

Dear ACMA,

Thanks for the opportunity to express a view on the proposed changes to the amateur radio licencing arrangements. As you would expect the following thoughts and conclusion will be entirely personal, from the perspective of an amateur radio hobbyist. I do not claim to have any expertise in the surrounding policies, or economics.

#### Points of consideration

- Your task at ACMA is an interesting one. To consider the complexity of often conflicting views from different quarters, and from this devise a system which will maximise the benefit to existing and future stakeholders. There's no doubt the outcomes will have a long reaching effect, on a lot of people. You have my respect and confidence.
- As a relative newcomer to amateur radio, I have been intrigued by the demography. For decades the amateur HF bands were the primary means of rapid long-distance connection for a lot of people. The hobby was inclusive, welcoming those who wanted just to talk, as well as those fascinated by the technical and scientific aspects. Over the last decades networked communication have changed that balance. Our community has the serious task of considering where the interests and therefore the members will come from in the future.
- ACMA are our recognised and respected experts in managing the precious common resource of the radio spectrum. I sincerely hope your managers will fight to retain the authority and determination for combatting ill-informed or party-political driven pressures for change. Especially where such change might have a detrimental long-term effect on our society. When I hear the term 'de-regulation' from a politician I become very concerned. Reviews of regulations are vital and healthy, but politically driven de-regulation brings to my mind venal, self-centred forces which have no regard of long-term harm. In this there is a serious danger of a slide towards anarchy, benefitting a few at the expense of many
- As with any group of people. There are a small minority of amateurs who refuse to comply with agreed rules and protocols. Such behaviour can be annoying at best and dangerous at worst. To ensure safe and general enjoyment of the use of the allocated bands, there must be an authority with effective resources, able to enforce rules, backed by legal sanctions.

#### Addressing the specific matters in the consultation document:

I have no reason to believe that the current fees for examination, issue, and annual maintenance of the licence have a significantly detrimental effect on the hobby. Compared to sporting club memberships for instance, amateur radio costs are small. Having said that, if it were possible to introduce a level of concessionary fees. Even at the expense of raising the non-concessionary ones. I believe that might be welcomed by our community. A lower hobby entry fee for inquisitive but non-committed amateurs would help encourage younger members (e.g. < 18 years old), those who are doing it tough (un-employed) or cash strapped pensioners.

One invaluable resource I believe must be protected, is the registration of amateur callsigns in an open and readily accessible database such as the RRL. If amateur radio was to switch to a fee free class licence. Would ACMA mandate the running of such a register from another body? Who would administer and maintain this, and how would it be paid for? If the answer is that there would be no such mandate. I would not favour class licensing for this reason alone.

It sounds like the current hierarchy of operator licences will remain. In my opinion this is essential. Graded training in the technicalities, most importantly safety, operating procedures, adherence to power levels and bandlimits etc. is important to ensure utility for all. It is also important that those who have committed to learn, and proven their learning at higher levels should be rewarded with band privileges. To be effective this system must be policed, and the rules enforced.

In summary I have serious concerns over amateur radio switching to a class licence. Under the current telecommunications legislation this would appear to bring an undesirable reduction in both control and transparency. Other things aside, option A would be my favoured choice, along with continued dialog with amateur radio representative bodies regarding mutually beneficial change. I understand that the ACMA would like a change, so I also believe there is room for negotiation under option B, if further details could be made available.

Once again thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Hall (VK3CHR)