

QTC

The Radio Amateur Society of Australia

December 2023

FEBRUARY 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
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26	27	28	29	30	1	2

ACMA LAUNCHES CLASS LICENCE

ACMA Answers Our Questions

Columns - VKFF, Dits 'n Dahs

Where to Buy A.R. Gear in VK

And More...



The Radio Amateur Society
of Australia

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You are welcome to join RASA or simply make a donation to support our work.

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Contributing Items For QTC Magazine

QTC Magazine welcomes contributions for future editions. When planning to submit an article, please read our submission guidelines first. Following the guidelines will save you and the editing team a lot of time and effort. The guidelines are [HERE](#)

Cover picture:

February 19th is marked on the calendar because it's Class Licence Day. The grey background symbolises the uncertainty felt by many with all of the changes impending.

In this issue of QTC we endeavour to ease the uncertainty, and shed light on the impact on us of the Class Licence for Amateur Radio in Australia.



QTC From the Editor



Welcome to our final edition of QTC for 2024.

Not surprisingly, this edition will be focusing on what is probably the biggest change to Amateur Radio in living memory. The Class Licence.

What does it mean for our hobby and how will it affect you?

Let us answer the easier question first. How will it affect us as individuals?

The simple answer is that there will be no change. No change. Your operating privileges and licence conditions will suffer no adverse effects, and your day-to-day enjoyment of the hobby should not change.

The single biggest change will be the removal of the annual licence renewal fees. An annual saving of \$55.

The other visible changes that concerned many Amateurs was the removal of individual Apparatus Licences and how this would impact:

- * Our ability to seek a reciprocal licence overseas
- * Being able to access a database of amateur callsigns as we will no longer be listed in the Register of Radiocommunications Licences

The ACMA have addressed these concerns and will issue appropriate documentation regarding our qualifications and licence alignment with international standards. They will also publish a dedicated database, albeit with fewer details. It will only contain the callsign, whether it is allocated or not, and qualification of the holder (Foundation, Standard or Advanced).

The ACMA have assured us that other concerns have been addressed:

- * Our rights vis-a-vis interference remain unchanged

- * Our Primary Bands remain unchanged
- * Other operating privileges such as power limits, bands, and modes remain unchanged
- * EMC obligations are unchanged

Entry to the hobby will also remain largely unchanged from a practical perspective. You will still need to sit and pass an exam and then apply for a callsign. And there will still be fees for the exam and callsign.

Class Licencing will not be a free-for-all or other alarmist predictions you may be hearing on your local repeater or Social Media.

Class Licencing takes effect from 19th February 2024.

Tied in with this new licence regime will be the transfer of Examination Services and Callsign Administration from the Australian Maritime College (AMC) to the ACMA. For those who may not have heard, AMC decided not to renew their five year contract with the AMCA.

You can read more about these changes in this edition of QTC.

In other news, we have a few updates from ACMA, an interesting article on the history of Amateur Radio, EMC compliance, WWFF and QRM Guru. There have also been some changes to the retail sector in the last twelve months; we've provided a rundown of the major suppliers; if you know of a business we've missed, drop us an email.

If you like listening to something a bit different, the Sydney to Hobart Yacht race is coming up. Here's the frequencies to QRV: 4482kHz USB and 6516kHz USB. See them online [HERE](#)

On behalf of the editorial team and RASA, we wish our readers a very Merry Christmas and good wishes for a safe and healthy 2024.

73.

From the President

Here we are at the end of another year. I hope all our members and readers have had a successful 2023 and have also enjoyed the endless options of activities our wonderful hobby provides.



It's been a very newsworthy year with the Australian Maritime College (AMC) announcing it would not renew its contract with ACMA to provide Examination Services and Callsign Administration. Like me, I'm sure many of you are pleased to see the ACMA take these services back in-house. There are many who believe the regulator never should have outsourced these services in the first place.

Following on from this important news, the ACMA have made tremendous progress, not just with the transition arrangements to bring the services back in-house, but also with the upcoming migration to a Class Licence for Amateur Radio, scheduled to take effect on 19th February 2024.

You can read more about these important changes in this edition of QTC.

Throughout the year, RASA has maintained a close watch on developments, and posed a number of questions to the ACMA. We've also raised concerns over the callsign template, higher power for Advanced Licensees and access to sixty metres.

Just as importantly, we've continued to visit clubs to talk about what we're doing, and also to seek their feedback. Our online resources continue to be popular and well utilised; if you are not aware of our key resources, check them out:

- [QRM Guru](#)
- [Amateur Radio Tech Support](#)
- [Welcome to Amateur Radio Guidebook](#)
- [Amateur Radio Welcome Pack](#)
- [VK Regs](#)

All these resources are free and available to all amateurs, clubs, and educators.

2024 will prove to be another interesting year as we move to a new licencing regime, although I suspect there will be little to no noticeable change for 99% of us.

RASA will continue to focus on how we can support existing Amateurs, promote the hobby and greater participation, as well as supporting newcomers. Early in the New Year we will be launching another innovative resource for newcomers; we hope a game-changer. And, like all our resources, it will be free.

More on this exciting news in the New Year. As always, I welcome your feedback, ideas, and most importantly, your support. We couldn't do it without our members and the positive feedback we receive.

For now, on behalf of the RASA Management Team, I'd like to extend the season's greetings to all our members and readers, a Very Merry Christmas and a successful New Year.



73, Paul Anslow VK2APA
RASA President



ACMA Announces the Australian Amateur Radio Class Licence

Earlier this month the ACMA released details of the long awaited plan to transform Amateur Radio from the existing Apparatus license to a Class License. In this article we look at some of the detail and find out what this actually means.

**Amateur radio – transition to class licence and supporting arrangements ACMA**

These changes will come into effect from the 19th February 2024. There will be additional information released as we approach this date. RASA is working hard to present this information in a meaningful way to all Amateurs. Surprisingly, most other Australian Amateur Radio associations have been very quiet about the transition and do not appear to be taking this change process seriously.

Key Points:

- The Class Station License document is dated 7th December 2023 and the Class Licence arrangements will commence on the 19th February 2024
- The Certificate of Proficiency and existing licenses are to be replaced by 'Recognition Certificates'
- Australian Amateurs will no longer pay annual license fees.
- The ACMA will refund Amateurs who have paid for a recent License Renewal, subject to the ACMA minimum refund policy.
- New Callsign arrangements are to be administered directly by the ACMA
- Examination Services provided by volunteer Assessors will be managed by the ACMA
- Arrangements for overseas visiting Amateurs will change
- A Callsign Register will go on-line from the ACMA with limited information about each callsign

Although the mechanisms for managing Amateur Radio in Australia are undergoing a major change, for most part it will be business as usual for existing Amateurs. Spectrum usage, and band plans remain the same, power levels appear unchanged, qualification levels (Foundation, Standard, and Advanced) remain in place. We are informed that the ACMA's role in dealing with interference problems will remain unchanged.

Let us Investigate what the ACMA are Telling us in Greater detail: (text in red are quotes from ACMA)

The Amateur Class License

The Radiocommunications (Amateur Stations) Class Licence 2023 (Amateur Class Licence) will commence on the 19th February 2024.

The amateur class licence will authorise the operation of amateur stations in Australia by qualified persons

that hold recognised qualifications at the foundation, standard and advanced level. To operate an amateur station under the amateur class licence, you must comply with the conditions within it.

You do not need to apply to the ACMA or pay any fees to operate under the amateur class licence. You can continue to use your existing call sign.

No action is required by Amateurs. Your callsign allocations and regulations remain unchanged. There will be no annual Licence fees. Prospective Amateurs still have to pass the same exams to the same standard to be apply for a callsign.

Surrendering existing licences

When the amateur class licence commences, the current amateur licences (non-assigned amateur licences that authorise foundation, standard or advanced station operations) will no longer be needed. Amateurs who wish to retain their call sign(s) must ensure their licence(s) is active until the amateur class licence commences. More detail on call sign retention is in the call signs section below.

As an individual licence will no longer be required to operate when the amateur class licence commences, current licensees can choose to surrender their licence and may be eligible for a pro-rata refund on the annual tax already paid.

The minimum the ACMA can refund is \$41, which means only licensees with an expiry date of 9 December 2024 or later may be eligible for a refund. Refund eligibility is determined from the date the ACMA accepts the surrender, so early submission of surrender applications is encouraged. You can submit a surrender application now (guidance on how to surrender a licence is below), seeking that it be surrendered on 19 February 2024.

If an amateur licensee does not wish to surrender their licence, the licence will continue to exist for the remainder of its term. The ACMA will not renew any non-assigned amateur licences after the amateur class licence commences. To surrender a non-assigned amateur licence, email your surrender request, including your licence number, customer ID and the date you would like your licence to be surrendered to info@acma.gov.au. We issue refunds by cheque or Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). If you would like your refund by EFT, you will need to complete an EFT details form. This form will be emailed to you when the surrender is processed.

