

of older DJs are playing great music from a bygone era



By the numbers

2000 calls and emails a month from listeners around the world

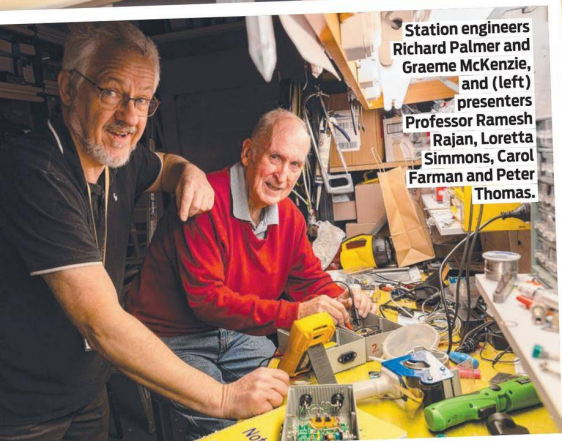
80 volunteers who do everything from present to plan

75,000 listeners from Melbourne to Montevideo each month

10,000 listen to the programs online

1000 members pay about \$40 a year to help sponsor the station

No.1 patron
Television and radio personality Pete Smith



Station engineers Richard Palmer and Graeme McKenzie, and (left) presenters Professor Ramesh Rajan, Loretta Simmons, Carol Farman and Peter Thomas.



Presenters Ian McLeod, Heather Swift, Jack Sanderson and Larry James, and (below) receptionist Keith Irvine.

my love of music was from the '20s, '30s and '40s, which was the era that this radio station was established for," she says.

"It was one that brought back memories of my parents because Dad had his wireless next to his chair and we listened to the dance bands, the early jazz, the British dance bands – the wonderful music of that era that I still play today."

Ms Simmons says Golden Days Radio plays a vital role in the lives of many people.

"For many lonely, marginalised people that, perhaps, have no one in their life or they are living alone and may not even communicate from one day to another, the music brings back happy memories," she says.

"I think our front desk is the most important role in this radio station. I call them our psychologists because they're there to listen to our listeners.

"People telephone about the music, how it has brought back memories for them of their parents, of their siblings, where they were on the dance floor, what dance hall they went to – that's been a wonderful thing for me."

KEITH IRVINE, 86 RECEPTIONIST

When listeners call in to the station, one of the calm, clear voices they hear on the end of the phone is Mr Irvine, a former Coles-Myer company secretary and one-time president of Epworth Hospital.

These days, he's happy to work in the background and take calls. "Working with Golden Days Radio is a true love," he says.

PROFESSOR RAMESH RAJAN, 67 6PM TO 10PM SATURDAYS

The Monash University neuroscientist admits he thought the station and its music was for "old people". He's now changed his tune.

"I'm an academic, so I do research and I teach," Professor Rajan says. His area of interest is how the brain works and what it tells us about the world.

Professor Rajan is also passionate about giving back to the community, which also sees him work as a volunteer at Vision Australia and a soup kitchen.

"This country's been very good to me," he says. "We came stateless (from India) in

1975 on a travel document that allowed us one trip and it was to Australia." The Glen Huntly studio of GDR 95.7fm is, he says, his "happy place".

"For four hours, you play your music and, you know, what could be nicer than that?" he says.

For the presenters, what matters most is what their music means to the listeners.

"I still remember vividly during lockdown playing some early English band music and this lady rang in to say that was the music to which she and her husband had danced 60 years ago," Professor Rajan says.

"He had died the previous week. I've never forgotten that because it made such a powerful impact."

CAROL FARMAN, 76 BREAKFAST THURSDAYS

Carol Farman is a high-flyer, having worked as an air hostess with now-defunct airline Ansett for more than a decade before starting a family.

She met her advertising executive husband when he was a passenger and, after he sold his agency, they bought and ran what was then Victoria's largest conference centre. Music is in her genes.

"My brother, Mark Davis, was an entertainer on tele-

vision in the '60s," she says.

"He was in musicals and was an entertainer, so the family loved music.

"I learnt classical piano from the age of six, then the flute, I sang classically, played guitar ... we were all musical."

PETE CLEMMENS, 79 BREAKFAST TUESDAYS

As the clock chimes at noon, popular presenter Pete Clemmens' morning shift has come to an end.

The Vietnam veteran, who was in the air force for 30 years, pokes his head out of the control room. Up next is eager "youngster" Domenic La Rocca.

There is a flurry of conversation in the office about plans for the next outside broadcast – they do seven or eight a year.

"What we do here is support the senior community, and that's needed more so now than ever," says Mr McLeod.

"But we are attractive to all generations. We're a multi-generational radio station, not just for old people."

LOOKING FOR A ROLE? Mr McLeod said the station needed a volunteer IT/web manager, as well as a sponsorship expert to help keep the wheels turning. If you are looking for a presenting role, you might just have to join the queue. For more information call the station on 03 9572 1466 or visit goldendaysradio.com

