

## **In the news from Amateur Radio New South Wales for this week;**

With the NSW state Government introducing restrictions as part of managing the ongoing Covid19 public health emergency, many organisations and services are required to modify their operations.

Here at ARNSW, we are continuing with VK2WI Morning News bulletins only, for the present time. The morning bulletins will be in the familiar “summer” format, with a relay of WIA National News, followed by full local coverage and expanded features. The board have sought external advice and have implemented procedures to manage operations, in line with the current regulations.

Other activities at ARNSW unfortunately have to be restricted. The site is currently closed to visitors, and the regular Library and HF operations group meetings have been suspended. While we regret that we have to suspend these activities, it is paramount that we take on the responsibility that we, along with every other individual and organisation must consider, to help reduce the risk in this current situation.

Before we leave this topic, it might be helpful to remind listeners that the health authorities have some telephone services that can provide advice and support if you have health concerns at this time. The National Covid hotline number is 1800 020 080 for general advice. If you are feeling unwell, the Healthdirect phone number is 1800 022 222. Both of these services are available 24 hours a day, and are a free call from most telephone services.

Time waits for nobody, and earlier this morning the eastern states of Australia returned to standard time, UTC +10 hours. VK2WI News Bulletins remain at the same local time – but HF propagation may be different. One option available is to stream live or download audio from our website, at [arnsw.org.au/audio](http://arnsw.org.au/audio).

Many clubs have increased their on air activities, and we have a summary of some of these, later in this bulletin. Please let us know of activities and events in your area. Email the details to [news@arnsw.org.au](mailto:news@arnsw.org.au) – we don't need formatted news items, just the details of the activity and contacts. And, don't forget – after your event we want to hear about it too; send a report on your activities back to VK2WI News, so we can tell listeners how it went.

## ARNSW Radio Experimenters Group

Last Sunday was scheduled to be the ARNSW Radio Experimenter's Group meeting at Dural, but due to the Covid19 lockdown, the group, in true Experimental spirit, had a video conferencing meeting using Skype.

We chose Skype because it's available on all platforms including Linux and is free for group calls which can be shared via a simple link.

The meeting went well, with eight attendees. We went around the group with each person giving updates on the amateur radio activities taking place during the lockdown. Owen and in particular, Kevin VK2KB, made excellent use of the system and showed images of projects they have been building.

The group plans to hold another online meeting on Sunday the 26th of April, at noon. To participate you need a computer, with a microphone and ideally a camera and a reasonable internet connection.

The URL to join the conference is on the ARNSW web site.

*Peter VK2TPM  
For the ARNSW Radio Experimenters Group.*

[link for text version: <https://join.skype.com/PFCoaE95dVMs>]

## Sydney Amateur Radio Ferry Contest

The fifth annual Sydney Amateur Radio Ferry Contest was held on Sunday March 8<sup>th</sup>. It has been judged a great success, with nearly 70 operators taking part.

Ferry riders were blessed with good weather and smaller crowds than in previous years, probably due to the slowdown in tourism.

The overall winner was a visitor - Soren ZL1SKL - who flew to Sydney especially for the contest. He made an amazing 101 contacts - more than double his nearest rival. What was his secret? It looks like sheer effort and a close study of the timetable.

Paul VK2AHB was the next highest scorer, followed by Richard VK2XII. The highest scoring home station was Peter VK2PR. And Shane VK2MIS was the check-in winner. He'll get a powerpole kit for his prize.

All contesters who submitted a log claimed the Billy Blue certificate, which is named after Sydney's first ferrymaster.

Also, a popular innovation this year were the wildcard points, which could be claimed by answering CQ calls based on famous seafarers.

The ferry contest is the only one of its kind in the world and is organised by the Waverley Amateur Radio Society.

Plans are underway for next year's event, and you find out more by joining the Sydney AR Ferry Contest Facebook page.