The refund will not be processed until the surrender has taken place, so you won't receive it until February 2024 at the earliest. Our refund policy is available to view on the ACMA website.

This appears to be a straightforward plan to ease the transition from old to new licensing arrangements. The majority of Amateurs will do nothing, let their existing licenses expire and wait for their Recognition Certificates to arrive, as described in this next section.

Confirmation letter for existing licensees

In January 2024, we will write to all existing non-assigned amateur licensees to outline key transition arrangements. The letter will confirm the qualification level and call sign(s) they hold, and that they are authorised to operate under the amateur class licence if they comply with its conditions.

For advanced licensees travelling overseas, the confirmation letter can also be used to demonstrate to an overseas jurisdiction their ability to operate an amateur station in Australia.

This will be a very important document to retain. The original should be stored in a secure place, such as

next to your passport and a digital version should be created and stored as a backup when travelling overseas.

Call signs

When the amateur class licence commences, amateur call signs that have already been assigned and that will remain active on 19 February 2024 will remain with the call sign holder. Call signs that are assigned after the amateur class licence commences will be specified in a 'call sign certificate', issued by the ACMA when a call sign is assigned.

The amateur class licence provides for the ACMA to set an assignment period (a specified period assigned to a call sign) for certain call signs. Most call signs will be assigned in perpetuity (unless the call sign holder surrenders or the ACMA cancels the assignment of the call sign), and these call signs will be specified in the confirmation letter to existing licensees. Every 5 years, the ACMA will check with these call sign holders whether they still require the call sign.

However, call signs with the prefix VK0 or VK9, special event call signs and contest call signs will have a designated assignment period of 12 months.

When the class licence commences, contest call signs' assignment periods will be revised to align with the end of the first anniversary of their expiry date that is outlined on the AMC's contest call sign list. For example, on 19 February 2024, if the expiry date for the contest call sign is listed on the AMC contest call sign list as 24 March 2024, the expiry date of that call sign under the amateur class licensing arrangements will be 24 March 2025.

For holders of call signs with the prefix VK0 and VK9 as well as special event call signs, shortly after the amateur class licence commences, we will write to these call sign holders to confirm the call sign(s) held and their expiry date(s). These assignment periods are also outlined in the amateur class licence. Please note, this call sign letter is separate to and will be provided later than the confirmation letter.

Holders of call signs with the prefix VK0 or VK9, special event call signs and contest call signs will be able to apply to have their call sign re-assigned ahead of their expiry.

We will release a call sign policy document in February 2024, which will outline the policies and procedures associated with assigning, reassigning, replacing and cancelling call signs when the amateur class licence commences.

In February 2024, we will also release a call sign register, which will outline:

- call signs
- whether a call sign is assigned, available or reserved
- if a call sign is assigned, the qualification level of the amateur to whom it is assigned.

Operation under the amateur class licence means that an Amateur acknowledges that their call sign and qualification level are available on the ACMA's call sign register.

This section is largely self explanatory. It aims to address the hoarding of callsigns, both conventional and Special Event calls. It aims to maintain the unique attributes of VK9 and VK0 callsigns for external territories. The new Callsign Register will be a big change for many. Amateurs have become accustomed to going to the ACMA website to conduct a Client or License search to identify the name and home location of licensed operators. Presumably all Amateur Radio details (other than Repeaters and Beacons) will be

purged from that database, leaving only the proposed new Callsign Register. This database will only show whether or not the callsign is allocated, and the qualification of the callsign holder (Foundation, Standard or Advanced). There will be no name or address information.

Charges for ACMA qualification and call sign services

Charges relating to the provision of amateur radio qualification and call sign services by the ACMA are outlined in the Cost Recovery Implementation Statement: Fees for radiocommunications, telecommunications and broadcasting services, budget year 2023–24. Key charges are:

- a charge for considering an application for and giving (if applicable) an ACMA recognition certificate – \$45.20
- charges for considering an application under the amateur class licence for the assignment of various call signs – from \$30.15 to \$52.75
- a charge for considering an application for and giving (if applicable) a written exemption from completing an examination, otherwise known as a recognition of prior learning assessment – \$188.35.

We will consult on charges for the re-assignment of call signs with the prefix VK0 or VK9, special event call signs and contest call signs as part of the draft 2024–25 Fees for Service Cost Recovery Implementation Statement, which is planned to be released for consultation around March/April 2024.

This section provides clear information regarding callsign applications and fees. There will be no fees for callsign renewals.

Assessor accreditation arrangements

We are in the process of conducting accreditation checks with AMC examination assessors for them to conduct amateur radio examinations under ACMA arrangements from 19 February 2024. As a result, the AMC is no longer accepting new applications to become an amateur radio assessor.

The ACMA will accept new applications for accreditation as a General Accredited Assessor or Specialist Accredited Assessor with the ACMA from 19 February 2024 onwards. Information on how to apply will be provided in February 2024.

We have updated the amateur radio accredited assessors webpage, to provide information about the:

- Accredited Assessor Guidelines
- information sessions with AMC assessors.

The Assessor accreditation process and on-going management arrangements contain many details, some of which are still being refined. RASA will produce a more comprehensive breakdown about the Assessor role in a future edition of QTC.

Revised arrangements for overseas visiting amateurs

The Radiocommunications (Overseas Amateurs Visiting Australia) Class Licence 2015 will be revoked when the amateur class licence commences. Given majority submitter support towards recognising HAREC-issued licences as equivalent to the ACMA recognition certificate (Advanced), ahead of the class licence commencement we plan to make a declaration to facilitate this. Once the declaration is made, it will be published on the ACMA website and on the Federal Register of Legislation.

Overseas visiting amateurs without a HAREC issued licence can operate under the amateur class licence for 365 days if their overseas licence is specified in Tables A and B of equivalent qualifications and licences on the Overseas amateurs visiting Australia page. To continue operating after 365 days, overseas amateurs will be required to obtain an Australian qualification and call sign.

International reciprocity arrangements for Australian amateurs with advanced qualifications travelling overseas

For existing non-assigned licensees, the confirmation letter and an advanced qualification certificate recognised under the amateur class licence can be used to confirm that their advanced qualification is equivalent to a European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) licence (CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-01) and meets the requirements of a Harmonised Amateur Radio Examination Certificate (HAREC) (CEPT Recommendation T/R 61-02). For amateurs obtaining an advanced qualification after the class licence commences, the ACMA recognition certificate (Advanced) and the call sign certificate issued by the ACMA can be used to demonstrate that their advanced qualification is equivalent to a CEPT Licence and meets the HAREC requirements.

These two sections describe the arrangements for Australian Amateurs travelling overseas and foreign Amateurs visiting Australia. Note that the ACMA are maintaining a one-year limitation for overseas Amateurs visiting and operating within Australia. Advanced Amateurs will be able to convert their licence to similar licences in other countries that comply with the HAREC standard. All this helps to reinforce that skill levels are being maintained in both directions when reciprocal licences are being sought.

Notably absent are references to reciprocal licensing for Foundation and Standard Amateurs. They have not been specifically excluded in this text, but they have not been referenced either. On that basis it would appear that non-advanced Amateurs may not have access to reciprocal arrangements. Some clarification is needed here.

The ACMA Response to RASA’s August Submission

In August 2023 the ACMA launched a consultation for the proposed changes to the assessor accreditation framework.

Along with the Class Licence, the ACMA has just published the submissions it received, consolidated their findings their responses.

Altogether there were eighteen submissions put to the ACMA. (this includes RASA’s submission which featured in the last edition of QTC.) At twenty eight pages, the response document is a long one and here we can only provide a summation of their final position.



The ACMA began by stated they received many suggestions they regard as being *'outside of the scope of the consultation.'* For the most part the ACMA appear to be going with their original proposals but there are some interesting exceptions.

Examinations

Examinations for Foundation, Standard and Advanced Amateurs are essentially the same standard and degree of difficulty. Seventy percent remains the pass threshold.

A network of volunteer Assessors will be confirmed and listed on the ACMA website.

Many submissions requested a map showing Assessor locations. ACMA have determined that the maintenance of such a facility is not feasible, however have said that they would provide a state based filtered search facility. RASA will be suggesting a more specific search facility, for example, including the postcode with the assessor's details.

50km Radius for Remote Exams Scrapped

In the original proposal, Remote Exams were only going to be permitted where the candidate was more than 50km from an assessor. This arbitrary boundary proposal was universally criticised in the submissions as being restrictive, given that many persons with disabilities or lacking transportation would have problems travelling even 5km. The ACMA agreed and the 50km radius rule on Remote Examinations has been dropped.

Still no Assessments at Private Residences Permitted

Given that Assessors cannot charge site rental fees for their services, a number of submissions stated that they did not like the limitation that prevented examinations to be conducted at residential sites. The ACMA confirmed that residential examinations will remain prohibited. On that basis, assessments are most likely to be carried out at radio clubs or free community based venues.

