



May 2023


# Key - Down Under

The International Morse Preservation Society



**FISTS Down Under Inc.**

  
VK2FDU  
FISTS: 9610  
Courtesy At All Times

  
ZL6FF  
FISTS: 9600  
Accuracy Transcends Speed



**HMAS Vampire – currently on the air as VK2VMP**

### 2022-2023 Committee

<b>President</b>	<b>Chris VK3QB</b>	Vk3qb(at)Hotmail.com
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<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Chris VK3QB - acting</b>	
<b>Committee</b>	<b>Graeme VK5GG</b>	

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

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

### Recommended FDU calling frequencies (MHz)

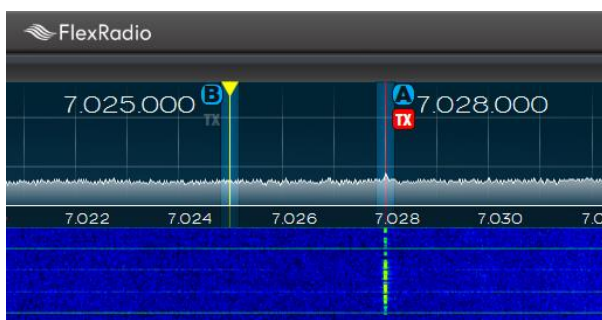
1.818      3.528      7.028      10.118      14.058      18.085  
 21.058      24.908      28.058

## 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 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 May newsletter.



There's been some exciting activity in the CW/Morse Code world since the last newsletter, so this edition is earlier than usual! We're hoping to make the newsletters more regular anyway (roughly monthly), so this is a good start. Funnily we've ended up with a very nautical theme this month, with a warship on the air, a circumnavigation, marine memorabilia, and the centary of the very first amateur radio communications across the ditch!

Please keep the content coming and share your photos and story, we all love hearing from other members, and that's what this newsletter is all about.

Also, please **help us add to the calendar**. The Upcoming Events calendar is now a regular feature of these newsletters. Please send us any CW-related events you are involved in or hear about, for us to include. Send them via email to the editor Ben VK2JA (details at the end of the newsletter).

*Ben VK2JA - Editor*

## Upcoming Events – May 2023

**Every Friday night** – FDU QSO Party on or around 3528kHz and 7028kHz. 2100 EST (1100z). Call or answer CQs and make QSOs, long or short, fast or slow.

This is the perfect event for newcomers or people still getting comfortable in CW, as well as more seasoned CW ops, in a welcoming, supportive environment. The Friday Night QSO parties are fun, relaxed events and we are keen to see even more people join in! Speed doesn't matter, and you don't have to ragchew either (unless you want to).

<https://www.fdu.org.au/fdu-qso-party/>

**13 May** – FISTS America Spring SATURDAY SPRINT from 1600 UTC to 1800 UTC.

<https://www.fistsna.org/operating.php#sprints>

**17 May** – Use the AX prefix instead of VK to celebrate World Telecommunications Day.

**20 – 21 May** - NZART Sangster Shield contest (worldwide and ZL CW contest)

- 0800-1100 UTC (2000 NZST-2300 NZST), on both Saturday and Sunday

<https://www.nzart.org.nz/activities/contests/sangster-shield/>

**20 – 21 May** – Don Edwards Slow Morse Contest (VK and ZL contest, limit 10WPM)

- Saturday evening 20th May 2023 6-9pm EST (0800 – 1100 UTC)
  - o 80 metres
- Sunday afternoon 21st May 2023 1-4pm EST (0300 – 0600 UTC)
  - o 40 metres

<https://www.sgars.org/index.php/downloads/1-contest-and-field-days/42-the-don-edwards-memorial-slow-morse-contest-2023-rev2a>

**21 May** – FISTS America Spring SUNDAY SPRINT from 2100 UTC to 2300 UTC.

<https://www.fistsna.org/operating.php#sprints>

## Are you using Discord and Facebook?

Send a message on Discord with your frequency if you're calling CQ or looking for a sked.



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>

The FDU Facebook group is also quite active. Use Discord to announce on-air activity (Discord will notify you immediately when messages are posted). We recommend Facebook for general information, chat about upcoming events, and items of interest.

