



On-Air Presenter Training Manual

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Property of Voice FM

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Welcome to Voice FM

As a Voice FM presenter, you are the voice of our community radio station, where you'll have the chance to make a real difference in the community while sharing your passion.

All presenters are required to undergo training before becoming a presenter and to be familiar with this manual. It is designed to equip you with the technical skills, broadcast techniques, and legal knowledge required to operate our studios confidently and professionally.

We look forward to assisting you on your journey onto the airwaves of Voice FM – Ballarat Community FM Radio. Welcome to the team!

We are always open to new shows and presenters.

Community Broadcasting Guiding Principles

Community broadcasters are united by six guiding principles. We will work to:

1. Promote harmony and diversity and contribute to an inclusive, cohesive and culturally diverse Australian community;
2. Pursue the principles of democracy, access and equity, especially for people and issues not adequately represented in other media;
3. Enhance the diversity of programming choices available to the public and present programs that expand the variety of viewpoints broadcast in Australia;
4. Demonstrate independence in programming as well as in editorial and management decisions;
5. Support and develop local arts, culture, music and activities;
6. Increase community involvement in broadcasting.

Firstly, some housekeeping

1. Voice FM Responsibilities

- Undertake to provide facilities, training, infrastructure and a safe working environment that enables the presenter to work in our community radio station as a volunteer presenter.
- Ensure that the Station operates in accordance with the applicable Laws and Government regulations, and that Station policies and procedures are followed and shall keep the presenters informed of any changes that may apply to them.
- Provide the presenter access to the Voice FM and CBAA's conflict resolution processes as set out in the CBAA's Code of Practice. Concerns presented in writing will be addressed at the next scheduled Programming Committee meeting.
- Ensure that details of any complaints received are fully explained to the presenter, and the actions Voice FM is obligated to follow.
- Endeavour to give forty-eight (48) hours' notice, where practicable, if changes to schedules or format are required, due to special events or other programming requirements: e.g.: Outside broadcasts.
- Give constructive feedback on programs.
- Programming Committee to provide feedback on the quality of a presenter's program and presenting skills to assess satisfactory performance and to suggest improvements as required.
- Undertake to take every care with item(s) left by the presenter at the station but cannot accept any responsibility for loss or damage.
- Notify all presenters and volunteers of any changes to the rules or guidelines as the needs of the station changes, either by the noticeboard, panel notices or in writing.

2. Presenters Responsibilities

- Any individual or group wishing to be involved in presenting a program on Voice FM needs to be a current financial subscriber.
- The presenter undertakes to comply with the requirements of the Community Broadcasting Code of Practice and the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 and any other applicable legislation, and accept all liability attached to the station caused by their breach of such Code or Act.
- The presenter undertakes to accept responsibility for the content of their program, and so far, as it is possible to do so, agrees to comply with the laws relating to defamation, libel and slander, obscenity and contempt of court.
- Voice FM provides presenters with the environment, (and the artistic scope), to broadcast the best radio possible. In exchange, presenters are to always behave in a reasonable and mature manner, in strict accordance with and in the spirit of voice FM policies, procedures and guidelines. These obligations apply both on and off air, both inside and outside the station, and whilst acting on behalf of the station in a volunteer capacity.
- Presenters are required to NOT vilify members and organisations of the community, both on and off air, when representing Voice FM. This includes political parties, businesses, community groups, and our fellow regional/metro broadcasters.
- Presenters are expected to contribute to the station's positive, friendly and communicative environment. They will contribute to the achievement of a safe, tolerant, and equitable working environment by avoiding, and assisting in preventing behaviour which is discriminatory. Discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment, harassment, and victimisation are not tolerated.
- The presenter undertakes to accept all directions and decisions made by the programming committee concerning — program content, technical quality, presentation skills and on-air conduct, access to station premises, use of station equipment and property, strategic planning, risk management and Occupational Health and Safety.
- The presenter will undertake to comply with any reasonable request by the programming committee to change their broadcast time, the day, program content or length.
- The presenter understands that Voice FM retains the right to replace scheduled programming with alternate programming, (such as outside broadcasts), when and if required.
- The presenter understands that Voice FM undertakes to communicate with reasonable notice any changes to regularly scheduled programming.

- Select broadcast material appropriate to the potential listening audience for that time of day. Where the content of broadcast material is likely to be challenging, presenters are asked to make a judgement on potentially offensive, obscene and blasphemous material, and when in doubt do not broadcast it, or seek the advice from the Station Manager on the appropriateness of specific material. Presenters are expected to make a disclaimer warning to the listening audience before airing any potentially offensive, obscene and blasphemous material, or at the very least back-announce such an occurrence if unaware prior to broadcasting it.
- Presenters are expected to put in some volunteer work, (additional to announcing time), into other station activities, such as events, OBs, working-bees, or assist in an area that you think relates to your expertise. Voice FM is volunteer-based and cannot survive with a few doing all the workload, so please consider how you can assist in some way, or when requested.
- Presenters are requested to attend training sessions and meetings and stay informed by reading regular Voice FM communications.

