

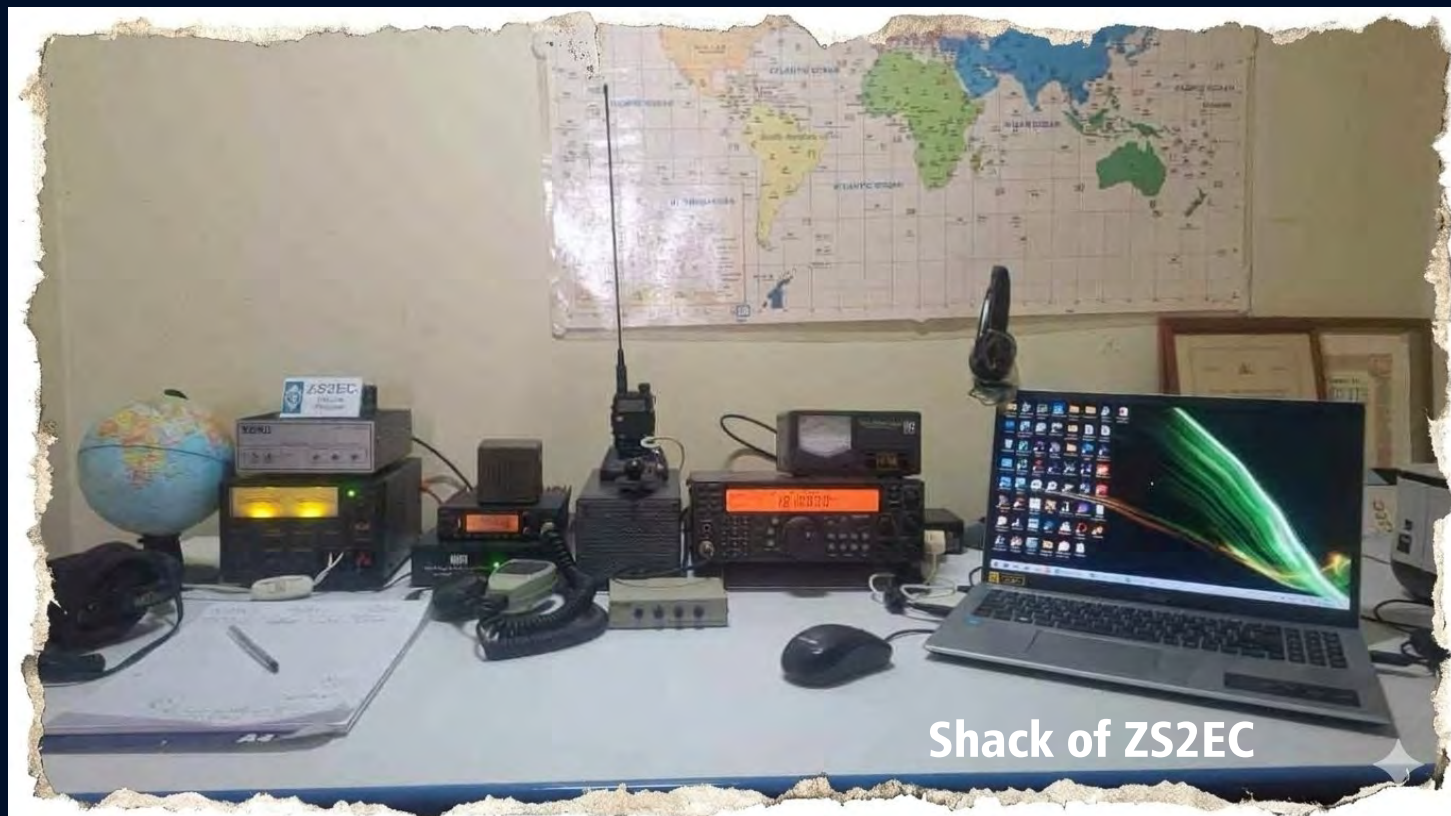


QSX-PE

OCT
2026

NEWSLETTER FOR THE DISCERNING RADIO HAM

PORT ELIZABETH AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY



Shack of ZS2EC

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UPDATE
SETTING UP
REPEATERS**

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OCTOBER**

PORT ELIZABETH AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY
ESTABLISHED EXCELLENCE IN AMATEUR RADIO

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Disclaimer

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YOUR COMMITTEE

Meet the team behind your Club!



Thank you to each of our committee members for their time, dedication and support.



CHAIRMAN

Kevern
ZR2BK



VICE CHAIRMAN | RAE

Vaughan
ZS2VR



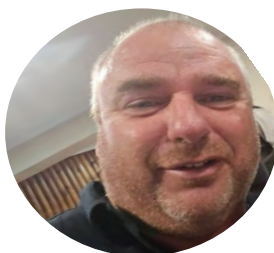
**SECRETARY | REPEATERS
QSX EMAIL | CLUB DATABASE**

Chris
ZS2AAW



TREASURER

Mike
ZS2MIC



**TECHNICAL | REPEATERS
SEARCH & RESCUE
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION**

Glen
ZS2GV



**COMMITTEE
MEMBER**

Andrew
ZS2AFB



**COMMITTEE
MEMBER**

Patsy
ZS2PTY



**COMMITTEE
MEMBER**

Odette
ZS2OD



**COMMITTEE
MEMBER**

Andre
ZS2ALN

EDITORIAL TEAM



**EDITOR
QSX PE**

Dave
ZS2DH



**COMPILER
QSX PE**

Eugenie
XYL of ZR2BK



CLUB NEWS

Welcome to the latest edition of the QSX. In this edition there are several member-contributed articles. Thank you to those who submitted – even if just a few lines and some photos – it all comes down to the fact that this is a CLUB magazine.

In the club news section, Kev ZR2BK gives us the Chairman's report, you can get the usual update from the minutes of the last meeting to birthdays and anniversaries.

Andre ZS2BK joins the QO-100 crowd with a satellite dish donated and installed by Gary Immelman, ZS6YL.

Event report backs include the SARL National Field Day weekend with operators camping and playing radio! The Fox Hunt and the Rally – a full month of activities and socials. Did you make the photoshoot?

Tony concludes his series on Meshcore – for now. Thank you, Tony!

A new addition to the Club news section will be an **XYL page** – with stories by or about the good ladies in the background. The ladies who might not have a callsign but know more of the members than we do! If your XYL would like to send in her thoughts on any radio related topic, please allow her to be free and honest. We start off with a contribution by our very own “first lady” and “QX-pretty” Eugenie!

Your dose of DX includes a wide selection of DXpeditions – including two to Lesotho, several Islands for the IOTA chasers, and some not-so-rare prefixes – just to keep you awake into the wee hours of the morning.

The Focus On Contests segment gives you some idea of who is making it into the results, what PEARS can do to improve our overall club participation, and the normal list of local and international contests.

In The Rule Book we look at the ICASA legislation protecting “Astronomy Geographic Advantage Areas” – areas where sensitive radio telescopes become the primary spectrum user. We also look at ICASA in the news as they attempt to reduce mobile data costs in South Africa.

In Technically Speaking we look at the upcoming BACAR launch and what promises to be the best BACAR launch yet. Scheduled for launch on 17 October, preparations are already well underway.

