

WICEN (Vic)
Coordinators' and Commanders' Meeting
Minutes for Meeting 28 May 2017

1. Attendance & Apologies

Attendees

- Ross Sargent
- Alan Stratford
- Paul Elvey
- Ian Morris
- Paul Engler
- Gerard Werner
- Christopher Morley
- Graham Mason

Apologies

- Gordon Cornell
- Paul Whitaker
- John Morrissey
- Peter Weeks
- Ian Branch

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

3. Business arising from previous meeting.

4. Reports

a. Data comms – Nil to Report

b. Training

- i. Still no training requests from regions.
- ii. Each Co-Ord to nominate a date for their area for data coms training for 2017

c. Radio

- i. Demonstration of recorded voice over message.(Ebay ISD1820)
- ii. Also a micro recorder wave file details to be provided
- iii. UHF CB has issues "deaf "
- iv. APRS Tags
 1. Currently being put together and 2 in service for testing.
 2. Still need information on how it can be configured for events.

d. Regional Coordinator Reports

- Central/Eastern Metropolitan
- Central/North & West Metropolitan
- Central/Southern Metropolitan
- East/Gippsland Region As attached
- Mid West/Grampians – As attached
- North East/Hume – As attached
- North West/Loddon Mallee – Nil
-

e. Event Commander Reports

- i. Australia Day Fun Run as attached
- ii. Pajero Challenge Ross to contact Dirk.
- iii. Duncan Run – See Region Report
- iv. Sunraysia 400 - attached

Many calls to SA for operators to no avail.
7 operators manning 5 check points
1537 car reports via TRAK with some chat messages
Dual band antenna

- v. Exercise Comm Alpha See attachments
- vi. KENDA see region report.

5. General Business

a. EMV Grants (Update on progress)

- i. Bushfire Mitigation Grant – outcome expected end 2016
Secretary to do some work on the figures for claiming.
- ii. VESEP – Trailers
Deposit for the trailers has been paid.
Timeline for delivery.
Equipment to be decided.
Storage locations x 2

b. VHF Packet Radios

- i. Do we issue to members or hold in HQ
- ii. Place in trailers?
- iii. Need minor items that most operators will have to maintain their equipment.

- c. Group Email Addresses
Request for a couple of group email addresses for specific areas. Ross to follow up.

Pre-Existing email groups are:-

wicenvic@vic.wicen.org.au –

Anyone interested in WICEN happenings - lots of former members/adherents

members@vic.wicen.org.au –

Current financial members

datagrps@vic.wicen.org.au –

Data Group members - people who have expressed interest in WICEN data comms

coordcmdr@vic.wicen.org.au –

CoM, RCOs, Event Commanders and sundry others who help run WICEN

com@vic.wicen.org.au

Committee of Management

- d. Mallee Rally preparation check gear and equipment operation in preparation including UHF CB.
- e. TRAK – improvements for discussion such as dedicated ID or AWI issued. Discussion to take place to hard code some details.
- f. Idea of Sunraysia 400 & Rainbow was to try and include regional operators. It appears that the members of the radio clubs in the area that are not interest in participating in similar events. May need to look at other options for including local club members.
- g. Direction of WICEN to be discussed at next CoM meeting.

6. Next meeting

- a. Next meeting 27 August 2017 at Rotary Crt, Box Hill



WICEN Victoria Gippsland Coordinator's Report

May 2017

Membership

Current membership remains at 11.

Member readiness was surveyed late last year and details forwarded to the Secretary.

In summary:

- All members are available to operate agency radios
- For a cold call-out, members would typically be ready to commence travel in 1-2 hours
- For a planned multi-day call out, members would typically be ready to commence travel in 2-4 hours, with several needing 24 hours.

Equipment

Additional radios / modems now available thanks to John 3ZRX's handiwork. Question remains over whether to store or allocate.

Gippsland 6 m repeater, formerly sited near Aberfelby, now being trialled at the Carrajung beacon site.

Regional Emergency Management

- A/Inspector Cameron Blair continues in the role of REMI.
- Peter Tyers VK3KTS and John Morrissey VK3ZRX continuing to represent WICEN at the EGS and Latrobe MEMPC meetings respectively.
- Currently unclear re WICEN's position on the REMPC as it was announced that the total membership is being reviewed.

WICEN Emergency Communication Plan – Gippsland

The Plan has been reviewed and several updates made, including addition of the SCU.

Recent Events within the Region

- Duncan's Run was held at the Tara Bulga National Park on Saturday 1st April. Twelve radio operators took part, using voice for logistics and safety traffic on 2 m, and Trak for competitor tracking – also on 2 m. As per John VK3ZRX's report, the comms worked well and the organisers were very pleased.

Forthcoming Events

- Alpine Car Rally – Based in Lakes Entrance, the event starts on Friday 1st December 2017 and covers over 700 km of forest roads visiting Bairnsdale, Bruthen, Orbost and Cann River before finishing at Lakes Entrance Golf Club on Sunday afternoon 3rd December.
<http://alpinerally.org.au/> Will typically need about two dozen operators.
- Joint Exercise – Options are being explored for a joint exercise with possibly one of the LGAs.