3. The Process

3.1. Preparing a Program Submission

In preparing a program submission you should address these items:

- a. will the program idea complement the principles of our Voice FM Programming Policy?
- b. what will make your program distinctive?
- c. who is the target audience?
- d. do you think your program idea is innovative or fills a void not covered by other Voice FM programs?
- e. what is your presentation style?
- f. the range of content you expect to cover;
- g. your knowledge of the content;

Note: You will be supplied with a program application form to complete.

3.2. Training

Voice FM offers free in-house training in broadcasting to prospective volunteer presenters who are interested in being involved in Voice FM broadcast operations.

Following initial interview/s, a prospective presenter will be allocated a trainer, who will usually be an experienced Voice FM presenter with expertise in the program area of interest to the applicant.

Practical training sessions are held in the station's main Studio 1 or recording Studio 2. These sessions cover an overview of radio presentation, music programming, presenting live-to-air, panelling, pre-recording and editing, and script writing.

The normal sequence of sessions is observation of the trainer, (or other experienced presenter), in a live studio experience, followed by instruction on panel operation and/or pre-recording techniques, (depending on the prospective presenter's future deployment) and finally trial program production).

There is no set limit to the number of training sessions required. Training may continue for as long as is required, by agreement between trainer and trainee, until both feel an acceptable level of proficiency has been achieved. During this process, it should be noted that studio time can sometimes be hard to secure. Studio time for practice and/or program production should be booked in advance and, if the booking cannot be used, it must be cancelled so that someone else can use the studio time.

Following this practical phase of presenter training, the volunteer will be given the opportunity to present a live or pre-record and edit program/s to be broadcast to air, in order to gain experience and confidence behind the microphone.

These programs are usually produced with the trainer present as advisor and troubleshooter. When training has been fully completed and some 'live' experience gained, the new presenter may apply for time slots in the program grid commensurate with their areas of musical interest or expertise.

As a new presenter, there will be on-air trial lasting up to three months following completion of training. Progress will be reviewed and evaluated by trainers/mentors, and the programming committee during this period, and constructive feedback offered.

4. So, let's start with the Studio

4.1. General Information

Food and drink is prohibited near the studio equipment. Please use side table away from the studio desk to place your drink/s.

Treat all station equipment and property with utmost care to avoid damage to equipment.

All equipment responds to a gentle touch on the centre of the button.

Check that the headphone levels are off, or set very low, before you put your headphones on to avoid ear damage.

Voice broadcast quality is better when the studio door is closed.

Our station utilizes two robust mixing consoles: the **Solidyne 2600XL** in Studio 1 and the **Elan Kestrel 12** in Studio 2. While the layout differs slightly, the core principles of operation remain identical across both desks.

4.2. The Faders (Volume Control)

Function: Faders control the audio levels transmitted out to the broadcast tower.

Optimal Levels: When raising a fader, monitor the VU meters, (the illuminated dials/lights at the top of the desk). Aim for the "0" mark. Consistent peaking in the red indicates audio distortion, while low levels will be inaudible to listeners.

Standard Protocol: Always pull faders completely down when a channel is not actively in use to prevent accidental broadcasts.

Monitor your VU meters to make sure your voice and your music are at the same level

Listeners should NOT have to adjust their volume controls during your program.

4.3. Headphones

It is extremely important that the panel operators have headphones on at all times when going to air.

Once headphones are removed you lose control of the continuity of volume levels going to air for the various components. Variation of volume levels is a big turn off for the listener!

Never speak on air without headphones on.

4.4. Microphones

- Speak directly into the microphone. Have it at mouth level.
- Keep the microphone a hand span from your mouth.
- Move the microphone by the arm, not by the connecting plug or microphone. Do not move the arm while microphone is live.
- Do not shout.
- Avoid talking and turning away at the same time, as your levels will drop significantly.
- Check your VU meter levels using the cue buttons.

Turn the microphone(s) off if:

- You are not speaking;
- There is unwanted background noise;
- You are about to cough, sneeze, or hiccup;
- Be sure to turn your microphone off as soon as you finish talking on-air;
- Be in the habit of turning all microphones off before speaking in the studios. Check the microphone button is not lit. It is easy to say the wrong thing and still be on-air.

Remember: your microphone is sensitive. It will pick up the rustle of papers or squeaky chairs.

It is the panel operator's responsibility to set up interview guests with the correct microphone positioning by explaining what is required to control their microphone levels. You will be able to judge by listening through your headphones while they are talking and checking the VU meters that correspond to their microphone.

4.5. CD Operation

- Check CD channel fader is down before loading and selecting tracks on player left or right. They automatically cue.
- Slide fader into position.
- Double check button light on the respective channel is on.

4.6. Turntables

Important: Turntables are not to be used to stack things on.

The tone arms are fragile. ALWAYS use the tone arm lifter to position the arm near the location of the start of track and gently lower onto record.

