



# **THE WIRELESS INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA**

## **OPEN FORUM, BANKSTOWN, 6 May 2006**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**Michael Owen, VK3KI**  
**President, on behalf of the Board**

#### **1. Introduction**

This report is submitted to the Open Forum to be held immediately following the formal Annual General Meeting on 6 May 2006, and outlines the activities of the WIA since 1 January 2005 until today, covering the last full financial year which was the 2005 calendar year. It is submitted on behalf of and following consultation with all of the directors. It does not repeat the formal matters set out in the Directors Report submitted with the Annual Accounts to the AGM.

It is a significant period because this report covers the first full financial year of the restructured WIA as a single national body.

It is significant, also, because it covers a period of momentous change, not only to the WIA but the introduction of the Foundation licence, and the WIA's new examination structure.

I also report briefly on some matters the subject of separate reports to be submitted to the Open Forum.

#### **2. The Restructure of Australia amateur licensing**

It was at the last Open Forum that the members present unanimously passed a resolution expressing their concern at the delay in the introduction of the so called "Outcomes" of the Review of the Amateur Service, and requested the ACA (as it then was) to introduce the new Foundation Licence and the new licence privileges without further delay and in any event not later than 30 June 2005, and instructed me to convey these views to the Authority.

On 10 May 2005 I wrote to the Acting Chair of the ACA, and in part said:

"The WIA believes that the further delay is unacceptable, and would be counter productive, and rather than promoting a licence structure appropriate to today's needs, will simply create frustration, loss of motivation and, unfortunately, ill will. .... Accordingly, and formally, on behalf of the WIA I request that the

Authority proceed to introduce the amateur service licence structure contemplated in the Outcomes paper without further delay and in any event not later than 30 June 2005, with the WIA accepting that other changes to the regulation of the amateur service will be delayed.”

On 26 May 2005 the WIA was advised that the Outcomes of the Review would be introduced in two phases, the first to introduce the licences, the second to introduce the other changes.

In fact, the changes to introduce the Foundation licence and the new licence structure came into effect on 19 October 2005.

The other matters are yet to be finalised.

I comment on the Foundation and other licence matters under the heading The WIA Examination Service.

Of the further changes foreshadowed, the one that we are most often asked about is Australia participating in CEPT TR 61, usually by overseas licensees about to visit Australia.

We have been on constant communication with ACMA on the second phase of changes.

We have been able to demonstrate some aspects of the use of the Internet to ACMA, one of the areas of change that raises complex issues.

One factor that complicates a number of issues is the Determination under S 119 of the Radiocommunications Act in respect of “qualified operators” of amateur stations. I am of the view that a Determination under that section creates more problems than it solves, simply because of the width of the word “operate” and that a better solution would be other subordinate legislation. The issues are technical, at best resulting in provisions that are undesirably complex.

The WIA’s position is to seek minimum regulation, with no less privilege than at present. For example, at least for Standard and Advanced stations, and particularly for club stations, the right to allow others to “operate” under supervision has always been an important part of demonstrating amateur radio and training radio amateurs.

I do not know when the further amendments to the Amateur LCD will be released, and I hope that we will continue to be given the opportunity to comment, particularly on a final draft.

In the context of the general area of regulation, and particularly in relation to the whole examination process, I would like to pay tribute to Alan Jordan of ACMA.

He has always been willing to listen to the WIA’s views, even if not always agreeing with them, always happy to exchange ideas and always open to listen to new information and always of very great assistance in relation to the examination area.

### **3. The WIA Examination Service**

The introduction of the Foundation Licence and the requirement for a practical assessment for every first licence qualification (usually a Foundation Licence) foreshadowed in the “Outcomes” paper, as well as the shortcomings of the existing examination system led the Board to a total revision of the WIA’s approach to the assessment of amateur qualification.

Let me review the events that have led to the system we have now established.

