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Changes to CB Radio Arrangements

ACMA

SLPSConsultations@acma.gov.au

<https://www.acma.gov.au/have-your-say>

Changes to CB Radio Arrangements

First, thank you for recognising that, firstly, Citizen Band (CB) remains an integral part of Australia's telecommunications infrastructure, and secondly, that it requires some modifications to ensure it remains relevant.

I live in regional Australia (New South Wales' north coast) and lament the state of the Citizen Band Radio Service (CBRS) in this part of the world.

I believe CBRS can have a vital role to play in communities:

- It's very simple to use
- It is highly accessible in terms of price (units are 20 per cent of the cost of a smartphone) and there are no contracts, ongoing services or monthly charges, ID requirements and other barriers to entry
- It mostly doesn't rely on central or networked infrastructure

I believe CBRS is of most use in regional areas:

- All year round for emergencies and community connectedness
- During natural disasters, for emergency communications, telemedicine and community connectedness
- Traffic and highway information
- In places where 4G/5G doesn't reach

I do object to your proposals regarding these items for the following reasons:

- *Initiating contact on HF channels 11 and 16, as well as UHF channel 11.* If you conduct an online search, you will find that there is a wealth of information advising that Channel 11 on UHF is a contact channel (simply do a Google search). This is ingrained in the 'muscle memory' of existing users and documented in the vast volumes of online information. It serves as a starting point for both new and existing users.
- *Prohibition on certain 'on-air' conduct.* I take your point here, but you still limit what amateur radio operators can cover, right? You regulate what TV networks are allowed to show (news, Australian content, etc.), right? Why should CBRS be any different?

I do have a comment on:

- *Emergency communications on HF channel nine and UHF channels five and 35.* My comment is the same as the Channel 11 matter - it's out there (as in online and in literature provided by manufacturers). Just leave it. There's no harm in doing that. From what I can gather, the 'monitoring' people who were active before the proliferation of cellular phones are no longer active. I know there are a few organisations in existence, but these are skeletal these days.



I think it would be good to ask local governments across Australia to become involved in CB radio as the service is, by nature, 'local'. There is a need for:

- Community connectedness
- Emergency communications at all times
- Emergency communications, connectedness, and telehealth during natural disasters using CBRS.

Local government could play a role by providing:

- Repeaters throughout local government areas for connectedness
- Repeaters throughout local government areas for emergencies on 5/35
- Monitoring of 5/35 at all times at the council emergency management centre
- Education to communities on using CBRS for emergencies and connectedness

I have put such a proposal to the Bellingen Shire Council, and I am working with others (including the Coffs Harbour and District Amateur Radio Club) to further develop a concept. You can see more here: [REDACTED]

Again, CBRS has a role to play this century beyond what you envisage. Please go a step further beyond the good work you have already done.

Thank you

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ANDREW WOODWARD

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Andrew Woodward - [REDACTED]

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