It is important not to abuse the turntable needles (stylus). Please treat them gently as they are very expensive.

4.6.1.1. How to operate

- Cue using cue button.
- ALWAYS use the tone arm lifter to position the arm near the location of the start of track and gently lower onto record.
- Lift with tone arm lifter after use and return the tone arm to the tone arm rest.

4.6.1.2. How to cue a record to the start of the required track

1. You need to wear headphones;
2. Press the cue button for the required turntable;
3. Press start/stop on the turntable;
4. Place the needle near the track required;
5. When you hear the required track commence press start/stop button again;
6. Rotate the turntable $\frac{3}{4}$ turns anti clockwise (this prevents the whirr noise at the start of the track);
7. Press the on-air button for the required turntable.

4.7. Computers – Main (right side) and Auxiliary (left side)

4.7.1.1. Play It Live

Our primary playout software is Play It Live. It manages the scheduling and playback of our pre-recorded programs, digital music library, sponsor announcements, and promos.

4.7.1.2. Operating Modes

Operating modes are controlled by two selection switches located in the bottom right of the Play It Live window:

- **Log Scheduler:** This should never be switched off. If you ever need to restart Play It Live, make sure the Log Scheduler is turned back on immediately.
- **Automation:** This switch must be turned on at the end of your show to activate full automation mode (detailed below).

If you need to insert stops on tracks, you must be in Live Assist Mode with the **Automation** switch turned **OFF**. The Log Scheduler must remain **ON**. You can toggle between Automation and Live Assist modes using **F6** on the keyboard.

- **Automation Mode:** The system sequentially triggers the next item in the log without user intervention, and any track stops are ignored. A large red bar is displayed at the top of the playout log (the playlist on the left). While in Automation Mode, you cannot drag tracks or promos into the playlist, nor can you stop the player manually.
- **Live Assist Mode:** Allows you to insert stops to pause playback after a track and manually skip to the next item. If you switch to Live Assist Mode during your show using **F6**, remember to switch back to Automation Mode when your show concludes.

4.7.1.3. The Main Playlist (The Log)

- **The Log (Left Side):** Displays the current track, queued items, and scheduled playback times. Presenters can rearrange the queue using drag-and-drop.
- **Inserting Stops:** Click the green arrow on the specific track you want to stop after it finishes playing. To stop the *currently playing* track when it finishes, press **F4** on the keyboard.
- **Adding Music Tracks, Station Promos, CSAs, and Station IDs:** Drag the desired track from the library on the right side of the screen into the log on the left. You can search for a track by name using the search bar at the top of the library or browse by group. Left-click and hold the track, then drag it to the playlist—a green line will indicate where the track will be placed when you release the mouse button. You can also reorder existing tracks in the playlist using this same drag-and-drop method.
- **Removing a Track from the Playlist:** Click the bin icon (soft delete) on the right side of the track. **Do not delete any Ad Blocks from the playlist.** These are mostly protected, and any attempted deletion will be logged.

- **Starting the Next Track:** Press **F1** or click the **Play** button in the bottom right corner of the screen to start the next track in the playlist immediately. Do not hold the button down, as this will cause the system to skip through multiple tracks.

4.7.1.4. Operating Modes

- **Auto (Automation Mode):** The system sequentially triggers the next item in the log without user intervention. Ideal for when a presenter needs to momentarily leave the studio.
- **Assist (Live Assist Mode):** The system halts playback at the conclusion of the current track, awaiting manual input. Use this mode when preparing to open the microphone for a live back-announcement or segment introduction.

4.7.1.5. The Main Playlist (The Log) and Cartwall

- **The Log:** Displays the current track, queued items, and scheduled times. Presenters can rearrange the queue via drag-and-drop mechanics.
- **The Cartwall:** A grid interface designed for instantaneous audio playback. Use carts to trigger sound effects, station sweepers, news introductions, or underlying music beds. Carts can be fired via mouse click or assigned keyboard shortcuts.
- **Content Retrieval:** Utilize the search function to locate specific digital tracks or pre-recorded interviews, then drag them directly into the desired position within the main playlist.

4.8. Auxiliary Computer (Left Side – Studio 1 Only)

The Auxiliary Computer is located on the left-hand side of the desk in Studio 1. It is used to access websites, perform Google searches, and check studio email via Outlook Web. **It cannot be used for music playout.**

- **Login & Password:** The login credentials match those of the main Playout Computer on the right side. The password is located on a label at the bottom of the screen.
- **Studio Email & Text Line:** The studio email receives live Text Line messages, so ensure **Outlook Web** remains open during your broadcast.

5. On Air Protocols and Ideas

5.1. Preparation

How to plan a radio program

The notes below are a guide of how to plan a radio program. People have different ways of preparing their programs, and there is no specific right or wrong way, so use as a guide and adapt it to suit your own needs.

Remember, the most important things are to be positive on air and to have fun when presenting a program.

