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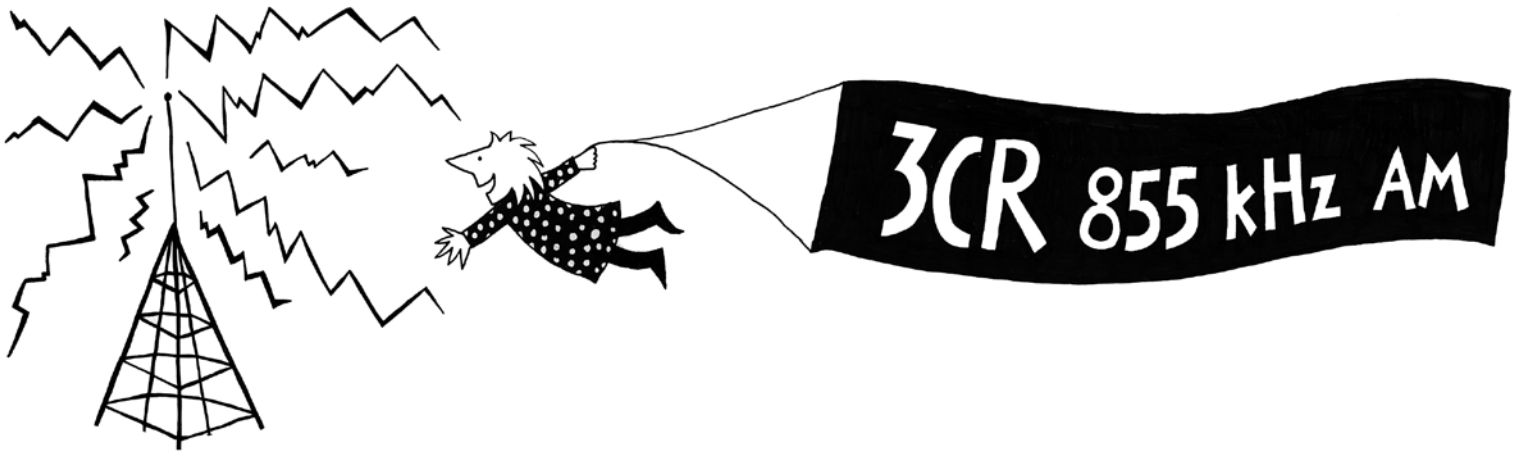


Over nearly five decades, the CRAM Guide has been produced by dedicated volunteer writers, photographers and 3CR programmers. Thanks to everyone involved!

CRAM EDITORS: Juliet Fox, Aodhan Madden, Katelin Morris and the Projects Sub Committee

DESIGN AND LAYOUT: Rachel Kirby

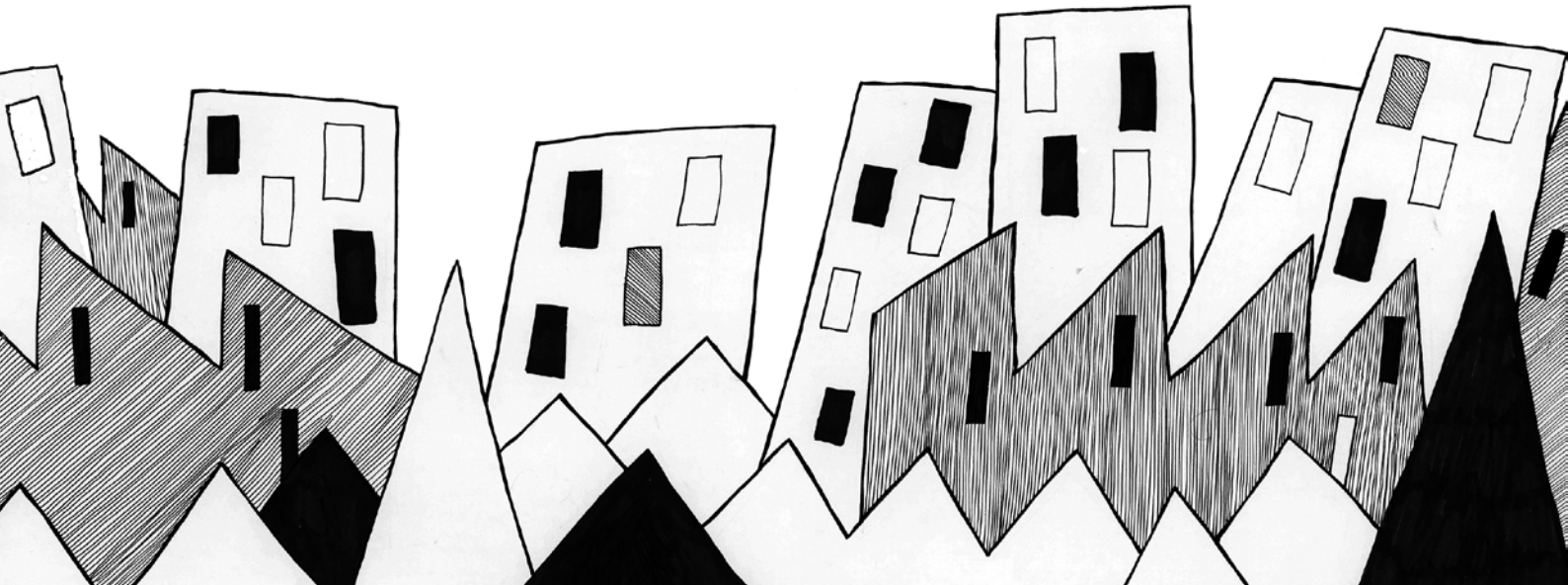
COVER ARTWORK: Charlotte Allingham

CONTRIBUTORS: Juliette Baxter, Kannagi Bhatt, Scheherazade Bloul, Brendan Bonsack, Meg Butler, Fiona Dean, Ralph Edwards, Vittorio Grando, Cleis Hart, Koshin, Areej Nur, Gab Reade, Tobia Severi, Keiran Stewart-Assheton, nici stott, Michaela Stubbs, Phuong Tran, Michele Vescio, Shae Wiedermann, Xan, Mercedes Zanker

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT: Dr Nat Grant (Chairperson); James McKenzie (Vice Chairperson); Mercedes Zanker (Vice Chairperson); Fiona York (Treasurer); Priya Kunjan (Secretary). Directors: Brendan Bonsack, Amy Aednat Ciara, Vittorio Grando, Cleis Hart, Pat Khor, Joe Malignaggi, Michael Ricardo, Ayan Shirwa, Therese Virtue

STAFF: Meg Butler (Station Manager); Michaela Stubbs (Program Coordinator); Innez Tulloch (Volunteer and Training Coordinator); Beth Barker (Fundraising and Events Coordinator); Annette (Office and Finance Coordinator); Karina Aedo-Aguilera (Current Affairs Coordinator); Juliet Fox (Projects Coordinator); Riah Williams and Greg Segal (Technical Coordinators); Luke Neeson (IT Coordinator)

3CR is proud to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, traditional owners of the land from which we transmit radical radio. Sovereignty was never ceded.



Meg Butler, Station Manager

This edition of our CRAM magazine brings together a remarkable collection of stories that speak to the depth, diversity and purpose of 3CR as we celebrate 50 years of broadcasting.

3CR was built to broadcast the progressive voices of those denied access to the mainstream media, and we are so proud to have done that for 50 years. Unions have been with 3CR from the very start, and the *Concrete Gang* (p.15) reminds us that unions and workers helped build this station, both materially and politically. The union movement has always known that independent media is essential to defending the working class. Nearly five decades later, the *Concrete Gang* continues that tradition with collective strength, humour and solidarity.

While mainstream media continues to fail many of us, 3CR stays strong. Invasion Day programming (p.9) on 3CR has always centred First Nations voices, we broadcast live coverage from protests, air speeches in full, and we help to build the movement to rethink the day. These broadcasts are a record of resistance, grounded in the reality that sovereignty has never been ceded.

This year contains many milestones for the station. We celebrate 25 remarkable years of *Beyond the Bars* (p.18) broadcasting annually from inside prisons during NAIDOC Week. These broadcasts are more important than ever, but we hope for the day that we no longer need to go inside.

Eritrean Voices (p.6) celebrates 25 years on air this year, demonstrating the dedication required to grow programming that is deeply embedded in community needs. *Radio FILEF* (p.14) has returned to the 3CR airwaves for the first time since the 1990s, and we are so pleased to have them back on air with the next generation of people struggling for migrant workers' rights.

3CR has always looked for ways to bring young people to the microphone. We offer young people the chance to speak about the world they are inheriting, and to develop skills and confidence in broadcasting (p.20). For 50 years, 3CR's training has demystified media and transferred power, enabling people who never imagined themselves on air to develop skills, confidence and autonomy. Training at 3CR has always been a political and practical commitment to access and empowerment (p.16).

