OXTALES

January 2010
Compiled by VK2TT & VK2AYQ

PRESIDENT: Henry Lundell VK2ZHE 6582.0534
VICE PRES: Jim Neil VK2VIV 6581.2481
TREASURER: John Bailey VK2KHB 6582.2192
SECRETARY: Jim Neil (A/g) VK2VIV 6581.2481

President's Report

I must start the new calendar year with a call for a volunteer to undertake the important role of Field Day Co-ordinator. This year's event on the 12th & 13th of June, which is the Saturday and Sunday of the Queen's Birthday holiday weekend, will be our club's 35th annual Field Day. It is important that the Field Day is a success. As well as being a major field day on the Amateur Radio calendar, the Field Day is ORARC's major fund raising activity for the year. Without the income from the Field Day our club would not be financially viable unless membership fees were substantially increased.

Please consider undertaking the role of Co-ordinator for Field Day 2010. It is a great opportunity to utilize your organizational skills to put something back into your club and make a valuable contribution to Amateur Radio. Please contact Jim Neil VK2VIV or myself if you can help. Remember that the ORARC Field Day is a team effort but it takes a good leader to get the best return on the sum of the individual efforts. If you aren't able to offer your services as Co-ordinator, but would still like to contribute to the Field Day, please contact Jim Neil VK2VIV or myself. Your assistance will be greatly valued. Following the success of last year's dinner, there will be a Field Day dinner at the Port City Bowling Club on the Saturday evening again this year.

As usual ORARC will have a display at the Mid North Coast Amateur Radio Group 2010 Radio Expo in Coffs Harbour on Sunday the 24th of January. It is another opportunity to promote our club and its services including our Field Day weekend. To those who are attending the Expo, please take a little time to help out at our display. We will have our ORARC 2010 calendars on sale.

The Central Coast 2010 Field Day at Wyong on Sunday the 28th of February is another opportunity to promote our club and our Field Day weekend. It has become a tradition for as many ORARC members as possible to wear our club tee shirts. There are always lots of photographs taken at Wyong and our yellow and black tee shirts stand out in the crowd. As most of us are aware, 2010 is the 100th anniversary of the formation of the Wireless Institute of Australia. The Central Coast Amateur Radio Club is hosting a Centenary Dinner in association with Amateur Radio NSW at the Wyong Bowling Club prior to the Field Day on the evening of Saturday the

In This Issue :

Down The Coax

All scheduled meetings held in the S.E.S. Building
Central Road Port Macquarie

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 22nd Jan. 2010 7.00pm

MNCARG "Expo 2010"
Sunday 24 January 2010.
St John's Church Hall,
McLean Street, Coffs Harbour.
Doors open at 08:30 am.

February Monthly Meeting
Saturday 6th Feb. 2010 2.00pm

Friday Night Get-Together
Friday 26th Feb 2010 7.00pm

CCARC Wyong Annual Field Day
Sunday 28 February 2010

March Monthly Meeting
Saturday 6th March, 2010 2.00pm

E-mail directory

Reflects ALL changes notified up to
10th December 2009

Peter Fletcher fletcher@physics.usyd.edu.au
VK2AG (Lewis) lewisgreen@bigpond.com
VK2EI (Neil) neilsan@tpg.com.au
VK2EM (Bruce) vk2em@tpg.com.au
VK2GD (Alan) anu16734@bigpond.net.au
VK2KC (John) vk2kc@bigpond.com
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VK2AYQ (John) hansenjo@ozemail.com.au
VK2BEL (Allan) belly@skymesh.com.au
VK2BOR (ORARC) vk2bor@orarc.org
VK2CJM (Chris) Chris@CalmDowns.org.au
VK2CHC (Richard) yachtsman@midcoast.com.au
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VK2ZHE (Henry) lundell@tpg.com.au
VK2ZTM (Tim) c/- info@tvg.com.au
VK2FABJ (Ailsa) cabrooke@westnet.com.au
VK2FBRG (Barry) bgilson11@hotmail.com

