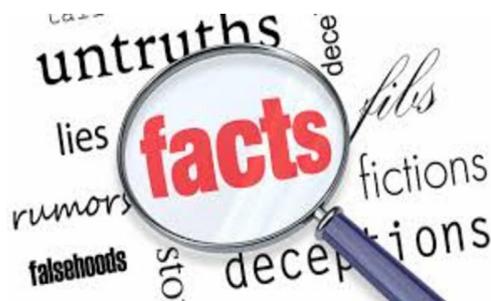


# FACT SHEET



## WIA Membership – size matters

The WIA's effectiveness in representing Australian radio amateurs largely depends on its size. The larger the WIA's membership, the more influential it is as an organisation, and the more seriously it is taken by government and other spectrum users.

The current trend of declining membership is not good. Unless reversed, it will affect the WIA's ability to provide services to all Australian radio amateurs, and would eventually affect the important national and international advocacy work.

**Tracking the Numbers.** The number of WIA members is tracked on a monthly basis. Membership fell markedly over 2016, as the following table shows:

Report Date	MEMNET Membership Total	Change
Jan 2015	4487	
June 2015	4469	-18
Jan 2016	4453	-16
June 2016	4269	-184
December 26, 2016	4159	-110

*\* Membership totals are different to those shown in the Directors Report to the AGM, which does not include members who are un-financial but within the 60 days grace period specified in the Constitution.*

The decline over 2015 was quite small and in line with expectations due to the age profile of the membership.

The largest decline the WIA has experienced, nearly 300 members, occurred over 2016. The greatest decline was in the first half of the year, while the rate of decline slowed during the second half.

If all lost members were non-concessional members, the reduction in membership income in 2016 alone would be about \$28,500. Taking concessional members into account, the actual figure would be close to \$26,000.

No doubt there are many factors that have contributed to the membership decline, including the rising number of 'silent keys', and the number of radio amateurs now living on fixed incomes at a time when interest rates are very low.

A recent analysis by Mark Hillman VK3OHH has determined the total number of Amateur Licences across Foundation, Standard and Advanced. According to that analysis, in late 2015 there were 14721 amateur licences, and near the end of 2016 there were 14619, a reduction of 102 licences over the 12 months. However, using the approximate one-third ratio of amateur licences to WIA members would only account for about 30 lapsed memberships.

Equally worrying is a corresponding reduction in new memberships, from 199 in 2014 and 209 in 2015, to only 134 in 2016.

**The obvious conclusion is that the recent concerted campaign of negative publicity on social media and elsewhere on the internet, even on the air, has dissuaded many people from renewing their WIA membership, or joining in the first place.**

**The WIA Compared to Other Societies.** A useful benchmark is to compare the percentage of WIA members to the total amateur population, and then compare that result to other societies, such as the ARRL and the RSGB.

Both the ARRL and the RSGB memberships are around 23% of the available market.

At the end of 2015, the WIA was running around 31%, i.e. significantly better than those societies. The WIA is now running around 30%, still significantly better than other societies, but declining.

**Reverse the Trend.** This trend needs to be reversed, or at least slowed down to pre-2016 levels.

The WIA is not just the Board and committee volunteers. It's the whole membership. The major focus of every member of the WIA must be to reverse the downward membership trend. That's the only way to ensure a strong voice for Amateur Radio, and to enhance and preserve our licence privileges well into the future.

Membership retention and recruiting is a key focus of the Board for 2017.

Perhaps the one piece of good news to note is that membership is still around 1000 more than when the National WIA was formed from the members of the previous seven Divisions.