There are many struggles that wind through 3CR's history. Disability-led broadcasting (p.7) at 3CR has consistently challenged mainstream ideas of access and representation, pushing towards Disability Justice and self-determination. Queer broadcasting, an important part of 3CR since the station's earliest days, has similarly broadcast conversations of survival and pride (p.21).

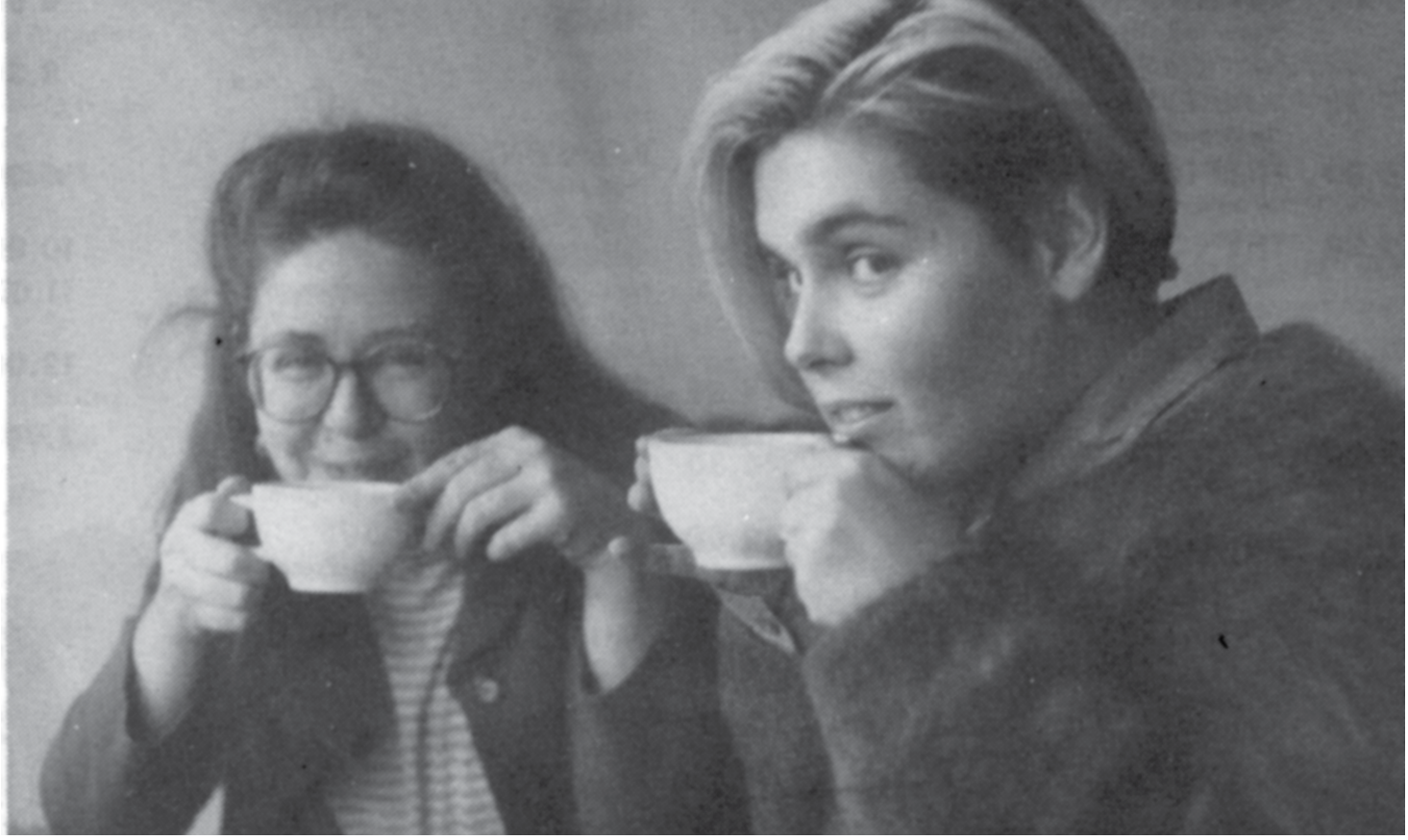
Another huge milestone this year is *Women on the Line* (p.4) marking 40 years on air. Across four decades, the program has evolved alongside shifting feminist debates while maintaining a strong commitment to internationalism, anti-imperialism and intersectionality. *Women on the Line* is not just a record of changing politics, but a demonstration of women and gender-diverse people impacting politics and media for the better.

This is also reflected in the story of Jean Ely (p.12) and the Defence of Government Schools program, demonstrating how long-term access to the airwaves can sustain decades long struggles for public education. At 3CR, not only do we document movements; we are intrinsic in organising, mobilising, connecting and informing communities across Melbourne.

These stories, programs, and people show how 3CR has survived by remaining accountable and connected to communities, demonstrating solidarity and enabling people to speak in their own voices. 3CR is sustained through the commitment of volunteers, workers, donors and members who believe independent community media is worth defending. Thank you to everyone that contributes to 3CR.

As we continue to celebrate 50 years of broadcasting, this CRAM edition is a celebration of our history, and a pledge to keep broadcasting for a just and kind world.

Opposite: Cartoon by Judy Horacek



40 years of *Women on the Line*

Women on the Line, Monday 8.30-9am

This year marks the 40-year anniversary of the first *Women on the Line* (*WOTL*) broadcast. We, as presenters, celebrated the occasion by speaking with Deb Welch, the founding producer of the program, and (re)read the CRAM archive from 1987 to 2016, albeit with our 21st-century eyes.

1986

When we spoke with Deb, she told us that *Women on the Line* began following a survey conducted during the mid-eighties in the still young community broadcasting sector. The survey identified that about three-quarters of on-air presenters in the sector across the country were men, and only a quarter were women. There was also a similar inverse gender imbalance in who was undertaking the administrative and off-air tasks.

Deb explains, '3CR got some funding to employ a woman to be both a women's coordinator and to produce a national women's current affairs program.' It was early on that Deb took the view that women should talk about current affairs, and not just 'women's issues' (at the time, discussed mostly by men too).

A major tension in feminism of the time, Deb told us, was between two different analyses of sexism that seemed biometrically opposed: whether capitalism dictated gender or whether gender oppression was its own thing, in and of itself.

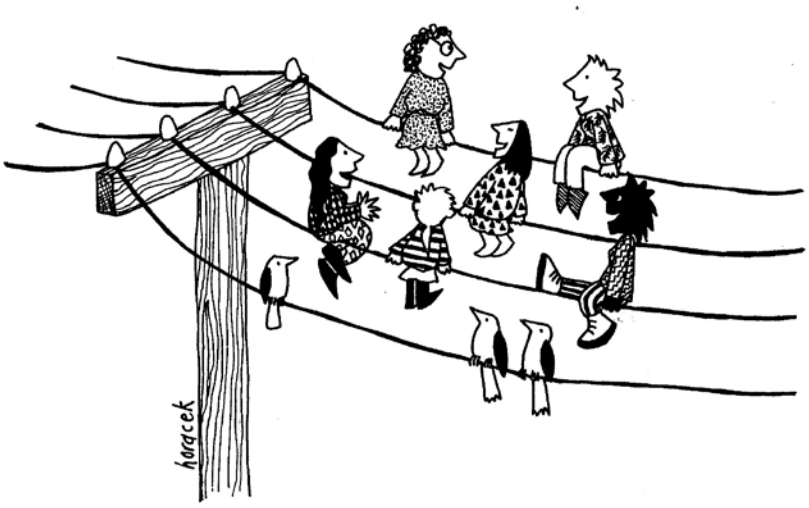
L-R Deb Welch and Ruth Barney, CRAM Guide June 1988

Liberal social theorists expanded on this, particularly in the 90s and early 2000s. It is these tensions that we continue to grapple with today, particularly white feminism's exclusion of race and imperialism.

The 90s

The 1993 CRAM guide tells us this was a period of research and skill development for *WOTL*, where presenters produced a variety of documentaries on topics ranging from union rights to HIV.

In the March 1999 CRAM guide, there are two articles dedicated to special projects undertaken by *WOTL* team members. The first, a series titled 'Women and the Republic', looked into the life and work of suffragette Jessie Street. *WOTL* presenter Marion MacGregor argues that class should not be excluded from analysis, as Street was able to afford to live an active and prominent life. Discussion of race and colonialism was absent and, at best, marginal during discussions of a republic. For the second special project, *WOTL* collaborated with Indigenous women from different community radio stations to produce documentaries on Native Title claims, including with Wathaurong women from radio 3YYR, in response to a Section 29 notice of a proposed gas pipeline.



Throughout the 90s, *WOTL* also documented industrial disputes; prison justice campaigns, such as the one at the Fairlea Women's Prison; and transnational feminist issues, including post-apartheid South Africa, East Timor, and women's organising in India and the Philippines.