*Submitted by Laurie VK2GZ*

# Weekly Solar and Geophysical Report

For the period of the 27<sup>th</sup> of March to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April.  
First, the summary;

| Dates across the columns are | 27 <sup>th</sup> | 28 <sup>th</sup> | 29 <sup>th</sup> | 30 <sup>th</sup> | 31 <sup>st</sup> | 1 <sup>st</sup> | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 10cm flux                    | 69               | 69               | 68               | 69               | 70               | 69              | 69              |
| Fredericksburg Index (Afr)   | 4                | 4                | 6                | 8                | 10               | 4               | 7<br>estimated  |
| Australian Index (Aaus)      | 3                | 3                | 6                | 7                | 8                | 3               | 5<br>estimated  |
| T index                      | -1               | -6               | +8               | +4               | +8               | -1              | -1              |

Solar activity was very low all week. Geomagnetic activity was quiet with some isolated unsettled periods on the 27<sup>th</sup>, quiet on the 28<sup>th</sup>, quiet to unsettled from the 29<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup>; then quiet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of April.

F2 critical frequencies in the southern Australian region, remained mostly near predicted monthly values all week, with some periods of enhanced conditions observed; 30% during local night and 20% after local dawn on the 27<sup>th</sup>; 15% during local night and 20% after local dawn on the 28<sup>th</sup>; 30% during local night on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>; 35% during local night on the 31<sup>st</sup>; and 15% enhancement during local night on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April.

Now, the forecast for the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of April;

Solar activity is expected to be very low. There is currently one numbered region on the visible disc; that is region 2759 located at N28E30, which has remained quiet and stable over the last few days.

Geomagnetic activity is expected to be at quiet to unsettled levels, with a chance of active periods, mainly at mid-high latitudes, on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of April, due to coronal hole effects.

Maximum Usable Frequencies should remain near predicted monthly values, no shortwave fadeouts are expected.

*Data courtesy of Space Weather Services.*

## Solar Flux Index update

Here are the updated Solar Flux Index (SFI) figures for this week.

For March, we had a;

Minimum of 68, Average of 70, and a Maximum of 72  
With peak dates from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup>, and the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup>

So far for April, we expect a;

Minimum of 68, Average of 70, and a Maximum of 70  
With peak dates from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup>

And looking ahead to May, we are expecting a;

Minimum of 68, Average of 69, and a Maximum of 70  
With peak dates from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup>.

*Update with thanks to Noel, VK2FUL.*

[using daily data updates from :  
<http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/products/usaf-45-day-ap-and-f107cm-flux-forecast>]

---

**[Play ID File: M-OP ID2.wav]**

---

## What use is an F-call?

Today we continue with this series, written and produced by Onno VK6FLAB. Each episode looks at different aspects of the diverse hobby of Amateur Radio.

---

### **[Play File: E-FCAL096.wav]**

*Duration: 1m30s*

*In: "What use is an F-call?"*

*Out: "I'm Onno VK6FLAB"*

---

For more information about this series, including transcripts and useful resources for F-calls, Onno's website is; [vk6flab.com](http://vk6flab.com), or follow him on Twitter, @VK6FLAB.

## **ARRL DX news**

While travel restrictions have required the cancellation of some DXpeditions and other planned activities, there is still some interesting special event stations and contests this week;

**NORFOLK ISLAND;** Janusz, SP9FIH continues to be active as VK9NK. Activity is on 160 to 10 metres using SSB, RTTY and FT8.

**TURKEY;** TC100KIDS is active until the end of the month, using SSB and CW. This event is for the National Sovereignty and Children's Day. Also, members of the Tango Alpha Ham Radio Club (YM1KE) will be active using the special event call sign TC1STAYHOME for awareness of COVID-19 pandemic, until May 5.

**BRAZIL;** Special call ZW75FEB celebrates the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II and will be active through May 31. Also, during April, special event station ZW60DF celebrates the inauguration of Brasilia as Brazil's new capital in 1960.

**SERBIA;** Look for special call YU2020IARU through the end of the year, to note the 25th General Conference of the International Amateur Radio Union.

**CZECH REPUBLIC;** Members of the Czechoslovak DX Club will be active as OL30DXC until the end of the year, to celebrate CSDXC's 30th anniversary. Operations will be on various HF and VHF bands using CW, SSB, FM and digital modes.