In the December 2004 edition of ‘Amateur Radio’ I raised the idea of a new examination system based on the assessment competency by assessors holding a nationally recognised qualifications based on the Australian Qualifications Framework, with WIA Assessors formally trained by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), and accredited and registered by the WIA.

By April 2005 I was able to report that from my meetings with many clubs I was satisfied there was real support for such a system, and so the planning continued. Ultimately, in June 2005 we were successful in finding a formula of words that satisfied us that ACMA would recognise the proposed qualification for issuing certificates of proficiency and satisfied ACMA that they would not be embarrassed in the context of a possible tender for the further outsourcing of the amateur examination function. In August and September 2005 assessor training courses were conducted in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide by the WIA’s RTO.

The WIA must be satisfied that a WIA Assessor is a fit and proper person to be accredited and registered and so a police clearance is required, mandatory in a number of states for persons responsible for young people. Because we take some responsibility for the Assessors, and because we wish them to be covered as WIA members by the WIA QBE Public Liability policy, we insist on Assessors being WIA members and because we believe the assessors should be supported by a club, ordinarily we insist that an Assessor be nominated by a club.

Today there are some 93 accredited and registered WIA Assessors, and some 15 Nominated Assessors, from right across Australia.

Currently, some 50 further potential assessors have just been trained or are awaiting training at assessor training courses to be conducted in Melbourne, Sydney, the Gold Coast and Townsville.

By that time the first assessor training courses was conducted an Assessment Instructions manual had been prepared, and the training courses identified many of the deficiencies that could be corrected by the time the first Foundation Courses were being conducted.

As well, the extremely well received Foundation Licence Manual written by Ron Bertrand and Phil Wait was being completed and printed. All the material needed by a Foundation licence candidate was available in one attractive package.

On the weekend before the actual Amending Determination to create the Foundation, Standard and Advanced licences came into effect on 19 October 2005 the first Foundation training course and assessments took place at the Gold Coast Amateur Radio Society with 16 candidates found competent. Their WIA qualification was recognised by ACMA and so that a week later the first Foundation licences had issued.

Let us not underestimate the load this has imposed on the WIA.

Since the start of October 2005 the WIA office has prepared some 1,100 Foundation Assessment Packs.

Of those Packs, 589 have been returned.

In order to minimise the delay in the issue of a licence the WIA will process the candidates applications for certificates of proficiency and apparatus licence applications if candidates wish and provide the necessary forms and payment. By 28 April 2006 426 candidates had taken advantage of this service.

Certification of results has been sent direct to 163 Foundation candidates, for them to forward to ACMA.

As at 2 May 2006, in some 6 months since the category of licence was created, ACMA has now issued 502 Foundation licences.

So, we have in a few months celebrated the first Foundation licence, and now the 500<sup>th</sup> Foundation licence. By an extraordinary coincidence, both the first and the 500<sup>th</sup> come from Southern Queensland.

And, by a further extraordinary coincidence, the 500<sup>th</sup> Foundation licensee is John William Owen VK4FRUM. What a great name!

The distribution by state/territory is interesting:

VK1 20	VK2 138	VK3 161
VK4 57	VK5 63	VK6 24
VK7 38	VK8 1	

In the same period 18 candidates have qualified for the Standard licence and 6 have qualified for the Advanced licence.

Standard/Advanced Regulations and Standard and Advanced Theory Packs are now available, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Revision of the Assessment Instructions has been produced and circulated, to take into account the new packs, and to provide greater simplicity.

Now some 37 clubs in all states offer Foundation licence training courses and assessments, and clubs from Hobart to Cairns and Darwin, and from Perth to Sydney and Melbourne have through their Assessors the ability to qualify all 3 grades of amateur licence.

As I look back over the past 12 months, I can say that a great deal has been achieved – a completely new assessment system, able to cope with the need for practical assessments, able to provide immediate guidance and feed back to candidates, the ability to attract and qualify new entrants to amateur radio.

And I suggest that the number of new amateurs in the last 6 months demonstrates the value of all this effort.