The turn of the century

For *WOTL*'s 20th-anniversary edition in CRAM 2006, the program's producers reflected on their then two-decade-old archive. At the time, the RU486 drug was once again dominating the headlines, and *WOTL* producer Sarah L'Estrange writes that men's voices dominated the debate on reproductive rights, with very few women interviewed on an issue 'so important to women'. In contrast, the show only interviewed women on this issue, and L'Estrange returns to the continuing salience and continuity of the program's coverage of feminist and internationalist struggles in the 1980s.

Rather than simply covering 'women's issues', *WOTL* continually provided feminist analyses, from its coverage of Chernobyl-era nuclear debates to contemporary geopolitical developments during the War on Terror, and the administration of George W. Bush, notably his circumvention of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Revisiting the archive, we notice a tension between implicit anti-imperialist analysis conducted without using the language of anti-imperialism—coverage of war, nuclear policy, global diplomacy foregrounding grassroots, humanitarian and feminist voices—and more liberal feminist discourses of individual advancement and success within Empire. An example of the latter could be *WOTL*'s 2006 coverage of Chile's centre-left 'first female president', Michelle Bachelet, who implemented a range of socialist reforms, defeating the incumbent right-winger.

We feel, as current *WOTL* presenters, that the implicit framing of imperialism and capitalism and the show's reflection of the politics of that era—liberal feminism—have now shifted to explicit points of discussion in our work.

2010s

The 2016 CRAM guide features a special article covering *WOTL*'s 30th anniversary. Here, we get the sense that overt discussion of race enters the airwaves from a situated perspective, with new presenters providing a much-needed analysis on blackness.

The rest of the stated focus, as described in the article, is on 'sexuality, income management, gender equality and the student-level push for women working in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.' This, to us, reflects the constant tension with liberal feminism during the popularisation of intersectionality, as social media campaigns in the 2010s were taking off. Intersectionality's core demand to show the interconnectedness of disparate but connected struggles against oppression and imperialism became, again, one of individual discourse, particularly in the West, of civil liberties amplified through the ideology of neoliberalism embedded in capitalist social media production.

The show embraced more intersectional perspectives from the mid-to-late 2010s as gender-diverse and trans voices received greater support and representation, particularly as the fight against patriarchal capitalist systems intensified into the 2020s.

Our current moment

Right now, we see liberalism hanging on by its last threads, rightly confronted over its continuing attempts to absorb liberation movements, thereby paving the way for state and corporate capture. Our current moment marks more than two years of unabated genocide in Gaza, Sudan, the Congo, the continued resistance of Indigenous peoples in colonial outposts from this continent to Kanaky to Kashmir and Turtle Island.

Our tagline now is that *WOTL* is a radical intersectional current affairs program, giving space for women and gender-diverse feminisms in their multitudes (except fascists and liberals!), wrapped in explicit anti-imperialist politics. The program covers topics from First Nations sovereignty to South liberation to trans liberation and disability justice, abolition and sex worker rights. There is still much work to be done!

By Scheherazade Bloul, Cleis Hart, Kannagi Bhatt and Phuong Tran *Women on the Line* presenters

Women on the Line cartoon by Judy Horacek

A legacy of courage

Eritrean Voices, Monday 6.30-8pm

For half of 3CR's 50-year history, *Eritrean Voices* has been creating content for the East African community in Australia and abroad. From interviewing high-profile guests like the Premier of Victoria, to in-person shows recorded from refugee camps, current hosts Berhan Jaber and Ahmed Ali create an important bridge for the Eritrean community in Australia. With a focus on topics such as safety, education, and health the show is an invaluable resource for those tuning in. Starting out in 2001 as Eritrean Women's Voices, the show has grown to become a 90-minute weekly show, involving over 50 volunteers across its 25-year history, giving skills and experience to many in the African diaspora.

The incredible selection of music on the show transcends all language barriers, bringing the sounds of East African culture to the airwaves of 3CR. With a focus on representing all nine ethnic groups in Eritrea, the range of music celebrates genres that aren't always easy to hear in Melbourne. The music also expands out of Eritrea to represent many of the nearby countries, especially the Sudanese, Somali and Tigray communities.

The topics discussed each week can be far-reaching depending on the guest, from African politics to local events in Naarm. The show has featured interviews from Christian and Islamic leaders, the two major religions in Eritrea, which each make up about half of the population. With episodes focused on many diasporic African communities, the show represents not just the Eritrean community, but the Horn of Africa more generally.

The shared languages across this geographic region have allowed people from neighbouring countries to tune in and learn about each other. As Berhan explained to me, the legacy of colonialism in the region has left many communities divided. The show addresses this, by allowing shared learning to take place beyond cultural and ethnic lines.

This sharing goes beyond the range of the 855 AM frequency. With the availability of the show online, a following has emerged abroad, including some in the Eritrean government who are far from fans! Just over 20 years ago, Berhan was targeted by the Eritrean government because of his platforming of views critical of the regime in his home country. When they couldn't reach him in Australia they threatened his family—even imprisoning his mother—to pressure him into silence. Instead of being intimidated, Berhan explained to me that the event 'fuelled' him, making him even more motivated to continue standing up for his people against political repression. In 3CR's tradition of radical radio, it would be hard to find a better example than *Eritrean Voices*.

The show has won recognition through multiple awards and with no sign of slowing down there will likely be many more to come. With 25 years of broadcasting history, a show centred on a small country continues to have a big impact.

By Koshin, *Uprise Radio* presenter

L-R Ahmed Ali and Berhan Jaber, *Eritrean Voices* presenters

Voices and visions of disabled liberation

Raising Our Voices, second Wednesday of each month 6pm-6.30pm
Disability Day Broadcast (online), 3cr.org.au/disabilityday2025
Brainwaves, Wednesday 5-5.30pm
The Boldness, third and fifth Wednesday of each month 6pm-6.30pm

Did you know that 3CR has been broadcasting radio for and by disabled people for decades? From the get-go, 3CR programming history reflects the radical disability rights movement's push for self-determination and systemic change across the 1970s and 80s, with programs such as *Alive and WEL* (1976–1984) covering disability issues, and *Open House* (1981) prioritising disabled guests calling for self-representation, bodily autonomy, housing, and workers' rights.

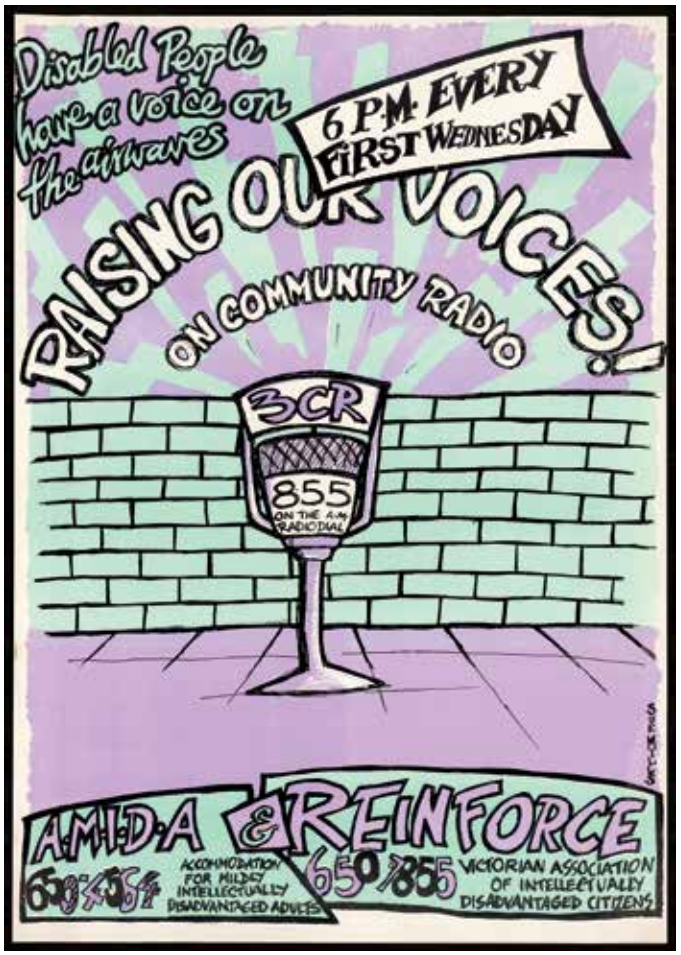
In 1987, AMIDA (Action for More Independence & Dignity in Accommodation) launched *Raising Our Voices*. Founder Amanda Millear reflects on her vision of a platform for disabled people to share information about, 'what it's like to be tackling all this stuff like Centrelink and housing. If I had a wish list, I would wish for another 40 years of *Raising Our Voices* to be on 3CR, but we can't see the future. It depends on funding.'

From 1999 to the mid-2000s, Disability Resource Centre's *Rocking the Boat* covered lived experience, rights and advocacy, and in 2009, 3CR's first International Day of People with Disability broadcasted twelve hours of content for and by disabled people.

