



## OCTOBER 2006

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### President's Report

Hi all... no doubt you are now all aware of the current topic under discussion amongst amateurs at present, and that is the fees being levied by the MED for Repeaters Beacons and Fixed Links.

I have asked Sean to include both articles from NZART on this matter – one from the President, and the other from FMTAG. Both are of real interest to all amateurs, but especially to members of NZART, as your opinion by way of a vote is required to guide the NZART Executive as what you as members think.

As always, I am happy to discuss any matters with members of the branch about this matter. I will withhold my personal opinion as I don't wish to influence you in your decision making process.

NZART has provided an email address for the gathering of responses – it is included in the Presidents report. NOTE: Unless you are a member of NZART there is no point sending an email as it will not be included in the final count. Perhaps now is the time to join?

Planning is under way to get organised for the Mt Climie working bees. Does any one have a "mate" or know of someone who is a digger owner or digger driver? We need to dig a trench up at Mt Climie, and to speed the matter up, we intend using mechanical diggers. Can you assist? Contact me if you can. A planning trip up to Mt Climie will occur in the next few weeks, so watch this space as weekends are set aside to commence this work – as always a call on the day will be made subject to weather.

Again, it is good see various members new and old returning to the club and catching up at the well attended Friday night meetings. Hopefully with daylight saving more people will make the effort to come along as we say good bye to winter and hello to summer (fingers crossed).

Well that's all from the top - see you all at a Friday meeting, and good DX.

73's  
 Mark, ZL2UFI

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**Club HF Net 3.630 MHz every Tuesday at 2100 NZST  
 listen for ZL2VH and join in.**

A listening watch is also held on the first Friday of each month on the **439.625MHz** Repeater between 5pm and 7pm. Short QSO's are welcome. Branch 63 announcements may be made at these times.

## AREC Report

### The Big Coast 2007

Branch 63 have once again been asked to assist with the communications for the Big Coast event to be held on 10/11 February 2007.

The Climie 730 repeater will be used to cover the major part of the route and the IRLP function will be turned off for the duration of the event.

This will be an AREC combined exercise and E calls will be issued.

Any members who wish to take part in the radio operations are asked to contact Morrie Ph 976 9022 or by email to [mdvile@paradise.net.nz](mailto:mdvile@paradise.net.nz) no later than Friday 27 October 2006

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### Repeaters Beacons and Fixed Links - NZART President Bruce Douglas, ZL2WP

Without going into the history of how the present state of affairs has come about a brief explanation is required. Prior to 2004 each amateur licence holder paid an individual fee. That fee contained a component which went towards MED services for repeater licences and fixed links. This was a trade-off for what might otherwise have been a slightly reduced annual fee and was seen by NZART Council of the day as fair and reasonable. The problem of "repeaters beacons and fixed links" only arose when free licences to amateurs became a reality. Members may recall that this was heralded at the Nelson AGM/Conference in 2002, when no mention was made of charging for "repeaters beacons and fixed links." All present thought that these, too, would be free. However this proved to be not the case and in due course we learned of the intention to charge a fee of \$250 for each of those items. This was intolerable and a totally unrealistic impost. Our Administration Liaison Officer (ALO) persuaded the MED to reduce this fee to \$50 but no further. This \$50 fee is prescribed by the current radio regulations. A \$5 reduction for payment on-line is available in effect reducing the fee to \$45.

NZART Council is aware that members want "solutions not problems". At the same time members need to know what is happening. Everyone should be aware of the view of NZART Council and members, endorsed at the last two AGM's that our objective is to have all MED costs assessed by way of licence fees shared equitably amongst all amateur licence holders.

It is not acceptable to our membership that fees for the provision of services to amateur radio be incurred solely by our membership.

Bearing in mind the wishes of members NZART Council has considered a number of options as to how to achieve an equitable outcome for the members.

There have been a multitude of possible solutions offered to us as to how a desired outcome might be achieved. Many of these have not passed scrutiny and others, although appearing attractive, have been rejected for one reason or another.

Very serious consideration was given to a mechanism whereby we could invoice non members but this was rejected by the MED and thus could not be enforced.