Our featured article this month is a look at the new “Over The Horizon Radar” (OTHR) system currently being built on Palau – and the changes it is going to bring to our hobby. Calling it OTHR is correct but not very accurate. Read the article in the Technically Speaking section to find out why.

We round out this edition with the regular back page featuring a callsign word search, some humour, and a taste of what is to come next time.

Enjoy!

Dave
ZS2DH



BULLETINS



Sunday SARL and Monday Evening PEARs Bulletins

PEARs provides a local reading of the SARL bulletin every Sunday morning at 8:15 in Afrikaans read by **Kevern ZR2BK** and at 8:30 in English read by **Rory ZS2BL**, transmitted through the Lady's Slipper Repeater on 145.700MHz.



PEARs Bulletins are transmitted on **Monday evenings at 19h00** through the Lady Slipper repeater 145.700MHz.



REPEATERS



PE Town VHF 145.650 MHz



PE Town UHF 438.650 MHz



Lady Slipper VHF 145.700 MHz



Lady Slipper UHF 438.700 MHz



Longmore VHF 145.625 MHz

Viewlands UHF 438.675 MHz

Cockscomb UHF 438.600 MHz



Stay connected.
Stay informed.



Thank you for keeping our frequencies active and our community connected.

73!



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to another edition of QSX. Thank you to everyone for their submissions and also to the editor and compiler.

September was a busy month for PEARS. First, we had the SARL National Field Day and was well attended by club members. I wish to thank everyone that made the effort to join us, and much fun was had.

The Club meeting was held on the 15th, and we had a very special guest speaker. **Marius Rautenbach, ZS2JR**, gave a very interesting talk on the development of radio communication over the years in the South African Police Service, as well as the preparations had to be done for the funeral of late president Nelson Mandela.

A fox hunt and social braai was held on Heritage Day, the 24th. Thank you to the participants who came out to hunt. More to follow on this below.

The 25th and 26th, saw the PEARS doing communication for the Algoa National Rally. A very big thank you to all the members who went out into the Longmore Forest on the Friday, and then in Uitenhage/Despatch area on the Saturday.

I would like to wish all the candidates writing the RAE on the 10th of October all the best. Relax, read carefully and take your time. You have got this!

The second last meeting of the year, (can you believe it is almost the end of the year) will take place on the 20th of October, at the German Club in Port Elizabeth at 19h30. Please make every effort to attend.

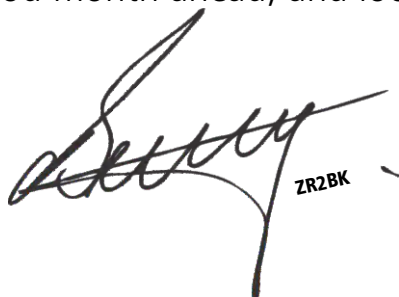
On the repeaters side, plans have been made to address the issue at Slipper with regards to coverage and then the upgrade at Mount Road for the town repeater. This will be completed before the end of November. There will be a call for help, please raise your hand if you are able to assist when called for.

All you need to know for the upcoming month is right here in the QSX. Print the calendar, stick it on your fridge and stay in the know.

I wish everyone a good month ahead, and look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

73,

Kevern, ZR2BK



Handwritten signature of Kevern, ZR2BK, with the call sign ZR2BK written below it.



ZS2BK GETS A QO-100 SATELLITE STATION



It is hard to have a conversation about satellites and "working the birds" without mentioning ZS2BK - the name on the SARL Satellite Award.

During the **SARL AGM hosted by PEARS** in May of this year, the president of the **SARL Nico ZS6QL** presented **Andre** with a copy of the award named in his honour. Andre was unable to attend the AGM in person at the time, and a small delegation was put together to visit Andre in hospital and to make the presentation.

The delegation consisted of the president, Nico, PEARS chairman Kevern ZR2BK, and Dave ZS2DH. When Gary Immelmann, ZS6YI heard for the delegation he asked if he could tag along to visit an old friend.

Andre and Gary were neighbours until Andre "upgraded" to the coast.

When we arrived, we were joined by Renett, Andre's XYL. Nico, Kevern, and I bore witness to the bubbling conversation that followed. Anecdotes, memories, smiles, and laughter as the two friends caught up on 42 years of "So what have you been up to?".

Gary mentioned QO-100 and Andre's eyes lit up. Some technical conversation pursued and it was agreed that Gary would sponsor a satellite dish and other equipment needed to get Andre onto the QO-100.

Roll on 15 August and I get a message from Gary - sitting at the airport on his way to install the satellite dish at Andre's QTH. It turns out that this act of kindness did not go unpunished! Gary's morning started when he left his QTH to go to the airport at 4am. Enroute to the airport he had car trouble, missed his first flight and had to get a another (later) flight, and to top it all they confiscated his cable ties!

Gary eventually arrived at Andre's QTH and started assembling the dish. This too was not without challenges, but by the time Gary crawled into bed at 11 pm that night, Andre was on the satellite.

A long day for Gary and a big thank you to Gary for making the time in a busy schedule.

*Friendship,
radio and
a shared passion
— what a
combination!*

*“A big thank you
to Gary ZS6YI!*

*Your kindness, time
and effort made
this all possible.*

”

By Dave ZS2DH



Here are some of the photos Gary sent through of the unboxing and installation of the satellite dish.



The dish and frame were shipped to Andre and unboxed when Gary arrived at Andre's QTH. They assembled the base, added the vertical section, fitted the dish, LNB and helical antenna, and pointed it out into the stars!



*Gary's last message to me on this topic was:
"He is having a lot of fun and that makes me happy."*

In next month's edition we will take a deep dive into QO-100 - what it is, why it is such a big deal, and what you need to join the party.



MESHCORE

– SETTING UP REPEATERS

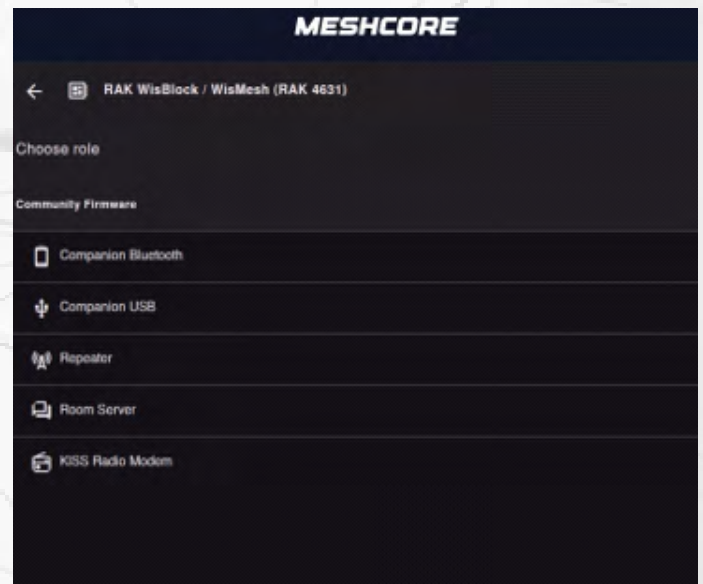
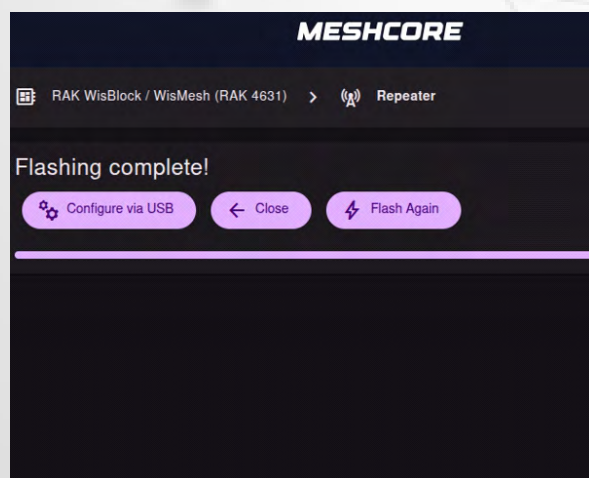


After last month we now have a Companion Node set up and are able to use the Mesh to chat to other users. However, a Companion does not repeat so if we want to extend the range of the network we need to fill in with repeaters.

