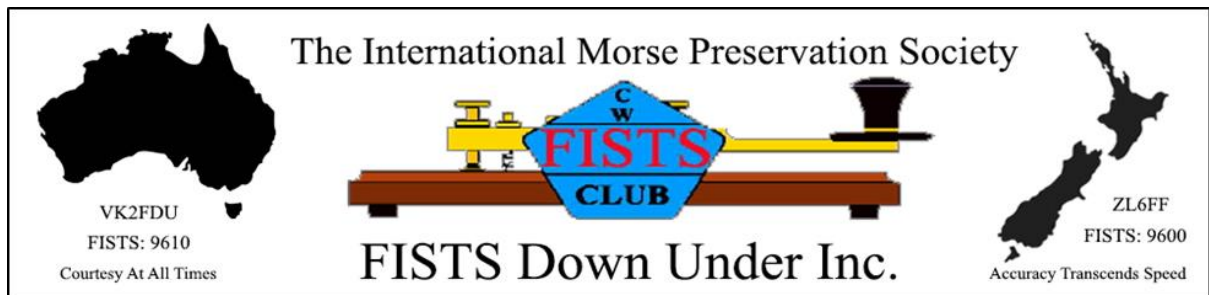


April 2023

# Key - Down Under



The view on the way to the SOTA summit of Mt Majura in VK1

## 2022-2023 Committee

<b>President</b>	<b>Chris VK3QB</b>	Vk3qb(at)Hotmail.com
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Phil VK3VB</b>	Ppavey(at)bigpond.com
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Derek VK3KX</b>	
<b>ZL Liaison</b>	<b>Philip ZL1PSH</b>	zululima1psh(at)gmail.com
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Chris VK3QB - acting</b>	
<b>Committee</b>	<b>Graeme VK5GG</b>	



## Recommended FDU calling frequencies (MHz)

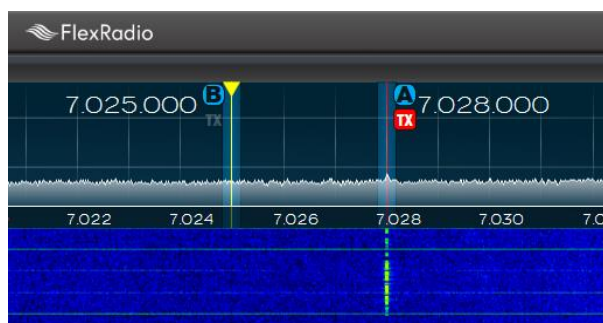
1.818	3.528	7.028	10.118	14.058	18.085
21.058	24.908	28.058			

## 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 on the East Coast of VK) 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.

**W**elcome to our April newsletter



It's been almost a year since my last SOTA summit but I've managed to finally get the report in. Last newsletter there was so much great content from other members we had a jam-packed edition.

Please keep the content coming – this is your newsletter and your club. I've found that whenever a member writes about themselves, their station, or what they have been doing, I always get positive feedback.

So please share your photos and story, even if it's just where you got that radio or key from decades ago – we all love hearing from other members, and that's what this newsletter is all about.

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*

## Upcoming Events – April 2023

**All of April** – VI1MARCONI special event callsign available for use to FDU members – see below in this newsletter for details and <https://www.fdu.org.au/international-marconi-day-22-april-2023/>

April 22 – Macrconi Day

April 25 – Celebrate ANZAC day with the AX prefix in place of VK in your callsign

April 27 – Morse Code Day (Samuel Morse's birthday).

April 27 – CQ QRS Slow CW practice net quiz via Zoom. More details at <https://www.parg.org.au/copy-of-slow-cw-dec-2022> or contact Chris  
Vk3qb(at)Hotmail.com

Please send us any CW-related events you are involved in or hear about, for us to include in the calendar. Send them via email to the editor (details at the end of the newsletter)

## 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/zkdjHgHbag>

## Some updates from the President



Hello everyone. I hope 2023 is being kind to you and you're getting some quality time on-air. I'm just back from Norfolk Island where a group of four and two visitors activated VK9NT for two weeks. You can read more about it in [QTC Magazine](#) which will be published later in May.

In our efforts to reduce administration and make FISTS Down Under a more efficient club we have made some changes to the website.