Net Controllers' Roster

Nets on Voice Repeater VK2RPM 146.700 MHz

Sundays (0830 Local)		Wednesdays (1930 Local)	
January 2010			
VK2OA	Jan - 03	VK2ZHE	Jan - 06
VK2VIV	Jan - 10	VK2EI	Jan - 13
VK2TT	Jan - 17	VK2AYD	Jan - 20
VK2OA	Jan - 24	VK2ZCM	Jan - 27
VK2VIV	Jan - 31		
February 2010			
VK2TT	Feb - 07	VK2ATM	Feb - 03
VK20A	Feb - 14	VK2ZHE	Feb - 10
VK2VIV	Feb - 21	VK2EI	Feb - 17
VK2TT	Feb - 28	VK2AYD	Feb - 24
March 2010			
VK2OA	Mar - 07	VK2ZCM	Mar - 03
VK2VIV	Mar - 14	VK2ATM	Mar - 10
VK2TT	Mar - 21	VK2ZHE	Mar - 17
VK2OA	Mar - 28	VK2EI	Mar - 24
		VK2AYD	Mar - 31

E-mail directory *(Continued)*

VK2FHKO (Horst) horstko@bigpond.com
VK2FJKD (Jim) jaidanl@bigpond.com
VK9FLHI (Des) lhibluelag@bigpond.com
VK2FSBB (Steven) sharkbait_ _@hotmail.com

President's Report *(Cont'd from P1)*

27th February 2010, commencing at 1800 hours. Hopefully our club will be well represented at this dinner as I know many of us arrive on the Central Coast prior to the Field Day.

I have started the New Year with a Field Day column so I should mention the 2010 Urunga Convention on the 3rd and 4th of April which is Saturday and Sunday of the Easter Weekend. Our club has again been invited to bring its display to Urunga. Our membership is always well represented at this very enjoyable Field Day.

For more details of the various Field Days, just point your browser at the web sites of the respective clubs.

Now that I have prompted everyone to plan to attend at least four Amateur Radio Field Days in the first half of the year, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all members and their families the very best for 2010.

Henry Lundell VK2ZHE (President)

Headphone Distribution Box
By VK2ATM

Criteria: Build a headphone distribution device to minimize distractions inside the caravan when operating multiple transceivers.

Subsequent discussion decided to add microphone input to allow instruction and transmit facility and separate volume control for each headphone.

A data input/output to allow digital modes was also included in the wish list. To cap it off it was decided to make two of them.

Design: To eliminate loading of the audio source at the microphone socket of the transceiver, a single transistor pre-amp driving parallel emitter followers with variable output level control was used to manage the primary objective. The pre-amp is conventionally forward biased to give approx two milliamp collector current for class "A" operation, with an un-bypassed ten ohm emitter resistor to provide thermal stability and a small amount of negative feedback.

The emitter followers use a common input forward biased to give approx half rail voltage at the emitters.

The microphone input from the instructors headset being an electret needs a dc supply through a fifteen kilo-ohm resistor. A coupling capacitor of .001mfd is used to limit the low frequency audio response and provide good communications quality. The amplifier module is a Jaycar KC5152 kit using an LM386 IC. It mounts nicely on the main Vero board using the I/O pins provided.

A transistor switched relay is used for PTT functionality. This is controlled either from a spring loaded manual switch on the box or remotely via the DTR pin four of a serial port on a computer. To prevent data line earth loops and hum problems, a non-mains earthed laptop computer is preferred.

The Transceiver coupling cables needed detachable adapter leads to accommodate the different brand and models the club owns.