Recently NZART Council has investigated the possibility of instituting legal proceedings such as a judicial review of the MED invoicing NZART for a service of benefit to all amateurs (members and non-members alike. High level but informal legal advice became available to us, gratis, from a variety of sources, for which I together with the NZART Council are most grateful. The considered opinion of all legal advisors, as accepted by your NZART Council, was that while there was some possibility of achieving a favourable outcome, legal arguments would need to be advanced in a ground-breaking way by highly experienced legal people (probably at Q.C. level). Win or lose, NZART simply cannot afford the costs of such legal proceedings.

Certain political initiatives have been, and continue to be, undertaken by both your Administration Liaison Officer and myself. These continue and I can offer no comment at this stage as to whether or not they will be successful – but I remain optimistic.

Another initiative is to seek the assistance of the Ombudsman. Preliminary discussions are currently underway. If results are encouraging NZART Council will take matters further.

Recent Happenings: Last month (August 2006) the first of the repeater invoices arrived followed in September by two more. The bulk of the invoices are expected in November.

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## **Repeaters Beacons and Fixed Links** (continued from Page 2)

We had expected a single invoice for all repeaters, as stated by MED, but the SMART software application has been turned on and is sending out a few individual invoices as a precursor to the bulk invoicing yet to come.

With most licences now in the name of NZART, we received the first invoice when it was issued. Following considerable discussion by NZART Council, the General Secretary was asked to contact the Branch and Repeater Trustees concerned to give them the opportunity to pay the fee should they so wish. This they did and, by arrangement with all concerned, the fee has been paid by NZART on the basis that it will be reimbursed to NZART by the Branch.

The process involved was extremely time consuming. It took many working hours plus several telephone calls and emails to achieve a positive outcome. As a one-off the General-Secretary was able to help facilitate this and for the next two invoices a similar process can be followed. However, our single part time manager will be unable to process the work generated by a bulk invoice for several hundred licences.

### **So what do we do?**

Council has debated the matter and considered many options. We know that all members want any assessed fees to be born equitably by all and not by our members alone. NZART Council fully support this view.

We have these choices or some combination of them:

**Option 1:** NZART pays all beacon, repeater and fixed link licence fees for this licensing period only (2006-7).

**Option 2:** NZART declines to pay any beacon, repeater and fixed link licence fees, without exception.

**Option 3:** NZART pays for certain beacon, repeater and fixed link licence fees for 2006-2007 and maybe beyond.

### **What are the pros and cons of each of these options?**

**Option 1:** Is an interim measure to buy time. It enables retention of the existing infrastructure without incurring the substantial costs and difficulties associated with trying to contact branch secretaries and trustees. It avoids placing the burden of licence fees on some branches such as VHF groups who have already used substantial funds of their own for the benefit of all. It means we can retain all Channel 39 (ATV or Amateur Television) licences nationwide and all component parts of the National System. Further it means that we will not lose hill top repeater sites because a particular branch can't, won't, or fails to act when a renewal is required. In essence we buy time to continue efforts to obtain free licences for repeaters, beacons and fixed links as Canadian and British amateurs will shortly have.

If this option were chosen there would be a substantial unbudgeted cost falling in the current financial year. Will the amateur fraternity see this as an acceptable course of action to preserve our infrastructure while all avenues of persuasion are explored, or until the membership can review the situation at the next AGM in 2007?

If this option was adopted, there could be some cost recovery by setting up a fund (a fighting fund, if you will) to accept voluntary donations. Members might like to return their \$15 subscription rebate to such a fund, for example.

**Option 2:** This is an option that was voted on at two AGM's and is the view of the membership. It means that branches/repeater trustees will need to make their own arrangements to pay assessed fees. NZART would do its best to advise those affected of the details of the accounts received, but clearly this may need to be done in a global rather than an individual way. With licences in the name of NZART the system for collecting payments will need to be established.

It is almost inevitable that if this option is taken then several licences will not be renewed. This may be due to inertia or other reason such as the branch deciding to relinquish a repeater licence.