Beacons and Repeaters to Remain Under the Apparatus License Framework

Beacons and Repeaters are regarded as fixed stations and will remain in the ACMA database as they are now, meaning the existing Apparatus license fees will still apply. A responsible person holding a valid Amateur Recognition Certificate will need to be nominated in order to maintain that license.

Recognised Domestic Qualifications

While the ACMA hasn't completely ruled out recognising some qualifications that will provide recognition of prior learning, they are likely to be quite strict on this subject. In practical terms it would be easier and cheaper for candidates to just sit an exam rather than trying to argue for RPL.

On-Line Examinations

Most submissions favoured on-line exams.

The short answer from the ACMA was 'No.' Their response to this question was:

'Given the varied support for an online examination system and the potential impact on the frameworks being put in place for conducting amateur radio examinations, we do not intend to pursue the development of an online examination system at this stage.'

Question Banks

The ACMA reiterates that examination question banks will not be available to the public. A statement was made that the actual exam paper questions would be regenerated every three months to prevent over-familiarity of exam papers in circulation.

Single Assessor Exams

The ACMA will allow exam events to be conducted by a single Assessor. Not shown here was a previous statement by the ACMA that there may be a requirement for a second Assessor to be in attendance if more than five candidates are being examined in the one session. This will no doubt be made clear to the Assessor network before it commences next year. One requirement stipulates that where candidates are under the age of 18, the ACMA require that the exam must take place in the presence of a parent or guardian.

Continuity of Assessors from the AMC

There is a long response from the ACMA about Assessors under their new system. Generally, all existing Assessors are being invited to apply, but the ACMA have their own criteria that need to be satisfied. This includes a Working With Children accreditation and the Assessor having an Advanced license. The ACMA reserve the right to reject anyone they feel is in breach of their guidelines. They won't be issuing Assessor I.D. cards, but they will provide a written 'Notice of Accreditation' to all Assessors.

Specialist Assessors (with the authority to conduct Remote Exams) will require a *'qualification granted by an Australian education organisation in education, teaching or assessment or an equivalent qualification in education, teaching or assessing vocation based training.'*

ACMA has written to all Assessors with further instructions.

Re-sitting Exams

As the ACMA is only going to recompile their exams from the question bank once every three months, they stipulate that anyone who fails an exam must wait three months before trying again. The logic being this is the only way to guarantee that the candidate gets a different paper on the re-test. This restriction has been raised with the ACMA and we understand they are revisiting this policy.

Candidates wanting to re-sit an examination will only be able to 3 months after the initial examination. This is because we will release a new pool of questions every 3 months. We have updated the Guidelines and the Qualification Framework to more clearly specify this.

Assessors not Allowed to Criticise the ACMA on Social Media

'Accredited assessors should refrain from making comments on the actions of the ACMA on social media when acting in their capacity as accredited assessors. Accredited assessors should not represent themselves as being part of or employed by the ACMA. We welcome any feedback about the assessment process, but ask that accredited assessors speak directly to the ACMA and refrain from making comments on the actions of the ACMA on social media when acting as accredited assessors.'

There have been some inappropriate and unprofessional (bordering on defamatory) on social media and other public forums. On occasion the Amateur community has not represented itself appropriately. This statement from the ACMA is not unexpected. Should Amateurs have a problem with ACMA or any of its processes, they should take them up directly with the ACMA rather than publishing unprofessional statements in the public domain.

Harmonised Amateur Radio Examination Certificate (HAREC) as a 'Recognised Qualification

This plan seeks to limit how long Amateurs from other countries can operate in Australia without sitting an exam. The original ACMA statement was:

Overseas visiting amateurs holding recognised qualifications and licences as specified in Table C of the amateur class licence will be able to operate in Australia for 365 days, in accordance with the corresponding Australian qualification, and use the call sign issued by their overseas jurisdiction. To continue operating after the end of the 365-day period, overseas amateurs will be required to obtain an Australian amateur qualification and call sign.

This position has shifted. The ACMA policy is now:

In line with the CEPT's HAREC recommendation and the high level of support received through the consultation, we propose to recognise HAREC licences as equivalent to the advanced licence, allowing HAREC licensees to operate under the amateur class licence without needing to obtain an ACMA recognition certificate (Advanced). Overseas amateurs with HAREC licences can also apply for an ACMA

recognition certificate should they wish, although this is not required. Consequently, we will not impose the proposed charge for considering an application for recognition of prior learning made by a person who holds a HAREC licence.

Confirmation That Examinations are to be Free

Under the proposed scheme, there are no costs associated with amateur operators undertaking an examination with an accredited assessor. Provided an amateur operator adequately passes all components of an amateur operator's examination, that candidate can apply for an ACMA recognition certificate. It is at the person's discretion whether they apply for one or more ACMA recognition certificates.

The cost for applying for a call sign to be assigned is based on the type of call sign being sought and does not differ for a new or existing amateur operator. We do not propose any new charges to reassign ongoing use of amateur operators' 2-letter or 3-letter call signs. This is because the ACMA will not need to consider any further information from amateurs to reassign these call signs, except for them confirming every 5 years that they continue to use the call sign.

Existing Amateurs will simply transition to the class license automatically. There will be no fees.

Callsigns held by Amateur Radio Clubs

This topic has been an item of concern to many clubs which maintain a repeater, beacon or general purpose Club Callsign. For most part it appears to be 'business as usual' for clubs who are the custodians of callsigns. Here is the recent ACMA response to this topic:

The Amateur LCD has been amended to include a condition requiring that a person operating an amateur beacon station, or an amateur repeater station must be a qualified person (meaning they have certain specified qualifications). Amateur radio clubs can continue to hold their assigned call signs, and the process for transferring call signs will be outlined in the call sign policy document.

Under the amateur class licence, amateur radio clubs will need to revise their arrangements to record member details when operating stations remotely. For example, instead of a licence number, a member's call sign and qualification level could be included in the arrangements. The current arrangements will be retained.

Some radio clubs now sponsor a Remote Station for their members. Current arrangements are unchanged; the club must have some form of log to track the identity and license class of any remote persons using their station.

An amateur radio club may own and operate amateur stations and can be assigned call signs, and the applicant for a call sign assignment must be an advanced-level qualified amateur. It is up to amateur radio clubs to allow members to use their amateur station and call sign. If a member who holds a standard- or foundation-level qualification is permitted by the amateur radio club to operate a club station, they must operate the station in accordance with the conditions specified for their qualification level.

A key aspect (which may be an item of frustration for some clubs) is the ruling that the callsign assignment must be attached to an Advanced licensee, not a Standard licensee, even if in practise, the callsign usage is restricted to Standard frequencies and power levels.

Costs Associated with Contest and Special Event Callsigns

The 2x1 Contest callsigns, Special event callsigns and external Territory callsigns (VK0, VK9) are all being

treated the same way and will attract a \$52.75 application fee. This fee may be affected in the future if other Cost Recovery fees are reassessed by the ACMA.

Summary

As a Representative Body, RASA has a responsibility to convey its concerns and those of its members to the ACMA. We also aim to provide an informed interpretation of ACMA policy to the sector in clear language. There is much to absorb about the proposed changes and we hope our readers find this article to be useful and informative. Its contents are intended to be a guide only. The information published by the ACMA is the definitive document which governs our sector and Amateurs should defer to the ACMA website where further clarity is warranted.

Amateur Radio has undergone many changes in its long history. In the 60's we saw the introduction of the VHF and above Limited Licence, then the Novice Licence, which was intended to become a stepping-stone into the hobby. When Morse Code was dropped as a requirement, the Limited licence was absorbed by the Full Call which we now refer to as Advanced, and the Novice morphed into what we now call Standard. Twenty years ago the Foundation licence was introduced as another way of getting started in the hobby. It has been quite a ride.

Originally the P&T (Postal and Telecommunications department administered exams. Back when they were written and not multi-choice until 1978. The P&T became the DOC (Department of Communications) then DOTC and finally ACMA. For a while the WIA (Wireless Institute of Australia) took over the exam administration, and then lost the contract to the AMC (Australian Maritime college), who have managed exams for the past five years. Now the government regulator is taking the exams back in house and is transitioning from Annual licence fees to a free licence for life.

We are witnessing the biggest development in Amateur Radio in recent times. Right here, right now. Amateur Radio clubs should help their members through this process and we hope this article will assist them in this process. RASA was formed in 2018 and takes this responsibility very seriously, working hard to ensure the survival of this amazing hobby. There is a common tendency to see change as a threat, sometimes with good cause. The class license is not a threat, and in reality most of us will experience little or no change in how we enjoy our hobby.

We are happy to answer your questions. Our email address is info@vkradioamateurs.org



You Never Quite Know What You Are Going to Get

An encounter with a Japanese capsule store,
by Ian Jackson VK3BUF

Few countries in the world have embraced Amateur Radio with more enthusiasm than Japan. On a recent trip there I found myself in a capsule store at Shibuya, a region within greater Tokyo. If you haven't heard of a Capsule Store before, it is a shop full of identical vending machines that contain small toys in plastic capsules.

