

VKS-737 Radio Network - a division of the **Australian National 4WD Radio Network Inc.**

Established 1993

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Interference to, and Disruption of, High Frequency (HF) Radio Services

The following press release was received from the Wireless Institute of Australia and indicates their concerns for the harmful interference that can occur to HF Amateur Radio operations from the introduction of Broadband Powerline Communications (BPL). **Of interest in the article is the concerns that the WIA have for the future operation of the VKS-737 Radio Network, and how the safety of members travelling in the Outback will be placed in jeopardy should this technology be allowed to be implemented in Australia.**

It is recommended that members read this press release, as well as the accompanying basic overview of BPL, and then express their concerns to their State and Federal Politicians.

If BPL is allowed to go unchecked it will render HF Radio networks unusable depriving our nation and emergency services of an invaluable and irreplaceable public safety resource. HF is a unique resource for disaster response (natural or man-made) that works when all else fails.

Members may find that their expensive HF radios will eventually make good paper weights, and that they will have to purchase some other (more expensive) form of communications such as satellite telephones if they wish to maintain some basic form of safety communications while they are travelling.

It is up to members to make their concerns known, if the politicians are not made aware of the problems that BPL can cause then they are going to allow the technology to be introduced to the detriment of HF users such as VKS-737 members.

Don't rely on the member "next door" to make the complaint, "they" may also make the same assumption and expect you to make a complaint.

Power industry seeks to stymie amateur radio (Press Release from the Wireless Institute of Australia.)

In the effort to bring **Broadband Powerline Communications** to Australia the power industry wants interference protection for amateur radio and **other recreational HF radio users** to be removed.

Under the Radiocommunications Act the power companies could be breaking the law if they cause harmful interference to the radio communications.

They believe it would be too costly to remove amateur HF band frequencies from their systems and such a measure will also be at the expense of BPL capacity or data flow rates.

The power industry has urged the Australian Communications Authority to outweigh the interests of amateur radio and **other recreational HF radio users**, with the benefits of making broadband enabling technology available to the public.

The ACA is now looking at how it can legally remove the interference protection provided under the Radiocommunications Act to amateur Radio **and what it categorises as other less significant users of the HF spectrum.**

How does this affect WICEN?

What is not well known among many hobbyists and users of the HF Spectrum is that such Broad Band Internet activity (BPL) over the standard power lines system causes severe interference to a very wide range of HF radio frequencies, and over a very wide area. Whole suburbs and regional and country locations may be affected accordingly. The problem is not restricted to the Amateur Radio service and its frequencies, but covers the entire HF radio spectrum.

Affected immediately is WICEN HF Communications, RED CROSS RedComm HF Communications, State Emergency Services, St John's Ambulance, Police HF, Aircraft HF, Flying Doctor, Outback HF communications, plus many other extraneous users which rely on HF Radio communications for safety and logistics. **Of specific interest and concern is the Australia wide VKS737 HF network with its five channels namely 5455, 8022, 11612, 14917 and 3995 kHz frequency allocations, could be made totally unreadable in some areas.** These HF channels are closely aligned to some of the HF Amateur Bands and if they are affected, so too will the VKS737 network.

If this threat becomes a reality, then WICEN HF Communications will be severely affected, and the subsequent consequences are immeasurable. Loss of life in an emergency may result if HF WICEN communications are not able to be understood.

We will keep you informed of further developments.

The Australian National 4WD Radio Network Inc is a Public Benevolent Institution. All gifts of \$2.00 or more to the Network are allowable tax deductions to the donor under Item 1 Section 30-15 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997

What is BPL?

BPL is used to transmit data such as fast Internet services.

By design, BPL systems:

- **Use high frequency radio energy** (*this is the same as is transmitted from a HF radio*),
- **This energy is transmitted on unshielded power transmission lines,**
- **This results in radiation of RF energy into the atmosphere,**
- **This radiation can create harmful interference to HF radio services such as**
 - **VKS-737,**
 - **Police,**
 - **Radtel,**
 - **RFDS,**
 - **State Emergency Service,**
 - **St John Ambulance etc**

Australia relies heavily on HF radio, more so than most countries, and therefore it has a lot to lose if that radio spectrum is degraded by harmful interference from BPL communications.

Most HF radio users do not yet know about the possible introduction of BPL and how it could impact on their operations.

Developments overseas particularly in Europe and the US where it is being heavily debated, believes that BPL could create unacceptable levels of interference on HF radio frequencies.

Promoters of BPL claim that it could dramatically increase the available broadband capacity, and deliver power companies a new and lucrative source of income.

In addition to RF being pushed along long-distance and suburban power lines, the technology can be applied to buildings whereby the internal wiring comes alive with RF to carry data via a modem and the mains powerpoint.

Further information about BPL can be found on many web sites including:

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2003/09/25/100/?nc=1>

<http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2004/08/17/2/?nc=1>

<http://homepages.ihug.com.au/~vk5vka/>

<http://www.tradcentral.com/ei6iz/plt.html>

http://www.powerline-plc.info/index_en.html

<http://www.wia.org.au/BPL/index.php>

http://gullfoss2.fcc.gov/prod/ecfs/retrieve.cgi?native_or_pdf=pdf&id_document=6515292045

If any members find more information on BPL it would be appreciated if they could pass the information to Head Office either by mail or e-mail, copies of letters sent to politicians and any replies received from them would also be appreciated.

Steve Johnston OAM

Administration Manager

26th August 2004.

Reminder:

It is recommended that members express their concerns to their State and Federal Politicians. Link >> [HERE](#) << to contact your federal politician of choice.

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