

2022-2023 Committee

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 <http://www.fdu.org.au>

 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/349974226381281>

Recommended FDU calling frequencies (MHz)

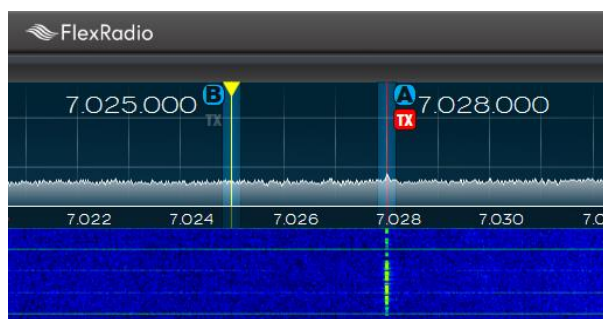
1.818	3.528	7.028	10.118	14.058	18.085
21.058	24.908	28.058			

FDU Calling frequencies

Many members in VK and ZL hang out on the frequencies listed above which are also on our “About us” page.

<http://www.fdu.org.au/about-us/>

During the day (at least here in VK3 and the states surrounding us) it seems we have two popular frequencies on 40m. 7.025 and 7.028MHz. Or 7.030....



As many of us are either retired or working from home these days there tends to be a fair bit of day-time activity – so spin the dial, have a listen.... BUT... put out a call also.

Night-time... 3.528Mhz.

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2023!



There's some great inspiring content this month, including amazing QRP reports, fun DX and more – thanks to all contributors! We'll get some important housekeeping out of the way first though – the next step in simplifying our club structure and reducing admin for the enjoyment of all.

A warm welcome to our new members. If you hear them on-air, please give them a call and say g'day or kia ora.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions please send me or your favourite committee member a message on Discord, Facebook or an email, or give us a call.

Ben VK2JA - Editor

FISTS Down Under Incorporated – Proposed changes

Members will recall committee voted to simplify the structure of the club following the AGM last year. These changes will enable us to focus more on club activities and less on administration. Late last year committee closed the FDU bank account and transferred our money to the Eastern and Mountain District Radio Club. An MoU with the EMDRC was agreed to guide the future expenditure of these funds in accordance with our wishes.

The next step in this process is to deregister FDU with Consumer Affairs in NSW. Nothing else will change for members. We still have our website, Facebook page, Discord and various on-air activities.

In two weeks, members will receive a simple motion (via email) detailing this change and you will be asked to cast a vote: Yes or No.

The motion will read:

“The committee of FISTS Down Under Inc. recommend that the club cancel its registration in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 2009.”

The Club has no financial assets.

The Club has no liabilities.

As a member of FISTS Down Under Inc. I support this motion to cancel the Club's registration.

(Yes or No)

The committee recommends you vote Yes.

73, Chris VK3QB #9085 on behalf of the FDU Inc Committee.

Cover story – QRP CW from indoors

Sam VK3NOP has been known to experiment, and has achieved some pretty impressive results already with his newest rig.



"I just received this Elecraft KX2 today after 4 months waiting. I ordered it with internal automatic ATU option so that I can easily use it with Elecraft AX1 whip antenna. For the 40m band, I install the 40m extension coil. Total whip length is about 1.5 meters. From my previous experience, an auto ATU is essential for this type of antenna.

"With the help of the bi-pod, the whole thing can be very easily set up on the desk next to a window, leaving the 4 metre and 9.5 metre-long counterpoises (coming with the whip antenna and extension coil) on the floor of my single storey house.

"It's pretty easy to use after spending half an hour reading the manual and exploring. I then heard VK5FA answering VK2ZZR's call on 7.019MHz. Both of them were very clearly copied. VK5FA hit my KX2's S meter with 7-8 while VK2ZZR with 5-6.

"Then I called VK2ZZR and had QSO with Jo. I was running on the default power setting, 5W. Jo gave me RST 579 report. That was an amazing first QSO with my KX2.

"I used 4 LiFePO batteries to power KX2 externally.

"Some details on the control panel: I turned off PRE-amp, turned on Noise Reduction and changed the filter to be 200Hz. My noise floor was about S2."

It's time to get on-air

The committee regularly hear from members who are wondering how they learn the code well enough so they can get on-air.

In nearly every case, those asking these questions **are** ready. Why not use the **Friday Night FDU QSO party** as a good way for low-pressure multiple contacts? Every Friday night, 2100 – 2200 Sydney/Melbourne time, around 3528kHz and 7028kHz.

