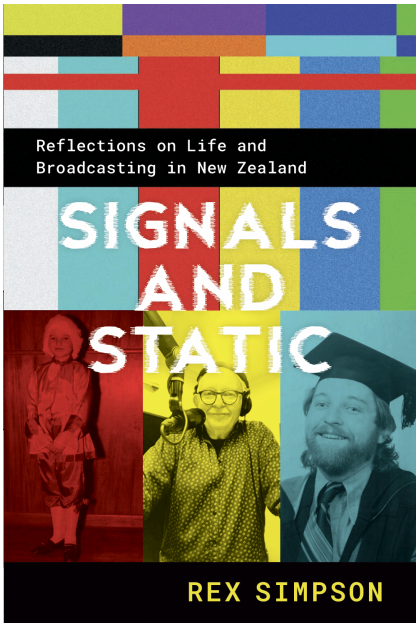
MARY EGAN PUBLISHING

Signals and Static

Reflections on Life and Broadcasting in New Zealand

Author:	Rex Simpson
Published by:	Mary Egan Publishing
Distributed by:	BookReps
ISBN:	978-1-991436-11-5
Trim:	6 x 9” (Portrait)
Extent:	286 Pages + 6 x 4-page picture inserts + Cover
Binding:	Paperback
Colours:	B&W with colour inserts
Stock:	Internal: 80gsm Cream
	Pic Sig: 128gsm Matte Art
	Cover: 300gsm artboard + gloss lamination
RRP:	$40.00
Pub date:	18 November 2026



***Signals and Static* is a vivid memoir from one of New Zealand broadcasting’s quiet pioneers.**

For more than five decades, Rex Simpson helped shape the sound and screen of a nation. From *Play School* and *What Now?* to *Nice One Stu* and *How’z That?*, he was there as local television came of age, navigating creative risk, big personalities and the relentless pressure of live production.

Set against the social upheaval of the 1970s, 80s and 90s, this is more than a story about programmes. It is the story of a country finding its voice. As a producer, radio personality and later a local body politician during turbulent times on the Coromandel, he witnessed first-hand the growing pains of a changing New Zealand.

Adopted as a child and raised by Scottish immigrant parents in rural Māori communities in Northland, his early years laid the foundations for a life in storytelling. *Signals and Static* traces how those experiences shaped a career built on creativity, resilience and self-belief.

Thoughtful, candid and often wryly funny, this memoir offers a rare behind-the-scenes portrait of an industry, and a country, coming of age.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Rex Simpson created *What Now?*, produced *Play School* and conceived *Praise Be*. Across a broadcasting career spanning nearly five decades, he worked behind the scenes on some of New Zealand’s most familiar television programmes and behind the microphone at radio stations from Dunedin to the Coromandel.

Born in Auckland and raised in rural Māori communities in the Far North and Ōpōtiki district, Rex got his first taste of broadcasting after winning a teenage radio DJ competition in Gisborne. He joined TV One in 1975 and went on to head TV3’s Children’s and Young Persons Department, establish independent production company Kids TV and develop programmes for audiences in New Zealand and overseas.

His working life also took him into hospitality and local politics. On the Coromandel, he combined community radio with service on the Thames Community Board and later as a district councillor. He retired to Ghana in 2023.

His memoir, *Signals and Static*, brings together a lifetime of storytelling, creative ambition and community involvement, offering an insider’s perspective on New Zealand broadcasting and the changing country around it.