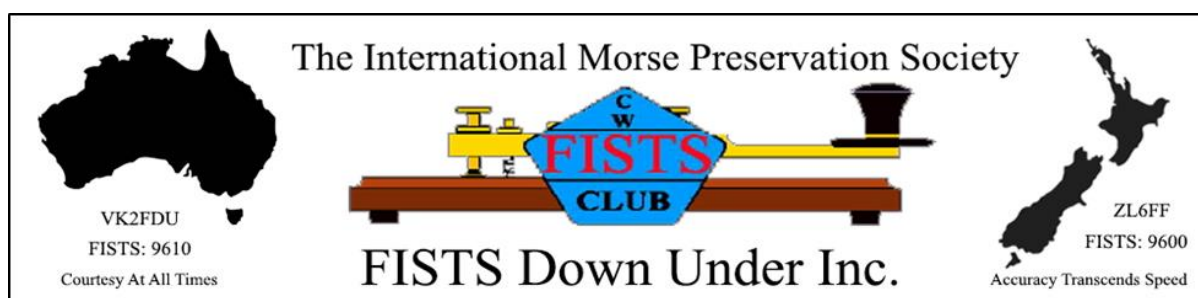


January 2025

Key - Down Under



.... - . - - -

Committee

President	Vacant	
Vice President	Derek VK3KX	Dfdawkins (at) optusnet.com.au
Secretary	Pete VK1AAF	
Awards and ZL Llason	Philip ZL1PSH	zululima1psh(at)gmail.com
Newsletter editor	Ben VK2JA	Hit "reply" on any newsletter email
Facebook moderators	Philip ZL1PSH and Derek VK3KX	

 <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



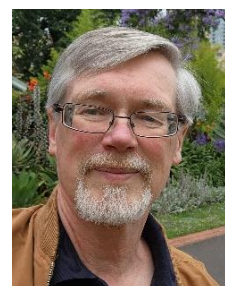
My year started by rekindling the fun of the QSO party after about a year off the air – see more in my article below. I hope your new year is off to a good start too.

As usual, we're keen to hear from members, even if just a photo of your shack, to share with other members in this newsletter. Please hit reply to the email you received announcing the newsletter to drop me a line!

Ben VK2JA – FDU Newsletter Editor

Vice President's Message

Welcome everyone to 2025, a year sure to be fun riding near the peak of the Sun Spot cycle. In between solar flares, we should continue to have exciting HF propagation. So much for the (Space) weather report!



For FDU, we continue to enjoy an upsurge in activity based around the Friday night QSO Party with participants from most states and occasionally New Zealand on 20, 40 and 80m. The expanded Party window from 0800Z to 1100Z is designed to help bring the ZL community more into the activity hopefully while 20m is still open to VK in the earlier part of the evening. If you are not familiar with the format and rules (such as they are) of the QSO Party please have a look on our Website for the details.

December's 10 in 10 activity was fun for those of us that had a go, and Chris VK3QB is generously mailing out certificates to those who qualified. Congratulations!

For this year we have added a QSO Party Award to see who can be regular and efficient at the weekly event. Again the details are on the Web page if you missed earlier announcements. Running results will be published on FB weekly.

You may also have seen the Most Improved Awards that Derek VK4DRK, Sam VK3NOP and Rob VK2COS have earned. This is a status that all of you can aspire to, the lower the base you start from the easier it is to be noticed! Get on the Friday night Party!

So I hope you enjoy this newsletter our Editor has put together for you, and I look forward to seeing you on Fridays evenings.

73 Derek VK3KX

And – Yes, we are still looking for a volunteer to join the committee. I can't continue as 'pseudo President' for ever, so if you care about FDU and can offer just a little time to help out send me a message via email or through Facebook messenger to discuss the options. Please.

Upcoming Events

Every Tuesday night – CQ QRS net - https://vkqrclub.org/qrp_club_net_page.php

Every Friday night – FDU QSO party – <https://www.fdu.org.au/events/>
Participate from now until 28 March to be eligible for an award!