## Membership List

The membership list has always been maintained by FISTS in the UK. They manage the lists and allocate new membership numbers. They have a very good website and search facility. If you wish to look up a member's details, you can do this from their website.

<https://fists.co.uk/members/memberslists.aspx>

You may need to register for access. You can download membership lists in various formats. These lists should always be up-to-date. I encourage you to visit the UK website and have a look around. It's well-structured and provides a lot of useful information.



## **New Membership Applications**

For now, applying for membership hasn't changed. Membership is free. Just send an email to Phil VK3VB and he'll process your application. We only need your name, callsign and email address.

## **Membership Gallery**

We've removed this page from the web site. Most amateurs tend to use qrz.com or their own personal web sites these days. If you want to share information about you or your station, I recommend you set-up a qrz.com page, if you don't have one already.

## **FDU Registration Cancellation Update**

Thanks to the members who have responded to the ballot regarding the cancellation of registration for FISTS Down Under Inc. Committee has the paperwork in hand and will be preparing the application in the next little while. As already advised, nothing will change for the day-to-day involvement of members.

## **Events**

Club events and on-air activities continue to be a challenge for FDU. The QSO Party has been a measured success, and after one year of "partying" we only receive 3-4 logs per week and no more than 8-10 people "partying".

The Morse Code Proficiency Certificate has not attracted any interest. The contests are also poorly represented. Both these initiatives will be discontinued.

The Leagues Table has attracted ten members... out of 271 members.

<https://fists.co.uk/dxccleague.aspx?c=du&fbclid=IwAR3tiwr1TtysBwD1J2r-r5qi ygFQel7ISLPNiX5tDdCNDv3gkRSNiXWuryE>

As of writing, no-one has applied to use the V11MARCONI special event callsign.

A great way to get some on-air experience and maybe even deep your toe into a new facet of the hobby is to look at the SOTA and WWFF programs. Check out Ben's article further down, and contact either of us if you would like more info.

Paul, VK5PAS has some good information and links about these programs on his web site. Check them out here.

<https://vk5pas.org/about/>

<https://vk5pas.org/worldwide-flora-fauna/>

## **CW Buddies**

This is one area where at least four members are passionate and keen to help. If you're seeking some one-on-one assistance, please reach out. It might be a telephone call, or better yet, some basic on-air QSOs to help build your competence and confidence. Just send an email to Chris, vk3qb(at)hotmail.com and I'll connect you with a buddy.

The July 2022 edition of the FDU Newsletter has some good hints 'n tips for getting started.

<https://www.fdu.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/FISTS-Jul-2022-Newsletter.pdf>

## **Input from you – the members**

FDU is made up of 271 members across VK and ZL. The club is what you make of it. I encourage you to get on-air, join the Facebook Group and engage with other like-minded operators, connect on Discord to get notifications from other members... and write an article for the newsletter.

## **Are you looking for support?**

If you are not a Morse code practitioner but want to get started, reach out. The committee is here to help. We need you on-air.

If you're looking for some inspiration, here are a couple of links that might just help:

**Dit Dit FM** is a podcast by Bruce Pea N9WKE. Bruce hosts various guests and covers a number of interesting topics about Morse Code... well worth a listen.

<https://www.ditdit.fm/>

## **Ditto CW – for the phone**

If you use an Android phone, I can highly recommend this app.

It's a great app to help you improve your code proficiency.

And, as always, I can't recommend CW Academy highly enough. Brought to you by CW Ops [www.cwops.org](http://www.cwops.org) this is probably the best online/in virtual person course you can do to learn or improve your Morse Code.

The more you put into learning or improving your Morse Code the more you'll get out of it. We've said it one hundred times... 20 mins every day will make a huge difference.

And don't forget our [Useful Links](#) page.

In closing my comments for this month, I'd like to extend a very special thank-you to Ben VK2JA for pulling together the newsletter.

Finally... we need you on-air. If there is anything we can do to help just send any of the committee an email. We are here to help.

73, Chris VK3QB

President, vk3qb(at)hotmail.com

FISTS Down Under Inc

## **VI1MARCONI – Special Event Callsign available in April**

International Marconi Day is observed annually on the Saturday closest to the 25th of April, which is the birth date of Guglielmo Giovanni Maria Marconi, who is recognised as inventor of radio. This year International Marconi Day is the 22nd of April.