Most – if not all - FDU members are happy to have a slow (less than 15WPM) QSO, and there are plenty of us who are only comfortable below about 10WPM. For me (Ben VK2JA), I can only copy a "ragchew" up to 10WPM. Anything faster and I get completely lost. So don't be nervous about being too slow: there is no such thing as too slow. Just get on air or set up a sked.

The best way to improve your skills and build confidence is to **get on-air**. So, hang up your training buzzer and plug in the antenna. Email the committee and we can help you with some friendly **on-air contacts**, or post on Discord.

Are you using the FISTS Discord messaging and chat app?

The **Discord** app enables users to chat with friends and participate in group messaging. We've created a **Discord** group for "FISTS Down Under".

Discord is an ideal way to let others know you're in front of your radio and looking for a QSO, or announcing activity like when you're running a DXpedition or other FDU relevant information.



You can install **Discord** on your PC, Mac, smart phone or iPad and be alerted by push notifications when a message or “chat” is sent to you.

Scan the QR code on your phone to join the FISTS Downunder group, or on a computer, click this link: <https://discord.gg/zkdjHgHbaq>

Inspiration from John VK2DLP – life’s path, CW academy, and never give up!

We all have taken different paths in our life line some easy and some hard. Here is mine.

I was born in 1946 and grew up in Hamilton Ontario Canada. I developed a keen interest in electronics in my early teenage years. My cousin was an amateur radio operator VE3CCH and I bought a converted Canadian Army 19 set from him and started listening to 80M.

I had problems with CW and mentally I convinced myself that it was too hard. At that time the Canadian licensing scheme had two CW requirements. The basic license was 10 WPM and the advanced was 15 WPM. Too hard! Oh well get on with life!

Any ambition to obtain an amateur license was pushed down due to obtaining an Electrical Engineering degree from Queens University in Kingston Ontario Canada. After graduation a career with Bell Northern Research in Ottawa and starting a family left no time for amateur radio pursuits and money was tight with a newly purchased house and a young family to care for.

After a succession of very cold and snow laden winters my wife and I decided that the climate didn’t suit us and if you don’t like something you change it. Change it we did!! In 1977 we landed in Sydney on an overcast and wet day in March 1977 with two small children one of which was sick.

The ride from the airport through an unreconstituted industrial area on our way to the North Sydney Travelodge raised the question in our minds, “What have we done?” Thankfully, we persisted and we are eternally grateful to the many Australians who assisted us in our acclimatisation to life ‘Down Under’.

I was at this time working of Digital Equipment Corporation Australia and one of the field service technicians was a ham and he just happened to have an original FT-101 for sale. Not a B or a yet to be released E model but an original. Yours truly could not resist and my amateur radio interest was rekindled. As an Electrical Engineer the

theory requirements seemed trivial so I obtained my Australian Limited call sign VK2YFP in 1977 and became active on 2M FM with a Kenwood TR-7400.

Still no code but I decided to try again and to my amazement with a lot of practice I reached that magic 5 WPM and obtained my Novice license VK2VAL also in late 1977. The only thing left was the 10 WPM requirement for my advanced. As a novice I stayed on 80M CW and with the help of an amateur in Northern NSW (Harry Alderson I think) who rag chewed with me I succeeded in getting my Advanced in early 1978 with my call VK2DLP. I didn't know the political significance of the DLP being a "new" Australian until it was pointed out to me by some non-amateur acquaintances. I think someone in the PMG's office was having the lend of me. Hi Hi.

After getting my Advanced I promptly forgot about CW and continued on and off over the years as a voice only operator. I flirted with the idea of getting back into CW about 15 years ago and bought a Bencher BY-1 paddle but found it hard to use and like many intentions I never got 'a round tuit'.

Move forward to 2021 and I realised as you age (I was 75 at the time) you need to keep the brain active. I saw on the net information about the CW Academy and thought this might be an opportunity to use my paddle. I signed up for a Basic course in September 2021 and with the help of a retired US Navy Chaplin who was the course tutor I was amazed at how I got to the point where I could read characters at 15 WPM.

The Academy teaches code reading in your head and I must say I sincerely wish I had done this many years ago as my 75-year-old brain had difficulty stringing several characters together in my head. I was not game to get on the air at this point as I was still very shaky in reading continuous morse but I did feel I had made progress so it was on to the Intermediate course.

After several lessons into this course tragedy struck. I came down with a bad dose of Shingles and to top that off I came down with COVID after a visit to an unnamed hospital's outpatient clinic for an Ophthalmic examination due to swelling from the Shingles. I withdrew from that course as I could not keep up the practice requirements to get the most out of the sessions.

