



Above : The earliest known photograph of the SWR 1st test (Cutec) mixer panel in original "Broadcast" configuration. This photo was actually of the desk in use in the WOW studios in March 1991. (Insert : the only known photo of SWR's original "\$50" Broadcast compressor)

Below : The Mt Druitt / St Marys Standard newspaper reports of happenings in the SWRFM studio just before commencement of the third SWRFM test broadcast at Emerton in October 1992.

New station hits the airwaves

THE airwaves have been buzzing since last Saturday with the sound of a new community radio station.

Sydney West Radio FM hit the airwaves for its third test broadcast from its temporary home in a back room of Mt Druitt Baptist Church at Emerton.

The station will broadcast daily from 8am to midnight.

"The station will be entertainment based, with music and lots of community news," broadcaster Erna Szabo said.

The non-profit station is being run by the former communications students and other volunteers of telecommunications workers and electricians.

The test broadcast will continue until the end of the month.

All you have to do to tune to the new radio station is turn the FM dial to 100.3mHz.



Community radio starting up at Emerton . . . Paul Matthews at the controls



Above : *The only known photograph actually taken at SWRFM's first test broadcast in January 1992 and its not even of the business end of the studio! Mark Davies and Stuart Jackson relax at the "other end," which was basically set up as a lounge room. The "coffee facilities" can be seen to the top left. Makeshift bed facilities are on the lower left on the other couch, for those "overnight" necessities. The Emerton site was always occupied 24/7 whenever a test broadcast was in progress.*

Below : Live Bands Day @ Emerton site, 2nd test May 1992.





Above : The Greenhouse. Unknown date, probably around 1998. Yes that is *the* Datto.

Below : First mixing panel under construction, early 1992. Paul's workshop in St. Marys.



This Page : *It takes all kinds to make a community.*

These photos are literally the only other photos that were ever taken within the Greenhouse studio during the seven years it existed between 1994 and 1999, hence their importance here.

Of course, the actual subject was presentation of a show on air simply called "Nude Natterings" which among other things, focused on what was going on in the nudist community at the time.

Naturally, the show was presented nude. Paul Matthews and Jorgi Zamroz were the presenters.

Worthy of note here is the "monitor speaker" behind Jorgi (Lower right photo). These speakers came into the organisation courtesy a "kerb side late night aquisition" somewhere in Mt Druitt, just before the second test at Emerton in 1992. *They remained at SWR in use for this purpose, right up until the first reconstruction of the Showground studio in 2003!*

During this time the speakers were *utterly abused, overloaded, punished and thrashed to within an inch of their lives for over ten years.* When finally removed from the studio, they still worked : however they literally disintegrated into chipboard piles once lifted.

Remember what happened to the Bluesmobile at the end of "The Blues Brothers"?

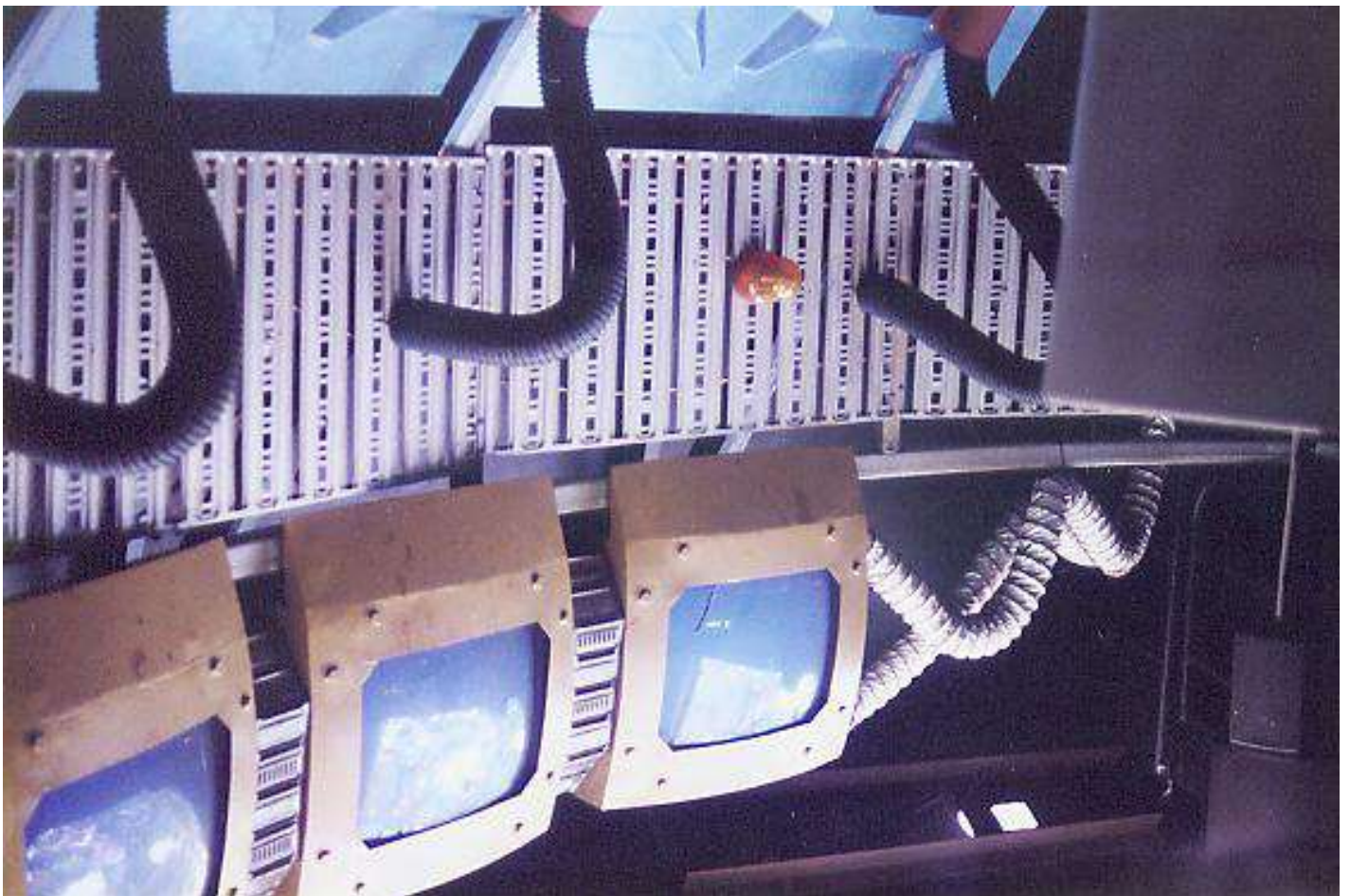
Well, this was literally like that :-)





THAT SPACE PROBE

A Western Sydney landmark now long gone, remembered by only a few. Here's a few snaps of what it looked like from the top of the tower, in the maintenance area looking out at the passenger display area (below) and also straight down to the ground (above). "A period of history the Tech Committee would like to forget!"