Meshcore uses defined roles for nodes, so we now need to configure a device to act as a repeater. The exact same hardware works for both roles, just the firmware is different.

As before we use the flasher tool on the meshcore.io website.

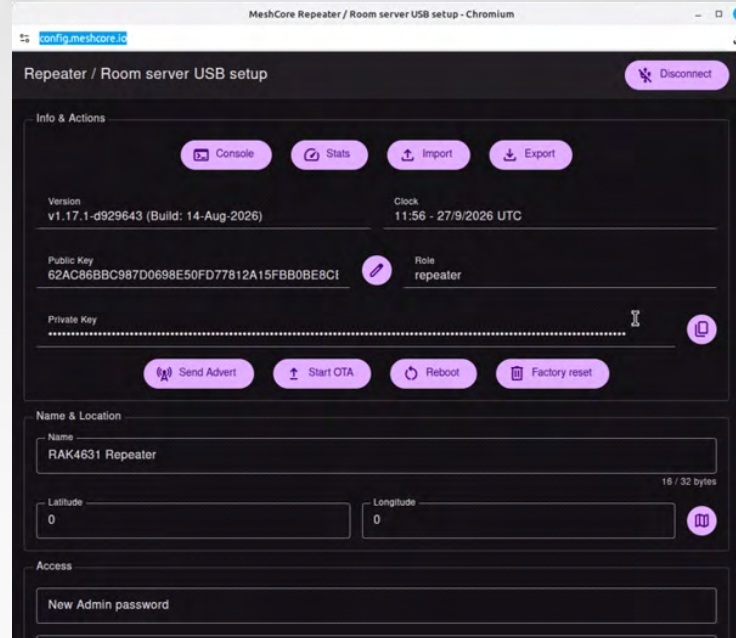
This time we select the repeater option and flash as before. You will receive a warning suggesting updating to the OTA_Fix bootloader, it is strongly suggested that you follow the instructions given and do this before flashing.



Once the flash is complete you are then ready to configure the repeater, this can be done while still connected over USB.

Once you connect to the repeater over the usb connection you are able to start making your setup. Firstly let me say the most of the defaults are just fine, however the following are important.

1. Set an Admin password, this will allow you to access the repeater over the mesh and manage the repeater going forward.
2. Set the radio parameters, again these need to be the same as the mesh you are joining, in our case we use the EUR433 (Long) default but remember to change the frequency to 433.750.



MeshCore Repeater / Room server USB setup - Chromium

Repeater / Room server USB setup

Info & Actions

Console Stats Import Export

Version: v1.17.1-d929643 (Build: 14-Aug-2026) Clock: 11:56 - 27/9/2026 UTC

Public Key: 62AC86BBC987D0698E50FD77812A15FBB0BE8C1 Role: repeater

Private Key: [Redacted]

Send Advert Start OTA Reboot Factory reset

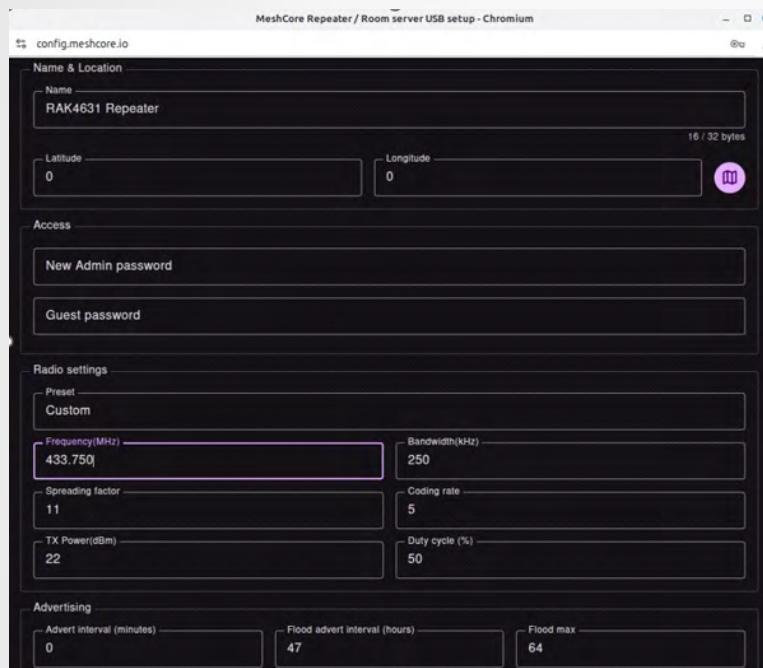
Name & Location

Name: RAK4631 Repeater

Latitude: 0 Longitude: 0

Access

New Admin password



MeshCore Repeater / Room server USB setup - Chromium

Name & Location

Name: RAK4631 Repeater

Latitude: 0 Longitude: 0

Access

New Admin password

Guest password

Radio settings

Preset: Custom

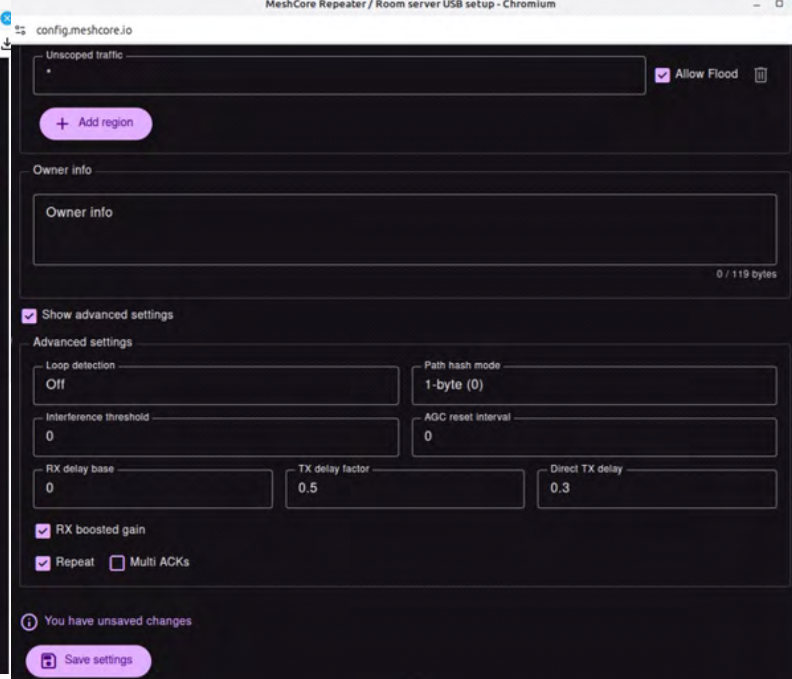
Frequency(MHz): 433.750 Bandwidth(KHz): 250

Spreading factor: 11 Coding rate: 5

TX Power(dBm): 22 Duty cycle (%): 50

Advertising

Advert interval (minutes): 0 Flood advert interval (hours): 47 Flood max: 64



MeshCore Repeater / Room server USB setup - Chromium

Unscopied traffic

Allow Flood

+ Add region

Owner info

Owner info

Show advanced settings

Advanced settings

Loop detection: Off Path hash mode: 1-byte (0)

Interference threshold: 0 AGC reset interval: 0

RX delay base: 0 TX delay factor: 0.5 Direct TX delay: 0.3

RX boosted gain: [Checked] Repeat: [Checked] Multi ACKs: [Unchecked]

You have unsaved changes

Save settings

For now that is it, scroll to the bottom and Save.