Associated with this option is the suggestion that all licences should revert back to the branch/beneficial owner. This is not as easy to achieve as the undoing process requires input from the branches. One difficulty with retention by NZART is that if a licence is allowed to lapse NZART must take immediate steps to ensure the repeater is disabled. Failure to do so could expose us to liability and compliance costs if it is not disabled, such as fines. It is unlikely that NZART Council has the ability to disable any significant number of repeaters. (continued on Page 4)

## Repeaters Beacons and Fixed Links (continued from Page 3)

**Option 3:** This is a compromise option. It recognises that NZART should not be paying for licences even as an interim measure – but at the same time recognises that at least in the interim certain items of infra structure ought to be paid for by NZART, e.g. our international beacon. The cost of this is negligible (as the beacon is now only one licence, not the many it had been) and it is unlikely that anyone would object to NZART paying to preserve this.

Another candidate for preservation is our Channel 39 ATV access. NZART Council has good reason to believe that if we lost these licences then access to Channel 39 would be lost forever. Commercial interests in the UHF TV Band are already putting pressure on MED to have the amateur allocation reviewed, and possibly removed.

Then there is the National System. Is this something that needs to be preserved? NZART Council will need to make decisions very soon. None of us want to lose any of our current repeaters, beacons or fixed links.

None of us want the situation of our members having to pay for repeaters, beacons or fixed links available for the use of non members to continue indefinitely, as this is simply not a fair situation.

None of us want access to repeater to be controlled by access codes so that they can be accessed by NZART members or branch members only. So what's the answer?

### **The time has come for your input.**

If we select option one this preserves our infrastructure for the time being, enables us to continue to fight for what we believe is justice, at the cost of temporarily reversing our position as set out in recent AGM resolutions?

If we select option two we are asking those who have worked long and hard to ensure Channel 39 access to accept its likely permanent loss. Will NZART members at large accept any loss of the repeaters and links in the National System? Will those individuals who have given freely of their time and energies in providing infrastructure be motivated to revive and renew dismantled stations, resulting from non-payment of licences? Will those faced with a re-engineering fee of \$300 plus a licence fee of \$50 be interested to re-instate any lost licence? Will there be physical resources available which will enable this to happen in a timely way?

If we select option three will we be faced with endless arguments as to what should or should not be preserved? Or can we identify the need to preserve our International beacons, our Channel 39 access and our National System infrastructure as a minimum?

Members want answers not problems. Whatever answer we give you will not be acceptable to all. There is no magic wand to wave to conjure up \$16,000 (or so) to preserve our infrastructure for another year.

It would not be fair of me to suggest a solution to you as being the option preferred by NZART Council.

I can however give you my own view, which is that I do not wish to see any of our infrastructure lost in the short term - certainly not before we have had every opportunity to take all appropriate measures properly available to us and pursued each of them to their logical conclusion. We do not have the advantage of time. If licences are not paid by due date they are automatically cancelled by the SMART system. All rights in relation to the same would be lost and would have to be reapplied for as if they were applications for new licences, with all the processing formality that is associated with a new application. In the case of Channel 39 it is my belief, on advice, that if not paid for these licences would most likely be permanently lost.

It is my personal opinion at this time (and not necessarily the opinion of any other member of NZART Council) that Option 3 is the preferred course (though Option 1 is in my view a viable alternative).

**So where to from here?** Send an email with your name, call sign and membership number to [repeatersurvey@nzart.org.nz](mailto:repeatersurvey@nzart.org.nz) with the subject line showing your order of preference. For example "Option 2, Option 1, Option 3" or if only one or two of the options is acceptable to you specifying accordingly e.g. "Option 1". If for any reason you are unable to email, a fax or letter to NZART Headquarters to the same effect will be acceptable.

If you have any additional comments please send these to Council or myself separately. The purpose of this survey is simply to ascertain overall support for suggested options.

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## **Repeaters Beacons and Fixed Links** (continued from Page 4)

There may be other options that occur to you - by all means suggest these to us we would appreciate all constructive input at this time.

Also included with this statement is a document entitled "The Licensing Of Amateur Repeaters, Beacons, And Links - An Update" by Doug Ingham ZL2TAR, Secretary of FMTAG. This explains the workings of the SMART system that has been instituted by MED.

73 Bruce Douglas, ZL2WP

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### **Licensing Of Amateur Repeaters, Beacons And Links - An Update**

- Doug Ingham, ZL2TAR, Secretary FMTAG

#### **Summary**

The MED has introduced a number of step-wise changes in the licensing of all radio services, including Amateur repeaters, beacons and links. Many of our members appear to be unaware of these changes, despite much publicity by the MED (several direct mail-outs to all licensees) and FMTAG and Council (Break-In, HQ InfoLine, Official Broadcasts and Branch visits).

