



THE WIRELESS INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA

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WIA HISTORY

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Will McGhie, having only very recently taken on the task of National Historian, this is the first report to the National WIA Open Forum.

It is important to understand the purpose of National Historian and it appears that the position, which was previously Federal Historian, has never had any terms of reference. Several volunteers have taken on the position over the decades and their efforts are to be appreciated. However, it appears that the position has largely centred on storing potential historical items.

The WIA does not have knowledge of what is held and this is the most urgent requirement. Until a detailed list of items held can be prepared a terms of reference cannot be written up. The reason for this is if after many decades of collecting “historical items” the WIA has little of significance the position of National Historian has to be considered. What would a National Historian do if there were no history to source apart from Amateur Radio Magazine?

It is unreasonable to expect any person who holds the position of National Historian to research and write our history. This may be thought to be one important part of the position but we believe it is beyond anyone other than a paid professional historian – writer. This option should be given serious consideration, as a successful example can be seen with NZART doing just this and producing a worthy 300 page book “Ham Shacks, Brass Pounders & Rag Chewers” written by Ian Dougherty, a professional historian – writer.

The Board at its meeting in February 2006 agreed that the WIA would seek the digital reproduction of AR magazine for archive purposes and for sale to members.

The aim is to have the project completed within 12 months. Will has scanned some magazines including October, November and December of 1933. Once up to speed each magazine takes about 2 hours to scan, but the processing to provide a good storage sample is taking about 10 hours depending upon the condition of the original and the accepted quality of the finished article.

David Fisk VK5MDF has scanned 1975, and is continuing to scan the rest of the '70s .

In the immediate future we need a team of at least 4 people who have a scanner and a CD burner to assist with this project.

Most Amateur Radio magazines from 1970 to the present are available, and we are still looking for all editions before 1970, and in particular pre-WW2.

We are very aware of the fragile nature of early editions and consider that it is now time to ensure the long-term storage by the most appropriate mode available today, in keeping with a format that will remain active into the future.

One important aspect that we now have at our disposal when it comes to the position of National Historian is the advantage computers and the Internet offer. Using these modern applications can make the task much easier for a group in different places.

Certainly there is a need for the Board to provide some direction for this long held position within the WIA and hopefully our rapidly fading history can be recorded. Decisions need to be made as to what the WIA wants the position of National Historian to achieve.

Will McGhie and Trevor Quick