

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

This weekend at VK2WI has seen a licence training and assessment weekend. [late update here if available?]

We would like to thank the members of the Waverley Amateur Radio Society education group for their assistance in running this weekend. Enquires about training and assessments can be sent to our education team by email, to education@arnsw.org.au.

With the change back to Eastern Standard Time, VK2WI maintains transmissions at the same local times, of 10am and 7:30pm – so HF propagation conditions may have changed.

Speaking of HF – the ARNSW HF Operations Group, is recommencing activities now that public health restrictions have been relaxed. Activities are generally scheduled for Monday afternoons, continuing into the evening. If you are interested, please email HFgroup@arnsw.org.au.

We wish to remind our listeners of some telephone services that are available, if you currently have any health concerns – the National COVID hotline is 1800 020 080, providing general advice; if you are feeling unwell, Healthdirect is on 1800 022 222. Both services are available 24 hours a day; and are a free call from most telephone services.

Later in the bulletin, we have a summary of on-air activities from Sydney and across the state. You can let us know what is happening in your area by email; to news@arnsw.org.au – we don't need full items, just the details of the activity and contacts. We would also welcome reports on the outcome of recent group activities, which we can report to our listeners.

Once again this week, we welcome listeners on the EchoLink “HAM” conference, and the Australian & New Zealand EchoLink Network. Callbacks will also be taken tonight on the network after the bulletin. Our thanks to John VK3HJQ and the Australian & New Zealand EchoLink Network team, for making this relay available to VK2WI News.

[Play File: 14-E-ID1.wav]

Weekly Solar and Geophysical Report

For the period of the 2nd to the 8th of April.

First, the summary;

Dates across the columns are	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th
10cm Flux	72	73	70	72	74	76	74
Fredericksburg Index (Afr)	4	2	2	5	3	15	4 estimated
Australian Index (Aaus)	5	2	1	4	2	13	1 estimated
T index	3	6	0	1	5	6	4

Solar activity was very low all week.

Geomagnetic activity was at quiet levels, except for some unsettled periods on the 2nd and the 5th; and on the 6th, which saw quiet to active conditions.

F2 critical frequencies in the southern Australian region, remained near predicted monthly values, except for some periods of depressions; 20% during local day on the 2nd and 15% during local day on the 3rd; 15% during the day and 20% during the night on the 4th; 15% during the day on the 7th; and depression of 15% during the local night of the 8th.

Now, the forecast for the 9th to the 15th of April;

Solar activity is expected to be low.

Geomagnetic activity is expected to be at quiet to unsettled levels.

Maximum Usable Frequencies should be mostly near predicted monthly values.

Data courtesy of Space Weather Services.

Solar Flux Index update

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

Having finished March, we saw a;

Minimum of 71, Average of 78 and a Maximum of 84
With peak dates from the 9th to the 17th; and the 23rd to the 28th.

So far for April, we are expecting a;

Minimum of 70, Average of 73 and a Maximum of 78
With peak dates from the 1st to the 2nd; and the 22nd to the 27th.

And looking ahead to May, we are expecting a;

Minimum of 70, Average of 72, and a Maximum of 74
With peak dates from the 1st to the 2nd; and the 19th to the 24th.

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>]

Space Weather Summary for March 2021

Compiled with data courtesy of Space Weather Services

Solar activity was at Very low to low levels this month, with no M or X class solar flares observed. Coronal hole high-speed solar wind streams were observed during the periods 1-3, 6, 12-14, and 20-22nd of March; they were mildly to moderately geo-effective. Solar region 2810 produced a minor B5.6 X-ray flare at 0139UTC on the 22nd which appeared to be associated with a coronal mass ejection. This was subsequently observed off the solar north-west limb which possibly induced some very mild geomagnetic activity on the 24th and 25th.

The strongest geomagnetic disturbance for the month was observed on the 20th of March, with a local A index of 17 signifying active conditions and isolated minor storm periods. A geomagnetic alert was issued for this event. The activity was associated with the Earth's entry into a high-speed solar wind stream induced by a coronal hole. Auroral observations were reported from Kettering and Tinderbox in Tasmania.