Failure to understand these licensing changes can have costly consequences, particularly if the Annual Licence Fees are not paid by the due date.

The total cost of re-certifying a cancelled licence is in the region of seven to eleven times the Annual Licence Fee. Fines for operating while un-licensed typically start at five to twenty-five times the Annual Licence Fee.

The automated collection of Annual Licence Fees commenced in July 2005, for all services except Amateur repeaters, beacons and links. From that date the Amateur repeater, beacon and links licences showed an Annual Licence Fee of \$50, but fee collection was "turned off". The MED "turned on" the collection of the Amateur Licence Fee in July 2006, after 12 month's grace.

324 licences are currently in the name of NZART Incorporated. Failure to pay the Annual Licence Fee has serious practical and monetary consequences.

#### **Failure To Pay The Annual Fee For An Existing Licence**

SMART operates automatically, without human intervention, issuing emails at every step of each process. In the case of failure to pay the Annual Licence Fee for an existing licence, SMART automatically cancels the licence and erases all its engineering records, without human intervention.

This means that once cancelled, a licence cannot be re-instated. A new licence has to be applied for, and pass through the Engineering Certification process, as if it were a new licence application. The hidden dangers of this process will be discussed in the next section. SMART sends an email to the Licensee, advising of the cancellation, and of the severe consequences of operating the station without a licence.

SMART also sends an email to the nearest MED Field Office (previously known as the Radio Inspector's office). This describes the new licence granted (for inspection) or the old licence cancelled (for inspection to confirm that the station is no longer operating and has been dismantled). MED compliance action (warning or infringement notice and fine) follows if a cancelled licence station is found to be still operating.

With 324 licences currently in the name of NZART, it will be seen that the failure to pay the Annual Licence Fee has serious consequences. The largest group of these licences falls due for payment in two month's time.

#### **Hidden Dangers Of Licence Cancellation**

MED document PIB38 requires that each new or modified licence has to be certified to be compatible with every existing licence within a radius of 2 km, or more in certain circumstances. In other words, every new licence granted since our particular repeater licence was granted, has had to be made compatible with our old licence.

This is sometimes referred to as "first in time rights". Often the certification process reveals technical problems, requiring the new licence to be on a frequency other than that preferred by the applicant, and sometimes in a different frequency band.

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## **Licensing Of Amateur Repeaters, Beacons And Links - An Update**

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On cancellation of an old licence, for example for non-payment of the Annual Licence Fee, the "first in time rights" are lost. The new, replacement, licence becomes the "last in time", and has to be made compatible with all existing licences. Similarly, a frequency or band change may be required.

### **The Special Case of TV Channel 39 (614 MHz To 622 MHz)**

NZART holds 30 licences on Channel 39, distributed around New Zealand. These licences effectively prevent the use of Channel 39 for non-Amateur use, and force prospective broadcast applicants, for Channel 38 and Channel 40, to engineer their applications for compatibility with our existing Channel 39 licences.

The recently proposed MED procedures for licensing additional Channel 39 Amateur stations, or for modifying existing Channel 39 Amateur stations, are more complex than previously.

It is likely that the cancellation of a Channel 39 licence, for non-payment of fees, would make it more difficult, or impossible to re-certify, prevent the re-licensing of that station. This is a serious hidden danger.

### **MED Spectrum Management And Registration Technology (SMART)**

SMART is a fully automated licensing system. Each intermediate step of the SMART process must be satisfactorily completed before the SMART software permits commencement of the next step.

In the case of new or modified licences, one such intermediate step is the payment of fees. The process stops if the fees are not paid, and the application is erased from SMART after a period.

In the case of the Amateur Service, the minimum cost is \$50, being the Annual Licence Fee, plus a zero dollar Engineering Certification Fee, provided that a charitable MED-Approved Person, willing to waive the fee, and having the required software and 3 to 5 hours to spare, needed to certify each licence application, can be found.

The Amateur Licence Fee requested for a new application can differ from \$50, depending on the timing difference between the Application Date and the Annual Billing Date of the licence applicant.

