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NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR RADIO



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NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR RADIO MAGAZINE

DX-World V51WH

NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR RADIO MAGAZINE

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THANK YOU TO ALL THE AMAZING CONTRIBUTORS.

New Zealand & Australian Amateur Radio Magazine is now being sent to every amateur radio club in New Zealand and Australia ... and it's all for FREE

Our aim is to bring you inspiring stories and news of exciting activations and give you ideas to fuel your amateur radio dreams, whether it is a project, review or DX-Pedition.

New Zealand Amateur Radio magazine is free and includes Product News, International Amateur Radio News, DIY projects, Interviews, POTA and SOTA news and DX Pedition news. Club news is for the clubs and will not be included in the magazine.

If you want to be featured or have a project that you want to feature then email me the details and we will include it.

Greg
ZL1GUD

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This issue:

- Page 01 Introduction
- Page 02 Top Fest
- Page 03 From the Editor
- Page 04 Antenna Racing
- Page 05 JOTA
- Page 06 Lighthouse Activation
- Page 08 Icom IC7110 launch
- Page 11 POTA California
- Page 13 Tassie Ham Conference
- Page 14 Canterbury Repeaters
- Page 15 Guohetec 1Kw Amp
- Page 17 On The Air
- Page 18 DX World DX-Peditions
- Page 23 Activations
- Page 27 DX Report
- Page 30 Calling NZ Competition
- Page 31 Wavelink
- Page 32 Feedback
- Page 33 Competition Calendar
- Page 34 Rig Expert
- Page 38 Tokyo Ham Fair
- Page 41 FT8 Automated
- Page 49 Short Wave Listening
- Page 50 60m News
- Page 51 CW News
- Page 56 Importance of Hams
- Page 59 Radio has no borders
- Page 61 Classifieds



The Top of the South Amateur Radio Gathering

Saturday 19 & Sunday 20 September 2026

Brayshaw Park, Blenheim

Everyone is welcome!

Topfest is a weekend gathering for amateur radio enthusiasts from the Top of the South and beyond.

Whether you're an experienced operator, a newcomer to the hobby, interested in radio and electronics, or simply curious about what amateur radio is all about — come along, meet fellow enthusiasts, see what's happening and enjoy a weekend of radio, technology and good company.

Event Information

 **19–20 September 2026**

 **Brayshaw Park, Blenheim**

 **\$20 for the weekend — pay at registration**

 **Registration opens Saturday at 8:30 am**

Registration

Please let us know if you're planning to attend by emailing:

Nick — nick@zl2neb.nz

Registration will be available from **8:30 am on Saturday morning**.

The \$20 entry fee covers the weekend.



From the Editor

I probably come up with too many ideas, and I put them in writing before I really investigate them properly.

What I'm trying to say is, I'm going to postpone the field day. We are going to concentrate on Calling New Zealand: the event where you try and speak to as many towns and cities across the North Island and South Island as you can during the month of November.

This month the magazine has got some really interesting stories and adventures and once again, I do think our cover photographs are amazing, and I hope you enjoy them. A special thanks to DX-World for giving us access to the images on their site.

It would really be nice to have more contributions from the hams out there, in their shacks, on the road or doing activations. It's difficult to find stories from the people who spend hours playing radio, and we'd like to keep it local between Australia and New Zealand. If you do have something in future, please let us know.

Thank you for reading, and please let your friends know about the magazine. I don't think all the clubs send it out, so if you could do that, it would be awesome.

Have a great September, and we'll catch you next month.

73 Greg — Editor

When the Editor actually plays HF radio a few times a week.



2026 World Championships

Official Rules for Competitors

The Antenna Racing World Championships held its inaugural event in 2025, with a group of enthusiasts taking on the clock for the title of Antenna Racing World Champion. Join us for the chance to become the **2026 Champion**.

Join us at Topfest to win the title

What Is Antenna Racing?

Antenna Racing is the art of setting up your portable antenna — POTA, SOTA, or similar — and getting on the air faster than anybody else.

Equipment You'll Need

To level the playing field, every competitor needs:

- A mast of **6 m or longer**
- An antenna: **EFHW** or **dipole**

How the Race Works

You may place your antenna, mast, and equipment around yourself before the start. When the countdown reaches zero, the clock starts:

5 4 3 2 1 ...

Working entirely on your own — **without any help** — you must:

- 1** Erect the mast
- 2** Set up the antenna
- 3** Connect to your radio

Once you're satisfied that SWR is **less than 2:1** and you're ready to call CQ, call time. The clock stops, officials check the installation, and your time is recorded.

General Rules

- The mast must be a **telescopic mast**.
- The mast must be guyed with a **minimum of three guys**.
- The antenna must be an **EFHW, random wire, or dipole** — no spiked verticals allowed.
- Coax is to be **connected during the event**, not beforehand.
- The radio may be connected to the power source before the start, but must be **turned off** until the clock starts.
- SWR is measured **after the ATU has been activated**.

Do some practice and get ready to take home the title of

2026 ANTENNA RACING WORLD CHAMPION



International

JOTA – JOTI

JOTA-JOTI is the world's largest annual digital and radio event for Scouts and Guides, bringing young people together on the third full weekend of October each year. It's an exciting opportunity to connect with Scouts and Guides from around the world and share a weekend of friendship, fun and discovery.

JOTA-JOTI stands for Jamboree on the Air (JOTA), and Jamboree on the Internet (JOTI). It's organised by the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM).

Whether you are hosting an event, visiting a site, or participating from home, there are plenty of ways to get involved. From early September, you will be able to register your JOTA-JOTI site at vkjotajoti.com.

This year, JOTA-JOTI will take place from Friday 16 October to Sunday 18 October 2026. The theme is 'A peaceful and inclusive world'.

From St George Amateur Radio Society

For over 30 years SGARS has been providing an amateur radio station as a JOTA activity at a combined guide and scout event, the Boree Regatta, held in Sydney. The station, VK2LE has over 500 youth members attending, in two groups of ten (20 in total) every half an hour from 10.30 am Saturday until midday Sunday. The operators are keen to make contact with **New Zealand and Australian JOTA stations**, hence the appeal following.

Paul VK2GX

Jamboree On The Air – JOTA 2026

Amateur radio operators are reminded that Jamboree On The Air, or JOTA, will take place over the third full weekend of October — 16 to 18 October 2026.

JOTA is an international Scouting activity that gives Scouts and Guides the opportunity to communicate with other young people around the world using amateur radio.

Once again, the St George Amateur Radio Society, SGARS, in Sydney, will be operating its club station VK2LE as part of the JOTA activities at the Endeavour Boree Regatta. The event will bring together hundreds of Scouts and Guides, providing them with an opportunity to experience amateur radio and make contacts with other young people.

The SGARS JOTA team would particularly like to hear from amateur radio operators and clubs around Australia and New Zealand who will also be operating JOTA stations this year. The aim is to arrange contacts between participating stations, giving Scouts and Guides the opportunity to communicate with their counterparts in other parts of Australia.

If your club or station will be operating for JOTA 2026 and would like to arrange a contact with VK2LE, the SGARS team would be pleased to hear from you.

For further information or to register your interest, contact the St George Amateur Radio Society through their website at www.sgars.org

JOTA 2026 — 16 to 18 October. Get your station involved and give the next generation of Scouts and Guides the opportunity to experience the magic of amateur radio!



International Lighthouse & Lightship Weekend – Stirling Point, Bluff

This year I decided to take part in International Lighthouse & Lightship Weekend from Stirling Point Lighthouse at Bluff. The XYL came along for the adventure, and we travelled down by car with the weather looking decidedly doubtful. It rained for a good part of the journey south, but fortunately Bluff had other ideas. By the time we arrived, the sun was out and the car park beside the lighthouse turned out to be an excellent spot to operate from the car.

As always with portable radio, I think setting up is half the fun. You arrive at a new location, assess how much room you have to play with, look for suitable anchor points and then decide how you're going to get an antenna into the air.

For this activation I used my 10-metre Spiderbeam mast, strapped securely to a post, with my EFHW arranged as an inverted-V. The end-fed is a great portable multiband antenna, giving me 40, 20 and 15 metres without having to change antennas during the day.

I got on the air rather late, at about 12:30 pm, and started on 40 metres. It wasn't long before some of my usual chasers appeared, along with several other lighthouse stations.

The contact highest on my list was Cape Reinga. With me sitting almost at the bottom of the South Island, a contact with a station operating from the top of the North Island seemed like the perfect Lighthouse Weekend QSO. Tip to toe across New Zealand.

Pascal, ZL1FDO, was activating Cape Reinga and came through to me at Bluff at a very respectable 57. It was great to get him in the log and was probably my favourite contact of the activation.

Another signal that deserves a mention was Grant, ZL1GGL, in Te Puke. Grant was running just 5 watts, yet still put a very good signal all the way down into Bluff. It was a nice demonstration of just how well 40 metres was working that day.

In fact, 40 metres was easily the star performer. I tried 20 metres, but conditions there were quite poor by comparison. There was, however, one rather unexpected exception with Nancy in Virginia, USA

I also gave 15 metres a try but heard nobody at all, so it didn't take long before I retreated back to 40 metres, where the action was.

The Bluff weather behaved pretty much as you might expect. It rained and blew a couple of times during the activation, but more often than not the sun was shining and it actually became quite warm.



Operating from the car turned out to be a very comfortable way of doing it. With flasks of tea on hand and a Subway for lunch, the XYL and I were certainly not suffering!

At around 3:30 pm, after about three hours on the air, I decided it was time to pack everything away and begin the journey home.

There was, however, one small detail I hadn't considered. When I'd arrived and set the antenna up, the tide was low. I'd used a bush near the water as an anchor point for some of my paracord. By pack-up time, the tide was very definitely not low anymore.

Retrieving the paracord resulted in me getting drenched up to my knees while trying to reach the bush. Fortunately, a pāua diver nearby came to the rescue and gave me a hand getting it free. It was a rather wetter conclusion to the activation than I'd planned!

All in all, it was a thoroughly enjoyable day. It made a nice change to get down beside the sea, operate from somewhere completely different and take part in an event where the emphasis is simply on getting on the air and having fun.

Stirling Point proved to be a good portable operating location, the EFHW did its job nicely, and 40 metres provided some excellent contacts. Getting Cape Reinga from Bluff was the highlight for me, with the unexpected Virginia contact adding a bit of DX into the mix.

The only downside was the travelling. It was a long drive down to Bluff, and somehow the drive home seemed considerably longer!

Still, that's Lighthouse Weekend done for another year. I've now got 12 months to decide which lighthouse to tackle next year.

As always it was a pleasure to catch up with everyone on the air, and I look forward to my next activation.

73

Ben – ZL4AT





The NEW Icom IC-7110

ICOM IC-7110

The ICOM IC-7110 is an announced multimode MF/HF/VHF/UHF mobile amateur radio transceiver. The IC-7110 will have support for a wide variety of commonly used amateur radio modes, including DSTAR, the digital voice mode from JARL, the Japan Amateur Radio League. Previously known under its code name X-026, the IC-7110 will serve as the successor to the ICOM IC-7100 and will have a large detachable control head with a slanted display so the transmitter can be installed elsewhere in a vehicle or home. The transceiver will also support RS-BA1 remote operation.

Announced at the 2026 Tokyo Ham Fair on August 29, 2026, an official release schedule has not yet been provided.

Icom's international leaflet lists coverage as **HF/50/70*/144/430/440 MHz all mode**, with the asterisk noting that 70 MHz applies to the EUR version only. Modes are SSB, CW, RTTY, AM, FM and D-STAR DV. Receive is continuous from 30 kHz through the 144 MHz band, taking in FM broadcast and airband along the way.

The separate mention of 440 MHz is not an additional band — it reflects the wider North American 70 cm allocation (430–450 MHz) against the Region 1 range that stops at 440. Nothing in the official documentation mentions 220 MHz, and speculation about a 1.25 m variant circulating in some forums has no basis in the published material.

Three power variants were announced:

- IC-7110 — 100 W on HF/50 MHz, 50 W on 144/430 MHz
- IC-7110M — 50 W
- IC-7110S — 20 W
-

The Japanese documentation notes that the 100 W version is not intended for portable or in-vehicle use in that market, with the M and S variants filling that role.

The 4 Metre Angle

The European version includes 70 MHz as standard, and this deserves more attention than it has received so far. The IC-7300 covers 4 metres but stops at 50 MHz. The IC-705 does not have the band at all — Icom UK issued a formal correction in May 2020 after 70 MHz appeared in early marketing material. The IC-7100 had the full HF-through-UHF spread including 4 metres, but has been out of production for years.

That leaves the IC-7110 as the only transceiver currently in production offering HF, 50, 70, 144 and 430 MHz all mode in a single unit. For 4 metre operators in Region 1 who have been keeping an ageing IC-7100 alive or running two radios side by side, that combination is the headline.

Dual Receive Is Genuine, Not a Split VFO

The receiver section carries independent circuits for HF+50 MHz and for VHF/UHF, feeding two separate antenna connectors on the rear panel. That allows true simultaneous reception across HF/144, HF/430, 50/144 and 50/430, with operating mode set independently for each band.

In practice it means holding a ragchew on 2 m while watching HF conditions open on the scope — something the IC-7100 could never do. Of everything announced, this is the specification that most clearly separates the IC-7110 from its predecessor rather than simply modernising it.



Display, Decoders and Digital Modes

The display is a 4.3-inch colour touchscreen, the same size as the IC-7300MK2 and IC-705, driven by an RF direct sampling system with FPGA on HF and 50 MHz. It carries a real-time spectrum scope, waterfall and audio scope, with automatic dimming and backlit keys for night or in-vehicle operation.

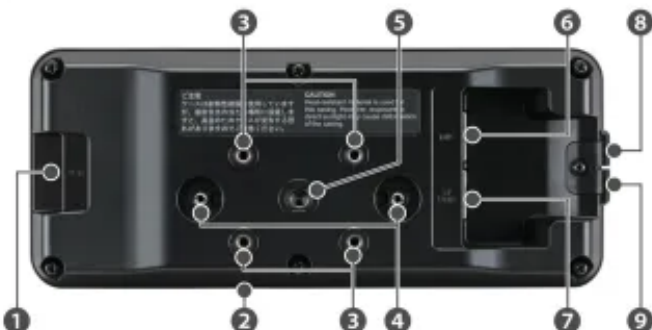
The CW decoder is carried over from the IC-7300MK2 and handles both Latin characters and Japanese wabun, with configurable decode key speed (AUTO, LOCK, KEY SPEED link), decode filter Q (AUTO, FIX) and threshold (AUTO, MANUAL). Icom notes that decoding accuracy varies with reception conditions.

There is also a one-touch FT8 preset. Selecting FT8 from the preset menu configures every required parameter in one step, and returning to normal operation is the same single selection.

What's Missing: No Internal ATU

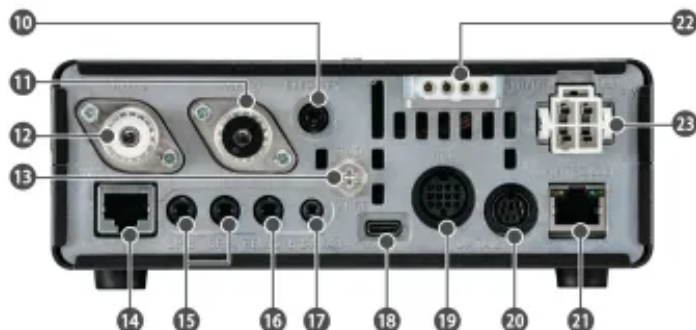
The IC-7110 does not include an internal antenna tuner. The rear panel carries a dedicated tuner connector, and Icom recommends pairing the radio with an external automatic unit.

