

News Bulletin – VK Regulations for DXpeditions for International Visitors

The introduction of the Australian Amateur Radio Class Licence on 19th February 2024 has brought about some changes to regulations and the way callsigns are used.

There are other important regulations international visitors must comply with when operating in Australia and its external territories.

Please don't put your DXpedition at risk of being discredited by the ARRL DXCC Desk.

Finally, it has been two and a half years since Australia introduced 2x1 contest callsigns. A short summary is provided for the information of international readers.

Bands and Band limits.

5 MHz

Australia still does not have access to 5 MHz. The Radio Amateur Society of Australia (one of Australia's two representative bodies) is in ongoing discussions with the Regulator to negotiate access to this band.

1.8 MHz

Australian band limits are: 1.800 – 1.875 MHz.

3.5 MHz

Australian band limits are: 3.500 – 3.700MHz and a "DX Window" 3.776 – 3.800 MHz.

10.1 MHz

Australia is one of only a few countries that permits SSB on 30 metres. Feel free to pick up the microphone and make VK operators happy with a new band slot.

You can download a handy VK Band Plan here. Please note that this is a VK Band Plan – The RASA band plan references the same source information as the WIA band plan. Neither association "owns" the Band Plan.

[NEW RASA band plan chart – The Radio Amateur Society of Australia Inc. \(vkradioamateurs.org\)](https://www.vkradioamateurs.org/)

Australian power limits

SSB is 400 Watts PEP

CW and Digital modes are 120 Watts average. (The interpretation is "key down")

By all means, bring an amplifier. Just make sure you're aware of these power limits when publishing your intentions.

Callsigns

There have been some recent changes to callsign templates as a part of the Class Licence.

Foreigners can no longer obtain a VK callsign for DXpeditions or short-term stays. Instead, visiting amateurs from countries with which Australia has a reciprocal agreement are permitted to use their home callsigns preceded by the VK prefix. This arrangement applies for visits up to one year in duration.

If you are in Australia for an extended period (i.e. greater than one year) you can either apply for a reciprocal licence or sit our exams. If you are in doubt, check this link for details:

[Overseas amateurs visiting Australia | ACMA](#)

If visiting for less than one year, you can use your callsign preceded by the appropriate VK prefix, as follows:

- For mainland Australia and Tasmania (VK1-8): VK
- Lord Howe Island: VK (note this is a recent change)
- Norfolk Island, Mellish Reef, Willis Island, Cocos Keeling and Christmas Islands: VK9

(Note that VK9 dropped the first letter signifier in the suffix about 20 years ago: eg. VK9N for Norfolk Isl is not a valid prefix)

For example, a New Zealander visiting Sydney should sign VK/ZL1YYY. If they wish they could sign VK2/ZL1YYY to provide some geographic information, but this is no longer a regulatory requirement.

A visitor (or DXped) to Norfolk Island should sign VK9/ZL1YYY. They cannot sign VK9N/ZL1YYY. VK9N is not an approved VK prefix.

A visitor (or DXped) to Lord Howe Island would now sign VK/ZL1YYY. Lord Howe is now considered a part of VK2, not VK9. Of course, it remains a unique entity for DXCC and related award purposes.

As with many other countries, these changes are important. The ARRL DXCC Desk can be notified of the correct DXCC Entity for award purposes, and QRZ dot com can also be advised if a change to the system defined default allocation is required. Logging programs can be manually updated.

Remember, Government radio regulators assign amateur radio callsign prefixes. Award administrators will need to update their systems and callsign prefix tables.

Permanent residents of external territories can only use their VK9 or VK0 callsigns from the designated territory. Eg. VK9XX cannot sign VK9XX portable 2 if visiting Sydney.

Contest Callsign – 2x1 Callsigns

As many will be aware The Radio Amateur Society of Australia (RASA) successfully negotiated 2x1 contest callsigns with the ACMA which were approved for use in October 2021. These callsigns have the prefixes VK/VJ/VL with the state numeral and then a single letter suffix. Eg. VJ3N.

These callsigns can be used in **any** contest. There is no “approved list” nor are there any exclusions.

You can read more here:

[Regulations and 2x1 Contest Callsigns – The Radio Amateur Society of Australia Inc. \(vkradioamateurs.org\)](#)

For more information, visit this link and refer to page 9 for contest callsigns.

[Amateur radio call sign policy April 2024.pdf \(acma.gov.au\)](#)

Dialogue with ACMA regarding these matters is ongoing; further bulletins will be issued if there are any developments.

To stay up to date, visit our website [The Radio Amateur Society of Australia Inc. – Representing and Promoting Amateur Radio \(vkradioamateurs.org\)](https://www.vkradioamateurs.org) and follow the News link. Should you have any queries, please send us an email info@vkradioamateurs.org

20th May 2024