



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Maritime Safety Authority**



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Communications  
and Media Authority**

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

between the

**AUSTRALIAN MARITIME SAFETY AUTHORITY**

and the

**AUSTRALIAN COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA AUTHORITY**

This **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING** takes effect this

Fourteenth day of December 2005.

**BETWEEN**

**THE AUSTRALIAN MARITIME SAFETY AUTHORITY**, a body corporate established under section 5(1) of the *Australian Maritime Safety Authority Act 1990* ("AMSA")

**AND**

**THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA AUTHORITY**, a body corporate established under section 6 of the *Australian Communications and Media Authority Act 2005* ("ACMA")  
("the Parties")

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding ('Memorandum') is to facilitate a cooperative relationship between the Parties in relation to support services for search and rescue (SAR) operations. The Memorandum also sets out areas of cooperation and mutual interest in the administration of radiocommunications services in Australia.
- 1.2 The intended areas of cooperation between the ACMA and AMSA with regards to the administration of radiocommunications services in Australia include:
  - 1.2.1 the submission of registration information to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU); and
  - 1.2.2 the management of various aspects of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS).

**2. Interpretation**

- 2.1 Terms used in the Memorandum are to have usual meaning unless defined in the text of the Memorandum or in Annex A.

**3. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 3.1 Nothing in this Memorandum alters or affects roles and responsibilities as defined in relevant Commonwealth legislation, nor confers an extension of either Party's liability. Obligations will be performed in accordance with applicable polices in each agency.
- 3.2 Nothing in this Memorandum is intended or is to have the effect of creating binding legal relations or obligations between the Parties.

### **3.3 AMSA's Commitments**

#### **3.3.1 Ground based Radio Direction Finding (RDF) for distress beacons**

AMSA is responsible for coordinating and conducting search and rescue operations in Australia. On occasion, AMSA requests ACMA's assistance in locating and deactivating distress beacons that have been identified as being activated in non-emergency circumstances. In these cases, the activation of the distress beacon may have been accidental or malicious, but not considered to be related to an emergency.

For the purposes of the Memorandum, AMSA acknowledges that:

- ACMA does not maintain on-call after hours RDF staff;
- ACMA assistance to locate distress beacons is provided on a resource availability basis, and an immediate response cannot be guaranteed;
- AMSA should avoid calling for ACMA assistance for non-urgent after hours activity; and
- AMSA should promptly pay ACMA invoices for RDF resources allocated to a SAR incident.

#### **3.3.2 Investigation of interference to distress frequencies**

To assist ACMA in identifying instances of considerable interference, AMSA should:

- provide daily reports to ACMA's HF Monitoring Station about interference to the Cospas-Sarsat 406.0 – 406.1 MHz band;
- assist ACMA, as required, in investigating unauthorised signal sources in the Cospas-Sarsat 406.0 – 406.1 MHz band;
- advise ACMA of any long-term 121.5 MHz transmissions which have fixed locations; and
- advise ACMA of unauthorised transmissions and interference on GMDSS terrestrial radio frequencies.

#### **3.3.3 Provision of registration database services**

AMSA administers a number of databases for the purpose of registration of devices used to signal a potential emergency.

For the purposes of the Memorandum, AMSA acknowledges that it has responsibility for:

- providing registration database services for 406 MHz distress beacons;
- providing registration database services for Maritime Mobile Service Identities (MMSI); and

- providing details of MMSI registrations direct to the ITU in accordance with arrangements made by ACMA.

#### 3.3.4 RDF of unidentified Automatic Identification System shore stations

In recognition that there will be instances of Automatic Identification System (AIS) shore stations transmitting without an identity, AMSA acknowledges that:

- ACMA does not maintain on call after hours RDF staff;
- ACMA assistance to locate AIS shore stations is conducted on a resource availability basis, and an immediate response cannot be guaranteed;
- AMSA should avoid calling for ACMA assistance for non-urgent after hours activity; and
- AMSA should promptly pay ACMA invoices for RDF time allocated to an AIS incident.

#### 3.3.5 The Cospas-Sarsat Downlink Frequency

The Cospas-Sarsat system is a satellite-aided system that receives signals emitted when a distress beacon is activated. The integrity of the Cospas-Sarsat downlink signal is vital to AMSA's search and rescue capabilities.

For the purposes of the Memorandum, AMSA acknowledges that it has responsibility for:

- reporting to ACMA any instances of considerable interference to the Cospas-Sarsat downlink frequency on 1544.5 MHz; and
- initiating registration of new Local User Terminals with the ITU through ACMA.<sup>1</sup>

### **3.4 ACMA's Commitments**

#### 3.4.1 Ground based Radio Direction Finding for distress beacons

The Parties acknowledge that this activity falls outside the scope of ACMA's core functions and responsibilities set out in the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*.

However, ACMA has agreed to use its reasonable endeavours to provide this service, on a cost recovery basis.

For the purposes of the Memorandum, ACMA acknowledges that it has responsibility for:

- providing AMSA with current contact details for ACMA RDF officers;
- providing resources for RDF on a resource availability basis, for the support of search and rescue operations when requested by AMSA;

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Cospas-Sarsat document C/S T.014, Cospas-Sarsat Frequency Requirements and Coordination Procedures refers.

