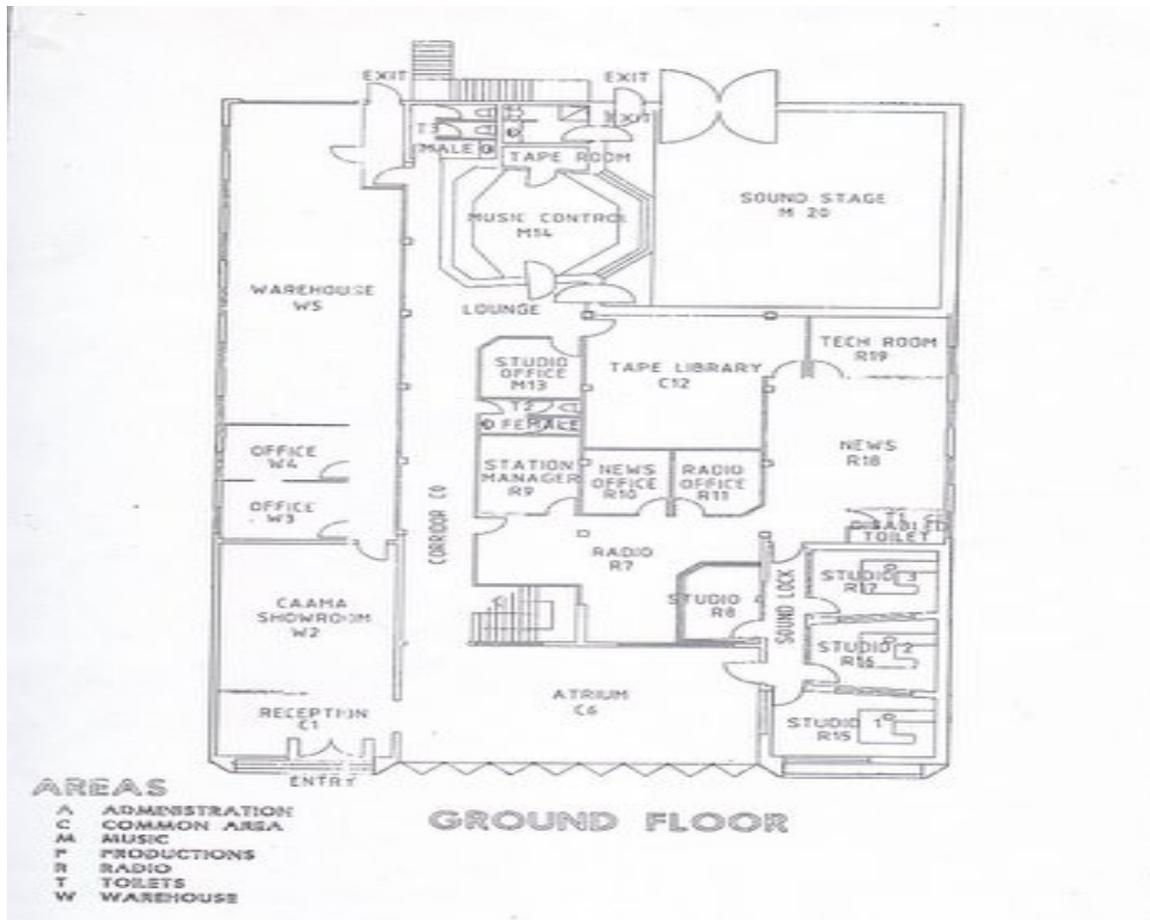


## **The CAAMA Building and Fit Out**

CAAMA (the Central Australian Media Association) as its name suggests is a multi media association. Over the years CAAMA had grown and spread and its different departments were housed in various locations around Alice Springs, this physical spread of departments reduced the interaction between sections. One of the prime concepts of CAAMA was to create a structure where all of the resources could interact and be shared on a daily basis, so the mission was to find a building where all of the CAAMA departments could be brought together under one roof.

In 1993 a suitable building was found. As I was on the ground and already working for all CAAMA departments I was given the job of finding an acoustic designer and an architect and coordinating between all departments to get the job done, I was given the title of Project Manager and away I went. I tracked down a chap called David Flett originally just to do the acoustic design work. David was the original bass player in the Redgum band and had gone on to be a successful record producer and then recording studio / acoustic space designer, plus he is highly skilled at building acoustic doors and benchwork of all kinds. It also turned out that David had an excellent eye for ways to use limited space and so we gave him the job of being the architect for the entire project. My title of Project Manger lasted up until commencement of building works, then we appointed a proper building site Project Manager and my title then became Building Coordinator.

The CAAMA Building (as it is known) houses a radio station, a music recording studio, a multi use sound stage, a video production house, a shop, a warehouse, a tape library and the CAAMA administration offices. CAAMA is also the major shareholder of Imparja Television. Imparja is run independently and operates from its own site.