Before your program

Please prepare your program several days in advance of your show and preferably not the night/day before. That way, when you come on air the show will be fresh to you as well as the listeners, and your voice will sound more enthusiastic on air.

Perhaps plan your show in sections and think about the following:

- What kind of mood would you like the program to have overall?
- Are you planning a flow in the program- i.e.: lively intro, quieter part in the middle, lively ending of the show.
- For music-based programs - try to take the listener on a musical journey with you.
- Prepare any notes, extra information etc..., before you go on air.

Plan the show and print out a running sheet for the program. Think about scripting some or all of the following elements in your program:

- Starting the program;
- Introducing and back-announcing music;
- When to change brackets and length of brackets, what songs and artists flow together;
- Time calls or weather updates;
- Station information or promotions you would like to include in your show; for example: Information about local events or gigs;
- Ending the program.

Before you start your program

Arrive at least 10 minutes before your program time, inform the current presenter of your arrival. It is unacceptable to be late for your program – if a listener has tuned in to hear you and you're not on air they will probably turn off and not return. Plus, it's provides a bad impression of you and the station.

It is a good idea to swap phone numbers with the presenters either side of yours, so if for some reason you are running late you can inform them. Ask Station Manager for permission before requesting private phone numbers of any volunteers/presenters at the station. They can act as a go-between to ensure all parties are 100% comfortable with this.

If you are away and have arranged a fill in presenter, please advise the presenter before your show, so they can inform the listeners.

If you are unavailable to present their scheduled program, you must:

- Arrange a suitably qualified replacement presenter and notify the Station Manager, or;
- Notify the Station Manager by telephone or in person at least 6 hours, (a longer time is preferable), before broadcast time (except in an extreme emergency);
- Be responsible for any guests you have on their program and ensure they do not operate any broadcasting equipment. (This includes all computers, telephones etc).
- Take full responsibility for the correct and appropriate behaviour of the guests whilst you are present on station premises.

Please sign the attendance log on arrival or departure. All guests must do the same.

The Changeover

As a general rule, you should always be courteous to the incoming presenter when changing over programs. The presenter coming in to do the next program is sometimes more nervous than the presenter who's been settled in the studio is.

It's important that both the presenters work out together how the changeover will occur. Don't just assume that the presenter doing the program before you will let you know when it comes time to start the next program. Work out how the program is going to end, how the next program will begin, and who will be controlling the panel during the changeover. Try to finish and start programs as near as possible to exact changeover times.

It is important that the changeover is smooth. Give the current presenter space and time to sign off and then arrange the transition procedure. And take all of your belongings with you, ensuring the panel is clear of anything you brought with you. In time, you will have a seamless system sorted.

When finishing your program, follow the same procedure as arranged with your other co-presenter.

5.2. Studio Rules - while in the studio

A radio studio is a workplace.

The presenter working in the studio can at times be working under a lot of pressure. When entering, check that the presenter is not speaking on air. If you walk into a studio while the presenter is on mic you may cause unwanted noise going out over the air. This distracts listeners, and the flow of the presenter's program. It is recommended you knock on the door before you enter to get the presenter on air's attention. As you enter the studio it's always a good idea to check with the presenter's if it is OK to come in. Be courteous at all times and follow the 'do unto others as you would like done to you' rule.

Presenters have rights!

The presenter doing a program has control of the studio and certain rights with this position. The presenter has the right to be alone in the studio when presenting a program. Other people in the studio must respect this right. If you ever have problems with unwanted people

in the studio, ask them politely if they can leave. If they aren't co-operative, please let the Station Manager know.

The presenter also has the right to silence people at any time.

Usually, before the mic is turned on the presenter says 'standby'. Other people in the studio should stand still and make no noise. It's important to warn people, before going on mic, to avoid unwanted studio noises distracting listeners and the flow of your program.

Eating, ingesting any drugs, drinking alcohol, vaping, and smoking are prohibited in all studios. This is because it is a workplace and alcohol/drug are prohibited on the site as per our landlord BGT's tenants rulings. In the studio these behaviours also mark a threat posed to the equipment. A drink bottle with a screw top lid is permitted but must be placed on a surface/desk far away from the operations panel.

5.3. During your show

How to Start a Program

If listeners are going to turn off, they are likely to do so at the changeover of programs. If you can keep the listeners from the last program for the next 10 minutes or so, you have a good chance of keeping them listening.

Your first announcement must be interesting, polished and friendly; you have just entered your listeners' space and should not take their attention for granted.

Introduce yourself, include for example -

Your show introduction needs to set the tone for the program. It gives people reasons to stay tuned but also sets the mood for what to expect. Your show intro should forecast the interesting parts of your show, be creative and engaging and set the listener up for what is to happen. You must include: your name, the show name, thanks to the previous host, a reason for listeners to stay listening, what your show is about, and the duration of the show, all done in a friendly and natural way.

Good Etiquette

Thank the show before i.e., *"Thanks to X and Y from 'That Show', for the last two hours"*. If you have trouble remembering names write them down!!!! Always get the name of the presenter and the show correct!