Mid West/Grampians Region 2 Coordinator Report May 2016

Meetings

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Ballarat MEMPC | 8 Feb |
| Moorabool MEMPC | 14 Feb |
| Hepburn MEMPC | 16 Mar |
| Moorabool MEMPC | 5 May |
| Region MEMPC | 9 May |
| Ballarat MEMPC | 10 May |
| Moorabool MEMPC | 16 May |
| Pyrenees MEMPC | 17 May |

Exercise

Grampians REMPC Exercise 18 May

This exercise was an all day affair based on an outbreak of Avian flu. There were about 87 attendees from all services and it is to be used as a precursor to the main state exercise later in the year, so all comments are subject to "Chatham House Rules."

At the other MEMPC meetings there have been presentations by Vicrail on working on crashed trains, and from the "mines department."

Gordon Cornell RFD RCO

NE & Hume Region

May 2017 Co-Ordinators Meeting Division Report

Apart from the lead up to the Eildon Nav Rally 2017 we have been fairly quiet.

Mt Buller 70cm Repeater

I have reprogrammed the Mt Buller 70cm repeater VK3RZU back into mixed mode, the repeater will operate in analog or digital (DMR) mode depending on which mode users key the repeater with. A new version of firmware now allows the repeater to run in wideband (25kHz) analog in mixed mode, as previously it could only run in narrow band (12.5kHz) in mixed mode when using analog, the repeater automatically uses 12.5kHz in digital (DMR) mode.

It was an issue at the A4DE at Merrijig last year requiring the repeater to be reprogrammed into analog only mode for the event so that 25kHz could be used, as most operators only had 25kHz equipment available.

The VK3RZU operating frequency is Tx 439.675MHz and Rx 434.675MHz with ctcss access tone of 123.0Hz and 25kHz bandwidth on analog. It is suggested that you set your transceiver to encode and decode 123.0 Hz as this will block the DMR transmissions from being heard as the digital transmission is rather hard on your hearing.

DMR uses a color code of 1 and has two time slots 1 & 2. Time slot 2 will be IP linked into the Australian VK DMR network in the near future, leaving time slot 1 for local traffic only.

Mt Macedon 70cm Repeater

Some news this week that the Mt Macedon 70cm repeater is to also be replaced by a DMR repeater operating in mixed mode, being analog or digital (DMR).

Event

On May 7th the annual Alexandra & District Motorcycle Club - Kenda Motorbike Nav Rally at Rubicon was held with 3 field check points and control at start/finish. Approx 463 Motorbikes were involved with WICEN providing location and safety communications through voice and packet in conjunction with emergency services. We had a good number of operators, and kept everyone busy for the day.

Alan FABT stepped up to the plate while Ian YEA is away, and was a huge help in calling for operators, without his assistance we would have struggled to have enough operators for the event.

I spent quite some time ensuring all packet devices were working up to standard, and established the Mt Buller 70cm to 6m Simplex link for the event. Packet performed reasonably well except however, Yagi antennas are essential in the mountains for all modes for two reasons, one being multipath phase distortion and secondly ensuring a good signal to noise ratio over motorbikes that generate impulse noise from their electrical systems.

The safety issues at control points from last year were sorted by having additional signage leading into the controls and also ensuring officials were on location to determine the correct location of the control point.

The weather was fine but cold with some of the elevated sections had light snow falling, the dampness helped keep the dust down.

There were a few incidents on the course, with one rider suffering a broken collar bone and broken ribs resulting from a high speed incident requiring WICEN and SES coordination with Ambulance and then HEMS transport from Eildon, the second incident was a broken femur also requiring ambulance transport. SES & AWI command coordinated with 000 for Ambulance transport on two separate occasions with transport from Control.

I would like to thank all operators that travelled to help with the event especially John ZRX for his packet expertise as Paul was not available this year, as without his help we would not have had packet for the event.

The club made an \$800 donation to WICEN and \$600 donation to Alexandra SES this year.

Meetings

I have attended one MEMPC meeting with Murrindindi Shire since last Div Coordinators meeting that was held at the Murrindindi Shire Council MECC room.

Finally our prayers, thoughts and best wishes are with Ian VK3YEA and his family for his wife Gayle in the really tough time she is going through.

Again, sorry I cannot be at this meeting.

Regards,

Peter Weeks OAM VK3YZP
NE & Hume Region Coordinator

The Australia Day Fun Run 2017.

With 10 Operators participating in the event

Bruce Bathols
Mark Dods
Graham Mason
Phill Simpson
Ross Sargent
Paul Whitaker
Mark Hudson
Donald Fraser
Paul Elvey
Doug Canning

Comments:

The event was once again a simple exercise, but is well received by the Shire, Competitors and Public.

We continue to have issues with establishing reliable contact between Start & Finish, and some checkpoints, in a simplex manner.

The 2 Mtr repeater that we borrowed from Paul Engler proved very suitable on testing when first installed at Graham Masons house, but its performance dropped off dramatically in its receive capability the next day, after a bout of severe interference (like self regeneration).

