



THE WIRELESS INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA

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BPL INTERFERENCE REPORT

Phil Wait, VK2DKN

Director, WIA, Coordinator, BPL Working Group

BPL interference is probably the greatest threat to amateur radio in its almost 100 year history.

Radiation of electromagnetic interference on the HF amateur bands at levels stronger than the strongest signals commonly worked have been measured in areas of BPL deployment overseas and more recently, here in Australia.

Widespread BPL rollout of current BPL technology would change the face of Amateur Radio dramatically, BPL interference would prevent use of the HF bands by most amateur stations in or close to BPL deployments, irrespective of whether the amateur subscribes to BPL derived telecommunications services.

Early in the BPL debate the WIA made a strategic decision to focus its attention on the interference to radiocommunications services caused by BPL, and on the related regulatory.

The WIA is focussed on measuring and documenting the effect of BPL interference on amateur radio communications in order to mount a case for protection from "Substantial Interference" in accordance with s197 of the Radiocommunications Act, 1992.

Our pluralistic society works by limiting the number of political actors through special interest groups such as the WIA, and as a special interest group the WIA can exert significant influence through its relationship with the ACA. Our relationship with the ACA is now excellent and we believe our submissions are being taken very seriously indeed.

The WIA published an authoritative report "[Wireless Institute of Australia Review of PLC/BPL in Australia](#), December 2004" with assistance from the WIA's BPL Working Group and Owen Duffy and Keith Malcolm.

In December 2004, the WIA wrote to the ACA expressing concerns for the observed radio interference from BPL deployments overseas and more recently in Queanbeyan, NSW. The WIA asked the ACA to make its own measurements of background noise levels and radiation of electromagnetic energy in the BPL

trial areas; to act to mitigate the risk of interference to radiocommunications users during such trials; and to develop a policy for such trials including disclosure of key information about the trials. The WIA also stated its position that the ACA needed to consult with all radiocommunications users to determine appropriate standards to protect the important social and economic values of radiocommunications services in Australia. The ACA published its "BROADBAND OVER POWERLINE COMMUNICATIONS ACCESS BPL TRIAL GUIDELINES" in late January 2005, addressing most of the points raised by the WIA. Importantly, the ACA also stated its intention to release a discussion paper on BPL early in 2005.

WIA BPL Working Group members David Wardlaw has represented the interests of amateur radio on numerous standards committees, and Barry White has attended conferences, presented information to clubs, and represented our interests in ARNSW. Fred Johnson, ZL2AMJ and Rick Warnett, P29KFS have represented the BPL working group in New Zealand and PNG .

Soundly documented BPL interference complaints to the ACA will be extremely important to resolution of the BPL interference threat.

The WIA is taking a leadership role in a response to the expected wide scale trial of BPL Access technologies announced by Aurora Energy in Hobart. The WIA will assist local amateurs in measurement of background noise levels and anticipated BPL interference in the Hobart trials. This project will allow documentation of the interference environment in the trial area, and will assist any amateurs who may be directly affected by BPL interference to file soundly based interference complaints with the ACA.

The current BPL situation is very complex and difficult, and the news is mixed on a daily basis. On our side, we have a good regulator in the ACA, who are much less politically influenced than their equivalent in the USA, the FCC.

It is encouraging to see other Australian stakeholders such as the Department of Defence, the ABC, and many other HF radiocommunications services, especially safety of life services, are now actively lobbying for protection against BPL interference.

The ACA announced a public consultation process with respect to BPL, and indicated that they would publish a discussion paper for public comment around April 2005. At the time of writing, that discussion paper has not yet been released. The WIA will respond to the anticipated ACA discussion paper on BPL.

We expect many radiocommunications users and stakeholders to make submissions to the forthcoming ACA public consultation process. Many of these organisations are closely monitoring the WIA website. The WIA publishes frequent updates on its website and in the WIA National News to inform members and others of its activities and other relevant news.

I believe our strategic approach is the correct one, and it is proving effective. The WIA is well respected in the BPL debate, we have substantial support of other HF users, although not necessarily publicly, and a strong case to put. However our numbers are few and the WIA needs a strong membership to be effective.

Thank you for your support.

Phil Wait, VK2DKN