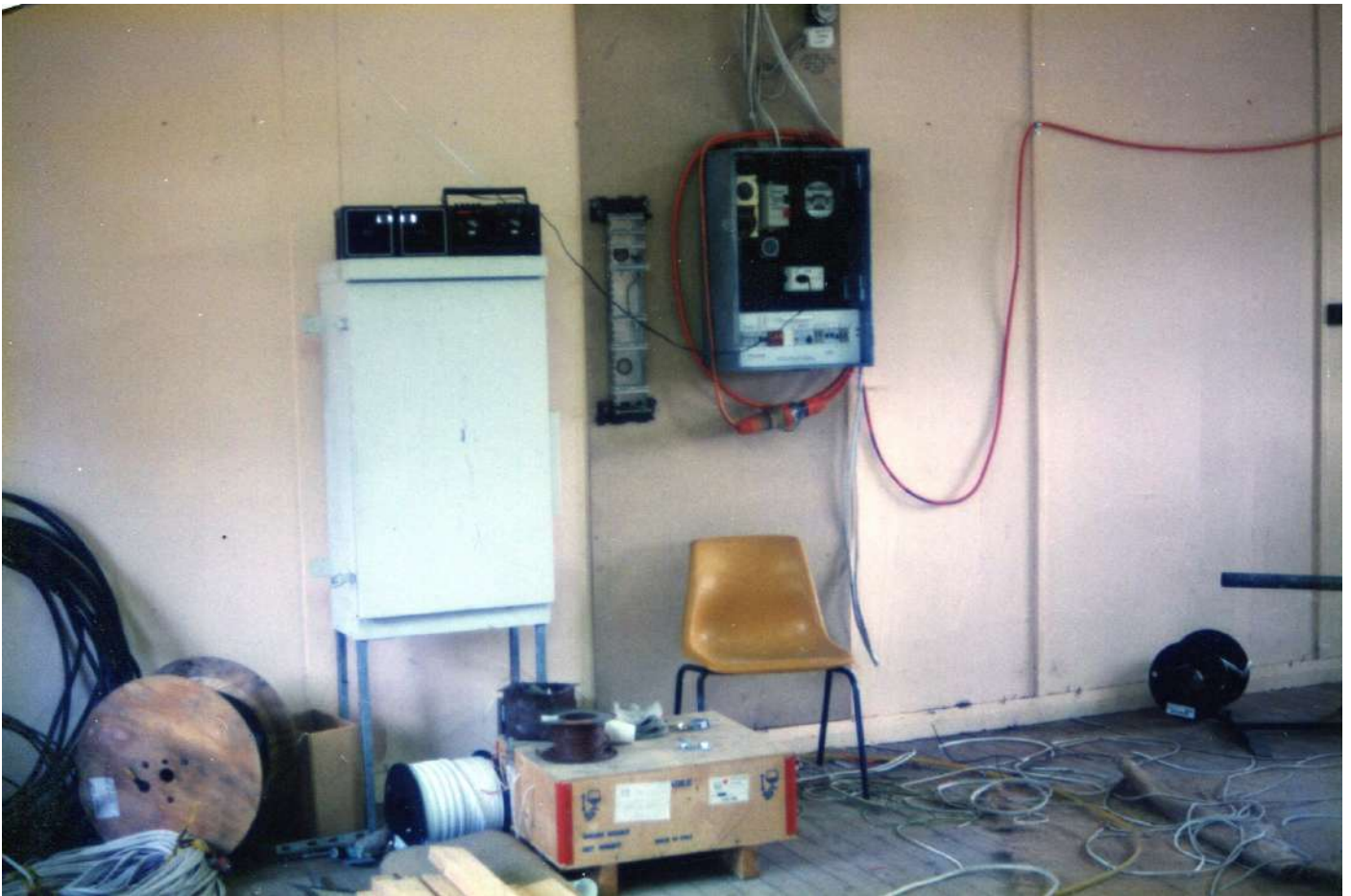


This Page : Photos of the Greenhouse Studios taken on the very last day of broadcasting, during the on air “Demolition Party”.

The whole building was pretty much trashed, the bulldozers arrived two days later.

The photo middle right shows the old Greenhouse “tech area”. You can just make out the FMPro unit in the full height rack to the left. Meanwhile, a pile of reel to reel tapes stands high on the makeshift desk next to an old reel to reel deck which ran at an abysmal quality 15/16’ speed and was used to log broadcast content back in those days.





SWR Blacktown Showgrounds Site

While the teams were hell bent on destroying the Greenhouse and pulverising it into dust, work had already commenced on the hurried and forced relocation to the Simpson Pavilion at the Showgrounds site. Power and Phone are yet to be connected, as can be evidenced by the temporary power connected to the distribution board in what would become the "Tech Room". The big box to the Left is recognisable as the transmitter box that was placed outside near the light tower and is still there today. Photo below : the original Studio One takes shape.





SWR Studio foyer and outside— very early days before the 2003 upgrade





TECHNICAL TRAINING COURSE 2004

Even in early licensed operation, SWRFM were actively developing their own technical training course and training members in basics such as sound, audio systems and basic troubleshooting. Outside Broadcasts in those “pre van” days always consisted of a motley collection of equipment plonked on a desk and hooked together. How does it all connect? Here, you could find out.





EARLY SOCIAL DAYS

Regular "SWR-B-Q's" and other social gathering events were always a feature of SWRFM's early days at the Showground site. This always culminated in the annual "Christmas Party" which is still held annually.





LIVE BANDS DAY INDOORS

BELOW : It's a Live Radio Gig day and it's raining outside. What do you do??
Move inside of course! Very early days Live Radio Gig with the band set up in what was then the tech area and office all rolled into one room.