Construction: A 120mm x 40mm Veroboard with the PCB potentiometers mounted along one edge was used. The transistor switched relay, pre-amp, microphone amp, decoupling chokes and filter caps all fitted easily on the board. The input-output, serial port and DC supply sockets were mounted on the box fronts and end panels. Attaching the Vero board to the front panel was achieved by the mounting nuts of the potentiometers. All the earth points were returned to a common Molex pin to which the

The Circuit
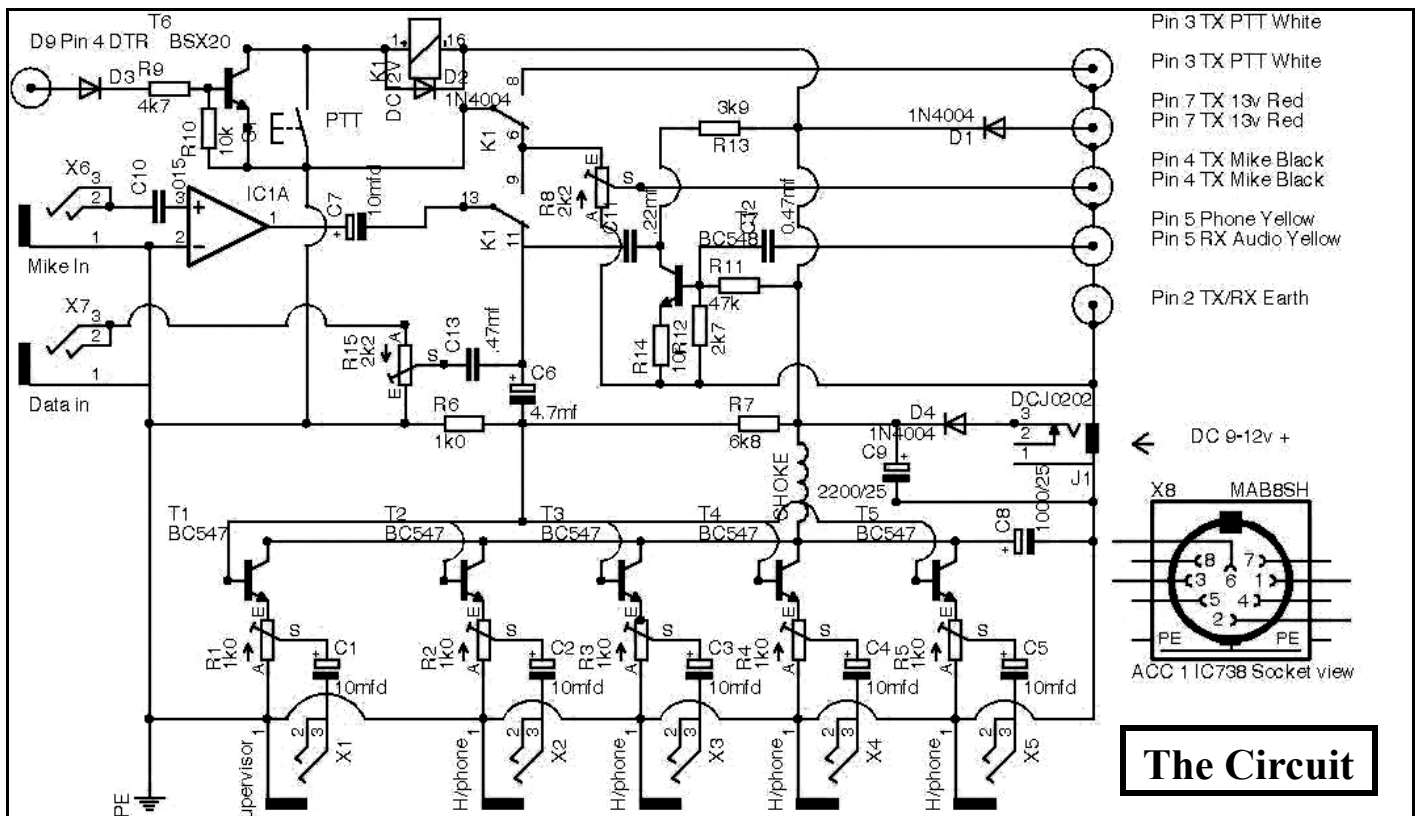
transceiver cable shields were also attached.