At the end of your show announce the show immediately following and those following i.e., *"Thanks for listening, coming up next is Z with 'Next Show' and after that is Q with 'Show After Name'".*

Structuring your show - Introducing and Back Announcing Music

Forward announcing OR back announcing?

Back announcing is essential as it allows your audience to hear the music for themselves and then you can provide the key information later after the music bracket. It also may help to keep listeners tuned in for a longer time. It is also perfectly acceptable to forward announce the first track in a bracket of music before you play it.

This may be particularly important if that track relates directly to the previous track/bracket, or if it features something quite unusual that you believe listeners may wish to listen out for. Also, with some music shows it may be that a track runs for a long time and some context may be given before the track starts. Try to provide different information if you intend to forward and back-announce the same track.

Golden Rule - Before opening the microphone - know exactly what you are going to say. Before you start talking, know where you are going to finish talking.

So if you are going to back announce, then make sure you know what you are going to say to get to the next item.

Use inclusive language - avoid the word 'I' and 'me' if possible, e.g.: *"I've just played xyz" ...* is not as good as *"We've just been listening to xyz"*. Inclusive language helps to build rapport with the audience.

Also avoid over-use of the same words or expressions. For example, instead of using the word 'track', try these:

• Song • Number • Cut • Work • Piece • Tune

Make a list of all the frequently used words and expressions you hear on the radio. Then list some alternatives for these.

It's up to you, but a good idea is when listing the songs played in a musical bracket you should help the listener identify them by including additional information. You might include information about the nationality of the group/singer; names of the group members and/or backing artists; date and place of recordings; details of other recordings and previous releases. If the tracks are remixes, include info on the producer/s.

Remember if you are going to include information make sure it's concise and accurate. If you don't know, or you are unsure about something, don't say it. Avoid saying *'I'm not sure'* or *'I think'* and other such indications of ill preparedness. You should also encourage your

listeners to contribute their expertise; it's ok to ask them to contribute questions or information about artists that you may not be expert about, but best if you do your research and are well informed.

When playing music, put the imagination to work and come up with some original introductions. Note them down and rotate them to ensure a variety during your program.

Scheduled Announcements

Scheduled announcements need no introduction or further explanation. They can be used as 'punctuation' between the elements of a program and should not interrupt the flow, e.g. a message can be inserted between a back announcement and a forward announcement. Avoid the word 'ad' we don't have ads on community radio!

Time Calls

The industry wide standard is that time calls should be given every half hour or so. If you are broadcasting at night time it is not as crucial to keep constant track of the time. There is no particular requirement, so use your own judgement depending on the time of day e.g.: it's important to know the time during a breakfast and morning shifts.

What if I make a mistake?

Very importantly - do not refer to any piece of equipment that fails or any mistakes you make. A small pause is almost unnoticeable, but acknowledgement that equipment has failed puts you and the station in a poor light and breaks the transparency spell. There is almost never a need to point out mistakes, most of the time the listener won't even notice unless you point it out!

Interviewing Guests

It is the Presenters' responsibility to guide interviewees or visitors regarding broadcasting rules, for example defamation regulations. (If you think this is necessary in your judgement). If something is broadcast that breaks our rules and regulation - turn the microphone(s) off immediately. It is better to be sure than sorry. Remember you could be liable.

Before going to air with interview guests

Make sure the interviewee is relaxed, welcome them into the seat, and ask them how they are feeling about the chat. They will most likely be nervous, it's your role to make them feel comfortable.

- Adjust the microphone to approx. a hand span away from interviewee(s).
- Move the microphone by the arm, not by the connecting plug or microphone.
- Show your interviewee how to speak to the microphone and use the headphones;
- Check interviewee(s) VU meter levels using the cue buttons.
- If the microphone is not working (VU Meter does not move), check the desk plug and the microphone plug;
- Ensure that you have no music going to air whilst talking during your interview;
- Ensure that your interviewee(s) microphone is on-air;
- Introduce the interviewee(s), and the topic.

If you do not have knowledge of the topic, say so and ask the interviewee(s) to explain it to you. Better to admit ignorance than open your mouth and leave your listeners in no doubt. Do not argue with your interviewee(s). Debate makes for good radio, argument does not! In a lengthy interview, it may be appropriate to play a track or two of music to allow you and your interviewee(s) a break.

When you return to air. Re-Introduce yourself, the interviewee(s) and the topic. When the interview is completed and before going off-air: Thank the interviewee(s).

Preparing and tips for your interview

- Choose your angle: All stories have been done—it's the angle that makes it new. How you want the story to develop, what information you want exposed, and the structure (logical progression). Focus on the outcome you want from the interview.
- Do research: Understand the issue, and both sides of the debate. Pre-interview your talent where possible.
- Write a strong, informative introduction that is succinct and clear.
- Write your questions: Always prepare your questions, think about the why, who and how. Have a logical structure to the interview. Your research will inform your questions, making sure you get the most interesting information out during the interview. This will help you predict where the interview will go.