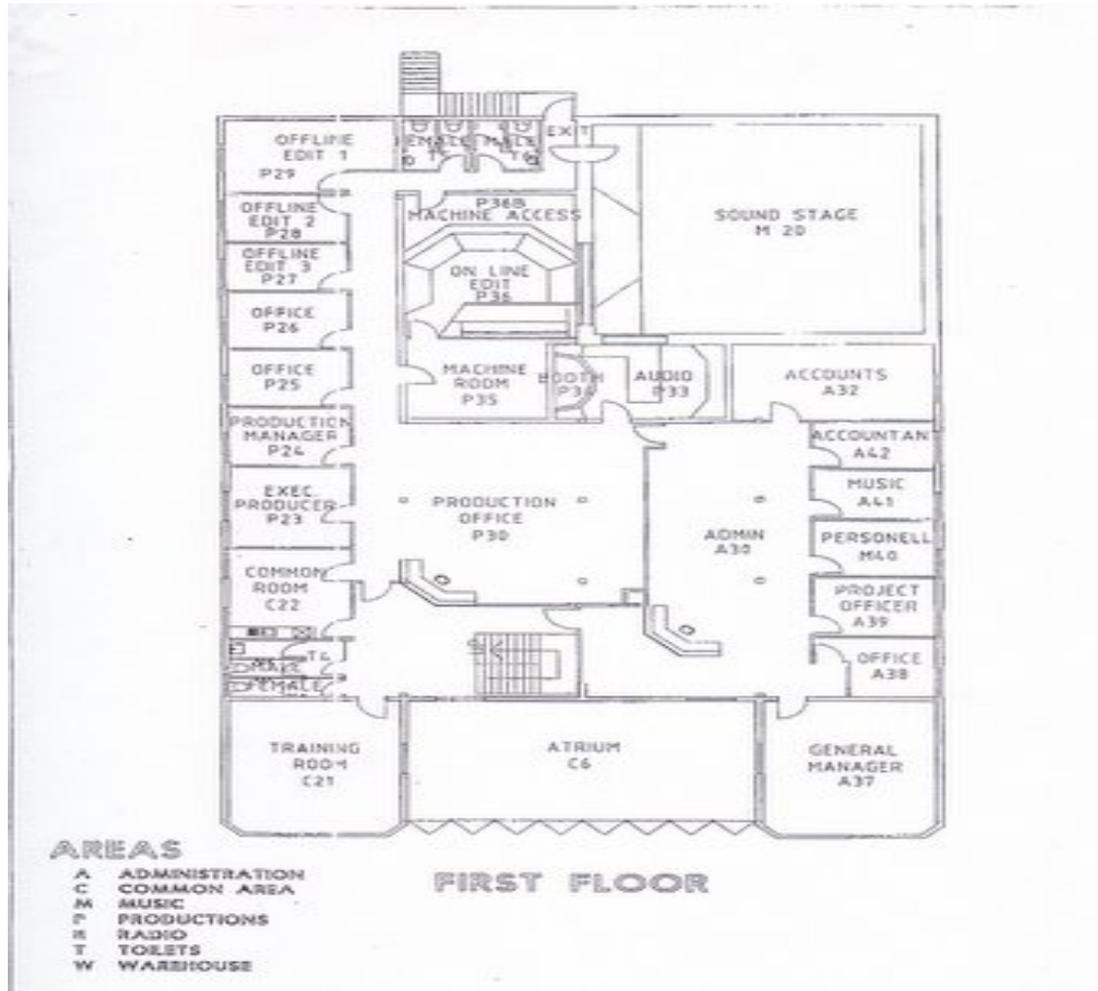


*The above shows the concept drawing for the ground floor*

The left side of this floor is independent from the rest and houses a reception area, the CAAMA Shop (indicated as "showroom") and the Warehouse for CAAMA products. The rest of this floor houses a large glass fronted atrium, CAAMA Radio (four radio studios and various office spaces), the CAAMA news team, the original Tech Room (now moved), the Tape Library (fitted with a custom built high density vertical compactus), CAAMA Music and a Sound Stage.

The Sound Stage has a six metre high ceiling and is designed to be multi purpose for audio recording and video production, it is ten metres wide and twelve metres long. It has a four metre wide, six metre high loading doorway to enable trucks to enter. The Sound Stage is relatively small for a film/TV sound stage and relatively large as an audio recording space (a compromise).

The Sound Stage has its own bathroom (toilet, shower, make-up) to make life a little easier when being used for television production.



*The above shows the concept drawing for the first floor*

This floor houses CAAMA Productions (a video production company) and CAAMA Administration (inc payroll for Imparja TV). CAAMA Productions includes a range of Off-Line Edit Suites and one main On-Line Edit Suite. The on-line edit suite looks into the top of sound stage. To the right of the on-line edit suite Machine Room is an Audio Suite (with built in glass voice over booth), this suite also looks into the top of the Sound Stage.



*The building as it was*

It has good ceiling height downstairs but low ceiling height upstairs. We seriously contemplated pulling the roof off and extending the brickwork upwards but were constrained by the available budget. This photo was taken after the original outside front stairway was jack hammered off and removed.



*Off with its face*

A bold design involved yanking out the front of the building and replacing it with glass.



*The new glass front going on*

The glass in the atrium is angled and each section is relatively narrow, the angle make it deflect the suns heat and makes it tough and relatively vandal proof.