**SPAIN;** The DXXE Group marks its 15th anniversary with the callsigns AO5DXX, operator Salva, EA5BB and AO5DXX/8, operator Juan, EA8RM, until April 15.

**FRANCE;** Thierry, F4GVO joins the DXXE celebrations as TM15DXXE during the first half of April.

**ITALY;** The Mediterraneo DX Club celebrates its 10th anniversary during April as I15MPI. QSL via LoTW. In addition, the ARI Fidenza Club is putting a number of special event call signs on the air during 2020 to commemorate the life and achievements of Guglielmo Marconi. In April, I14FTX celebrates the first transatlantic wireless broadcast in 1901.

BULGARIA; The Bulgarian Radio Club Blagovestnik (LZ1KCP) honors the memory of Orthodox saints during April with the call sign LZ603IL.

NETHERLANDS; Special event station PA75ASN commemorates the liberation of the city of Assen during World War II. They are active until May 7.

SLOVENIA; Members of the radio club S59FOP will be marking Earth Day, April 22, on the air with the call sign S50EARTH during April.

POLAND; SN100KW commemorates the 100th birthday of Pope John Paul II (born Karol Jozef Wojtyla)[KA-ruhl voy-TEE-wuh] on May 18 in 1920. They will be active during April and May on the HF bands.

AUSTRALIA; The Western and Northern Suburbs Amateur Radio Club (WANSARC) celebrates its 50th anniversary as VI50AWS, until the end of August.

SAUDI ARABIA; Special event call HZ1WARD will be on the air during the 2020 World Amateur Radio Day, April 18th.

THIS WEEKEND ON THE RADIO; The LZ Open 40 Metre Sprint Contest, PODXS 070 Club PSK 31 Flavors Contest, Nebraska QSO Party, Louisiana QSO Party, Mississippi QSO Party, Missouri QSO Party, Florida State Parks On the Air, SP DX Contest, EA RTTY Contest, North American SSB Sprint, UBA Spring Contest, 6 Metres and the RSGB RoLo SSB will keep contesters very busy this weekend.

## WICEN News

WICEN NSW is a communications support squad of the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, WICEN is cancelling participation in all but emergency activations, and moving training and meeting to radio and other electronic means. The SES BSAR Navshield is cancelled, along with preparations, such as radio reces.

WICEN NSW has been tasked by the VRA Commissioner, to be ready to support the community if required during the current COVID-19 crisis. Since some WICEN members may find themselves in higher risk categories, WICEN is concentrating on activities that can be done in the shack, providing equipment for use by other agencies and advice on specific communications problems.

WICEN NSW has established a schedule of daily check-ins for members, as well as giving all amateurs an opportunity to test equipment and report on welfare. Those checking in can provide a succinct report on their health and safety and any significant items in the local area, that might be escalated to the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association.

In Sydney, the repeaters are VK2RWC on 2m and VK2RWS/VK2RWK on 70cm. For members outside the Sydney basin there is also a morning-only net on the User Activated Talk Group 3810 on the national DMR network, which has a reasonable coverage across the state. WICEN is looking to include HF as well in the near future.

More details are on WICEN's website, at [nsw.wicen.org.au](http://nsw.wicen.org.au).

WICEN ACT is part of the Canberra Region Amateur Radio Club, supporting events in the ACT and Capital Country, and on the South Coast of NSW. The BMSC "NatCap" has been postponed. For more information, see the WICEN and Events pages on [www.crarc.ampr.org](http://www.crarc.ampr.org).

WICEN Victoria has cancelled all current events. Their weekly net is on each Tuesday at 8:30pm, on 3.6MHz and the website is at [vic.wicen.org.au](http://vic.wicen.org.au).

[OEM link; <https://www.emtraining.nsw.gov.au/>]

---

**[Play ID File: M-OP ID3.wav]**

---

## Club News

We start this week with news from the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club. Like many organisations, the Club has suspended in person activities - Monthly General Meetings and Friday Night Get-Togethers are cancelled until further notice, along with the weekly Wednesday morning working bees.