Pauline Vetuna, Disability Day worker since 2019, emphasises how honoured they feel contributing to 3CR's long legacy of disability rights and community storytelling: 'During its 50 years of existence, 3CR's programming has not just been moving with the times—it has been ahead of the times. As Disability Day coordinator, I have brought a shift in perspective towards Disability Justice, and through that portal we have been able to explore decolonial and post-capitalist liberated futures, in addition to discussing urgent material disability rights issues of the present and celebrating disability culture.'

Across the 2010s and into the current decade, new swathes of disability programs have exploded on our airwaves. *Brainwaves* (Wellways Australia) features lived experiences of mental illness, *Small Talk* (Short Statured People of Australia) challenged dwarfism stereotypes, and shows T*he Boldness, Are You Looking at Me?, Chronically Chilled* and *Voice At The Table* all centre self-representation. These are just some of the highlights from over 50 years, as 3CR continues to forefront disabled voices and visions for a truly self-determined future.

By nici stott, station worker



Raising our Voices poster from the archives

Caption

A living archive of resistance

For decades, 3CR has treated January 26 as a day of invasion, resistance and survival. The station has used its airwaves to carry the voices, demands and realities of First Nations people grounded in struggle and community.

From its very beginnings, 3CR has operated as a partisan, community-controlled station aligned with movements on the ground. The CRAM archives point to a station built on grassroots perspectives and real people on air, committed to political clarity and collective voice. That foundation has shaped how January 26 is broadcast.

As early as 1980, the CRAM Guide noted: 'This Australia Day long weekend 3CR will both entertain and astound you with the best Australian music and a series of programs made by Aboriginals, taking a look at the other sides of Australia today'.

In 1988, we brought listeners live crosses from Invasion Day protests in Melbourne and Sydney, while hosting an 'anti-bicentennial extravaganza' at the Fitzroy Pool. Throughout the late 1990s and 2000s, programming for 'Survival Day' often featured live outside broadcasts from music events and community days.

3CR's coverage has always been tied to resistance. Earlier decades of programming supported major struggles for land rights and sovereignty, including the ongoing presence of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy. By 2012, 3CR was broadcasting dedicated Tent Embassy coverage, connecting listeners directly to one of the longest-running sites of First Nations' resistance on the planet.

By 2014, the language of Invasion Day was firmly present on air. Programming centred the strength and continuity of culture alongside the reality of invasion. In 2016, dedicated Invasion Day broadcasts expanded into coordinated, on-the-ground coverage, with reporters at rallies and marches, relaying speeches, chants and the crowd's energy live across the city.

This approach has continued to grow from year to year. January 26 on 3CR now runs as full-day programming shaped by the First Nations community. Live crosses from marches place listeners inside mass mobilisations where the uncompromising words of Elders, organisers and community members can speak directly to the listeners; where the speeches are aired in full, without filtering our demands for land back, justice and sovereignty.

First Nations artists, political hip hop, reggae and community music sit alongside live coverage, reflecting culture as a living force within resistance. The Invasion Day broadcasts carry grief, anger, strength and our continued survival and resistance.

3CR does more than document the day, it actively helps to build it. Broadcasts share upcoming rally details, amplify organising efforts and connect listeners into action. The relationship between the station and community is active and reciprocal. In recent years, this connection has grown outwards, beyond Naarm and beyond the state of so-called Victoria, with live crosses and updates from Mob protesting right across the continent.

This sits within a broader commitment. 3CR has consistently provided access to voices locked out of mainstream media, maintaining space for 'uncensored voices' and marginalised communities for decades. That commitment is clear every January 26.

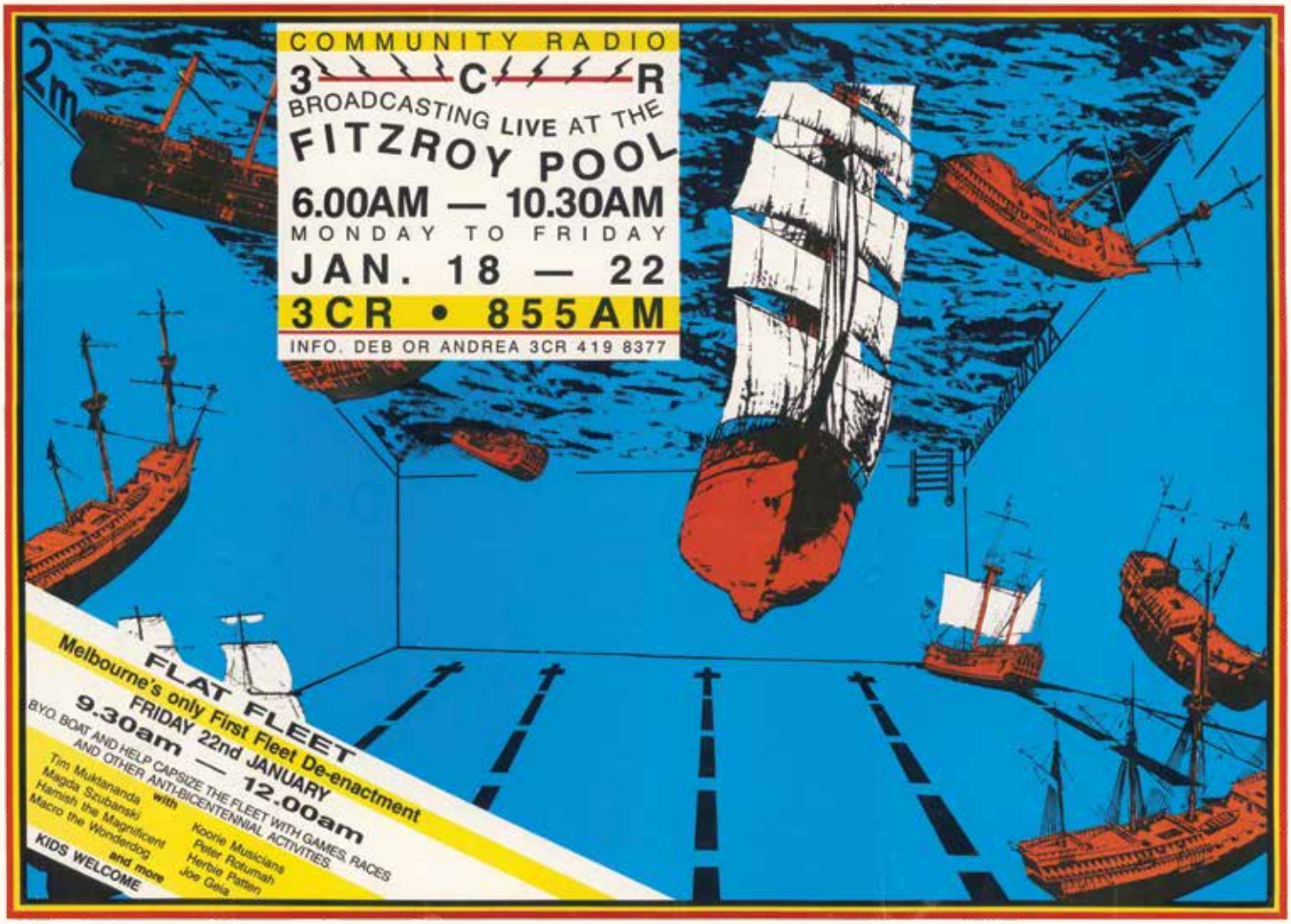
Community radio plays a material role in struggle. It carries information, builds connections and holds political lines that others avoid. 3CR has maintained that role without compromise.

January 26 broadcasts form part of a living archive of resistance on the airwaves. Each year adds to it. Each year carries forward the same reality.

Sovereignty has never been ceded. The occupation continues. The resistance continues.

By Keiran Stewart-Assheton, *yillamin* presenter

The late Viv Malo recording at the 2020 Melbourne Invasion Day rally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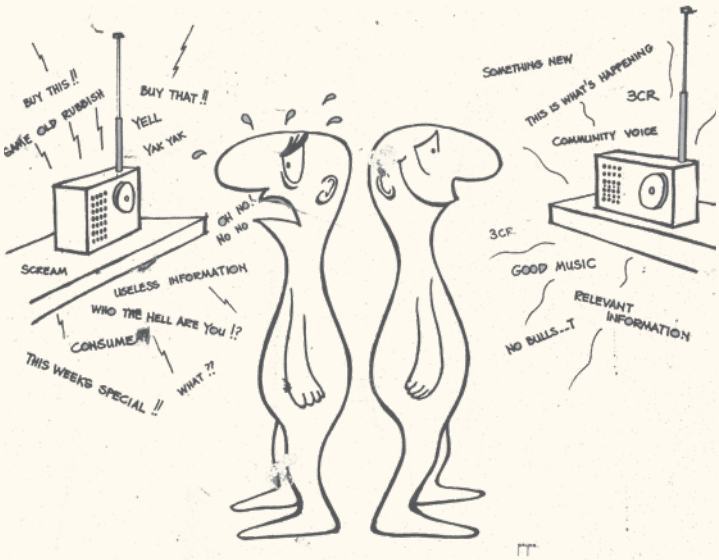
march 8
Riding the Airwaves