*This shows the beginnings of the three main radio studios*

Each of these three concrete slabs is sitting on a bed of rubber. Each entire room sits on on its individual rubber "floating" floor and this gives great acoustic isolation between rooms.



*This photo shows the cured "floating" floors*

You can see that the original windows in the wall have now been bricked in. There was a plasterer on-site who's main function was to plaster up (called "stopping") all holes and cracks in every layer of every wall that went up, you can see that he has "stopped" all the gaps in this new brickwork.



*This photo shows a new brick wall in the Sound Stage area after the plasterer has been in and "stopped" all the gaps*

The acoustic designer and builder were not taking any shortcuts here. This and every other acoustic related wall had to be properly sealed or the design would not work. The ceiling shown in this photo was jack hammered out shortly after, the photo below shows the evolution of construction in the same room.

The wall in the left of this photo is exactly the same one as in the photo above but post the floor being jack hammered out. This photo shows the CAAMA Music Control Room (ground floor) taking shape and the CAAMA productions On-Line Edit Suite (first floor) coming together. The window on the top left is a little dedicated Audio Suite with a built in voice over booth. All of these rooms look into and share the Sound Stage. All rooms including CAAMA Radio are on a common mains power "star earth" system and can be cross patched to each other without

problems. The Sound Stage is approximately ten metres wide, twelve metres long and six metres high.



*Inside the CAAMA Music Control Room*

This room is designed around JBL 4435 "sofit" mounted monitor speakers. This control room is unusual in that it has a compression ceiling, if you look you will see the the ceiling starts high and then drops down, what you you cant see in this photo is that the the ceiling then rises again as it heads towards the rear of the

room. The door on the left goes into a Machine Room where the multitrack recording machine and its tape stock are housed. The entire Control room is built on a "floating" floor (sitting on rubber), the wall that you can see here is really three separate walls stacked closely together, the point of multiple walls and "floating" floors is to give as much acoustic isolation as possible.

Inside the CAAMA Productions On-Line Edit Suite. The designer, David Flett, applied a couple of golden rules everywhere : all benchwork is to be 750mm high (standard table height) and all spaces whether used or unused are to be 19" rack width. Some of these spaces were covered up but if they were ever required the cover could simply be taken off to reveal a standard rack space. I still use these core concepts in nearly everything I do today.





*The building with its new front*

This photo was taken after it had been completely rendered and painted.



*Inside the finished and now functional Sound Stage*

The CAAMA Music Control Room has great isolation. There are three complete walls and four sheets of glass between it and the Sound Stage. A walkway, safety rail and storage space has been added above the Control Room



CAAMA Music. The JBL 4435 monitor speakers came out Rhinosaurus Recording Studio in Sydney and used to be owned by the band INXS, once I found out they might be for sale I badgered them for months until they sold them to me. The power amplifier that drives the JBL's is mounted under the clock to keep the speaker cables as short as possible. The console is a 44 channel "Big By Langley".



*A different shot of the Control Room*



*Stan Satour starting a mix*

In this photo you can see some of the built in seating that runs the entire length of the rear wall. This seating can hold about 18 people, it is designed so that when you sit down your knees wind up higher than your waist and so you are less likely to get up again without real purpose, simple and very effective crowd

control. The seating is comfortable and is also a perfect height for sitting and playing guitar or keyboards etc. Behind the seating are acoustically transparent panels that allow sound to travel back to the bass traps in the walls. Stan posing for the camera. This photo shows the effects rack that runs behind the sound engineers position, nearly everything is within easy reach].



*CAAMA Radio, studio one (on-air).*

There are three nearly identical radio studios, each built on its own floating floor. The window (the van is a reflection from the street facing window) looks into studio two (production) and this in turn looks into studio three (news). Across the corridor is studio four (BRACS training) which is small and basic and does not have a floating floor. All studios can be switched to be "on-air", all have full intercom and tie lines fitted. The mix output from CAAMA Music always feeds into CAAMA Radio, mixes from the Sound Stage via CAAMA Music can be sent "live to air" with the push of a button.



*Radio presenter Warren Williams "on-air".*

Warren is also a recording artist, live performer and all round nice chap.



*CAAMA Radio studio four*

This studio is much simpler than studios 1 to 3 and is intended to be a BRACS (broadcast for remote aboriginal community scheme) training studio. This is a good shot of the benchwork. The acoustic designer and architect, David Flett, built all of the benchwork (and acoustic doors and acoustic windows) in the entire building. The benches are finished with something called Vari-Coat which is like a spray on laminex with a bumpy finish, it is extremely hard wearing and very difficult to draw on and so the benchwork never seems to age or get marked. The window from studio four looks into the atrium, which in turn looks out onto Todd Street.



The radio studio shown here is located at Hermansburg, which is 120 kilometers from the CAAMA building in Alice Springs. The concept was to build identical studios in remote places to enable uniform training. There are four identical remote studios plus the training studio at CAAMA. The next wave of remote radio studios used different mixing consoles and slightly different equipment choices but the concept remains the same.