Unfortunately, the ORARC annual Field Day over the Queen's Birthday Long Weekend on the 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> of June, has been cancelled. The inconvenience is regretted but, under the present circumstances, the Field Day cannot proceed.

Next year will be the club's 50th anniversary, so the 2021 Field Day will be one to remember. The Wauchope Showground Hall has been booked for Saturday and Sunday the 12th and 13th of June 2021 during next year's Queens Birthday Long Weekend. The Port Macquarie Golf Club function room has been booked for the Field Day Dinner on Saturday the 12th of June 2021. Mark your diary now!

Members and visitors are encouraged to participate in the club on air nets as often as possible. There are two nets each week; the club's mid-week net starts at 7:30pm on Thursday nights, and the weekend net starts at 9am on Sunday mornings. Both nets are on the VK2RPM 2 metre repeater on 146.7MHz, which requires a 91.5Hz sub-audible tone for access. Access to VK2RPM is also available via EchoLink, for those outside the coverage area of the repeater.

For more information about the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club, visit the website at [orarc.org](http://orarc.org). The newly published March 2020 issue of the club's bimonthly newsletter, Oxtales, is now available, and past issues are available on the website as well. The club is also on Facebook; just search for Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club.

*Submitted by Henry VK2ZHE  
For the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club.*

## Illawarra Amateur Radio Society

The Society normally meets on the second Tuesday of each month; however, given the current Covid19 public health restrictions, the next meeting will *not* be of the normal face-to-face type, but will rather be of a virtual-type, using the RF spectrum.

Consequently, the Society's special RF meeting will commence at 7:30pm local time on Tuesday the 14th of April, using the linked 2 metre repeaters of VK2RMP on 146.850MHz and VK2RUW on 146.675MHz. Out-of-town Members can call in via Echolink on VK2MT-R. This special RF meeting will follow the normal meeting format with a welcome, call-ins, apologies, correspondence and general discussion, etc.

At the conclusion of this formal meeting, attendees can break for their own cuppa and cake, before reconvening for the more informal 80 metre catch-up Net at 8:30pm. This net will be on 3.666MHz, plus or minus frequency for other usage.

Unlike most other hobbies, Amateur radio allows for socialising with your mates while still maintaining the required social-distancing. Perhaps an upside to Amateur radio is that with all the self-isolation and quarantining, we'll see an increase in on-air use of our bands.

A reminder of the Society's other weekly Net on Saturday morning run by Steve VK2BGL. Listeners can join-in at 9:30am local time by either using one of the aforementioned 2 metre repeaters, on 6850 or 6675, while the out-of-towners can call-in on Echolink via VK2BGL-R.

You can find out more about the Illawarra Amateur Radio Society on their website, [iars.org.au](http://iars.org.au), and the society is also on Facebook.

To conclude, all listeners are invited to call-in to the special RF meeting of the Illawarra Amateur Radio Society at 7:30pm local time on Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup> of April, via the Society's linked 2 meter repeaters of 6850 and 6675 or via the Echolink node of VK2MT-R.

Finally, the Society wishes to send their best wishes to all listeners and for them to stay safe in these rather uncertain times.

*Submitted by Rob VK2MT*

*Publicity Officer for the Illawarra Amateur Radio Society.*

## Central Coast Amateur Club

Due to the current public health situation, access to the club rooms are closed and all future face to face activities are on hold until further notice. The clubs executive team are currently working on a solution for alternate means to host business meetings.

On the bright side, this is a good time to be an amateur radio operator and we expect to see the bands a bit busier with more people staying home.

The Club wishes to thank those that submitted their expression of interest for the MMDVM build day. The club will collate the numbers along with build requirements and the projects co-ordinator will come back with further details to those interested soon.

If you are interested in obtaining or upgrading your current licence; The club's education coordinator is a Level 3 assessor, which means that we can facilitate remote assessment sessions. So to find out more, reach out to Karen our Education Coordinator at [education@ccarc.org.au](mailto:education@ccarc.org.au).

The club's Thursday evening net hot topic for this week was "What old projects will you be dusting off" and "What other aspects of AR do you want to learn?".