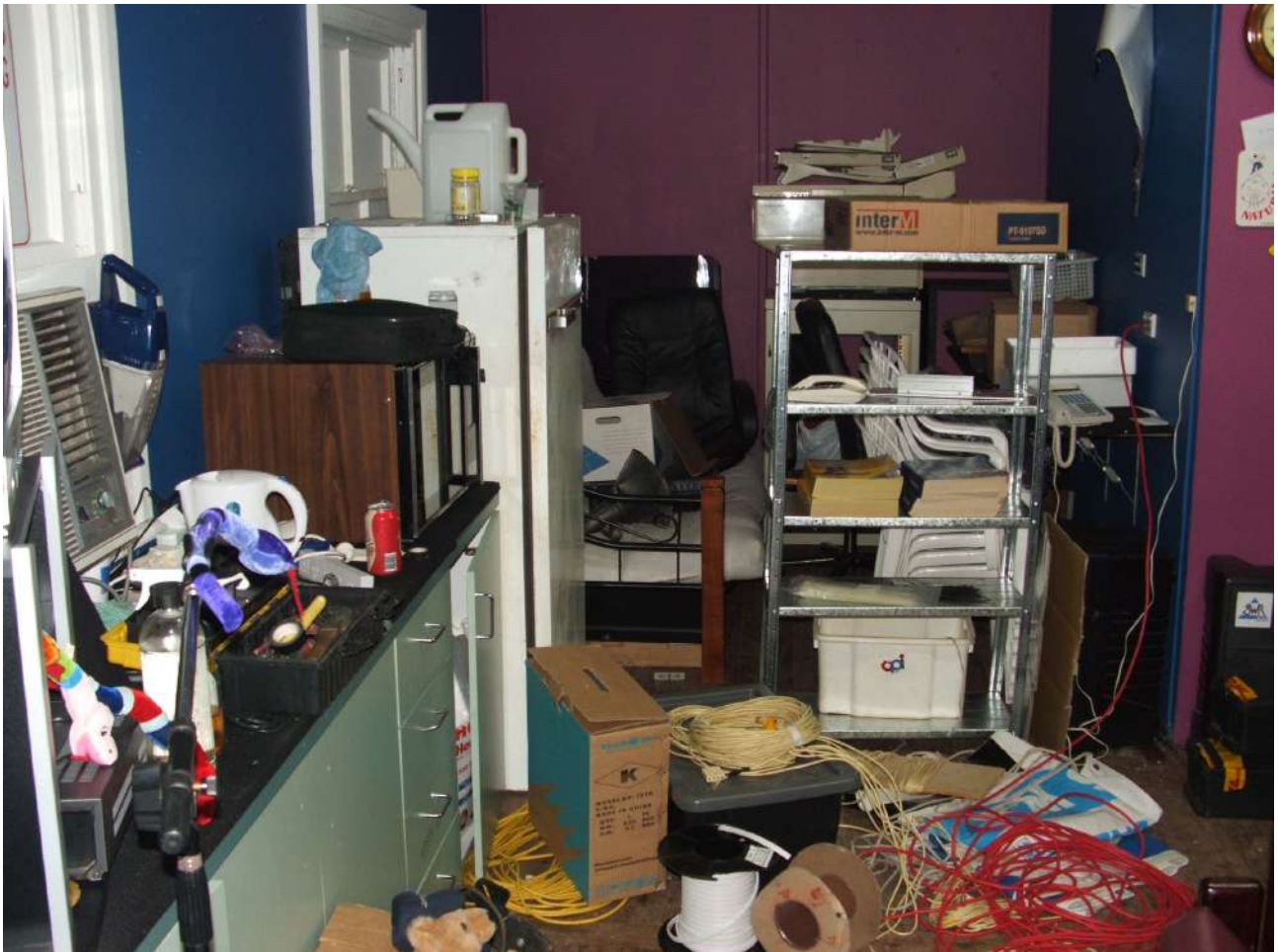




Above : Sashi Matthews and young Matt Reid are in control of the office sometime around ~2004ish

Below : Unfortunately the office was the tidiest room in the station back in those days.

The tech area? Well. ~2006. The Window A/C unit to left is a tribute to very early days at the Showground site, well before the building received its first ducted air conditioning system.

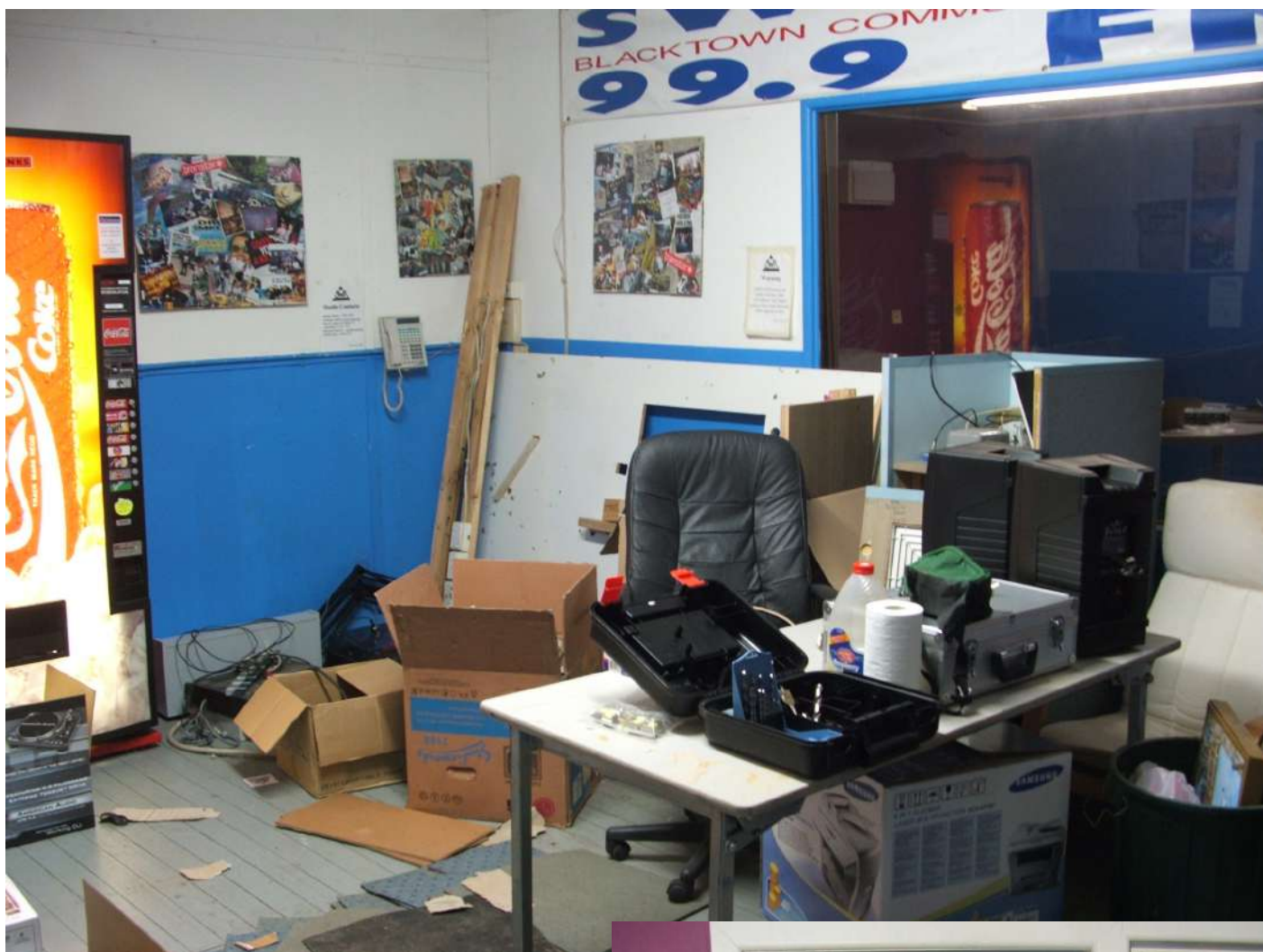




Above : The last photo taken of the “2003 to 2006” studio setup in use before its reconstruction. The original Mk2 desk, born in 1995 and first used at the Greenhouse, is now in it’s final days of operation.