They offer a tremendous variety of models, figurines, and strange objects. When 400 or 500 Yen is inserted, (That's under \$5 Australian) and the knob is rotated a full turn, a spherical capsule drops into the chute for collection. It is a random selection of the half-dozen or so items shown on the front of the machine. These machines are all over Japan, with some stores dedicated to them.



The Capsule Store



On this occasion, one machine had a picture of a Morse key on it. Four coins were deposited and a ball came out. Inside was a tiny Morse key and a set of instructions in Japanese. The key had a plastic tab which when removed armed a battery and suddenly it had a functioning oscillator operated by the key. The toy was small, just 50mm long, but it worked fine. Here is an image of the unit and its capsule shown next to a PC mouse for scale.

This was cute and somewhat unexpected, but it came with notes. One was a small card with some Morse Code examples and the other was a slip of paper with a lot of Japanese text on it.

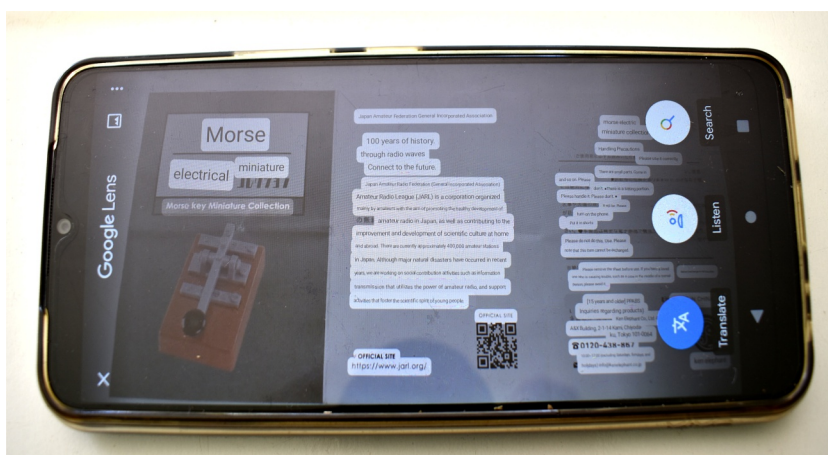


Some further explanation was in order. My phone came with a generic Google Translate application which produced a reasonable language conversion using its internal camera. The note says (verbatim):

Amateur Radio

Amateur radio is a type of communications that uses radio waves just like smartphones, Wifi etc. that you are familiar with. It is a tool that allows people regardless of their nationality or age to communicate freely through radio waves, even with strangers and it may even be possible to communicate with astronauts at Showa Base, even far away. Amateur radio has been called the 'king of hobbies' for a long time because there are many ways to enjoy it. It also plays an important role as an effective means of communications during disasters.

Morse Key. Is a device that transmits Morse code. The communications method by the American Morse. Some people call Morse code 'ton two' because it uses a combination of two dots " . " (ton) and dash one (two) Morse code communication was once used for communications between ships and maritime accidents, but is now loved by many people in the hobby world. The appeal of Morse communication is that it allows you to communicate with people further away than wireless communications using microphones. By the way there are various shapes of electric keys.



Japan Amateur Federation General Incorporated Association
100 years of history. Through radio waves connect to the future.

Japan Amateur Radio Federation (General incorporated association) Amateur Radio League (JARL) is a corporation organized mainly by amateurs with the aim of promoting the healthy development of amateur radio in Japan, as well as contributing to the improvement and development of scientific culture at home and abroad. There are currently approximately 400,000 amateur stations in Japan. Although natural disasters have occurred in recent years, we are working on social contribution activities such as information transmission that utilizes the power of amateur radio and support activities that foster the scientific spirit of young people.

The remainder of the message contained some brief dos and don'ts advice on using the key and a link to their website

This text explains much. The miniature Morse keys were placed in the capsule machine by the JARL as part of a campaign to promote Amateur Radio. Apart from being a cute, somewhat unexpected toy, its appearance is a practical demonstration of innovation on behalf of the JARL to introduce Amateur Radio to the public. They are to be congratulated for this effort. There is a lesson here for Amateur Radio groups in Australia. We too must devise innovative ways to promote our hobby to the public in ways that encourage enthusiasm and imagination, instead of reiterating the same stale messages of yesteryear.

Now my HF radio has a new key perched on its lid.

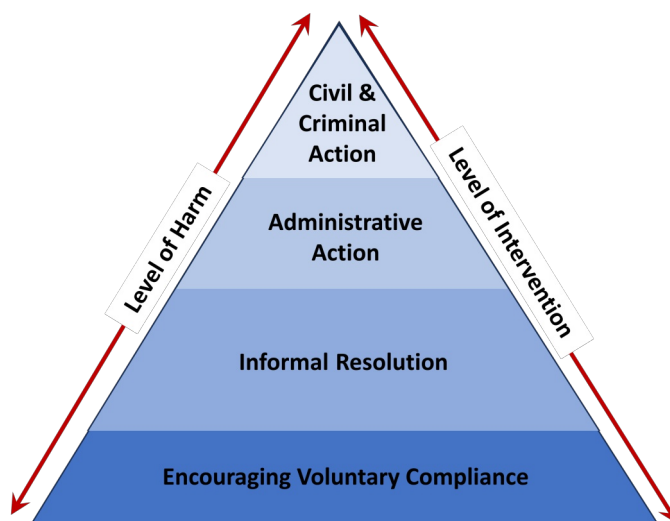
Interference, Compliance and the Pyramid

We wrote to the AMCA recently asking about Compliance and Enforcement Policies for the Amateur Radio sector.

Many radio amateurs do not properly understand or appreciate the challenges and regulatory burdens the ACMA manages on a day-to-day basis.

In particular, **Compliance and Enforcement Policies**, as they relate to the Radcom Act and the Amateur LCD.

We referred specifically to the Compliance Pyramid, shown right.



We note ACMA's guidelines per below:

In deciding which compliance or enforcement option or combination of options to use, we consider a range of factors including:

- *the relevant regulatory objective*
- *whether the conduct was deliberate, inadvertent or reckless*
- *whether the conduct has caused, or may cause, detriment to another person, and the nature, seriousness and extent of that detriment*
- *whether the conduct indicated systemic issues that may pose ongoing compliance or enforcement issues*
- *whether the person has been the subject of prior compliance or enforcement action and the outcome of that action*
- *the personal and general educative/deterrent effect of acting*
- *the seniority and level of experience of the person/s involved in the conduct*
- *what, if any, action has been taken to remedy and address the consequences of the conduct*
- *whether the subject of the investigation has cooperated with us*
- *whether the issues involved require urgent action/intervention by us"*

We understand that some amateurs harbour concerns that the ACMA is not performing its role as the regulator on matters relating to Amateur Radio. We sought comment from ACMA.

The following scenarios are typical, and we understand that the ACMA receives complaints about these matters from time to time. All too often, the complainant provides inadequate evidence and/or expects ACMA to "drop everything" and attend to their matter. Of course, this is unreasonable.

We asked the ACMA for some guidance or commentary for each of the following scenarios; based on the legal obligations of the Act, the LCD, and of course set against the backdrop of the Compliance Pyramid and strategic priorities.

1. An amateur is verbally abused on-air.

Where an Amateur is verbally abused on-air (vilified, inappropriate language etc), what advice would you offer?

It is our view that the amateur should keep a log (record the transmission if possible), and ignore the transmissions. If the amateur feels at risk of personal harm, they should report the matter to the ACMA and Police. Any evidence should be provided.

2. Amateurs causing deliberate interference to other Amateurs.

This is similar to scenario 1. Ignore the transmissions, move frequency. Keep a log and record if possible. Monitor, and if the situation escalates, provide evidence to ACMA.

3. Claims that international OTHR (Over The Horizon Radar) signals are causing interference on Primary Amateur bands

In reality, there is little ACMA (or other Aust Govt Departments) can do where the interference is likely coming from a foreign state.

What advice can ACMA provide in this instance?

Our advice is for the amateur to keep a log, record the interference and submit a complaint to the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) Monitoring Service, via their local member association, the WIA. It is most likely such interference is coming from SE Asia or other nearby administrations, and the best course of action is through IARU member societies, who can engage directly with their local Regulator.

4. Interference from consumer electronics

This is probably the most important regulatory issue impacting Amateur Radio enthusiasts globally. Australia is not unique. It is worth noting that Radio Frequency Interference (RFI) and Electro-Magnetic Compatibility (EMC) issues also impact the broader community. For example, AM Radio can be impacted by RFI.

Whilst it would be ideal for the relevant regulatory instruments to limit and/or prohibit non-compliant electronic equipment from the market (eg. Solar panel micro-inverters, poorly designed power supplies, LED lights, battery chargers, etc) it is probably safe to say 'that ship has sailed'.

What advice does ACMA recommend.