Your repeater is now all set, you can place it in a suitable location and add coverage to the mesh.

If you are already in a location that is covered by a repeater, it is not necessary to worry about this but otherwise a remote solar repeater on a high pole or building will help you and others in your area.

Of you wish to disclose the location of the repeater you can add a location in the optional fields, this can be accurate or approximate, depending on your privacy / safety concerns.

Adding the location does help others to see how well the mesh is operating as it gives an indication of distance between nodes.

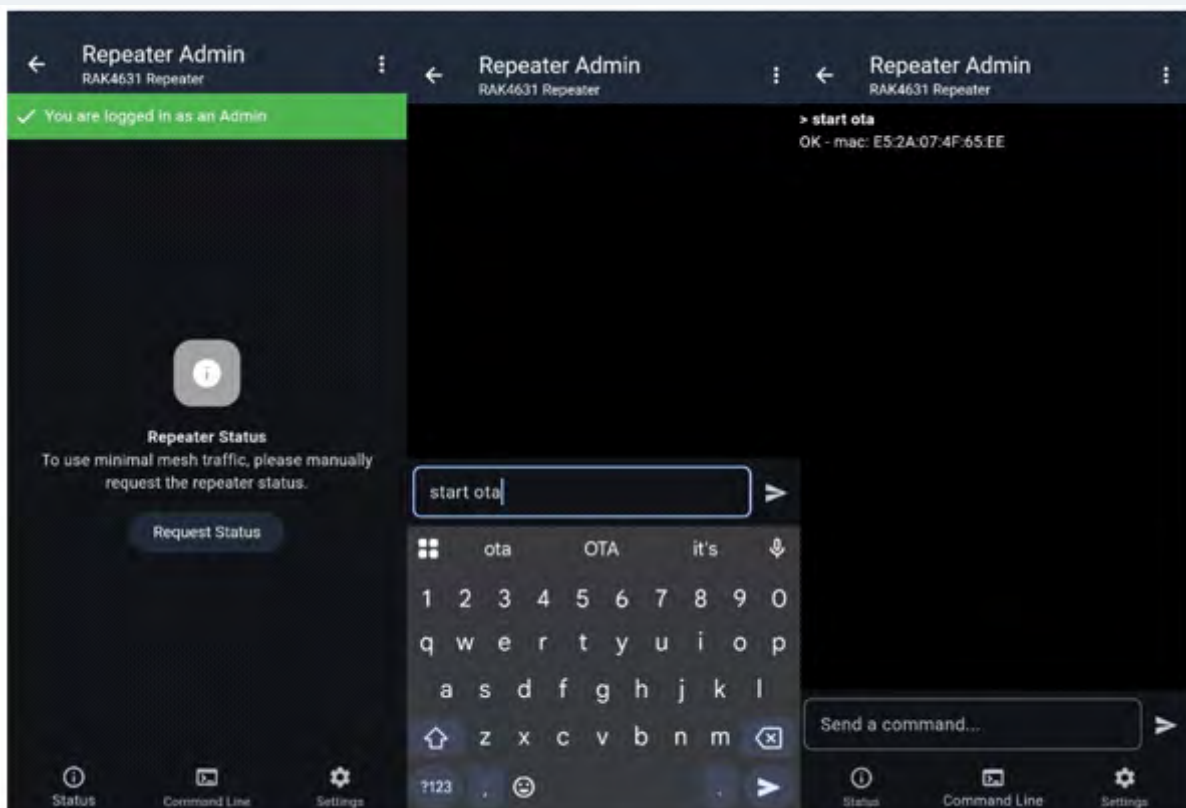
There are options in the cell-phone app which allow you to see which repeaters are heard by your repeater so play around and learn as you go.

OTA UPDATING: RAK & NRF BOARDS (REMOTE REPEATER UPDATE)

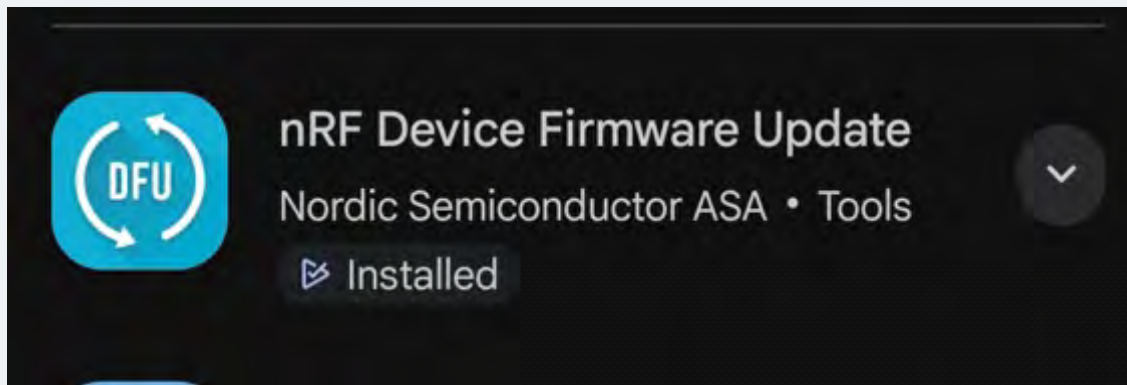


Over the Air (OTA) Updating (This applies to RAK and other NRF based boards only)