January 24 - 26 – CQ World Wide 160 metre contest (CW)
<https://cq160.com/>

January 26 – Australia Day contest
<https://www.wia.org.au/members/contests/australiaday/>

January 26 – “AX Day” – replace your VK prefix with AX to celebrate Australia Day

February 15 - 16 – ARRL International DX CW contest
<https://www.arrl.org/arrl-dx>

3rd Saturday in March – FOC Bill Windle QSO Party (all operators welcomed)
Check <https://www.g4foc.org/bill-windle-qso-party/> closer to the time to confirm details

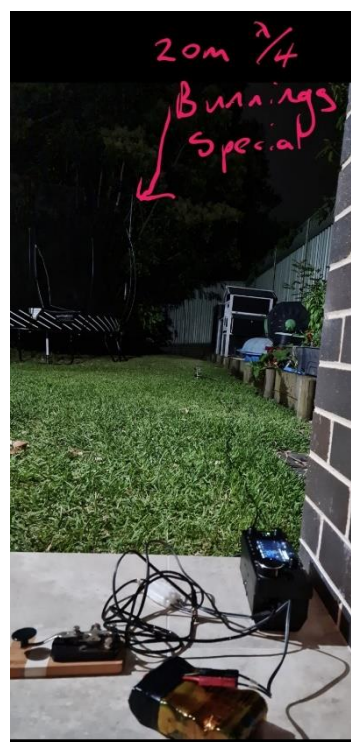
Returning to CW: An inspired journey

After about a year away from the airwaves, I returned for the FISTS Down Under QSO Party, logging two enjoyable contacts—one on 40m and another on 20m. Sending the familiar rhythms came back with surprising ease, but receiving remains a challenge—anything faster than 10wpm leaves me struggling to keep up. Luckily Mark was sending each word 2-3 times, which I needed!

My fascination with CW traces back to an unlikely source: the Broadway musical Titanic. The most memorable moment of this show for me was the duet between Harold Bride, the junior wireless operator, and Barrett, the stoker. Barrett goes to the telegraph room and dictates a message to be sent to his beloved, and Bride transmits it with quiet determination. Bride then sings of how he used to be very shy but discovered Marconi’s telegraph, and “the night was alive with a thousand voices...and every one of them connected to me...” The scene deeply moved me when I first saw the show when I was in high school.

That scene planted the seed of my love for CW. It wasn’t just the technical skill that captivated me but the idea that Morse code could convey emotion and connection across vast distances. Returning to the airwaves now, I feel a similar sense of wonder and respect for the craft. Is it any surprise I operate almost exclusively CW? I bet you can think of many of the other reasons too.

The FISTS QSO Party was the perfect re-entry point—an opportunity to reengage with the CW community and rekindle my passion. While my receiving skills are still a work in progress, I’m





determined to improve, inspired by that unforgettable scene and the enduring magic of Morse code.

Here's to more QSOs, more practice, and rediscovering the joy of CW. See you on the air!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMdtT6Fq4lc>

FDU Operating Awards 2025

QSO Party Award

Every Friday night from now (3 Jan 2025) to 28 March 2025 is your chance to sharpen your CW skills and rack up points on 80m, 40m, 30m, and 20m bands.

Aim for 13 points across 13 Fridays to claim Gold, Silver, or Bronze Awards. No need to stick to FDU members—QSOs with any station count! Just avoid duplicates on the same band/date.

Submit your scores weekly via Google Form, and collect your certificate in April.

Let's make the airwaves buzz—see you on 7025 or 7028, and beyond!

See more details and scoring rules at <https://www.fdu.org.au/events/>

What a great start to 2025!