FISTS Downunder has applied for the Special Event Callsign VI1MARCONI. We invite members to operate the callsign throughout the month of April as a part of a casual contest and to recognise Marconi's birth date and achievements.

If you would like to use VI1MARCONI during April (excluding 22nd April) please send an email to Chris vk3qb(at)hotmail.com, even spot yourself on [dxwatch.com](https://dxwatch.com) and be on the other end of the pileup!

For more info see <https://www.fdu.org.au/international-marconi-day-22-april-2023/>

## **Cover story – Ben's first SOTA summit**

It was a cool winter day and I was in Canberra for work. Walking to the top of Mt Majura was unofficially on my bucket list, and taking my Icom IC-705 to the summit for a combined SOTA and WWFF (Parks) activation was the perfect excuse. It also just happened to be the first anniversary of my first amateur radio contact!

I have tried many times over the last 25 years to learn CW. It was only in 2019/2020 where I finally actually learned it, and got my amateur radio licence at the same time. I learned through the Android app [IZ2UUF Morse Koch CW](#), and listening to WWFF/park activation videos from [Thomas K4SWL](#) and [James VK2TER](#) while washing and cleaning up at night.

CW is my main interest, so much so that I don't really know what to do if using my voice for a contact! I usually bring a mic just in case, and often end up getting coaxed into chasing other activators on SSB.

This activation ended up being all CW. It got quite cold towards the end, and I was shivering so much that my keying was quite variable!



*The Airservices radio and radar facility at the summit of Mt Majura – I made sure I was downhill enough to still be in the activation zone, but shielded from interference!*

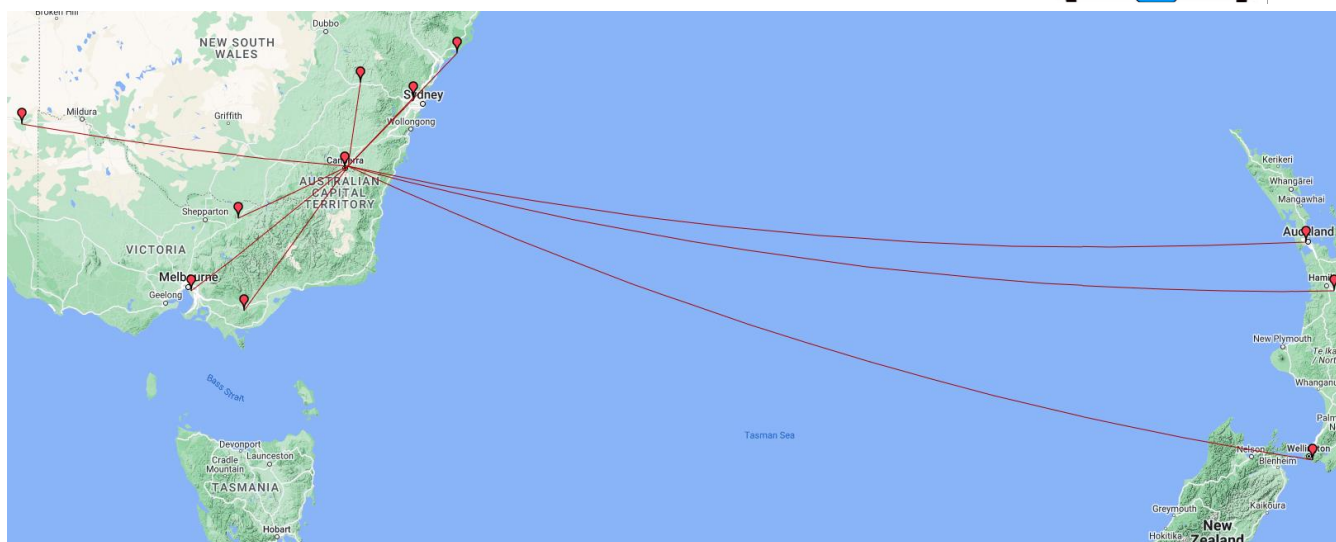
I'm a parent of three, and a business owner, so don't get much time to be on-air. I still consider myself a CW newbie, even though I've been doing it for almost two years. My home is in a creek valley, so not great for propagation, which is part of the reason why I love portable operation so much. It's great to go on a bushwalk to somewhere, then set up and sit doing practically nothing for hours, before heading home. It really clears your head.