No significant ionospheric depressions were observed this month; the Southern Australian region Maximum Usable Frequencies were depressed up to 20% on the 2nd and 3rd, probably due to geomagnetic activity induced by coronal hole high speed wind streams.

A little about solar flares. These are temporary brightening of the chromosphere – the second-most outer layer of the sun. Besides visible light, flares emit energy in other parts of the radio spectrum, and X-rays.

The strength of solar flares is categorised the energy of the X-ray signal, as measured by GOES spacecraft. Classifications are A, B, C, M and X class – each is ten times the strength of the one below it. A and B class flares have little influence on the overall amount of solar flux. C class flares don't have much effect on earth, rarely causing a slight geomagnetic disturbance.

M class flares can cause changes in the ionosphere, and may result in shortwave fadeouts on lower frequencies, on the side of the earth facing the sun at that time. X class are the most powerful flares and can cause major ionospheric disturbance and fadeout across the whole HF spectrum, on the side of the earth facing the sun.

What use is an F-call?

Tonight, 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: 15-FCAL183.wav]

Duration 2m27s

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, or follow him on Twitter, @VK6FLAB.

[Play File: 16-E-ID2.wav]

ARRL DX news

FIJI; Dom, 3Z9DX is active as 3D2DOM and has been active mainly on 20 metres using CW and SSB.

SRI LANKA; Nadika, 4S6NCH has been active on 17 metres using FT8 around 1800UTC.

CROATIA; Members of the radio club Libertas are active with special event callsign 9A25RBM during April, to commemorate the US Secretary of Commerce Ronald Harmon Brown and 34 other victims of a fatal plane crash in 1996.

MOZAMBIQUE; A group of operators are active as C92RU until April 12. Activity is on 160 to 10 metres using CW, SSB and FT8 in DXpedition mode, with four stations active, and on Satellite QO-100.

SOUTH SHETLAND ISLANDS; Lee, DS4NMJ is active as DT8A until December 31 while on work assignment from the King Se-Jong Korean Antarctic Base on King George Island, IOTA AN-010. Activity is on various HF bands using CW, SSB and FT8 in DXpedition mode.

SPAIN; EA. Special event station EH4WRD will be active from April 12 to 18 while taking part in World Amateur Radio Day 2021 activities.

IRAN; Saeed, EP2LSH has been active using FT8 in DXpedition mode on 20 metres between 1645 and 2015UTC.

FRANCE; Special event station TM1PSL will be active from the town of Port Saint Louis du Rhone during the European FT8 DX Contest.

THAILAND; Jorge, AB6WP is active as HS0ZOK from Phuket Island, IOTA AS-053. Activity is on 20 to 10 metres using mostly SSB with some CW. His length of stay is unknown.

JAPAN; Special event station 8J100CB is active until the end of March 2022 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Chiba City.

GREENLAND; Bo, OZ1DJJ is active as OX3LX from Kangerlussuaq, IOTA NA-018, until May 1. Activity is in his spare time on the HF bands.

NETHERLANDS; Ruud, PG1R is active as PG96WARD from Leersum until April 30 to celebrate World Amateur Radio Day. Activity is on the HF bands using SSB, RTTY and PSK.

CURACAO; Jeff, K8ND will be active as PJ2ND from the Signal Point contest station from April 15th until May 3rd.

CANADA; Bill, VE3ES is active with special callsign VC3VACCINE during April to support COVID-19 vaccination efforts.

THIS WEEKEND ON THE RADIO; The Japan International DX CW Contest, NCCC RTTY Sprint, NCCC CW Sprint, K1USN Slow Speed CW Test, QRP ARCI Spring CW QSO Party, SKCC Weekend CW Sprintathon, OK/OM DX SSB Contest, European FT8 DX Contest, IG-RY World Wide RTTY Contest, DIG CW QSO Party, Yuri Gagarin International DX CW Contest, International Vintage HF Contest, WAB 3.5/7/14 MHz Data Modes, Hungarian Straight Key CW Contest and RSGB RoLo 80-Metre SSB Contest are all on over this weekend.

