hear the moment when reading from home went live to air. It was a nerve-wracking moment for all involved but was highly successful and means more volunteers can stay involved with the station.

As a result of these dedicated and persistent efforts, 2RPH's broadcasting capability was virtually unaffected. The Board and I are extremely grateful to all the management team and volunteers who have worked so hard to achieve the success we have.

### **Support**

We are also extremely grateful that funding from the **Community Broadcasting Foundation** (CBF) has continued via a series of grants. Perhaps the most important is that of the grant covering our transmission costs which forms a large part of our budget each year. The CBF has also provided funding for new programs, training for readers and to develop new content. This funding has enabled us to reach more listeners and for volunteers to increase their broadcasting skills.

**The City of Sydney** is another key financial supporter of the station via the provision of subsidised rent and the maintenance of the station premises. Both are vital to the smooth running of the station and we appreciate their ongoing support.

Our sponsors involvement in the station is important to our financial well-being and we have been successful in attracting and retaining new sponsors in the religion and commercial categories. While some of these sponsored programs may not suit all tastes, they are critical to the finances of the station and provide a level of comfort for listeners who may be alone, fearful, or isolated.

The year saw a decline in the number of government-sponsored announcements and so our revenues from that source dropped markedly. However, the need for information regarding the pandemic saw this source of sponsorship return but it has highlighted the importance of that revenue.

### **Future Direction**

As a result of the onset of the pandemic our plans to conduct a review of the strategy earlier in the year did not happen. Hence, for the next twelve months the work of the Board and the station will be framed by: a review of the 2020-2025 strategy in early December; making



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decisions around the structure, finances and priorities of the station; and ensuring that in doing so that we're meeting the needs of our listeners.

Although not having fallen within the timeframe of this report, the marvellous bequest from Robyn Potter OAM, should be mentioned, as it has provided certainty for the financial future of 2RPH. The bequest now forms part of 2RPH assets and will be considered in line with the overall strategy for 2RPH. Members and volunteers will be consulted on the Strategy and those priorities they see as being essential over the short and long term.

Our good fortune with grants, bequests and donations cannot be taken for granted and we need to ensure we grow and protect the funds as we seek to become fully financially independent. Importantly, our responsibility as custodians is to ensure that 2RPH continues to serve the needs of listeners and the wider community.

The Board and I are indebted to management, members, volunteers, donors, and sponsors for their unstinting support. We fully appreciate the level of commitment and goodwill we see demonstrated on a daily basis, and thank you for your ongoing dedication and involvement.

**Di Collins**

Chair

AGM 23 November 2020