Controller



- 1 USB Type-C™ port
- 2 microSD Card Slot
- 3 AMPS Hole Pattern
- 4 Magnet for Optional Accessories
- 5 1/4-20 Tripod Mount
- 6 Microphone Connector
- 7 Main Unit Connection Port
- 8 Electronic Keyer Jack
- 9 Headphone Jack

Main Unit



- 10 Electronic Keyer Jack
- 11 HF/50 MHz antenna connector
- 12 144/430 MHz antenna connector
- 13 GND Terminal
- 14 Microphone Connector
- 15 External Speaker Jack
- 16 Remote Jack
- 17 DATA1 Jack
- 18 USB Type-C™ Port
- 19 ACC Socket
- 20 DATA2 Socket
- 21 Controller Connector
- 22 Tuner Connector
- 23 DC Power Input Connector

*All band, all mode
for every operating environment.*



Photo is an image of in-vehicle use. Installation for in-vehicle use must comply with the applicable laws and regulations of each country.

HF/VHF/UHF ALL MODE TRANSCEIVER
IC-7110



HF/50/70*/144/430/440 MHz ALL Mode Coverage

*70 MHz for only EU/UK version

Real-Time Spectrum Scope and Waterfall Display

CW Decoder

Comprehensive D-STAR Functionality

4.3-inch Large Color Display with Touch Operation

Dualwatch for HF/VHF and HF/UHF

Simple Configuration for FT8 Operation

Wi-Fi® (2.4 GHz / 5 GHz) and Bluetooth® Connectivity

D-STAR



Promotion Video

Click on image for links



Dockweiler State Beach POTA Activation – US-3425

By Neil Smith, K6KWI | Orange County | California



One morning in late February, I headed to the Los Angeles Airport area for an event that would last a couple of hours, so I decided to work in a POTA activation while I was there. After checking the POTA app map, I discovered that Dockweiler State Beach was a POTA site located right at the end of the LAX runway.

After my morning event ended, I headed to the beach. This is a great place to watch planes taking off, but I was concerned that the parking area might be busy and that my usual antenna configuration could get in the way. So, I opted for a 20-meter Ham Stick with a mag-mount positioned in the middle of my car roof. This kept my "POTA footprint" small and helped avoid attracting too much unnecessary attention.

That turned out to be a good choice.

I put my FT-891 on the dashboard, placed my Bioenno 15Ah battery on the car floor, and set the radio to 80 watts. I had no way to self-spot, so I got on 20 meters and started calling CQ POTA.

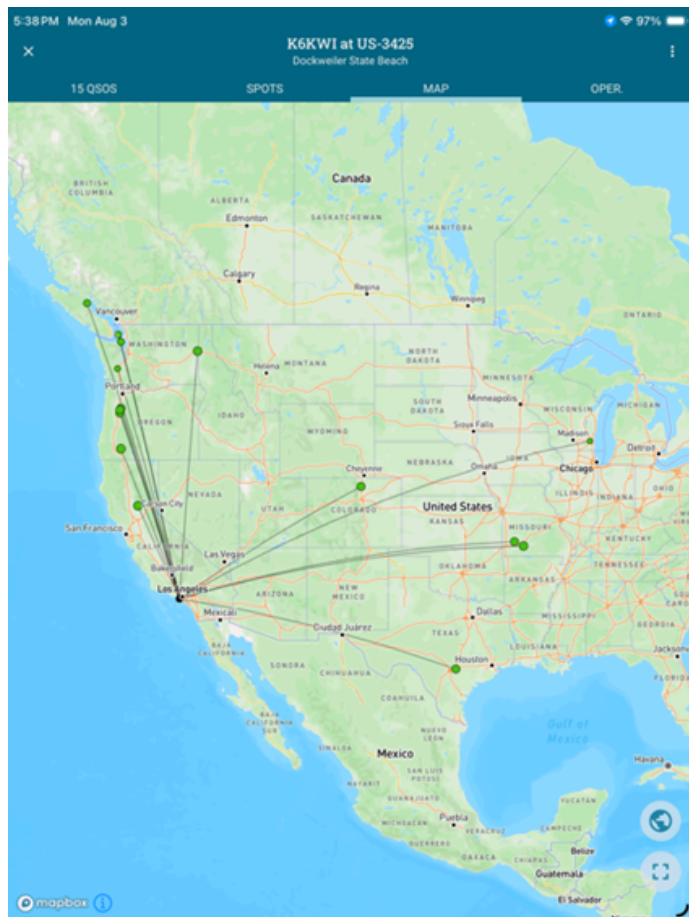
Sometimes that first contact is the hardest one to get. It just requires patience and plenty of calling: "CQ, CQ POTA..."

The day's first contact was kind enough to put out a spot for me. And, as we know, once you get spotted, the contacts start coming in!

In about 45 minutes, I had 15 QSOs in the log. I even managed to make a couple of Park-to-Park contacts, along with a DX contact with VA7JH in British Columbia.

For such a hurriedly planned activation, at a busy location with limited antenna real estate, I was very happy with the results. Time was growing short, and I needed to get back on the road for home. LA traffic was already starting to build.





K6KWI at US-3425 Dockweiler State Beach									
15 QSOs		SPOTS		MAP		OPER.			
Feb 27		15 QSOs						16 ✓	
22:51z	14.270	KE7ERQ	OR	William D. Abbott			53	57	
23:01z	14.167	W5DOC	TX	Greg W. Dockery			57	57	
23:12z	14.310	VA7JH	BC	Jim Hogg			59	55	
23:14z	14.310	KZ9W	WI	Burch D. Merritt			52	52	
23:16z	14.310	KK7SYA	WA	Alan R. Crim			55	55	
23:18z	14.310	KI7WGA	OR	Wayne D. Einarson			59	58	
23:19z	14.310	KN6XU	CA	Paul D. Bean			55	58	
23:21z	14.310	KF0PWT	CO	Brad E. Metzler			57	57	
23:22z	14.310	KK7VEF	OR	James E. Noble			59	57	
23:23z	14.310	KM7P	OR	Santiam Canyon Amateur Radio Club			59	57	
23:25z	14.310	W0RKK	MO	Randy K. Keene			54	57	
23:26z	14.310	A17MO	WA	John M. Zinza			53	53	
23:30z	14.310	KE6GAE	MO	David C. Harris			55	58	
23:31z	14.310	KK7QJK	WA	David A. Braucht			55	58	
23:34z	14.310	W7PT	WA	Jerauld L. Fry			55	55	

As you can see from the map, the vertical did a good job of getting out in every direction. I have used this setup on numerous occasions, and the results continue to surprise me.

POTA can be hungry work, so before leaving, I topped off my day with a hot dog from the vendor right there on the beach. Questionable nutritional value, but it tasted great! Hihi...As I drove off the beach, I looked up and saw a plane taking off. For a moment, I wondered if it was heading across the Pacific to Australia or New Zealand.



Every POTA activation is a different experience, and you learn something every time. This activation reminded me that even in crowded locations with limited spotting options, there is still a way to get set up and make contacts.

So, don't get discouraged if, on paper, a site looks difficult. Go out and have a go! At worst, you'll come home with a new experience—and maybe a little more knowledge for next time.

73, all, from SoCal!
POTA on!!

TASSIE

HAM-E-CON

HACK THE ETHER:

EDUCATION, INGENUITY, CONNECTION

NOVEMBER 7TH - 8TH 2026

HOBART TASMANIA

**A weekend of
discussion on
Amateur Radio
mind and
culture, system
and future.**



tassiehamconference@gmail.com for more information

CANTERBURY REPEATERS



When visiting Canterbury give a call on one of the repeaters.

CANTERBURY REPEATERS

Detail provided by Blair secretary@chchhamradio.org.nz

Ashburton B01 Repeater;

Mt Alford UHF 890- (67.0Hz CTCSS) FM & Allstar linked - ON AIR

Christchurch B05 Repeaters;

Cavendish UHF 970- ZLTRBO DMR - ON AIR

Idris Rd UHF 92125- DStar - OFF AIR

Marleys VHF 705+ FM (123Hz CTCSS) - ON AIR

Marleys National System UHF 9875- (123Hz CTCSS) - ON AIR

Marleys Digipeater VHF (iGated) 144.575 - ON AIR

Te Ahu Patiki (Mt Herbert) VHF 725+ (123Hz CTCSS) - ON AIR

North Canterbury B68 Repeaters;

Mt Grey VHF 675 FM/Fusion (123Hz CTCSS for FM mode) - ON AIR

Mt Noble VHF 6975 FM - ON AIR (without weather reports)

CARDS Repeaters;

Cass Peak VHF 5625- FM (88.5Hz CTCSS, IRLP Node #6900) - ON AIR

(Linked to Rollesby 680 FM South Canterbury)

Cass Peak UHF 438.500- (88.5Hz CTCSS, Echolink ZL3CAR-R) - ON AIR

Cass Peak VHF 53.850- 6M FM Repeater - ON AIR

Marleys UHF 840- MMDVM - ON AIR <www.digitalradio.co.nz>

Mt Admiral VHF 7375+ (88.5Hz CTCSS) - ON AIR

Mt Admiral UHF 439.300- MHz MMDVM DMR/Fusion is working (check out the

Canterbury 5303 DMR Network <www.digitalradio.co.nz>) - OFF AIR

Woolston UHF 9575- MMDVM - ON AIR <www.digitalradio.co.nz>

South Canterbury B34 Repeaters;

Rollesby VHF 680- FM - ON AIR (Linked to Cass Peak 5625- FM Christchurch)

Rollesby VHF Digipeater (iGated) 144.575 - ON AIR

Horrible VHF 6625- FM - ON AIR

Horrible UHF 8850- FM - ON AIR

Cave UHF 845- FM/DMR - ON AIR <www.digitalradio.co.nz>

Studholme VHF 695- FM - ON AIR

Studholme National System UHF 490+ FM - ON AIR

Studholme VHF Digipeater 144.575 - ON AIR

Westland B49 Repeaters;

Sewell Peak VHF 146.950- FM (77Hz CTCSS on both TX & RX) & DMR Local
TG9 + TG10 only (no IP link) - ON AIR

Sewell Peak UHF 438.575- FM (77Hz CTCSS on both TX & RX) & DMR Local
TG9 + TG10 only (no IP link)- ON AIR

Coming Soon

The NEW Guohetec 1KW Amp

The Ham Shack - Official Agents in New Zealand



GUOHETEC

All-English interface;
Fully Auto Amp;
Built-in Antenna Tuner;
10.1-inch touchscreen;

Running a built-in Linux OS;
Compatible with Hamlib;
CAT control protocol;
Remote control



AMP-1000W Fully Automatic Power Amplifier

The AMP-1000W power amplifier is a fully automatic wideband unit delivering a peak output power of 1.2 kW. Covering a frequency range of 1.8 MHz to 74 MHz, it provides power amplification for both shortwave and VHF bands.

Running a built-in Linux OS and compatible with Hamlib, the unit enables automatic band switching for most transceivers on the market via the CAT control protocol. It features comprehensive safety mechanisms including fault diagnosis, VSWR protection and overcurrent protection, with support for both input and output VSWR measurement.

Its 10.1-inch HD touchscreen clearly visualizes all operational parameters and delivers intuitive on-device control. An integrated high-power antenna tuner handles VSWR matching up to a 3:1 ratio. Four antenna output ports are fitted, supporting either custom frequency-based automatic port switching or manual selection.

Additional onboard hardware includes a 100 W 50 Ω dummy load and a 1–4 dB adjustable attenuator. The amplifier also supports remote control over network connection.



Technical Parameters

Parameter	Specification	Remarks
Operating Frequency Range	1.8–74 MHz	—
Rated Output Power	1000 W CW (Amateur Band), 1.8–74 MHz	—
Intermodulation Distortion	≤ 35 dB	—
Noise Rejection	≤ 43 dB	—
Harmonic Rejection	≤ 50 dB (Amateur Band, 1.8–74 MHz)	—
Input & Output Impedance	Input: 50 Ω unbalanced Input Connector: SO-239A (Female M-type) Full-band bypass input VSWR < 1.2 Full-band amplifying input VSWR < 1.5 Quantity of input ports: 1 Quantity of output ports: 4	—
Input Power Range	1–100 W (with built-in adjustable attenuator)	—
Gain	23 dB	—
Power Flatness	± 1 dB	—
Antenna Tuner Matching Range	3:1 (1.8–74 MHz)	—
Operating Voltage	85–264 VAC, 50/60 Hz	—
Total Power Consumption	2000 VA	—
Dimensions & Net Weight	6U chassis, Net weight: 21 kg	—
Operating Temperature & Humidity	Operating temperature: -10 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ~ +65 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ Operating humidity: 0% ~ 95% (non-condensing)	—

Disclaimer

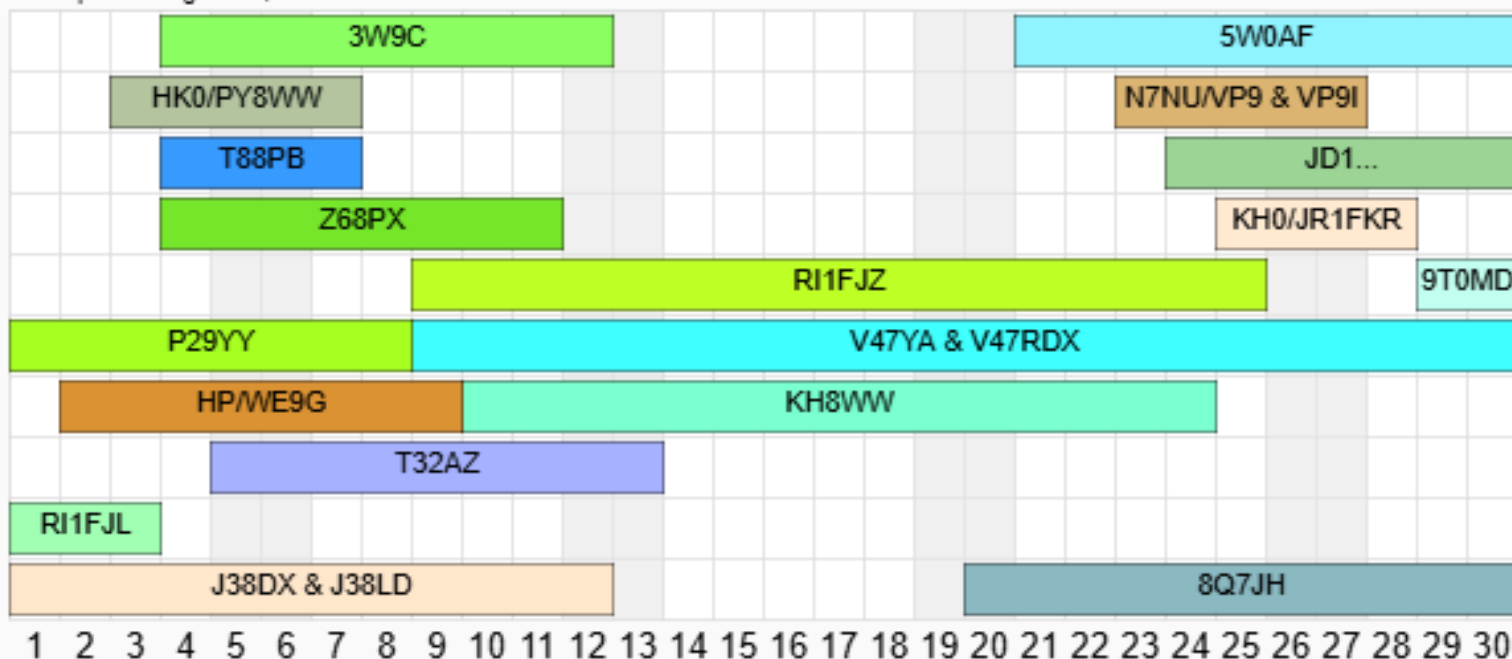
GUOHETEC reserves the right of final interpretation of all technical specifications.





