fbi.radio: Before 94.5

Before fbi was known to Sydney as fbi 94.5, “there was a time,” like the cart you have heard on the airwaves, “when nothing like fbi existed.” Cue the screams.

But yes, there was a time before fbi made its roaring debut as Sydney’s permanent youth broadcaster, playing the sounds of the city. However, the station did not appear out of thin air. Eight years led up to fbi being known as 94.5, eight years of broadcasts, fundraising, member and volunteer recruitment, years of writing to politicians, and many, many faxes from the Australian Broadcasting Authority. From 1995 up to late 2003, fbi did not stop their desire to support the emerging and cutting-edge sounds of Sydney and to cultivate a place where young people could feel seen, and they did not stop telling the government that this station was exactly what Sydney needed.

The early history of fbi has not been recorded in a long-form and publicly available way…yet. This history contains stories and mementos from the eight year period of fbi’s fight for the airwaves.

From the bottom up

Before the era of Triple J, Double J was the youth broadcaster unlike any others before, and it was Sydney’s. Teenagers and young adults had their very own broadcaster that felt wild and free, actually playing what they wanted to hear. But in 1989, it was decided that Double J would become Triple J and expand to be a youth broadcaster for the nation.[1] This decision left a

[1] https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/the-j-files/1985-1995-40-years-of-triple-j/10274872

vacuum in the musical tapestry of Sydney, with no specific station dedicated to the young sounds of the city available on the airwaves anymore. Jim Beetson of 4ZZZ up in Brisbane, despite not having a stake in Sydney, was mourning this loss. So in 1995, Jim called up Cassandra Wilkinson, who was already involved in Sydney's music scene, to do something about it.

"So Jim and Lee [Hubber] and a few other friends were promoting the idea that with the last FM bandwidth being available in Sydney, that there should be a community station…from a culture, and particularly from a youth culture perspective."

Cassandra was immediately interested and began wrangling together a group of fellow music lovers to make this ambition come true. One of those people included programming extraordinaire Meagan Loader.

"We had this tee shirt in about 1996 or something which had two little kids on it. And one of them says, 'Have you ever dreamed of taking over the airwaves?' and the other kid says, 'Fuck yeah, all the time', and Meagan says, like that was her experience."

From the beginning, and continuing now, the commitment was that fbi would play 50% Australian music, with half of that coming from Sydney.[2] Test broadcasts began soon after fbi's founding with prospective radio stations awaiting the permanent bandwidth, sharing the 96.9 FM signal for various phases of planning, setting up, broadcasting, taking it all down, and then hopefully doing it all again. The initial stages of this journey were magical, it was a group of

[2] https://www.fbi.radio/about-us

passionate people who made radio and culture together in all different parts of the city. But once John Howard was elected as Prime Minister, everything changed for the station.

"John Howard was elected and the Liberal government moved away from settling the metropolitan licences in Sydney and decided to do all the regional licensing first, which meant the process was stalled. And all the money ran out and all the very busy grown up people kind of had things to get on with. And in the end, by about 1997, the only people left were the kind of kids who had been licking envelopes and walking around with surveys and petitions."

On top of this decision was the Howard government's liberalisation of media regulation laws which allowed private entities to own up to two out of three types of media – print, radio, and television – and scrapped limitations on foreign media ownership.[3]

However, the lost momentum from the Howard government's decision to shift focus away from the metropolitan area did not knock all the wind out of fbi's sails. The station kept growing from strength to strength, with the period over late 1995 to late 1996 hosting a number of successful test broadcasts. And the number of people involved kept growing with eager volunteers joining to get a taste of fbi.



FBi FAZE SIX TRANSMISSION

It's just over a year since our first humble weekend broadcast from a Surry Hills disused video shop and FBi is geared up for the biggest and most difficult broadcast to date - with the greatest number of volunteers taking part.