Our advice is for the Amateur to follow the processes described in QRM Guru (www.qrm.guru) and in the first instance endeavour to resolve the problems themselves. We are, after all, technologists, and a part of our hobby should be to resolve these problems ourselves. However, if this is not possible, we encourage people to follow the processes described on QRM Guru and formalise a submission to ACMA. The processes, methods, templates, and forms provide the ACMA with the diagnostic information to assess and determine the most appropriate action – and best of all, most of the work has already been done.

We understand the WIA supports this view.

5. Interference from mains electricity lines

This is similar to Scenario 4. QRM Guru provides a proven process for dealing with such situations.

<https://qrm.guru/power-line-noise-taking-action/>

Whilst we understand the ACMA is unwilling for endorse QRM Guru, this process is logical and works. It has been applied by a number of radio amateurs successfully.

What advice does the ACMA offer where Power Line noise has been identified?

We invited feedback from the ACMA.

The ACMA responded:

Thank you for your enquiry. We appreciate you taking the time to review and research the ACMA's compliance and enforcement policy and note your request for the ACMA to provide input for your articles.

In general, the ACMA does not provide detailed advice on how it may interpret relevant legislation or apply its compliance and enforcement policy to specific circumstances. The provision of such advice may inadvertently prejudice any future decisions by the Authority in exercising its legislative obligations.

The ACMA considers each matter on its merits with all reports of non-compliance received by the ACMA subject to a graduated risk-based assessment in accordance with our Compliance and Enforcement Policy. When considering radiocommunications matters, the risk to spectrum utility (i.e., the risk of causing harmful interference to the radiocommunications spectrum) and public safety are our priority when making this assessment.'

QTC is grateful to the ACMA for its response to our questions.



Join RASA or Make a Donation

RASA, the Radio Amateur Society of Australia is efficiently structured and our services are provided at a very low cost, and are free to users. There are costs associated with software licences, web hosting and some materials that we need to buy sometimes.

Although we operate efficiently, there are bills to pay, and support from the Amateur Radio community helps us in our work. There are two ways you could help us financially. These are to become a member, or to simply donate money.

If you wish to become a member, go to [THIS PAGE](#) and follow the instruction. You can pay by direct debit or by PayPal. We suggest that you pay \$10 as membership fee, and any amount over that will be counted as a donation. Or simply call all of it a donation if that's the way you want to roll.

There's no form to complete - simply send an email tell us what the payment is, along with your name and callsign. No callsign yet? No worries - just let us know when you get a callsign. We don't need your physical address. The link to the email is on the "join or donate page."

Becoming a member means that you are on our members list, will receive bulletins and announcements first, and of course you get to attend member meetings.

How easy is that? Join or Donate.

The Australian Regulator Announces HF Power Credits

In a bid to address rising concerns over unregulated use of Higher Power on the HF spectrum, the Regulator has today announced a new system to manage overall risk and human exposure.

Many Australian Amateurs have been using Higher Power for years, even decades, with no deleterious impacts to neighbours, their cats, or the broader community.

In response to sector-wide pushback from Australian Amateurs, the Regulator has announced it will replace the proposed Scientific Licence regime for Higher Power with a more progressive Power Credit offset scheme.

This new scheme will be known as the Supplementary Power for Licenced Amateurs Trading Exchange Register, or SPLATER.

What are HF Power Credits?

Power credits, also known as QRO offsets, are permits that allow an amateur to transmit a certain amount of HF power or other unit of power output. One credit permits the transmission of one Watt of power (over existing regulated power limits) or the equivalent in other power output units.



The power credit is half of a so-called Cap and Trade program. Amateurs who operate QRP (or QRO only when required to make the QSO) are awarded credits that allow them to continue to transmit RF energy cumulatively, up to a certain limit, which is reduced periodically. Meanwhile, an Amateur may sell any unneeded credits to another Amateur who needs them. Amateurs are thus doubly incentivised to reduce power emissions over time. First, they must spend money on extra credits if their cumulative power transmissions exceed the cap. Second, they can make money by reducing their power transmission (QRP) and selling their excess power credits.

Proponents of the HF Power credit system say that it leads to measurable, verifiable power reductions from certified QRO operations.

Cashed-up Contesters and companies selling power amplifiers are the biggest supporters of this new scheme. QRP operators are also excited at the prospect of selling their unwanted credits and using the financial windfall to upgrade their sub-standard radios to an Elecraft KX2 or KX3.

The Regulator will be taking a clip on every trade which will be directed to education campaigns. One government representative, who asked to remain anonymous, indicated the first round of money would be directed on Duty Cycle education for Amateurs who continually destroy their power amplifiers with overdriven FT8 transmissions.

What is Cap and Trade?

Cap and trade is a common term for a government regulatory program designed to limit, or cap, the total level of emissions of certain transmissions, particularly HF Radio Frequency transmission, as a result of DX and contesting activity.

When will the new arrangements take effect?

HF Power Credits will come into effect with the Class Licence. A dedicated fax number will be implemented. The price per credit will initially be set by the Regulator. Amateurs are invited to register their interest in purchasing the first tranche of HF Power Credits.

Foundation and Standard Licensees will be credited with one-fifth of their otherwise permitted credits under this new scheme and will be permitted a Foundation Unlimited Credit, or FUC, which can be used once they upgrade to a Standard or higher qualification level.

Standard Licensees will have access to the scheme via Standard Un-capped Credits, or SUCs.

Both these options will contribute to the overall success of the SPLATER initiative.

More news to follow.

2023 VKFF National Get Together

By Paul Simmonds VK5PAS

The inaugural VKFF National Get Together was held on Friday 27th October, Saturday 28th October, & Sunday 29th October 2023 at Renmark, South Australia.

The aim of the event was to get VKFF park activators and hunters together in the one location, share a meal and a drink, listen to some interesting guest presenters, activate some parks, and share their love of park activating for the World Wide Flora Fauna (WWFF) program.

The event included a Friday evening meal, a series of presentations on Saturday, a Saturday evening dinner with a special guest speaker, a Sunday morning BBQ breakfast, and then a plethora of park activations. This was a special occasion as it coincided with the 10-year anniversary of the WWFF program in Australia.

A total of 27 amateurs from across Australia attended the event. Hans VK6XN ventured over from Western Australia, Ian VK1DI from Canberra, while other amateurs attended from VK2, VK3, and VK5.

Each attendee received a special attendee certificate and a welcome pack which included an attendee manual, visitor guide, a VKFF pen, a VKFF fridge magnet and various park and tourist information.

2023 VKFF NATIONAL GET TOGETHER



REMARK, SOUTH AUSTRALIA



The Friday evening dinner was held at the Renmark Club overlooking the mighty River Murray. Amateurs and their partners enjoyed a very nice meal and shared many laughs.

The Saturday presentations were held at the Hotel Renmark. The speakers were as follows:

Paul VK5PAS – An introduction to the WWFF program

Andy VK5LA – Operating portable with a fly wire vertical

Peter VK3PF – Tips for Activators and Hunters

Peter VK3ZPF – VK Port-a-log

Sue VK5AYL – IOS ParksNPeaks app

Hans VK6XN – Logging in parks

Ivan VK5HS – Home brew half wave antenna matching unit and linked radiating element.

Marija VK5MAZ – Operating from Troubridge Island

Grant Geyer, SA Ambulance – snake bite

Adam VK2YK – Alaskan park activation

A question-and-answer session was held, hosted by the VKFF National Co-Ordinator and the attending State/Territory reps. This was an opportunity for those attending to ask some questions about the WWFF program.



Following the presentations, certificates were presented to all of the guest speakers and the MC, Chris VK5FR.

This was followed by presentation of certificates of appreciation to the attending VKFF State/Territory reps Ian VK1DI, Gerard VK2IO, Peter VK3ZPF, Hans VK6XN, the VKFF Treasurer Marija VK5MAZ, and the VKFF National Co-Ordinator Paul VK5PAS.



A raffle was then drawn. The lucky winners of the first prize (a boat trip to Bulyong Island, Murray River National Park provided by Ivan VK5HS) were Tony VK3YV and Peter VK3ZPF.
Second prize (a \$100 voucher from Jaycar) was won by Michael VK5BRU.
Third prize (a \$50.00 Jaycar voucher) was won by Mark VK5MK.
Fourth prize (another \$50 Jaycar voucher) was won by Peter VK5PE.
Fifth prize (a 7 metre Haverford squid pole) was won by Danny VK5DW.
Sixth prize (100m roll of RG58 donated by RivComm Solutions) was won by Leigh VK3SG.
Seventh prize (a VKFF polo shirt) was won by Chris VK5FR.
Eighth prize (a VKFF baseball cap) was won by Gerard VK2IO.
Ninth prize (a VKFF coffee mug) was won by Peter VK3PWG.

Thank you to Daryl VK3AWA for donating prizes 7, 8 and 9.

Paul VK5PAS announced the venue of next year's VKFF National Get Together....Bendigo, Victoria. This is very much in the planning stage, and more information on next year's event will appear shortly on the WWFF Australia website.

