##### **[00:00:02.760] - Bernard Namok**

Hi And welcome to Yarning Disability, the FPDN podcast. I'm your host, Bernard Namok Jr. I'm a proud St Paul, Badu, and Erubian man from the Torres Strait. I'm also the son of the designer of the Taurus Strait Islander flag, Bernard Namok Senior, and an advocate for the first People's Disability Network. Join me now on Yarning Disability as we showcase First Nations people dealing with the disability, as well as their families and carers and other industry professionals.

##### **[00:00:44.790] - Carly Wallace**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned that the following podcast may contain the voices and names of people who are deceased. The First Peoples Disability Network and the producers of this podcast recognise the traditional custodians of the land on which this podcast is recorded. They pay respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders past, present and the future leaders of tomorrow. FPDN would like to acknowledge our founding elders and their lasting legacy, Uncle Lester Bustock and Auntie Gail Rankin, and acknowledge all first peoples living with a disability.

##### **[00:01:28.690] - Bernard Namok**

So in this week's episode of Yarning Disability, Roz Bynder, one of our Training and Engagement officer, visited Goolarri Media in Broome, and she spoke to Sandy Dan. Sandy was diagnosed with congenital glaucoma when she was only young. Roz had a yarn with Sandy in the studios of Goolarri Media.

##### **[00:01:54.930] - Sandy Dann**

Hello, I'm Sandy Dan. I work for Goolarri Media here on 99.7 FM in Broome, I do a national program that goes around the country by the National Indigenous Radio Service for an hour. I also do a local hour beforehand that pretty much hits around town.

##### **[00:02:16.130] - Roz Bynder**

Beautiful. Thank you. Sandy, why don't you tell us a little bit about who you are and where you're from?

##### **[00:02:22.770] - Sandy Dann**

I'm a Broome girl, locally born and bred in Broome, but I'm a Nyul Nyul woman. I'm a woman whose family is originally just north of Broome, south of the Beagle Bay community, is our traditional lands. I've always lived in broom, and it's always been my home as I know it, other than frequently visiting Perth, where I spent many a years as a patient in-house at Princess Margaret Hospital, having a disability and being diagnosed with, trying to say that word, congenital glaucoma.

##### **[00:03:10.880] - Roz Bynder**

What are some of the struggles or things that you've overcome growing up and working in a radio station or being an Aboriginal woman with a vision impairment? Is that how you would like to say it? Or what is the word that I could use to best describe? Yeah. Well- Vision impairment?

##### **[00:03:31.450] - Sandy Dann**

Some could see that, yeah. I prefer to use that terminology visually impaired.

##### **[00:03:37.940] - Roz Bynder**

Visually Impaired

##### **[00:03:38.450] - Sandy Dann**

Yeah. I guess some may see it as a difficulty. Some might see it as a curse, being born a woman, being born black, and then having to handle a disability in such a high-profile place, working in media. But I kinda realized over the last 10 years or so, and especially since my eyesight deteriorated back in 2004 that, more than anything, it's been a blessing. But the sad thing is it seems to be an obstacle or a problem to other people. And the aspect for other people has been a real problem in trying to, not so much convince, but to make them realize that people do different things in life and utilize different ways of doing things. It's just like coping mechanisms. Everyone's got their own strategies, and that really is pretty much something you've got to find within with having any disability of sorts.

##### **[00:05:16.250] - Roz Bynder**

you've been at this radio station for how many years now as the main broadcaster?

##### **[00:05:21.670] - Sandy Dann**

I've been in the business for 32 years. I originally started as a cadet broadcaster with Goolarri Media back in 1992. I beforehand volunteered my service. Radio was always of interest to me as that was very much a way of keeping in contact with families, especially when away from home as a child or a teenager, radio was a good link from one end of the state to the other.

##### **[00:06:04.710] - Roz Bynder**

You've had such a long career, that's not easy for anybody to stay at one place, so that's a massive achievement in itself. What have been some of your best moments in radio, especially since you've been here at Goolarri?

##### **[00:06:20.140] - Sandy Dann**

Well, I suppose my best moments really have been as a student and doing broadcasting and journalism in the Northern Territory, going to a bachelor college, as it was known back then, or bachelor institute now, and just taking in that two-way aspect of radio with broadcasting and journalism, then having to do work placements around the country in other community stations or even in the ABC at times, and finding that my skill sets well and truly exceeded those around me

##### **[00:07:05.030] - Roz Bynder**

Yeah, you're very good at your job. I know that much. What is a day in your life as a radio broadcaster look like?