I also love SOTA and park activations because they are a great way to improve my CW skills in an easy environment. The QSOs are short, and relatively pre-defined. The chasers and activators are always very patient. My most memorable park activation included a CW contact from California, USA. I was putting out 10 watts, he was putting out less than 100. It took about 10 minutes, but we both stuck with it and eventually got the details right!

From Mt Majura, I operated with five watts CW and a  $\frac{1}{4}$  wave wire. I had a [Weaver Arborist's throw line](#) and storage cube which I used to get the wire about four metres up a tree, then sideways to another tree where I fixed it about 2.5 metres off the ground, so a very very low inverted L configuration. I used alligator clip leads to adjust the length of the wire to be resonant on 40 metres.

Using only QRP CW with a straight key and my poor antenna, I made 11 contacts in just over half an hour, validly activating Mt Majura for SOTA, and Mt Majura Nature Reserve for WWFF.





*11 QRP CW contacts were made with a poor antenna and cold, shaky operator!*

It just goes to show what you can do with CW. The worst signal report I got was 539 (to VK3), with more than half being 579 or better, including two 599s to NZ. It was a great afternoon and a real recharge. As it was getting late, so ran all the way back down to the car. Fortunately, I had reached the main trail before it got completely dark!

To get into SOTA or WWFF, you don't need to go portable. Chasers can be any home, mobile or portable station. Check out ParksNPeaks (<https://parksnpeaks.org/>) to see who's out there, and give them a call. It's a really good low-pressure way to get into, or practice, CW. Realistically, you can even keep it as simple as to just send your callsign, a signal report, and 73. Give it a go, it's a great and easy way to start or improve your CW.

A short WWFF exchange could look as simple as this:

[activator] CQ CQ WWFF DE VK2JA VK2JA K

[chaser] VK3PF

[activator] VK3PF GM UR RST 579 579 SK

[chaser] R VK2JA GM UR 559 559 TU 73 44 SK

[activator] TU 73 44 DE VK2JA K

## NZ news and NZ CW net

NZ Autumn sprints are back on for the rest of April – CW and SSB.  
<https://www.nzart.org.nz/activities/contests/sprints/>

The NZ net is on 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](#).

<https://zl1.nz/about-amateur-radio/new-zealand-nets/nz-net/>



## CW lessons for new ops

*The following item was written by David ZL1DK and appeared in the NZ Net News 102 (18 Mar 2023). It is reproduced here by permission of the editor of NZ Net News.*

On-air and online lessons for CW beginners started on 13 March this year. Sent from South Auckland, the signals can be heard on the UHF FM National System (where available), on 3755 kHz and online via ZOOM. For those wishing to listen via ZOOM, please contact Peter ZL1PX for access details [pjh@teachlit.com].

The lessons start with a character speed of 19 Words Per Minute but by using Farnsworth Spacing, the text speed is just 6 wpm. As time moves on, we will increase the text speed by reducing the spacing until we reach around 13 wpm in December.

The CW is sent on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, starting at 7.15pm on Mondays, and at 7.30pm the other days.

Sessions last around 35-45 minutes. Text is available to all for these lessons, just ask. At the start of each session, we ask for check-ins and at the end of the session, if you wish, you can tell us how you did – good, bad or somewhere in the middle. No one will be asked to read back what they received or put under any pressure at all.

So far, I have three operators sending the CW: Rob ZL1RJS, Peter ZL1PX and me.

We use Gary Bold's Teach software which has been modified by Andrew ZL1AF.

*From Philip Sharp ZL1PSH*

**Suffering QRM/RFI?** Check out [www.qrm.guru](http://www.qrm.guru) for hints and tips, case studies, education, and on-line support.



## 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-r5qi ygFQeI7ISLPNiX5tDdCNDv3qkRSNiXWuryE>



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, to Ben VK2JA – newsletter editor – [bmcosier\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:bmcosier(at)gmail.com)

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

Chris VK3QB, Derek VK3KX, Phil VK3VB, Graeme VK5GG es Philip ZL1PSH

April 2023