On Saturday evening a dinner function was held in the Nanya Function room at the Hotel Renmark. This included a guest speaker, Peter Hunter, the Mayor of Renmark Paringa Council. Peter delivered a very interesting presentation on his involvement in the Friends of Paringa Paddocks (Murray River National Park), and the recent floods in the Riverland region of South Australia.

Peter was presented with \$200.00 from the raffle, for the Friends of Paringa Paddocks.

A Sunday morning BBQ breakfast hosted by the Riverland Radio Club was held at the Jarrett Memorial Gardens at Renmark. The hot coffee and bacon & egg rolls were welcomed by many who were sporting sore heads after the Saturday evening dinner.

Following the Sunday morning BBQ breakfast, many of the VKFF National Get Together attendees headed out into the field to activate numerous VKFF references in the Riverland region of South Australia and just over the border in northwest Victoria.



A number of parks were activated on Monday and Tuesday.



More information on next year's event can be found on the [WWFF Australia website](#).

73, '44', and Merry Christmas,

Paul VK5PAS.

Dits 'n Dahs

By Chris Chapman VK3QB

Well, it's that time of year when we reflect on the year behind us, and look to the upcoming year; and maybe revisit all those new year resolutions that remain on the 'to-do' list.



If learning or improving Morse Code has been on your 'to-do' list now is a perfect time to think about how to best achieve your goals in 2024. Whatever level you're at, be it beginner, or more advanced, there are tried and true methods to help you in your quest.

My recommendations to help you are:

▶ Commit to a daily practice regime for at least six to eight weeks; you'll need to commit 15-20 minutes per day, at least six days a week.

▶ Learn the code at a character speed of at least 18-20 Words per Minute (WPM). This might sound ambitious, but it's the best way to learn the code for efficiency and improvement. You'll be increasing the spacing between letters so the real speed can be as slow as five to six WPM at the beginning.

▶ Choose a learning program that will suit your learning style and time commitments.

There are two programs I recommend:



Learning CW Online

Welcome to LCWO.net - Learn Morse Code (CW) Online! - Learn CW Online

This is a great resource for those who prefer to manage their own learning schedule and pace. There are loads of good tools and programs to help you achieve your goals.



CW Academy – CWops

CW Academy, provided by CW Ops is a structured eight-week course. There are four levels:

- Beginner
- Fundamental
- Intermediate
- Advanced

If you're not sure which level is for you, visit the Student Portal and take a practice assessment.

CW Academy – Student Portal Information (cwops.org)

I have just finished leading a Beginners class with six VK students and two NA students. The experience was very rewarding and it proved the CW Academy works. CW Ops have taught thousands of Amateurs how to master the code. I can't recommend their program highly enough.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about CW Ops and the Academy, please drop me an email. My contact details are on qrz.com.

I hope to hear you on air. Merry Christmas and HNY!

73, Chris VK3QB ... -.-



Where to Buy Stuff

From time to time we see people asking on social media where they can buy Amateur Radio products. We've provided a brief run-down of the main retailers in VK.

If we've missed anyone, please let us know. If you're a retailer and would like to advertise in QTC please send us an email.

Future Systems (Perth)

Steve Kennedy VK6SJ had a great business and was the sole distributor for Flex Radios. Unfortunately, Steve was forced to close the business earlier in 2023. Steve made the following announcement:

"Hi All, I'm sorry to have to inform you all that over the course of this week, Future Systems and DX Radio Systems will cease to trade. We are still selling stock we have on the shelf but only via online sales until it has been sold. We have a couple of customers who have paid for radios that are on their way. These are all paid for and are being shipped directly to those customers (and they know who they are), so no issue there. The shop front is now closed."

"Warranties on more expensive gear (e.g. 403A, Flex and Icom) are still backed by the factory and I will also work with anyone needing support in that regard whilst the warranty is in force."

"Personally I'd like to thank you all for your support of the shop and business. We met a lot of really nice people whilst building the business and I think had it not been for an incident in the project delivery side of the business that happened 3 years ago, that we have been trying to recover from, we could have built a nice business in the ham sector. Thanks and looking forward to being able to spend a bit more time playing radio now instead of just selling them.' (Facebook, 8 August 2023)"

We're sorry to see you go Steve, and we wish you well.

StrictlyHam (Melbourne)

www.strictlyham.com.au

Strictly Ham has been around for decades; since 1993 according to the website. Ross (aka Slim) has been a stalwart of the industry providing sales and service across VK and ZL for numerous Amateur Radio brands.

During 2023 Ross announced he would be retiring and his website advises he is now in 'wind down' mode. It will take some months to sell off stock, unless a buyer for the business can be found.

You can read more about Ross' pending retirement here: strictlyham.com.au

Enjoy your retirement Ross; you'll be leaving a huge hole in the Amateur Radio retail market.

Andrews Communications (Sydney)

www.andrewscom.com.au

Andrews Communications has also been around for decades; since 1976 with founder Lee Andrews still at the helm. Andrews Comms sells a variety of products, not just Amateur Radio. Lee sells all sorts of comms equipment as well as telescopes and binoculars.

DXing (Sydney)

www.dxing.com.au

A relative newcomer to the Amateur Radio retail environment, well-known DXer Nick Hacko VK9DX started the business in the second half of 2023. Nick is an authorised dealer for ICOM, ACOM amplifiers, Heil, Power Genius Amplifiers and antenna tuners and switches as well as coax.

G&C Communications (SE Melbourne)

www.gccomm.com.au

Graham Brennan VK3KCS started the business in 1990. He's moved a few times over the years and is now based in Leongatha, about 110km south-east of Melbourne. Graham is well-known for his Grazy Master verticals, as well as being an ICOM dealer and a number of other well-known brands.

Connect VK (Adelaide)

www.connectvk.com.au

Connect VK is an Australian online retailer of RF connectors & Accessories based in Adelaide SA. Ivan's runs an online only business model and you can contact him via his website or mobile number. He's a distributor for ICOM, Expert Electronics, Heil, and various other brands.

South Eastern Communications (Melbourne)

www.secomms.com.au

South Eastern Communications is a small business based on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria. South Eastern Communications can tailor a communication system to meet your needs.

From CB Radio, UHF, HF, Scanners, Dedicated Receive radio for your emergency service volunteers, Marine radio, Paging, an amateur radio or even a private frequency – South Eastern Communications can do it all!

Elite Communications And Electronics

(Brisbane)

www.elitecommunications.com.au

My name is Sean Brennan from Elite Communications And Electronics here in Jimboomba Queensland my wife and I opened up a small communications store about three years ago now and have built on it and supplying ham radio equipment, Antennas and just about any other bibs and bobs for the communications industry.

I attended my first Hamfest on Sunday at Narang and the customers that came up and were introduced to us by the event organisers were taken back to find out who we were and or putting a face to the name after speaking on the phone.

We would like to see if there is anything we can do for your club and be active with you, we could give your members a straight up 10% discount off all rrp pricing just to come to us and being a member of your club or if there is anything we could discuss that might work more than happy to have a chat.

Feel free to give the store a call and speak to Lisa

or myself 07 5605 2000 or my mobile 0412 698 670

Communication Systems Geraldton

[On Facebook](#)

Greg Fletcher, VK6FG, has for many years been a supplier, installer and maintainer of communications equipment in and around the City of Geraldton in the Mid West of Western Australia. Greg has recently extended his inventory into Amateur Radio.

Greg has been an Icom Dealer for some time.

Unit 2 116 North West Coastal Highway, Geraldton, WA, Australia, 6530

0418 939 069 greg@commsg.com.au

Second Hand Equipment

Of course, with any second-hand purchase, it's a case of caveat emptor, or buyer beware.

Perhaps the best known and most popular place to buy and sell second-hand gear is vkclassifieds.

www.vkclassifieds.net.au

Allan VK2CA started vkclassified in 1998 and has been supporting this platform for 25 years. It is free to use, but you do have to register if you want to sell or communicate via the site's messaging system.

There are a number of Facebook pages dedicated to buying and selling equipment in Australia.



RASA Offers Tangible Benefits to all Amateurs

Amateur Radio Welcome Pack

These Welcome Packs are offered free to clubs who conduct Amateur Radio courses.

RASA has assembled a free Amateur Radio Welcome Pack. These packs comprise a portfolio folder which includes a number of useful documents and reference sheets.

These packs give your students some practical and relevant material to take away at the end of the course.

Included in this Welcome Pack are some documents and information sheets to help your students get started.

- Welcome to Amateur Radio Guide Book
- VK Regulations Handbook
- Getting started with Repeaters
- Australian Band Plan Quick Reference Guide
- Interference Resolution (QRM) Process Guide
- Useful Web sites information sheet



If your club is running a course and would like to provide these resources to your students just send us an email. This is a free resource. We only ask that you cover postage costs, and plan early to ensure the packs are received on time.

An email from your Club President to info@vkradioamateurs.org will set the ball rolling.

