

Amateur class licensing update

We would like to inform you the Australian Maritime College (AMC), has decided not to extend its deed for the provision of amateur licensee services beyond February 2024.

In light of the AMC's decision and the planned move to class licensing of amateur services, we have taken the opportunity to review how amateur radio qualifications and call signs can be best supported under a class licence framework.

Background

For some time, the AMC managed several functions on behalf of the ACMA, including conducting amateur radio operator exams, issuing qualifications and recommending call signs for successful candidates to the ACMA.

However, after examining how to provide the best continuity of service for amateurs, we are proposing an alternative way to deliver these services.

New, more effective arrangements

We will no longer use a deed arrangement to provide amateur radio qualifications and call sign recommendations. Instead, we have decided to update the amateur radio qualification and call sign framework alongside the class licence implementation, and manage some of these services ourselves.

- *New accreditation procedures:* We propose to use the network of voluntary assessors used by the AMC as accredited assessors under a scheme managed by the ACMA. Assessors will be able to conduct theoretical and practical examinations for amateur radio. Qualified and experienced amateur operators will be able to seek ACMA accreditation to conduct amateur radio examinations. As part of this accreditation work, we are:
 - preparing operational guidelines for accredited assessors
 - developing examination material
 - compiling a list of allocated and available call signs to go on our website.

The ACMA will still be responsible for approving the amateur radio syllabi.

- *Better alignment of qualification levels:* The new framework will keep the Foundation, Standard and Advanced qualification levels for amateur radio examinations. This aligns with the qualification levels in the proposed class-licensing arrangements.
- *ACMA to issue qualifications and call signs:* Under the new arrangement, qualifications will be issued by ACMA staff after an application from a person who has passed an examination. We will continue to be the call sign administrator and issue call signs to amateurs with recognised qualifications.

These arrangements are consistent with our amateur spectrum management obligations under the International Telecommunication Union's Radio Regulations and the *Radiocommunications Act 1992*.

Next steps

We want to introduce the new accreditation scheme at the same time as the class licensing arrangements. At this stage, we expect to consult on the new accreditation scheme in August 2023. We welcome your feedback through the public consultation process, and we'll keep you updated on progress.

To prepare for the move to class licensing, we have changed the renewal periods for non-assigned amateur licences to 12-months only. This will help amateur licensees make a smooth transition to class licensing.

We are grateful for your engagement and assistance in this transition, and look forward to a smoother, more efficient framework.