- Ask questions on behalf of the listener: When you are writing your questions and during the interview, think about what your listener would ask if they could; you are interviewing on their behalf and should always be keeping them in mind.
- Pick your talent: Select an appropriate person (knows the topic, comes across well on air, has personal experience, is a credible authoritative figure). Pre-IV briefing.
- Always listen: Engage with your talent so they will engage with you, and the listener will engage with you both. Listen to what they are saying and refocus the interview questions in line with the flow of the interview. It needs to be like a conversation so listen to what you are being told and hopefully start a discussion.
- Be respectful to your guest: Your tone will encourage your interviewee to chat openly. A conversational approach always works better than an ambush of questions.
- Keep it about the talent: Let them tell the story and you be the guide. Don't try and include yourself, even though you may be bursting to tell a story of your own.
- Use body language: Keep focused on the guest and retain eye contact where possible. Let your body language and facial expressions tell the talent that you are responding to them rather than speaking over them or responding verbally like you might in a real conversation ("Oh!" "Aaah!").
- Keep your interview to an appropriate length: Listeners will get bored quicker than you. Either break up the interview with a song, or wrap it up after 6 – 8 minutes. Interviewing is a privilege. You are able to speak to people and ask questions that in the normal course of life you are not able to. An interview means you get to have someone share something with you and to learn things that you may not otherwise come across. Always remember that you are a visitor to someone else's experience or knowledge, and that you are there to assist in sharing something with others.

5.4. Promotions, Sponsorship and Social Media

5.4.1.1. Promotions

Presenters are encouraged to use gig guides, "what's on' events guides and community group promotions as a way of informing listeners of events of interest to the audience around the Ballarat region (or beyond). The guides may be used to promote a gig or event in which the presenter is involved or has an interest. Presenters may still make reference to a gig or event where appropriate in an interview, or music being played.

Many of the regions events can be accessed on the left side computer at <https://www.visitballarat.com.au/whats-on> (click on "When" to narrow your search) or search various venues or community groups.

Presenters will not promote an event, product or service, (other than in the context of a gig, event or community activity), if the promotion might be deemed an advertisement.

Advertisements are prohibited on Community Radio broadcasts by the Broadcasting Services Act. Refer to the ACMA Sponsorship Guidelines (Appendix 6) for details.

Presenters are not permitted to receive inducements or 'benefits in kind' from a third party for unauthorised endorsement of that party, or a related product or event, on a Voice FM broadcast.

5.4.1.2. Cross promotions

The Voice FM website: voicefm.org.au is a primary source for communicating web-based information about and its programs to listeners and the general public.

We encourage you to promote this is where to find the current program guide, and that if required, it can be printed off. This is extremely important as Voice has block programming, (programs change every 1 to 2 hours), so to discover what they like to hear is available on the website.

Similarly, presenters are encouraged to promote Voice FM social media accounts (e.g. Facebook & Instagram) on air and also communicate any Voice FM promotions across their own social media accounts.

5.4.1.3. Other ideas

- Please promote other shows coming up that day, or your favourites that you can recommend at other times on the program grid;
- Talk about how people can interact with the station. How they can subscribe, become a member, donate, how they can listen online via voicefm.org.au and through the Community Radio Plus App, how they can volunteer or pitch their own program idea;
- Occasionally mention 'You're listening to Voice FM, my name is X and this is My Show Name'.

5.4.1.4. Sponsorship

Presenters have an obligation to play scheduled station and sponsorship announcements.

When playing a sponsorship announcement, announcers **should not**:

- Flag that they are about to play an announcement, (as this may promote listeners to stop listening);
- Speculate or make negative comments about the announcement.

When playing a sponsorship announcement, announcers **must not**:

- Repeat the announcement, as this is considered advertisement and is likely to result in the station exceeding the '5 minutes per hour' sponsorship time limitation under the Community Radio Broadcasting Codes of Practice; (refer to Section 7).

You don't need to mention sponsors at all. If you do remember they are not advertisements they are announcements. If you do, only speak in positive or neutral terms about the announcements. You can say

'Our lovely sponsors who keep the station going' or 'Important announcements from our valued sponsors.' Or just keep it neutral: *'Now It's time for some announcements'*.

5.4.1.5. The Difference

The Legal Difference: Community radio is legally not allowed to broadcast "advertisements"—we broadcast "sponsorship announcements."

No Calls to Action: Volunteers cannot urge listeners to buy things or use words like "Sale," "Discount," "Best in town," or "Come on down and buy." Statements must be factual.

Voice FM has a very affordable sponsor package for individual programs so if you can think of a business that could be your "show sponsor" please consider approaching them or informing our sponsorship coordinator Belinda Wardle via the Station Manager.

Sponsorship rates are available on our website – voicefm.org.au

For general station sponsorship please also contact Belinda via the Station.