Last test transmission in July we had 84 presenters assisted by 200 program volunteers presenting nearly 40 different programs each week. Our weekly music count saw us with 53 per cent Australian content, 36.4 per cent Sydney content - proving you can deliver high Australian content and still have challenging, diverse and professional programming.

FBi Newsletter, page 1 (1996)

[3] https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/rearvision/the-history-of-media-ownership-in-australia/6831206

Cassandra explained that all it took was a magic bass player to hold the station together. The theory goes, courtesy of Brandon Saul, that any band that survives has a magic bass player (although the bass can be changed for drums, or a saxophone, or any other instrument). The bass player cleans the lead singer up. The bass player fixes the guitarist's dysfunctional on-again-off-again relationship.

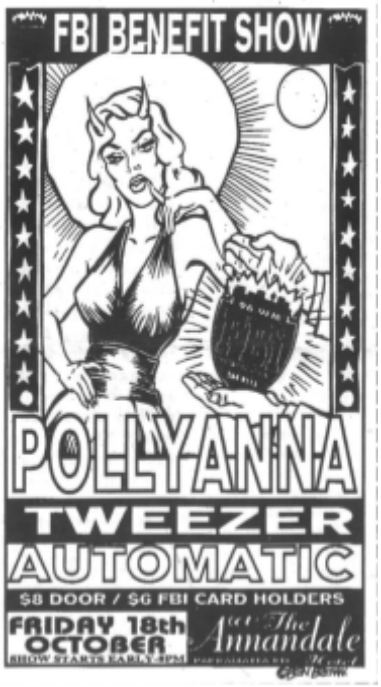
"There's like this person who has no other place where they feel special, needed, driven. There's a person who needs to work. And fbi attracts magic bass players."

So, from losing quite a bit of what had been created, fbi gained a lot more, which was this group of people who needed a place like fbi in their lives.



Broadcast poster (1998)

The late 1990s continued to be a busy time for fbi, now with the government promising to consider their calls for more concrete information on and consideration of permanent radio spots. The tests continued and the community around fbi kept growing and growing. Broadcasts were becoming sensations, with locations of these tests being at some of the city's hottest spots like the Bondi Pavillion, The Lansdowne and even The



FBi Newsletter, page 1 (1996)

University of Sydney. The University of Sydney Union and fbi partnered to run a workshop training new presenters, including modules on media law, interviewing, and editing. Opportunities like this created a Sydney-wide ecosystem of sharing and partnership between radio stations, like with the Sydney University Radio Group, with the student radio station even having a dedicated slot during a season of test broadcasting.



USU and FBi Radio Broadcasting Course (undated)



FBi Schedule, featuring SURG (undated)

In the days when almost everything was still analogue, there was a lot of effort into making sure that these broadcasts were listened to. I asked Dan Buhagiar about this experience of getting the word out about fbi.

"Because it was built around a community, there was a lot of word of mouth, you know? So bands played gigs for us and would talk about the station…And then the street press, you know, we worked really closely with the street press and I think the street press were really good to the station in those days and worked with the station to help hit that community of people that were already going to gigs every week."



Members' news

FBi is owned and operated by members. By becoming a member, you get to participate in station activities, get some groovy discounts, and help democratically run FBi. Membership is very affordable at $20 ($10 concession and ½ school students).

Membership numbers are steadily increasing with members from all over Sydney that include bands and other industry personnel, pledging their support. Hey, we've even got members from NSW country areas and other states! We need to keep the membership numbers growing to make it clear to the Government that this is the FM station that Sydney needs, so get your friends to become members.

You may have seen FBi membership stalls at such events as Summersault, Big Day Out, the Redeye Showcase and Silverchair at the Royal Easter Show. (Thanks to Danielle, Nicholas, Stu, Mark, Skep, Melissa, Celia, Jacqui, Meagan and all!) If you would like to help out on one of FBi's event information booths, please phone Amanda Donovan at FBi.