DXWORLD.net FEATURED DXPEDITIONS TIMELINE

Last update: August 29, 2026



Edited by MM0NDX

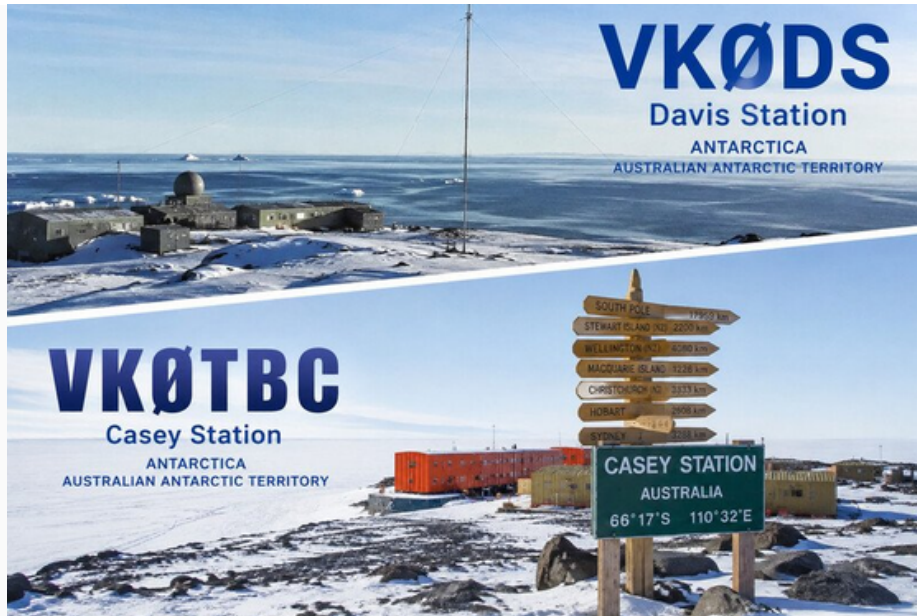
SEPTEMBER

© IK8LOV Max Laconca



Courtesy of DXworld.net





by Wireless Institute of Australia.

Here's a reminder for DXers to keep an ear, and perhaps more importantly these days an eye on the waterfall, pointed south. Two Australian radio amateurs are currently based at two different Australian Antarctic research stations and operating as time, work and Antarctic conditions permit. At Davis Station, David Short VK2JDS is operating as VKØDS, while at Casey Station, Tom Blunt VK2TBC is operating as VKØTBC. Opportunities to work Australian Antarctic stations are uncommon enough that having two active at the same time deserves a prominent place on the DX radar.

VKØDS at Davis is expected to remain there until around the end of October. DX-World reports David has been using an end-fed antenna from a 22-metre tower with plans for a V-beam array, operating whenever his station duties allow. David has previously demonstrated that Antarctic amateur radio need not stop at HF, having experimented with 2-metre EME from Davis during his earlier deployment. Meanwhile VKØTBC at Casey is Tom's 2026 Antarctic operation, with SSB and FT8 among his activities and operating necessarily fitted around his Antarctic duties. Casey is Australia's closest permanent Antarctic station, about 3,880 kilometres due south of Perth, while Davis is Australia's most southerly Antarctic station.

Both operations are a wonderful example of amateur radio reaching places most of us will only ever see on a map.

Propagation, work commitments, weather and the realities of living on an Antarctic station mean neither operator can simply keep a regular DXpedition schedule, so watch the DX clusters, check the bands and keep an eye on FT8 activity.

Whether you're chasing Antarctica for DXCC, Worked All Continents or simply want one of those contacts you'll remember for years, VKØDS and VKØTBC provide two very different paths into the frozen continent.

More information and operating updates:

VKØDS – Davis Station, Antarctica | DX-World [Link](#)

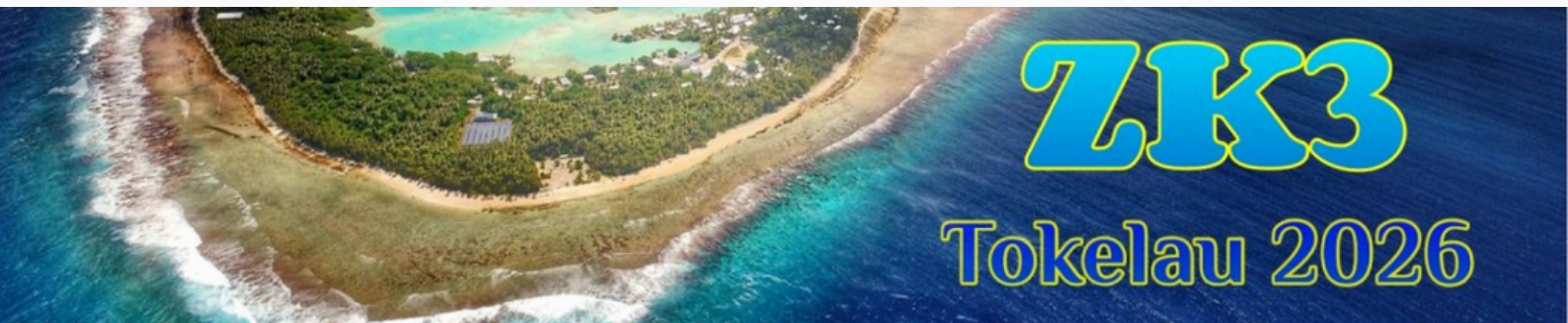
VKØTBC – Casey Station, Antarctica | DX-World [Link](#)





Gunter, DK2WH got in touch to say he will again be active from Namibia as V51WH starting August 25 and lasting through until October 10, 2026. He operates from a farm near Omaruru and in April last year installed an Optibeam 9-5 on a 15m mast. QRV on 160-6m, including 60m. Gunter will use V55Y in the CQWW RTTY contest. QSL via DK2WH.

other news.....



Due to an administrative error, the Tokelau 2026 DXpedition will be rescheduled to November 2027.

To summarize the issue: The call sign ZK3ZL was issued and the team was notified they had permission to travel to Tokelau on the November 17th ferry. Unfortunately, their return ferry booking was missed and the space allocated to other passengers. With no other reasonably priced transportation alternative, we must reschedule the project.

We know this is a big disappointment to the DX community, the team is equally disappointed, we've been working on this project for over a year. Everything was ready to go, equipment purchased / packed, airline tickets purchased, interim hotels booked, and travel schedules finalized.



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- 5 Band Yagi's 10m, 12, 15m, 17m & 20m Kit
- 5 Band Yagi's Pre-assembled
- 5 Band Yagi's Portable Pre-assembled
- 40m add on (use with Spiderbeam yagis)
- GOPAK 12m mast and 404 7 band antenna
- 404 7 band antenna & 807 9 band antenna
- 12m Masts with collars
- 10m Masts
- Mast bags

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SOTABEAMS Masts - more stock has arrived

- 7m Tactical
- 6m Tactical
- 6m Carbon
- 4m very portable
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- Sotabeams wire (lots of options)
- Guying rings and guying kits.

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OH NO!! THE SPARC ROSEBUD RADIOFEST HAS BEEN POSTPONED.

(Don't worry, it's only for this year, and SPARC have something special for you, instead.)

SPARC have been advised by Eastbourne Primary School that their much-needed school renovations have begun, which is wonderful news for the school.

So what will SPARC stage in place of this year's event?

SPARC member Paul VK3DPW has generously offered us the use of his Dromana Triple Drive In theatre, the perfect place to stage SPARC's 2026 GIANT CAR BOOT SALE !!

It will take place on Sunday, November 15th, 2026 at the Dromana 3 Drive In, Nepean Highway, Dromana, commencing at 10:00 am

Goods sold will be anything related to Amateur Radio, CB, marine, 4WD radio, etc., aviation, commercial comms, electronics and IT-related items.

Sellers may hire a site at \$10.00 per car/ute, \$20.00 per trailer or truck. Entry for buyers and the general public will be just \$2.00.

Some tables will be available for hire if required, SPARC to be advised by vendors when booking. (Price per table TBA)

The Rosebud Sea Scouts will supply catering on the day.

Bookings / enquiries email John Ross VK3MK, secretary@sparc.asn.au



ZL4AT

ACTIVATIONS

Photographs used with permission of
FaceBook page owner/admin





2L1	2910	57/55	2330
2L1	"	57/55	2331
2L1	"	57/53	2332
2L1	"	55/53	2333
2L1	AT	55/54	2334
VK1MA 2130 53			
2L1/NL-086 23/8/26			
2L2	NEB	7090	97/57 0208
2L1	BH	"	57/57 0209
2L1	BRT	"	57/56 0214
2L1	30Y	"	55/54 0213
2L1	ALF	"	55/53 0213
2L1	3XJ	"	57/57 0214
2L1	KL	"	57/57 0215
2L1	2SA	"	55/52 0215
2L1	CNB	"	57/55 0221
2L1	KB	"	57/58 0221
2L1	YX	"	57/55 0222



VK / ZL Events Calendar updated 26-07-2026

- WINTER RETRO FAIR Sunday August 2nd (Reservoir VK3)
- NORTHERN CORRIDOR RADIO GROUP HAMFEST Sun. Aug 30th (Bassendean VK6)
- SADARC SHEPPARTON HAMFEST Sunday September 13TH (Shepparton VK3)
- SUNSHINE COAST ARC SUNFEST Saturday 19th September (Beerwah VK4)
- Software Defined Conference 29 Sept. to 2 Oct. <https://sdr2026.org> (Adelaide VK5)
- BAREC BENDIGO RADIOFEST Sunday 11th October (Bendigo VK3)
- WESTLAKES ARC FIELD DAY Sunday 18th October (Teralba VK2)
- TASSIE HAM – E- CON November 6th, 7th & 8th (Hobart VK7)
- GOLD COAST HAMFEST Sunday 8th November (Nerang VK4)
- SPARC GIANT CAR BOOT SALE Sunday 15th November (Dromana VK3)
- AREG ADELAIDE CAR BOOT SALE Saturday 21st November (Kilburn VK5)

Find or post event details at Hamfests Australasia Group FB page
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1675116319317400/>

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SUNDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2026



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HF Band Conditions Forecast: September 2026

Forecast prepared 31 August 2026

September should bring good, varied HF propagation rather than continuous high-band fireworks. Solar Cycle 25 is past its late-2024 peak, but the Sun remains active enough to support reliable worldwide communication on 20 metres and useful daytime openings on 17 and 15 metres. At the same time, the Southern Hemisphere's transition from winter to spring will preserve worthwhile lower-band conditions early in the month while improving north-south paths around the equinox.

September in one sentence: Make 20 metres your dependable DX band, use 40 and 30 metres around darkness and the grey line, and check 15, 12 and 10 metres whenever solar flux rises and geomagnetic conditions remain quiet.

Solar and Geomagnetic Outlook

NOAA's 27-day outlook, issued on 24 August, predicts 10.7-centimetre solar flux of about 120 sfu on 1 September, falling to 90–95 sfu during 4–9 September, then recovering gradually toward 115 sfu by 16–19 September. Across the published 1–19 September figures, the average is approximately 104.5 sfu. This is moderate solar support: enough to keep 20 metres healthy, but not strong enough to guarantee daily worldwide openings on 10 metres.

Geomagnetic conditions are forecast to be mostly quiet to unsettled. The same NOAA outlook lists planetary A-index values mainly between 5 and 8, with a more disturbed interval around 13–14 September, when the predicted A index rises to 15 and 12.[1] NOAA's short-range forecast for the start of the month expects no G1 or greater geomagnetic storm, with the maximum three-hour Kp remaining below storm level through 1 September.

Indicator❏	September expectation❏	Likely on-air effect❏
F10.7 solar flux❏	90–120 sfu through 19 September❏	Reliable 20m; selective 17m/15m; opportunistic 12m/10m❏
Planetary A index❏	Mostly 5–8❏	Generally stable ionosphere and usable long-distance paths❏
Disturbed period❏	Around 13–14 September❏	Possible weaker polar paths, fading and higher absorption❏
Early-month Kp❏	Mostly 1–3❏	Favourable for routine HF work and weak-signal modes❏
Radio-blackout risk❏	Low but not zero❏	Brief daytime degradation remains possible after flares❏

Best Operating Strategy

For most VK and ZL operators, 20 metres should be the starting point during daylight, followed by 17 and 15 metres when signals, beacons or digital activity suggest the MUF has lifted. Around local sunset, move progressively through 30 and 40 metres. At night, 40 metres should provide the best balance of activity, distance and antenna practicality, while 80 metres will favour regional paths and occasional longer-distance contacts.

Grey-line operation deserves particular attention. The period from roughly 30 minutes before to 45 minutes after local sunrise or sunset can produce rapid signal enhancement on 40, 30 and 20 metres. Because the useful interval may be brief, operators should prepare headings and frequencies in advance rather than beginning a band search after the enhancement has started.

If conditions appear poor, try CW or a weak-signal digital mode before abandoning the band. During moderate solar-flux periods, a quiet geomagnetic field can be more valuable than a high flux reading accompanied by disturbance. Check the Kp trend, not merely its latest value, and listen for several minutes because long-path fading can be slow and deep.

Dates Worth Watching

The All Asian DX Contest, Phone, on 5–6 September, should create concentrated activity from Asian stations and provide a useful opportunity to test the forecast northward paths. The WAE DX Contest, SSB, later in the month, is particularly relevant to VK and ZL because only intercontinental contacts between Europe and DX stations count; its organisers specifically encourage activity on both the high and low bands.

For digital operators, the CQ World Wide RTTY DX Contest runs from 0000 UTC on 26 September until 2359 UTC on 27 September. The official event site describes it as the last full weekend of September and reports participation from around the world, making it an excellent opportunity to work new countries even when propagation is only moderate.

Final Outlook

September 2026 earns an overall rating of good to very good. The forecast solar-flux range will probably keep 20 metres dependable, 40 and 30 metres productive, and 17 and 15 metres rewarding when timed correctly. The higher bands are unlikely to remain open continuously, but the approach to the equinox means they should never be dismissed without listening.

The most promising period appears to be the middle and latter part of the month, as forecast flux recovers toward 110–115 sfu. However, the predicted disturbance around 13–14 September may temporarily reduce polar and long-path performance.

Monitor live space-weather reports, DX clusters, beacons and reverse beacon networks, then adjust quickly when the ionosphere changes.

