

Submission to the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)

1 June 2025

To: ACMA Consultation Team
Australian Communications and Media Authority

Subject: Submission – Consultation on Changes to CB Radio Arrangements

I am writing in response to the Consultation Paper: Changes to CB Radio Arrangements (May 2025) and would like to offer the following submission based on my experience as the owner and operator of the designated emergency UHF CB repeater in Hobart.

Over the past nine years, I have maintained and continuously monitored this emergency repeater. During this period, there has been only one verified emergency call. In contrast, a disproportionate amount of time has been spent attempting to discourage and educate users who mistakenly use emergency channels 5 and 35 for general conversation or repeater testing. This misuse continues despite ongoing efforts to raise awareness and uphold compliance.

In practice, it has become evident that users requiring assistance in an emergency are more likely to turn to UHF channels where activity is higher and assistance more readily available. For example:

- Channel 18 is commonly used by caravan and travelling communities;
- Channel 40 remains the primary channel used by road transport operators;
- Active repeaters on general-use channels are more frequently monitored and more likely to elicit a response.

It is also worth noting that since the original publication of the class license, a wide range of more accessible and reliable emergency communication technologies have become available to the public. These include mobile phones, satellite phones, emergency SMS capabilities, EPIRBs (Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons), and consumer-grade low Earth orbit (LEO) communication devices such as Starlink. The availability of these technologies further reduces reliance on UHF CB channels for emergency communication, reinforcing the case for reallocating channels 5 and 35 for general use.

Given this context, I respectfully propose that UHF CB channels 5 and 35 be reallocated for general use. The current emergency-only designation imposes administrative and enforcement burdens with minimal demonstrated public safety benefit.

Additionally, I recommend that consideration be given to regulatory or technical measures that would prohibit or discourage manufacturers from enabling transmissions on repeater input channels (such as channels 31–38 and 71–78), which continue to cause interference and unintentional misuse. Addressing this at the manufacturer level could significantly

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reduce disruption across the UHF CB spectrum and improve overall user compliance.

I also welcome any changes that allow for the integration of voice over IP (VoIP) technologies in CB radio systems. The ability to link repeaters or CB users via internet-connected gateways offers substantial improvements in coverage and accessibility, especially in regional and remote areas. Enabling these advancements would align CB radio use with modern communication practices and enhance its relevance in today's environment.

Additionally, I support the removal of mandated calling channels. In practice, users do not consistently follow calling protocols, and the requirement to designate specific calling channels is now largely redundant.

I appreciate the ACMA's work in reviewing and modernising the CB radio framework and thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important consultation.

Yours sincerely,

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