This has been achieved through the efforts of very many people, each working within their own area of skills, but working together to achieve a result.

I cannot mention everyone who has contributed to what has been achieved but let me mention some:

Fred Swainston, VK3DAC, of Train Safe, the WIA's nominated RTO who has spent so many hours and days training and qualifying Assessors, keeping records, advising generally and in particular in relation to the Instructions, and helping define the solutions to so many new issues.

Ron Bertrand, who not only wrote the Foundation Licence Manual with Phil Wait, but with others represented the WIA in the formulation of the new syllabi, (and did most of the work) and also prepared the basic question banks.

Robert Broomhead, who produced the photographs for the Foundation Licence Manual and managed its production, and also is developing the software to produce the Assessment Packs and manage the whole assessment process and create the records that we need.

Of course, the many people from so many clubs who have supported the change, and particularly all those who have given up a whole weekend for training, sometimes travelling quite some distances and who have, since then, given up further weekends to assist at Foundation courses.

Alan Jordan of ACMA for his invaluable advice and guidance, and Margaret Wattam of ACMA, who has helped us in streamlining the forwarding of certificate and licence applications.

Emma Trebilco, Brenda Edmonds and more recently Margaret Webb, who have provided the office support, the packs and the administration.

And finally, the man who has made it his mission to make it all work, and to organise the Assessor Training courses, the man who lives on the phone, our secretary Chris Jones.

#### **4. Board**

In accordance with the Constitution adopted on 16 May 2004, 3 directors stood down and offered themselves for re-election.

Nominations were called for and as there were 4 candidates for 3 positions, an election was conducted in accordance with the regulations for the conduct of a postal ballot that had been adopted by the Board.

David Wardlaw, VK3ADW was appointed Returning Officer by the Board, and as announced formally at the Annual General Meeting, the result of the ballot was:

Trevor Quick VK5ATQ, 715 votes, elected  
Robyn Clare Edwards VK6XRE, 694 votes, elected  
Philip John Wait VK2DKN, 694 votes, elected, and  
Edward (Ted) Thrift VK2ARA, 477

I think we can all be immensely proud that some 960 odd members voted. That is nearly one in 4 members, and says a great deal about how the WIA has changed to a single national entity, with all members having an equal say.

Ted Thrift has contributed much to the WIA during his term as a director. He has taken special responsibility for the WIA's publications, attending virtually all Publications Committee meetings by phone, and has been very much involved in the Call Book.

Ted took a special responsibility for the clubs, and elsewhere I report on the problems we have experienced in the office. When it became apparent that the office would not be able to cope with handling the club's insurance renewals, Ted took on that task – not merely a matter of sending a reminder, but chasing down all the clubs that did not respond, which meant finding the person who was responsible this year for that matter.

The Board is very grateful to Ted, and took the view that to lose his special knowledge and enthusiasm would be a terrible mistake, and so the Board has created the role of National Club Coordinator, and appointed Ted to that position.

So, that way, we do not say farewell to Ted.

But we do say welcome to Robyn Edwards VK6XRE. The Board of the WIA succeeds simply because each of the directors contributes his or her special skills to look after particular areas or projects. I am sure that Robyn is going to work very hard for us, too.

As reported in our formal report submitted to the Annual General Meeting, during the calendar year one meeting of Directors was held, and since then a further meeting was held in February. Following the meetings today, a Board meeting will be held tomorrow, Sunday.

Also, as reported formally, the directors communicated regularly by email and phone and during the year and all directors signed 98 Resolutions pursuant to clause 18.10 of the Constitution.

These Resolutions dealt with the admission of new members (46), the affiliation of clubs (36), and the balance (16 resolutions) dealt with banking, the approval of the reimbursement of directors expenses, the adoption of a 5 year subscription, the

appointment of an Assistant Treasurer, the transfer and subsequent sale of the property at Humpty Doo in the Northern Territory, the appointment of QSL and Repeater coordinators, the adoption of postal election regulations, various matters relating to the adoption of a new amateur competency assessment system and the accreditation of assessors.