3CR Posters from the 70s-90's



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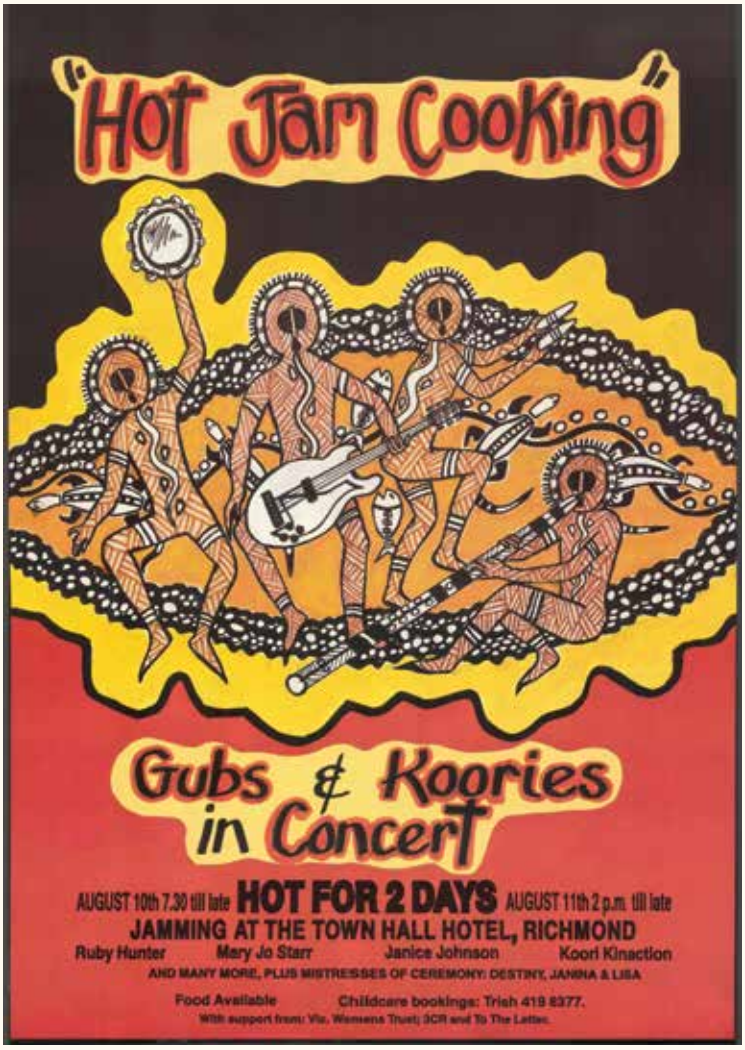
THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE



The prevailing voice of public education

DOGS, Saturday 12-1pm

Jean Ely has many titles to her name – teacher, tertiary lecturer, lawyer, author and long-standing radio producer. She has been on 3CR's airwaves since the station's early days and has witnessed its evolution over its 50 years.

Jean's fight for public education dates back to 1968, as a teacher in Sydney on strike after religious private schools began receiving state funding. After moving to Melbourne in 1975, Jean became involved with the local Council for the Defence of Government Schools (*DOGS*), which was engaged in a High Court case challenging the validity of government funding to religious private schools. She documented this case in her book 'Contempt of Court'.

To Jean, 'The *DOGS* are about a very basic issue, which is the right of a child to an education at public expense and for schools that are open to all children, whoever they are, so that they have the same opportunity from the moment they're born to the moment they've left university.' Her commitment to the cause stems from a deep belief that a free, secular and genuine public education system is essential to a truly democratic society.

DOGS first came onto the airwaves through interviews on Bill Hartley's Saturday morning program. They later secured their own midday Saturday timeslot in 1987, which they have held ever since. Alongside Jean, the *DOGS* team have included 'the front man' Ray Nilsen, Robert Ely, Ambi James, Sorrel Tucker, Geoff Irvin and current producer Dale Bridge. 'The program has always been a team effort,' Jean says, 'We are so grateful that 3CR has been there so that *DOGS* can put its message across consistently'.

Over the years, that gratitude has shaped the station's history, with the *DOGS* providing funding for the construction of Studio Four and the installation of solar panels.

Jean recalls the battle to save Richmond State School from closure as a defining moment in her activism, when *DOGS* members—alongside parents, teachers and students—held the picket line. '3CR was very important for saving Richmond, because the word would go out from station early in the morning, encouraging listeners to get down there when the police were arriving.' The book 'Behind the Lines' details this battle. She notes that 3CR has been important in many battles over the years and attributes its longevity to its 'good people who aren't prepared to give up.'

'3CR has survived and prospered as a community radio station where so many others have gone to the wall,' Jean goes on to say. 'There have been ups and downs and disagreements, but the rule has always been that we get on. And that's terribly important, because as a community radio station, we have to prove to the world that we can get on because the people in power divide and rule.'

Reflecting on the broader political climate, Jean adds, 'A problem in the world at the moment is that we're going back into oligarchic and authoritarian regimes. However, you never give up. You always fight. You stay around to live another day. It's a great life if you don't weaken.'

By Shae Wiedermann, *Climate Action Show* presenter

Jean Ely, *Defence of Government Schools* presenter

Same jazz time, same jazz channel!

Jazz on a Saturday, Saturday 4-5.30pm

'In Jazz, the keynote is improvisation,' says John Smyth, founding member of *Jazz on a Saturday (JOAS)*, 'which is also a very good keyword for broadcasting.'

Teaming up with fellow music enthusiast Roger Beilby in 1976, the two put together some plans for an afternoon show on the suggestion of then secretary, Bevan Ramsden, who simply remarked, 'Don't you think that would be a good time for a jazz program?' From a DIY studio made from discarded ABC equipment, with a transmission radius of 16 kilometres, *JOAS* played its first notes at 4pm on 2 October. It has been going ever since, earning it the distinction of being 'Australia's longest continuously running jazz radio program.'

In those early years, 'There were only eight AM stations, of which six broadcast football, the others classical, and Top 40,' says John. 'We sprung up in the middle of that and offered something rather different.'

The show is supported by the Victorian Jazz Club (VJC), whose mission is to promote and encourage the performance of jazz music. Even before *JOAS* was conceived, the VJC had been a pivotal support for 3CR, assisting the fledgling organisation to draft its constitution, joining as a Federation member in 1975. Roger's love of jazz had led him to the VJC in the 1960s, where he went on to serve many years as President.

John came to the station with a background in engineering and a keen interest in radio. He first joined as a technical volunteer, training panel operators. Within the first two months of the show, John and Roger would travel to jazz conventions around the country, recording material on portable reel-to-reel recorders to bring back and put on air. John was also a pioneer of outside broadcasting (OB) at 3CR, facilitating live feeds from music concerts and rallies, regularly helping programs outside of his own.

In the decades before mobile phone technology became available for OBs, radio stations needed to book in advance and connect to a copper telephone wire in the street to send audio back to their studios. An often costly exercise, involving a lot of planning! John recalls that there were a few occasions where the OB crew would improvise alternative methods, devising 'The $15 Outside Broadcast' which involved five reels of bell wire from Dick Smith at three dollars each… run out the door of 3CR, across the road, tacked down by various means, through the gutters… and in the backdoor of the hotel.' For the show's thousandth episode broadcast in 1995, John recalls the crew slinging an audio line across the street from the Smith Street Hotel into the upstairs window of the studios. 'You can still see the hole we drilled for the wire!'

In the early 2000s, *Jazz on a Saturday* expanded its team with the addition of ardent jazz enthusiasts, John Trudinger and Geoff Tobin. The show has featured interviews with countless notable Australian and international jazz figures and has covered many emerging musicians in the local jazz scene. Almost as old as 3CR itself, it remains one of the most popular on the grid. Not bad for a show that Roger had quipped 50 years ago, 'would probably only last a few months!'

By Brendan Bonsack, volunteer and trainer

Jazz on a Saturday presenters John Smyth and Roger Beilby

Al servizio della comunità!!

At the service of the community!!

Radio FILEF, Wednesday 6.30-7.30pm

Broadcasting since July 2025, *Radio FILEF* is one of 3CR's newest programs, yet its historical roots run deep within community radio. Presented in Italian and English by members of the Federation of Italian Migrant Workers and their Families (FILEF), our program offers a unique, radical and progressive voice for the Italian community.

Radio FILEF aims to bridge political, cultural, generational and linguistic gaps, with one foot in Italy and the other firmly planted here. Building on FILEF's history and advocacy for Italian migrant workers, as well as its involvement in political and social struggles, our program covers the issues that matter to our community: weekly analyses of current affairs, interviews, culture, and music from Italy, Australia and beyond.

A highlight for us this past year has been covering news from Italy that rarely reaches Australia. We are the only local program to provide detailed coverage of the Italian trial of Palestinian political prisoner Anan Yaeesh, as well as the ongoing mass demonstrations and general strikes that have swept across Italy in support of Palestine, and protests against the far-right government's growing repression and drive to war.