The RSGB 80-Metre Club CW Championship, OK1WC Memorial, 4 States QRP Group Second Sunday Sprint and K1USN Slow Speed Test are scheduled for April 12th.

The Worldwide Sideband Activity Contest and RTTYOPS Weeksprint are scheduled for April 13th.

The VHF-UHF FT8 Activity Contest, CWops Mini-CWT Test, Phone Fray and NAQCC CW Sprint are scheduled for April 14.

WICEN News

Coming WICEN activities include Dementia Australia's Memory Walk and Jog events; in Penrith on the 9th of May and at Leichhardt Oval, Lilyfield, on the 23rd of May. Volunteers are still needed for both events, which are an ideal training ground in emergency communications for WICEN members.

The Glow Worm Tunnel Marathon is held in and around Newnes and the Wolgon Valley area in the Blue Mountains, on the weekend of the 18th to the 20th of June.

WICEN weekly voice nets are on Sunday evenings, starting at 6pm, on either the Chatswood 2 metre repeater, or the Kurrajong 70cm repeater. Please check the WICEN website for details.

Digital messaging sessions continue Monday evenings from 8pm, using WINLINK and JS8CALL.

WICEN NSW, is a communications support squad of the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association. The website is at nsw.wicen.org.au.

WICEN ACT is part of the Canberra Region Amateur Radio Club. Their website includes WICEN and general Club information; its at www.crarc.org.au.

WICEN Victoria has a weekly net is on each Tuesday at 8:30pm, on 3.6MHz. More details on the website at vic.wicen.org.au.

[Messaging software at: <http://js8call.com/> and <http://winlink.org/>]

Club News

We start this week, with news from the HARAOA radio club.

The club is planning a DXpedition for early November 2021, to Willis Island, VK9W, for about 11 days.

Situated about 450km east of Cairns in the Coral Sea, Willis Island is in the top most-wanted DXpedition sites in the world.

If you're interested in this exciting adventure and enjoy working with experienced DX operators; you can send an expression of interest and a request for further information, to Tommy VK2IR via email; vk2ir@vk2ir.com.

Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club

The next meeting of the Club will be the April Friday Night get together, at 7pm on the 16th of April, in the SES Building in Port Macquarie. The meeting will be held in accordance with the club's COVID-19 Safety Plan.

The April Monthly General Meeting proceeded as planned yesterday; flood clean-up is still in progress, but fortunately the SES Building was available for the meeting.

The club is conducting Foundation training and assessments, next weekend in the SES Building in Port Macquarie. Since the weekend is fully booked, those interested in the next training and assessment weekend are requested to contact the Education Officer Larry VK2CLL, at the Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club, PO Box 712, Port Macquarie NSW 2444.

Now is the time to plan to attend the Club's 2021 annual Field Day. It is on Saturday and Sunday the 12th and 13th of June, during the Queen's Birthday long weekend. Please plan and book accommodation early, as the Port Macquarie area is certain to be even more popular than usual this year.

There are two club nets each week; the mid-week net starts at 7:30pm on Thursday nights, and the weekend net starts at 9am Sunday mornings. Both nets are on the VK2RPM 2 metre repeater on 146.7MHz, which requires a 91.5Hz sub-audible tone for access. 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. The site contains a wealth of Amateur Radio items in addition to the club information. The published March 2021 web edition of the club's bimonthly newsletter "Oxtales" is now online, and past issues can be viewed 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.*

[Play ID File: 17-E-ID3.wav]

Illawarra Amateur Radio Society

The next meeting of the Society is on this Tuesday the 13th of April. The general meeting starts at 7:30pm; directly after the Committee Meeting at 6:30pm. Attendees are welcome to arrive early and enjoy a pre-meeting chat and cuppa in the foyer.