- notifying AMSA when the RDF task has commenced and when it has been completed; and
- providing AMSA with an invoice for the services provided, charging the general hourly rate set out in the *Radiocommunications (Charges) Determination 2003*, and any other related expenses.

#### 3.4.2 Investigation of interference to distress frequencies

As part of ACMA's management of the radiocommunications spectrum, ACMA conducts investigations when it believes that a breach of the *Radiocommunications Act 1992* has occurred.

For the purposes of the Memorandum, ACMA acknowledges that it has responsibility for:

- investigating unauthorised signal sources in the 406.0 – 406.1 MHz band;
- investigating unauthorised signal sources in the 121.5 MHz band;
- monitoring the daily 406 MHz interference report provided to ACMA's HF Monitoring Station;
- providing reports to the ITU and AMSA about persistent interference in the 406 MHz band; and
- investigating unauthorised transmissions and interference on GMDSS terrestrial radio frequencies.

#### 3.4.3 Provision of registration database services

ACMA will liaise with the ITU to establish appropriate access for AMSA to lodge MMSI registration data direct to the ITU.

#### 3.4.4 Radio direction finding (RDF) of unidentified AIS shore stations

Where it is able to do so, ACMA undertakes to use its reasonable endeavours to make available suitable resources to assist in tracking unidentified AIS shore stations.

For the purposes of the Memorandum, ACMA acknowledges that it has responsibility for:

- notifying AMSA when the RDF task has commenced and when it has been completed; and
- providing AMSA with an invoice for the services provided, charging the general hourly rate set out in the *Radiocommunications (Charges) Determination 2003*, and any other related expenses.

#### 3.4.5 The Cospas-Sarsat Downlink Frequency

ACMA recognises that the Cospas-Sarsat downlink frequency is important to AMSA's search and rescue capabilities.

For the purposes of the Memorandum, ACMA acknowledges that it has responsibility for:

- where practical, assisting AMSA in determining the suitability of sites that may be chosen for Cospas-Sarsat Local User Terminals tracking Cospas-Sarsat satellites with the downlink of 1544.5 MHz, in regards to electromagnetic interference;
- investigating instances of considerable interference to the Cospas-Sarsat downlink signal in the 1544.0 – 1545.0 MHz band;
- whilst assigning frequencies to the Cospas-Sarsat downlink signal in the 1544.0 – 1545.0 MHz band, having regard to ITU allocations for distress and safety communications in the space-to-earth mobile satellite service (MSS);
- assisting AMSA in fulfilling the ITU requirements for the registration of new LUTs; and
- liaising with the ITU about any issues that both Parties agree are a concern to the integrity of the Cospas-Sarsat downlink band.

#### **4. Commencement and Variation**

- 4.1 The Memorandum will come into effect on the date of signing by the second of the Parties and will remain in effect unless terminated by either Party giving the other Party ninety (90) days written notice.
- 4.2 The conditions of the Memorandum may be varied from time to time by mutual agreement of the Parties. Any variations shall be agreed in writing by the exchange of letters between the Parties.

#### **5. Management arrangements**

Implementation and maintenance of this Memorandum will be managed on behalf of the Parties by the officers specified below, or such other persons as delegated by the specified officers, or as notified from time to time.

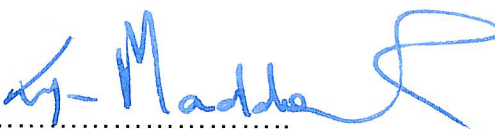
**ACMA:** Executive Manager, Communications Operations & Service  
Branch  
Australian Communications and Media Authority  
Benjamin Offices, Chan Street  
PO Box 78  
Belconnen ACT 2616

**AMSA:** General Manager, Emergency Response  
Australian Maritime Safety Authority  
Level 3, 25 Constitution Avenue  
GPO Box 2181  
CANBERRA ACT 2601

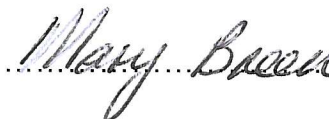
**6. Signatories**

SIGNED on behalf of the  
Australian Communications and Media Authority  
by

Lyn Maddock  
Acting Chair  
Date


  
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Witnessed by

  
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SIGNED on behalf of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority  
by

David Baird  
Acting Chief Executive Officer  
Date

  
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Witnessed by

  
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## APPENDIX A

Considerable Interference	Instances of interference that have a distinct impact on the licensed service as opposed to being a mere inconvenience.
Local User Terminal (LUT)	A ground receiving station that receives data from COSPAS and SARSAT satellites, calculates the position of the emitting distress beacon and forwards the resultant information to search and rescue authorities.
Maritime Mobile Service Identity	A unique nine digit electronic identifier required by stations using digital selective calling techniques.
Persistent Interferers	Multiple detections of an interferer over an extended period of time. A 406 MHz interferer is persistent when it has been detected by 10% or more of the available Sarsat satellite passes at or above 5 degrees elevation (measured from the interfering source).
Related Expenses	Expenses incurred by ACMA when employees are required to perform duties outside normal business hours. These may include overtime costs, meal and travel allowances.
Unauthorised signal source	An unlicensed signal operating on a frequency that has been licensed, without authorisation of the licensee.