It was found that the units only worked successfully with a supply rail between 10 and 14 volts, so for the transceivers with only 8 volts available at the mike sockets, power had to be supplied by an external power pack or the caravans own 13 volt circuit. Isolation of the DC circuits was achieved by the inclusion of two power diodes.

Audio level adjustments are possible with the inclusion of internal preset pots.

Audio quality tailoring was done with the patient cooperation of club members and the trial and error substitution of coupling capacitors.

Use: A successful operational test was conducted with the Bago 150 car rally where it all worked surprisingly well.

It became apparent that for such a simple device an instruction manual will be required as will a panel engraving job to identify all the controls and connections. ◻

ORARC Christmas Function

Following last year's successful function at the Port Macquarie City Bowling Club's smorgasbord, this venue was again chosen for our 2009 "Do". This year's function was held on Friday 27th November. The attendance of members and their XYL's totalled 18.

An evening that involved "eating as much as you can eat", coupled with much social chit-chat, and an occasional sip of the cup that cheers, all added to the enjoyable festive atmosphere.

Pictures are worth thousands of words, so it has been said. Try these for size:

Below: Lewis, VK2AG & XYL PAM
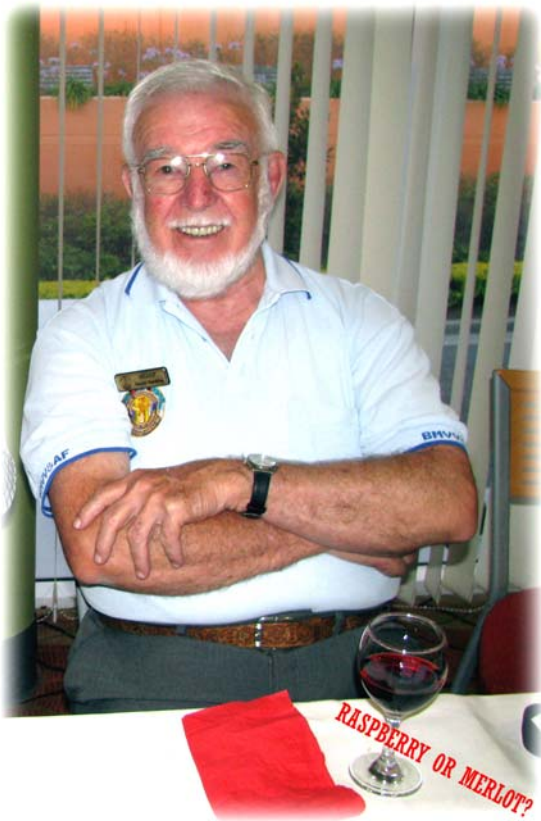

Below: Charles , VK2KCE & XYL Pat.

Corrine & OM John, VK2KC

Verena & OM Neil, VK2EI

Dee & OM Dave, VK2AYD

Henry,
VK2ZHE

VK2AIF, David,
making decisions on
his next draught!

John, VK2KHB
(enjoys desserts!)

RASPBERRY OR MERLOT?

Larry, VK2CLL

Peter Fletcher

Alan, VK2GD & XYL, Elaine

The Trip To WA and Back : Part I
(by John, VK2CE)

In my last article, prior to the trip to Perth, I shared with you the ups and downs of installing transceivers in a late model car, but my woes weren't over yet. I found that the vehicle's charge rate was a constant 15.9 volts. I remembered that the Icom IC-706's absolute maximum supply voltage is 16.0vdc, so with that in mind, I didn't turn on the Icom. I monitored the charge rate and found that when the battery was fully charged, the charging voltage remained at 15.9vdc!

The Auto Elec couldn't shed any light on the subject, but then a chance meeting on the next Sunday, with the Service Manger of the local GM dealer, solved the problem.