Below : The last day of the old 2003 studio before it was torn apart.





Above : Front foyer, during the second reconstruction of Studio one, in 2006. The O/B Van in the shed was being used as SWR's main studio during this renovation.

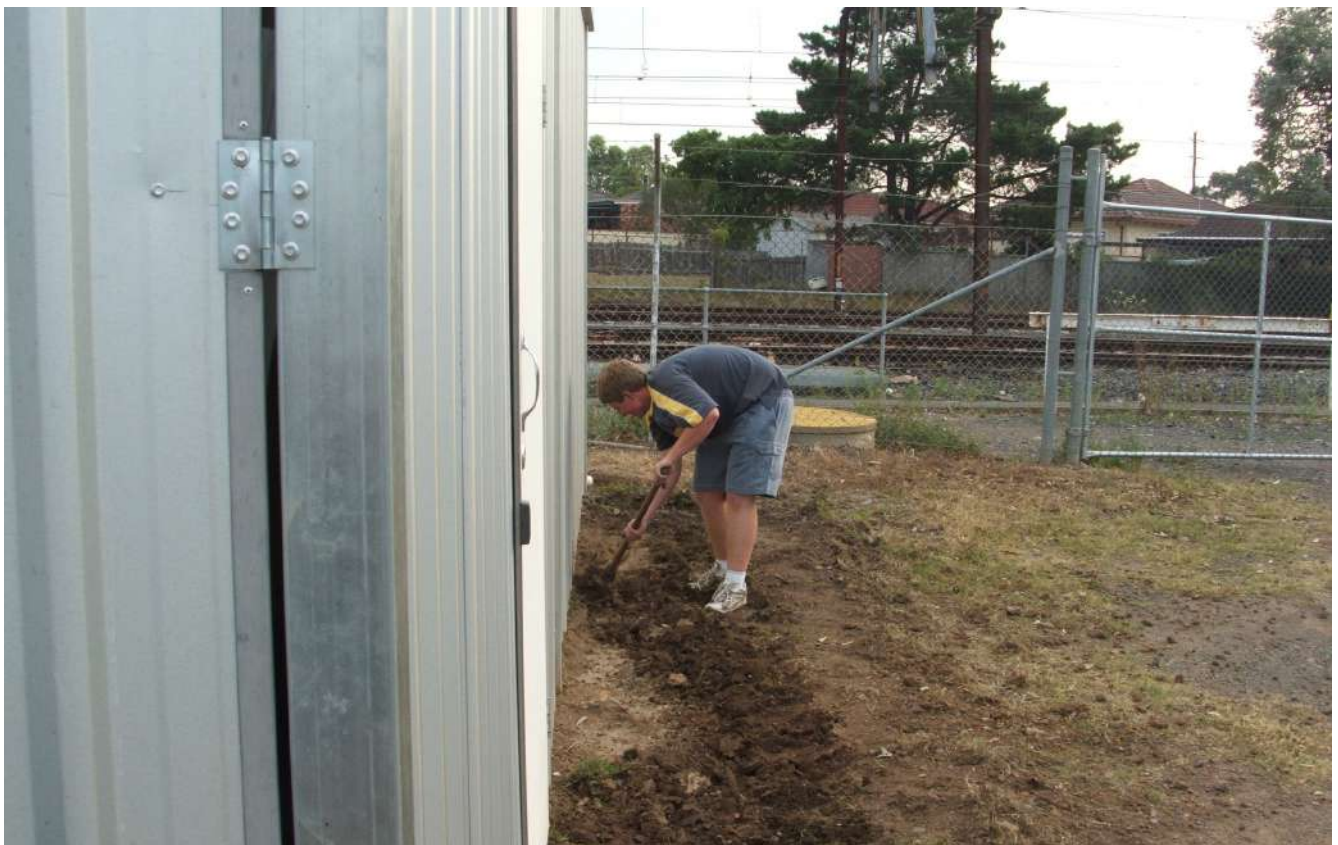
Below : Tech committee member David Gardner beavers away configuring new computers for SWR sometime around 2008.





Above : SWR Van parked in the shed. This photo would have been taken in 2006, during the studio renovation, when the van was doubling as SWR's main studio. The banner has been slung across the inside of the shed, in order to give broadcasters something a bit more interesting to stare at.

Below : Early days just after the van shed construction in 2005, Matt Reid isn't wasting any time in the garden.





PCYC GIGS 2007/08

Early days on O/B service with the SWR van parked outside the PCYC hall in Blacktown in 2007, for a "Live Radio Gig" event inside. The method being used to get audio back to the SWR studio just down the road, is clearly obvious to those who know what to look for.





PCYC "Small Day In" GIGS 2007/08 (Police Citizens Youth Club, Blacktown)
Above : 2007. Below : 2008.





AUSTRALIA DAY ON THE HILL O/B's

Since the dawn of time it seems, SWR has held exclusive live broadcast rights to this popular Blacktown Council sponsored event. The photos on this page show the 2004 offering, well before the ampitheatre was built on the site and well before the SWR O/B van was a thing. *For the production tech heads : YES, those are Jands Concord boxes! This rig was from the infamous (?) Newcastle based "Roanwatt Audio" who had been doing this community stuff since the mid 1970s . This was among his last gigs, before he finally retired!*





AUSTRALIA DAY ON THE HILL O/B's

In 2006, the message was becoming a little more organised. This was a year when a mono UHF STL link (transmitter on the desk right of bottom photo) was used to get the signal from Rooty Hill direct to Horsley Park, bypassing the Blacktown studios altogether. This was the last time before the SWR O/B van was then employed at this site in 2007.





AUSTRALIA DAY ON THE HILL O/B's

By 2007 (Above) the new concrete amphitheatre had been constructed. This would be the first year of the SWR van at this gig, to the left of stage in more or less the same location SWR uses at the Australia Day gig today. In 2008 (Below) the SWR van has returned to the right of stage. This year would see considerable security issues at the event (fights broke out near the stage twice, at one point encroaching on the SWR work space). This would be the last year alcohol was permitted at the event. *Roanwatt's Concord boxes still in use! - was the last year.*





AUSTRALIA DAY ON THE HILL O/B's

By 2009, the SWR van had taken up residence alongside the other food concession vans to the rear of the site behind the stage, a location it would keep for the following four years. This often presented challenges getting a signal back to the studio, however each time a solution was found. In this year, it was a tri truss tower with FM linking back to a members' house nearby thence using the POTS Codecs to get the rest of the way. In following years a boom lift (otherwise at the site for the purpose of installing and removing the canvas stage cover) was used to mount the antenna. A VHF FM LPON service was established to use as a studio to transmitter link.