Donate yourself. Get involved with the FBi cause and become a volunteer. FBi needs all kinds of people to get this thing going. Members, if you change your address, let me know your new details by mail.

FBi Newsletter, page 3 (1996)

Gigging was a huge part of fbi's early history. Not only were presenters, producers, and tastemakers going to shows, but they were also putting on shows. These gigs were an incredible place for fundraising and bringing new listeners into the fold of the fbi community. Bands like Pollyanna, Grinspoon, and Front End Loader played fbi fundraisers and sponsored gigs. fbi would also set up roaming membership drives at some of Sydney's biggest music events like Big Day Out, which ran from 1992 to 2014, and Summersault, a one-off festival that included acts like Sonic Youth and Beastie Boys.[4]

It was visibility and fbi's willingness and commitment to not only speak on behalf of the communities and subcultures they represented, but to also be in amongst them, getting to know people face to face that gave them credibility and a sense of place in Sydney's musical scene. Dan said:

"It was just exciting to be part of this idea of creating a community that strengthened the scene. It felt like fbi was very much going to help the Sydney music scene thrive."



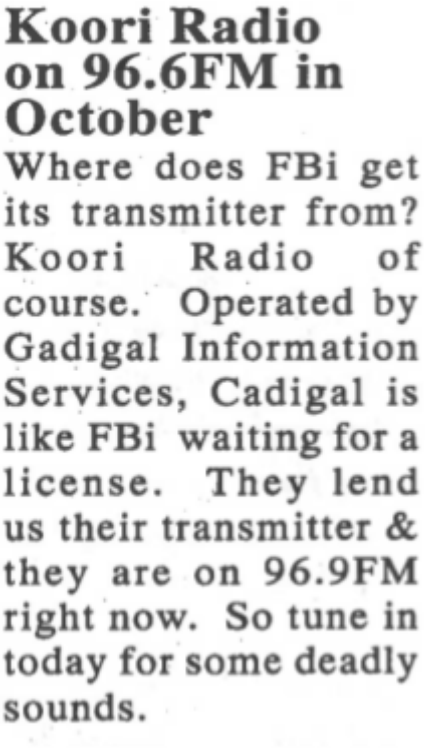
FBi Schedule (1996)

The station, during every test broadcast, had an incredibly busy schedule, curated by a team of dedicated people and headed by Meagan Loader. With this commitment to at least half of the music broadcast being from Australia and half of that Australian music being from Sydney, having diverse shows with a variety of tastemakers and view points

[4] https://medium.com/the-shadow-knows/summersault-australias-biggest-music-festival-of-1995-3cb0ed72e008

was essential to broadening the horizons of what sounds this country was producing. This schedule from July 1996 speaks to the incredible number of shows that were on the air, like Peter Ferris' Dance, The Grrrly Show with Annette Bird and Dan Buhagiar, Trance hosted by DJ Dynamix, Mary-Lou and Pamela Jo's Agony Country. I was curious to get Dan's insight into the process of this curation of shows and music on the airwaves.

"It was also in the days before Spotify, it was about who had access to interesting and good music collections because you couldn't just go online and stream it. So it was about people who spent the time and energy to be hunting down music and hunting down new music, and pulling it in from overseas and making connections with new bands and going to see new bands, because the only way you found out about who the new good Sydney bands was going to see them."



Koori Radio on 96.6FM in October

Where does FBi get its transmitter from? Koori Radio of course. Operated by Gadigal Information Services, Cadigal is like FBi waiting for a license. They lend us their transmitter & they are on 96.9FM right now. So tune in today for some deadly sounds.

