

Submission to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)

Re: Citizen Band Radio Stations Class Licence – Proposed Changes to Channels 5 and 35 and Digital Modes

Dear ACMA,

I am writing to provide feedback on the current Citizen Band (CB) Radio Stations Class Licence, specifically regarding the designation of UHF CB channels 5 (476.525 MHz) and 35 (477.275 MHz) as emergency channels and the restrictions on digital modes under the existing licence.

- Reclassification of Channels 5 and 35 as Standard Repeater Channels

Channels 5 and 35 are currently reserved exclusively for emergency communications under the CB Class Licence. However, based on my observations and discussions within the CB radio community, these channels appear to be underutilised for their intended purpose. There is limited evidence of regular monitoring by emergency services or volunteer organisations, and actual emergency communications on these channels are rare. This suggests that the designation of these channels as emergency-only may no longer align with current usage patterns or community needs.

I propose that the ACMA consider reclassifying channels 5 and 35 as standard repeater channels, allowing their use for general communications and repeater operations. This change would increase the availability of repeater channels, enhancing the utility of the UHF CB band for community, recreational, and professional users, particularly in regional

and remote areas where repeaters are critical for extending communication range. To ensure emergency communications remain supported, the ACMA could reinforce that any CB channel can be used to attract attention in an emergency, as already permitted under the existing licence.

- Permitting Digital Modes on UHF CB

The current CB Class Licence restricts transmissions to analogue modes (e.g., FM, AM, SSB), with digital modes explicitly prohibited due to their different emission designators (e.g., FXE for digital modes like DMR). However, digital modes offer significant advantages, including improved audio clarity, better spectrum efficiency, and enhanced resistance to noise and interference. These benefits could greatly improve the user experience and functionality of UHF CB, particularly in challenging environments.

I respectfully request that the ACMA explore amending the Class Licence to permit specific digital modes (e.g., DMR, DPMR, or NXDN) on designated UHF CB channels, provided they adhere to existing bandwidth and power limits (e.g., 12.5 kHz bandwidth and 5W ERP). To prevent interference, the ACMA could allocate specific channels for digital use or require digital transmissions to incorporate backward-compatible features, such as analogue FM fallback.

Additionally, any digital modes permitted should exclude encryption to maintain the open and accessible nature of CB communications, especially on channels used for emergency purposes.

I believe these proposed changes would modernise the CB

Class Licence, better reflect current usage trends, and enhance the utility of the UHF CB band for all users. I would be happy to provide further information or participate in consultations to discuss these proposals.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Brown

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Adam Brown.

Date: 2 June 2025