3/01/2025	VK3NOP	4	1	Happy to see lots of people on air. Worked ZL1PSH, VK3ACU, VK3VB and VK5GG on 40m.
3/02/2025	VK3VB	8	1	Great activity level /p dinner plains at 10w
3/01/2025	VK3QB	7	1	What a great 1 hour on 40 metres. Tnx chaps for a fun evening,
3/01/2025	ZL3TK	4	1	
3/01/2025	ZL1PSH	4	1	
3/01/2025	VK5GG	8	1	
3/01/2025	VK1AAF	2	0.5	Great idea ! I had two QSOs on 40m with VK2DLF (1041 UTC) and VK2GBR (1059 UTC).
3/01/2025	VK2COS	4	1	

(plus unofficially VK2JA with 0.25 points QRP)

10 in 10 Award for December 2024

Congratulations to the following operators who satisfied the requirements of the 10 in 10 award in December 2024. Your awards are on their way.

- VK3VB
- VK5GG
- VK3KX
- VK3NOP
- VK4DRK
- VK2COS



Outstanding Improvement in CW Award 2024

This is a new award. Its purpose is to recognise those whose CW has advanced and encourage the spirit of ongoing self-improvement. It gives FDU and CW Ops (Oceania) great pleasure in announcing the following three operators who have made outstanding improvements in their CW during 2024.

- VK3NOP - Sam
- VK2COS - Rob
- VK4DRK – Derek



Congratulations gentlemen. Your awards are in the post.

Details for all FDU awards at <https://www.fdu.org.au/awards/>

FDU club callsigns available for use by members

ZL6FF is the callsign for the New Zealand national FISTS CW club station. The callsign has not been used for a number of years and that is not ideal. I (Philip ZL1PSH) will start using the callsign at some of our weekly QSO parties starting with the party this coming Friday.

For those of you working towards the four FISTS century awards, a QSO with ZL6FF is worth five points provided you have not already claimed ZL6FF. The QSO is also worth one point towards one of the three FISTS platinum awards if you receive the ZL6FF CC# number (see below) during the QSO, and you have not already claimed ZL6FF towards a platinum award.

ZL6FF has two numbers associated with it: a FISTS membership number and a Century Certificate (CC) number. The membership number is 9600 and publicly available using, for example, the search facility in the membership area of [fists.co.uk](https://www.fists.co.uk). The ZL6FF CC #, as with all CC #s, should not be publicly available and should be obtained during a QSO.

I will use a cheat sheet to help reduce the chance of me using the wrong callsign or FISTS number. Could I suggest the exchanges be kept reasonably simple: callsigns, RSTs, numbers.

You can find out more about the FISTS awards and CC #s at <https://www.fistsna.org/awards.php> or <https://www.fists.co.uk/members/membersawards.html>. The FISTS award manager is Dennis K6DF

Philip ZL1PSH

Edit: Ensure you schedule use and send your logs to an FDU committee member when using the FDU callsign, see <https://vkradioamateurs.org/who-can-operate-a-club-station/>



The Editor "Fists Down Under"

Greetings, Here we have a 1930's replica C.W. Transmitter. Its life started as an Oak bed head, polished and fabricated brass columns mounted.

I had collected parts for this project over several years, the Brass top switches needed refurbishing likewise the Burlington meters, 2 needed tedious work.

2 x Mercury vapour rectifiers (866A) and a 900 volt a side centre tapped transformer provides the H.T.

The old adage of keeping one hand in the pocket when making adjustments certainly applies. A respected club member used to quote "many a man has ceased to be, because, he touched the EHT"

Power output is just over 60 watts with 820 volts at 100 ma on the plate of the 809.

Many negative comments were received during the building of this transmitter, your mad even thinking about it...Televisions will be blotted for miles. In fact, the on air tone is quite pleasant and no television interference has been detected, so, some bright guys had a hat to eat...Hi

I have used this transmitter on straight key night gaining a certificate in the nostalgia section, also the project won the Montgomery Cup for the best article (by an Old Timer) in the New Zealand Break In magazine.

A labour of love but I still enjoy polishing those Brass switch tops.

**73 Ivan Horn ZL2ATU
Grand Old Man O.T.C. (ZL)**



1930s replica CW transmitter

NZ NET NEWS

[Read the latest edition – 4 Jan 2025 – advice for safe use of cable ties](#)

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.

See you on the bands!