

# Tuned in to our town

## DJs needed for Pelorus radio station

By ROBIN RAYMOND

In a hastily restored shed behind the old Havelock post office Pat Fairweather's dream is coming to life, bringing a new sound to the town.

A builder by trade, Pat is the man behind Havelock's community radio station Pelorus FM 106.7, which began broadcasting last month. Pat's love of radio and music started as a child in the 1970s when he built a crystal radio set.

"I used to tune in and listen to music when I went to bed. I was always the guy that was a pain at

parties going and changing the music all the time."

Living in Havelock, where radio coverage is patchy or non-existent, the dream to start a town radio station got stronger and stronger, until two years ago he read an article in the *Saturday Express* about Donald Jamieson from Blenheim community radio station Whisper FM.

"I got hold of Donald and he came out and we set up a little aerial on my deck at home and went around the area to see where we could pick up the signal."

With funding from Havelock Vision 2020 Donald, Pat and Havelock Vision 2020 chair Wendy Walker set to work on the station.

Wendy said it has not been easy teaching themselves to run a radio station, working in stolen hours during nights and weekends, and it is very much a DIY station.

"The aerial out here is pretty

much just held together with rope, but we had a strong wind the other night and it held together fine," Pat said.

Their first broadcast was of children's songs and piano concertos.

"It let people know they weren't listening to a normal radio station because not many stations play Pinky the Elephant in the middle of the afternoon," Wendy said.

However, Pat said in a small town you soon find out what people think.

"Straight away I got the texts. The guys down at the engineering sheds by the marina were quite excited when they heard we were starting.

"They all tuned in, but they all tuned out again pretty quick when they didn't like what they were hearing."

For the moment the station is broadcasting music 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but the



**DIY:** Pelorus FM station organisers Wendy Walker and Pat Fairweather work on setting up the new community radio station. **Photo:** ROBIN RAYMOND

plan is to use it to share Havelock focus programmes such as town news, sports reports and residents' stories about themselves and the town's past.

The station will require a lot of community support Wendy said. They hope to train as many people as possible as DJs through the town community classroom. A

broadcasting room at Havelock School will also provide an opportunity to train some of the pupils.

The station has been picked up in Linkwater and they hope eventually to boost the signal across Pelorus Sound and out to Rai Valley so it can be used by Civil Defence in case of flooding or other emergencies.