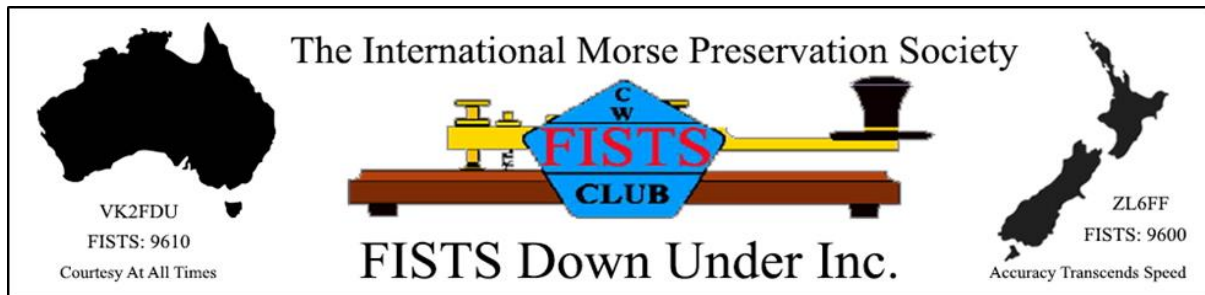


March 2024

# Key - Down Under



Christmas greetings from the shack of CH4TGPT!

## Committee

<b>President</b>	<i>Vacant</i>	
<b>Vice President</b>	Derek VK3KX	Dfdawkins (at) optusnet.com.au
<b>Secretary</b>	Pete VK1AAF	
<b>Awards and ZL Liason</b>	Phillip ZL1PSH	zululima1psh(at)gmail.com
<b>Newsletter editor</b>	Ben VK2JA	Hit "reply" on any newsletter email
<b>Facebook moderator</b>	Phil VK3VB	



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



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

## Recommended FDU calling frequencies (MHz)

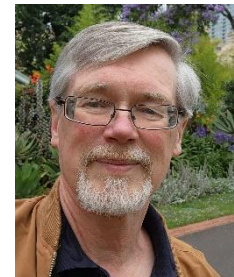
1.818	3.528	7.028	10.118	14.058	18.085
21.058	24.908	28.058			



**W**elcome to our March newsletter. I hope you find interest in this edition's articles. I'm always on the hunt for more articles – if you are doing something interesting (ie. using your radio), please take a photo of it - your radio, antenna, shack, SOTA hike or QTH and send it for publication. This newsletter is what you make it, so please share your fun with all of us other members.

*Ben VK2JA – FDU Newsletter Editor*

## Vice President's Message



Hi everyone and welcome to another edition of FDU news.

I think our activity level is fairly typical at the moment, with Friday night QSO Party attended by a regular few and others chasing band slots or participating in activities outside the FDU group.

Facebook and Discord continue to be active on line and apparently our Facebook posts were up 29% in February. We have almost 150 registered on the Facebook page and about 40 seem to be active in looking at posts. I wonder why then we only get small numbers on the Friday night QSO party and a similarly small number interacting with Facebook posts?

I have learned over the years that everyone does things rationally from their own viewpoint, and I would love to understand members needs better than we currently do. In the past we have run surveys to try and drill into members minds, and I am considering running one again shortly. If you have any opinions on this or other club matters, please feel free to send them to me via the usual means (messenger/email/Facebook post).

### **VP ≠ President**

Yes, I am still looking for a volunteer to take up the President's role.

So, can I ask again if anyone would like to join the FDU committee and assume the role of President?

I can assure you that because of the hard work of the previous committee to relieve us of the burden of accounts, constitution and formal reporting, the job is very simple. Basically, the position Description is "Must enjoy CW, be prepared to stay abreast of FDU activities, feel comfortable being referred to as 'President' and like working with a small committee" That's about it! [edit: and get asked by Ben to write this column every 1-3 months!]

If you would like to discuss this, please drop me a message via the usual channels and we can have a phone hook up perhaps.

## And Webmaster

Perhaps President is not for you, but you know how to type into a Web Interface? Again, not an onerous task as we rarely change the contents of the web pages, however we need someone to take this on as a single task, so other committee members can do their roles separately.

Please reach out to us!

That's all for now, make sure you get on air if you can, and please tell us what's happening in your world if you can't.

73 Derek VK3KX FDU VP

## Upcoming Events

**Every Friday night** – FDU QSO Party on or around 3528kHz and 7028kHz.

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

Join us for the FDU QSO Party every Friday night! We gather on or around 3528kHz and 7028kHz, starting at 2100 EST (1100z). Whether you prefer to call or answer CQs, this is your chance to engage in QSOs of any length and at any speed.

Make sure you're in the FDU Facebook group for updates and results (even though it's not a contest, we keep a tally of contacts made).

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

**Every Tuesday night** – CQ QRS net – see below.

## Slow CW practice net – lots of fun!

### About the CQ QRS Net

The team will be on again for the usual Tuesday arvo / evening Practice QSO Net. CQ QRS will start at 0800z until about 1300z+. This translates to 1600 - 2100+ WA time, 1830 - 2330+ SA Summer time and 1900 - 2400+ Eastern Summer time.

- For the first three hours (0800z to about 1100z) we'll be on 40m from **7030kHz to 7040kHz**.
- For the last two hours (around 1100z to 1300z), we'll be on 80m from **3540kHz to 3570kHz**.

So tune around and call anyone you hear, or find yourself a quiet spot in the designated segment and start calling CQ QRS at about 75% of the speed you're comfortable receiving at; hopefully responders will match (or send slower to their comfort level).