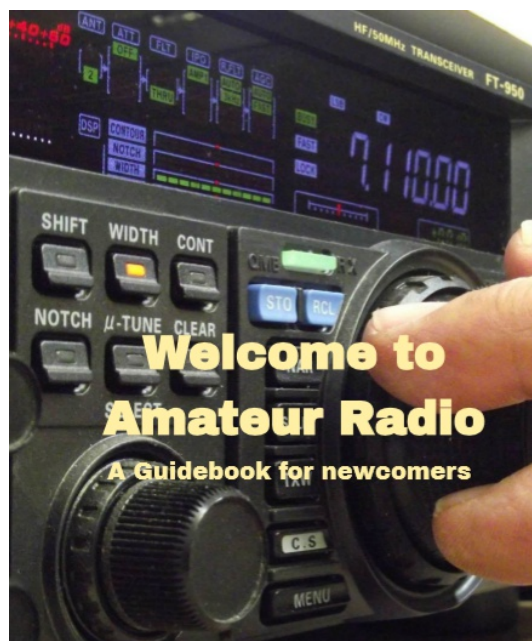
Welcome to AR Guidebook for Newcomers

If you're new to the hobby, or perhaps returning after a long time, the RASA Welcome to Amateur Radio Guidebook gives you an introduction to our hobby.

The book is published digitally. It contains hotlinks to external websites with useful information.

It is available as an Acrobat pdf file suitable for reading on a PC or tablet. It can be printed if required.

Click [HERE](#) for the Welcome to AR Guidebook download page. The download link is at the bottom of the page.



VKREGS.INFO

Australian Amateur Radio Regulations

This website provides a guide to the regulations governing the hobby of amateur radio in Australia.

It is a joint publication of the Radio Amateur Society of Australia (RASA) and the Radio and Electronics School (RES).

You can read about the regulations on the website, or download a complete pdf guidebook version.

Note that the Foundation exam uses a subset of the full regulations detailed here. You should be guided by the Foundation syllabus and any course of instruction you may be undertaking to determine the appropriate regulatory elements to learn.

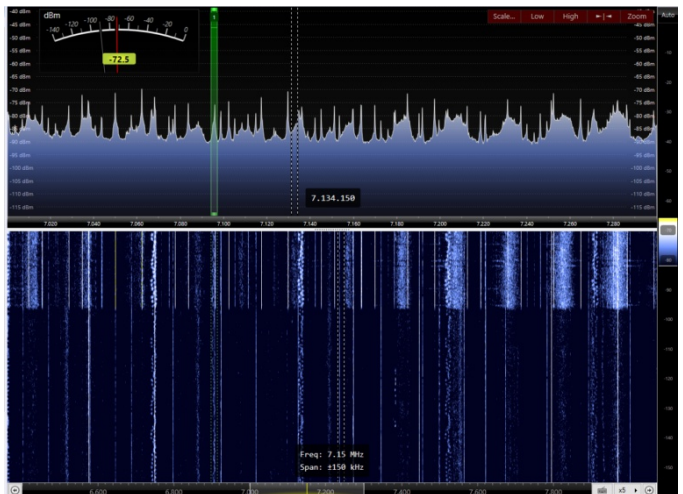
Like all RASA resources, this guide is provided at no charge to the amateur radio community, however donations are welcome. Click [HERE](#) to donate.



QRM.GURU

If HF looks like this at your QTH, read on....

- Are you suffering QRM/EMI?
- Do you need online assistance to resolve your noise issues?
- What should you expect from the Regulator?



QRM Guru is a RASA online resource to help you resolve your QRM/EMI issues. QRM GURU is a free resource.



QTC Magazine

You're reading it!

QTC - It means "I have a message for you"

RASA's QTC Magazine is produced quarterly by a small team of volunteers, with contributions from a variety of sources.

QTC is an electronic magazine, available online at qtcmag.com in a true online magazine format, where you can flip pages on-screen, and it's also available as a PDF for those who wish to download it.

QTC accepts article submissions to be considered for publication. If you have not had an article published previously in QTC, it would pay you to contact RASA for a copy of our guidelines for articles. We particularly encourage brevity, which is achievable because of our ability to include hotlinks and videos in the magazine. Send an email to info@vkradioamateurs.org and get the ball rolling.



No Advertising

Have you noticed that QTC does not carry any commercial advertising?

There are some reasons for this. Firstly, we have not sought paid advertisers. We have no objection to carrying paid advertisements, and are open to offers.

The truth is that QTC magazine operates under the same low cost philosophy that RASA ascribes to. The work is done by volunteers, and RASA does not hold any property or assets.

If, however, you'd like to place paid advertisements in QTC, please contact us at the email address above, and we can talk about it.

Amateur Radio Clubs may advertise free of charge.

Would you like to join RASA? Click [HERE](#) to join, renew your membership, or simply make a donation.



BEING HEARD IS IMPORTANT

The Radio Amateur Society of Australia

Do you need help with QRM

Here at QRM Guru we often receive emails asking for assistance. All too often the email goes something like this.



“I have this noise on xyz band, it’s S7 on my meter and covers the entire band. What do you think it is - refer screenshot attached”

Or

“I have a spike every 25kHz on the 20 metre band. Refer attached screenshot. I have no idea what it is. Can you help?”

And of course the aim is to identify and minimise or remove the noise source.

Every time we respond to these emails asking if the correspondent has followed the process.

Have they done some detective work to narrow down what the noise is - or isn't? Have you tried switching off the mains power supply and used a battery powered receiver - this will help identify if the noise is on your property. Does the noise have a profile?

- Time of day
- Direction
- Particular bands/frequencies
- When it is worst

Is it aligned with any household routines? Washing clothes, garage door activation, Christmas lights, transition from day to night to day?

Have you compared it to known noise sources?

We have created the QRM Guru resources and tools and techniques to help you navigate what can be a complex investigative process. Like any complex task, break it down into bite size chunks, record your actions and observations and if you need extra help, [send us an email](#).

In the meantime, check out these links and spend some time navigating the QRM Guru website - its a collation of articles, videos and checklists

gathered from amateurs here in VK and overseas.

[QRM Guru Process – QRM.GURU](#)

[Newcomers start here – QRM.GURU](#)

RASA DX Contest 2023

Don't forget to submit your log for the RASA DX Contest for 2023.

Up for grabs is a RigExpert Antenna Analyser AA-35.

You must submit your entry before 0000Z on 12th January 2024.

Read more by following [this link](#)



Peel Amateur Radio Group

PARGFEST Swap-Meet

Saturday 10th February 2024

Mandurah Bowling Club
89 Allnutt Street, Mandurah WA.

Even better than last year!

Huge annual raffle!

PARGFEST WA's best!

Doors Open:
0800 – Exhibitors & Sellers
0900 – 1230 Buyers
Entry Fee - \$5.00 per person
See you there amongst the raffles and bargains

Please check www.parg.org.au/whatsnew for last-minute updates.
Call-in to VK6ARG in PARG1 – AllStar & 146.850Mhz with 91.5Hz sub-tone
For more information call Peter 0432718026 or email parg.secretary@gmail.com

1:1 and Topband DXing

By Nick Hacko VK9DX

'Let me pick your brain' (matching the 160m Inverted L antenna) resulted in a number of helpful suggestions. I've opted for one provided by Allan Mason:

"I use a coil in shunt feed and adjust the inductance by stretching and compressing an air spaced coil. Then adjust the length by folding back the end of the L or pruning. You do not need a capacitor. Here is a link:
<https://www.dj0ip.de/vertical-antennas/hairpin-match/>"

It worked. Not winning any prizes for the most perfect hairpin coil ever (or should we call it 'a shunt'?) but hey, getting the SWR to 1:1 was simply a matter of finding the right tap, some hardware work, a bit of soldering - a mere three hours of work. Beats the gym anytime.



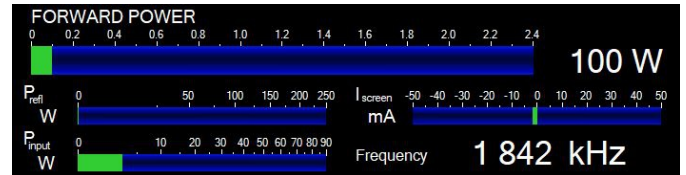
There was another lesson to be learned on this project: a major discrepancy between the SWR reading of the antenna analyzer vs the built-in SWR meters in the amplifier and IC-7700. Precisely 120KHz which is a massive difference on the 160m band. Which instrument should be trusted? Obviously, with two agreeing and one at odds, the antenna analyzer has been rendered untrustworthy. At least for now.

There is something satisfying about seeing the SWR as low as possible. Of course, the antenna

efficiency is another matter altogether. For amateurs, the ultimate performance tests are actual signal reports. And this is why FT8 is a priceless mode - a mode like no other: putting out a call yields immediate fireworks of reporters who can't lie. A true experimenter's mode.

The 160m band is an insomniacs paradise. For some reason, I am struggling with staying up late as well as getting up early, missing all the top-band action. But I really want that DXCC on 160m...

