

<b>Project Name</b>	Accessible Zeds. Engaging People Living with disability at 4ZZZ
<b>Partner Organisation</b>	Creative Broadcasters Limited-4ZZZ
<b>Project Period</b>	01 July 2023 to 30 June 2024
<b>Project Status</b>	Completed
<b>Project Budget</b>	\$40,023.20

## Project Overview

4ZZZ is a Brisbane community radio station that aims to give a platform to people who are often unheard or forgotten. The station is run by the equivalent of 3.5 full-time staff and over 250 active volunteers. Every program on air at 4ZZZ is made by volunteers. 4ZZZ (102.1FM) is one of a very small number of radio stations in Australia that broadcasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The FM band has over 80 weekly programs and Zed Digital has at least 40.

The Accessible Zeds Project aims to increase the representation of people with disabilities on the radio, make it easier for them to volunteer at the station, offer specialized broadcast training and support them to achieve their goals. The key stakeholders for this project are people with disabilities and 4ZZZ, with the wider community seeing some flow-on benefits.

## Main impacts

*“This new grid of Zed Digital has seen the biggest influx of new programming ever. Nine new shows with a wide variety and diversity in content and content creators...The value of hearing new voices is unprecedented - it makes Zed Digital more and more relevant. ...This is valued so much, and it allows people whose time pressures, accessibility concerns or issues, and general make up of how their lives work, somewhere to have their voices heard, their ideas expanded, ... and develop as people”*

*(Blair Martin  
4ZZZ Zed Digital Coordinator  
Queer Radio Brisbane Coordinator (4ZZZ 102.1FM)*



Photo 1 Owen, Bryce, Bryce's support worker and Salty at the first Accessible Open Day



Photo 2 Sample Facebook post promoting the project

✓ 68 people living with disability were inducted to 4ZZZ Accessible Zeds program. Inductions were held on Sunday, so attendees were able to see how the show “Only Human” was put on air. This show is produced and hosted by people living with a disability.

✓ 23 people living with disability trained in broadcasting.

4 new programs were created by the people inducted. All shows are now part of the Zed Digital greed.

1. [Cool4Catzzz](#)
2. [High Fidelity](#)
3. [Steve’s Radio Show](#)
4. [Molotov Cocktail](#)

3 more volunteers from this cohort are joining existing programs.

✓ 15 people living with disability and trained in broadcasting have recorded at least one episode for a digital show

✓ Production of 4 Disability awareness videos These videos were created with the aim to support the induction program for volunteers at 4ZZZ.

- [Video 1: Disability at 4ZZZ, Featuring: Owen, Salty and Suin](#)
- [Video 2: Types of disability and basic rules when talking with anyone living with a disability \(Physical Disability and Sensory disabilities\)](#)
- [Video 3: Types of disability and basic rules when talking with anyone living with a disability \(neurodivergence, the autism spectrum, acquired brain injury and mental health conditions\)](#)
- [Video 4: How to be an ally for someone living with disability in and out of 4ZZZ](#)

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*“... the bigger obstacle has been overcoming anxiety about speaking into the microphone. At first, was very uncomfortable hearing my own voice on the headphones... As I listen to more radio shows and continue develop my own radio show, I’m also discovering MY VOICE”*

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*(Extract of a feedback letter to the Program Accessible Zeds. The author lives with bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder and PTSD)*

## Highlights

- *Participants* that have come through this program are hard at work either on their own Zed Digital shows, contributing content to other shows and even filling in on the 102.1FM grid occasionally.
- *15 Organisations between NDIS providers and VIOs* were engaged to take part on the project. Some of them helped us to promote the initiative within the community and others reached out to refer people who wanted to participate.
- *Accessible open days* Induction days were run during Sundays with a BBQ and some drinks.



Photo 3 Induction at Accessible Open day

*“These Accessible Open Days were fantastic. Not only for the new volunteers attending but also for the current volunteers that got to help us put it on, giving them an opportunity to hear about other experiences. I heard someone describe it as: “The most welcoming house party ever”*

*(Salty- Volunteer Manager 4ZZZ)*

- ✓ *Adaptability in inductions was crucial.* Initially, trainings were scheduled during quieter station times. However, recognizing the accessibility barriers faced by some participants—who couldn't attend on Sundays due to insufficient NDIS funding for necessary support workers—Thursdays were subsequently added to the schedule, along with online inductions.