AUSTRALIA DAY ON THE HILL O/B's

In 2010 (above) and 2011 (below) the set up was almost identical, with the SWR van and compound still occupying a stall site in the "back row" with the food concessions. As can be seen, use of the boom lift as an antenna platform and also for suitable signage, meant that everyone had absolutely no doubt as to where SWR was!





Above : At the 2015 Australia Day event, SWR began a long run of locating its van and O/B at the top of the hill rather than the bottom. The added height provided the ability to link to distant cell towers, as local ones were always swamped by the crowd's mobile devices being used where they normally aren't found. This new location allowed SWR to use IP codecs for the first time, providing a high quality stereo digital link. SWR would retain this position at this event until 2020. Most recent O/B's from this site, from 2024 onwards, now use Starlink which has enabled the OB to move back down the hill to more or less the same position where it all started!

Below : Another popular O/B for SWRFM has always been the Doonside Festival, this photo is of early van days around 2010 and would still have been using POTS Codecs for a link. Note the "Ambience mic".





A GRAB BAG OF EARLY VAN O/B'S

Above : Horsley Park “Carols by Candlelight,” 2009. Link was by POTS codec, using a specially installed phone line. Ironically the SWRFM Transmitter site sits just 1km away further South—but blocked by a high hill between it and this otherwise very low site.

Below : Outside broadcast from a Sponsor’s shop location at “Home Base” near Seven Hills, circa 2010. POTS codec in use.





A GRAB BAG OF EARLY VAN O/B's

Above : Shelley Public School, 2011. POTS Codex, with a phone line "stolen" from the school.

Below : "Hot Summer Grooves", 2010. VHF FM Link.





Above : Oxley Park Public School, sometime around 2007~ish. POTS Codecs.

Below : Between 2008 and 2012, SWRFM were active in promoting the **Blacktown Relay for Life** which was held at the Olympic athletics track. While stage entertainment kept things humming until around midnight, SWRFM were responsible for holding the event together and keeping everyone awake from there and through the wee hours. The O/B van was perfect for this application. Many SWR old timers would have vivid and fond memory of these events.





SWRFM RELAY FOR LIFE OUTSIDE BROADCASTS





Above : Relay for Life was so much more than “just an outside broadcast”. No need for expensive take away, SWR hot food and beverages were always available, including a freshly cooked hot breakfast!

Below : SWR’s primary purpose at Relay for Life was to keep things going in the wee hours. Lots of contests, dancing, song requests and special shenanigans were the order of the day both for those on site and the many families at home tuned in, just to keep in touch with their (usually young) participants “out for the night”. No mincing words though: *this event was a HUGE COMMITMENT from every volunteer involved*. As fun as it was, by 2012 it was clear that the effort was unsustainable. It was drawing effort away from other important tasks at SWR.





SWRFM RELAY FOR LIFE OUTSIDE BROADCASTS





SWRFM RELAY FOR LIFE OUTSIDE BROADCASTS





20th Anniversary—2012

In December 2012, a concerted effort was taken by the then Board to gather the three original founders of SWRFM together for a special "20th Anniversary" event. Above are Enayat Khan, Ken Jones and (right) Paul Matthews, in the van and together again for one last time. Parents looking over their grown up kids really... where the shenanigans never stopped....





Above : 20th Anniversary event. Doesn't look that much different to today's Christmas parties, does it?

Below : Early days of construction for the short lived "first Second Studio" commenced in 2012. This project took over four years to complete and in the end, met its demise in 2023 when the entire building was remodelled.





LIVE RADIO GIGS

Above : Also known as “*Small Day In*” (an obvious play on the Big Day Out), These started small.. and got bigger. Back in the early days there was no stage or cover. So if weather played its hand, we would need to quickly find somewhere under cover and fast. In this case it was the small shelter near the Show office at the show ring, about 80m from the station building. We had just enough cable.

Below : An important part of SDI events was always the interviews. Artists and bands record an interview before going live to air, usually while the previous act is still playing live. This is then played back while they set up and tune for their performance. Once the interview concludes, they launch in live.



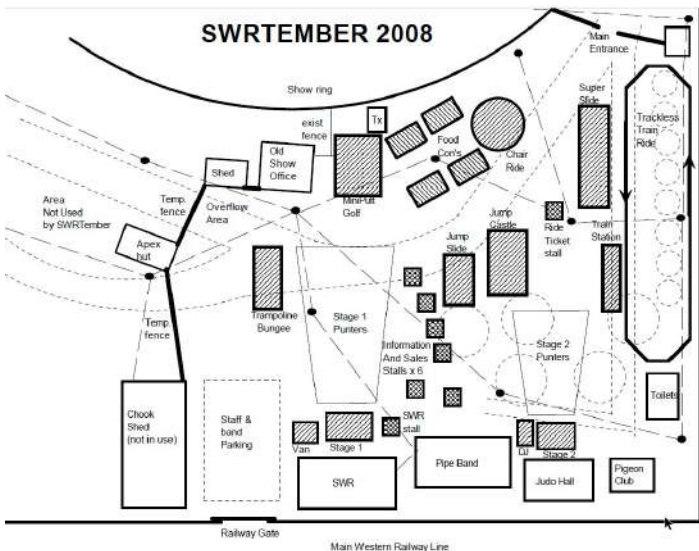


SWRTEMBER 2008

After repeated requests from members to turn the “Live Radio Gigs” into a more publicly accessible festival, the SWRFM Board decided to wear some financial risk and “up the stakes” in 2008 to include a full “music festival” style event with two stages and other attractions.

While everyone who attended had a great time, there was one problem : *not many people attended!* This ultimately left the station wearing a \$10k headache.. from just this one event.

“We tried, we failed, now lets look at other options”. SWR has done this ever since, having far better success partnering with other organisations to bring mutual benefit to all.





SDI 2009

After the financial “ouch” of 2008, SWR returned to its more familiar roots in 2009 with a format for the Small Day In that would stay with the station for many years afterwards. Set up a stage out the front of the studio. Pull the van out of the shed by hand and do a 90deg turn with it. Set up the PA and run it off auxiliaries on a desk located in the van, where a stereo mix would also be prepared for the on air feed. There were TWO events in 2009.