Overall September rating: ★★★★★☆ — Good to Very Good

“The new kid on the block” Have a look at the great products... editor



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GOTO Potaholics FB page



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Grant
ZL1GGL

Ian
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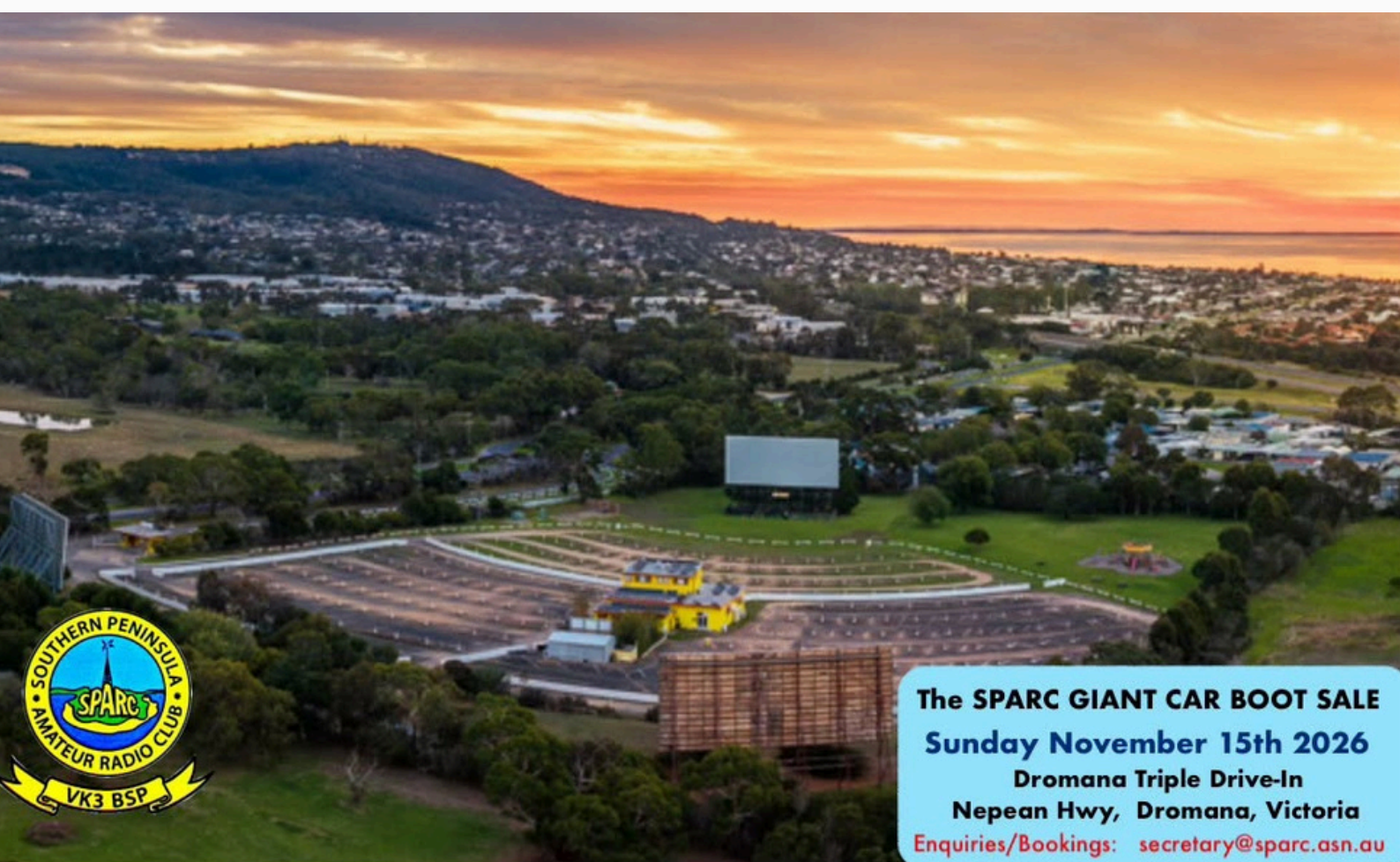
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Cheers
Grant ZL1GGL



The SPARC GIANT CAR BOOT SALE
Sunday November 15th 2026
Dromana Triple Drive-In
Nepean Hwy, Dromana, Victoria
Enquiries/Bookings: secretary@sparc.asn.au

Calling New Zealand

See how many towns you can contact in a month

November 2026

Saturday & Sundays for 4 weeks

Time: 6am Saturday until midnight Sunday

HF SSB only

Activators:

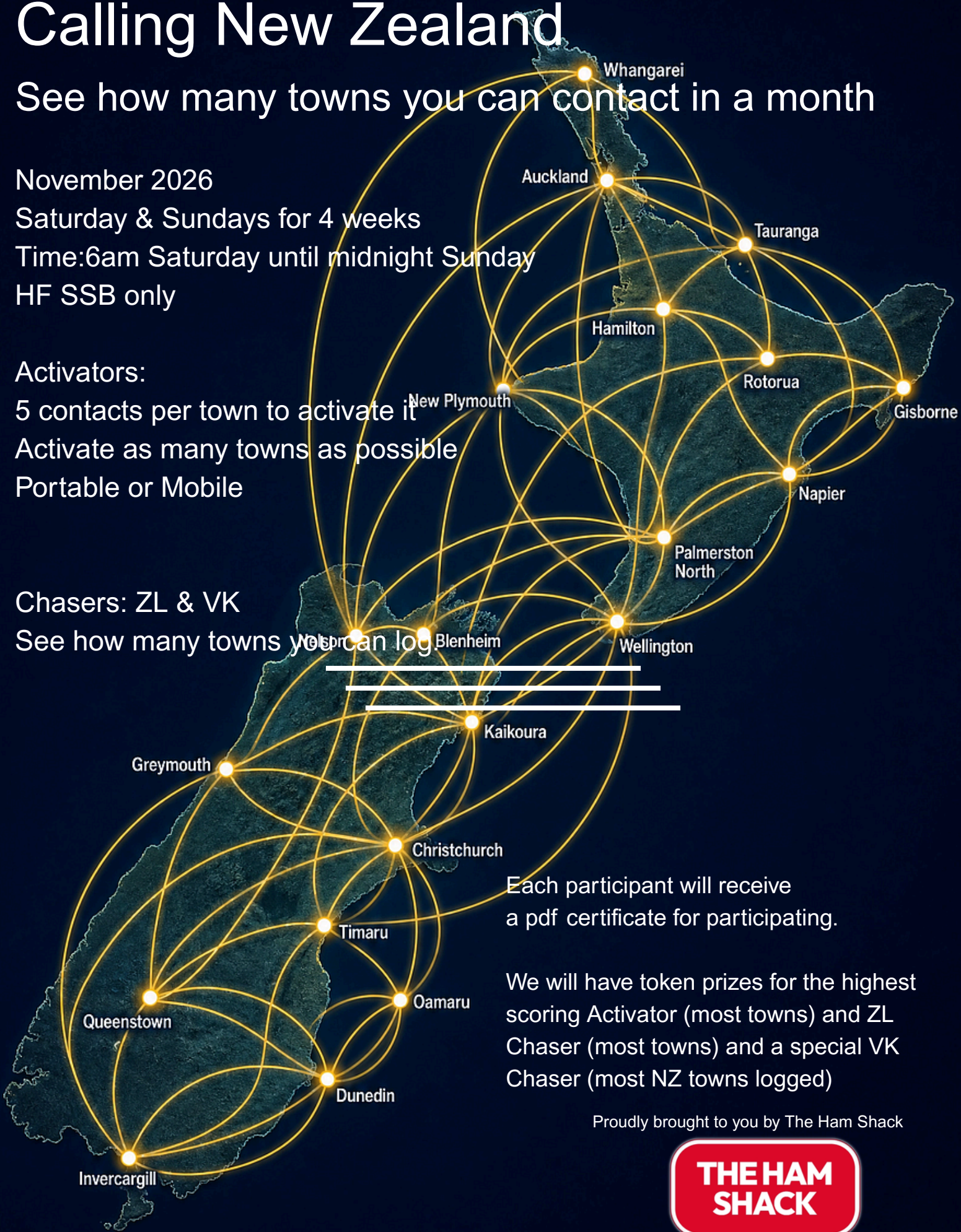
5 contacts per town to activate it

Activate as many towns as possible

Portable or Mobile

Chasers: ZL & VK

See how many towns you can log



Each participant will receive
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We will have token prizes for the highest
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Chaser (most towns) and a special VK
Chaser (most NZ towns logged)

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Remote Control the PMR171 using WaveLink

WaveLink is the Guohetec companion app/platform, hosted at wavelink.guohedz.com, a real-time audio communication system. If you want to remote control your radio then give it a try.

[Click here for the link to instructions.](#)

The current version is a test version and is available for free use.

WaveLink

username Mail administrator

A username

password

[forget the password?](#)

☒ I have read and agree. User Agreement and Privacy Policy

Mobile login Computer login

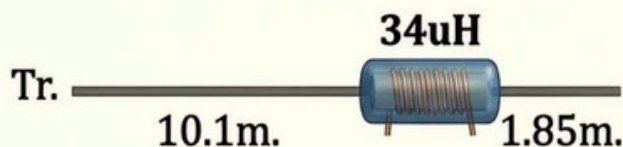
Don't have an account yet? [Register now](#)



80 - 40 - 20 - 15 - 10m.



40 - 20 - 10m



110uH coil : 260 turns 1mm. cul. 34uH coil : 90 turns 1mm. cul close wound on a 19mm pvc tube start tuning the long wire on the high bands.





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 Soren Low
August 1 at 4:00PM · 🌐

A shout out to Greg ZL1GUD from The Ham Shack after Aviation Security confiscated my antenna pole at Auckland Airport on Friday morning. Greg answered by 7.15am text and offered to meet me at Christchurch on my arrival with a new SOTA Beams Carbon 6. Talk about great customer service!

I took my new pole up Dumbane ZL3/CB-527 today for a pleasant activation near Hanmer Springs. Thanks Greg for hooking me up with the new pole, and of course to the chasers!



Greg at the HAM Shack provides absolutely outstanding service and is always incredibly generous with his time. He's more than happy to answer questions, offer advice and share his considerable knowledge, whether you're buying something or simply looking for a bit of guidance.

It's this genuine willingness to help fellow amateurs that makes the HAM Shack such a pleasure to deal with.

Ben ZL4AT

Like bad service, good service is something that sticks with you as a customer. Greg at The Ham Shack on the other hand has set the bar very high, and I've been incredibly impressed with his service. Emails answered, he is happy to take a call and discuss options and ideas, even if you aren't buying something. He is genuinely happy to talk Radios and trouble shoot ideas. If you want someone to show you the POTA "ropes" he will do that as well. Ah and don't forget he also publishes what may be the best Amateur Radio Magazine that the Ham World has seen. Keep up the great work.

PHIL ZL3PAE

Great service and very quick delivery. Arrived in Hamilton 1 day after I ordered it. Will definitely buy more from the Ham Shack....

Oh, I already have bought EFHW antenna kit.

ZL1BOG

Thank you so much for your awesome support. It's great that you answer your phone and you are "always" so willing to help & reply with a solution in a very timely manner. Thanks again.

Cheers Grant ZL1GGL

I've purchased a few products from The Ham Shack over the last year. I've been impressed with their service, speedy delivery and knowledgeable advice. One thing that I really appreciate is that Greg is an operator himself and uses the products he sells for his own activities. This means that the answers I get are based on practical real world experience. That's a point of difference that I really value.

Nick ZL2NEB

As for the equipment I bought through you, I was actually surprised that you were able to supply non stock Sotabeam equipment. I honestly didn't expect that, I was expecting "sorry, we don't stock that".

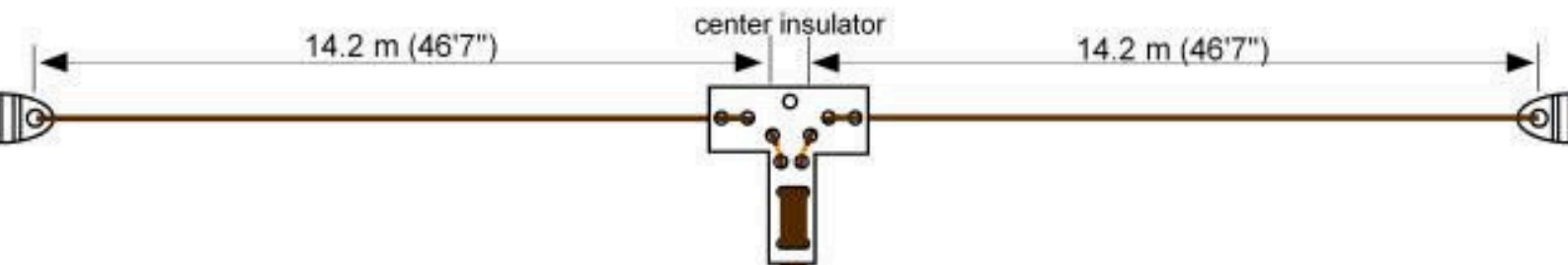
The Contest Console for the IC-7300 mk2 works like a dream. It has changed the way I use the radio and my display settings. For it to arrive from the UK in less than a fortnight was amazing. Thank you

Pete ZL4te

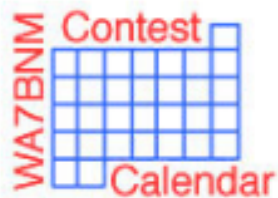
Good quality pole, very heavy duty. Great packaging, quick shipping, and as always awesome service from the Ham Shack! Gareth

I bought a linked dipole from The Ham Shack and am very happy with the antenna, I wanted different bands then the standard and this was no problem and got the antenna in a couple of days. It works really well, has a low swr and good results on all the bands.

Thanks very much ! 73 ZL2HTO



COMPETITION CALENDAR



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August 22 - 29, 2026

August 30 - September 6, 2026

September 7 - 14, 2026



	Aug 30 Sunday	Aug 31 Monday	Sep 1 Tuesday	Sep 2 Wednesday	Sep 3 Thursday	Sep 4 Friday	Sep 5 Saturday	Sep 6 Sunday
SCRY/RTTYOps WW DX RTTY Contest								
ALARA Contest								
U.S. Islands QSO Party								
World Wide Digi DX Contest								
Kansas QSO Party								
K1USN Slow Speed Test								
QCX Challenge								
ICWC Medium Speed Test								
OK1WC Memorial (MWC)								
QCX Challenge								
ICWC Medium Speed Test								
Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest								
QCX Challenge								
ICWC Medium Speed Test								
Tuesday's Telegraphy Contest								
Phone Weekly Test								
A1Club AWT								
CWops Test (CWT)								
VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest								
Mini-Test 40								
Mini-Test 80								
CWops Test (CWT)								
UKEICC 80m Contest								
VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest-NA								
Walk for the Bacon QRP Contest								
CWops Test (CWT)								
CWops Test (CWT)								
NRAU 10m Activity Contest								
SKCC Sprint Europe								
NCCC FT4 Sprint								
Weekly RTTY Test								
NCCC Sprint Ladder								
K1USN Slow Speed Test								
ARRL EME Contest								
All Asian DX Contest, Phone								
CWops CW Open								
Wake-Up! QRP Sprint								
SARL VHF/UHF FM Contest								
SARL Field Day Contest								
Russian RTTY WW Contest								
CWops CW Open								
IARU Region 1 Field Day, SSB								
RSGB SSB Field Day								
AGCW Straight Key Party								
IARU Region 1 145 MHz Contest								
PODXS 070 Club Jay Hudak Memorial 80m Sprint								
CWops CW Open								
WAB 144 MHz Phone								
Tennessee QSO Party								

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— OLD HAM RADIO ADAGE

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Small Stick, Big Signal: Why Every Ham Should Carry an Antenna Analyser

There's a particular kind of silence that falls over a shack when a station goes quiet for no obvious reason. The rig is fine, the mic is fine, and yet nothing is getting out the way it should. More often than not, the problem isn't in the radio at all, it's sitting quietly at the base of the mast, in a feedline joint, or in an antenna that has drifted off resonance since the last time anyone checked it.

Ask any experienced operator how they finally solved a mystery like that, and the answer is rarely a lucky guess. It's a measurement. An SWR reading. A quick sweep across the band. A cable checked end to end with a proper analyser instead of a finger crossed and a dummy load.

The Hidden Cost of Guessing

Most of us have, at some point, relied on the transceiver's built-in SWR meter and hoped for the best. It's a reasonable starting point, but it only tells you one number at one frequency - it won't show you where a fault sits along a feedline, how an antenna behaves across the whole band, or whether that slightly-too-high reading is the antenna, the coax, or a dodgy connector.

Guessing has a cost. It's the contest weekend lost re-terminating connectors one at a time. It's the field day antenna that never quite performs, with no way to know why. It's the finals stage that takes the strain of a mismatch nobody spotted before keying up. None of it is dramatic, until it is.