Remember, I mentioned the circular device that is fitted around the negative (earth) cable? Well, just as I suspected at the time of installation, it's a current sensing device. The Service Manager informed me that the charge rate is now part of the engine management system and is monitored by computer and adjusted to suit the demands of the electrical system. It had been sensing more current flow through the earth cable and had upped the charge rate. He also warned me not to fit a larger capacity or a different type of battery because the main computer has to be changed as well! I wonder how many will get caught in this trap?

Needless to say, ASAP I removed both of the transceiver's earth wires from inside of the pickup around the main earth cable, and that restored the charge voltage to a respectable 14.5 vdc, no matter what load I put on the battery. It's a calcium battery which has totally different characteristics to a normal lead acid battery.

The trip over:

The trip to Perth started out on the 27th August, with the first hop to Gilgandra, my old home town, via Maitland. I heard a fair bit of traffic on 2m on the various repeaters around Newcastle, but commonsense dictated that with the density of traffic on the Pacific and New England Highways, my concentration should be on the driving!

As I turned west from a short stop in Stockton, the only other repeater I was able to trigger was the Mudgee repeater, with no takers.

We arrived in Gilgandra at sundown where we had 2 birthday parties to attend, a 60th and a 90th. The only contact I made in Gilgandra on the local VK2RCC repeater was to Barry, VK4KKN, who happened to be visiting for the same parties. It's interesting to note that the RCC repeater is linked to 2 other repeaters, Dubbo and Parkes, so 2 metres covers a huge amount of real estate in that area.

On the following Monday, 31 August, at 6 am, we left Gilgandra for the remainder of the trip to Perth, with the first overnight stop planned at Port Augusta in South Australia, some 1170 Kms from Gilgandra. To be honest, I didn't know how I would go with an uncooperative knee, not being able to sit for 12 hours or more. Sure enough, by the time I got to Broken Hill I was very uncomfortable. Contact was made with only one local AR operator on their 2m repeater.

After I had left Broken Hill, near a small village called Olary, contact was made on 7.070 MHz with a couple of VK3's and then a well known call sign popped up, and contact was made with Bill ZCV, and it was a great feeling to hear Bill's voice.

Earlier on in the day I called in on the Travellers' Net on 14.116 MHz and gave them my plans of travel for the day and where I would be over-nighting. It was great comfort to know that wherever you were, someone was contactable. There are AR ops acting as relays in all states of Australia and monitoring the frequency each day from 0200 UTC and call backs begin from 0300 UTC. A big thank you to those who, without fail, monitor 14.116 MHz 365 days of the year.

We had a motel booked at Port Augusta and although feeling very weary and leg sore, we pressed on and when the lights of Port Augusta came into view, we were more than relieved!

Contact was made with one VK5 from our Motel room, on my hand held through the local 2m repeater, with no other takers.

The next day we left well before sunup, with our sights set on Mundrabilla, a "Motel"/Roadhouse some 1050 km west from Port Augusta, just 80 km east from the WA/SA borders. There was a heavy fog when we left Port Augusta. Being mindful of the kangaroo population, we drove very carefully through the fog, until we finally cleared it well after passing the Iron Knob turnoff and 1-1/2 hours of driving. Thankfully, there were no animals to be seen.

The country side looked a picture. The area had received a lot of rain and

was green everywhere. I surmised that the reason for the lack of 'roos on the highway was that plenty of fodder was available elsewhere.

I knew from the way I felt when we arrived in Port Augusta, that I had a fair chance that I wouldn't be able to make the long hops I had originally planned. However, thanks to the room in the Commodore, I was able to adjust the seat back, and down (it's all electric), adjust the steering wheel out and kick off my shoes. I was then able to drive with my legs fully outstretched, (don't you love cruise control!). That way I was able to exercise and stretch out. As a result, when we arrived at Mundrabilla in WA, I felt I still had a few hours driving in me, but commonsense dictated that I shouldn't!