Meetings are at the BlueScope Steel Visitor's Centre, on the southern side of the Wollongong CBD; after turning off Springhill Road into the main entrance, immediately turn right just before the security gates and follow the signs to the Visitors Centre. Due to the large size of the Visitor Centre, physical distancing requirements can easily be maintained.

At the April 13th meeting, IARS member Simon VK2KU will be presenting and discussing his HF Noise Filter project. Simon has been working on the noise reduction performance and the circuit board design for many months now. The performance of the prototypes has been outstanding, dramatically removing the local urban noise prevalent on the lower HF bands. Simon is planning on organising a production run of the circuit boards and will be taking orders on the night as well. So, if you're interested in lowering your HF noise level, come along for what will be a most interesting presentation.

The night concludes with coffee, tea and cake in the venue's large foyer, where you can also relax on the very comfortable lounges, while of course maintaining the ever-changing physical distancing requirements.

A reminder of the Society's weekly Nets; the Saturday morning net starts at 9:30am, run by Steve VK2BGL. You can join on the 2 metre repeaters, VK2RMP on 6850 or VK2RUW on 6675, or call-in on EchoLink, via VK2BGL-R. The second weekly Net is on 80 metres on Tuesday evenings, except for meeting nights; the usual frequency is 3666kHz, plus or minus for other usage, and it starts at 8:30pm.

You can find out more about the Illawarra Amateur Radio Society, including details on upcoming Amateur Radio training and examination activities, on the web at iars.org.au, and the society is also on Facebook. The website again; iars.org.au.

To conclude, all listeners are invited to attend the next meeting of the Illawarra Amateur Radio Society—at 7.30pm this Tuesday the 13th of April, at the BlueScope Steel Visitors Centre, Springhill Road, Wollongong.

*Submitted by Rob VK2MT
Publicity Officer for the Illawarra Amateur Radio Society.*

Central Coast Amateur Radio Club

A reminder that "Mayham" is coming up on Sunday the 30th of May 2021 at Wyong Racecourse. Also, on Saturday the 29th, there will be both pedestrian and mobile fox hunts.

If you are looking to attend, be a trader or exhibitor, email the team at mayham@ccarc.org.au. For the latest news and information regarding this event, you can check the website www.mayham.org.au, as well as updates in future VK2WI bulletins.

Central Coast WICEN held their AGM yesterday, with the following positions being filled; RCO; Glenn VK2GEM, Vice RCO; Col VK2ZCO, and Secretary; Mark VK2CCR.

The next training and assessment weekend at the Club is on the 29th and 30th of May; training will be at the clubrooms on Saturday, with examinations at Mayham on Sunday. If you are interested in obtaining your licence or upgrading, contact the club's education facilitator Karen VK2AKB, at education@ccarc.org.au.

The Club is making a change to repeater operations at VK2RAG, to conserve power coming into the winter months. Between the hours of 10pm and 6am EST, VK2RAG repeaters on 23cm, 6 Meter, 70cm 438.075 MHz including link to Rylstone, MMDVM 438.875 MHz and 2 metre packet will be switched off.

The operation of the VK2RAG 2 metre 146.725 MHz and WICEN repeaters, is not affected. The club's repeater committee will monitor operations and will revisit these changes in the in the future.

Adrian hosts a fortnightly Slow Scan Television net every second Friday on the VK2RAG WICEN 2 Meter Repeater; with last firday's net a success, the next is scheduled for Friday the 23rd of April. If you have any feedback or suggestions regarding this net, please reach out to the club directly at ccarc@ccarc.org.au.

This week the Club's Thursday evening net this week was hosted by Brad VK2FRQ with a discussion about your best bargain buy from a flea market, and boy oh boy were there some bargains snapped up over the years. Some great references to taking chances in bulk buy lots and finding some treasures hidden amongst the stuff. Thank you, Brad!

Bob VK2AOR and Dave VK2KFU continue the clubs daily Morning Tea net; whilst check-ins have reduced a little as many people are returning to the workplace, the net is still well attended. A huge thanks to Bob and Dave for running these nets, it sure brightens up everyone's day. Did you know the net has been running for over 12 months now?