What a Proper Analyser Actually Buys You

A dedicated antenna and cable analyser turns troubleshooting from folklore into fact. Instead of swapping components and hoping, you can sweep a full band in seconds, check a feedline end to end and know whether the fault is the cable or the antenna, and walk away.

The trick is finding one that's genuinely practical to keep with you: something small enough to live in the radio bag, simple enough to use standing at the base of a mast in the rain, and capable enough to trust the numbers it gives you.

Enter the RigExpert Stick 230

This is exactly the gap the RigExpert Stick 230 was built to fill. It's a genuinely pocketable analyser - barely bigger than a torch, that covers 0.1 to 230 MHz, which takes in every HF band plus 6m and 2m in one unit. For most amateur operators, that's the entire working range covered by a single, compact instrument.

The high-contrast E Ink display stays perfectly readable in direct sunlight, which matters far more than it sounds when you're up a ladder or out on a field day site. A single charge is good for around 16 hours of use, and the splash and dustproof case means it can handle splashes without drama.

It's built with real operators in mind: a HAM mode for a fast single-band check, a Multi mode for scanning multiband antennas, factory calibrated, and a 100-point SWR chart so you can see the whole picture rather than a single figure. Bluetooth connectivity lets you pair it with a smartphone or laptop to log and review sweeps. At 185 grams, it disappears into a radio bag without you noticing it's there, until the moment you need it.

Whether you're maintaining a home station, heading out on a DXpedition, or simply tired of not really knowing how your antenna is performing, the Stick 230 gives you a proper, trustworthy answer in a package that fits in one hand.

SEPTEMBER READER SPECIAL

RigExpert Stick 230 — was \$690, now **\$590 NZD**

Valid 1st–30th September 2026 · Excl. GST



Get in Touch

Ready to stop guessing? Reach out to the Electrotest team using either of the buttons below, click to email us directly, or visit the product page online to enquire and see full specifications.

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JARL Ham Fair 2026

HAM Fair 2026

"JARL 100th Anniversary: Build up the antenna of curiosity"



Tokyo Ham Fair 2026: A Century of Curiosity, Community and Innovation

For two days at the end of August, Tokyo once again became a focal point for the international amateur-radio community. The 48th Amateur Radio Festival—Ham Fair 2026 was held on 29 and 30 August at Ariake GYM-EX in Tokyo's waterfront district.

Organised by the Japan Amateur Radio League, the event combined a major equipment exhibition with club displays, technical presentations, operating activities, homebrew projects and opportunities for newcomers to experience amateur radio firsthand.

Although the event is sometimes informally described overseas as the “Tokyo Hamvention”, its official name is JARL Ham Fair. It is Japan's largest amateur-radio gathering and one of the most important annual radio events in the Asia-Pacific region.

This year's theme carried particular significance:

“JARL 100th Anniversary: Build up the antenna of curiosity.” — Japan Amateur Radio League

The words neatly captured the character of the weekend. Ham Fair 2026 looked back over a century of organised amateur radio in Japan while placing equal emphasis on experimentation, education and the technologies that will carry the hobby forward.

A Larger and More Diverse Exhibition

Ariake GYM-EX hosted the Ham Fair for the third year after the event moved from Tokyo Big Sight in 2024. The single-hall venue brought commercial manufacturers, specialist suppliers, radio clubs and technical groups together under one roof. Japanese amateur-radio news service hamlife.jp counted 234 booths, including poster displays, compared with 197 in 2025.

The fair was much more than an equipment showroom. Its programme included main-stage and satellite-stage presentations, a homebrew equipment competition, DXCC card checking, technical demonstrations, club meetings, an amateur-radio advice desk and youth activities. Construction classes offered children the opportunity to build an FM radio, a kitchen timer or a Morse-code practice oscillator with help from experienced volunteers.



People under 22 were admitted free on presentation of identification, an important gesture at a time when amateur-radio organisations around the world are working to attract younger operators. A stamp rally for children encouraged families to explore different parts of the exhibition rather than remaining only at the large commercial stands.

48th Amateur Radio Festival

Theme “JARL 100th Anniversary: Build up the antenna of curiosity”



Icom's IC-7110 Takes Centre Stage

The most closely watched equipment announcement was Icom's world premiere of the IC-7110, previously teased under the development name "X-026". Positioned as the successor to the long-running IC-7100, the new radio combines HF, 50 MHz, 144 MHz and 430/440 MHz all-mode coverage in a compact, mobile-friendly design. The European version also includes 70 MHz.

The IC-7110 uses a separate control head with a 4.3-inch colour touchscreen, spectrum scope and waterfall display. It includes D-STAR, CW decoding, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, GNSS and dual-watch reception across selected HF/VHF/UHF band combinations. Icom also incorporated USB-C connectivity and an interface designed to simplify FT8 operation.

This combination makes the IC-7110 especially interesting for operators who want a single station for home, mobile and portable use. It reflects a broader trend visible throughout the fair: modern amateur transceivers are no longer isolated boxes. They are increasingly expected to integrate with computers, networks, positioning systems, digital voice infrastructure and remote operating platforms. At the time of the unveiling, Icom had not announced final pricing or delivery dates.

Kenwood Celebrates 80 Years

JVC Kenwood used the event to demonstrate its new TM-D750 and TM-D750S 144/430 MHz mobile transceivers. The dual-band models combine APRS with D-STAR and were presented through hands-on receiver demonstrations. The company also displayed its TH-D75 handheld, TS-890 HF transceiver and flagship TS-990.

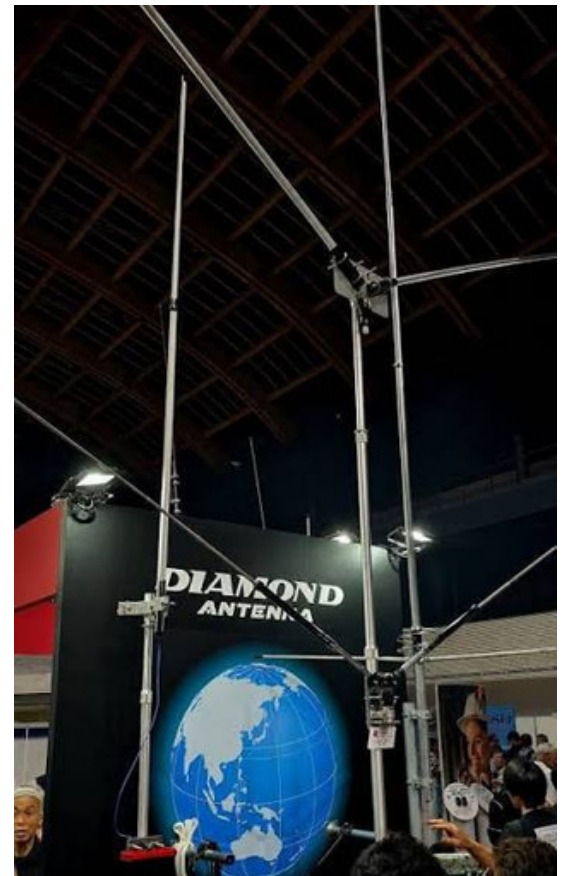
The greatest surprise was the announcement of a TS-990 Kenwood 80th Anniversary model. Limited to 15 units for the Japanese domestic market, the special edition features gold-coloured accents and a nostalgic TRIO badge. It is to be supplied with a matching speaker, a JAIA-developed desktop microphone and headphones. Pricing and the sales method were still to be announced after the fair.

Receivers, Digital Systems and Practical Innovation

AOR displayed the AR5700D 6GHz Extended Version, a wideband communications receiver covering 9 kHz to 6000 MHz. The set supports analogue modes and numerous digital formats, including D-STAR, C4FM, DMR, NXDN, TETRA and P25, while digital I/Q output allows integration with SDR software. No price or release date had been confirmed, but the receiver demonstrated the continuing convergence of traditional communications receivers and software-defined radio.

Alinco's stand included the DR-DPM80H, a reference model for Japan's 351 MHz digital business-radio service. Its unusual feature is support for both AMBE and RALCWI voice codecs in one radio. The company also showed its new DJ-P420 licence-free handheld range, including a noise-cancelling version, and a proposed DM-425MV 25-amp power supply.

Yaesu presented its broad amateur-radio line-up, C4FM repeater equipment and WIRES-X demonstrations. Around the time of the fair, it also released new FTX-1 firmware and the ADMS-19 memory-management program. These developments were less dramatic than a surprise transceiver launch, but they illustrated an equally important part of modern radio ownership: manufacturers now improve operating features and correct problems through software long after the hardware leaves the factory.





Radio Was Meant to Be Used

Ham Fair 2026 did not confine radio activity to display cabinets. The special-event station 8J1HAM offered public and supervised guest operation. Because the venue does not permit external antenna towers, the HF and other station facilities were linked to remote sites around Tokyo—an elegant demonstration of how remote operation can overcome physical limitations.

JARL also scheduled all eleven of its regional headquarters stations for 144 and 430 MHz activity from the venue. A temporary internet-connected D-STAR repeater, JP1YJJ, provided digital voice and data facilities during the weekend.

These activities helped bridge the gap between looking at equipment and experiencing communication. An unlicensed visitor could discover the excitement of making a contact under supervision, while experienced operators could explore digital networks, remote stations and new operating techniques.

Why Tokyo Matters to VK and ZL Operators

For radio amateurs in Australia and New Zealand, the Tokyo Ham Fair offers an important view of developments within our wider region. Japan remains home to several of the world's major amateur-radio manufacturers, and products first shown in Tokyo often attract worldwide attention before reaching export markets.

The 2026 exhibits also addressed operating conditions familiar to VK and ZL amateurs. Space limitations favour compact control heads, mobile installations and remote stations. Emergency-communications groups value APRS, reliable VHF/UHF systems and digital networking. Portable operators want equipment capable of handling HF, VHF and UHF without carrying an entire shack. The IC-7110 and TM-D750 illustrate how manufacturers are responding to those requirements.

Just as importantly, Tokyo demonstrated that a successful amateur-radio convention cannot rely on new products alone. Its strength came from the combination of commercial displays,

Looking Forward

Ham Fair 2026 celebrated JARL's first century without turning the event into a museum. Historic names and anniversary displays stood alongside touchscreen radios, SDR receivers, remote operation, digital voice and online updating. The message was clear: amateur radio honours its past most effectively when it continues to experiment.

The final official attendance figure for 2026 had not been published when this article was prepared on 31 August, so it would be premature to compare visitor numbers with previous years. What can be said with confidence is that the increase to 234 booths, the extensive programme and the international interest surrounding the IC-7110 gave the 48th Ham Fair considerable momentum.

A century after JARL's foundation, the "antenna of curiosity" remains very much upright. Tokyo Ham Fair 2026 showed a hobby that is changing in its tools but constant in its purpose: learning, experimenting and connecting people across distance.

FT8 automation with the program MSHV

By Daniel Romila VE7LCG

In this article I suppose:

- You know already what FT8 is
- You have some experience working FT8, probably with variants of the software WSJT-X and JTDX
- You have a modern transceiver with a USB sound card connected with your computer, a transceiver like YAESU FT-710, FT-DX10, ICOM IC-7300, KENWOOD TS-980S or similar.

I will quickly go to the MSHV software and settings, with the purpose of you being up and running in 20 - 30 minutes, following my article.

I tried various scripts for automating FT8. Those required leaving the FT8 software exactly as it wanted to put its component windows on the computer's screen. The automating scripts faked mouse movements and clicks. Practically, those scripts took control of my computer and I was no longer able to use the computer for anything else. The smallest slide of the FT8 windows from their original position made those scripts not to work anymore. It is not something I intend to ever use again.

If you ever saw on your FT8 screen something like an FT8 communication line communicating with two separate stations, you already met somebody using MSHV:

040115	-6	0.3	VE7LCG	N8IH	EM50		U.S.A.	3539	2900
040115	-18	0.1	VE7LCG	KQ4FTM	EM74		U.S.A.	3507	552
040130	TX		N8IH	VE7LCG	-06				750
040145	-4	0.3	VE7LCG	N8IH	R-03		U.S.A.	-	2899
040200	TX		N8IH	RR73;	KQ4FTM	<VE7LCG > -18			750

I am VE7LCG. In a single line, I acknowledge the end of communication with N8IH, and I start a new communication with KQ4FTM and tell him my report for him is -18.

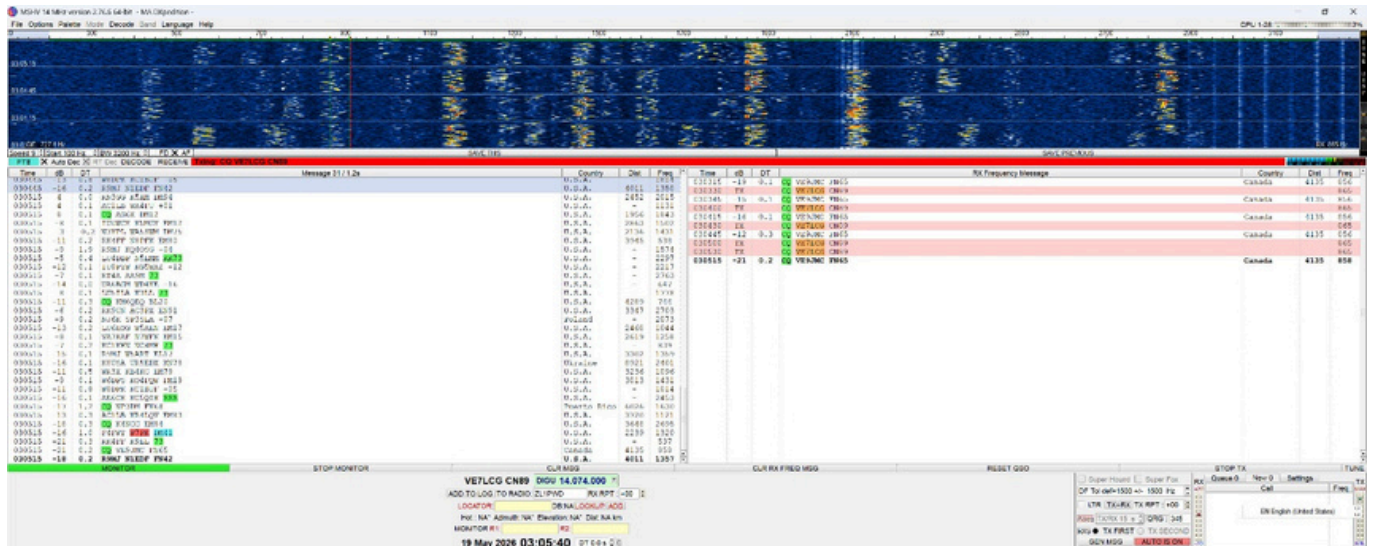
The MSHV software is not something new. It is less known because it is made by a Bulgarian radio amateur, LZ2HV. His website does not have the newest OK certificate for many antivirus/firewall Windows programs you might have, so – most probably – you will get a warning and have to explicitly decide to continue to the Bulgarian website:

<https://lz2hv.org/mshv>

I decided to go further, and I ignored the warning. Nothing happened to me – there was no warning for a virus or similar; it was a warning about a certificate being expired or not. Proceed at your own risk.