In later years, digital mixing and recording was added so that full multi track recordings could be taken. Of these, each band would get one song professionally mixed down and then played on air for a few months afterwards. *Every band always left with a CD of their performance, created and burnt on the spot by the team.*





Above: SWRTember 2009 featured a different lighting company. It was also the first time the event was streamed live on the internet.

Below: In contrast, consider SWR's SDI "Roots" during this early gig outside the studio building in around 2006.





Above : SDI March 2010. By this time, budget had extended to including a roof over the stage in case of bad weather. TWO SDI events were held in this year.

Below : SDI October 2010. In the following year (2011), the famous Todd Hunter headed “Dragon” would headline the event at the start of their national tour. It rained, so “Rain” had special meaning.





Above : SDI 2010. Any event was always an excuse for a SWR-B-Q, the “Small Day In” was no exception.

Below : SDI 2010. Another excuse to dress up. In the van with newly obtained Pre Sonus Studiolive desk to the left, paid for through a CBF grant. This enabled us to provide even better on air quality as well as produce recorded multi track stems for later mix down. A copy of these were always handed to each band on a CD before they left.





Small Day In 2013





MUD RUN 2014

Between the years of 2012 and 2015 a private group known as “Tough Mudder” (who are still in business today) ran a much larger, easier and more wide appeal fun event at the Horsley Park Equestrian Centre, literally within view of SWR’s transmitter site. The event was extremely popular, drawing *well over 10,000 participants* over the day, / SWRFM became involved as a collaborative sponsor in 2014, producing a live O/B from the site in that year. Unfortunately after 2015, the short sighted NSW Government of the day (who owned the site) then tried to extract more money from Tough Mudder for hiring the site. This pushed the event well into uneconomic territory. Sadly, this fun and worthy event was lost to Blacktown. Forever.





MUD RUN 2014





MORE PARADE FLOATS AND STREETS ALIVE O/B PHOTOS

Above : Merrylands 2006—Van live on air while in parade
Below : Merrylands 2010



Merrylands 2011





Merrylands 2011





Blacktown Streets Alive 2008 (above) and 2012 (Below)





Blacktown Streets Alive 2011

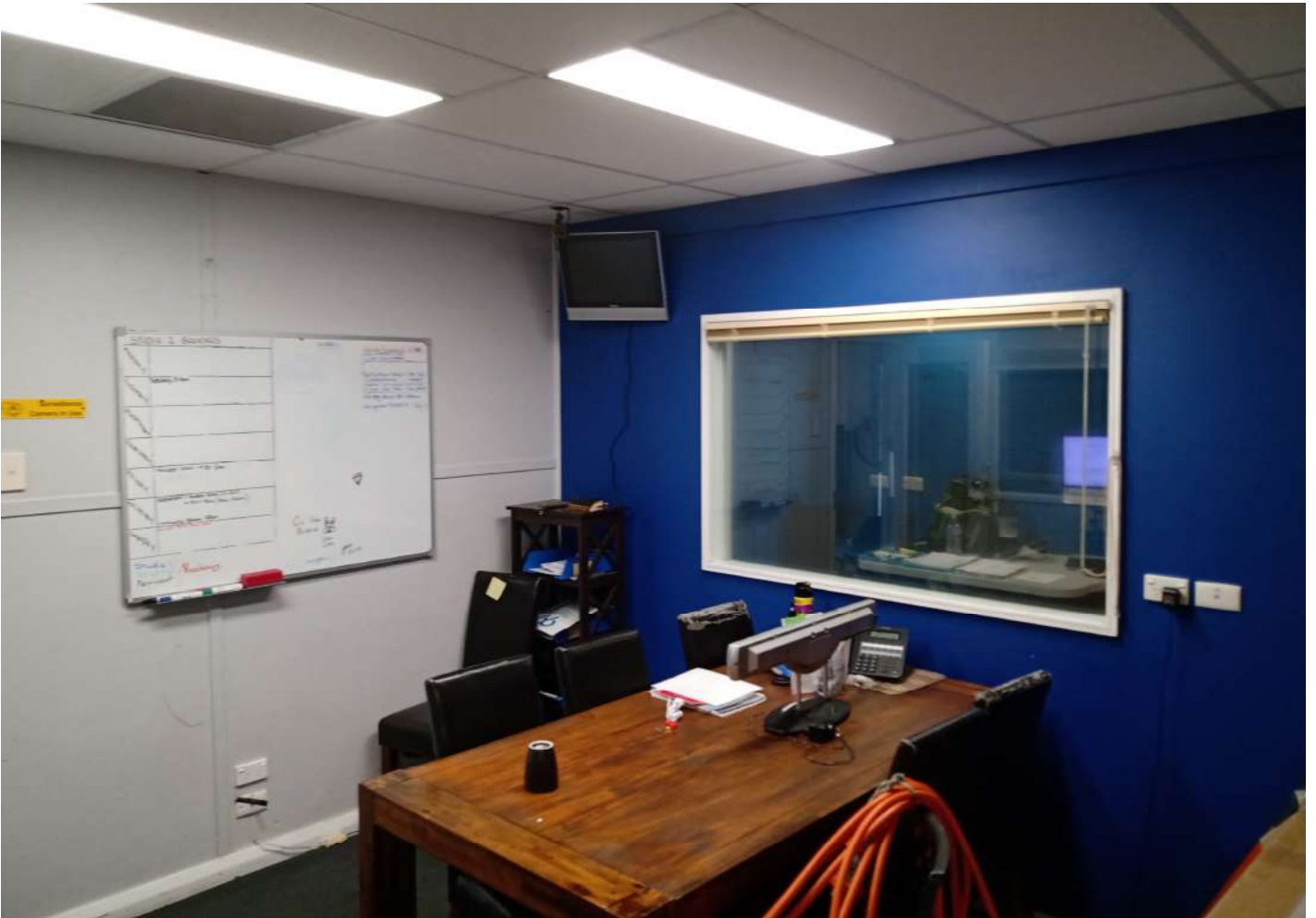




Blacktown Streets Alive 2014

This would be the last time SWRFM entered a float in a street parade.