Scan this QR code on your phone to join the fun, or on a computer, click this link:

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



## VI1MARCONI – Special Event Callsign used in April

We celebrated Marconi's birthday with the special event callsign VI1MARCONI. Highlights included QRP DX getting as far as France and a club station in the Czech Republic. It was a bit of a fistful of a callsign to send, but certainly got some attention!

## Cover story - HMAS Vampire back on the air after 35 years



HMAS Vampire was built at Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour, and served in the Royal Australian Navy from 1959 to 1986. Since 1997, her home has been the National Maritime Museum in Sydney.

Members of Manly-Warringah Radio Society have put Vampire back on the air with a refurbished Yaesu rig in the ship's radio room. VK2VMP looks like being a permanent part of Vampire's communications facility, where it will help promote the great hobby of Amateur Radio, and I'm sure, CW!

The team has been active on 20m and 40m already, and VK2VMP is on the air most Saturdays. The station is active other days depending on the availability of the team each day. Advertised frequencies are 7050kHz CW and 7150kHz SSB. So far we've had a QSO on 14036kHz CW and seen them on 14200kHz SSB.

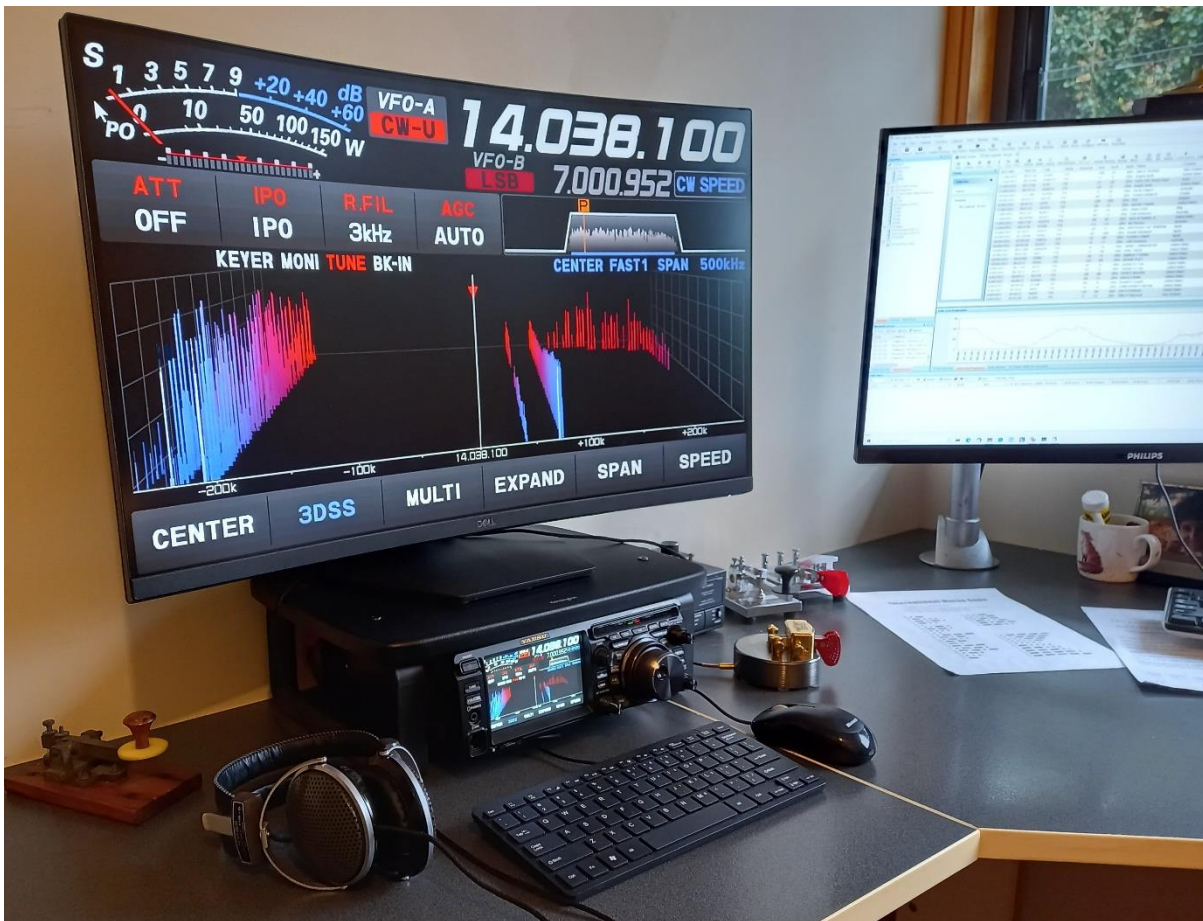
If you're keen for a QSO, call them blind on their last seen frequency or add VK2VMP to your watchlist in HamAlert or your favourite spotting software, as their CQs so far seem to have lots of quiet space in between transmissions.