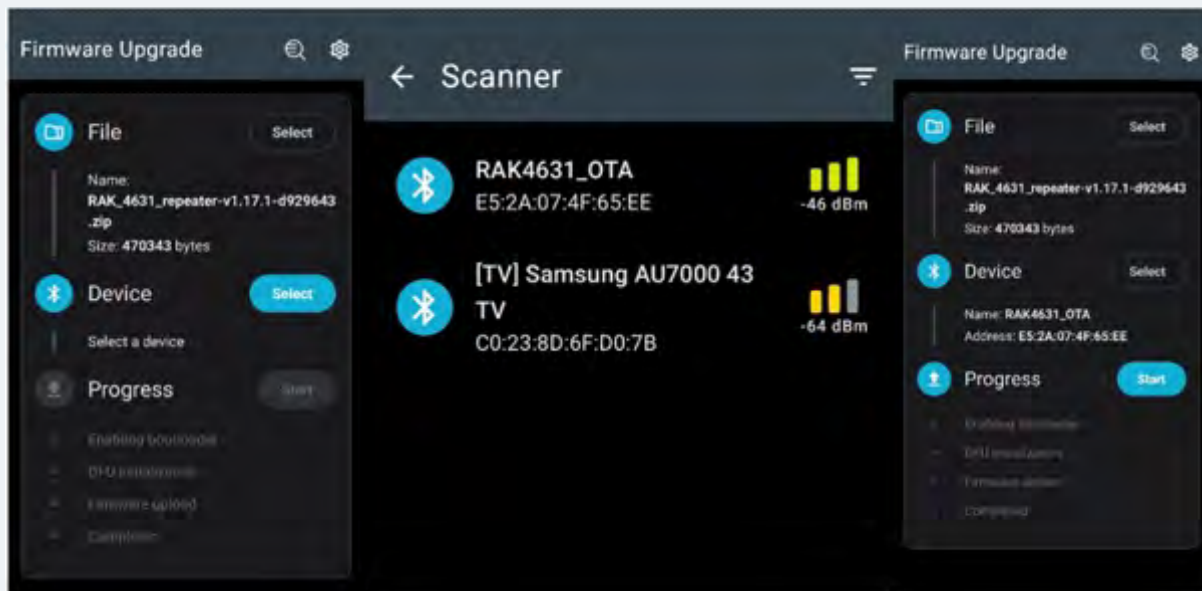
The last item I want to cover is remote updating of your repeater. If you place your node on a pole or other high site it is not always convenient to connect it to your laptop when you need to update the firmware. Here you can use a built in feature to update over BLE. (You need to be close enough to connect over BLE so might still need to climb the mountain, but not the mast at the top)
To do this you log into the repeater, from your contacts list on your companion device, using the Admin password that you set during setup.



Then select Command Line, type "start ota" and this will place the repeater in ota mode.

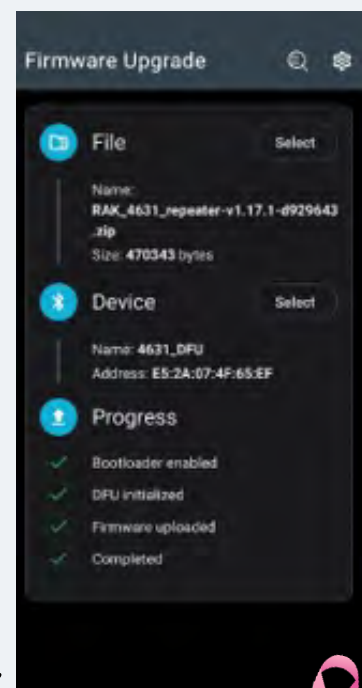


We now use an app called DFU, which is available on the Playstore. This allows us to connect to the repeater node over BLE and upload the new firmware file. The latest firmware can be downloaded from the Flasher page, selecting the Download option over on the right hand side. We need the .zip package for this purpose. Now just follow the sequence in the app.



If all goes well you will end up with an update repeater. However, there is always a chance of the update failing, if this happens you should be able to reselect it from the DFU app and retry.

That is provided you have the updated ota_fix bootloader that was recommended when you originally flashed the device.



That brings us to the end of this series on Meshcore.
I hope you enjoyed the journey and that some of you will
be motivated to try it for yourself.
Should you require any hardware or advice please make
contact and I will assist where I can.

73 Tony ZR2TX



MINUTES

PEARS MONTHLY MEETING

PEARS Monthly Meeting

Held at the German Club on the 15th September 2026 at 19h30

Welcome: Chairman Kevern ZR2BK welcomed all present.

Attendance: ZR2BK, ZS2VR, ZS2OD, ZS2AFB, ZS2GV, ZS2DH, ZS2JR, ZS2GS, ZS2BO, ZS2RT, ZR2NT, ZS2GV

Apologies: ZS2AAW, ZS2MIC, ZS2PTY, ZS2G

Acceptance of previous meeting's minutes:

Proposed: ZS2OB | **Seconded:** ZS2GS

Matters arising: None

Finances:

ZR2BK reported all is in good standing.

Events:

Planned Fox Hunt on the 24th, 09h30 at the Sundridge Scout Hall followed by a bring an braai social.

RAE:

- 7 Candidates will be writing on the 10th of October 2026

.Kevern:

- QSX will be published on the 1st of October 2026. Any articles are welcome.

Field Day:

- The SARL field day took place on the weekend of the 5th.
- The field day was very well attended, at Krantzklouf.
- Thank you to PEARS for paying for the venue.

ZS2DH:

- JOTA – 24 October 2026
- There will be four field stations
- 2x HF stations and 2x VHF stations

Speaker:

Gert, ZS2GS introduced the guest speaker for the meeting, Marius Rautenbach, ZS2JR who gave a very interesting talk on the evolution of radio through the many years in SAPS, and the arrangements for the late Nelson Mandela funeral by SAPS Radio Tech.

Closure:

Meeting ended at 20h02

Next meeting 20th October 2026



Guest speaker: Marius Rautenbach ZS2JR

SARL NATIONAL FIELD DAY

5 & 6 SEPTEMBER 2026



The venue of choice for the second leg of the SARL National Field Day was Krantzkloof, at the foot of the Lady Slipper mountain. The venue boasts camping facilities, ablutions, and plenty of trees making it perfect for a weekend out playing radio.

ZS2PE ran a single transmitter field station using a linked dipole strung in the trees.

Running 50W using an IC-7300 and a lithium battery, the team managed a total score of 42 818 points. This was good enough for third place overall and a first place in the 1A category.



The team:

Gert, ZS2GS
Kevern, ZR2BK
Eric, ZS2ECH
Isolda, ZS2IW
Andrew, ZS2G
Twanet, ZS2TW
Andreas, ZS2ALN
Paul, ZS2PS
and Odette, ZS2OD.

A number of these callsigns are prominent in contest results and clearly the effort is paying off.



The result:
42 818 points!

Third place overall and first place in the 1A category.

Thank you to all who came out to represent the club and keep the PEARs flag flying high.











PEARS FOX HUNT

× & *Braai*



The latest PEARS Fox Hunt took place on the 24 September and although there was a small turnout, it was enjoyed by all who took part.

Andrew Boucher ZS2AFB hid the fox and at 09:30 the teams set off in hot pursuit. One can always learn something from the chatter before and after a fox hunt. All the theory and what went right and what did not work!



**The winning team was
Andrew ZS2G and Twanet ZS2TW,
so they will be organising the next fox hunt!**

Being 24 September, National Braai Day, it was only fitting that the fox hunt was followed by a braai.

There was a lot of chatter around the fire – and we even caught someone “stealing with his eyes” while looking at the “winning antenna”.

I won't mention any names but just look at the pics!









Algoa National Rally 2026 Finally!



The rally went off without a hitch, all tasks were handled, and fun was had by those operating.

The areas where the stages were run were flat and with the rain these became very muddy, adding not only to the excitement, but to the laundry pile too!

Due to the rain, one stage was postponed and another stage was run back-to-back. This is a little ironic since the rally - normally held in July - was postponed to September due to rain.

During a break in the rain, however, with the sun making a cameo appearance and the wind helping to dry the wet ground, the postponed stage was run.

Tony also reports that there were several new (not necessarily young) faces and that this was inspiring. It helps to breathe hope into the events on which PEARS relies so heavily for much of our income.

Thank you to those who took part in what Shaun ZS2SG describes as "a very professional finish" quoting one of the race officials as saying (about PEARS) "You guys only get better!"