Photo 4 ORCA Induction Group

- *Adaptability has multiple dimensions* a tailored training was developed adapting the Broadcasting Training Program to better accommodate individuals with diverse access and support requirements.

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- 1) ***Physical adaptation:*** *Devised solutions for participants unable to physically access our studio spaces. Training sessions were conducted to familiarize them (and their support personnel) with our library of Zoom Microphones, enabling recording in alternative areas throughout our facility.*
  - 2) ***Social and emotional adaptation:*** *Participants were encouraged to progress through the training material at their own pace, leveraging resources such as the Participant Booklet, Wiki, and Database. We fostered a supportive and relaxed atmosphere, meeting participants wherever they were in their journey on any given day.*
  - 3) ***Intellectual adaptation:*** *Throughout the program, we continuously observed and subtly assessed participants' comprehension at different stages of training. This proactive approach allowed us to clarify any potential misunderstandings and ensure a thorough understanding of the material*
  - 4) ***Temporal adaptation:*** *Recognizing varying schedules and needs, we introduced a series of drop-in sessions. These sessions provided participants with the flexibility to return at their convenience for additional support, contrasting with our conventional announcer training that typically follows a structured format with limited ongoing support from the community.*

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- *Incubatorzzz*. This show was designed as a platform for individuals who have participated in the accessibility program, as well as future volunteers living with disabilities, to nurture their confidence and cultivate innovative show concepts.

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*“This [show] make being on the radio more accessible for volunteers living with a disability for a few reasons:*

1. *They don't have to come into the station.*
2. *They can pre-record their show.*
3. *They don't have to commit to the creating a whole show of content.*
4. *It allows them time to develop their show ideas to explore what works for them and what doesn't.”*

*(Salty- Volunteer Manager 4ZZZ)*

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- Networking for Knowledge and experience sharing. Salty (4ZZZ Volunteer Manager and Project Manager) meet with the volunteer coordinator at 2SER and FBI in Sydney. Both are Community Radio Stations with interest in starting a similar program with their volunteer cohort. Salty shared some of the resources created for Accessible Zeds as well as her experience with the project.



Photo 6 Salty and 2SER Volunteer Coordinator, Jono



Photo 5 Salty and FBI Volunteer Manager Bre

## Lessons learned.

- **Time and Budget.** Is important to take in consideration that it takes time to gauge interest of people to volunteer and time required to make the adaptations required. For a future project it should be considered a time of 6 months to do this.
- You don't have to reinvent the wheel, there are some amazing resources out there and making sure you provide the required credit. For example, we needed to create a form for the engagement and needed a list of different disabilities. After hours of searching the internet for one we found something appropriate from the Disability and Inclusion Resources at the [Australian National University People and Culture page](#).
- For the future of the program, it is recommended that a dedicated support role for the Volunteer Manager is established. This role can handle scheduling, address grievances, and facilitate personalized communication with participants outside of regular training sessions. This support can be particularly beneficial for individuals who are neurodivergent or dealing with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities. By having a designated coordinator, it is possible to enhance the ability to provide tailored support and ensure that all participants feel heard, understood, and adequately supported throughout their engagement with our program.
- It was reasonably difficult to find new volunteers living with disabilities who wanted to participate in the Accessible Zeds program. The project manager thinks a lot of this had to do

with confidence of a lot of people who live with disability. A lot of time has been taken to make sure people realise that they are worthy of being on radio.

- When talking about our Accessible Open Days and inductions the weather played a big role. It is something that is often overlooked when engaging people living with disability. Some disabled folks are greatly affected by the heat. 4ZZZ's building isn't air conditioned throughout. In future we would only run Accessible Open Days in winter.



Photo 7 Future volunteer Cale at our Accessible Open Day



Photo 8 Salty (Host of Rhinestone Cowgirl), Poppy and Ian (Host of Brighten the Corners and Program Manager) after Poppy's visit to both of our shows

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*"...I can see how much it (the Accessible Zeds program) helps people and how positive the work environment is here. The staff are all so helpful and genuine, and clearly care about uplifting the community and allowing people to engage with 4zzz through various forms of work experience. There are multiple roles and types of volunteering available, and everyone at 4zzz is happy to help out and offer different types of work and training based on what works best..."*

*(4zzz Staff member)*

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