In the moment I am writing this article, May 18th 2026, the MSHV software is at the version 2.76.6 and can be downloaded for Windows, Linux and MacOS from:
<https://lz2hv.org/node/10>

I let everything install with the default options. When you start the program you will have on the screen something similar with the following picture (I say similar and not identical, because your software is not setup yet for your transceiver):



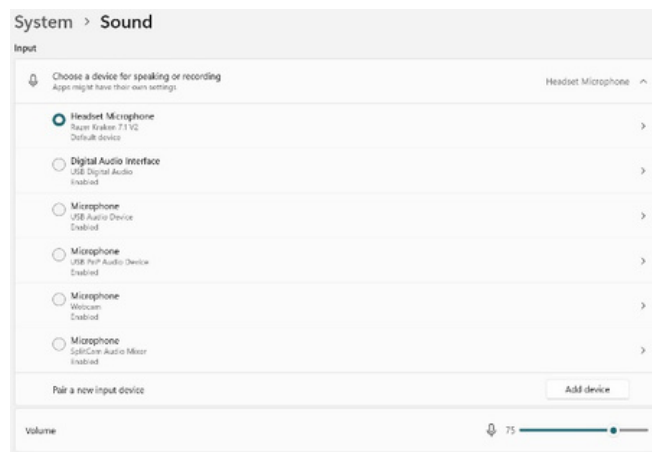
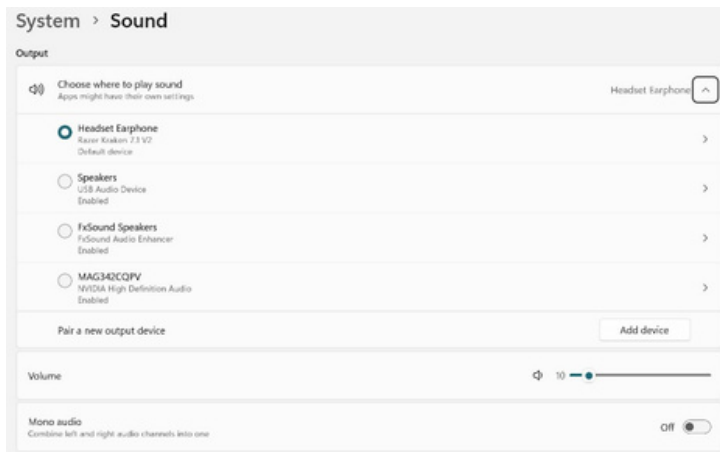
Let MSHV running. We have to look first in the operating system itself. Your transceiver must be ON, ready to work in FT8 as you worked already in FT8 in other programs, and connected with a USB cable to the computer (also ON). Just for verification, we start by going into Control Panels and see everything is OK there, no problems with drivers and connections. In the PORTS section of the Control Panel, you should see something like this:



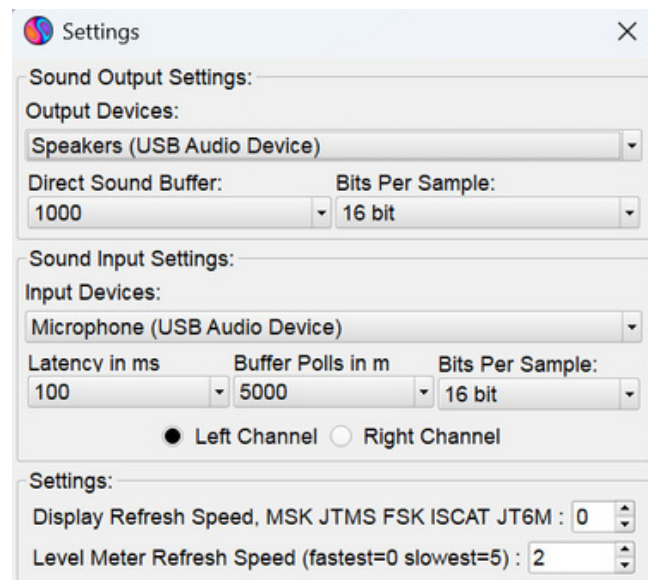
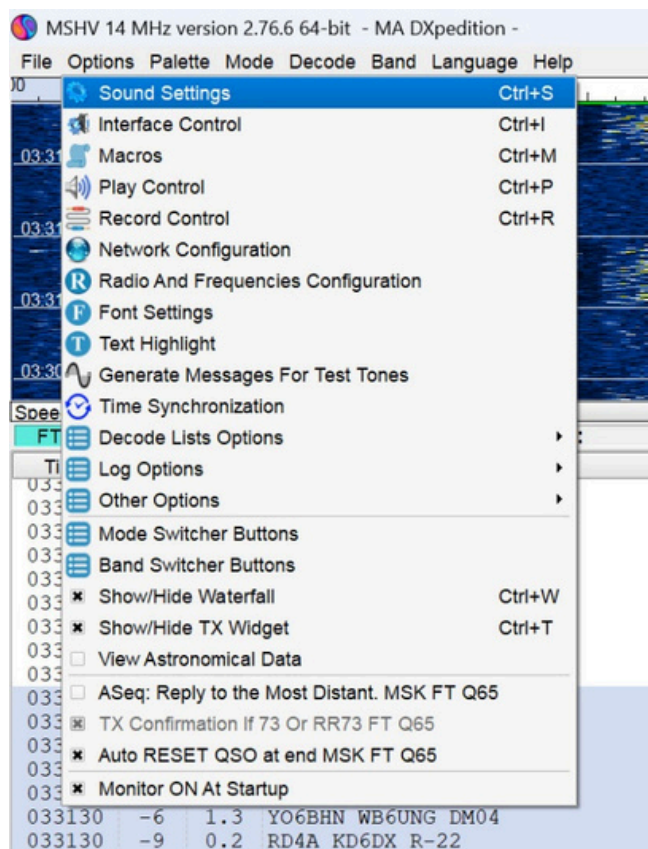
The most important is not to have any yellow exclamation sign in the Control

Panel.

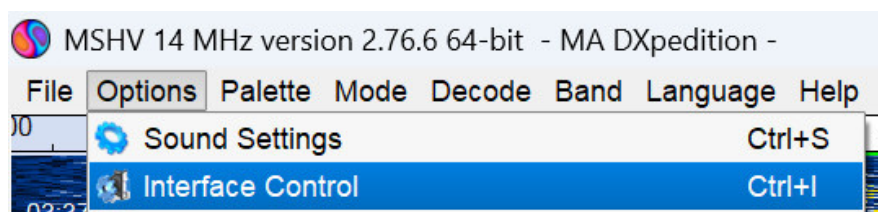
When I connect my transceiver's USB card to my computer and both the transceiver and the computer are ON, I see in the System – Sound setting a new “Speakers – USB audio device” and “Microphone – USB audio device”. Your computer should show the same. The easiest way is to look at System – Sound settings first with your transceiver OFF, and after starting ON the transceiver to notice those 2 devices appear:



Now, that we are sure everything is OK in the Windows operating system, we can jump in MSHV software and have it in function in several minutes. Let's go at Options, and from over there at Sound settings. Have it as you see in my screens.



We solved with audio IN and OUT for the FT8 transmission. Now let's setup for the Rx/Tx commands. Go at Options and from the drop down menu select "Interface Control".



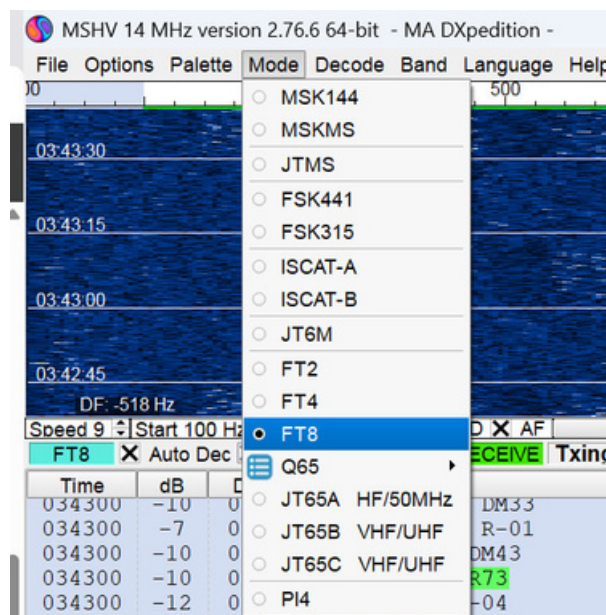
In the new window that appears, copy everything as I have:

(NOTE: My enhanced port is COM3. The third picture from this article shows you what I have in the Control Panel, at ports. Your enhanced port might be a different number, so choose that number for the COM port.)

Do not panic your screen does not show any decoding yet, not even any reception yet.

Everything is fine. (My software has already the full setup, not only the steps above, this is why there is some activity eventually seen in the background.)

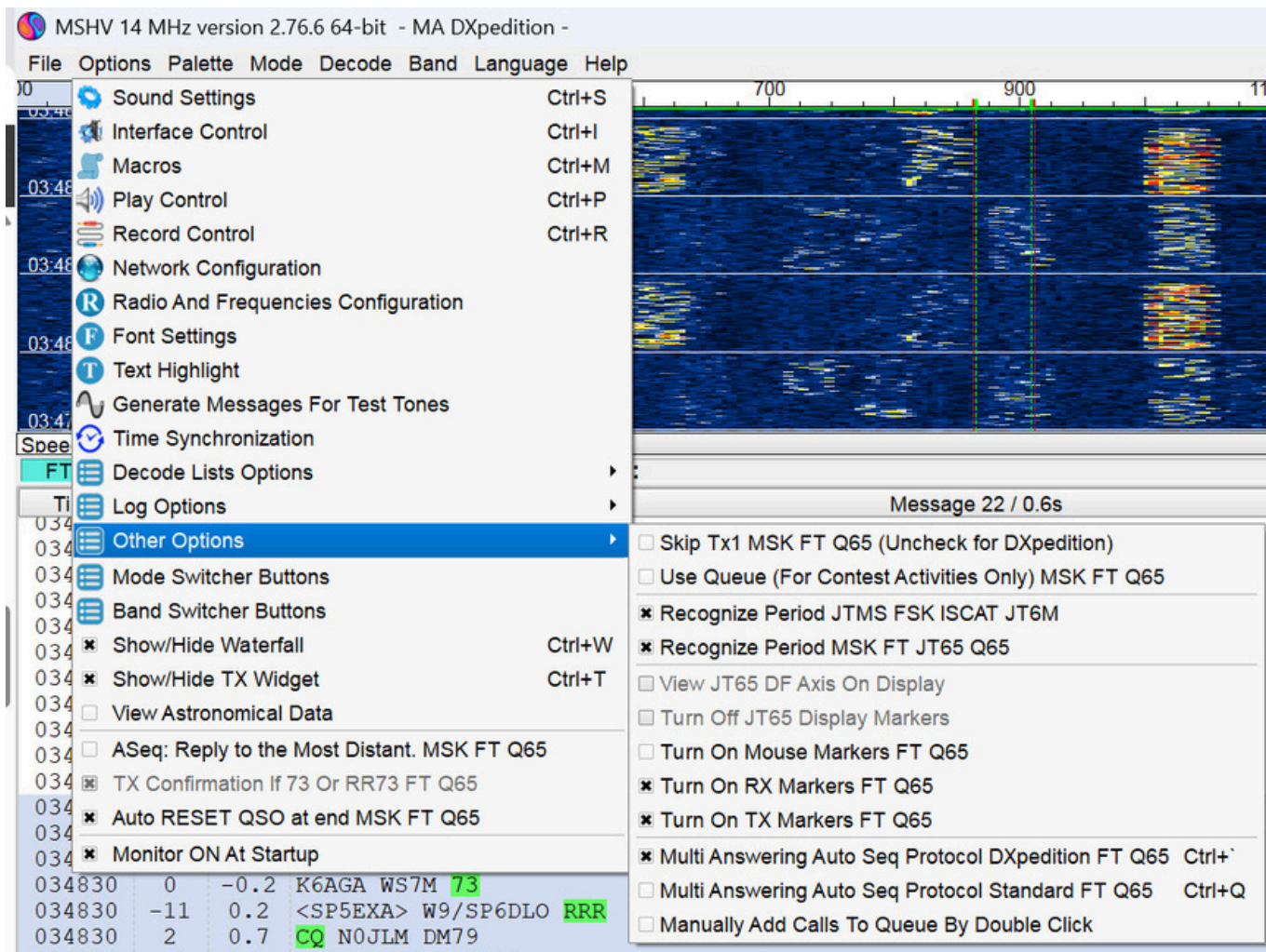
We set our software to work in the FT8 mode:



You can see in the screenshot that MSHV knows already the new fast FT2 mode.

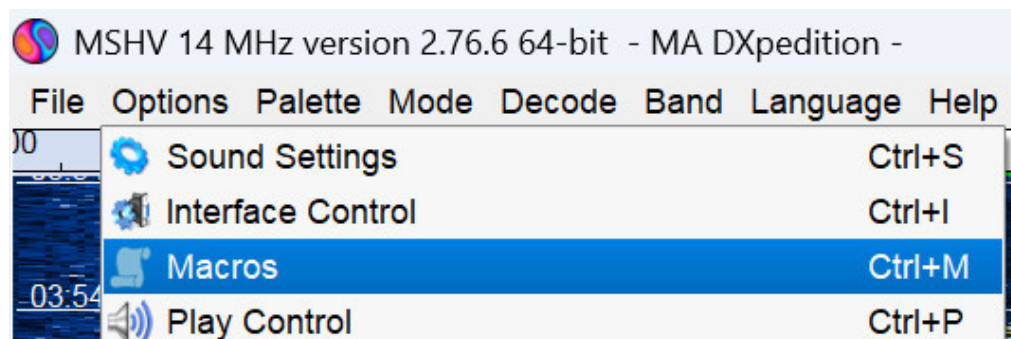
We need to go at “Other Options” several times, because the software allows us to click only one option at a time – yeah, I would change that!

Copy what I have.



I made a big screenshot, because you have to check you indeed have as I have on the left column, too, not only at “Other Options”. Especially pay attention to “Monitor ON at Startup” to be checked (left column). If you do not check this, you will start the software and nothing will happen. The waterfall will not flow, nothing will be shown as received signal, nothing will be decoded.

Now we go at Options, the Macros section:



We have to input the callsign and the grid locator (located after the big button “Gen Message”). Adjust everything for your station.