Locally, we covered the Francesco Fantin Memorial in rural Victoria where we met Tony Guseli. His touching interview about his research into his uncle and the other Italian migrant workers who died on the Snowy Scheme featured on our special program during summer. We also featured a first-hand report of police repression at Invasion Day 2026 in Boorloo-Perth, and a special for International Working Women's Day including Italian migrant women's perspectives on industrial issues and women's rights.

Radio FILEF presenter team Vittorio, Hanna, Tobia and Gigi the dog

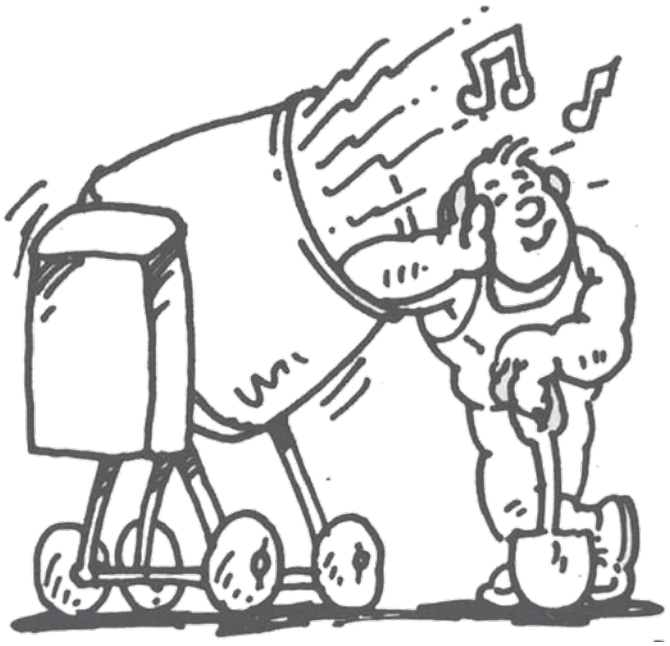
We see our program as continuing FILEF's rich engagement with community radio. Our organisation was one of the early supporters of 3CR and campaigned for multilingual broadcasting, including the establishment of Australia's first public access radio station, 3ZZ, in 1975. When the Fraser government forced the closure of 3ZZ in 1977, FILEF naturally found its new home at 3CR, joining the station in February 1978. Over the years, FILEF members produced numerous shows in Italian and English, including a dedicated women's program, and continued broadcasting into the early 1990s when the original organisation wound down in Melbourne.

FILEF was founded in Melbourne in 2023, thanks largely to the work of our late President, Gaetano Greco, a beloved and staunch community advocate. Gaetano was passionate about FILEF returning to 3CR, and his lessons and legacy continue to influence us both in our activism and in the studio each week. In many ways, *Radio FILEF* reflects the same motivations that drove FILEF's return in Melbourne, which is the need for a radical and progressive voice for the Italian community. Italian news and media in Australia are all too often 'apolitical' or conservative and usually disconnected from the radical grassroots politics of the Italy many of us know or want to connect with.

Take it from our newest member, Hanna: 'Since joining FILEF, I've felt more connected with my community. I have learnt so much through *Radio FILEF* and being a part of 3CR.'

We are proud to continue our shared, rich history as we celebrate 3CR's 50th year. Together we stand as a testament to why community radio and its radical, migrant voices remain as vital as ever.

By Vittorio Grando and Tobia Severi, *Radio FILEF* presenters



50 years solid

Concrete Gang, Sunday 9.30-10am

Concrete Gang History podcast series 3cr.org.au/concreteganghistory

The Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) and the *Concrete Gang* have been there since the beginning of 3CR's magnificent 50 years of giving a voice to the alienated, marginalised, and least powerful in our community.

The BLF affiliated to the Community Radio Federation back in 1975, before it got the 3CR licence, and members at branch meetings were asked to help with the setting-up of the new station and support its operation. So before the formal opening of the station on 3 July 1976, BLF members Danny Hellier and Phil Court, with production assistance from 3CR legend Darce Cassidy, recorded a short series called "A Builders Labourers History of Australia". This recording was used as part of the test broadcasts and became a regular Christmas fill-in for the *Concrete Gang*, which became a regular part of the 3CR schedule from July 1976. It has held down the 9.30am Sunday slot ever since.

The original rank-and-file presenters were Ian Bolton (Mario), Phil Court (Joe), Bob Mancor (Willy) and Paul Komersaroff (Bruce). They set the pattern for construction industry news, broadcasting health and safety issues, political commentary and expressions of solidarity with community groups and other unions, using aliases to avoid victimisation by bosses for speaking out. Phil also wrote the words for the "Builders Labourers Song", and after a few recording efforts, the current version continues on as the show's weekly theme song.

In the late 1970s, 80s and 90s, John Cummins (Harold) provided the continuity for the show as the BLF transitioned to become part of the CFMEU Construction Division in 1993.

He became infamous for his Cummoisms—'as unbiased as the Collingwood cheer squad'—and after describing badly behaving bosses as scallywags, he established the regular show segment "Scallywag of the Week".

In the 1980s and 90s, many BLF members kept the show and the station on the air, including regular presenters Dominic Amarto (Pepe), Mick Young (Colin), John Loh (Luigi) and the legendary "Poet Lorikeet" George Despard (Charlie). There were also, of course, numerous occasional presenters, too many to mention here.

After the integration into the CFMEU, the regular presenters came from a wider group, led by Frank O'Grady (Seamus), aided and abetted by Steve Long (Gorilla), Gerard Benstead (Buzza) and Jon Stanger (Stringbean). They introduced another weekly segment, "Sooky La La Award" to recognise bosses who can't stop whinging about workers and their unions. As the current crew of regulars—Campo, Sparrow and Three Trees—progressively take over the responsibility of the show and its traditions, innovation will continue, as it has over the last 50 years. Keeping 3CR on air and doing the job for construction workers will remain as paramount as ever.

Unfortunately, as many of the regular and occasional presenters have passed, we cannot get their thoughts on this 50-year journey, its highs and lows, what the past has taught us and what the future will offer. They must be acknowledged and thanked for helping us get to this momentous 50th Anniversary.

Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win!

By Ralph Edwards, former *Concrete Gang* presenter and producer of the *Concrete Gang History* series

Concrete Gang cartoon, CRAM Guide March-April 1978

Training as a revolutionary act

Remember your first training session? A skill you learnt? A friend you made? That revolution you planned while learning to wind tape on a reel-to-reel machine?

Speaking with some people who do, a common theme emerged. There was no manual for what 3CR did.

Early trainers remember handwriting training notes, illustrating instructions on how to operate studios, tape machines and conduct interviews. Some of these illustrations remain a marvel to this day!

From our inception, sharing skills was key to serving our community with accessible training crucial in offering opportunities to new and emerging communities. This support offered to 'make your own media', was often a first in terms of providing access and a means for self-determination.

Dalal Smiley remembers, 'In 1993 I was part of a group of Arabic-speaking migrant women, looking for an opportunity to make our voice and issues public. What 3CR offered us was training in all aspects of program production. We had complete control over content and style. That gave us lifelong skills as well as a sense of autonomy and freedom to be creative and courageous. Voice of Arabic Women was iconic for us and a moment in our lives when we truly found our voice'.

Training demystifies, builds confidence and makes radio accessible. It is this transfer of power and privilege that makes it a revolutionary act. With success measured in empowerment.

Long-time trainer Maya Graham observes, 'There is such deep respect and appreciation for who the trainees are, and what they bring to both the training sessions and the station. 3CR is about the people, so the training has to be too.'

Many people mention that the sessions focused on voice and microphone technique liberated them from a fear of not sounding 'the right way'. Discovering instead, the power of their own voice and the ability to control the message.

Former Training Coordinator Libby Jamieson credits the visionaries who set up the station, 'We have always challenged how radio sounds and broken down the barriers for so many people to have access to and hear their ways of speaking being broadcast'.

Trainees also reflect on how unique it was in the beginning to receive peer-to-peer training, with different shows sharing skills with each other. Nancy Atkin, a member of one of the morning shows in 1977, remembers being shown by a rock 'n' roll show host how to cue up a record on a spinning turntable, holding it still with her finger for a snappy start.

So while it's impossible to list all the different types of training and trainers and their impact over the years, we can be confident our training model has stood the test of time. Under the current stewardship of Innez Tulloch, training continues to adapt to the needs of our community, building on access and empowerment.

Thank you for being part of this revolutionary act.

By Gab Reade, Current Affairs Coordinator 2007-2023, *Raising Our Voices producer* 2003-present

Cartoon by Fiona Katauskas, 2009

Listening between the lines

Uprise Radio, Wednesday 5.30-6pm

From its inception, *Uprise Radio* has wholeheartedly embodied the radical ethos of 3CR. *Uprise Radio* first hit the airwaves in 2019 with Jackson McInerney (former breakfaster) and James Brennan (*Stick Together*) as a radical current affairs program. *Uprise Radio* turned me from a regular listener into broadcaster when I joined in 2021.