Again, contact was made on the Travellers' Net that morning and the appropriate message passed as to where we would be over-nighting.
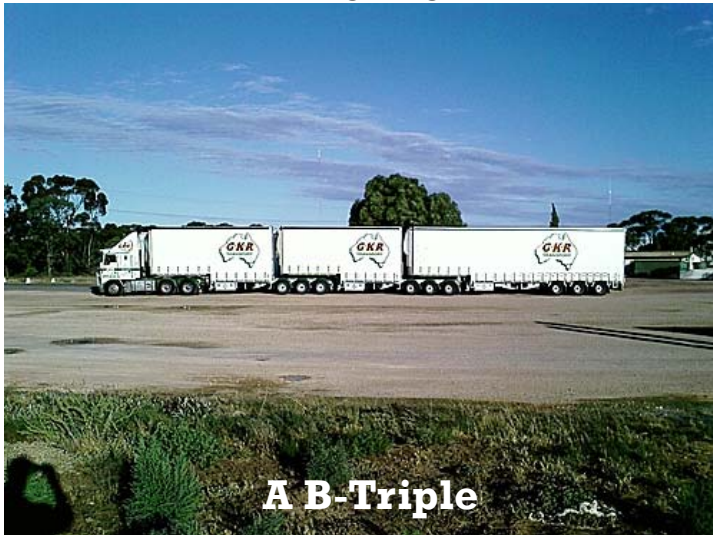
A B-Triple

One thing that impressed me was the B-triples across the Nullarbor. They have 3 trailers and track beautifully. They enjoy the 100Kmph speed limit because of their stability, whereas road trains are limited to 90Kmph. I found that, generally, truck drivers were very courteous.

The "Motel" at Mundrabilla was quite a shock… $85 for a double and I doubt whether it would make it into the Backpackers' Manual for a preferred stop! It was clean and the bed was very comfortable, but the condition of the buildings was atrocious. When I booked the room a few weeks before I left Port Macquarie, the lady from the Roadhouse stressed that the rooms were very clean, cheapest on the Nullarbor. Indeed they were, but not very attractive: neither inside nor out!

The fuel price was also cheap in comparison to other roadhouses we had

Mundrabilla "Motel"

passed. At $1.55 per litre, it was indeed the cheapest on the Nullarbor, with the price at Caiguna and Cocklebiddy being $1.66 per litre. I found out later on that the same person owns the BP Roadhouses at Norseman, Caiguna and Cocklebiddy, so those were the ones at which to avoid purchasing fuel, if at all possible... (I couldn't!).

A meal was the next shock, with rissoles and veggies costing $18.00. The veggies had been clearly cooked many hours before, but having paid that much for a meal, one eats it anyway! If you had ordered a T-bone with veggies, the asking price was $32! But apart from road kill, what is the alternative? We had packed enough food of the type for breakfasts and lunch. This all got through the Border Dept of Agriculture inspections, so we bought only the evening meal.

The next fuel stop was Norseman at the end of the Eyre Highway…..

The mobile rig. Mundrabilla

Part II of John's narrative will continue in the next issue of OXTALES.

Don't forget to get your ORARC 2010 calendar (Full colour images) $2.50 per copy from VK2ZHE

OXLEY REGION AMATEUR RADIO CLUB Inc.
MEMBERSHIP REGISTER.
(As at 13th December 2009)

