



FROM LEFT: Tony Easton, Jade O'Donohue and Chris Coxhill.

# thirty rocks

Adelaide's 'fiercely independent' community radio station Three D is still thriving after 30 years

It's all about the music at Three D radio: no playlists, no commercials and no pretences. Every Monday evening, colourful characters from across Adelaide meet at the stables behind the studio – a ramshackle house in Stepney. This is the Hillbilly Hoot, an open-mic, live-to-air jam. "We never know who is going to turn up," says Jade O'Donohue, who has been with the station for four years. "Sometimes, it's 10 people, sometimes it's over 100. You just need to bring your own chair."

First established in 1979 using the name Triple M (it changed to Three D in 1993 after a cash injection from Austereo), the station now broadcasts more than 60 programs a week to more than 110,000 listeners. Chris Coxhill, the chair of Three D's board, says the future has never been brighter as they celebrate their 30th birthday.

Three D receives no regular funding from the government, instead relying on more than 1000 subscribers to raise the \$90,000 it takes each year to stay on air. Of those subscribers, about 100 volunteers actively run the station.

The Three D record library is a hidden treasure-trove of rare and wonderful items, with more than 85,000 tapes, CDs and vinyl records, many from underground local acts. Just don't expect to find any Britney Spears CDs on the shelves. "Commercial stations are about moving new product, so a lot of good stuff disappears," says original subscriber Tony Easton.

Three D is more concerned with celebrating niche genres of music, such as neo-folk, spoken word, funk, soul, jazz, beats, breaks, pop, rock, punk and everything in between. "Some of our programs sound like lost transmissions from another era," adds Tony, tipping the brim of his impressive hat.

To be around in another 30 years, the station must move with the times, and it seems it will soon outgrow the Stepney headquarters – there's no room for any more albums. However, whatever happens, Three D is a survivor. "There have been plenty of times over the years where we all didn't think we'd last," says Tony. "But we always have." ■  
Tune in to 93.7FM for Three D's 30th birthday celebrations on December 21, from 9pm. [threedradio.com](http://threedradio.com).

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