



The lucky Scouts erupt in a cheer at the end of the contact with the International Space Station.

VI3JAM contacts the ISS

Robert Broomhead VK3KRB

Over the last couple of weeks, we have been keeping you up to date with the preparation and activities of VI3JAM the special event station of the 21st Australian Scout Jamboree held in the country town of Elmore in Victoria. The highlight of AJ2007, the 21st Australian Scout Jamboree, was on Sunday evening when a planned hook-up with the International Space Station took place, enabling 20 Scouts to speak with Suni Williams KD5PLB. The 20 lucky scouts were selected from the 13,000 attending the Jamboree through a “What would I ask an astronaut” competition conducted via the AJ2007 Jamboree website. Everything was going to plan – well almost everything. The contact was on schedule, the equipment was working, the 20 scouts were pumped, but unfortunately so was popular New Zealand rock band *Evermore*, which was providing a concert on the main Jamboree stage some 500 metres away and playing

through a massive EAW PA system. The acoustic interference was causing the entire VI3JAM shack to vibrate and shake. Luckily Alistair VK3FAWB, a professional in the audio industry, came up with the great idea to line the exterior shack wall facing the band with a 6 foot stack of hay bales. The team constructed the wall and provided what felt like 3 dB of noise reduction from the band. With this in place and 20 Scouts ready at the microphone, and many hundreds more outside the shack looking on via close circuit television and with the event simulcast on the local Jamboree FM radio station, the contact was underway.

An ARISS telebridge was utilised and Philip Adams VK3JNI kicked off proceedings initially talking via the telebridge to Will Marchant KC6ROL from the space science laboratory at the University of California, the team leader for the evening’s ARISS contact, then in turn speaking with Shane VK4KHZ

providing the uplink from his home in VK4 to the ISS orbiting some 300 km above the earth.

Right on schedule, the voice of Suni Williams KD5PLB was heard loud and clear and the question and answer session began. Everyone listened intently.

The whole contact worked perfectly and ended in an enthusiastic cheer from both the team inside the shack and the many hundreds listening outside.

The AJ2007 team would like to acknowledge ICOM, BKB Internet, Minuteman Press, ARV and the WIA who all generously supported the amateur station and enabled the ISS contact.

If you would like to hear a full recording and see pictures of the contact, then visit the WIA’s website, <http://www.wia.org.au/> and click on the news story titled “NAISS calling – and the band played on”.

Photos by Robert Broomhead VK3KRB.

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