

# Campbell Town airwaves expand as radio goes live

IF YOU live at Campbell Town and you tune your radio into 87.6FM, you will now pick up the dulcet tones of your own Campbell Town radio station.

Campbell Town Radio Tasmania took to the air waves about a month ago and has already picked up an audience of locals keen to hear news, music and what is going on around the town.

But radio station manager John Reardon won't be stopping there.

He has a Northern Midlands Radio plan which will see Ross, Evandale, Longford and Cressy with their own town radios run from the mother station, at Campbell Town.

Longford is the next location for its own station which should please residents who have missed Heart FM which was forced to shut down because of spiralling costs and difficulty finding volunteer support, nearly 10 years ago.

Mr Reardon, who grew up at Burnie and has spent most of his life working in electronics and communication, understands.

"Simply put, the setup costs, licensing and general operating costs are prohibitive for a full community station with a significant funding of some \$200,000 required for a set up," he said.

However Mr Reardon,

who has also been a ham radio nut since he was a teenager, has found another way.

"The licensing which forms a major cost (for a new radio station) we've contained by using what is known as LPON (Low Power Open Narrowcasting)," he said.

"There are several restrictions on such a licence, the major ones being the output power (watts) and the availability of an allocated frequency in the LPON band."

Mr Reardon's proposed stations will have a much smaller network coverage area than usual of about 2.5 kilometres from the transmission point.

"This will fully cover the small towns that we are aiming for and at this time the frequencies are available for towns including Campbell Town (already established), Ross, Evandale, Longford and Cressy."

It means that Mr Reardon has been able to set up the Campbell Town mother station for about \$20,000 not \$200,000 and believes he can establish satellite stations at the other Northern Midlands towns mentioned for about \$3000.

But why?

He and his wife Marianne moved to Campbell Town to live about six months ago from Legana.

They had moved there from Victoria, where Mr



ON AIR: Campbell Town's John Reardon in his shed housing the new Campbell Town Radio station. He intends to expand to other towns in the municipality.

Reardon has mostly lived since leaving Burnie after enlisting in the Australian Army when he was 19.

He had started an electrical apprenticeship.

"My father and brother were both sparkies (electricians) and they worked at the Mill (the former Burnie Pulp and Paper Mill)," Mr Reardon said.

"I didn't want to do that. I wanted to go and see what was out in the world. So I joined the army."

When Mr Reardon retired from the electronics industry in which he had worked since leaving the army, he and his wife decided to move to Tasmania to live closer to children and family.

But retirement doesn't

really suit Mr Reardon's busy mind.

Now in his early 70s, he contacted an electrical business to see if there were any odd jobs that he could do for them.

He started doing test and tag work for the business travelling to companies around the state to test their electrical equipment on site, tag it as safe to use and supplying an audit report to the company.

It has built into a fulltime job.

"Last year we (I) did 18,000-20,000 tags around the state. We've got a group of about 15 regular clients now," Mr Reardon said.

"I was doing so much travelling and Marianne

and I thought it would be better to live somewhere more central to all the state, like Campbell Town."

The couple moved to the Northern Midlands town about the same time as residents were busy with plans to celebrate Campbell Town's bicentenary and involving as many residents as possible.

"We noticed that there didn't seem to be any form of local communication, a notice board at the supermarket, that was about it," he said.

For someone like John Reardon, the obvious solution to that problem was a local radio station.

And the project grew.

He can see a time soon when he will have to move

the radio station out of the converted shed at the back of his property.

"We will need proper studios but we will be staying in Campbell Town," he said.

He wants to build the station and its satellite centres at towns across the Northern Midlands into community stations with plenty of community input through live and outside broadcasts.

He has been talking to Campbell Town primary and high school teachers about getting primary students involved running their own outside broadcasts and training the high school students in radio broadcasting firsthand as part of their media studies.



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## Council keeping lid on its costs

FEW new initiatives for the next 12 months were identified in the Northern Midlands Council 2021-22 Budget in its attempts to rein in costs to keep rate rises down.

Corporate Service manager Maree Bricknell said that the 2021-22 Operating Budget had been drawn up to start recovery from the social and financial shock caused by the Covid-19 pandemic for the community at large.

"This year council aims to deliver a very small operating surplus," she said.

The council followed up by signing off on a 3.3 per cent rate increase, more than half a per cent less than the 3.95 per cent rise recommended by council officers.

So the list of initiatives funded for the new financial year were subdued compared to recent years.

The six main funded new initiatives in 2021-22 will be:

- \$28,240 for a climate change emergency strategy/action plan and \$5512 for

the Northern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy (NTRLUS) climate project.

- \$63,500 for Northern Midlands Business Association projects and Translink promotion.

- \$80,000 for town promotion videos, banners and maps.

- \$100,340 for planning consultancy.

- \$50,000 for municipal weed control action plan.

- \$50,000 for masterplans and other general consultancy.

The council charges rates for 7612 properties across the municipality with 266 exempt properties including Tooms Lake and Lake Leake shack sites.

There are now five places in the Northern Midlands where residents pay more than \$1000 annually for rates.

They are Longford (approximately \$1127), Perth (\$1187), Evandale (\$1226) Devon Hills (\$1951) and Campbell Town (\$1012).