FBi Newsletter, page 4 (1996)

Community was always at the forefront of operations around fbi, and that not only extended to their own organisation but to the wider community of Sydney and their needs. Koori Radio continues to exist on the radio with the frequency 93.7 FM and is Sydney's only dedicated First Nations radio station, operated alongside the Gadigal Information Service.[5] In an October 1996 newsletter, fbi gave a shout out to Koori Radio, who had been broadcasting part time since the early 1990s, sharing the test frequency of 96.9 FM. Koori Radio was also an early community supporter for fbi, with the station often lending equipment and their transmitter to support the up

[5] https://www.kooriradio.com/about/history/

and coming station. Of course, there was a sense of competition with other prospective broadcasters at times, but that competition came second to understanding the needs of the city and building a community around music and culture.

Community was not only found in music and the subcultures fbi got involved in, but the marginalised and sidelined people who found space in and around the organisation. This was also extended to later test broadcasts like the February to March 1998 broadcast which features a women-specific show called Matriarchy, and a First Nations show called Blackground. These shows were a breath of fresh air for a time of music where racism and sexism were greatly amplified and visible across the music industry.


FBi Radio
96.9 FM
Ph: 9241 3089
Broadcasting Feb 16 to March 17, 1998
THE GRAVEYARD SHIFTS
SOMETHING ON TOAST
Morning Music
Latest Releases & Interviews with Local Talent
Eye Spy (Arts)
Blackground (Indigenous)
Radio Out There (Youth)
Matriarchy (Women)

FBi Schedule (1998)

There was also a consistent behind-the-scenes effort going into the administrative and logistical side of fbi, a side that was often overlooked in passing interactions with not only fbi, but radio in general. Newsletters from the early days of fbi were constantly advertising for volunteers who were willing to donate their time and energy into marketing, financial management, and technical work. Even things as unassuming as creating a logo needed someone to hop on board and contribute their time. The iconic bee logo which has a radio tower as a stinger is featured all


November 1997
NEWS
FBi RADIO SYDNEY 96.9 FM
The Newsletter of Free Broadcast Incorporated PO Box 1952 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

How you can be in the next broadcast

If you ever wanted to get involved in FBi now is the time to do it. On January 31 FBi has a two hour national window aspect of the 'Loud' youth media festival. In late February and March FBi will broadcast for 30 days taking in both the National Youth Week and Universities' Orientation weeks.

The reason for these broadcasts is to build a new team, develop our skills as a broadcaster (that means your skills) and have as much fun as possible. Here are just a few ways you can get involved;

Volunteering for Programming

Do you want FBi to sound great and want to get close to that great sound, perhaps this is where you can help most. We need producers, presenters, librarians, researchers, writers, a program director, music directors, trainers, panel operators, studio engineers and lots of people with enthusiasm
(Jacquie Riddell 0417 283 539)

Marketing

No point in sounding great if no one knows about it and we go bankrupt doing it. There is no limit to the number of people who can help out here. Publicists, promoters, sales persons, lobbyists, journalists, desktop publishers, advertising, statistical researchers, copywriters, PR people, leafletters, canvassers, artists, webmisters phone canvassers, events professionals, printers.
(Ph Millie Millgate 0411 416 527)

Management and administration

Are you well organised or perhaps you're a person with a big vision for FBi. Someone has to run the show, is that you - can you keep us on track? If you have skills as an administrator, manager, accountant, secretary, PA, traffic manager, volunteer coordinator, office manager, company

Annual General Meeting
Your chance to be in the FBi Loud, Youth Week & Orientation Festival broadcasts
Have your say on FBi or
Become a Board member
2pm on Saturday December 6
upstairs Newtown Neighbourhood Centre
(opp. Newtown Station beside the Hub)

directors, President, Treasurer, lawyer then you could be one of the people that ensures FBi is thoroughly professional.
(Phone Lee Hubber 018 613 944)

Logistics

In January and February we need to build a radio station, after that we have to continue to debate the Australian Broadcasting Authority about the number of radio stations you can fit in Sydney. We need all RF Technicians, logistics experts, studio technicians, electricians, electronics engineers, riggers, telephone technicians and more. (Paul Mason 9563 6161)

You don't have to be the boss (but we do want someone to take control) or even have the skills described above, all you need is enthusiasm and a desire to be involved with an exciting broadcast. This broadcast is only for the sake of good radio, if you want to be involved turn up to the AGM on December 6 (Newtown Neighbourhood centre, 1 Bedford St Newtown opposite Newtown Station)

and in the meantime call one of the board members listed above. No positions have been appointed so this meeting is your chance to design FBi in your own image. As this broadcast includes Youth Week we will also be encouraging people under the age of 21 to get very involved in running the broadcast. See you there.