We used a FT8900 in cross band mode, installed at the McCrae Yacht Club to fill in the gaps. UHF handhelds into the Crossband device, and its output triggering the repeater.

Graham & I are doing some work on testing a 2 transceiver repeater - 2 FM8900's, separated about 100 mtr, linked by 70cm.

Initial testing has enabled a guideline document to be produced. Every circumstance may modify the setup, (antenna gain/height, station separation etc. The system works very well as a sensitive 2mtr repeater. We are looking forward to putting it into trial service for comment.

Thank you.

Paul Whitaker.
VK3DPW
Central Southern Metro Region.

Exercise Comm Alpha – Program Friday 28 April 2017

Sandown Racecourse 591-659 Princes Highway Springvale, VIC 3171

Overall, a very interesting day. I am glad I made the effort to attend.

Exercise Comm Alpha was organised by the State Emergency Response Planning Communications Sub-Committee, SERPCSC.

The general theme was for the various agencies, Telstra, NBNC Co, etc to bring along their comms vans, command / control vehicles, whatever, to show to others, plus a day of presentations by various players and some of the agencies. The program is attached.

John Patterson and I attended, mainly to give some visibility to the EMCOM / WICEN SCU secure HF system we have been rolling out for the past 2 or 3 years. It attracted at least some interest although most of the interest was with the much bigger and shinier toys on offer from the agencies.

Paul Engler attended too, Motorola higher-ups were giving one of the keynote addresses.

By far the biggest and shiniest toy was from MFB who had a full size coach fitted out as a mobile command centre / comms van. I saw equipment from VicPol, CFA, MFB, St Johns, Ambulance Vic, Telstra, NBNC Co, and others. Many \$M of gear in the carpark – hope to have photos.

Some interesting reflections:

CFA admitted they had built their comms vans but were far short of using their capability. For example the vans are not in any escalation procedure (eg: “make tankers 10” adds a comms van, or whatever) plus they really don’t know the usefulness of some of the gear in the van – in other words it has been kitted out but there wasn’t a burning need which drove what went into it!

Both Telstra and NBNC Co now have amazing post-disaster capability. Telstra has a substantial number of MEOWs (mobile exchange on wheels) ranging from trailers up to a full size container which can replace a substantial exchange, COWs (cells on wheels), using fibre or links to other cell towers, and SATCOWs (a COW with high capacity satellite up/downlink). I think they have a couple of dozen of those. NBNC Co have a substantial number of “kiosk replacements”, what they call a “muster ute” which is a SUV ute fitted with satellite dish and kiosk gear (they have quite a few of these) and even complete fixed broadband kiosks (on a LARGE trailer – weighs several tonnes) to replace hilltop gear knocked out in a bushfire or whatever. The limit to this gear is what they can keep cool !!!!!

Also impressive is the response time – getting shorter, NBNC Co had their gear installed in 24 hrs after Cyclone Debbie to get their NBN systems back up. Telstra claims similar response times.

All of this brought John and I to the same conclusion – the “window of opportunity” for WICEN to offer comms systems (as distinct from just operators) has all but closed. In turn this means we need to think carefully about the future of WICEN and what our priorities should be. Depressing, but there it is.

Might be worth discussing at the next C&C meeting.

Hopefully there might be copies of the presentations circulated, too.

SUNRAYSIA 400 RALLY 2017

On the weekend after Easter, WICEN members and helpers trekked to Keera Station, 50km west of Mildura, to assist with safety and vehicle tracking at the Sunraysia 400 Rally.

This event was part of the ARB Off Road Racing Series and Sunset Challenge. 69 vehicles of various classes started to do either two or four 90km laps of the off road course. The event was planned as 4 x 100km laps over Saturday and Sunday, but due to 30+ mm of rain on the Thursday night, the course and checkpoints were modified on the Saturday and 4 x 90km laps done on the Sunday.



Five field stations with packet and voice operated around the course plus two operators manning Net control. After a few weeks desperately searching for available operators from VK3 and VK5 to fill half the requirement, Peter KTS, Murray JKZ and Craig KG came forward to work with a number of operators who had done the similar format Mallee Rally event a number of times. Thanks to Peter JUGs assistance, a communications trailer and SES caravan were supplied and setup to run 2m voice net and 70cm packet off a dual band vertical antenna on pump up mast with a no break generator and battery setup.

The software used to record and send data was TRAK 3.9g. Sunday morning all stations were operational with voice and packet on air prior to competitors passing. Stations worked direct all day to Net Control with a total of 1,537 car reports of times and status and 44 chat messages received by packet. The search of data allowed missing cars to be narrowed down to checkpoints and recovery details obtained.

The Event Commander was Paul VK3YYF and the crew were VK's, Ross 3SF, John 3ZRX, Peter 3JUG, Murray 3JKZ, Peter 3KTS, Gerard 3GER & Craig 3KG.

Total travel recorded was 10,054 kms.

Paul Elvey VK3YYF

24/5/17