MSHV

Macros Network Configuration Radio And Frequencies Configuration

Distance unit: ☒ Kilometers ☐ Miles

Macros By Region: ☒ Region 1 ☐ Region 2 ☐ Region 3

Macros option for JTMS,FSK,ISCAT,JT6M ☒ Report ☐ Grid ☐ RSQ And Serial Number

Macros option for MSK,FT,Q65 Activity Type: Standard

ARRL Field Day Exch: 1D NB Roundup Exch: DX

Multi-Two Transmitter: (Requires Two Different Installed Copies Of Software) None

Macros:

My call =%M His call =%T RST or RSQ =%R 4 characters locator =%G4
6 characters locator =%G6 Random QRG =%QRG Serial number =%N
My suffix =%O His suffix =%H Separating numeral + my suffix =%SO
Separating numeral + his suffix =%SH

GEN MESSAGE

MY CALL: VE7LCG GRID LOCATOR: CN89

Macros for JTMS,FSK,ISCAT,JT6M

Tx1 %T %M
Tx2 %T %M %R %R
Tx3 %T %M R%R R%R
Tx4 RRRR RRRR %M
Tx5 73 %M
Tx6 CQ %M
Tx7 CQ %QRG %M

SET DEFAULT MACROS

Macros for MSK,FT,Q65,JT65

Tx1 %T %M %G4
Tx2 %T %M %R
Tx3 %T %M R%R
Tx4 %T %M RR73
Tx5 %T %M 73
Tx6 CQ %M %G4
Tx7 CQ %QRG %M %G4

SET DEFAULT MACROS

Now let's go down in the general MSHV window, lower right corner. Copy as I have in the settings. You might need to press some tabs to have what I have in the screenshot:

MONITOR STOP MONITOR CLR MSG CLR RX FREQ MSG RESET QSO STOP TX TUNE

VE7LCG CN89 DIGU 14.074.000

ADD TO LOG TO RADIO: 1PWD RX RPT : +00

LOCATOR: DB:NA LOOKUP ADD

Hot : NA° Azimuth: NA° Elevation: NA° Dist: NA km

MONITOR R1: R2:

19 May 2026 04:04:01 DT 0.0 s

Super Hound Super Fox

DF Tol def=1500 +/- 1500 Hz

LTR TX=RX TX RPT : +00

ASeq TX/RX 15 s QRG : 345

RXS TX FIRST TX SECOND

GEN MSG AUTO IS ON

RX Queue 0 Now 0 Settings TX

Queue Limit: 2 2 QSOs

TX Slots: 1 X SM OTP

Max Periods: 5 Distance

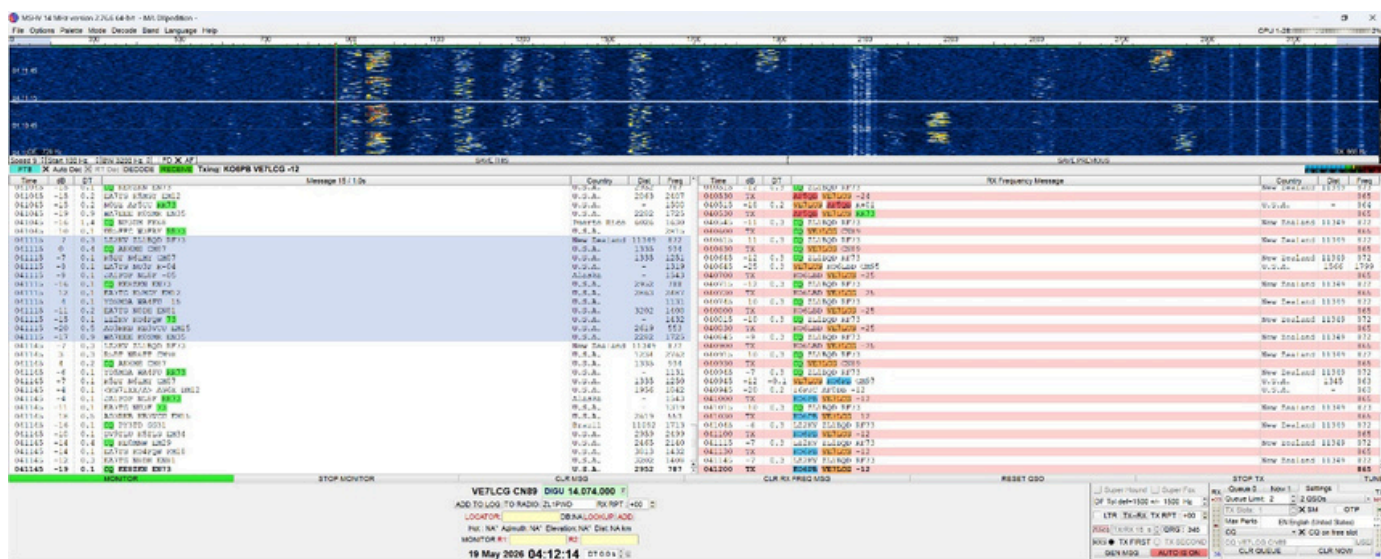
CQ X CQ on free slot

CQ VE7LCG CN89 USE

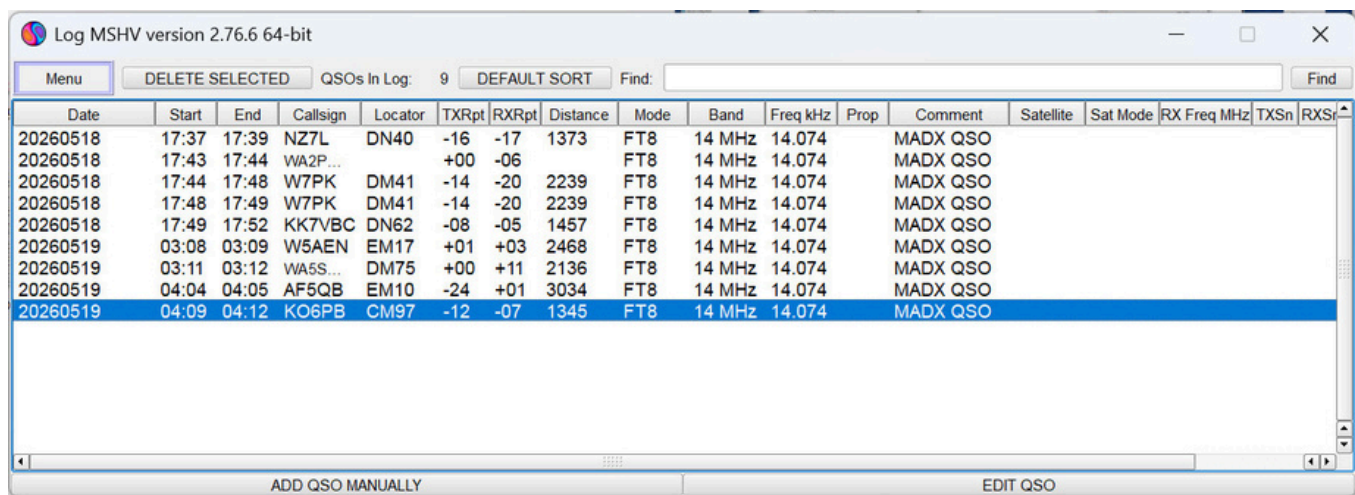
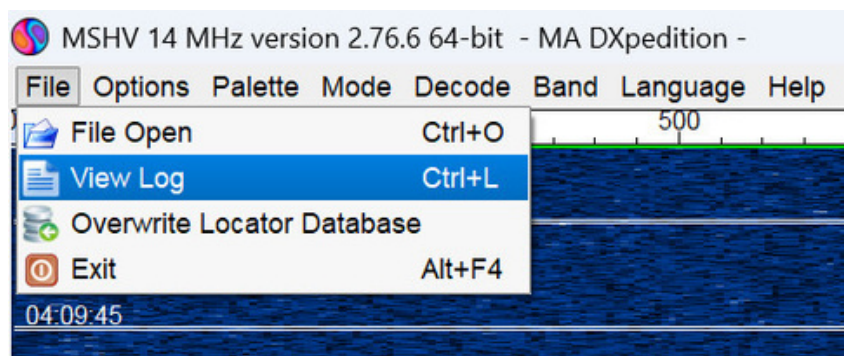
CLR QUEUE CLR NOW

What you see above works. You can change after, when you will understand more about MSHV. But the above screenshot makes everything to work. You can see with red that I pressed already "AUTO IS ON". My transceiver was already on 14.074 MHz, a dedicated FT8 frequency, and tuned. On the left of the screenshot, you see with green "MONITOR". If your monitor button is not green yet, press on it.

MSHV automatically selects the Rx and Tx frequencies. You do not need to worry about. As advanced settings, you can even limit the bandwidth (audio) in which your FT8 software works, but this is easy for you to play with, after everything works. Let the program work, and your screen will start showing QSO after QSO. I never made more than 400 QSOs in 24 hours, and it was good propagation.



You can see the LOG, by selecting:



If your software does not work, please start again this article, and verify with every single screenshot you did not forget to check something. I went myself step-by-step through the MSHV program while writing this article. As a good practice, I recommend

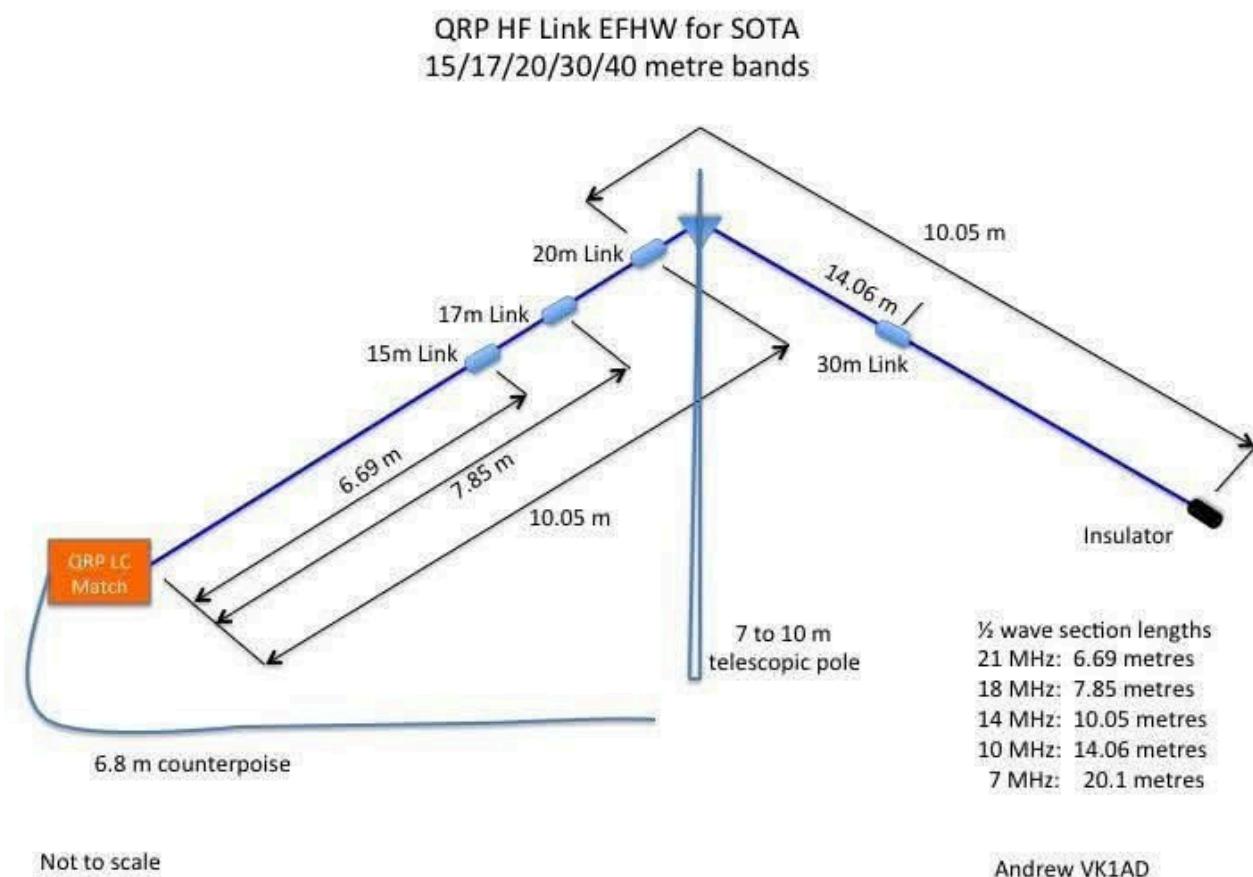
to you to create a Microsoft Word or .pdf document every time you setup something in your transceiver and your computer and software connected to your transceiver. This is what I already did, and for this article I practically re-created from scratch a document that was initially meant only for me and had no text, only screenshots.

Note1: MSHV works with higher ALC levels than other FT8 software. You can adjust the Tx slider, to have whatever power you want shown on your transceiver, when you indeed setup your transceiver for that power.

Note2: The Rx level is automatically adjusted by the software to be in the green zone. If somehow is not it will give you a warning, and you have to manually adjust the Rx level. It never happened to me.

Note 3: If you use multiple FT8 programs on your computer, keep in mind when switching from one to another that all of them are slow of releasing the ports, so wait for the previous FT8 program to really terminate all its processes before starting a new FT8 program.

Note 4: MSHV has strong capability for manual, non-automated FT8 working, too. It was not the purpose of this article, and MSHV has short and clear documentation. For manual FT8 work I prefer JTDX enhanced. I got used with JTDX from my very beginning of FT8.



Affordable Shortwave Listening: What to Buy in New Zealand and Australia

Shortwave listening (SWL) has a genuine advantage that a lot of newcomers don't expect: it costs almost nothing to get started, and you don't need a licence to do it. Tune in and you can pick up international broadcasters, maritime and aviation traffic, ham radio conversations, and utility stations — no internet, no subscription, no gatekeeper. The trick for readers in New Zealand and Australia has always been finding gear that's actually stocked locally, rather than importing everything from the US or China and hoping customs doesn't add too much on top. Here's a practical, budget-focused guide to what's genuinely available on this side of the world right now.

The easiest option: Jaycar's Digitech range

For most people starting out, the simplest path is also the most local one. Jaycar operates stores across both Australia and New Zealand, and its house brand, Digitech, includes a small line-up of portable world band radios that turn up again and again in SWL forums and reviews as unexpectedly good value.

Digitech AR1780 — the pick of the range (AU \$129 / NZ \$149) This compact receiver punches well above its price. It covers FM, MW (AM), longwave, shortwave, and air band, and — crucially for anyone wanting to go beyond just listening to international broadcasters — it includes SSB (single sideband), which lets you tune in ham radio voice conversations and Morse code traffic, not just scheduled shortwave programming. It's essentially a rebadged sibling of the well-regarded XHDATA D-808, and independent reviewers have called it "outrageously good value" for the size and price. It's sold almost exclusively through Jaycar in Australia and New Zealand, which makes it one of the few genuinely region-specific bargains in this hobby. Keep an eye on Jaycar's periodic clearance and sale pricing — this model has previously dropped as low as AU \$89 / NZ \$99 during promotions.

Digitech AR1733 — budget all-rounder (AU \$94.95 / NZ \$109) A step down in features (no SSB), but still covers FM/MW/SW/LW plus air band with 500 memory presets. A solid choice if you mainly want to listen to international broadcasters and don't need to decode ham or utility traffic.

Digitech AR1736 — pocket-money option (AU ~\$22–27 / NZ ~\$27–42) A genuinely tiny, cheap multiband FM/MW/SW radio. Not a serious DXing tool, but a fine way to find out if the hobby interests you at all before spending more.

Importing the well-known global models

The radios that dominate international "best shortwave radio" lists — Tecsun, XHDATA, C.Crane, Sangean — aren't generally stocked on the shelf in Australian or New Zealand electronics chains, but they're straightforward to bring in via AliExpress, eBay, Amazon AU, or specialist importers, and postage from Asia is usually fast and inexpensive.

- Tecsun PL-330 (roughly AU/NZ \$90–140 landed) is the current favourite among SWL hobbyists in this price bracket worldwide. It has proper SSB with fine USB/LSB switching, synchronous detection, and an external antenna jack — genuinely capable gear in a shirt-pocket size.
- XHDATA D-808 (similar price range) is effectively the international twin of the Jaycar AR1780, with a slightly different accessory bundle (it includes a lithium battery and charging cable) and marginally better sensitivity by some reviewers' accounts.
- Tecsun PL-880 (roughly AU/NZ \$250–350 landed) is a step up for anyone who gets serious about the hobby — better audio, more selectable filter bandwidths, and a more refined tuning experience, though it's no longer a "budget" purchase by the time shipping and any duty is added.
- Sangean ATS-909X2 (roughly AU/NZ \$300–400 landed) sits at the top of the affordable tier — reviewers rate its ECSS synchronous detection mode as genuinely useful for pulling weak, fading signals (including Radio New Zealand International) out of the noise.

60 metres

The quiet achiever of HF

Propagation · New allocations · Emergency comms · Digital modes

5351.5 – 5366.5 kHz

60 Metres — September Update

Conditions on the 60-metre amateur band around 5 MHz are presently good and should become more stable during the opening days of September. NOAA recorded a 10.7 cm solar flux of 107 sfu and a sunspot number of 74 on 30 August. Geomagnetic activity was unsettled over the final weekend of August, but NOAA's forecast calls for a maximum Kp of 4 on 31 August followed by predominantly quiet Kp values of about 1–2 on 1 and 2 September.