Inside

FBi "Where are they now?"
AGM "How to change FBi & How to become president"
A summer of FBi "What happened in '97"

FBi Newsletter, page 1 (1996)

over material from the 1990s, and was designed by Steve Scott.

It was all contributing to the future success and stability of a station that was still suspended in air.

In that sense of space and wonder produced in the makeshift studios of fbi, there was also another side of the broadcaster that often overlapped and informed the workings of this community: politics.

Talking politics

Unfortunately, the magic bass players only have so much power in their arsenal. As the government ultimately controlled who took the bandwidth, fbi had to maintain a small but powerful and consistent lobbying effort to get their name out there and taken seriously by these decisionmakers.



FBi News

96.9FM Radio FBi on air April 19 - May 5

Youth Week Broadcast

FBi petition

I Spy for the FBi ....

What do the politicians say?

Can I see your licence please?

FBi Newsletter, page 1 (1996)

From a 1996 newsletter, the political struggle is seen everywhere. fbi used petitioning as one of its most "immediate and valuable campaign tools" in the fight to be seen and heard by the government. They also used letterwriting, stressing to the main political changemakers at the time the importance of allowing fbi, a not-for-profit organisation, to have access to a chance to have their voices heard on the airwaves before it would become inaccessible to the small

community groups in the face of an increasingly commercialised industry. These campaigns worked. The Coalition, who was in power at the time, took notice of the demands of the community and made promises to reconsider how the government was going about the slow and laborious processes of allowing new community broadcasters onto the airwaves.

Campaigning did not stop or slow down in the periods between test broadcasts. Cassandra, who worked for a senator when she first joined fbi, alongside Neill Jones, who worked in the member management committee, were two of the key figures in corralling political support from policymakers, especially from people like John Graham, Tanya Plibersek, and future Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese. Cassandra said:

"Those were people who fbi actively cultivated relationships with because the first problem we had at the beginning was a regulatory problem. We actually needed the government to issue the license to the community that would give us the opportunity to compete for it. So we were working with the Broadcasting Authority to produce business plans and create all those documents like the application for the license. Neill and I wrote together. I mean, that was hundreds of pages of evidence around how many people's interests we would be serving with the broadcasting philosophy that fbi had and all these letters of recommendation and support from people across the industry."



News Release

NR 48/2000

For immediate release

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THREE SYDNEY COMMUNITY RADIO LICENCES

The Australian Broadcasting Authority is to conduct a public hearing to assist it in allocating three new Sydney-wide community radio licences. The hearing will be held in the Marconi Room at the Sydney Town Hall on the following dates:

Monday 14 August - Friday 18 August 2000 (five days)
Thursday 24 August – Friday 25 August 2000 (two days)
Monday 28 August – Thursday 31 August 2000 (four days)

"The hearing will assist the ABA in deciding the relative merits of the applicants. It is also a good opportunity for the applicants to highlight particular aspects of their case to the ABA in person," said ABA Acting Chairman, Gareth Grainger.

Members of the public may make written submissions to the ABA about the subject matter of the hearing. Written submissions must be received by the ABA no later than close of business Friday 4 August 2000 and can also be lodged via email at community.licensing@aba.gov.au. Written submissions should be signed, and include a contact name, address and phone number.