5.5. Mentoring

We ask that established presenters act as mentors to trainee presenters if possible.

This involves:

- a. Establishing a welcoming and encouraging environment for trainees where they feel comfortable asking questions and seeking guidance, like a buddy-system;
- b. Allowing trainees to sit in on the Presenter's show;
- c. Providing training and advice on how to plan a show and run a program;
- d. Providing guidance on and allowing trainees to carry out technical operations for the Presenters show.

5.6. Visitors

The studio is not a meeting place for onlookers and friends; it is a workplace. Presenters are not allowed to bring friends in with them to be on air. This is against station rules and will be acted on by the Programming Committee.

You may have only one visitor in the studio complex, but not in the studio with you. If your guest is in for a pre-arranged interview, remember that presenters are responsible for what their guests say. If a caller or guest starts defaming someone, or not adhering to station standards, the presenter must cut them off immediately and distance the station from the comments.

If you have a visitor in the complex, it must be recorded in the Logbook outside Studio 1 when they enter the station and when they leave.

6. Now the Heavy Stuff

6.1. Media Law / Community Radio Broadcast Law

Voice FM has prepared this document, plus offers training and advice, to ensure that its Presenters are aware of their legal obligations. These obligations apply to broadcasting, the use of social media, (including Facebook & Instagram), and any public verbal or written comments.

This document provides a guide to safe communication and explains in greater detail the laws around defamation and copyright.

Community Broadcasters, like all Australian broadcasters, are subject to both statutory law – the legislation produced by Parliament and regulations made under those parliamentary Acts – and common law, or the principles, precedents and interpretations of the courts.

These laws enable Voice FM to provide its services, but also restrict what Presenters and their guests can do and say. Voice FM does not expect its Presenters to be lawyers. However, as with all legal matters - ignorance is no excuse.

Not knowing the law will not excuse a Presenters from the consequences of breaking it – nor will being a volunteer.

The consequences can be far-reaching and severe:

- a. If an Announcer's conduct contravenes the law, the Presenter, the Station, and the Board of Directors might all be liable;
- b. If a program guest's conduct contravenes the law, again the Presenter, the Station, and the Board of Directors might all be liable;
- c. If the Presenter's conduct causes damage to Voice FM, the Board of Directors could, under its obligation to act in the best interests of the organisation, counter-sue the Presenter. It is therefore essential that each Presenter understands the law and controls what information is published during broadcasts and online.

6.2. Guide to Safe Communication

DO

'If in doubt, leave it out'.

- Be precise. Choose your words carefully;
- Be sure of the facts – truth can be a defence, but ignorance rarely is;
- Educate and inform your listeners;
- Offer honest opinions;
- Inform your guests of your and their legal obligations – show them this document;

- Consider prerecording your interviews, particularly if your guest invites controversy. This will give you the opportunity to assess and edit material prior to publication to a wider audience;
- Avoid gratuitous swearing or bad language;
- Provide a content warning immediately before broadcasting any potentially offensive material. This gives listeners to choice to tune in or out to that material;
- Provide a content warning immediately after broadcasting any potentially offensive material. This ensures listeners who tuned in after your warning are equally aware;
- Seek advice before broadcasting. Presenters should refer queries to the Station Manager or the Programming committee.

DO NOT

- Engage in political discussion – that’s not our purpose;
- Use language likely to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate someone;
- Use language likely to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate a group of people because of their race or ethnic origin;
- Identify the victim of a sexual offence without their consent;
- Identify a child offender;
- Criticise or degrade any political, cultural or religious groups, or objects of worship;
- Make adverse personal comment about another person, (unless as an honest analysis of an artist and their work, made without malice);
- Forget to seek advice before broadcasting. Failure to refer your queries to the Station Manager and to the Board will invite disciplinary action which can lead to suspension or cancellation of your program.

6.3. Defamation

Defamation is a written or spoken statement which causes injury to another person’s reputation.

There are three elements required to prove defamation:

1. How is the statement defamatory?
2. Is the person being defamed identifiable?
3. Is the defamation in the public domain?

Is a statement defamatory?

The test is whether a statement is defamatory is:

Does the statement lower or harm a person's reputation in the eyes of a right-thinking person?

If, to an ordinary, reasonable listener taking the literal or implied meaning of a statement the answer to that question is 'yes', then the statement is defamatory.

This is true whether any aspect of a person's reputation – professional, business, or personal – has been lowered.

The plaintiff must be identifiable

This does not mean that the person has to be named. To say *'the lead singer of xyz band is a paedophile'* identifies that person clearly if you mention their name. A general statement such as *'all musicians are junkies'* is not a defamatory statement as no identifiable person's standing in the community is lowered because of it. However, the statement *'all members of Midnight Oil are junkies'* may be defamatory because it refers to particular, identifiable persons. Pseudonyms and disclaimers are not effective to prevent defamation if the statement clearly refers to a real person.