The club is also running a daily net at 10am to check in on your mate. Both nets are available via the VK2RAG 2 Meter repeater. Do you have a suggestion for the clubs next weekly net topic or a burning question? Feel free to leave a comment on the club's page or reach out to the club via email.

Remember, you can view the live stream of the Thursday evening net from Facebook, watch later on the clubs YouTube channel or join in via Echo link using the \*CCARCNSW\* conference server.

You can find out more about the CCARC on the web at [ccarc.org.au](http://ccarc.org.au).

*Brad VK2NMZ*

*Vice-President, Central Coast Amateur Radio Club.*

## Fisher's Ghost Amateur Radio Club

The January - March period of the Ted Powell Memorial DX Challenge for 2020 has now closed and entries can be submitted until the 14<sup>th</sup> of April.

You don't need to be a serious DX'er to take part in the challenge; If you've worked any DX in the last 3 months, head over to [contest.fgarc.org.au](http://contest.fgarc.org.au) and submit your entry.

To find out more about the Club's activities, visit the website at [fgarc.org.au](http://fgarc.org.au).

*Advised by Peter VK2PR  
For the Fishers Ghost Amateur Radio Club.*

## Hornsby and Districts Amateur Radio Club

Meetings of HADARC meeting at Mt Colah have been cancelled, until at least the end of June under the current public health order.

In lieu of Main and Mid-Monthly meetings, an extra 2m net will run on the VK2RNS repeater; using the unique communication resources and opportunities made available by our amateur radio licences.

Saturday, April the 25<sup>th</sup> is International Marconi Day, however this year the Cornish Radio Amateur Club have cancelled their operation on the day; and so HADARC's operation is also cancelled.

The Club runs a number of nets each week. Monday's net starts at 8pm on the VK2RNS 2 metre repeater, 147.250MHz No tone is required, but a 91.5 Hz tone is sent. At the moment, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month, there is also an on air meeting net on the repeater, starting at 8pm.

The 80-metre net is on Wednesday evenings on 3608.5 kHz, also from 8pm, and Morning Tea with HADARC is on or near 7106 kHz from 9am on Fridays.

HADARC's website is at [www.hadarc.org.au](http://www.hadarc.org.au). The club has a group on Facebook, which can be found by searching for VK2MA, and on twitter, @VK2MA.

*Submitted by Julian VK2YJS  
HADARC Publicity Officer.*

---

**[Play ID File: M-OP ID4.wav]**

---

## Activities on the air

Since most regular activities have been suspended, the following is a list of current on air activities notified to us here at VK2WI News;

**Oxley Region ARC** nets at 7:30pm Thursday and 9am Sunday.  
VK2RPM repeater, 146.7Mhz with 91.5Hz tone.

**Westlakes** nets Monday, Wednesday and Friday; 9:30am on 3565kHz.

**Hunter Radio Group** news 7:30pm Monday, on 146.9Mhz and 438.025MHz repeaters, with callbacks taken after.

**Central Coast ARC** net Thursday night on VK2RAG 146.725Mhz, 91.5Hz; also on Echolink \*CCARCNSW\*. Every morning at 10am is a check-in net, also on VK2RAG 2m repeater.

**Illawarra ARS** on air meeting on Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup> – 7:30pm on VK2RMP 146.850 and VK2RUW on 146.675. From 8:30pm on 80m, 3666kHz.

**WICEN** daily nets at 9am on the VK-DMR network on Talk group 3810, VK2RWC on 147.150 and VK2RWS 438.275. Evening net at 7pm, on the Sydney repeaters only.

**Waverley ARS** net 8pm Monday on VK2RBV

**Fishers Ghost ARC** net 8:30pm Thursday on VK2RFG, 438.65MHz

**St George ARS** net 8pm Thursday, on VK2RLE 146.8MHz

**HADARC** Monday night 8pm on VK2RNS, 147.25MHz.

**Manly-Warringah** on air meeting net – Wednesdays at 8pm on 146.875MHz

**At ARNSW**, Morning News bulletins continue, but other activities have been suspended.

In April, Anzac Day is the 25<sup>th</sup>, and all Australian amateurs can use the AX prefix.