In September 2025, the program entered a new chapter with Xan and Koshin at the controls. Simultaneously bringing historiographical, political commentary to current issues while highlighting those that are overlooked and deliberately obscured in the mainstream, the two hosts are carrying it forward at a time when critical analysis of the present is needed more than ever.

'We've talked a little bit about topics that aren't getting covered at all, but mostly we talk about things that are getting covered, but we bring a more critical lens. We try to dig into things that might be getting mainstream attention but are framed with an establishment narrative, and we try to reframe them and show them from a different angle,' says Koshin. Xan adds that while they look at things already getting coverage, the focus is also on what's being deliberately missed in the media cycle.

With this ethos, Xan and Koshin weave an intricate narrative structure into the program, allowing the listeners to draw connections within the vast web of the current political climate. 'More generally the narrative-building for the movement is important and something that hopefully we can contribute to,' Koshin says, 'because a lot of these subjects are very big and complicated issues that I think people kind of get put off by a bit. It's like they don't want to try to understand, because some of them are too macro. But by doing the show, you can at least give listeners the information to understand why a topic might be important, empowering them to make decisions and build things into the future'.

This is why Xan says that the two of them came to 3CR, 'It was Koshin and I for about a decade just sitting together, having political discussions for hours on end. I've always found these conversations incredibly valuable. To share and grow that with other people, with new direction and purpose, is an evolution of something that was already happening'.

Reflecting on what they hope to bring to *Uprise Radio* listeners and to the community more broadly, Xan highlights, 'A sense of humanity. A lot of these topics can be really soul-crushing so being able to share that and sit with it and have an actual human conversation involving humour, laughter and music means that we can carry it together. And then, I also hope that also means other people can. Bear with it, even if it begins by just listening to it'.

By Mercedes Zanker, *A Friday Rave* presenter

Koshin and Xan, *Uprise Radio* presenters

25 years of unbroken connection

Beyond the Bars 2002-2026 3cr.org.au/beyondthebars

As 3CR marks 50 years of radical radio, *Beyond the Bars* enters its 25th year of broadcasting live inside Victorian prisons. Since the inaugural broadcast during NAIDOC Week in 2002, *Beyond the Bars* has used radio as a vessel for cultural connection. The planning and time spent preparing for the yearly broadcasts reflects 3CR's profound and inherent commitment to community. Over the years, the station has continuously upheld its responsibility by providing a space for Aboriginal people to share their stories and strength.

For nearly 20 years, Kutcha Edwards steered these broadcasts with a deep understanding of the prison system. As NAIDOC Person of the Year in 2001, Kutcha was entrusted with speaking on air to the men at our very first broadcast from Port Phillip Prison. As a survivor of the Stolen Generations, he helped establish the broadcast as a way to break the revolving door of the system. 'The mobs inside warm up to Beyond the Bars', says Kutcha, 'because they can, in a sense, voice what is going on within the confines of maximum-security prison but also internally in one's self.'

Beyond the Bars builds on the legacy of late broadcasters such as Gilla McGuinness, a pillar of the community, and poet Lisa Bellear. In 2003, Lisa presented the first women's broadcast from the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, providing a vital platform for truth-telling and radical love. When *Beyond the Bars* began, her work, alongside Gilla's and many others, including Johnny Mac, Freddy Norris, Haiden Briggs, Ross Morgan and Lester Green, established the airwaves as a space where Aboriginal people were heard on their own terms. These pioneers understood that radio is more than sound, it is a lifeline that carries the warmth of community into the coldest of institutions.

Today, Shiralee Hood is leading the project alongside a dedicated team of Aboriginal broadcasters. Shiralee and the team spend months visiting six prisons before going live, building a bridge of trust and mutual respect. She views the broadcast as a radical act of visibility, noting the project is about witnessing the profound resilience needed to survive, 'getting people to see beyond the bars, to the actual Aboriginal person who's speaking.'

Above: 2015 *Beyond the Bars* photo by Jessie Boylan

This 25-year milestone is a testament to the enduring power of Aboriginal people. It also highlights the persistent neglect of a state that remains in breach of obligations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Within the prison industrial complex, the over-representation of the most incarcerated people on earth remains a stark reality. 'It's hard to be in a society that doesn't like you', Shiralee reflects. Yet when the microphones go live, the spirit of the people proves stronger than the concrete walls.

One participant once described *Beyond the Bars* as 'a few hours of remission,' a moment where stories truly matter and the prison itself fades away. Another shared how the broadcast 'makes us feel that we really belong back in the community.' In this way, the airwaves become a sonic archive of survival where, from soulful songs and poems to the powerful rhythm of rap, culture acts as a lifeline of resistance and resilience.

These storytellers, artists, and Elders carry an unbroken spirit far beyond the bars, and for 25 years, this groundbreaking project has proven that the sovereign voice of the oldest living culture is always louder than the system attempting to contain it.

By Areej Nur, volunteer

Above: Beyond the Bars CD artwork from the archives

WAYS TO LISTEN

It's never been easier to listen to your favourite shows. Listen live on 855AM, 3CR Digital, or streaming on 3cr.org.au/streaming

Listen back on your favourite show's program page. Catch the podcast via 3cr.org.au/podcasts or on your favourite podcast app.

Community radio has an app and we're on it!

communityradio.plus

THANKS & GRATITUDE

Across 50 years there have been so many people who have helped build and shape the station.

We send our sincere thanks and gratitude to the recent work of Pilar Aguilera, Rachel Kirby, Loretta O'Brien and Senthooran Perambalam.

Pilar first volunteered at age 17 and was then a staff member and committee member, including Chairperson from 2019-2026. A fabulous effort!

Rachel was a staff member from 2009 to 2025 including nearly 10 years as Station Manager and continues to design the station's publications. A supreme contribution!

Loretta O'Brien was a staff member across 2005 to 2026 both as Finance and Admin Coordinator and Station Manager. A massive effort!

Senthooran Perambalam joined the station in the mid 1980s, was Treasurer from 2008 to 2026 and continues as a volunteer. A fantastic contribution!

Telling our own stories

3CR has a rich history of youth broadcasting. Over the decades, the station has supported children and young adults to develop radio skills, both at school and inside the walls of 3CR itself. Community radio has provided, and continues to provide, an opportunity for young people to find their voice and a sense of belonging.

The 1980s ushered in youth voices onto the airwaves. Starting in 1981, the Media Access Project for Schools supported children at more than 90 schools to gain first-hand media experience. Students researched, interviewed, recorded and edited their own programs, producing musical specials, comedy sketches, and current affairs segments on issues that mattered to their generation, such as uranium, sexism, racism, drugs, and unemployment.

On Behind the Sheltershed, the kids themselves presented and prepared afterschool programming, covering serious discourse, drama, music and social commentary. One participant, Ingrid, shared, 'We're part of the community too. Usually on the other stations … it's all from adult's views and here you have the kids talking about what they want to talk about.' (CRAM Guide Summer 1981-1982)

Founded in 1977, Ascolta, meaning 'to listen' in Italian, introduced the joys of broadcasting into classrooms. Students at seven Brunswick primary and high schools compiled music shows, recorded vox pops, interviewed musicians, wrote scripts, and even learnt to panel.

Radio opened new worlds for Ascolta participants. Moreland High student Trucly recounted, 'It was very exciting going to places I've never been to before and never even heard of. It's even more exciting when you hear your program on 3CR.' Another student, Dielek, weighed in, 'I get to interview people I want to interview. So far I have interviewed an air hostess, a model, two tennis coaches and the editor of a tennis magazine. I am planning on doing many more.' (CRAM Guide October-November 1985)

3CR's youth programs have spotlighted alternative news and marginalised voices. In the late 90s, Vietnamese Australian youth undertook radio training and started broadcasting. Vietnamese Youth and Students addressed the needs of young Vietnamese Australians living between two cultures and provided a social and artistic outlet for the community. The *VoiceBox*, which aired from 2004-2008, expressed young Vietnamese-Australian women's perspectives through Vietnamese and English. Its special project, 'In My Own Words,' engaged 84 young high school students to create their own show, exploring their unique concerns of how language and culture shapes communication.

Diana Nguyen, *VoiceBox* alumni and comedian, reflected in the Autumn 2009 CRAM guide, '*VoiceBox* … gave me the opportunity to express my stories, experiences and opinions to a wider community. To share them with other Vietnamese women was comforting as we had similar views or objections, which created great conversations.' Diana and other VoiceBox volunteers even went on to develop the project for TV.