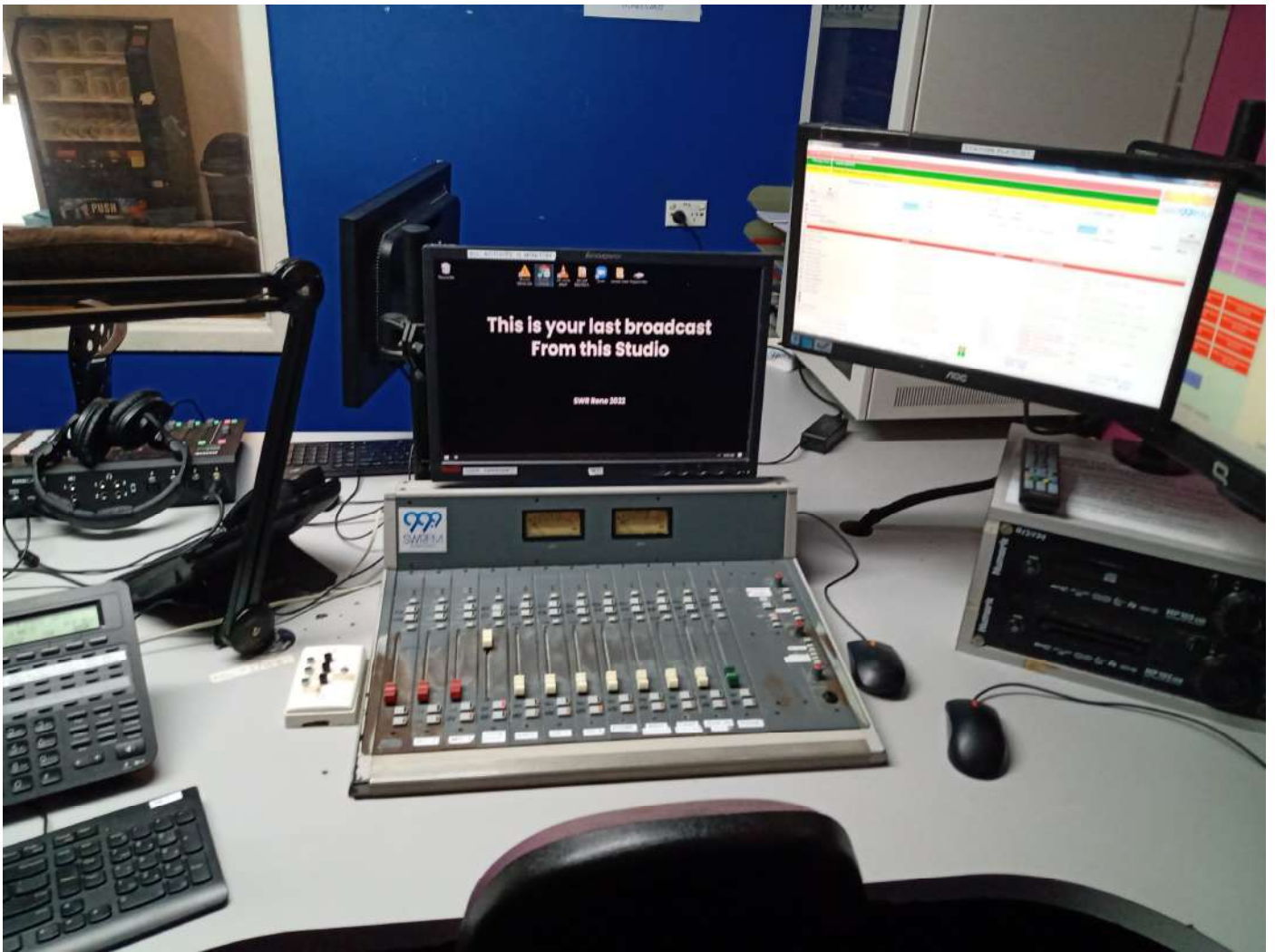




LAST DAYS

The following series of photos illustrate the SWR studios in their very last days before demolition in 2022.
Above : the “Board Room”, with window to Studio 2 behind. Below : Main Foyer.

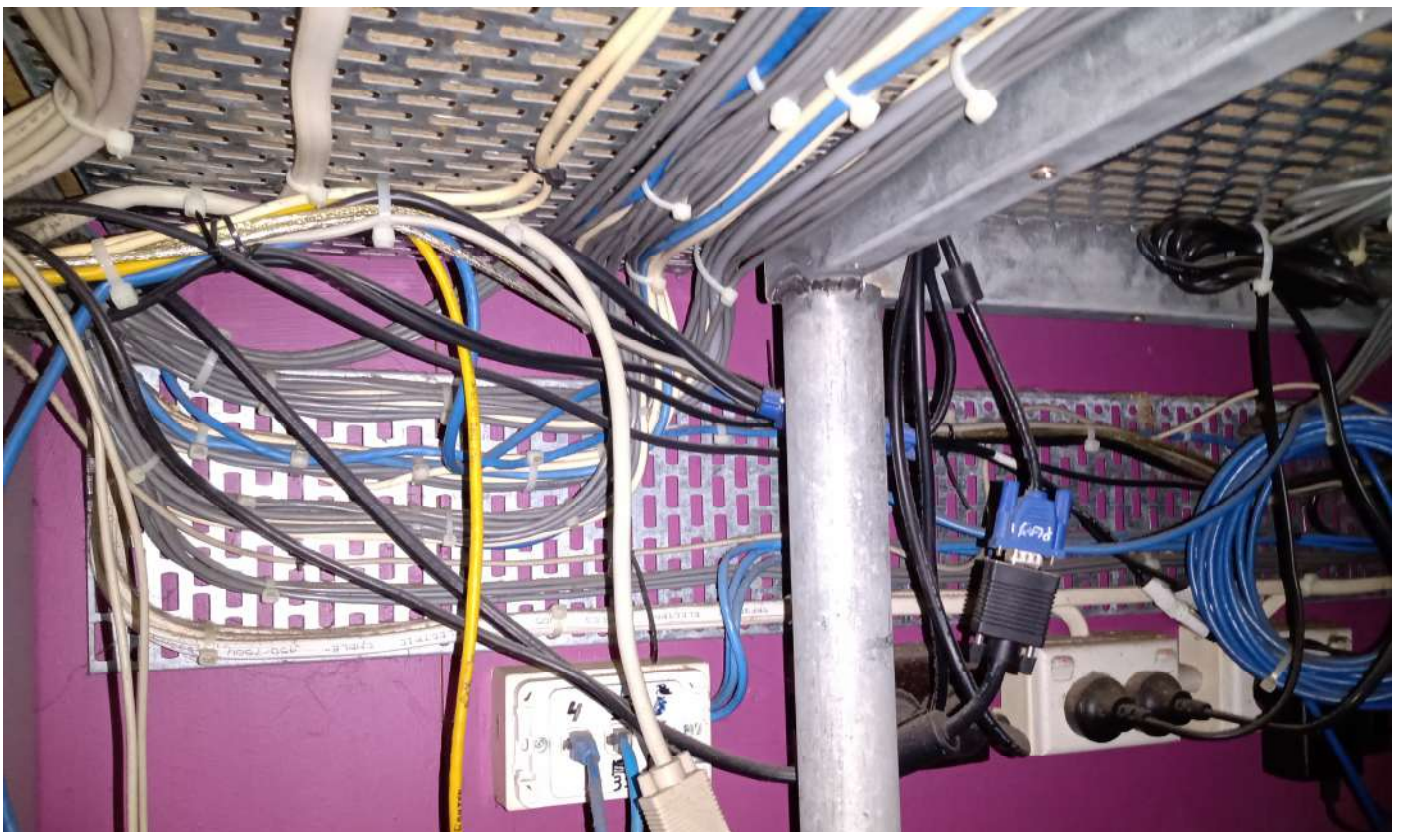




LAST DAYS

Above : Self explanatory.