## **5. Office**

At the last Open Forum I reported that June Fox would retire in a few weeks, and from 2 May 2005 Ms Judith Oliver worked with us to replace June.

Emma Trebilco continued to work on a part time basis for the WIA, providing a much needed continuity and knowledge. However, toward the end of last year she decreased her working hours, as she wished to increase her time with another employer who she believes offers her better opportunities than the WIA.

Emma has been extremely loyal to the WIA, working at weekends and at nights when our situation has been desperate, and she has continued to work 3 days a week when she can, training new staff and generally assisting us.

Except for about 3 days in January, Ms Oliver has been unable to work because of a medical condition since 20 December 2005.

In the period before her illness, Ms Oliver advised many members of her difficulty in coping with the work of the WIA. Currently Ms Oliver is receiving Workers Compensation payments, the WIA's insurers having admitted liability for her claim against the WIA.

In this very difficult period, since about November last, we have taken a number of steps to overcome our problems.

John Weir, VK3ZRV has accepted the job of dealing with the orders for the Call Book and the Foundation Licence Manual, from recording payments to packing and dispatching the books.

Brenda Edmonds has worked in the office up to 3 days a week, rather than the one she ordinarily gives to assist us.

For many weeks we relied on the answer machine to record questions, so that they could be referred to someone out of the office to answer questions, usually by Chris Jones.

A great many entries in the WIA's accounting software were wrong, and virtually none were made during the last 3 months of the 2005 financial year. Bruce Bathols spent very many hours putting the accounting records into order prior to the audit.

The result of all of this is, particularly over the last 3 months of last year and the first 3 months of this year, the WIA has not delivered the services to its members and others at the standard we had aspired to.

Membership applications were not processed as promptly as we had wished, inquiries were ignored, changes of address were not recorded, AR non-deliveries were not adequately followed up, and many inquiries we left unanswered.

All I can say is that the Board is very conscious of these problems, has been constrained in what it can do by reason of the legal obligations imposed on it in these circumstances, and can only apologise to our members and assure you that we are doing our best to overcome these problems as quickly as we can, subject to the constraints of a limited budget and our obligations set by law.

In recent weeks Margaret Webb has joined the staff at the national office.

## **6. Office Equipment/systems**

During the period under review the accounting software was changed from QuickBooks to MYOB, the first 3 months of the last financial year being the old software, since then the MYOB.

During the year Access based membership management software was developed, to replace the very old software.

A consultant was retained, and worked closely with the director responsible, Robert Broomhead.

While the transition caused a delay in the sending out of renewal notices last June, and has taken quite some time to debug, the new system is working very well.

Currently Robert is creating yet another system, this time to manage the examinations, creating the various Assessment Packs, generating the various documents and maintaining records.

In May/June last year, new furniture was acquired for the office, and a new second hand photocopier, printer, fax was acquired. At the same time, WIA Vice President, Ewan McLeod spent time in the office sorting old documents, books and magazines, throwing out what should be thrown out, and removing to storage what was needed, all to give us some more space in what is essentially a very overcrowded office.

## **7. Clubs**

Once again, I remind you of the importance the WIA and its Board has placed on clubs. Our whole approach to the training and assessment of amateurs relies on the support of the clubs. It can be no other way. The number of WIA Assessors, and the number still seeking training, the number of clubs conducting courses, is the clearest evidence that this partnership is successful.

While Ted Thrift reports separately on clubs, in this report I record the following:

There are now over 100 affiliated clubs of the WIA. That is heartening.



One of the concerns with the restructuring of the WIA was the possible effect on the availability of public liability insurance for the clubs. The WIA promised, in effect, to do its best to meet that need.

Ultimately the QBE Broadform policy was chosen, but with endorsements that made it clear that both the WIA and the insured clubs were insured, and also their members were insured as set out in the policy. Certain volunteers were also covered. And because the WIA premium is calculated on the number of members, the clubs do not pay premium on their members who are also WIA members.

