

## Claimed ACMA-DoD-WIA “deal” denied us 5 MHz band is

# BUNKUM

Bruce Kendall VK3WL, et al.

A claim that the WIA “made a deal” with the ACMA and Department of Defence to deny “all Australian amateurs access to the 5 MHz band” has been debunked by those very agencies.

In February, an Australian amateur radio splinter group issued an unattributed news release, provocatively headed **The enemy within**, setting out an elaborate narrative constructed to make the claim that, among other things, “*The WIA made a deal with the Defense (sic) and the ACMA which included denying all Australian amateurs access to the 5 MHz band.*”

### Disinformation debunked

In this column in Issue 2 (March/April) for 2025, the WIA’s ITU Conference and Study Group leader, Dale Hughes VK1DSH, provided an article titled **5 MHz – the truth**, that set out in clear detail what transpired at the 2015 World Radio Conference (WRC-15) where the fateful world-wide secondary allocation of 15 kHz in the 5 MHz band was agreed.

Dale was appointed to a significant position on the Australian delegation at WRC-15, so was directly aware of what took place. An eyewitness to the truth, so to speak.

### Is it true, Minister?

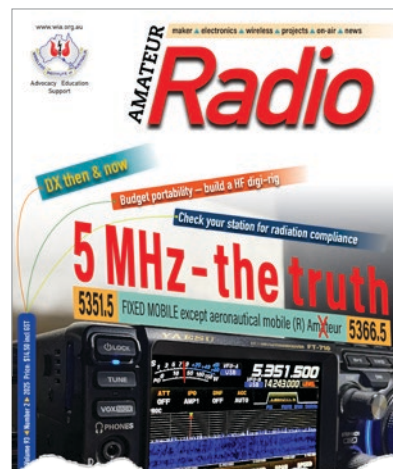
However, in response to Dale’s article in *AR*, in March, the allegation of an ACMA-DoD-WIA “deal” was reinforced during a weekly amateur radio broadcast from VK6ARN, when an announcer bobbed up to claim that the contents of the news release were “true” and “verifiable”, and that “correspondence” existed in support.

Seeking the facts, with a view to revealing the alleged “correspondence” about “the deal,” I wrote to the Minister for Defence, The Hon Richard Marles MP, and the Minister for Communications, The Hon Anika Wells MP, setting out the claims in the unattributed news release and asking if there was any truth in them, specifically seeking evidence of the claims. The Minister for Defence referred my correspondence to the Minister for Communications, who asked the relevant department to reply.

### And so, it came about

On 15 August, I received an official reply from the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts.

In that official reply, Mr Andrew Irwin, an Assistant Secretary at the department, reiterates the official



It seems the truth about the 5 MHz allocation process wasn’t enough, so the disinformation was reinforced, only to now be debunked by the authorities. Egg. Faces. Oops.

reasons why access to the 5 MHz band for Australian amateurs was not supported. It’s about balancing “... the existing uses of the band against the impacts of introducing use by the amateur service,” after considering public submissions.

You can download this letter for yourself, as well as a PDF of Dale VK1DSH’s article. Visit the *Amateur Radio* Issue 2, 2025 page on the WIA website, here: [tinyurl.com/5MHZ2ru](https://tinyurl.com/5MHZ2ru).

Of significance is interdepartmental correspondence between the ACMA and the Department of Communications that I have seen and the WIA now has, which makes it abundantly clear that there’s “no such evidence” that any deal took place between the ACMA, Defence, and the WIA.

Surely, the amateur radio community and the WIA deserve both a retraction of the false allegations as well as a public apology from the discredited splinter group and VK6ARN?



[tinyurl.com/5MHZ2ru](https://tinyurl.com/5MHZ2ru)

\* **Bunkum**; noun: bunk, claptrap, codswallop, drivel, gibberish, hogwash, hokum, hoey, humbug, twaddle.

According to the Macquarie Dictionary, bunkum means insincere talk or nonsense, often used to describe ideas, statements, or beliefs that are considered silly or untrue. It originated from the term “buncombe” or “bunk” and was coined after a U.S. politician’s speech in 1820 on behalf of his constituents from Buncombe County, North Carolina. (Merriam-Webster, Incorporated)