



Mr. Nicholas Brody
Manager
Spectrum Licencing Policy
ACMA

By email

Dear Nic,

WIA AND RASA CALLSIGN OPTION SURVEYS

I write with reference to the surveys conducted by RASA and the WIA to determine the format of three-letter suffix callsigns for Foundation class amateurs.

I note that the WIA have recently concluded their survey with the result that their preferred model was successful.

Unfortunately, there are several shortcomings with the WIA survey.

Privacy and unethical conduct

The WIA used the *opt in* model – which requires that details (email/name/callsign) are provided by those who participate. If a person does not wish to provide their details for privacy reasons, they are unable to take part in the survey.

Online surveys are always conducted anonymously for this reason.

Requiring registration effectively means that the entire sector can not participate – the survey therefore does not represent the sector view.

This also means that the WIA can track who has and has not voted and, presumably, their vote.

Not only is this a violation of privacy, it is unethical. The Australian Electoral Commission does not require a voter to write their name on the ballot form for Federal/State elections...once you have received your ballot papers, your vote is effectively anonymous.

Polls conducted by clubs, companies, universities and all levels of Government are always anonymous.

Why does the WIA require this level of detail for a mere survey?

Flawed survey mechanism

The WIA survey mechanism also had a serious technical flaw. The WIA survey email sent to participants cautioned against sharing the internet link to the survey with anyone else, as the link would allow the second person to change the first person's original vote....

This has been verified firsthand by survey participants, who were able to freely change the votes of their colleagues after being sent the requisite link.

The integrity and security of the WIA survey is compromised by this technical flaw.

The electronic survey platform used by RASA does not allow votes to be changed. Once a person has voted, they can not change their vote.

A sample WIA survey email is enclosed at Annex A.

Subjective survey introductory document

The WIA survey result document reports that all options were presented openly to all Amateurs for their consideration.

This is incorrect.

The WIA preferred option was aggressively promoted in the survey introductory document and associated broadcasts.

This is, again, completely unethical.

Non-WIA members could participate only if they elected to deliver their personal details to WIA management.

A deliberate omission from the survey result is data on what portion of poll votes were returned by non-WIA members. That figure would be very low.

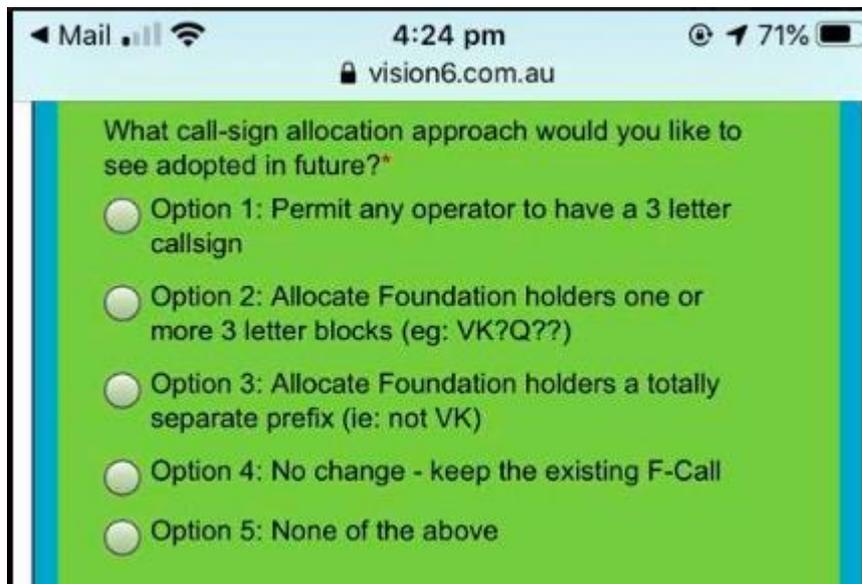
This survey was effectively a vote by WIA members for the option promoted by their management. In no way does the outcome reflect the broad, impartial position of all Amateurs.

From the beginning, this was a blatantly biased survey designed to return a specific result.

The RASA survey introduction outlined the pros and cons of each option and left it to the participant to decide.

Invalid survey questions

The WIA survey had 5 options:



Options 2, 4 and 5 are illogical.

Option 2, allocate an existing block, has already been discussed between the RASA and WIA Presidents, and was agreed to be impractical – the only vacant block is QAA-QZZ, and this does not provide enough callsigns to satisfy demand in the populous states.

Options 4 and 5 are particularly nonsensical. There is a clear need to allocate FLs a callsign with a three-letter suffix, so doing nothing is self-defeating.

Raw survey data not presented

The WIA does not report the raw survey data as obtained from the poll – merely a PowerPoint presentation. This creates significant doubt as to the veracity of the results.

In consideration of these shortcomings, it is RASA's view that the WIA survey is inherently flawed and does not reflect the views of the sector.

The RASA survey suffered from none of the shortcomings of the WIA survey. People were free to vote anonymously, votes could not be changed, the survey introductory text was objective and un-biased, and the questions were straight forward and logical.

We analysed the respondents IP addresses and found no evidence of fraudulent conduct or attempts to spam/influence the survey. The distribution of responses remained relatively constant over the survey period, with only very minor variations. There was no particular spike in responses one way or another.

Links to the survey were provided on RASA's website and Facebook page, bulletins distributed to clubs and members via email, AR Victoria to members via email, AR NSW via its Facebook page and social media in general. The survey was also advertised on the very popular vkclassifieds website.

There were 974 responses, which exceeded the 99% confidence level and 5% margin of error as determined by the survey provider. The survey was thus statistically significant.

Removing the link between callsign suffix and licence class is a significant change for amateur radio in Australia. The practice of denoting licence class by callsign suffix has been in place since the introduction of the Limited Licence (aka the "Z call") in 1954.

Is removing the link justified? The majority of respondents to the RASA survey feel that it is not.

We have received considerable negative feedback on the WIA "callsign for life" option, which can be summarised as follows:

- if callsigns never change, a person who studies hard for advancement will not be rewarded with a new callsign – friends and fellow club members could not be aware of his/her success....the motivation to upgrade is reduced; and
- random allocation of three-letter callsigns creates a new type of elitism, as two-letter callsign holders retain confirmation of their Advanced status, while the remainder of Advanced operators effectively have their license qualification cast into the 'unknown' category.

Accordingly, it is requested that a new VJ prefix for Foundation Licencees be implemented in accordance with the following principles:

- the prefix be available to FL class amateurs only;
- only 3 letter suffixes be allocated from the new block; and
- no new 4 letter FL callsigns be issued once the new block is active.

Of course, the administrative arrangements will need to be discussed/refined with yourselves and AMC.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G.C. Dunstan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

G.C. Dunstan
President

25 March 2019

Annex A – WIA survey email

ANNEX A – WIA SURVEY EMAIL

(note last sentence)



Callsign: [REDACTED]
First Name: [REDACTED]
Last Name: [REDACTED]
ACMA ID: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for being a part of the WIA Future of Amateur Radio Program.

The WIA is pleased to open the first of a series of polls on issues important to Amateur Radio in Australia.

This poll relates to amateur radio callsign structure. Detailed information regarding the proposed options is in the Information Paper which can be downloaded from the link below.

[Download "Information Paper - Amateur Radio Callsign Structure Poll"](#)

The poll has been emailed to WIA members and program participants and will be extended until the Midnight on the 5th of March.

Please do not share this email - it will allow someone else to change your vote!