I believe the insurance does represent a real service provided by the WIA for the clubs.

During the period I have continued to visit as many clubs as possible.

In October 2005 I attended a meeting of representatives of some 13 clubs in Brisbane, then in early November I visited clubs in Northern Tasmania and in Hobart. Later in November I attended a joint WIA/ARNSW club conference held in Sydney. At all of these meetings the role of the clubs in attracting new amateurs, training them and finding and then supporting the Assessors to qualify the new amateurs was the major matter for discussion.

I must say that I have found the support for the WIA's efforts to increase the number of amateurs through the Foundation licence very heartening.

The only thing that concerns me is that I wonder at times whether each club is really doing its best to promote membership of the WIA to its members. That is another and important aspect of our partnership with the clubs.

As I said last year, unashamedly, we are asking the clubs for their support and for them to work with us to encourage more members, and to make sure that their members are also members of the WIA.

## **8. Club Grant Scheme**

The Board has allocated \$1,500 to fund a small number of grants to qualifying Affiliated Clubs this year.

The Clubs Grant Scheme is based on the previous Queensland model, where clubs were invited to make submissions for assistance for particular projects.

Details were on the WIA website a few days ago and will be also available at the Open Forum.

## **9. Gifts**

Henry Andersson, VK8HA, who had become a member of the national body as soon as he could, and who died in Darwin in October 2004, left the WIA his house and land at Humpty Doo.

As announced last year, the Board decided to sell the property and I was able to visit Darwin, meet the Trustee's officers, appoint solicitors and estate agents and ultimately the WIA received \$252,722.42 after meeting all expenses.

The Board has yet to determine how best to establish a lasting memorial to Henry Anderssons's memory and generosity.

In October 2005 I accepted on behalf of the WIA a cheque for \$10,000 from one of the 'greats' of Australian amateur radio, Al Shawsmith VK4SS who indicated his wish that the money would be used for educational purposes or in support of WIA educational activities.

## **10. Publications**

Ted Thrift has continued to take special responsibility for publications and we have both continued to attend as many publications Committee meetings as possible, Ted by telephone.

With the final edition of AR for 2005, Colwyn Low VK5UE finally got his wish and retired.

We acknowledge with gratitude Colwyn's great contribution to the WIA as Editor, and on a personal note, I thank him sincerely for staying on at my request for as long as he did.

We are delighted that Peter Freeman VK3KAI, of GippsTech fame, has become editor.

To all of our Publications group, on behalf of us all, I say a very sincere thank you for all you do.

## **11. Broadcasts**

The Q-News team led by Graham Kemp, VK4BB, has continued their fantastic job of producing the VK1WIA weekly broadcasts.

To everyone who contributes, thank you.

## **12. WIA Website**

The WIA website continues to be the primary location of new information, and with as much other information as possible being found there.

We continue to seek to make it a little more user friendly.

During the period since our last report, ownership of the ISP providing our server changed, and we acknowledge with gratitude the support that we have continued to receive from Vintek Pty Ltd of Adelaide.

Our thanks to Colin Thompson, VK2TRC and director Robert Broomhead VK3KRB for their work with the website over the period.

### **13. Intruder Watch**

In various roles over quite a few years I have been able to observe the Intruder Watch activity.

I happen to believe that it is very important, even though victories may be few and far between. It is one of those activities where we will never be able to measure accurately its worth, simply because we will never know how many potential intruders have been deterred by the knowledge that the amateur service, nationally and internationally, will complain.

Last year we reported that Glenn Dunstan was taking responsibility “for the time being”. I believe that we should be very grateful that Glenn has continued his career as an Intruder Watcher!

### **14. ITU Matters**

As David Wardlaw reports WRC 07 is scheduled for October/November next year.

Two agenda items directly concern the amateur service. One is the review of the allocations to all services between 4 MHz and 10 MHz, excluding 7000 to 7200 kHz, and the other is the proposal to allocate 135.7 to 137.8 kHz to the amateur service on a secondary basis. Other items could also have an impact on us.