Do check out the DJ0IP article as recommended by Allan, good read.



*** Overnight action

Leaving the receiver overnight on 160m is the best way to learn about propagation.

Last night saw plenty of action - but no other Europeans beyond rather strong Russians. This is typical on 160m - some nights are better than others.

Congrats to VK3NX who snatched a rather juicy A71XX. Well done.

UTC	dB	DI	Freq	Message
173415	-12	0.2	1742	R3NBD RA3SS L004
173430	4	0.2	619	RD4FB RU3FM KO94
173430	-14	0.3	1032	RA3LC R5VCV R-09
173430	-16	-0.3	776	RD4FB RA4E +00
173430	-19	-0.6	1329	RD4FB RA4CGX L021
173445	-4	0.1	1481	SQ UALOMS LP31 EU Russia
173445	-9	0.4	1265	R5VCV RA3LC RR73
173445	-12	0.2	1741	R3NBD RA3SS R-06
173445	-11	0.4	1905	<R120N> R5GP R-01
173500	4	0.1	619	R5GP RU3FM KO94
173500	-3	0.6	1204	RD4FB RU3FA -01
173515	-2	0.1	1481	SQ UALOMS LP31 EU Russia
173515	-6	0.4	1265	RD3MF RA3LC +03
173515	-14	0.3	1905	R120N <R5GP> 73
173515	-18	0.2	1373	R3NBD RZ3ZZ -12
173530	4	0.2	619	R5GP RU3FM KO94
173530	-1	0.6	1204	RD4FB RU3FA -01
173545	0	0.1	1481	SQ UALOMS LP31 EU Russia
173545	-9	0.4	1265	RD3MF RA3LC RR73
173545	-15	0.2	1373	R3NBD RZ3ZZ RR73
173545	-13	0.2	818	R3NBD RN1CW KO59
173600	5	0.1	619	R5GP RU3FM KO94
173600	-2	0.6	1204	R5GP RU3FA +04
173615	0	0.1	1481	SQ UALOMS LP31 EU Russia
173615	-7	0.4	1265	UI6A RA3LC R+07
173615	-15	0.2	818	R3NBD RN1CW KO59
173630	7	0.1	619	R5GP RU3FM KO94
173630	-2	0.6	1204	R5GP RU3FA +04
173645	-1	0.1	1481	RV4CC UALOMS -07
173645	-9	0.4	1265	UI6A RA3LC RR73
173645	-11	0.3	1651	R3NBD RA3YDA KO62

Happy Dxing
Nick VK9DX

www.dxing.com.au

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We hope it will motivate some activity on 160m, as well experimentation with antennas.

Thanks Nick for the interesting blog.

by K1JT, G4WJS, K9AN, and IV3NWV

Band Activity					
DT	Freq	Message			
0.1	1480	~	CQ	UA1OMS	LP31
0.6	1204	~	YT3D	RU3FA	-18
0.1	1480	~	CQ	UA1OMS	LP31
0.6	1204	~	YT3D	RU3FA	-18
0.1	1480	~	CQ	UA1OMS	LP31
0.6	1204	~	CQ	RU3FA	KO84
0.1	1480	~	CQ	UA1OMS	LP31
0.1	1480	~	CQ	UA1OMS	LP31
0.4	1265	~	RZ3DY	RA3LC	R-08
0.6	1204	~	CQ	RU3FA	KO84

Amateur Radio Strategic Planning

Strategy and Planning

We often hear people talking about representation and the future of our hobby.

RASA worked with a number of experienced Amateurs late in 2021 to look at the strategy and direction of the hobby in Australia.

We approached the WIA and sought their input. Regrettably, no response was received.

RASA is the only representative body in this country with a documented strategy for our hobby. We desperately need work to be done if we want to see growth and greater participation here in Australia.

If you have not read the document, please do and send us your feedback to info@vkradioamateurs.org

RASA's Strategic Plan for Amateur Radio is [HERE](#)

We respectfully ask Scott Williams (President of the WIA) to review and provide feedback as well; for the good of all VK radio amateurs. And once again, we invite readers to encourage the WIA to collaborate with RASA for the benefit of all.

RASA's aim is to serve the Amateur Radio Community by providing resources to all Amateurs, and to enter into dialogue with the Regulator and other players as required.

It's up to the other players to stop playing silly games.



PerthTech 2023

At the end of October, About 50 Amateurs gathered at the Gidgegannup Recreation Centre, in the Perth Hills, about 45 kilometres North East of Perth CBD.

The venue has a modern function hall, caterer's kitchen, a lesser hall, toilets and showers, and a football oval that double up as a caravan park/camping ground.



WA Amateur Radio News thanks all presenters, participants, donors and supporters for making PerthTech possible. Special thanks to the ladies of Gidgegannup Community Church for the catering. Photography by Caroline Trenfield

Bob VK6POP
President WAARN



EMC Guidelines

The Draft Class Licence document contains Schedule 1, Conditions about Electromagnetic Energy. Not much has changed, but it's worth providing a summary of the obligations and considerations when operating your station.

Summary:

If you run 100W or less (Foundation, Standard & Advanced) and your antennas are inaccessible to members of the public (or the feedpoints are at least 10m above ground level) then you are presumed to be compliant. No action required.

Foundation Licence: Low-risk station, presumption is that you comply. No action required

Standard Licence: Low-risk station, presumption is that you comply. No action required

Advanced Licence: For transmissions that exceed 100W and are 10MHz or above, your station may be deemed high-risk and you may be required to measure your electromagnetic fields for compliance.

The only caveat we'd add is to ensure that the ends of any wire antennas are inaccessible to the public and/or are out of reach.

To learn more visit [VKREGS.INFO](https://vkregs.info) - VKREGS is another free resource provided by RASA.

We'll have a special article on EMC in the next edition of QTC.

9cm Update

Spectrum in the 3.4 - 3.575GHz and 3.7GHz was sold to Telstra, Optus, Mobile JV and NBN for \$721,766,300. ACMA has placed geographical restrictions on Amateur use of this section of the band.

Amateurs retain 100Mhz of allocation on this Band. (3.3 - 3.4Ghz) noting we are Secondary users.

For more information click on the following links.

ACMA reveals outcome of 3.4GHz/3.7GHz spectrum allocation process [LINK](#)

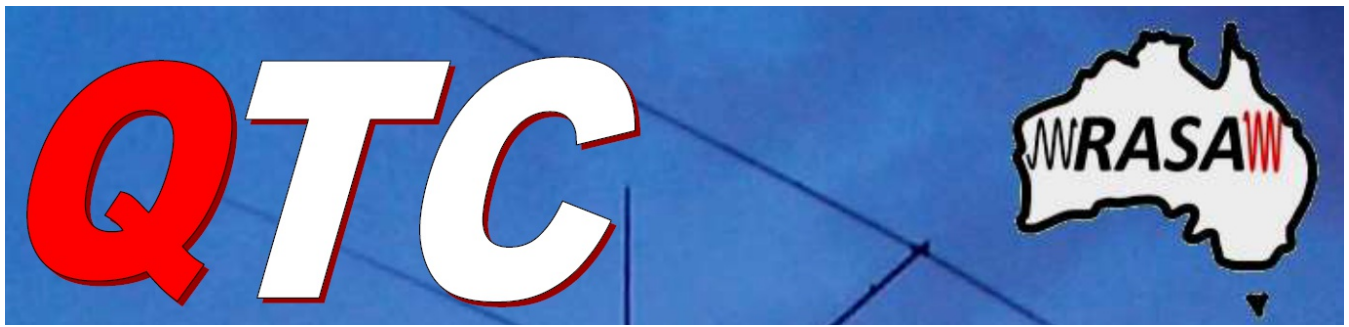
ACMA issues licences for 3.4–4 GHz band in remote areas [LINK](#)

23cm Update (from ARRL)

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Radiocommunication Conference 2023 (WRC-23) reached an acceptable conclusion on amateur use of the 23-centimeter band and co-frequency use by several radio navigation satellite service (RNSS) systems in the 1240 – 1300 MHz band.

IARU's four years of work began with a preparatory study in the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) to address this agenda item, and it has finally come to a close with a well-supported compromise for a footnote in the Radio Regulations regarding amateur and amateur satellite service operation in the 1240 -1300 MHz range!

READ MORE on this story [HERE](#)



Submitting Items for QTC Magazine

QTC Magazine welcomes contributions.

We ask you to read our article submission guidelines [HERE](#) before writing your item.

We like items about things you've done in Amateur Radio. We don't like really long construction items - by all means talk about your project, but make use of our ability to use live links. This makes the story shorter and more readable, with all the relevant information on hand via the links.

Send your item or story idea to info@vkradioamateurs.org

Advertising in QTC

We're happy to discuss running your paid ads, and in the future we'll be seeking paid advertising in QTC. Our operating expenses are relatively small, which will reflect in advertising fees. If you're interested in advertising in QTC, email us now - info@vkradioamateurs.org

