

Submission re RSM licence increase proposals

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This proposal is going to result in an increase for the amateur fraternity of 369%, a phenomenal increase that does not even remotely relate to inflation. The very definition of Amateur Radio means that the services provided under these licences are without financial return, therefore there is no scope to pass on these increases or offset them through increased charges to others. We note also that it appears the amateur radio fraternity, a totally volunteer organisation, are the only radio users disadvantaged by the proposed changes, with all other sectors of the radio spectrum receiving licence fee reductions.

Amateurs are in a difficult situation at any time with repeaters and other amateur licenced apparatus, as once a person is qualified, there can be no compulsion to become either a member of NZART or one of the NZART branches. However, and to their detriment, NZART and the branches have few options to limit the use of their equipment to paying members only. Further, while NZART member's fees are used to fund the benefit of their membership, the non-members often also benefit from the work of NZART and its affiliates. This has been a fact of life since the removal of individual licences and the introduction of GURL's. Those that are members pay to the benefit of all amateurs. Hence, the inequities brought into the system by the introduction of GURL's are significantly exacerbated by the proposed changes.

The inequalities of the GURL system has also adversely affected many other radio user groups, in particular the non-commercial marine industry where the hard work and fund raising of New Zealand Coast Guard and the many Repeater Associations are benefitted by many hundreds, and probably thousands of radio users who reap the benefit from the membership fees of what in many cases are the minority of users.

NZART and its affiliates in general cause RSM minimal work as they work hard to keep their equipment operating in good technical condition and in the local area have been able to assist RSM with monitoring intrusions and interference from less well maintained equipment, an area our assistance is readily and freely given.

These changes also appear to be extremely unfair in that the biggest winners are the financial commercial organisations, in particular the broadcasting industry while the biggest losers are the totally non-commercial amateur radio users.

While the broadcasters hold their licences in order to make money, the amateur radio operators have a significant contribution to the "public good" in that both NZART and NZART affiliate equipment is freely made available to the authorities in times of need whether that be SAR, CD or other public disasters. As our systems are largely independent of public utilities, they have a good chance of continuing to supply services when other services such as web based and cellular services fail in times of civil disaster. While it is true that much of the equipment is also used for members

own enjoyment, those pursuits and activities provide training towards public good activities and also provide the incentive to develop many of the systems that can then be used for “public good” purposes.

Financially, our club will have little option but to close down many of their systems as a fee increase from \$414p.a. to \$1,530p.a. is just not sustainable when the existing fee already consumes a large proportion of our annual subscription income. That will mean a significant reduction in amateur services available in the time of greatest need – civil disasters. Note: Despite the introduction of ES band services for emergencies, the amateur service equipment can still be heavily used at times particularly during SAR emergencies.

In the case of at least one of our neighbouring groups who operate an extremely useful repeater with wide coverage, the new licence fee will consume most of their income following the decimation of the group by recent deaths.

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