The WIA continues to participate in Australia’s WRC preparation and as a member of Study Group 8.

May I particularly thank Keith Malcolm VK1ZKM and David Wardlaw VK3ADW for their work in this area, and Keith, also, for his ever willing assistance on so many matters, particularly when we want yet another submission.

### **15. Marketing, Image**

Last year I referred to the adoption of new, more relevant and more appropriate imagery to promote amateur radio and the WIA.

The posters that had only just been produced last year have continued to be used around Australia at various club functions and continue to attract favourable comment.

The Foundation Licence Manual has also attracted much favourable comment in providing a younger more relevant image.

### **16. Membership**

Under this heading I repeat some information from the statutory report accompanying the financial statements presented to the Annual General Meeting.

In the Open Forum Report last year I reported, after making adjustments that were intended to allow for the distortion caused by the Provisional Members, that the total

membership was 3494, virtually the same number as the previous year. In the statutory Report we said there were 3851 members on 31 December 2005. As at today there are 3870 members.

While the true numbers were hard to measure last year, we can have confidence in the current numbers, so while last year we were able to say that at least that the decline in membership had been stopped, we can now say that the membership is growing.

Last year I reported that in the period from 16 May 2004 to May 2005 323 people joined or rejoined the WIA. In the period from 1 July 2005 to now 361 people have either joined or rejoined the WIA.

As stated in the statutory report, the 5-year membership has been very successful, with today some 317 members having taken up that option.

In the period since 1 July 2005 we have been advised of (and recorded) the passing of 27 members. Obviously, the real number is much higher, as we are only advised of a certain number.

The challenge remains to attract new members. I advert to that in the context of the clubs. But in the present context I should tell you that ACMA has recently agreed to the WIA including WIA promotional material in letters confirming a successful outcome for examination/assessment candidates and we certainly now intend to do that, also including a copy of AR.

Our target must particularly be the Foundation licensees.

### **17. IARU Region 3**

With the death of Peter Naish the WIA lost a valuable source of advice about Region 3. Peter was a director, and while as such he did not represent the WIA, rather was bound to act for all members (in the same way as the WIA directors act for all members and do not represent any particular group of members) Peter was able to ensure that the Board did understand Region 3 matters.

The WIA is a founding member of IARU Region 3. Region 3 is important to the WIA for a number of reasons:

One is that our representative and coordinator at the ITU, ultimately the body that allocates spectrum to the various services including the amateur service, is the IARU, and Region 3 is our means of input to the IARU, and our representative at a regional level, particularly to the APT.

Another reason is that nearly one dollar of every members subscription goes to Region 3 as the WIA's subscription, and in addition the WIA must meet the cost of participating the Regional Conference every three years.

The WIA must participate effectively and the regional organisation must also be effective to justify this significant expenditure.

The next Regional Conference is to be held in Bangalore, India from 7 to 11 August this year. The host society is The Amateur Radio Society of India (ARSI).

The Board reviewed the WIA's participation in Region 3 at its last meeting, and will further review our position at our meeting on the day following the AGM.

The WIA has considered the most constructive suggestions advanced by SARTS for improvement to the Region 3 Constitution, and tends to agree with their basic concerns, though we would be concerned if such issues ended up dominating the activities of the Region during this critical period immediately before a WRC that does have potential impact on the amateur service.

At the 2005 IARU Region 3 Directors meeting held in Bangalore in October 2005, Jim Linton, VK3PC, nominated by the WIA was appointed temporary Chairman of the IARU Region 3 Disaster Communications Committee. Jim's term of office will be until the Bangalore Conference.

I believe that is an important position, for while Jim may face inertia from some member societies, as I say in a different context, with the changes to Article 25 made by WRC 03, the capacity of the amateur service to engage in effective international emergency communications is important.