Both nets are on the VK2RAG 2 Metre repeater, 146.725MHz with a 91.5Hz sub audible tone. EchoLink access is via the CCARCNSW conference server, and IRLP on node 9509.

The club is looking for more operators to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the RAAF. This is a great opportunity to get out on the bands and share in celebrating this momentous occasion, operating portable or otherwise. If you are interested in participating, please contact the Club directly.

You can find out more about the CCARC on the web at ccarc.org.au; or on social media by searching for Central Coast Amateur Radio Club. Remember to give the club a "like" to follow for updates.

Brad VK2NMZ

Vice-President and Publicity, Central Coast Amateur Radio Club.

Blue Mountains Amateur Radio Club

The next Friday night meeting of the club is on the 7th of May at 7:30pm. If you would like to attend, please notify the secretary via email to secretary@bmarc.org.

Standard and Advanced licence upgrade courses continue Wednesday evenings from 7:30pm, at the clubhouse. Foundation or Standard Licence holders are encouraged to come these very informative courses. A gold coin donation is requested, to go towards the tea and coffee served during the night. An exam will be scheduled toward the end of the school year.

The clubhouse is now open every first and third Saturday from 10am, providing an opportunity for visitors to seek assistance with personal projects, take part in maintenance of clubhouse facilities or just to say hello over a cup of tea and biscuits. The next open day is Saturday the 17th of April.

On air nets continue weekly; on 80 metres from 8pm Tuesday evenings, on 3543 kHz, on Wednesday night from 8pm, on the club's 2 metre repeater on 147.050MHz with a 123Hz tone for access, and on the 6 metre repeater, 53.875MHz.

More information about the club can be found on the website, at www.bmarc.org.

*73 from James VK2GOH
Publicity Officer, Blue Mountains Amateur Radio Club.*

[Play ID File: 18-E-ID2.wav]

Sydney ATV Group

If you're interested in Amateur Television but don't want to tie up your evenings, then keep listening...

The Sydney ATV group now have two nets; on Thursday afternoon starting at 2:30pm, and Monday nights from 7:30pm. The Blue Mountains ATV repeater at Lawson transmits high definition TV on 445.50MHz. Reception is possible over the Sydney Metro area, or via the British Amateur TV Club streaming web site; select the VK2 callsign and the HTML5 option. You can also text to say that you're watching.

Give us a call on the Lawson repeater, 147.325 MHz with positive offset, with reports, questions or help with receiving Amateur Television. Why not join in and find out more about this fascinating and fast-growing aspect of digital amateur radio.

*Advised by John VK2ATU
on behalf of the Sydney ATV Group.*

St George Amateur Radio Society

The society announces two upcoming events. First is the 2021 Anzac Day QSO party; last year, many amateur radio operators not only missed out on catching up with friends at their local club gatherings, but also were not able to attend an ANZAC Day service. To help overcome those restrictions, the St George Amateur Radio Society sponsored a QSO Party on Anzac Day 2020. This event was very popular with many amateurs; local, interstate and overseas.

So, the society has decided to hold the ANZAC Day QSO Party again this year, on Sunday 25th April 2021. The QSO party is for amateur radio operators to keep in contact on-air with fellow operators, and to recognise the service of many amateur radio operators from both sides of the Tasman Sea, in defending our freedom.

The Anzac Day QSO Party commences at 3pm local Sydney time, and concludes at 9.00pm. Bands and modes of communication are 40m and 80m SSB, VK2RLE and VK2RDX 2m VHF FM repeaters and the VK DMR network. It is open to all amateur radio operators and a participation certificate is available, recognising the aims of this event. Amateurs are reminded that all VK amateurs can use the AX prefix on ANZAC Day.

Complete operating and participation details are available on Society's web site www.sgars.org.

Several weeks ago, the Society lost one of its longest active members, Don Edwards VK2NV. Don was a very keen CW operator, encouraging other amateurs to get out their keys and get on the air with Morse.