##### **[00:07:14.210] - Sandy Dann**

It's weird because being a radio broadcaster, there isn't a day in one's life. It's a 24/7 cycle. News never sleeps. The world turns. So you're always keeping a constant ear in what's happening out there, and prior preparations are always happening in the fore, front and the back of your thoughts with, Okay, what's going to happen within these two hours that I am on air? How am I going to pace it? Who am I going to talk to? What am I going to bring? Then the issues can change quite quickly, especially within seconds at times, because of breaking news.

##### **[00:08:05.690] - Roz Bynder**

What would you like people to know about being an Aboriginal woman and being visually impaired?

##### **[00:08:13.210] - Sandy Dann**

Yeah, well, don't let people determine who you are. You've got to be in the driving seat to be able to follow your own passion and get what you want. It's good to dream, but you've got to work on dreams and you got to work on changes.

##### **[00:08:35.240] - Roz Bynder**

What do you say to other Aboriginal people that have disabilities and wanting to make a career for themselves like you have done? What do you say to those listening who maybe have a disability and struggling with their thoughts of what they would like to do with their life?

##### **[00:08:53.570] - Sandy Dann**

Just like that sun that'll get up tomorrow. You wake up, you'll breathe, with, you'll reach out for some substance in life. Would it be something to eat or a habit that you've got? It's important to participate in what life has on offer because you really have a window and an opportunity that only comes once in a lifetime. And having a disability should never stop you. Just find your own strategies of getting around tasks and fulfilling your dreams to be satisfied with who you are at the end of the day. Don't worry about others.

##### **[00:09:45.900] - Roz Bynder**

Goolarri here, we've moved to a new building and we've got some things happening here that Kira and Kim have done just to make lives a bit easier for yourself and the staff also, so that they're not doing things they shouldn't be doing or putting things in your way. What do you think about services and organizations that are trying to employ Aboriginal people living with disabilities? What do they need to keep in their mind so that the workplaces are happy and safe environment?

##### **[00:10:17.650] - Sandy Dann**

Well, firstly, I had to take the lead to ensure that I had a safe workplace environment to exist in. I also had to take the lead in ensuring that my organization was working with the correct people, only so that we could tick all of the boxes in health and safety. But more than anything, it has just been such an eye-opener and the feeling of being a part of a world of working people has just been the biggest reward. Now, being able to be a part of that energy that exists within this organization, utilizing every inch of my workspace.

##### **[00:11:29.440] - Bernard Namok**

Roz also yarned with Chief Operations Officer, Kira Fong, and Broadcast Manager at Goolarri Media, Kim West, about the inclusiveness in the workplace.

##### **[00:11:38.500] - Kira Fong**

My name is Kiera Fong, and I'm the Chief Operations Officer here at Galari Media, enterprises in Broome, Western Australia. I've been at this organization for 20 years and in the Chief Operations role now for 14 years, 13 years, and I'm actually a broom girl. My family's Broome Chinese, so I've got a big affiliation with the town and the people and the lifestyle and the culture. I manage the productions team, which involves television production and broadcast, radio production and broadcast, arts and events management. We work together as a team on one floor, so we're always sharing ideas. We can have a cross-focus on everything that we do. If we're doing events, then we can make sure that it's promotion on radio and that we do interviews and that we're filming the event for television, so we've got content to broadcast on our TV station. It works really well. It's very noisy, it's very energetic. Of course, now we're bringing in that whole digital content role as well. And part of that is because the way things are moving, and we've got a small digital footprint. But in today's environment, we actually need a larger digital footprint.

##### **[00:12:56.140] - Kira Fong**

So we're now working at building that as part of a team too, within the productions team.

##### **[00:13:02.030] - Roz Bynder**

And the progression of the radio station is what brought us here as First Peoples Disability Network, because you are a very inclusive radio station in particular for people living with disabilities. What you've had to do to make sure that your radio station has an inclusive environment.

##### **[00:13:18.770] - Kira Fong**

Goolarri Media started in 1997 out of Broome Aboriginal Media Association, which started broadcasting out of Broome from the ABC studios in 1989. We moved into these buildings and had an old radio studio, which is in... We own two sites here, and it's on the site next door in 1991. Sandy was one of the first trainees here back in 1991, so we're now talking 2023. Her involvement in the organization has been quite extensive. After her traineeship here, she went up to work at Hall's Creek and throughout the East, Kimberley, and came back to work for Radio Goolarri. Before I started here in 2004, she was already back working here. She's had a huge affiliation with the organization, and for us, there's a whole lot of respect for her and the work she does here. Her radio content goes national, one hour per day every day around Australia, every work day around Australia. She's really got a reputation for herself and a name for herself in the industry. Many people actually don't know that she's vision impaired because she manages the radio station. We'll talk to Kim a little bit later and discuss how technology assists her in that role and how we've had to patch things along as we go to make it work.