<https://www.mwrs.org.au/2023/04/27/mwrs-members-on-hmas-vampire/>

*In an interesting twist, the metal nameplate on the right is not from HMAS Vampire, it's from another ship. It was given to Chris, VK1CT. We found out about this beautiful memento only a few days before VK2VMP was announced!*



## CW, circumnavigation, and CW buddies



John, VK4JE, actively assists, entices, helps and cajoles other radio enthusiasts and ham radio operators towards CW, with the final goal of keeping the art of Morse Code alive for future generations that are not here yet!

John was first licenced in February 1986 with the callsign VK2NEQ. Later that year he passed the Intermediate Exam and moved on to VK2KBG and a Yaesu FT-980.

In 1994 - 2000 he circumnavigated the world aboard A.Y. Sea-D and operated as VNNV International Marine Mobile.

John Moved to Queensland in 2000, and in 2019 became VK4JE and completely rebuilt his Station with a Yaesu FP-1030 Power Supply, a Yaesu FT-DX10, a West Mountain Radio RIGblaster DXPro, a remote MFJ-994BRT ATU and a GAP 20 Mono antenna.

Check out John's website for useful tips and tricks, CW stories and other resources at <https://vk4je.com/>, and drop him a line if you would like to be a CW buddy.

## Centenary of Trans-Tasman communications

The first amateur radio contact between New Zealand and Australia occurred on 26 April 1923. Frank Bell in Otago and Charles Maclurcan in Sydney make contact on 160 metres. On the centenary of this event, two messages were exchanged across 'the ditch' to mark the occasion.

During the weekly VKCW Net on 20 metres, Neil, ZL1NZ, sent the following:

```
NR28 R ZL1NZ 23/20 AUCKLAND 0600Z 26APR23
=
VKCW NET
=
GREETINGS TO COLLEAGUES IN AUSTRALIA
ON THIS 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF
FIRST TRANS TASMAN AMATEUR RADIO
CONTACT BY BELL AND MACLURCAN
=
ZL1NZ
```

During the same net, and later on the NZ Net, we had this message from Manny VK3DRQ:

```
NR20 R VK3DRQ 23/19 BLACKBURN 1230Z 24APR23
=
ZL AND VKS
=
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL ZL AND
VK AMATEUR RADIO ON THE
CENTENARY OF THE FIRST TRANS
TASMAN AMATEUR RADIO CONTACT
=
VK3DRQ
```

All radio amateurs are invited to check into the **NZ Net** on **3535.0 kHz**, starting at **2100 NZT**, Monday to Friday (0800UTC Summer daylight time, 0900UTC winter). For more info on the NZ net, and other great resources, see here: <https://zl1.nz/about-amateur-radio/new-zealand-nets/nz-net/>

The **VKCW Net** meets every Wednesday at 0603 UTC on 14049 kHz (Wed arvo in VK).

The VKCW net does not have a website, but you can contact the net manager Roy VK6RR if you would like more info. The usual net control is Manny VK3DRQ.

*Thanks to Neil, ZL1NZ, and the NZ Net*

## NZ news and NZ CW net

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/>



## 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-r5qiygFQeI7ISLPNiX5tDdCNDv3gkRSNiXWuryE>

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







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

May 2023