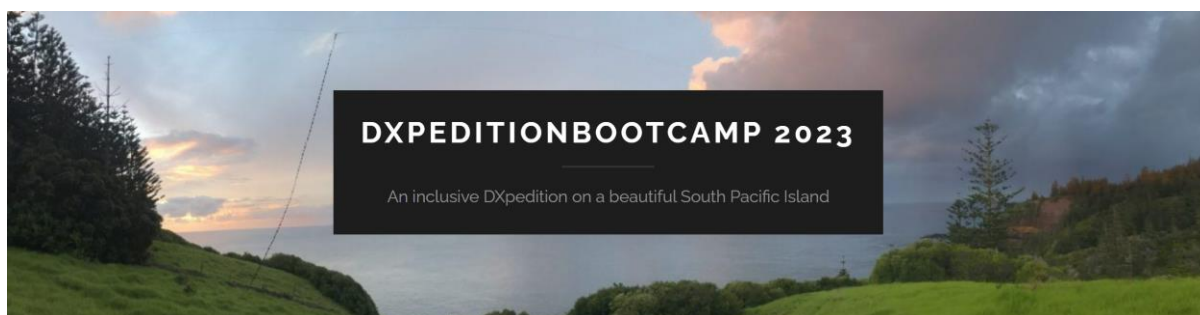
So here we are today December 2022. In 2023 I will restart my CW quest with the Intermediate course and hopefully I will gain enough proficiency to carry on a real QSO at 20 WPM.

In the mean time I have replaced my Bencher BY-1 with a UR5CDX paddle. Yuri makes a beautiful key which compares very favourably with the Begali keys. Mine left the Ukraine the week Putin's thugs decided to enter their country. A close call to be sure and I hope Yuri is able to continue making his beautiful keys once this war is over

I have made a several CW contacts which to the operators at the other end must have seemed painful (VK5GG, VK2GBR, K7CF et al). Today I have a Yaesu FTdx-10 transceiver with an ICOM IC-2KL solid state linear amplifier and a 40M an 20M Inverted V antenna on a small suburban lot.

I will continue my CW odyssey and sooner or later I will become proficient in CW or die trying! Hi. Hi.

Dxpedition Bootcamp 2023



Have you ever wanted to be part of a CW pileup on the pointy end... VK9NT Norfolk Island 2023 may be just the event for you. Read more by following this link.

<http://dxpeditionbootcamp.net/hello-world>

Your Committee On-air

Your committee all had a go at the 15 QSOs in 15 days in December and January. I think it's safe to say some real fun times had – 52 different DXCC entities worked by Chris VK3QB, and contacts on all HF I bands from Phil VK3VB, including from home and portable. Garry VK2GAZ made 31 QSOs with 6 DXCC entities. Here's a report on Phil's activities in January 2023.

January 2023 at VK3VB

Three things combined during January, well four actually but the 2m/6m WSPR challenge does not relate to CW.

I was trying to achieve 15 in 15 (again) for FDU, the SKCC (Straight Key Century Club) had "straightkey month" and then we arranged a few days away so there was a portable station to plan.

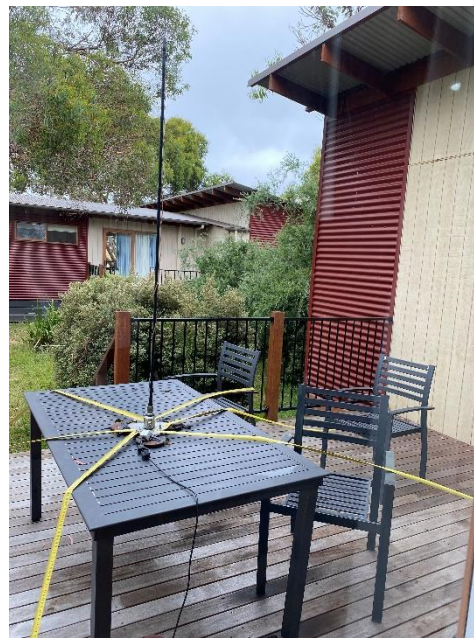
My first attempt early in the month for 15 in 15 was a failure, so that was re-prioritised to the end of the month. In the shack the paddle was moved to one side and the Vibroplex bug was proudly placed at the front of the desk.

During the month, including while away portable, I worked over 40 SKCC stations and 14 "K3Y's". Fun event and a takeout for me was the number of times a station would arrange asked where I there were no conditions and yet a contact took place. In the second half of the month I did manage to work the 15 in 15, some days with only 1 contact, but got there. This included **making at least one contact on each of the HF bands from 160m-10m-and all with a straight key.**

I guess the challenge for February will be QRP?!