##### **[00:14:40.320] - Kira Fong**

We had our old radio studios at the old buildings from 1991 until last year, beginning of the last year 2022, and we managed to find some funding to bring the new radio studio into our main offices. Of course, the old radio studio had been a building that Sandy had been going to for so long. She knew the layout, she knew the pathways, and whilst it wasn't designed for people with disabilities, it was on the ground, it was a low-lying building, and she knew the building and she knew and it had its own access. The radio studio had a different access from the office building, which is just in front of the radio studio, which we now rent out, but we used to be in that building. We moved into this building in 2008. The radio was still located on the old site. By doing that, it meant that there was a disconnect in the productions team. Radio was over there and television and the broadcast events and arts was over here, and they felt isolated and we felt isolated from them. There wasn't this team camaraderie with the radio crew, and there were a lot of things that it's a little bit like out of mind, out of sight, not intentionally, but because they're on that other site for us to go over and say hello every morning didn't happen because we'd have to travel across the or if it was wet season, run through the rain.

##### **[00:16:02.850] - Kira Fong**

By moving them into this site here, they got new studios. We were able to design the studio layout based on what the needs were of the broadcasters at the time. Sandy was able to pick her own desk, her own chairs, where her broadcast desk was located in the office, and what was the easiest for her to be able to walk into. The office is there as well. She's able to walk into her office and she knows the layout now. But of course, we had to make sure that the organization over here was ready for it. We're not just talking about people with disabilities accessing the building, it's about all the other staff understanding and appreciating what the needs are of somebody who's got a physical impairment and trying to train the staff in that and trying to get the staff to appreciate that was very difficult. We really had no one to turn to. We turned to local services and we felt they were overworked. They really didn't understand what our needs were because we weren't just an office. We weren't just an office site. Someone came and went. There were all the technology needs.

##### **[00:17:15.560] - Kira Fong**

There was the location, the venue sites were also right next to Bunnings. There's a bit of coming and going from their car park. We brought people in and no one could really give us answers how to ensure pathways were kept clear, cars didn't go over the pathways. Wet season here means that anything that gets put down on the cement gets washed away. We had an access path built, which is a ramp path that initially had some flooding, so then we had to have it redesigned. We thought ourselves, what can we do to stop cars coming into the internal car park from having their bumpers parked over the path that Sandy enters and exits from the footpath? We've also got a couple of volunteers. I think it's cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, so we've got to make sure there's no trip hazards or anything around the office for them to enter as well. As a whole, it may have addressed the organisation's OH and S issues. We would like to think that we're one of the safest organizations out there for access into the buildings and safety and awareness. It's actually been really healthy for us. We've got disabled toilets put in.

##### **[00:18:30.010] - Kira Fong**

Sometimes, I guess what the engineering needs, specifications are with relation to local government and what the reality is, I feel like there are some gaps there, things that we found out, okay, we had to make this for local government. But then when people are actually accessing and using it, what happens? You've got one pathway to disabled toilets and two people are trying to move past. There's all these other aspects that I guess we could probably, if anyone else was going to go down that track, advise them what works and what doesn't. We suggested rubber barmats, which is what we have in one of our indoor venue. Part of the reason for that is we've got tiled floors. When wet season comes, people coming in and out can make those tiles slippery. How do we stop that then from happening and what to do or how to manage it? That was one of the first things we noted with the technology that we have here at the organization. Yes, we're unique, but we're really unique in what we do. It's difficult, I guess, from somebody from the city to come up here and go, Not sure what to do.

##### **[00:19:43.900] - Kira Fong**

Not sure what to do. We had to suggest ideas and those ideas, they don't go with us. We know in a way that we're on our own. We've got to think outside the box to make things work. We talk to the... Obviously talk to the broadcasters, but we want to be accessible for people who've got physical or mental impairment of some kind. We want to make sure that people don't feel isolated coming here, that people feel welcome coming here. The people that we talk to with disabilities, say there's very few organizations in the Northwest that have that capacity to welcome employees with disabilities.

##### **[00:20:23.490] - Kim West**

I'm Kim West, the Broadcast Manager of Goolarri Media. So I handle the tech side of television broadcast and radio broadcast. It has been a real struggle, and part of the struggle with the technology side is how we've had to keep moving with the times in terms of technology. Like the radio studio used to all be analog. You had CDs, tapes, cart machines, all of that. And it was all analog signals. But now we're just moving with the times, having to move with the times. And we've moved to audio over IP, which is basically everything is networked. All the audio is networked between components. But that's obviously taken a lot of tactile functionality, especially for Sandy, out of the equation, where when everything was analog, she knew where everything was. But just being a radio station, we need to keep up with the times and technology and make our technology pathways away a lot more usable and proficient, really. Everything in the background, that is.