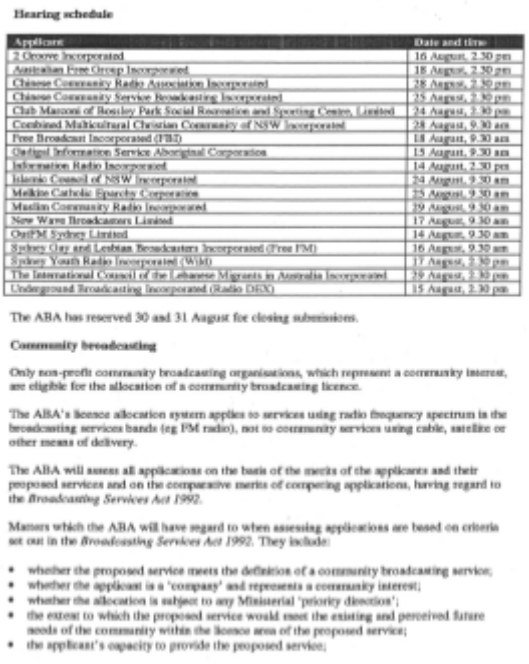
ABA Community Licence hearings (2000)

Whilst the community support was essential, without the support and infrastructure of the government, fbi's future would be non-existent. Creating relationships was key:

"Not just getting petitions and letters but getting statements of support from people across cultural institutions and within the music industry [was essential]. Trying to drive a conversation, you know, going on radio and TV elsewhere to tell the story. Going on Channel V to talk about the campaign for a new radio station in Sydney. So all kinds of advocacy and lobbying work, that was something that a small community of us did."

The year 2000 brought around some huge developments in Sydney. The new millennium, the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and finally, hearings for three community licences. The backlog of licence allocations since 1997 were finally about to be cleared.[6] These hearings were run by the independent Australian Broadcasting Authority, and in August of that year, fbi entered what was essentially a gladiator battle with other community broadcasters, including ones that to Sydney, seemed like the two obvious frontrunners for a spot: Wild FM and Radio Dex. Both Wild and Dex were genre-focused stations, both immersed in the dance and electronic scenes.

"fbi did something that worked in our favour. We came to the public hearings. Many of the other stations hired advocates. Some of them had barristers represent them at



Hearing schedule

Applicant	Date and time
2 Groove Incorporated	16 August, 2.30 pm
Australian Free Group Incorporated	18 August, 2.30 pm
Chinese Community Radio Association Incorporated	18 August, 2.30 pm
Chinese Community Service Broadcasting Incorporated	15 August, 2.30 pm
Club Marconi of Bossley Park Social Recreation and Sporting Centre, Limited	24 August, 2.30 pm
Combined Multicultural Christian Community of NSW Incorporated	28 August, 9.30 am
Free Broadcast Incorporated (FBI)	18 August, 9.30 am
Gadigal Information Service Aboriginal Corporation	15 August, 9.30 am
Information Radio Incorporated	14 August, 2.30 pm
Islamic Council of NSW Incorporated	24 August, 9.30 am
Melkite Catholic Eparchy Corporation	25 August, 9.30 am
Muslim Community Radio Incorporated	29 August, 9.30 am
New Wave Broadcasters Limited	17 August, 9.30 am
OutFM Sydney Limited	14 August, 9.30 am
Sydney Gay and Lesbian Broadcasters Incorporated (Free FM)	16 August, 9.30 am
Sydney Youth Radio Incorporated (Wild)	17 August, 2.30 pm
The International Council of the Lebanese Migrants in Australia Incorporated	29 August, 2.30 pm
Underground Broadcasting Incorporated (Radio DEX)	15 August, 2.30 pm

The ABA has reserved 30 and 31 August for closing submissions.

Community broadcasting

Only non-profit community broadcasting organisations, which represent a community interest, are eligible for the allocation of a community broadcasting licence.

The ABA's licence allocation system applies to services using radio frequency spectrum in the broadcasting services bands (eg FM radio), not to community services using cable, satellite or other means of delivery.