While it is easy to say the event went off without a hitch, it is worth mentioning that for about a week prior to the event there was no mains power on Slipper and the repeater was stone dead! Some of the conversations around the braai fire at the fox hunt put plans in place for the situation to be resolved on Friday morning.

Once again, PEARS have delivered a top-rated service in the face of whatever was thrown at us.

Tony is always needing assistance with various events and it would be nice if you could put your hand up every now and then.



By Tony ZR2TX







MEMBER PROFILE

ZS2EC



PERSONAL BACKGROUND



Where and when were you born and where did you grow up?

I was born in Vanderbijlpark in Gauteng on the 3rd of April 1964 and grew up in the Friendly City of Port Elizabeth.



What is one childhood memory that makes you smile?

Being myself and being naughty!



What do you for a living?

I started working for old OK Bazaars in their furniture/food warehouse in Stephenson Street, Deal Party, in 1993. I worked there for 7 years until they closed due to financial difficulties. I worked there as a receiving clerk and later as a jack of all trades (master of none). I went to the Cape Town warehouse where I worked as a transport supervisor. After 6 months I was asked by my PE manager to return to help limit the chaos that was happening in the PE warehouse. I really enjoyed my time with OK Bazaars – both in PE and Cape Town.



What is something about your early life that people might find surprising?

I found it difficult to dress myself because of my disability and found it very hard to ask for help. I went to a Cape Recife High School in Summerstrand near the University and attended the hostel for 5 years. Here the staff helped me a lot in getting my life in order. I left school in 1982 having passed grade 10.



What is something you're surprisingly good at?

I love talking to people and I love being a Ham operator. Something I have been doing for the last 33 years!

What do you think the future has in store for the hobby?

Great things! if the Sun would only behave itself

INTERESTS BEYOND RADIO



What hobbies do you enjoy outside of amateur radio?

Reading and doing a bit of research on earthquakes.



What books, music or films do you enjoy?

I enjoy reading comics. As for music I am not fussy, but when it comes to movies, I enjoy movies like Armageddon and other movies about asteroids.



What is your favourite way to relax?

My ham radio – it destresses me and gives me my comfort zone.

YOUR PEARS CONNECTION

How did you first get involved with the PEARS?

I really cannot remember, sorry!

What do you enjoy most about being part of the PEARS?

The comradery, friendship and advice.

What would you like to see more of in the PEARS or the QSX magazine?

Articles about building QRP radios and constructing hf/vhf antennas for portable use.

AMATEUR RADIO JOURNEY

When and how did you first get involved in amateur radio?

My father and I made some phone calls and eventually reached ZS2HD, Garth who in turn got hold of ZS2VM, Viv Moore. That's when I started attending classes, wrote the exam, and passed. The rest, as they say, is history!

What was your first callsign and your first radio?

I think ZR2EC was my first callsign, and my first HF radio was a B25 I got from ZS2EHB Ewalt.

Who or what inspired you to get licensed?

CB RADIO is what got me started, but I soon wanted to explore the world and talk to the world!

What parts of the hobby do you enjoy most (HF, VHF, contesting, etc.)?

All facets of the hobby! For the moment it is digital because the Sun and the Aliens are fighting for control of the Sun Lol.

What is your proudest or most memorable radio moment?

When I received my first DXCC. I cried like a small boy!

What is the most unusual or distant contact you've ever made?

Via digital to the USA. 20 000KM that's what the program showed!

What equipment are you currently running in your shack?

My HF rig is a Kenwood TS570-S. My antenna is a zs6bkw dipole, 10m off the ground. For VHF I use an Icom 229.

What project(s) are you currently working on (radio or otherwise)?

Learning CW



OCTOBER 2026

—  STAY ACTIVE, STAY CONNECTED!  —



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 SARL 80m QSO Party  Eric Hosten ZS2ECH	2	3
4 Antique Wireless Association SSB Valve QSO Party  Donovan van Loggerenberg ZS2DL	5 World Teachers Day  Roslyn Prideaux XVI of Al Andrea ZS2PA	6 Provincial Schools Open  Tejas Gajjar ZS2TG	7 Draconids Meteor Shower	8  Vanessa Scarr XVI of Chris ZS2AHW	9 World Postal Day  Jaco Koekemoer ZS2JKK	10 Radio Amateur Examination
11	12 World Migratory Bird Day  Neil Thomas ZR2NT Trevor Hartwig ZS2TJ	13  Lani Henegan XVI of Laura ZS2LB  Lise Dodd ZS2LLD	14 Early Morning Coffee QSO Party	15	16 JOTA	17 JOTA and CQ Hou Koers
18 JOTA	19	20	21 Orionids Meteor Shower SARL Wednesday 80m Club Contest	22 Orionids Meteor Shower	23	24 CQ WW DX Phone Contest
25 CQ WW DX Phone Contest	26  Patricia (Patsy) Kruger ZS2PTY	27	28	29  Pat Pullinger ZS2PJP Bennie Greyling ZR2BC	30	31 the SARL VHF/UHF FM Mode Contest



HAM BIRTHDAYS

= OCTOBER =

Celebrating our members – on the air and in life!



01
OCT

Eric Hosten

ZS2ECH

Eric, you celebrate with William Boeing and American outlaw Bonnie (and Clyde) Parker!

04
OCT

**Donovan
van Loggerenberg**

ZS2DL

19th US president Rutherford B Hayes (1822), along with Charlton Heston (1923), Susan Sarandon (1946), and Dakota Johnson (1989) all share a birthday with you!.

06
OCT

Jaco Koekemoer

ZS2JKK

Elisabeth Shue the American Actress of "Back To the future", and "The Saint" fame was born in 1963.

09
OCT

Tejas Gajjar

ZS2TG

Tejas -you share a birthday with John Lennon of the Beatles. Just Imagine!!

12
OCT

**Neil Thomas
Trevor Hartwig**

**ZR2NT
ZS2TJ**

Neil and Trevor celebrate with Luciano Pavarotti the famous tenor. The South African born golfer Sally Little will be turning 74.

13
OCT

Llise Dodd

ZS2LLD

Llise, you celebrate with Lani the XYL of Lance Henegan (ZS2LB) and other celebrities including Margaret Thatcher (British Prime Minister, born in 1925), and Paul Simon who was born in 1941.

26
OCT

**Patricia (Patsy)
Kruger**

ZS2PTY

Jaclyn Smith of "Charlie's Angles" fame and known for her role in "The Bourne Identity" will be turning 80 years old! Also sharing your birthday is Hillary Clinton who will be turning 78.

29
OCT

**Pat Pullinger
Bennie Greyling**

**ZS2PJP
ZR2BC**

Edmond Halley was born in 1656 and was so good at maths and astronomy that they named a comet after him! While Edmond Halley no longer celebrates his birthday, Winona Rider the actress known for Edward Sissorhands, will be turning 54.



SPOUSE BIRTHDAYS

= OCTOBER =



Celebrating the special people behind the Hams!

DATE

SPOUSE

FAMOUS CONNECTION

05
OCT

Roslyn Prideaux

XYL of Andrew ZS2PA

Ray Kroc, founder of McDonalds, and the subject of the Mark Knopfler song "Boom like that" was born in Oak Park, Illinois in 1902. Also celebrating will be Steve Miller the American rock guitarist who will be turning 82.

