

# SETTING UP A LOCAL RADIO STATION

A few years ago, the Government made an interesting change to broadcasting law, opening up a limited number of frequencies on the FM band to low power, local broadcasting. With a maximum power of 0.5 watts, these radio stations have a range of up to 10 kilometres, depending on terrain.

There are now in the region of sixty of these stations broadcasting around the country. Among the heavy rock, Christian, Hindi language and other minority interest stations can be found some interesting political broadcasters: **Radio Chomsky** in Auckland, Hamilton's **The Station, Matrix** in central Wellington, **Radio Free Aotearoa** in Island Bay and **Critical Analysis Broadcasting**, which can be heard in eastern Wellington from Melrose to Miramar.

A **low power FM radio station** is a very useful way for campaign groups and activists to get across what you have to say. Individuals with interesting views on different topics could be encouraged to make programmes. A network of radio stations could emerge throughout the country, and reasonably cheaply.

**It's easy. It's cheap. It's effective. The necessary equipment, once ordered, arrives very quickly and can be up and running in a couple of hours.**

One person is able to run a station easily. It's not necessary to speak over the air if you don't want to, but you could choose to. A pre-recorded station signifier announcing the name of your station is needed every couple of hours.

With assistance from existing radio stations, you'll find there is enough material for you to broadcast straight away. To get you started, shows can be provided by other radio stations and there are plenty of programmes available for free download and for broadcasting without a fee. Stations need not cost anything to run.

There are many talks available on global and local issues, from peak oil and climate change to fast food, health issues and the seeking of community solutions. There are talks available on globalization, alternative energies, and more. It is not difficult for you to put together your own radio shows: simply speak into a microphone, record your talk on a computer and upload it onto **www.radio4all.net** or **www.aotearoa.indymedia.org** to share it with others.

**This is about information sharing – it's not about profit.** Find your favourite documents and books and get the information you think is important to other people in your community via radio by making shows using that information. Similar things could also be achieved with community television.

Broadcasting mainstream music from major labels will generally require paying yearly fees to APRA, the Australasian Performing Rights Association and RIANZ. However, there is a wealth of music available under creative commons licenses (see [creativecommons.org](http://creativecommons.org)), all of which can be shared and broadcast freely by non-commercial stations. There is no fee payable if you broadcast only talks.

Matrix and Critical Analysis Broadcasting are willing to send you talks and other stations may also do so. It is possible to download talks from websites such as [www.radio4all.net](http://www.radio4all.net). Other broadcasters will be happy to give you material to get you started and running immediately. It's easy and very cheap to put together a playlist and you could have it all playing on, for example, a 27-hour cycle – or even a 4- or 5-day cycle.

**Contribute to online audio archives and share your knowledge.**



# GETTING ON AIR

Here is the basic technical information needed to start and run a low power FM radio station.

- The **rules and regulations** for LPFM are found at – [www.rsm.govt.nz/licensing/gurls/gurl-lpfbmc-2.html](http://www.rsm.govt.nz/licensing/gurls/gurl-lpfbmc-2.html)
- The **best deals on transmitters** can be found at [www.nrgkits.com](http://www.nrgkits.com). The PLL Pro3 1 watt transmitter is very good. Compliance to the 0.5 watt rule can be achieved by using a longer aerial cable.
- **More information** is available online at – [www.low-power-fm-radio.spacejunk.co.nz](http://www.low-power-fm-radio.spacejunk.co.nz)
- A **fairly accurate list of LPFM stations** in New Zealand is found at – [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_LPFM\\_stations\\_in\\_New\\_Zealand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_LPFM_stations_in_New_Zealand)
- If you are considering starting a radio station, you should **subscribe to the LPFM user group** and announce it there. This helps to prevent potential problems with other stations nearby – [http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/LPFM\\_Radio/](http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/LPFM_Radio/)
- And here is a site with useful **technical info** – [www.epanorama.net/links/radio.html](http://www.epanorama.net/links/radio.html)
- The Aotearoa Information Radio website (currently at **www.air.enzyme.org.nz**) lists a lot of radio stations in New Zealand which may be of interest and has their contact details also.
- There is also a **discussion list** for those interested in independent radio and low powered FM: <http://lists.indymedia.org/imc-aotearoa-radio> or write to [imc-aotearoa@lists.indymedia.org](mailto:imc-aotearoa@lists.indymedia.org)

If you want to know more, the **best people to contact** are those who run the central Wellington station Matrix and the eastern suburbs station Critical Analysis Broadcasting.

The frequencies available for low power FM broadcasting are 88.1 to 88.7 MHz and 106.7 to 107.7 MHz. A radio station should be no closer than 0.2 MHz away from than another station, so that the maximum number of stations can be heard in any locale.

To find out what **frequencies are available in your area**, drive to the highest point in the area you intend broadcasting in and, using the car radio, scan the frequencies mentioned above. If you find an available frequency, stake your claim, or choose the frequency with the weakest signal.

As a source of programmes to begin with, take a look at **www.radio4all.net**. This website has a huge assortment of programmes available for download. Also check out Democracy Now **www.democracynow.org**, Flashpoints Radio for alternative news perspectives at **www.flashpoints.net** and Global Public Media at **www.globalpublicmedia.com** who have a lot of peak oil talks on their website.

**Buy a transmitter and aerial** from NRG Kits in Britain, specifying the frequency you intend to broadcast on. They will set up the transmitter, match the aerial and test it before shipping it to New Zealand. Alternatively, you can save some money by buying it as a kit. If you need help, someone from one of the existing stations may be willing to assist you.

**What kind of costs** are we looking at? Around \$400 to \$700 for the transmitter and aerial, plus an old computer to play the programmes and some money for a microphone and speakers.

**Radio, remember, is about word of mouth. Let's hear what you have to say.**

THIS LEAFLET HAS BEEN PUT TOGETHER BY

3531 Communications • [wellington@3531.co.nz](mailto:wellington@3531.co.nz)  
Critical Analysis Broadcasting, Wellington • [audioinformationrelay@paradise.net.nz](mailto:audioinformationrelay@paradise.net.nz)  
Matrix 107.5FM, Wellington • [matrix1075fm@yahoo.com](mailto:matrix1075fm@yahoo.com)