For 60 metres, this is a useful combination. The band does not depend on very high solar flux in the way that 10 or 12 metres does. At 5 MHz, low geomagnetic disturbance and manageable D-region absorption are often more important than a high sunspot count. NOAA's forecast of quiet conditions should therefore favour steady regional and nighttime paths, even as the predicted solar flux eases toward 95–105 sfu during the first week of September.

What Operators Can Expect

The 60-metre band sits between 80 and 40 metres and often supplies useful propagation when neither neighbouring band is ideal. During daylight, it can support near-vertical-incidence skywave (NVIS) communication over regional distances, frequently covering areas that lie inside the normal skip zone on 40 metres. After dark, declining D-layer absorption allows the skip distance to lengthen and opens opportunities for more distant contacts.

For New Zealand operators, late winter and early spring remain favourable for lower-HF work. The nights are still reasonably long and seasonal atmospheric noise is generally lower than during the summer thunderstorm period. Regional signals should often be strongest from the morning into the afternoon when the ionosphere can return a high-angle 5 MHz signal. Around sunset, the band will begin changing from short-range NVIS to longer paths; this transition can produce strong signals but also rapid changes in signal strength and skip distance.

Operating objective	Expected condition	Practical comment
Short-range ZL NVIS	Good, but time-dependent	Useful for regional nets; may weaken if the local critical frequency falls below 5 MHz
Evening and overnight paths	Good to very good	Lower absorption should lengthen the path and improve weak-signal reception
Grey-line operation	Very promising	Check the band around local sunrise and sunset for enhanced medium- and long-distance paths
International SSB from ZL	Fair to good	The 15 W EIRP limit makes an efficient antenna and low-noise receive system important
FT8 and other narrow modes	Good	Well suited to the band's low-power international allocation
Disturbed or polar paths	Variable on 31 August; improving thereafter	Kp 4 can cause fading and absorption; Kp 1–2 should be more stable

These ratings are a propagation assessment rather than a guarantee of activity. A quiet band can simply mean that few stations are transmitting. The best check remains listening at different times, watching a propagation-reporting network and comparing 60 metres with 80 and 40 metres.



MORSE CODE - STORIES

"Caryn will be back next month, so this is my contribution. Editor

Morse Code in 2026: Old Mode, New Momentum

Nearly two centuries after Samuel Morse tapped out his first message, Morse code — known on the amateur bands as CW ("continuous wave") — remains one of the most active operating modes in radio. Far from fading into a museum exhibit, CW is riding a wave of renewed interest driven by portable operating, AI-assisted tools, and a community that keeps choosing to learn a skill no license exam requires anymore. Here's where things stand.

The numbers behind the persistence.

CW still accounts for roughly 30% of all HF contacts logged worldwide, according to recent contest and DXCC analysis. That's a remarkable share for a mode that hasn't been a licensing requirement in most countries since the mid-2000s — the US dropped its Morse proficiency requirement back in 2007, with most other countries following on similar timelines.

The physics explains a lot of the staying power. A CW signal typically needs well under 150 Hz of bandwidth, compared to several kilohertz for SSB voice. That narrow footprint lets a weak CW signal punch through noise where a voice signal would be unreadable, which is why CW remains the go-to mode for weak-signal DX work, QRP (low-power) operating, and emergency communications when conditions are marginal.

Community organizations back up the "growth, not decline" narrative. Clubs built specifically around CW skill-building and slow-speed, friendly operating — CWops, FISTS, and SKCC — collectively count more than 30,000 active members, and CWops' free CW Academy graduates roughly 1,200 new CW operators a year.

Portable operating is pulling CW along with it

The biggest structural trend in amateur radio right now isn't CW-specific — it's the explosion of Parks on the Air (POTA) and Summits on the Air (SOTA), portable-operating programs that reward hams for activating parks and mountain summits. POTA in particular is frequently cited as the fastest-growing activity in US amateur radio, and CW rides along with that growth because a simple QRP CW rig, a wire antenna, and a small battery is the lightest, most power-efficient way to rack up contacts in the field.

Recent POTA statistics illustrate the scale: a single day's snapshot in February 2026 showed nearly 1,500 activations generating roughly 63,700 contacts, of which almost 10,000 were CW, alongside about 12,000 data-mode and 41,700 phone contacts. Overall POTA activity has grown around 40% since 2023, though the year-over-year growth rate appears to be cooling as the program matures — down from roughly 23% to 17% by some measures. On the SOTA side, VHF/UHF activity has also surged, with 2-meter CW-and-SSB contacts jumping from about 3,400 in the first half of 2025 to over 48,000 in the same period of 2026.

AI is starting to listen for dits and dahs

One of the more interesting emerging threads is machine learning applied to Morse decoding. Traditional CW decoders rely on precise timing analysis of dot and dash lengths, which struggles badly with imperfect human sending, fading signals, and interference. Newer approaches are changing that:

- Mobile apps such as CWAI now use machine learning that reads dot-and-dash patterns directly from spectrogram images rather than raw timing, trained against a callsign dataset of roughly one million entries to improve accuracy on weak or noisy contest signals.
- Academic and defense-research groups have been publishing on the same problem. A 2024 NATO Science and Technology Organization paper describes using recurrent neural networks to transcribe Morse audio, reporting a character error rate around 1.7% — work aimed specifically at handling the imperfect, human-generated code found in military and maritime traffic, such as submarine and reconnaissance-vessel communications.
- Hobbyist projects have pushed AI Morse decoding down to microcontroller level, with makers training classifiers on real button-press data — rather than rigid, textbook-perfect timing rules — so decoders tolerate natural human variation in sending.

None of this replaces a trained human ear; CW operators still routinely out-copy software in noisy, weak-signal conditions. But it signals that Morse decoding has become a live testbed for lightweight, real-time machine learning.

News: the story you didn't expect

The most surprising Morse-related headline of 2026 didn't come from the ham bands at all — it came from commercial aviation.

The FAA issued an Airworthiness Directive in March 2026 affecting certain Boeing 787-8, -9, and -10 Dreamliners, after investigators found that continuous-wave radio interference — a category that includes Morse code signals, military transmitters, and amateur ham radio transmissions — could cause a specific transponder unit to fail to meet minimum performance standards, missing up to 90% of radar interrogation replies. Critically, the failure is silent: pilots receive no warning light or alert when it happens, so the first outward sign is the aircraft quietly disappearing from radar and collision-avoidance displays. The fix, replacing surveillance-system processor hardware on both sides of the aircraft, is expected to cost affected US airlines roughly \$8 million in total, and the directive took effect in April 2026.

It's worth clarifying a bit of terminology confusion running through the coverage: aviation engineers use "CW interference" to describe any unmodulated, single-frequency carrier tone overwhelming a receiver, not specifically Morse code traffic. But the reporting has made "Morse code" a recurring keyword in a story that's really about RF engineering tolerances and hardware sensitivity, not hams accidentally grounding airliners.





ALL MODE: SSB, AM, FM, CW, RTTY, FT8
 FREQUENCY RX 100 KHZ TO 2 GHZ
 TX ITU REGION
 AUTOMATIC ANTENNA TUNER
 WATREFALL

Unit: mm

YOUR POTA SOLUTION FOR HF OR VHF SSB

INCLUDES CLIP ON BATTERY



I have just taken my PMR171 on a trip to Australia (NSW & 5 days in the Outback), the radio worked perfectly and using 20 watts I had a lot of QSO's back to NZ and of course a lot of local contacts. I have a few HF radios and this was the first time I did not take a 100 watt radio. I was a bit concerned but the 20 watts was perfect.

I used the Spiderbeam 404 antenna on a 6m SOTABEAMS Tactical mast, a great combination.

Also, the battery back falls within the Air NZ & Qantas battery allowances so no issues flying with it.

Greg ZL1GUD

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Editor/ Greg The Ham Shack*



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Sunday October 11th 2026

East Bendigo Public Hall
35 Lansell St, Bendigo, Vic



Displays, pre-loved gear & raffles, free parking

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General Admission \$5.00, Tables \$20.00 (includes one admission)

10:00 AM START

Register tables at www.barec.net.au Enquiries to radiofest@barec.net.au



SUNFEST 2026 PROGRAM

Welcome to Sunfest 2026. Here's a run down of what's happening when:

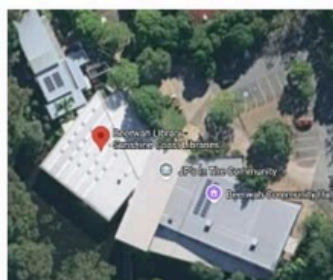
0800 Setup
0930 Hall opens
1000 Raffle Prize Draw - Meat Tray
1025 Raffle Prize Draw - Third Prize
Lucky Door Prizes x 2
1030 Talk - Remote Radio Systems
1055 Raffle Prize Draw - 2nd Prize
Lucky Door Prizes x 2
1100 Talk - Digital Systems
1125 Raffle Prize Draw - 1st Prize
Lucky Door Prizes x 2
1200 Close

Raffle drawn in reverse order with winning tickets for prizes 4 through to 2 being returned to the draw. Ticket sales until 1115.

Talks Location

September 19th

This year our talks will be held in the Beerwah Meeting place located on the other side of the library.



CAFÉ MENU

Operating Hours 0800-1200

Tea & Coffee - Gold Coin Donation
Soft drinks or bottled water \$3

From 0800
Bacon & Egg Roll \$7

From 1000
Hot Beef Brisket Roll w/gravey \$8
Hot Chips \$5



The Importance of Ham Radio in Modern Times

Chris KJ5DJC · President's Corner, Austin ARC
Used with permission of Radio ZS

When most people hear the term ham radio, they often think of emergencies, those moments when the power is out, the internet is down and cell towers go silent. And it is true: amateur radio has saved lives countless times by providing a lifeline when everything else fails. But the value of amateur radio in today's world extends far beyond emergency communications. It remains a vibrant hobby and learning platform that connects people, inspires discovery and keeps the spirit of exploration alive.

Amateur radio is often called the “original STEM hobby.” Long before coding bootcamps or maker spaces, amateurs were experimenting with antennas, building their own equipment and exploring the invisible world of radio waves. Today, that tradition continues. By getting involved with amateur radio, you don't just learn how to operate a transceiver, you dive into electronics, propagation science, digital communications and even space technology.

Modern amateurs are experimenting with satellites, bouncing signals off the moon and even communicating through the International Space Station. For students and hobbyists alike, radio provides a hands-on way to understand physics, electronics and networking in a way textbooks alone cannot.

One of the most overlooked benefits of amateur radio is how it shapes the mind. Every contact (QSO), antenna project, or interference problem is essentially a puzzle waiting to be solved. Amateurs learn to diagnose, troubleshoot and adapt on the fly, skills that are increasingly rare in an age of disposable technology.

These mental exercises sharpen critical thinking, logical reasoning and creativity. Operators quickly learn that no two propagation days are alike, no two antennas behave the same and no one-size-fits-all solution exists. This kind of adaptive problem-solving builds resilience, a trait that benefits not just the individual but society as a whole. There is something magical about sitting down at your radio, spinning the dial and suddenly hearing a voice from across the globe. Unlike the internet, where instant communication is expected, making contact on the airwaves is an achievement. It is a blend of patience, skill and a little bit of luck. Each successful contact feels like a discovery, whether it is your first local QSO or a rare remote (DX) station on the other side of the world.

This joy of discovery is what keeps the hobby alive. Every solar cycle brings new propagation conditions, every antenna experiment reveals fresh insights and every contact is a reminder that there are real people behind those voices in the static.

Amateur radio is not just about technology; it is about people. It is about building friendships across cultures, finding common ground in shared curiosity and creating a community that transcends borders. Nets, contests and local club gatherings keep the tradition alive and bring together people of all ages.

For younger generations, it is an opportunity to connect with mentors who have decades of experience. For seasoned operators, it is a chance to pass along knowledge, foster curiosity and inspire the next generation of experimenters.

The same problem-solving and technical skills that amateur radio fosters are also vital to our future. Many of the engineers, scientists and innovators driving advancements in wireless technology, cybersecurity and aerospace got their start as amateurs. The hobby serves as a training ground for the next wave of innovators who will tackle challenges in telecommunications, national defence and space exploration.

On a national level, amateur radio strengthens resilience. When disasters strike, amateurs step in to restore communication, but their value goes beyond emergencies. By cultivating a culture of experimentation and technical competence, amateur radio contributes to the nation's technological edge and prepares individuals to adapt to unexpected challenges, whether in science, engineering, security, or even daily life.

Perhaps the greatest gift amateur radio offers is its ability to spark curiosity in young minds. Getting a license introduces kids and teens to real-world science and engineering at a level that few other hobbies can match. Building antennas teaches geometry and physics, setting up repeaters introduces networking concepts and operating digital modes touches on computing and signal processing.

For students, amateur radio is a safe and exciting way to experiment, fail and try again, building confidence alongside competence. These experiences can inspire careers in engineering, data science, emergency management and even national defence.

In fact, many professionals in aerospace, cybersecurity and the military communications field trace their first spark of interest back to time spent on the amateur bands. By engaging youth today, we are not only preserving our hobby, but we are also preparing the next generation of innovators and protectors.

Beyond technology and science, amateur radio addresses a very human need: connection. Across our towns, counties and indeed the world, loneliness has become a growing epidemic. More and more people feel isolated, even in an age of digital communication.

Amateur radio provides something deeper than a text message or a social media post; it fosters real conversations. A simple call on a local repeater can lead to a new friendship. Weekly nets provide structure and companionship for those who might otherwise feel alone. And reaching someone across the globe reminds us that, no matter how far apart we may be, we are part of a shared human experience.

For many operators, the voices on the radio become a lifeline, proving that meaningful connection does not always require video chats or high-speed networks. Sometimes, it is just a voice in the static that says: You are not alone.

In an age dominated by instant messaging, video calls and high-speed internet, some might wonder if amateur radio still has a place. The answer is a resounding yes. The skills we practice, antenna design, RF propagation, digital modes, troubleshooting, are directly relevant to today's world of wireless communication, IoT and cybersecurity. And when the lights go out, amateur radio remains one of the few technologies capable of bridging the gap.

But perhaps most importantly, amateur radio reminds us that communication is about more than just convenience, it is about curiosity, resilience, connection and community. Amateur radio is not a relic of the past; it is a living, breathing hobby with endless opportunities for exploration. Whether you are fascinated by science and technology, seeking the thrill of discovery, or looking to be part of a global community, amateur radio offers something unique. It empowers us to learn, to connect and to serve.

It also prepares us for the next scientific breakthrough, the next national challenge and the next generation of explorers. Amateur radio matters not just because it can save lives, but because it develops minds, builds resilience, strengthens society and helps heal the growing sense of isolation in our communities.



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Welcome to 4X6TT. From the Mediterranean coast of Israel, we connect with operators and friends around the world.

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VIEW ON QRZ

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Tap a marker to inspect · Drag to rotate · Scroll or pinch to zoom

After more than 40 years on the air, I have finally given the story of 4X6TT a permanent home.

My new website went live only a few days ago. It brings together stations, antennas, DXpeditions, films, historic photographs, rare callsigns, and most importantly, the friendships created through amateur radio around the world.

Before I continue building the next stage, I would genuinely value the opinion of fellow operators. Please spend two or three minutes exploring the site and tell me honestly:

- Does the opening page make you want to continue exploring?
- Is the website clear, fast, and easy to navigate, especially on a phone?
- Which section interests you most: the live world map, DXpeditions, station and antenna history, films, photographs, or stories from the past?
- What is still missing that would make you return regularly? A live operating status, log search, QSL information, full station and equipment details, upcoming activations, propagation tools, technical articles, a guestbook, or something completely different?

I am not looking only for “great website” comments. Constructive criticism and new ideas are exactly what I need.

When you comment, please include your callsign and country so we can see how far this conversation travels.

Radio has no borders.

73 and Shalom

Amir, 4X6TT

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