The ABA will assess all applications on the basis of the merits of the applicants and their proposed services and on the comparative merits of competing applications, having regard to the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*.

Matters which the ABA will have regard to when assessing applications are based on criteria set out in the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*. They include:

- whether the proposed service meets the definition of a community broadcasting service;
- whether the applicant is a 'company' and represents a community interest;
- whether the allocation is subject to any Ministerial 'priority direction';
- the extent to which the proposed service would meet the existing and perceived future needs of the community within the licence area of the proposed service;
- the applicant's capacity to provide the proposed service;

ABA Community Licence hearings (2000)

[6] https://www.anao.gov.au/sites/default/files/anao_report_2001-2002_23.pdf

these hearings. I went in there with the entire team…Paul Mason gave evidence and Meagan Loader gave evidence and we, you know, had a community of people with us."

It was this passion for community, the drive to be present and show up for community that caught the panel's attention. Specifically, it caught the attention of one unsuspecting board member: conservative law academic and leader of Australians for Constitutional Monarchy, David Flint.

"We wanted to have a model that was intentionally built to be continually renewing and continuing to refocus on what is new and what is emerging and what are different elements of supporting emerging artists. Not to be strictly about what is young but certainly about what is new, which is often young, but not always young. And David Flint turned around at one point and he said, 'So I think what you're telling me is that if it were the 1930s and we gave a licence to people to play ballroom dancing music, then ten years or twenty years later, ballroom dancing would not be what the community needs or wants anymore.' I was like, 'Yes.'"

Although it cannot be said that Flint's observation is the driving force behind fbi's eventual success, this idea that perhaps genre-specific stations were not what the city needed but a station that could dip in and out of everything, that was, as described by Cassandra, a "self-renewing" model, certainly spoke to the outcome of these hearings.

fbi continued to push through the political quagmire of licensing, and in 2001, years of hard work and dedication paid off.[7]

[7] https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/tv-and-radio/better-late-than-never-20030612-gdgwxi.html

Over the finish line?

"The finish line was the starting line."

From the outside, it would seem like the awarding of the 94.5 frequency would be the end of the story. But that could not be further from the truth, as Cassandra told me.

"I got a letter in the mail that said, 'You have a license to broadcast 150 kilowatt transmission FM in Sydney…and fbi had 400 dollars in the bank."

The campaign for funding was not over and now, more than ever in 2001, fbi had to pull their limited political power and community spirit together to get the station up and running. The 150 kilowatt signal was a huge deal, and remains an immense privilege, with signals that strength often being afforded to commercial stations who spend millions of dollars to acquire them, (like Nova, who purchased the 96.9 frequency which fbi used for test broadcasting for $155 million).[8]

I got to speak to Angela Stengel, who became involved in fbi around 2002, and is the current President of the fbi Board, who told me that:

"To get a licence that's worth $100 million or something at the time broadcasting from, you know, from Gosford to the Blue Mountains and Wollongong, it was way bigger than Eastside or 2SER and so I think there was a level of, like, this is different to other community radio. Like, this