## **CQ QRS Landing Zone**

If the band goes really quiet, call and listen on 7032kHz or 3555kHz. If you catch someone, there's no need to QSY - enjoy the frequency. But don't forget to tune around if it's quiet - we have lots of operators with crystal locked transmitters - and they could be anywhere within the segments. For those who are locked, or can only transmit outside the segments, send a message on our WhatsApp CQ QRS group advising of your current frequency.

## **Speed**

If you're proficient at CW and can race along at 20 or 30wpm - terrific, but please remember, the net's aim is to encourage, not show how fast you can hammer the key. Please send slowly where you can and concentrate on rhythm - listen to your side-tone, get that wrist action going and make a special effort to make it sound like perfect CW; the longer we go with our net, the more I understand just how many non-transmitting listeners we have - and they will most likely appreciate your QRS! So, if you're an experienced operator, please try to send nicely balanced slow CW to give them a chance to practice and gain confidence.... they'll reward you one day by coming up on air to say g'day and thanks - how good is that? And if you're new or like me, just rusty.... ignore the above... just have a go - the lather of sweat will be worth it and there's plenty of time to get the details sorted out as you practice.

## **Matching**

And also for the oldies like me, when you hear someone new, please match their sending speed - or slower. The person you're replying to may not be as deft on the decoding as you - it may be their first ever CW QSO - remember your first? Lather of sweat, key that refuses to send that you tell it, brain that refuses to decode those complex letters that were right there half an hour ago, etc!

## **PSE QRS**

And if someone is sending too fast to comfortably copy - "PSE RPT PSE QRS" or "AGN? PSE QRS" will make life easier for everyone.... and might just encourage other listeners to have a go themselves. The other thing to remember - most operators are writing down what they hear... so when you put it back to them, expect a delay while they read your words of wisdom, before replying.

## **Whose frequency is this anyway?**

The aim is to give everyone a go at contacting others - no-one owns their calling frequency on this net. So unlike working DX, if you hear someone signing off - jump in and call - doesn't matter who was first on the frequency - we really are all good mates on this net.... and besides, at the speed we're sending, after a QSO most of us will have forgotten who was first! If you really want to move off frequency (eg because of a spurious switch mode power supply signal that's just drifted into the conversation), you could try sending an abridged callsign of the person you're after, followed by "UP

5" or "DN 5" then K; then call that person on the designated frequency and keep your fingers crossed, they may have understood you and followed... or not.

## CW Tips

As always, for newbies, operating suggestions are available from the operating hints link here:

[https://www.parg.org.au/files/uqg/ebe236\\_3ca5ca08bb38429db4eee524bda2f97a.pdf](https://www.parg.org.au/files/uqg/ebe236_3ca5ca08bb38429db4eee524bda2f97a.pdf).

There's usually people around until after 1300z - so keep calling until you catch someone. I should be on as usual from home in NSW and via the Remote at Bedforddale WA, and I'll also be watching the proceedings using the VK6QS and Tecsun SDRs in WA and NSW respectively.

VK2KI / VK6QI

## Summer QRP portable

*Chris VK1CT #9057*

On a mild Saturday afternoon in February, I headed out on my mountain bike to activate Gossan Hill Nature Reserve (VKFF-0842) in Belconnen. In my backpack was a QRP Labs 40m QCX mini, end fed half wave antenna, and a SOTABEAMS Carbon-6 ultralight mast.



Cycling on the shared path, I rode along the shores of Lake Ginninderra, past the University of Canberra, and then arrived at the nature reserve where the path became a fire trail. I went off the track and found a good area to set up. I anchored the mast to a fallen tree branch, hoisted the antenna and tied it off to a distant tree.

After putting up a small tarp shelter and laying down a groundsheet, I unpacked the radio, plugged in the power supply (3 x 18650 cells) and connected the RG174 coax. 7.034MHz is popular with park activators, so after checking that the frequency wasn't in use, I placed a spot using the porta-log app then started calling CQ.



In the space of half an hour I worked a total of 11 stations in VK1, 2, 3 and 5. Some exchanges were of the rubber stamp variety, while others were short ragchews and ranged in speed from around 14 to 20wpm.

Changing pace on the QCX mini is very easy with just one button press and dialing in the desired speed. The lightweight Radio Adventure Gear paddles are a joy to use.

Once the flurry of radio activity had stopped and there were no further callers, I took some time to just relax and enjoy the ambience of the bushland surroundings. After packing up, I got back on the fire trail and rode down the steeper side of the reserve where my brakes got a good workout. Arriving home just as the sun was setting and with a few more miles on the bike's odometer, it marked the end of another enjoyable park activation.



## NZ NET NEWS

### [Read the latest edition](#)

NZ Net News is the fortnightly newsletter of the New Zealand Net, and is packed with the latest updates and community news, delivered fortnightly directly to your inbox. If you would like to subscribe, please [contact ZL1NZ](#). To see previous newsletters, [click here](#).

Neil Sanderson ZL1NZ, Net Manager

### **New Zealand Net (NZ NET)**

3535.0 kHz at 9pm NZT Mon-Fri

[Website](#)



Struggling with QRM/interference and noise in your ham radio activities? Visit [QRM.guru](#), for tools, resources and guidance for tackling RF interference. Get any help you need to enhance your radio experience.

## ChatGPT Riddle

I begin where waves converge but never crash,  
In a realm where time and frequency dash.  
A key to worlds both near and far,  
My essence captures light from star to star.

Though bound to earth, I reach the skies,  
With whispers, shouts, and silent cries.  
Through me, voices cross the sea,  
Bridging continents with ease and glee.

Invisible threads I weave and spin,  
Uniting folks with kin and kin.  
My heart beats in pulses quick,  
Decoding dots and dashes slick.

In the dark, I am the light,  
Guiding signals through the night.  
What am I, with power so grand,  
Holding conversations in the palm of your hand?

**See you on the bands!**