##### **[00:21:39.140] - Roz Bynder**

And how have you done that? So what have you had to do? As far as I know from our previous conversations, you've also had to use your initiative and discover new ways of doing that so that you can be accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. So what lengths have you had to go to do that?

##### **[00:21:58.080] - Kim West**

We've been able to utilize the CD players that she does still use, and we've been able to hook those up to our new desks. So there is some automation there. But unfortunately, we're still trying to, I'm still trying to do research on how to make her life a lot easier, trying to get her to be able to use our automation software, which doesn't get used except for when she plays the ads, plays radio spots and stuff like that. And we've had to jerry-rig a system for that just for her so she can hit a button and then play our sponsorship messages.

##### **[00:22:45.570] - Roz Bynder**

What do both of you want to see going forward so that organizations can take out the battles that you guys have had and just be accessible, be inclusive, create that environment that you guys have here so that people living with disabilities aren't feeling like it is a burden or aren't feeling like they don't want to come to work because it's too hard.

##### **[00:23:12.390] - Kira Fong**

This is a start, being able to share what we've had to go through. Hopefully, another organization doesn't have the same battles that we do, whether it's from an operational perspective or a technical technology perspective like Kim. There wasn't anywhere for us to go. We had to go through a couple of different services before we found one that fit for us that still wasn't an ideal fit. Having a main center that you can call and say, We in Broonwes in Australia, this is the type of business that we run. Who is the best person to support us to come and do a workplace assessment for people with disabilities? That is the first difficulty, not knowing who to go to. We understand disability services are under enormous pressure. They're under immense pressure to get jobs done and doing two, three people's jobs, occupational therapist going, Okay, you've got to go into a workplace assessment. That's part of living.

##### **[00:24:12.500] - Kim West**

In regional areas. Yeah. Even when the assessor did come up and he was looking over the technology, so that's not his area, like radio automation, software, trying to get that interacting with Sandy's Jaws program that speaks what's on the computer. And then also, that's what I've been trying to grapple with. How would that work if you're on radio and you're trying to find a song in the computer and your computer is talking to you while you're trying to be just trying to get your head around that? Like having people that know the issues that we're facing in the same workplace, in the radio broadcast.

##### **[00:24:52.680] - Kira Fong**

The thing that makes us a very lucky organization is that we've had Sandy here for so long, so we've been aware of that. So when we had the young boy come in with cerebral palsy and do his show, we were more set up for people with disabilities than another radio where they've got to climb up stairs and go through all these different locks on building doors and stuff to get to access a studio. Then we had somebody come on board then the year before last with muscular dystrophy, and so we were already aware of trip hazards and those issues that could affect them. Sandy, for us, by being around so long and her raising her concerns about her being vision impaired has helped us across the board. I think her story can help so many other organizations to go, How do we make people feel more inclusive?

##### **[00:25:45.400] - Roz Bynder**

Well, let me tell you, we think you guys are doing an amazing job. I think that as our advocacy organization, First Peoples Disability Network, I think we definitely see you guys as trailblazers. I know from our point of we appreciate the effort that you go because that's what we're here for. That's what First Peoples Disability Network is really to advocate for people living with disabilities.

##### **[00:26:09.580] - Kira Fong**

Yeah, I just want other like-minded organizations like ours or even other organizations, especially in the northern regions of Australia, to know that we are here. We may not be able to give you the best advice because we don't know ourselves, but by sharing our story, we hope that you don't feel so alone in making those changes that need to be made. We've been able to do them in an often inexpensive way because we've fumbled through things and worked it out. Kim's done a lot of research online and we've worked out. If we can help anyone else out there, we're here. Give Kimaraya a call at Galaria or drop us an email because we don't want other people to feel as frustrated and alone trying to do what we've had to do over the last 30-something years that we've only been here for 20 and Kim, 24 of it.

##### **[00:27:00.010] - Roz Bynder**

Amazing.

##### **[00:27:02.570] - Speaker 5**

You can tune in to Sandy Dann's show live on Goolari Media's website. While you're there, please check out the work Goolarri Media is doing right across the Kimberley's by visiting their website, www.Goolarri.com. See you next time.

##### **[00:27:23.440] - Bernard Namok**

If there's anything you heard in today's episode that raises concerns for you, there is help available. You can contact 1 Three Yarn on 139276 or BeyondBlue on 1-300, Double 2, 4-6-36 or Lifeline on 1311.14. Follow FPDN on our social media accounts to stay up to date with future episodes and information. You can also visit our website at www. Fdn. Org. Au.