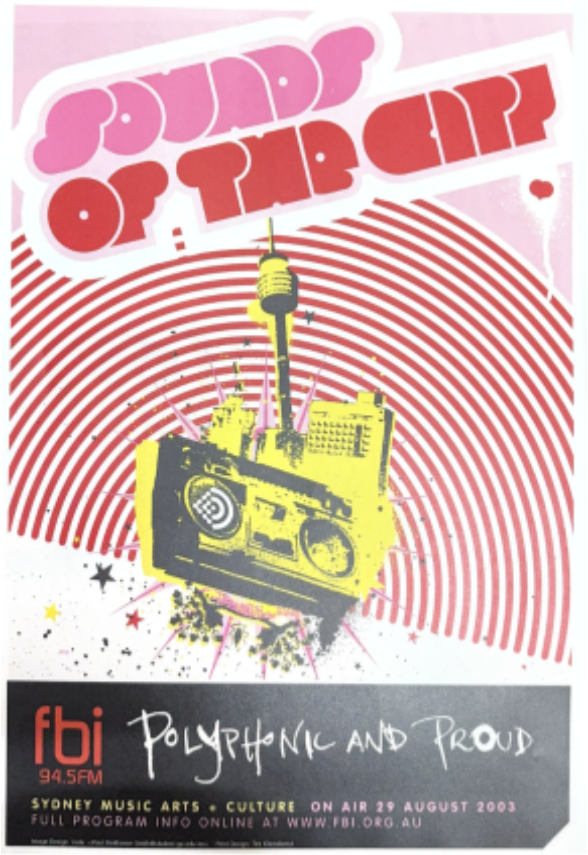
[8] https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/nova-beats-virgin-in-fm-auction-20040416-gdiqwv.html

is big. We're going to have big audiences. Sydney's music, arts and culture scene is going to be reenergised, as well."

And with the advent of digital and online radio, this only became bigger. The pressure was immense with this huge platform. Getting it up and running was proving to be an expensive and long challenge. The place in Redfern, just at the end of Botany Road, was secured. But what does a station do when they are short on time and money and need to fit out a whole studio in time for broadcast?

"The studios to this day, those beautiful wooden studios down at Redfern, those were the studios that were ripped out when Alan Jones moved from 2UE to 2GB and apparently insisted that they give an upgrade to the studios there. So all the old studios were thrown out. And so all of those soundproof walls, windows and doors, those are all secondhand castoffs."

And it wasn't just the space that needed shaping. It was the people, too. Now that the licence was official, the people side of the fbi operation became a lot bigger and more intense, with this newfound responsibility of serving up consistent and quality radio (not that hadn't been done before) 24-hours a day, seven days a week.



Promotional poster for launch (2003)

"It was almost like a bootcamp to get everyone ready because nobody had done radio before. There were people who were involved in test broadcasts and there were people who may have done stuff at 2SER, but most of the presenters were, like, straight out of school or uni." Angela said.

People like Marc Fennell, Linda Marigliano, Andrew Levins, and Stuart Coupe were brought into the ranks of fbi as presenters, alongside the hundreds of others who joined as volunteers on the music team, programming team, and frontline, answering phones and emails.[9]

The deadline for being operational was May 2002, but it was extended three times to account for various legal and financial setbacks, including a legal battle on fbi waged by Wild FM.[10]



Photographs from FBi's launch (2003). Credit: Patrick Boland

[9] https://www.theguardian.com/global/2023/dec/09/fbi-radio-celebrates-20-years-of-sydney-broadcasts-we-were-just-this-crew-of-dorks; https://www.fbi.radio/articles/features/who-are-you-supporting-a-look-at-fbiradio-over-20-years-with-stuart-coupe

[10] https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/tv-and-radio/better-late-than-never-20030612-gdgwxi.html

"I mean, the relief and joy on everybody's faces in [Patrick Boland's] photos from the launch day, you can just see it's absolutely palpable."

And at the end of it all, on August 29, 2003, fbi went to air with a roaring party as background noise. The atmosphere was electrified and, from all accounts, it felt as though all of Sydney was crammed into the studios down in Redfern, where the station still broadcasts today. A cover of 'Turn Up Your Radio' by the Master Apprentices' featuring Spod, Upshot, Sarah Blasko, Dave McCormack, Tony Buchen, and Front End Loader, which went to air as fbi's first ever track played.

The history of fbi does not stop on August 29, 2003. The station lives on and continues to provide Sydney with the soundtrack of the cutting-edge, for everyone young and old, living in inner city or suburbia, metalheads and ravers. And if those eight years demonstrated anything, is that there will always be a place for fbi and fbi always has a place for anyone.

"Luck favours the bold, you know, but you only get luck because everybody's out there working their asses off."