08
OCT

Vanessa Scarr

XYL of Chris ZS2AAW

Sigourney Weaver once again graces our pages with a birthday on 8th October. Sigourney will be turning 76 this year. She also has a wedding anniversary in October!
Ursula von der Leyen, a German politician and the 1st woman elected President of the European Commission, was born in Brussels in 1958.

13
OCT

Lani Henegan

XYL of Lance ZS2LB

Lani you celebrate with celebrities like our very own Llisa Dodd (ZS2LLD), Margaret Thatcher, and Paul Simon.

FAMOUS HAM BIRTHDAYS

*Celebrating the legends
of Amateur Radio!*



05 OCT
1940

Bob Heil, K9EID, was born on October 5, 1940, and passed away on February 28, 2024. He was a renowned audio engineer and inventor, known for his significant contributions to the field of amateur radio and live sound systems. Have you ever heard of a "Heil headset?"



01
OCT

*Tony &
Deidre Allen ZR2TX*

It seems that 1 October is a popular date to tie the knot with celebrities including Johnny Carsons (1949), Sigourney Weaver (1984), Whoopi Goldberg (1994), and Scarlett Johansson (2014) having agreed with Deidre (and Tony)

09
OCT

*Jaco &
Chantel Koekemoer ZS2JKK
Chantel &
Robbie Koekemoer ZS2CKK*

Celebrate their wedding anniversary along with Paul McCartney who in 2011, aged just 69 years old wed a New York girl Nancy Shevell - a sprightly 51 years old in London. Jason Momoa also selected the 9th of October to tie the knot.

12
OCT

*Donovan &
Rosalie van Loggerenberg ZS2DL*

Louis Armstrong of "What a wonderful world" fame chose the 12 October to marry his fourth wife in 1942. Dustin Hoffman (1980), Steven Spielberg (1991), and Natalie Cole (2001) round out quite a magical "anniversary team"

24
OCT

*Al &
Jo Akkers ZS2U*

There are not a lot of famous people who chose the 24 October to wed, but Al and Jo made it happen and years later they are still married. I don't know how many years it has been, but I'm sure Jo will agree that it is a long time to look after someone else's little boy!.



DX WATCH

STATIONS ON THE AIR

As the "DX season" starts to heat up with holiday-style / suitcase DXpeditions, October is a rather full month in terms of your DX options. There are also several Islands available for those chasing Islands On The Air. Whether you are chasing Islands or just general DX, you have your work cut out for you this month. Enjoy!

XR0Z – Juan Fernandez Island (1–31 October)



CE3VTZ and XQ7I will operate as XR0Z from Alexander Selkirk Island (SA-101) for ten days during October. Activity covers 160–6 metres using CW, SSB, and FT8. QSL is via M0U XR, and logs will be available on LoTW.

602M – Somalia (5–25 October)



OG2M will be active as 602M from Garowe, Puntland, operating 40–10 metres on SSB and CW during spare time. QSL is via LoTW, with additional details on DX bulletins.

TF/PD9DX – Iceland (7–17 October)



PD9DX will sign TF/PD9DX from Iceland, operating HF on SSB, FT8, and FT4. He will also participate in the Scandinavian Activity Contest (SSB). QSL information is handled through M0URX.

H49A – Solomon Islands (7–21 October)



A multi-operator team (9A3MR, 9A2NA, 9A3CJY, 9A4WY, 9A7Y, DK8ZZ) will be active as H49A from Guadalcanal Island (OC-047). Expect HF + 6 metres on CW, SSB, and FT8. QSL is via DK8ZZ, with logs on LoTW.

ZA/AE5X – Albania (8–30 October)



AE5X will operate holiday-style as ZA/AE5X, running 10 watts on 20–10 metres, exclusively CW. QSL is via AE5X (direct or bureau) and LoTW.



DX WATCH

STATIONS ON THE AIR



9H – Malta (10–12 October)

IK8YFU, IU8GUK, I8YGZ, and IU8HEP will operate from Malta on 80–10 metres using CW, SSB, FT8, and FT4. QSL is via IK8YFU (direct).



S21HRG – Bangladesh (16–20 October)

A large team of 13 operators will activate S21HRG from Tetulia, Panchagarh. They will operate 80–10 metres on SSB, FT8, and CW. QSL is via Club Log OQRS, managed by S21RAK.



7P8GE – Lesotho (16–29 October)

DL7DF and team will operate as 7P8GE, covering HF including 60 metres. QSL is via their OQRS portal hosted by DL7UFR.



W9HT/VP9 – Bermuda (17–20 October)

W9HT will operate as W9HT/VP9 from Bermuda on HF + 6 metres, using CW, SSB, and FT8. QSL is via W9HT (direct).



S9R – São Tomé & Príncipe (17–31 October)

A multi-national team (EC7R, D2ACE, CT1BOL, D2IM, CT1BZG, CT3MD) will operate as S9R on 160–6 metres, including 60 metres, using CW, SSB, and digital modes. QSL details will be announced (TBA).



DX WATCH

STATIONS ON THE AIR

JD1BQP – Ogasawara (17 October – 2 November)



JP1IHD will operate as JD1BQP from Chichijima Island (AS-031), covering 160–6 metres with 200 W and 100 W stations using EFHW, hexbeam, and 6-m yagi antennas. QSL is via LoTW.

V63SC – Micronesia (22–26 October)



JM1LBO will operate as V63SC from Pohnpei Island (OC-010), covering 80–2 metres on FT8 and SSB. QSL is direct to JM1LBO.



9N7XT – Nepal (23–31 October)

DL4XT will operate 9N7XT from Kathmandu on 160–10 metres, using CW, SSB, and FT8 with 100–500 W. He will also participate in CQWW SSB. QSL is via LoTW or DL4XT.

7P9EA – Lesotho (26 October – 25 November)



HB9CCS will operate as 7P9EA from Thaba-Tseka on HF, using CW and SSB. QSL is via HB9CCS.

V47JA – St Kitts & Nevis (28 October – 6 November)



W5JON will operate as V47JA from Calypso Bay on 160–6 metres, using SSB and FT8. QSL is via W5JON (LoTW or direct).



DX WATCH

STATIONS ON THE AIR

6W/I2YSB – Senegal (28 October – 9 November)



A large Italian team (IV3FSG, I1FQH, I1HJT, I2PJA, I2YSB, IK2AQZ, IK2CKR, IK2HKT) will operate as 6W/I2YSB and 6W/IK2HKT on 160–6 metres, using CW, SSB, RTTY, and FT8. QSL is via I2YSB.

V26JJ – Antigua (30 October – 6 November)



JA3FHL, JA3PJL, JH3UHG, JJ2RCJ, and JA0JHQ will operate as V26JJ on HF, using CW, SSB, and FT8. QSL is via Club Log OQRS.

KH8A – American Samoa (30 October – 12 November)



A large German team (DJ9KH, DK5WL, DL1KWK, DL2RNS, DL4SVA, DL6KAC, DL6KVA, DL7JOM, DL7VEE) will operate as KH8A from Tutuila Island (OC-045) on 160–6 metres, using CW, SSB, FT8, and RTTY. QSL is via Club Log OQRS, with LoTW uploads after six months.

Jamboree-on-the-Air (JOTA) 16–18 October 2026

JOTA runs from 16 to 18 October, connecting Scouts worldwide via amateur radio.