## **18. Advisory Committees**

The WIA Constitution requires Advisory Committees, initially the Divisional Councillors of the former Divisions, after 3 years elected, to advise the Board.

The fact that early next year is the first elections for members of the Advisory Committees will force the Board to formulate the regulations for that to occur.

That is our next task.

## **19. QSL Service**

In July 2005 the Board appointed Neil Penfold VK6NE as National QSL Bureau Coordinator to manage and promote this important service for members.

Members and bureau managers are encouraged to contact Neil if they need assistance in relation to any aspect of the QSL service.

## **20. QSL Curator**

Once again I record that Ken Matchett, VK3TL continues to collect the most interesting and most important QSL cards.

He has provided a separate report to the Open Forum, and you will see his concern as to where, in the future, the WIA will be able to store this valuable Collection.

## **21 History**

The previous WIA Historian John Edmonds has continued to look after a significant volume of historical material.

To the delight of the Board, Will McGhie VK6UU has accepted the position of WIA Historian, and is currently engaged in scanning old ARs. This will preserve our history and hopefully provide CDs that members will be happy to purchase.

## **22. Contests**

Trevor Quick is the director who takes primary responsibility for Contests and Awards.

The national Contests Co-ordinator is Ian Godsil, VK3JS.

Contests are an important aspect of the WIA's activities, and it is pleasing to note that they continue to attract attention.

The Board relies heavily on the expertise of the dedicated team who manage the various contests and we thank them for their efforts.

## **23. Awards**

Malcolm Johnson, VK6LC is the national Awards Co-ordinator, and has spent much time updating the WIA awards to reflect the new structure, and enhance the WIA awards as described in his report.

We thank Malcolm for his enthusiastic support.

## **24. Emergency communications**

There are separate WICEN organisations in each state, not necessarily associated with the WIA other than (usually) as an affiliated club.

The Board is very aware of the importance of international emergency communication since the changes to Article 25 at WRC 03, but is very unsure of the role, if any, of the WIA.

Accordingly Ewan McLeod has been given the task of providing the Board with a report, setting out the current position and addressing all the associated issues, including, for example, general emergency capabilities by amateurs generally outside the WICEN structure.

The Board, when properly advised, will develop a policy in relation to this general area.

Following a request from the WIA, ACMA has allocated the WIA two 5 MHz HF land mobile channels for WICEN use.

The 5 MHz channels will provide significant enhancement of WICEN capabilities. They will bridge the frequency gap between the 80 and 40 meter bands, and allow the use of Near Vertical Incidence Skywave (NVIS) propagation to provide coverage into areas outside of VHF range.

Because these channels are part of the commercial land mobile service, the use of amateur transceivers and callsigns is not allowed. Only ACMA type approved land mobile equipment may be used.

ACMA has also agreed to waive the licence fees for these channels on the basis of WICEN use.

## **25. Some other matters**

There are some matters that should be included in this report for the sake of completeness, and I mention them very briefly as follows:

### **ACMA matters**

Apart from the matters already mentioned, the WIA has been in regular communication with ACMA on many matters, including the clarification of when a practical assessment is required. The WIA was able to advise its members that amateur qualifications obtained before the new licensing arrangements came into force in October 2005 would continue to be fully recognised, so that persons holding an AOCP or AOLCP will be granted an Advanced Licence without having to undergo a practical assessment. Similarly, persons holding an NAOCP or NLAOCP will be granted a Standard Licence without having to undergo a practical assessment. However, this is being applied very strictly, so it seems that being qualified without having the certificate of proficiency is not enough.

When the new Foundation licence, came into effect on 19 October 2005, the WIA was surprised that a power limit of 3 watts for AM, FM and CW had been imposed, believing that limit to be unrealistic given the output power of commercially available equipment, particularly older equipment, and that the power limit should be 10 watts. Subsequently ACMA advised that the Foundation licence would be permitted a transmitter output power of 10 Watts pX on all permitted emission modes instead of the present 10 Watts pX for J3E emissions and 3 Watts pY for all other permitted emissions.

