

Announcement

To

From

Date

Number of pages

Dear all,

All Radio National staff

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Today you may have heard news of a proposed restructure of the Radio National Online Design and Development team and may have some concerns for the colleagues directly affected. You may also be wondering how this impacts on the Radio National web site and what this will mean for the future. And so we'd like to take this opportunity to provide you with some background to assure you that this decision has not been taken lightly, that your affected colleagues will be provided with as much information and support as possible and to outline why we believe this change is necessary.

Background

As you know in 2009 ABC Radio's management structure was reviewed and realigned. One of the key outcomes of this restructure was the creation of the Multiplatform & Content Development (MP&CD) department bringing all network online positions together under one management umbrella to deliver a common strategic approach to web development, design, project management and content production.

An underlying motivation for that part of the restructure was that the ABC is putting a greater strategic focus on websites and other digital presences. Radio's strategic plan of 2009-2012 reflects this emphasis, including references to building new ways for audiences to connect to ABC content and communities. The goal of the design and development team is to build the ABC Radio digital presence into an industry leader. In short that means showcasing the full depth of RN content in the most contemporary and accessible ways possible across a myriad of platforms including mobile devices.

RN Online Design and Development Team

In order to achieve this, our design, development and project management methods and standards need to change. Within Radio National roles within the design and development area have evolved over time in very particular ways, often combining content production, development and project management functions.

The online world is now very different from it's beginning 15 or so years ago and formal qualifications are more and more the norm. The ideal model for sustainable, high quality design and development teams now includes specialist project or product managers and specialist user experience designers as well as specialist front end developers. It is unusual and increasingly difficult to combine editorial with design or development accountabilities in operational/practitioner roles and we have come to the reluctant conclusion that the current design and development team is no longer able to meet the ABC's broad strategic goals, or Radio Multiplatform's quality standards around design, development and project/product management.

To realise our goals of designing and building a great web presence, more and more training, knowledge and specialisation is now needed. The UX (user experience design) field of knowledge has risen in importance over the last 5 years, alongside huge advances in code development that power modern websites, and make content portable across devices and platforms. This trend is only going to continue.

In saying this, we want to acknowledge – very strongly – the hard work, the deep commitment and the great care with which this team have grown the RN website into its current incarnation. We are all aware of their thoughtful stewardship and aware of the great things that have been achieved.

Proposed Restructure

Ultimately what we'll be looking for is a team that can:

1) Build and extend the websites so it can make the best possible use of your content whether it's audio, photos, videos or text; 2) Build up the presences for Radio National on mobile devices and social media platforms; and 3) Do it all with the best possible user experience, the best design standards, current code development practices, on time and within the available resources.

Even now, Radio National is unique within Australia's media, and it will continue to be so. All audiences, but especially audiences for this network, are increasingly used to high quality, sophisticated experiences on competitor websites, whether those are information or cultural websites. In the short term, it's important that the network's quality content is presented to audiences as well as it can be. In the medium term it's important that program makers' content is presented well on mobile devices, and other platforms.

This need for change is not in any way to deny that Radio National has been innovative around its website and the podcast success story is one example of this. But there is a need to take this level of innovation further in order to give our audience more ability to engage and interact with our content.

Proposed Structure

In planning this restructure we have also had to consider that there is currently only one 'online' position in Classic FM. Aside from the lack of balance between the Radio National and Classic FM teams, it is unrealistic for a single role to combine the number of functions and skills that are needed to design and build the network's digital presence as well as manage design and development projects. After considering a number of options we think it would be beneficial to combine the existing Radio National and Classic FM teams but more importantly to establish positions that more accurately reflect what's required to bring about the changes highlighted above.

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The diagram below illustrates the proposed structure and roles as compared to the existing model:

The current structure consists of Janet Parker, Peter Jackson, Gordy Blair, John Horner, Kevin Klehr, and Magda Kostrzewa in Radio National and Stephen Cannings in Classic FM.

What does this mean for your colleagues?

Over the next few weeks we'll be talking to your colleagues about their skills and qualifications and whether their skill-sets will match those required for the proposed new roles. We will also be consulting with their union who will have an opportunity to be involved in our considerations. At the end of our consultation process, the new roles will be advertised and affected staff will be welcome to apply if they believe they satisfy the selection criteria. Unfortunately however it may be the case that some of your colleagues will not have the requisite skills and/or experience.

In the event that someone is affected by a redundancy situation they will have the option to undertake a 6-week redeployment program under the provisions of our Employment Agreement. The ABC is committed to assisting affected staff explore this option.

We realise this email may come as a shock and these situations are always confronting. We can assure you that Radio management has given this matter extremely serious consideration and it's a step not being taken lightly. We will work towards ensuring it is dealt with in a

respectful and open manner and your colleagues will be provided with relevant support and information.

If you'd like to discuss this further you may contact Fergus Pitt in Multiplatform and Content Development. Please note however his first priority is to make himself available to your affected colleagues.

Regards

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Radio National