

## **Blind DJ Announces Plans for New Web Station.**

*Ron Murphy*

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Font Size Small Medium Large

[Back to Main Article](#)

Through an ever changing internet, Leura web radio caster 2PR continues to evolve. Operated by partially blind Mr Boerebach, Planet Retro 2PR is planning to commence regular programming within the next few months.

Mr Boerebach presented "More Great Music" on Rooty Hills "SWR FM" from 1992 to 1998. The program aired regularly on a Saturday from Midday to 2:00, and played a continuous mix of 70's 80's music.

Though he loved doing the broadcasts, it was a lot of traveling from Leura to the radio station's studios in Rooty Hill. Community radio also has a limited potential as these stations typically only cover a small broadcasting area. With commercial radio being somewhat difficult to break into, 32 year old Mark felt the next step would be to establish his own web casting station.

2PR FM blasted its first "Audio on demand" radio program to the world on Monday 26th November 2001, a successful test to show that such a radio station is possible. The first song aired was a track from Status Quo. A second test program aired on Wednesday the 12th December.

2PR FM started as "Planet Retro" in November 2000, a website dedicated to reviewing re-issues of 70s 80s albums on CD. Commencing on Yahoo Geocities, the website soon moved to Tripod in May 2001. At the same time a section on retro orientated video game reviews were published, with tips on how to play them.

With the station being operated out of personal finances, and living off a Blind Pension, the stations websites have been hosted on free servers. Mark notes, "One of the more annoying realities with free web hosts is that they are very strict with what you can put on them. One minute I have a fully operational station website, the next it would be a 404 error. If I want to get sponsors and advertisers, I definitely have to look at a paid host. At the end of the day, your integrity is only as good as the stability of your website". A 31 hour test broadcast commenced from the servers of Prohosting on Saturday 11th May, but was terminated as the broadcast originated from a free server.

Mark noted how expensive web hosting was when he continued with delight, "I'm really surprised how much recently web hosting has nose dived in running costs. With this in mind I'm looking into establishing a permanent arrangement with a paid host in the coming weeks. This will be so much better, as I'll be able to conduct regular programming, and ultimately have a permanent website with a proper web address".

What is so incredible about this tale is that Mr Boerebach is completely blind in one eye, and only has 20% vision in the other. He has produced an entire website, radio programs, and the promotional flyers and posters. In spite of this, he has been seeking paid work since leaving school in 1988. Though he has done several TAFE courses and work experiences, he has never been able to obtain paid work.

The idea of long term unemployment can drive many to depression, but Mark said, "I can't look down, the best way to manage such a situation is to always keep busy, and to keep ones self out there. In order to get a job, you have to be seen, and to always be actively doing something. Only recently I was on the Interview Panel at Blacktown Tafe, as they wanted my advice on employing an Educational Support Consultant. It was a two day job, but an interesting one at that".

You can keep up with Mark's progress and his website at <http://planet.retro.tripod.com>.