

Sean McQueen

From: Nicholas Brody
Sent: Thursday, 2 April 2020 8:18 AM
To: Martin Crees-Morris
Cc: Sean McQueen; Patrick Emery; Stewart White
Subject: Proposed changes to administration of amateur call signs [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: WIA Information Paper - Foundation Call Signs.pdf; WIA - Future of Amateur Radio - Poll #1 - Results.pptx.pdf

Categories: Yellow Category

Dear Martin

Thank you for your time on the phone the other day, and I hope you and [REDACTED] are keeping well.

As discussed, we have been receiving submissions from both the WIA and RASA on how best to facilitate some changes to the administration of call signs, following changes to the Amateur LCD in September 2019:

<https://www.acma.gov.au/consultations/2019-08/proposed-changes-amateur-licence-conditions-consultation-202019#outcome>

In changing the LCD, we have authorised use of digital modes by Foundation licensees. Unfortunately, the extra character in the foundation call sign structure (VK\$Faaa, as opposed to VK\$aaa) is incompatible with a number of digital modes (which only work with six character call signs) thereby preventing Foundation licensees from fully accessing these new allowances.

Both the WIA and RASA are engaged on this issue, and have submitted a range of options (which are all captured in the WIA information paper and slide presentation, attached). We are inclined to adopt the option preferred by the WIA (Option 1), which goes beyond the immediate requirement to facilitate 6 character call signs for Foundation licensees, insofar as it would involve all licensees having 6 character call signs, and all newly-issued call signs no longer required to expressly indicate the qualification/certificate associated with the licence.

The proposed call signs can be thought of as 'classless' or 'call signs for life,' whereby the available call signs would not be allocated on the basis of certificate level.

In practical terms:

- Foundation licensees with existing VK\$Faaa call signs could apply for a VK\$aaa call sign in order to use certain digital modes, or could elect to keep their existing call sign if they do not want to use those modes.
- Licensees would be issued with a single call sign when first licensed, and would not need to apply for new call signs when they advance from foundation to standard, and/or from standard to advanced.

However:

- Licensees moving interstate should still be required to obtain a new call sign indicating their state or territory, when they change the address details on their licence with the ACMA.
- Call sign arrangements for repeaters, beacons, scouts and similar would remain unchanged.
- Two-letter suffix call signs would continue to be allocated as per usual.

The WIA has identified a range of community and behavioural benefits associated with this proposal, which are identified in the attached papers. We are supportive of implementing changes that are supported by community engagement and evidence, and can be adopted with little interruption to services.

We also support proposals that would be more efficient from the ACMA and AMC's perspectives, and we think a call sign for life would be such a proposal.

I do want to make you aware that, as with all things in the amateur world, there will be some amateurs that will express concerns or dissatisfaction with the proposal. Because call sign administration is a policy matter owned by the ACMA, it is appropriate for the ACMA to handle communications on this issue, and so I expect you will be able to direct any such traffic to us.

That said, this is currently our preferred option, not a settled position, and so we are seeking your feedback on the proposal, and views on implementation issues.

Kind regards

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I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet, work and live. I recognise and respect their continuing connection to the land, waters and communities. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.