	Cat.	Surname	Given	Spouse Name	Call	Location	Tph
1	O	BAILEY	JOHN	(FLORENCE)	VK2KHB	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.2192
2	D	BELL	ALAN		VK2BEL	COOLONGOLOOK	02 6554.1689
3	O	BIVONA	JOE	(ROSE)	VK2IEV	PORT MACQUARIE	(Mob) 0405040953
4	L	BLYTH	BOB		VK2XIQ	TELEGRAPH POINT	-
5	O	BRODIE	BOB		VK2EJK	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.0592
6	O	BROOKE	AILSA	(BILL)	VK2FABJ	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6581.0547
7	O	BROOKE	BILL	(AILSA)	VK2ZCW	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6581.0547
8	O	BROWN	STEVEN		VK2FSBB	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6484.7885
9	O	BURGES	ROY	(JUNE)	VK2YOR	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.8801
10	O	COURT	RICHARD	(LINDA)	VK2CHC	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6555.4161
11	O	DANIEL	JIM		VK2FJKD	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.1933
12	O	EDMONDSON	CHARLES	(PAT)	VK2KCE	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.0495
13	D	EKERT	BRUCE	(YULIA)	VK2EM	FORSTER	02 6555.4161
14	D	ELLIS	STAN	(BETTY)	VK2DDL	TUNCURRY	02 6554.7996
15	A	FLETCHER	PETER	(CAROLYN VK2CZF)	-	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.5191
16	O	GILSON	BARRY	(FAY)	VK2FBRG	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.8814
17	O	GREEN	LEWIS	(PAMELA)	VK2AG	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.9162
18	D	GREENWOOD	GRAEME		VK2ZIS	MIDDLE BROTHER	02 6559.4836
19	O	HADFIELD	STEVE		VK2KK	PAPPINBARRA	02 6587.6160
20	L	HANLON	KEITH		-	PORT MACQUARIE	-
21	O	HANSEN	JOHN		VK2AYQ	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.7932
22	O	HARDING	DAVID	(ISABELLA)	VK2AIF	WAUCHOPE	02 6586.4980
23	O	KOPPEL	HORST		VK2FHKO	LAKE CATHIE	02 6585.5992
24	L	LINDSAY	LARRY		VK2CLL	WAUCHOPE	02 6587.1155
25	L	LUNDELL	HENRY		VK2ZHE	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.0534
26	O	MADIGAN	ALLAN	(DAWN)	VK2OA	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.2043
27	O	MARTIN	CRAIG	(JENNY)	VK2ZCM	SANCROX	02 6585.3452
28	D	McADAM	PETER		VK2EVB	COFFS HARBOUR	-
29	A	McGUIRE	MARK		-	PORT MACQUARIE	01 6583.8875
30	O	McLEAN	JOHN	(CORRINE)	VK2KC	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.6220
31	D	MILLS	TIM		VK2ZTM	BEECROFT	02 9868.1434
32	H	MINAHAN	CHRIS		VK2EJ	HALLIDAYS POINT	02 6559.3516
33	L	MONCK	ARTHUR	(WENDY)	VK2ATM	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6581.0960
34	O	NEIL	JIM	(CAROL)	VK2VIV	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6581.2481
35	O	NEWHAM	LAURIE	(ROBIN)	VK2ELN	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.5387
36	O	NUTT	ALAN	(ELAINE)	VK2GD	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6584.9639
37	O	PILLEY	DAVID	(DEE)	VK2AYD	KING CREEK	02 6585.2647
38	O	ROTH	BILL		VK2CWR	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6581.1776
39	O	SANDFORD	NEIL	(VERENA)	VK2EI	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.5830
40	O	SINCLAIR	BILL		VK2ZCV	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.9302
41	D	TARRANT	DAVID	(AILEEN)	VK2TBC	ILUKA	-
42	O	THATCHER	TREVOR		VK2TT	WAUCHOPE	02 6585.2278
43	D	THOMPSON	DES	(BETTY)	VK9FLHI	LORD HOWE ISLAND	02 6563.2152
44	O	WALKER	BRUCE	(GWEN)	VK2HOT	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6583.8360
45	O	WEBSTER	PAUL	(CAROL)	VK2BZC	PORT MACQUARIE	02 6582.3377

Category Key: O = ORDINARY   A = ASSOCIATE   D = DISTANT   H = HONORARY   L = LIFE