



CREST Australia

Submission to Re Making the CB Class License

Please note the original document headings have been left to establish a reference to the comment.

What the CB class licence does

CREST Au – understanding of how the class licence is received by the community.

Citizen Band Radio service is referred to "The UHF" by the younger generation. Not known to them as CB Radio. A change to how the public refers to CB, recently calling it; as "Community Band"

The word citizen is not in the vocabulary of these days. Citizen is not used as it was in the 70s many government documents now use the word community.

The use of CB for business should be frowned on. Business should be using commercial channels for the safety of their employees. CB or The UHF is commonly used by traffic control or crane and dogman situation; all should be on private channels. Anyone could give false directions over the air.

It is 'Citizens or Community Radio' not business radio, businesses and councils use CB like it is their own radio network, tying up repeaters.

Changes to the CB class licence

Is the class license working effectively.

CREST Au – Not really. If we consider the users of CB, many will not understand jargon used. The class license needs to reflect current terminology, the change from citizens to community would help.

The license would be best written for the layman as it serves the community of Australia.

The NSW EMPlan reflects the use of the word community as do other documents.

Is the class license fit for purpose?

CREST Au - Many CB users do not read the license as it is too hard for them to understand, referring to CB when they are using the UHF. Some rely on what other people tell them. As the license is open to basic public consumption it needs to have as much as possible in it. There are other documents referenced in the Class License it would be better for the end reader to have the information in one place.

Frequency modulation use in the HF band

CREST Au - Agree.

Initiating contact on HF channels 11 and 16 and UHF channel 11

CREST Au - Communities utilise the call channels to initiate calls between residents.

Consent of an inspector about altering a CB radio

CREST Au - Agree.

Prohibition on certain 'on-air' conduct

CREST Au - There must be a good explanation on how CB users deal with people that use high powered equipment to dictate control of the network, or use language not suitable for community ears.

If ACMA are the legislated federal entity that manages what can be said on TV and Radio, the same controls should be applied to CB radio.

Directions given by inspectors and other persons

CREST Au - Agree in principle. Needs to be well explained. The public do not search for information most will look at the licence for all the answers. They tend to look for answers on Google or what their mate says.

A CB radio connected to a telecommunications network

CREST Au – Agree

As communities adopt Community Band (CB) radio to assist them through the stages of disaster, this will allow the networks to be monitored from outside the disaster.

Use of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) applications

CREST Au - This like other determinations need to be explained in the simplest way.

Formatting and other drafting changes

CREST Au - We see many issues with the current instrument, people reading this document are not technical. They are novices, sections are explained using less common terms.

The current instrument and supporting legislative and instructions need to be simple and easy to understand for anyone.

Other matters for comment not reflected in the CB class licence 2025

We want to raise 2 further matters that are not reflected in the CB class licence 2025. This is because we wish to understand what stakeholder views are – including levels of demand – to inform our future approach in these areas. We welcome evidence (either qualitative or quantitative) to support any comments provided.

Emergency communications on HF channel 9 and UHF channels 5 and 35

CREST Au – CREST NSW is well involved in the roll out of a CB network that communities will use in disasters when all other forms of communications have failed.

While many providers invest in more technology this has limitation, the effect of bushfire and flood are proven cases for the use of CB (Community Band). Retaining 5/35 for emergency use as defined does not meet the needs of the community. What is needed is a dedicated repeater channel for community use. The description of use must explain community use in emergencies/disasters, being available outside of the described use for training.

Communities are being proactive and starting to develop community plans and guideline that provide the community with a better outcome through the disaster and on to the recovery process.

Communities are learning to use simplex UHF CB, allowing each resident to communicate with other resident. Passing messages from house to house,

until it arrives at a coordinator, or resident with a means of communication out of the community.

Once communities have an understanding of how to pass messages when networks fail. We then provide communities with repeaters, this allows each resident to communicate with the community communications leader (warden).

This process would be made easier as there are a number of 5/35 repeaters in play in NSW and other states, and the rules for setting them up can work with the community networks.

Communities in other states are setting up UHF CB radio networks, changing the 5/35 ruling would assist with this process.

Channel arrangements for data transmission (telemetry and telecommand)

Channels 22 and 23

CREST Au - This may help the end user make the decision to renew the equipment. radio that better comply with the new requirements.

Some thought must be given to the farming community that have equipment monitoring trough, tank water and gate monitors.

Thought is needed, we understand that some farmers may be using channels 21 and 22, and wonder if they should be left as they are allowing 61, 62 and 63 to be allocated to be voice not telemetry.

Channels 61, 62 and 63

Release as voice channels for community use

CREST NSW General

With the change to how the community uses CB (or as it is known UHF) We would suggest retaining channel 9, 5 and 35 renaming them as community emergency channels. Keeping them clear for community but allowing them to be used in disasters and for training. This would save having to change the rules in establishing these repeaters, allowing the community to use the channels, it would provide monitoring of the channels.

As it is specific in the use for emergencies, the channels cannot be used for training in preparation for its use in disasters.

Communities need access to all UHF CB repeater channels, however, the 100km/70km (unworkable rules in other documents) these rules are impractical.

The explanation used by assigners is not well written and fails to meet the needs of the community. Failure to improve the explanation on distance between repeaters may equate to the loss of life.

We cannot see a reason for the distance rules, unless we can change to power out put of a CB repeaters or radio fixed in a building to more than 5w.

This would help many communities with their communications, and who they can communicate with.

In the recent cyclone Alfred UHF CB was used by a resident trapped in a vehicle on a flooded road, the patient was rescued, thanks to CB.

Technical suggestion

Since the inception of CB repeaters were setup at an extreme cost due to special diplexers. The process for CB repeater setup have always created problems, both technically and operationally with the fact that the input for said repeaters has been inside the traditional CB allocation.

Technically having a small offset (750kHz) makes integrating CB repeaters an expensive task with either a large and expensive duplexer or very high isolation dual antenna arrays required. Portable repeaters become very cumbersome and very difficult to deploy especially in emergency situations.

Operationally the biggest issue is unaware CB users using the existing input channels for the repeaters in simplex mode (sometimes with subtone muting) and being unaware they are triggering repeaters sometimes a great distance away. The fact that older wide band radios also cause interference issues with newer narrow band allocations is an additional issue.

Our proposal is to shift the CB repeater inputs to the commercial (5.2MHz) split and resolve these issues. As repeaters are assigned services we believe the ACMA could allocate input channels for CB repeaters on the high side input (481.6250 to 481.8125 MHz), this is already a “base receive” allocation and would only require re-allocation of some assigned services (16 out of 384 available channels) to allow this change to be implemented.

For the CB manufacturers the addition of “new” repeater input TX frequencies would be quite simple with modern technology, some CB radios may only require programming or firmware updates to accommodate this change, commercial grade radios would be easily reprogrammed.

This would solve the issue of users unwittingly triggering repeaters as these new frequencies would only be accessible when repeater mode on the CB transceiver is selected.

Technically the use of commercially available duplexers would allow lower cost, smaller CB repeaters to be installed and deployed, also allowing “suitcase” style emergency CB repeaters to be used.

An interim period of changeover could be implemented with both schemas of duplex mode available to CB users (Duplex A / Duplex B?) and dual receivers fitted to existing and new repeaters until a reasonable time had expired for the phasing out of the old duplex system. The possibility exists for repeater owner/operators to use the “new” duplexer unit to implement this and in the future remove the extraneous equipment as take up of the new schema becomes commonplace.

CREST Australia Inc

Committee

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