Towards the end of the run for 15 in 15 I was heading down to Phillip Island for two nights—so a quick setup portable station was needed. Previously I have used the old faithful squid pole, helically wound with SGC tuner at base—which had worked well. I had mixed results last time with a Terlin whip on a "bigfoot" mag mount on the metal outdoor table with two radial wires.

I decided to use the FAMPARC whip this time. 3 holes were drilled in the plate of the “big foot” with a screw in each to enable the quick deployment of 6 x 8 metre tape measure radials. I tested this in the QRP party prior to leaving - it tuned up great on all bands and I had good reports. The first picture is testing at home, and the second is at the accommodation on Phillip Island.



The station consisted of a Panasonic tough book, which is an absolutely great piece of equipment. As I found out on my Dinner Plains trip, a cordless mouse is essential incase RF disables the touch pad. This was used for logging and to access the SKCC sked page.

Next to that is a 20amp switch mode power supply—this is required until I talk Chris into selling me his small supply! The ATU is an LDG AT-Z100 PRO.

Mostly I had the antenna so I didn’t need the ATU, but it did the job when I could not be bothered adjusting the stinger on the whip.

The radio is an Icom IC7000. This would be the second IC7000 I have owned, and I am quite impressed with it for a portable HF CW. The noise blanking and DSP worked well, and the DSP filtering was also adequate. I never found the menu structure logical, so that was probably the only frustration with the radio.



The heart of the operation is the Hi-mound BK100 bug. If I am travelling with a bug I take this one, mostly because I will not cry anywhere near as much if this is damaged as I would with the vibroplex! It always surprises me that it is also easier to send with than the vibroplex. You will see the factory weight on the end of pendulum and in front of that a bunnings “stair gauge”. This will slow the bug down to about 14wpm. If you need to slow down further you can just tap on the “dash” side as if it was a straight key. I am not quite sure what is to the right of the bug—it came in the box with the radio.

For some reason the antenna resonance was different portable then when tested at home – I can only think this is due to it being mounted above ground. I had to have the stinger as far extended as possible to get resonance for the bottom of 40m - a longer stinger is something I need to install in the kit.

Other than that I had an absolute ball during the time I got on air. I only had ten contacts, but they were across 80, 40, 30, 20 and 12m. Two memorable contacts were SM4OTI on 30m who was calling CQ, and then N1FG gave me a call on 40m to try for SKM and we had a great contact. Obviously the conditions were favourable, but the FAMPARC whip with 6 radials and 100w seemed a good setup for a quick operation with minimal equipment.

NZ CW NET

3535.0 kHz at 9pm NZT Mon-Fri

[Read the latest edition of the NZ Net Newsletter](#)

NZ Net News is the fortnightly newsletter of the New Zealand Net.

If you would like to subscribe, please [contact ZL1NZ](#).

To see previous newsletters, [click here](#).

<http://radio1nz.com/about-amateur-radio/new-zealand-nets/nz-net/>

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Suffering QRM/RFI? Check out www.qrm.guru for hints n tips, case studies, education, and on-line support.



The committee is considering working on a **worldwide FISTS event**, including other region FISTS chapters – if this is of interest to you, you have any ideas, or would like to contribute to organising, please contact us on Discord, Facebook, or by email.

FISTS QRP AWARD

The FDU QRP award is a year-long challenge to make the most contacts to different DXCC entities and different bands. The rules are very relaxed, this is not a contest, but an incentive to get active. Contacts from home, mobile and portable all count. Check out the details here: <https://www.fdu.org.au/awards/>



All FDU awards will use Club Log for verification, ease of administration and transparent tracking. Visit these pages for more info:

<https://clublog.org/>

<https://fists.co.uk/dxccleague.aspx?c=du&fbclid=IwAR3tiwr1TtysBwD1J2r-r5qiygFQel7ISLPNiX5tDdCNDv3gkRSNiXWuryE>

Next edition – April 2023

Please send us through any news, stories or pictures that other members may be interested in. The next edition will also be the AGM edition.

Please contact your editor Ben VK2JA via FDU Discord or Facebook for his email address.





That's a wrap for this edition.

Please email us with your feedback, questions, ideas and articles for the next edition. And don't forget to send us a few photos of your favourite keys, paddles, bugs, shack and your good self.

73, es c u on air from the FISTS Down Under Committee

Chris VK3QB, Derek VK3KX, Phil VK3VB, Graeme VK5GG es David ZL2WT

February 2023

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