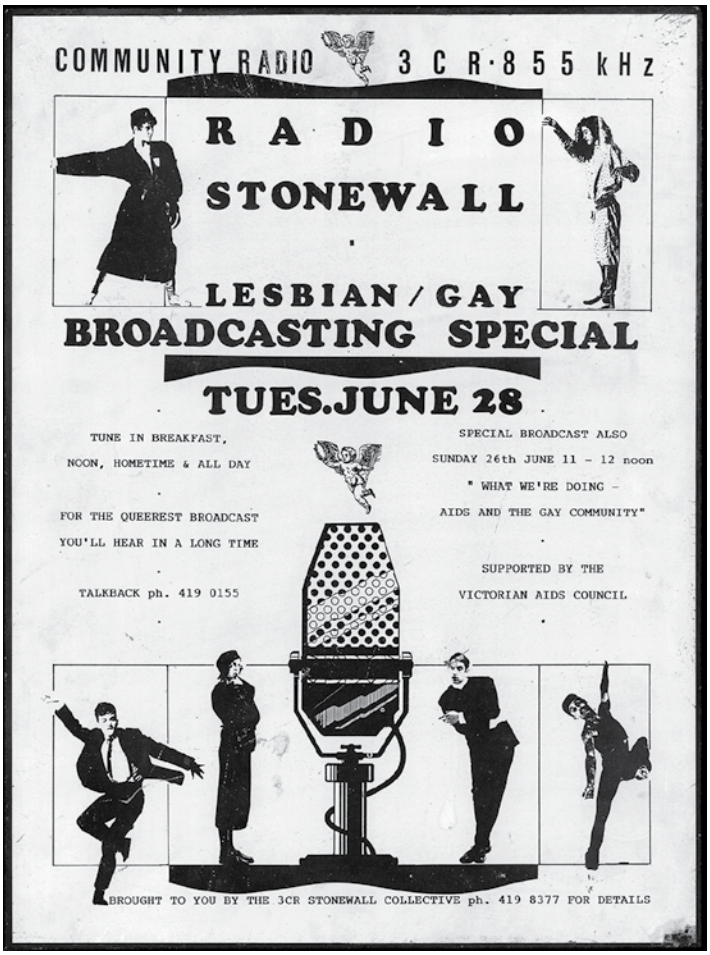
Time and time again, 3CR has bet on young people, with great rewards for its broadcasters and listeners. In their programming, these volunteers have offered new perspectives in tackling the issues important to them. Both on and off the airways, thousands of new broadcasters have built their skills and confidence, each generation more radical than the one before.

By Juliette Baxter, *Tuesday Breakfast* presenter

Youth Radio Festival poster from the archives

We made it ourselves

- *In Ya Face*, Friday 4-5pm
- *Out of the Pan*, Sunday 12-1pm
- *Queering the Air*, Sunday 3-4pm
- *Rainbows Don't Fade with Age*, Monday 2-3pm (fortnightly)
- *Trans-creator Radio*, Friday 9-10am (fortnightly)



For 50 years, queer voices have been on air at 3CR—not as an add-on, but as part of the station's DNA. From 3CR's earliest days, queer activism was embedded in the station's programming. *The Gay Liberation Radio Collective* (1976) produced one of Australia's first gay radio programs at a time when homosexuality was still criminalised and queer voices were largely absent from public life.

Over time, queer programming expanded to reflect the diversity of the communities it comes from. Programs such as the *Lesbian and Gay Show, Dykes on Mics*, and *PX Whanau Radio* created space for discussions of politics, culture, and identity, while Positively Primed and HIV Plus played a critical role during the HIV/AIDS crisis. Programs such as I*n Ya Face, Out of the Pan*, and *Queering the Air* have since become stalwarts of queer broadcasting.

During the HIV/AIDS epidemic, radio was not only about representation but survival. As former presenter and station manager Bruce Francis recalls, 'We received calls from people for whom we were their only contact with the queer community… I don't think we can overstate the importance of having out queer voices on air.'

More recently, programs including *Rainbows Don't Fade with Age* and *Trans-creator Radio* continue to connect the dots for communities, alongside podcast projects such as Queer Histories, Queer Futures, Queerbrood, and QR Code. Special broadcasts, including Stonewall Anniversary and Trans Day of Audibility broadcasts, have also sparked moments of collective energy across the station.

For former presenter and producer Libby Jamieson, queer broadcasting was also about specificity: 'We couldn't hear our voices… so we made it for ourselves,' she says, reflecting on the importance of queer women's voices and experiences being heard.

Five decades on, queer broadcasting at 3CR continues to transform and elevate, while staying grounded in community. And we're not done. Not while someone out there still needs to hear it.

Michele Vescio, volunteer

Radio Stonewall broadcast poster from the archives

PROGRAM UPDATES

NEW SHOWS

Breaking Through
The Beyond the Bars weekly radio show.
LISTEN: Monday 1-2pm

Crime Scene Australia Radio
We'll investigate the ongoing impacts of colonialism on First Nations' peoples and their lands. Uncle Robbie Thorpe & co-presenters
LISTEN: Monday 11am -12pm

Friday Night Sesh
Live requests, shout-outs and deep cuts across hip hop, reggae, rap, rock and more.
LISTEN: Friday 11pm-midnight

Gone Country
Classic Country Music
LISTEN: Monday 12-1pm (monthly)

Radio FILEF
Diverse and radical voices of the Italian community in Naarm/Melbourne and beyond.
LISTEN: Wednesday 6.30-7.30pm

Resident Frequency Radio
Tracks and chats with artists and community from the Collingwood 'hood.
LISTEN: Thursday 12-1pm

The Whole SHEbang
Music that illustrates the integral role women play in the development of popular and alternative music.
LISTEN: Wednesday 2-4pm

This is Not a Review
Theatre criticism and long-form dives into discourse, taste, performance, and the strange life of judgment.
LISTEN: Thursday 9.30-10am (fortnightly)

SPECIAL BROADCASTS

May Day: 1 May & 3 May
Every year we join communities around the world in celebrating the achievements of the labour movement.
LISTEN: 3cr.org.au/mayday2026

Trans Day of Audibility: 31 March
Featuring a diverse spread of community radio's least gender-conforming presenters.
LISTEN: 3cr.org.au/tdoa2026

International Women's Day: 8 March
24 hours of radio by women presenters, producers and musicians. A celebration of twenty-one years of Out of the Pan and 50 years of radical women's voices on the airwaves. LISTEN: 3cr.org.au/iwd2026

Dissociative Identity Disorder Awareness Day: 5 March
Conversations on dissociative disorders and complex trauma with a focus on navigating medical systems.
LISTEN: 3cr.org.au/didad2026

Invasion Day: 26 January
3CR's Independent Blak Media present an epic day of broadcasting. LISTEN: 3cr.org.au/invasionday2026

Disability Day: 3 December
Disabled people's visions of a safe future for everyone: the relationships and innovations that can get us there.
LISTEN: 3cr.org.au/disabilityday2025

16 Days of Action on Gender-based Violence: 25 November – 10 December
Programs from across the grid presented on the theme of eliminating gender-based violence in all its forms.
LISTEN: 3cr.org.au/16days2025

Hiroshima – Nagasaki: 80 years of the Atomic Bomb
Commemorative events, survivor testimonies and the global movement for nuclear disarmament.
LISTEN: 3cr.org.au/hiroshimanagasaki80years

Nakba Day 2025
As we mark the 77th anniversary of the Nakba, action is needed now more than ever.
LISTEN: 3cr.org.au/nakbaday2025

COMING UP!

Celebrating 50 Years!
Across all programs, throughout June, we'll be bringing to light gems from our archives, connecting programmers past and present, and celebrating the many ways that 3CR enables progressive communities to voice ideas and build their power to create social change.

Beyond the Bars: 6-10 July
Celebrating 25 years of powerful prison broadcasts during NAIDOC week.
3cr.org.au/beyondthebars2026

SPECIAL MILESTONES

As we celebrate 50 years of 3CR we also celebrate some amazing milestones for programs across the grid: *Concrete Gang* 50 years, *Steam Radio* 50 years, *Jazz on a Saturday* 50 years, *Women on the Line* 40 years, *Mafalda* 35 years, *Earth Matters* 30 years, *Burning Vinyl* 30 years, *Eritrean Voice* 25 years, *Out of the Pan* 21 years, to name but a few.

SUBSCRIBE TO 3CR

Your subscription is a simple and easy way to show your solidarity for real community-controlled media - grassroots and independent. Whether it's gardening, eclectic music, community languages, First Nations voices or cutting-edge current affairs – we've got a show for you. Community support enables us to broadcast critical conversations from diverse perspectives and showcase local culture, arts and music.

Subscribe today and be part of community-owned and community-controlled media.

3cr.org.au/subscribe

Subscriber poster from the archives

You're invited to celebrate 50 years of 3CR Community Radio

Collingwood Town Hall, Saturday 4 July, 2026

11am-4pm

Come along to our community day and help us celebrate this significant milestone. Catch up with listeners, supporters and broadcasters and enjoy music, speakers, stalls, activities, food and drinks. Free entry, family friendly, drug and alcohol free event. RSVP and let us know you're coming!