The material must be published (i.e. in the public domain)

Publication simply means communicating the statement to a third party. In the case of Voice FM broadcasts, this element will always be satisfied – the Broadcast Services Act provides that, for the purposes of defamation, the broadcasting of a statement on radio is to be treated as publication in a permanent form.

Who can be sued for defamatory content broadcast on my show?

Anyone involved in broadcasting the defamatory statement can be sued: the Station; the Board; the Producer; the interview guest; the Presenter.

Liability is 'joint and several', meaning that everyone is liable individually. Furthermore, a defamatory statement is separately actionable each time it is published. If broadcast again from the show's archives, or taped and replayed, there is likely to be a separate instance of defamation.

Common Misconceptions

It is often thought that if you quote from a newspaper, website or magazine something that is found to be defamatory that you are not responsible —

WRONG! You are responsible for everything you broadcast.

What is likely to happen is that you, your source, and Voice FM will be sued. Some broadcasters feel that a disclaimer – for example, *"We don't take responsibility for what guests say"* – will protect them from defamation — WRONG!

If it's published and is defamatory, a disclaimer counts for nothing.

7. Non-Studio Equipment

7.1. Air Conditioning

Studio 1

The temperature in the studios should be maintained between 19 and 22 degrees.

Ensure all windows and external doors are closed when using the air conditioner.

The remote control in the studio is used to turn it on/off and set the required temperature.

Please turn off the Air conditioner before leaving the Studio.

7.2. Lights & Doors

Please ensure all lights are off, and all doors closed/locked before leaving the Studios.

8. Emergency Procedures

In the event of a technical failure or emergency, prioritize safety and follow established protocols without panicking.

8.1. Station Off-Air & Major Failures

If the console loses power, or the transmission feed genuinely fails, contact the Station Manager immediately. Do not attempt to rewire equipment or reboot transmission servers independently. Emergency contact numbers are located on the studio noticeboard.

8.1.1.1. Dead Air Checklist

If the broadcast goes completely silent, execute this immediate 10-second check:

1. Check Play It Live: Is it paused in 'Live Assist' mode?
2. Check the Console Faders: Is the designated Play It Live channel fader up and routed to PGM?
3. Check Headphones & Meters: Are the VU meters registering activity? If yes, the issue may be localized to your headphones rather than the broadcast feed.

8.1.1.2. Studio Fault Reporting

Any faults need to be reported for either/both studios in the 'Studio Faults Diary'. This is located on the top shelf of the pigeonholes outside Studio 1 door. All studio faults, no matter how minor, should be properly reported so that technical staff can follow up and make any necessary repairs.

8.1.1.3. After Hours

If a studio fault is so severe that you cannot broadcast from that particular studio then you should at the first opportunity call Ben Daniel, Station Manager, on 0401 244331, and give a clear description of the fault.

If the fault is not repaired before the conclusion of your program, please make sure to let the incoming broadcaster know about the fault so that he/she is not affected by the failure.

When reporting any fault in the diary the following information **MUST** be provided:

8.1.1.4. Description of fault:

- Clear identification of equipment involved (top CD player, left-hand turntable, presenter microphone etc);
- Your name and contact details (in case additional information is required);
- The time/day the fault occurred, (allowing us to identify when the fault happened).

8.2. Facility Emergencies (Fire/Medical etc)

In situations involving immediate physical danger (fire, medical crisis, bomb threat etc), your personal safety supersedes the broadcast. Call 000, evacuate to the designated assembly point, and notify the Station Manager once secure. In the case of an announcement from BGT (our landlord) of an emergency, please follow all instructions on evacuation requested of you, even if it is just a drill.

8.3. No Show Occurrence

You must stay in the studio and keep presenting a show until the problem is resolved or the next announcer arrives. If a 'no show' occurs, or the next presenter is late, continue on until it is obvious they are not arriving then you will need to switch to Play it Live feed on the right-side computer.

Do not mention that the next announcer has not turned up. That only makes for bad radio and lowers our image in our listeners' minds. The problem is an internal one not a public one, and it's station program policy not to air complaints about personnel or internal station policy under any circumstances.

9. Feedback and Complaints

If a listener provides negative feedback or complains during your program, be patient and polite. Take details of their name, address, phone number and what their complaint is.

Explain to the person that there is very little you can do now and that you'll bring their complaint to the Station Manager's attention. Alternatively, you can encourage them to phone the Station Manager during office hours or put their complaint in writing directed to the Station Manager via complaint@voicefm.org.au. It is wise to follow things through by making personal contact with the Station Manager about the complaint.

Do not, under any circumstances, give out the private numbers of any Station personnel.

By following this procedure, you can avoid getting into an argument with the caller and making things worse. It is better from the station's point of view to diffuse complaints; otherwise, the caller may get so agitated that they make a complaint to the ACMA.

10. Thank you

Thank you for being a part of Voice FM, please know that we are all in this together, and we value your time at the Station. Don't hesitate to ask any questions, no matter how silly you feel they may be; we want you to have the best experience possible on air.