

Presenter's long fight for FM licence

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Stroke of genius: If 2prfm was granted an FM licence it would be the first disability-orientated commercial radio station of its type Mark Boerebach said. Picture: John Veage.

A SUTHERLAND man who has Asperger's syndrome and is partially blind is lobbying the federal government for an FM radio licence.

Mark Boerebach, 43, of Sutherland, wants to broadcast 2prfm.com — the online radio station he established in 2000 on the internet, as a Sydney wide FM radio station to advocate for people with disabilities.

Mr Boerebach has been looking for work since the late 1980s. He said 2prfm would enable him to be self-employed and pay people with a disability an award wage.

It would have a playlist based on a large archival music library and like any other commercial radio station, would generate income by selling air time to advertisers but would be licensed under special disability provisions.

Mr Boerebach first applied for a licence in 2005. He provided a 400-page plus submission to the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy in 2010.

He believed he was overlooked because he did not have the deep pockets of major radio broadcasters, including Southern Cross Austero, which a website published by the Greens claimed was the Liberal Party's seventh-biggest donor in 2010-11.

"If the government would actually look into this seriously I think it would be something that would really help people with disabilities," Mr Boerebach said.

"The thing I'm not happy about is that a licence should represent what a station can offer the public, not who's got the deepest pockets.

"I would assume that a lot of people with disabilities are isolated and find it difficult to reach out so radio would be the perfect medium to communicate to them."

Mr Boerebach has a talent for instantly recalling hit songs of the '70s and '80s and shot to fame on the SBS quiz show Rockwiz and was the subject of a documentary Rainman Goes to Rockwiz.

Comment was sought from the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy.

Details: www.savesydneyradio.com

Should the federal government give the station an FM radio licence?