The WIA was consulted by ACMA on the possible use of handheld transceivers in the 70 cm band during the Commonwealth Games.

### **Bookshop**

The WIA Bookshop commenced operation last September.

As is reported in the Managers separate report, AR advertising has been effective. The WIA will be seeking to make the online Bookshop much more user friendly and attractive.

### **Callbook**

The Callbook was the result, again, of the work of Brenda Edmonds and Ted Thrift, our editors.

Publication was delayed from late September until November so that the new licence conditions announced in mid October could be included.

The number printed was increased over last year, and despite the delayed publication, sales have been good and only 400 remain.

A number of people have complained about incorrect listings. The information comes from ACMA and the WIA is not permitted to change it. Any changes to callsign, name or address MUST be done by the Licensee advising ACMA, and in time for the change to be in the listings published by the WIA.

Once again, I acknowledge the contribution of John Martin as well as Brenda Edmonds and Ted Thrift.

## **26. Conclusion**

As I look back on the period since 1 January last year, I believe that the WIA has faced a period of great change, great pressure and great opportunity.

We have had our bad times – the loss of June Fox, the illness over a long period of her replacement, the onerous obligations imposed on employers in Victoria under our Workers Compensation legislation, the incredible pressure placed on our administration by the coincidence of a totally new examination system, the management of training of the assessors, the development and introduction of new membership management software and the introduction of new methods in so many things that haven't worked as easily as we hoped the first time.

But I firmly believe that we have moved further and faster, in response to all the challenges we have faced than would have been even possible under our previous decision making structure.

But I also believe this: what we have achieved has been due to the incredible commitment of a group of people with synergistic skills and a determination to succeed, supported by the incredible work of volunteers prepared to support us.

But this can only last for so long. For members in most states the national WIA has meant lower subscriptions. The time for confusion as to what is the WIA, is it still a state body, or something else, has surely passed.

The WIA is an organisation having many complex obligations, and like amateur radio itself, covers many areas of interest.



No organisation like the WIA can ever just stand still. It will either move forward or go backwards.

To continue moving forward the WIA must, in the near future, put itself in the position where it can employ a qualified and competent manager. The hours that some of us put in are, frankly, silly, particularly those trying to earn a living or manage a business at the same time. That is why we need a manager, because we can only ask so much for so long of volunteers.

How do we put ourselves in that position?

By either increasing membership fees or increasing the number of members, or some mixture of both.

That is the future.

We can look to the future because I believe that the year past has demonstrated what a truly national amateur representative and service organisation can do for our great common interest.

## **26. A personal note**

Thus far, this report is written for all of the Board, all of whom have seen and agreed with it.

Let me add this personal note.

During the period I report to you I have visited many clubs and met many amateurs. I believe that the WIA must be open and honest, and so members and potential members should see and hear those who represent them. I simply wish to thank so many of you for your hospitality and courtesy.

This report is a story that I believe is positive, a story of great change, and some real difficulty.

Under the previous heading I address the issue of time and commitment.

Let me now say how much I value the work of so many, and particularly our Board. The directors do not all agree on everything nor should they. But each makes their own contribution, and many give very many hours to the WIA undertaking tasks that are not the usual roles of directors.

To each of you, Ewan, Robert, Trevor, Glenn, Ted and Phil, I acknowledge your work, your commitment and your genuine value.

Bruce, I acknowledge your special contribution as Treasurer, and all you have done to get our financial reporting and controls in place.

Finally, to our secretary, Chris Jones, and I am sure on behalf of all of us, what you have done to make this organisation, and particularly the assessment system and the new licences, particularly the Foundation licence work is breathtaking. Without you I suspect we would not have moved very far.

I have stressed how much all of us have devoted to our roles. For myself, this has meant that at times I have left unanswered the letter that I should have answered, the email I should have responded to not responded to and things not done that should have been done. I simply apologise and seek your understanding.

Michael Owen