

Working with the amateur radio community to ensure spectrum integrity

The ACMA recently made the decision to cancel an amateur apparatus licence following a rigorous investigation that uncovered a series of licence condition breaches.

An amateur apparatus licence authorises a person or station to operate a radiocommunications transmitting device on amateur frequencies or amateur frequency bands. There is a range of amateur licensing options available. To become licensed, a person must achieve minimum qualifications according to the type of licence they require.

The ACMA regulates the licensing regime and its responsibilities include the allocation of unique call signs, the issuing of amateur licences, administering the transfer, suspension and renewal of amateur licences and the cancellation of licences.

Fortunately, owing to the high level of responsibility shown by amateur radio operators, the ACMA rarely has cause to use its powers to cancel licences.

While not a law enforcement agency, the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA) works with the ACMA in the administration of the amateur licensing regime. In 2009, the ACMA delegated a number of administrative functions to the WIA, making it responsible for the issuing of Amateur Certificates of Proficiency and making recommendations to the ACMA relating to callsign allocation. These functions are in addition to its existing role of providing examination services for those wishing to operate an amateur



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Under the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*, the ACMA can suspend or cancel an amateur licence if the licensee contravenes a condition of the licence. In the case of the recent cancellation, crucial information was provided by other amateur radio operators which alerted the ACMA to non-compliance and assisted throughout the course of the investigation.

The investigation found the licensee had caused interference to other stations, failed to use a call sign and transmitted unmodulated carriers, all breaches of the licence. The ACMA made the decision to cancel the amateur licence when other compliance and enforcement measures had failed. Every effort had been made to assist, encourage and educate the licensee to understand the importance of compliance with licence conditions. Despite issuing repeated warnings to the licensee, the ACMA found that non-compliance continued over an extended period of time.

radio. While the WIA has no enforcement powers, it regularly encourages appropriate behaviour through its broadcasts, publications and website.

The WIA and the ACMA have successfully worked together to solve a range of amateur radio licensing issues, including changing the policy on the issue of VK9 call signs (for external territories).

The ACMA looks forward to continuing its relationship with the WIA and licensees to provide an efficient and effective licensing regime for the amateur radio community. 📡

Formed in 1910, the WIA recently celebrated its centenary, making it the world's oldest sanctioned wireless operator group. The ACMA participated in the WIA's recent celebratory dinner, where Chairman Chris Chapman congratulated the institute on its 'fantastic achievement'.

'I find it amazing to think that the WIA has been representing amateurs since 1910. Amateurs in Great Britain and the USA had to wait a further two and four years respectively before they were similarly represented,' said Mr Chapman.

'As the voice of amateur radio in Australia, the WIA's contribution does not stop with making representations to the ACMA. They also represent Australian amateurs at the International Amateur Radio Union and join with the ACMA to make representations on the international stage, in particular at the World Radio Conferences.'

'The ACMA looks forward to continuing its relationship with the WIA to make amateur radio in Australia all that it can be.'