

# WIA Technical Advisory Committee News

## 15th September 2024

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### Amateur Repeater Frequency Management with ACMA

The WIA concluded the consultation on the Amateur Beacon & Repeater technical licensing standards defined in the new Radio Communications Licencing Instructions (RALIs) on the 2nd of August. The responses have now been reviewed and some minor revisions have been made, taking on the feedback received.

One of the key themes identified were concerns around the single frequency gateway licensing arrangements. Multiple people replied with concerns that their digital voice hot spots were going to be caught by these provisions. To address this, the WIA TAC discussed the situation with ACMA during a meeting held on August 8<sup>th</sup>. It was agreed that it was not the intention for the Amateur RALI documents to capture home station-based low power (<1 Watt) hotspots, and that these activities were covered by the existing provisions of the Class Licence.

We also clarified that the RALI's purpose is to prescribe how to assess an application, but they are not used to determine when an application needs to be made. The point where the RALIs are considered, only starts once the decision has been made that a station needs to be covered by an assigned amateur radio licence. We feel that reinforcing this point is the best way to address the concerns. Any questions an operator has about whether an assigned licence is required, should in the first instance be referred to the ACMA.

The other issue raised related to the management of off-air linked 2m repeaters. This type of linking can be particularly challenging in terms of adjacent site co-channel interference (i.e. a link transmitter on a repeater main input channel keying distant repeater stations that were not intended to be linked). Changes have now been made to address these concerns.

#### *Next Steps*

Final versions of the RALIs incorporating the proposed changes have now been forwarded to the ACMA for their acceptance. Once that is received, they will be published on both the ACMA and the WIA websites (with the WIA retaining ownership and maintenance responsibilities). At the same time, the ACMA will put the FAP 10 process into action with the Accredited Person frequency assigners, after which people will be able to apply for a repeater licence directly through an AP, should they so desire. Note that the original pathway of applying through the WIA (and using the WIA's AP) is still available.

#### *Future Work*

The TAC committee did note that several amateurs expressed concern over insufficient hotspot channels being defined on the 70cm band plan. While the RALI consultation was not intended to address such a structural change to the 70cm band plan, the concerns have been noted and will be subject to further review.