Below : Literally under the main desk of the 2006 Studio.





BUSINESS ENDS—BEFORE 2022

Above Left : Studio 1 Equipment Rack. Above Right : Studio 2 Equipment Rack.

Below : View of the electrical and comms areas looking South.



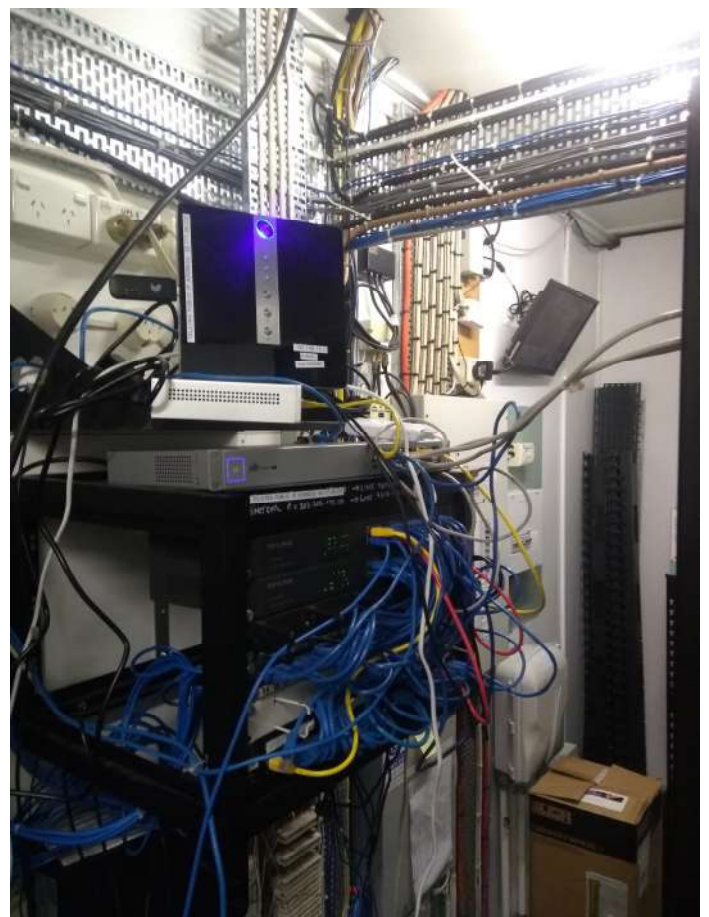


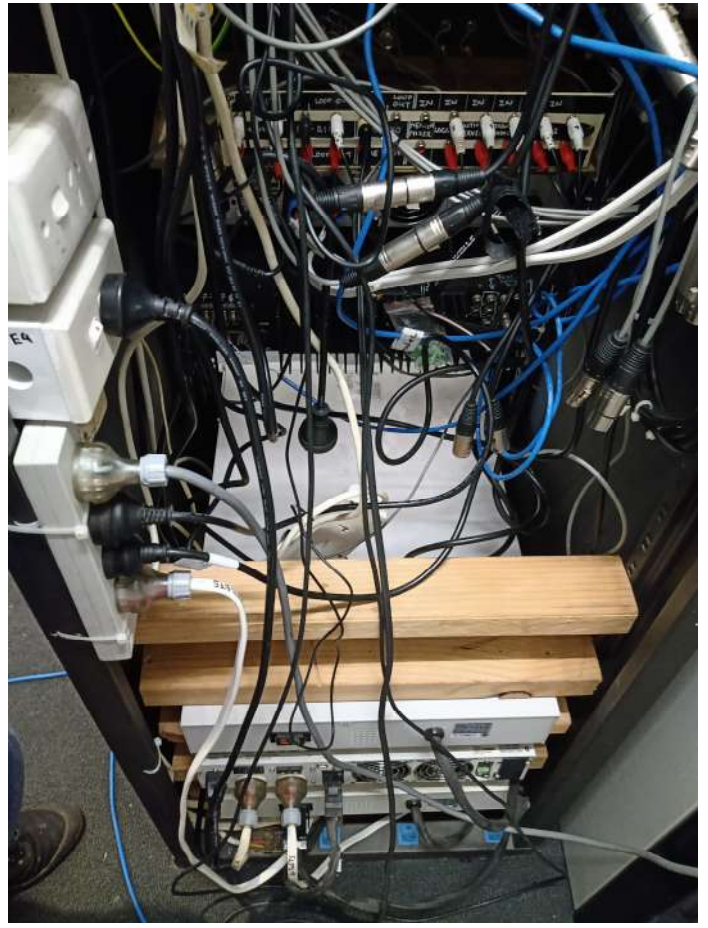
BUSINESS ENDS—MAIN RACK

Above Left : Main Rack & UPS units in 2019. Above Right : Same rack in 2022 prior to demolition.

Below Left : Elec & Comms in around 2014.

Below Right : By 2022 things in the Comms area were getting a bit out of hand..





BUSINESS ENDS—MAIN RACK

Above Left : Main Rack in 2022. Above Right : Rear of rack, 2022

Below : Computers prior to 2022 were all located on these purpose built shelves in the tech area.



LAST PAGE

IN MEMORIAM:

PAUL HUSSEY

For those of you who have read through all of our history books, congratulations. You've probably read through one of the most intriguing, amazing and outstanding histories of any broadcast station. Anywhere. In the world.

However out of all those other stations out there, very few, apart from SWR, would be able to make the unfortunate claim of having been the **first station to have a presenter actually die on air.**

Paul came to the station as a volunteer, when he moved into the area in late 2010. With a long string of broadcast history behind him, he quickly fell into a natural spot, becoming one of our best Drive announcers in 2011. Paul absolutely loved what he was doing. Every breath he took, breathed SWR. He was loved by all and instantly appreciated by listeners.

Paul "The Huss" Hussey, died at the broadcast panel of SWRFM Studio One, at approximately 4:35pm on Monday 28th November, 2011.

He had just completed the 4:30pm news and traffic and cut to the next track. After that song finished, Jo (our administrator who was on site) noticed the "dead air." She investigated, finding Paul slumped over the desk, unresponsive. Medical examination eventually confirmed he had suffered a severe heart attack in that moment as the song played.

Paul literally died doing what he loved doing most.

Let's all raise one for you Huss.

Paul Matthews
Your SWR History Curator, 2026.

