

My career in broadcasting

By Julie Derrett.



ALBINISM
FELLOWSHIP
OF AUSTRALIA

After I left school I went to the University of New England in the rural cathedral town of Armidale, where I completed a BA with a major in politics. While studying, I started volunteering at a community radio station and decided that I wanted to try and build a career in radio.

I learnt all that I could from anyone who would teach me. I got a stringer's job with the local ABC in Tamworth. I supplied them with three stories a week from Armidale. I applied for and got the broadcast manager's job at the community radio I had been volunteering at.



Then I was offered a job with the ABC presenting morning and afternoon programs for rural radio based in Tamworth. I leapt at this opportunity. I was good at this stuff, my school drama training, my knowledge of music, a very broad education from a BA and my interest in politics was paying off. I loved working in radio. My eyesight did pose a few problems. I am a dreadful news reader, but I have the gift of the gab and loved

interviewing people and entertaining my audience.

My next job with the ABC took me to Lismore, where I was the executive producer of the first NSW state wide afternoon program. I was let loose on a new project and I loved every minute of it.

I then landed a job in Canberra with the ABC presenting their afternoon program. That was 1990, the year I turned 30. Canberra is still my home. I had many roles with the ABC in Canberra both on and off air, as well as in management and training.

After 27 years with the ABC, it was time for a change and I retrained as a primary school teacher. I have been working in that role for the past 13 years. I now work as a casual teacher to give me time to travel and pursue hobbies: crochet, quilting, gardening and a bit of music, but mostly I just wanted to slow down and smell the roses. I felt like I had been running a marathon for 35 years of study, careers and family; I could afford to take a breather.

My best corrected vision has always been less than 6/60 which means that I meet the legal definition of blindness. Albinism has been a big deal, I look different to my peers, I can't see what they can see with ease and every day I have to think about how I am going to keep out of the sun. So, yes, albinism is big in my life, but my life has been big and I say to myself every day, so what if I have albinism, just get on with it. I choose to figure out a way to do what I want to do and occasionally ask for help if I really need it.