In recognition of Don, the inaugural "Don Edwards Memorial slow Morse contest" is on the weekend of the 8th and 9th of May. The contest will be in two sections; 80 metres on Saturday evening from 6pm to 9pm (0800 - 1100 UTC) and 40 metres on Sunday afternoon from 1pm to 4pm (0300 - 0600 UTC). The contest is open to all VK amateurs, and participants can enter either or both sessions.

Many amateurs have rarely ever used Morse code since they passed their exam, or never needed to learn Morse for their licences. This contest is to encourage inexperienced or rusty operators to try their hand or fist at Morse.

For this reason, it is a "Slow Morse contest" with a speed limit of 10 words per minute, no keyboards or screens - all sent by hand and received by ear. To encourage those amateurs who did not need to pass a Morse exam for their licence, they will be able to claim an extra 2 points per session.

So, if you have been looking for an excuse to get out the Morse key, then this is your opportunity.

More details on the contests, along with further information about The St George Amateur Radio Society can be found on the website, at www.sgars.org. The society is also on Facebook.

Peter VK2EMU

Publicity Officer for the St George Amateur Radio Society.

Hornsby and Districts Amateur Radio Club

The next mid-meeting of the club will be an informal dinner on Tuesday the 13th of April, at Magpies' Club, opposite Waitara Station. The club accepts the Dine and Discover vouchers, available to NSW residents via the Service NSW website.

The next general meeting, on April 27th will be back at Mt Colah Community Centre, starting at 8pm. At this meeting, Mick VK2CMP will give a presentation on EME or "moonbounce".

International Marconi Day this year is on the UTC day of the 24th of April, and on the 24th and 25th HADARC will activate the only Australian station, VK2IMD. This station marks the reception of the first direct message from the UK to Australia, sent from north-west Wales, to Fisk's home in Wahroonga, by Marconi.

The Club's website has up to date details on club activities, plus contact information and the Covid Safety plan; it's at www.hadarc.org.au. The club has a group on Facebook, which can be found by searching for VK2MA, and on twitter, @VK2MA.

The Club's 2 metre repeater, VK2RNS on 147.250 MHz, is connected to Allstarlink and is available on EchoLink.

The Club's three regular nets continue each week. Monday's net starts at 8pm on the VK2RNS 2 metre repeater. 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.

*Submitted by Julian VK2YJS
HADARC Publicity Officer.*

[Play ID File: 19-E-ID4.wav]

Activities on the air

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

Great Lakes Radio Club weekly net 7pm Monday on VK2RGL, 147.1MHz.

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

Hunter Radio Group VK2AWX News 7:30pm Monday, on 146.9Mhz and 438.025MHz. Meeting net Wednesday 7:30pm on 146.9MHz.

Central Coast ARC net Thursday night on VK2RAG 146.725Mhz, 91.5Hz; also Echolink *CCARCNSW*.

Amateur Radio Central West Group afternoon tea net 4pm daily; Monday and Friday night net at 8pm, on VK2RCW. HF net 8pm Wednesday 3653kHz.

Illawarra ARS Nets - Tuesday at 8:30pm on 80m, 3666kHz. Saturday 9:30am on VK2RMP 146.850 and VK2RUW on 146.675.

Blue Mountains ARC nets 8pm Tuesday on 3543kHz, 8pm Wednesday on VK2RBM, 147.050MHz with 123Hz tone and 53.875MHz.

WICEN nets on Sunday evenings from 6pm.

Waverley ARS net 8pm Monday on VK2RBV, 438.1125MHz. Activities online and in person, see website for details.

Fishers Ghost ARC net 7:30pm Thursdays on VK2RFG, 438.65MHz with - 7MHz offset and 91.5Hz tone required, also on Echolink.

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

HADARC Monday night 8pm on VK2RNS, 147.25MHz, Wednesday from 8pm on 3608.5kHz, Friday 9am on 7106kHz.

Manly-Warringah Meetings return every Wednesday from 7:30pm.