In the case of the Amateur Service, when Engineering Certification by the MED is chosen, the typical fee is \$350, consisting of the \$300 MED Internal Engineering Certification Fee plus the \$50 Annual Licence Fee. Similarly, the Annual Fee can differ from \$50, owing to timing differences.

Another option is External Engineering by one of the Approved Radio Engineers or Approved Radio Certifiers, listed on the MED's web site. The Approved persons typically charge \$300 to \$500 for Engineering Certification of an application, depending on its complexity. Similarly, the \$50 Annual Licence Fee, and any timing-difference supplement, is additional.

Failure to pay either fee freezes applications at the payment request step.

The present NZART policy, of not paying the Annual Licence Fee, has stopped all new or modified licence applications. Existing applications, frozen by non-payment, are being automatically erased by SMART, as time progresses, while this policy continues.

Doug Ingham, ZL2TAR, Secretary FMTAG

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## **Field Day Scouting Trip**

On Sunday 24 September Sean (ZL2SC), Peter (ZL2PDJ), and I went for a drive around Terawhiti station.

For those that do not know, Terawhiti station is on the Southwest coast of Wellington out behind Makara. It covers an area of 15,000 acres. There is an excellent book called "Terawhiti" written by Catherine Morrison, which is worth reading if history interests you.

The area is well known for its fishing and a prolific number of goats (to kill) as well as having a great historic value to the Wellington area. The best bit of news for the farm is plans to build a wind farm – that is if the dolphin strokers, tree huggers and twig 'n' tweet don't stuff it up.

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## Field Day Scouting Trip (continued from Page 6)

I have only just recently started to visit the station as part of my 4x4 driving hobby. For those of you with "shinies", 4x4 driving is when you use your 4x4 off road. Driving it on the grass verge in front of your house, through puddles in the supermarket, towing the trailer to the tip, and launching your boat do not constitute 4x4 driving. But I digress.

When you arrive at the station you see how bleak and rough the place is. The hills are high and the station is wind blown. There are two high places that are well worth visiting. The first is where the weather radar is situated and the second is known as Trig Hill. Both these point give a commanding view of Cook Strait. From both of these sites you can look down and see how big the Karori rip is...and it is big!! On one recent trip I watched a large ship motor/steam around the rip's edge. The weather radar site looks down over the old Karori Light and onto a vast plateau, which has an old unused(?) farm house on it...maybe another site for a future lighthouse weekend? To use the house we would need to find exactly how far from a light we can be?

The second possible site is "Nugent's Cave". This is not your average cave – this cave comes with two sleeping platforms, a bench, and a small pantry. It has a wooden frontage with seating and a small veranda, 2 fire places, (which fire place used is determined by what direction the wind is blowing), and views of Cook Strait.

The cave is named after Nugent Welch, a fisherman who was a regular user of the cave. Other users include artists, who used to travel to the cave to paint – these artist would have

walked round the coast from Owhiro Bay since the early 1900's.



Sean, Peter, and I think it would be a good location for a Field Day station. Peter and Sean even decided that should the radio conditions not be in our favour they could do some abseiling... why you would possible want to climb down a vertical cliff face when there is a perfectly good track to walk down is beyond me!!

Further up one of the long valleys are the remains of the gold mine battery. Gold was found in 1852. Some of the old mine entrances (adits) were blown up during the war due to fears of the Japs landing and using the old mines to hide in or store supplies in. There are a few remaining mines that are intact, but these are difficult to find as the scrub has grown over the years and hidden the adits.

If anyone is interested in spending a day or weekend playing radios, let me know, and I will approach the station's Head Shepherd to see if he would us allow access. The public are lucky to still be able to get access to such a large station especially with the H&S requirements. Most farmers and station owners will not have public on their farms/stations.

If anyone in the club would like to spend a day out playing with their 4x4's let me know and I shall arrange it – nice tracks to drive on enjoying views, BBQ areas, and lots of mud and water to get dirty in...this place can cater for all needs. There is an access fee.

Tom, ZL2HGR

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### More interesting websites

Another couple of interesting websites for our readers:

[www.maximog.com](http://www.maximog.com)

[www.gapantennas.com/superc.htm](http://www.gapantennas.com/superc.htm)

Morrie, ZL2ADP