Activity spans HF, VHF, and UHF, with no formal scoring — the focus is on youth engagement and international communication. Expect busy bands and plenty of opportunities to introduce young operators to the hobby. So be nice!

CQ Hou Koers is an event hosted by the Voortrekkers every year and aims to connect youth around the country and around the world.

The Voortrekker answer to Scouting's JOTA. CQ Hou Koers was an activity enjoyed by the late ZS2EHB (sk).





FOCUS ON CONTESTS



Because who doesn't enjoy
turning their shack into a

caffeine-powered
command centre?



CONTEST RESULTS

A big Thank you to Theunis, ZS2EC, the PEARS contest coordinator for always keeping members aware of ongoing contests. Theunis not only posts upcoming contest notifications and rules, but also makes sure the results get published to members as well. *Thank you, Mr T!*

Thank you
Theunis
ZS2EC! 😊



Welcome to our regulars and newcomers!

While on the topic of results, we need to acknowledge some newcomers to the contesting results pages! Regulars like ZS2EC are stalwarts, but several call signs pop up with increasing regularity. Amongst these are our two competitive ladies – ZS2OD and ZS2TW. Other regular callsigns include ZS2D – Dylan, Andrew ZS2G, and Andre ZS2ALN. New callsigns include Saskian – ZS2OBI and Tapiwa – ZS2TAP – welcome!

Enjoy and fly the ZS2PE flag as high as you can.



CLUB PARTICIPATION

Many of these contests have a club component where individual scores are added together “by club” and club winners announced based on the number and total score of the logs submitted by club members. While PEARS is often in the top 10 clubs, we can (and have) done so much better.

More
Logs
More
Points
More
Fun!



*If you submit a log, please make sure they know
(and can't miss the fact) that you are a member of the PEARS.*



INTERNATIONAL CONTESTS

in October 2026

Around the world ... on the air!



While this is not intended to be an exhaustive list – trust me there are plenty of contests taking place all the time! These are just some of the highlights. A good source for upcoming international contests is ng3k.com.



OCEANIA DX CONTEST — SSB (3–4 OCTOBER 2026)

The first major international event of the month is the Oceania DX SSB Contest, running from 06:00 UTC on 3 October to 06:00 UTC on 4 October. Activity spans 160 to 10 metres (excluding WARC). Scoring uses QSO points multiplied by the number of prefixes worked per band. The exchange is signal report + serial number. Stations worldwide aim to work Oceania, making ZS stations valuable DX.



DATES
**3–4
OCTOBER
2026**



DETAILS

Bands: 160 – 10 m
(excl. WARC)

Exchange: Signal report +
serial number

Scoring: QSO points ×
prefixes worked per band



OCEANIA DX CONTEST — CW (10–11 OCTOBER 2026)

The CW leg follows a week later, from 06:00 UTC on 10 October to 06:00 UTC on 11 October, using the same bands and scoring system. CW operators enjoy excellent propagation into Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific during October.



DATES
**10–11
OCTOBER
2026**



DETAILS

Bands: 160 – 10 m
(excl. WARC)

Exchange: Signal report +
serial number

Scoring: QSO points ×
prefixes worked per band



IARU REGION 1 UHF CONTEST (3–4 OCTOBER 2026)

Running concurrently with the Oceania SSB event, the IARU Region 1 UHF Contest begins 3 October at 16:00 UTC and ends 4 October at 16:00 UTC. It covers 432 MHz to 47 GHz, with scoring based on distance (km per QSO). This is a major VHF/UHF event across Europe, but DX monitoring from South Africa is still possible on higher bands.



DATES
**3–4
OCTOBER
2026**



DETAILS

Bands: 432 MHz – 47 GHz

Exchange: Signal report +
(grid locator not required)

Scoring: Distance (km per
QSO)



CQ WORLDWIDE DX CONTEST — SSB (24–27 OCTOBER 2026)

The biggest HF phone contest of the year, CQ WW SSB, runs from 24 October at 02:00 UTC until 27 October at 01:59 UTC. All HF bands are active (except WARC). Scoring is QSO points × zone + country multipliers, and the exchange is signal report + CQ zone. Expect wall-to-wall signals and superb DX opportunities.



DATES
**24–27
OCTOBER
2026**



DETAILS

Bands: All HF (excl. WARC)

Exchange: Signal report +
CQ zone

Scoring: QSO points × zone +
country multipliers



More bands • More countries • More DX!



SARL CONTESTS

October 2026

Get on the air. Test your skills. Have fun!



A quick reminder that the SARL Blue Book Contest Manual is a free download from the [mySARL.org.za](https://www.mysarl.org.za) website – for members and non-members of the SARL.

Go to <https://www.mysarl.org.za/> to get the contest manual, calendar, and all the goodies you need to take part in the local contests.



SARL 80 m QSO PARTY (1 OCTOBER 2026)

The month begins with the SARL 80 m QSO Party on 1 October. This short, friendly operating event encourages local activity on the 80-metre band, typically in the evening. Operators exchange standard signal reports, and scoring is based on the number of valid QSOs logged. Ideal for newcomers and seasoned operators alike.



DATE
**1
OCTOBER
2026**



DETAILS

80-metre band
Evening
Signal reports
QSOs = Score



AWA SSB VALVE QSO PARTY (4 OCTOBER 2026)

The Antique Wireless Association hosts its nostalgic SSB Valve QSO Party on 4 October, celebrating classic valve equipment. Operating takes place on HF SSB, with QSOs scored simply by contact count. This relaxed event is perfect for enthusiasts of vintage rigs.



DATE
**4
OCTOBER
2026**



DETAILS

HF SSB
Valve equipment
Contact count
(Score)



EARLY MORNING COFFEE QSO PARTY (14 OCTOBER 2026)

The Early Morning Coffee QSO Party on 14 October encourages operators to greet the day on HF with casual QSOs. Scoring is minimal and participation-focused, making it a fun warm-up before the heavier contests later in the month.



DATE
**14
OCTOBER
2026**



DETAILS

HF
Casual QSOs
Minimal scoring
Participation



SARL WEDNESDAY 80 m CLUB CONTEST (21 OCTOBER 2026)

The mid-month Wednesday 80 m Club Contest takes place on 21 October, running for one hour on the 80-metre band. Operators exchange signal reports and club information, with scoring based on QSOs and multipliers. A fast, competitive sprint ideal for sharpening operating skills.



DATE
**21
OCTOBER
2026**



DETAILS

80-metre band
1 hour
Signal reports
QSOs + Multipliers



SARL VHF/UHF FM MODE CONTEST (31 OCTOBER 2026)

The SARL VHF/UHF FM Mode Contest takes place on 31 October, focusing exclusively on FM operation across the 6 m, 2 m, 70 cm and 23 cm bands. Running in the afternoon and early evening, this contest encourages local and regional activity using standard FM repeaters and simplex channels. Simplex QSOs form the core of scoring, with RS reports and grid locators. Scoring is based on distance worked, with multipliers per band. Ideal for newcomers and experienced VHF/UHF operators alike.



DATE
**31
OCTOBER
2026**



DETAILS

6 m / 2 m / 70 cm /
23 cm (FM)
Afternoon & early evening
RS reports + grid locators
Distance worked = Score
Multipliers per band

The

RULE BOOK



REGULATIONS AND REGULATORY INFORMATION

ASTRONOMY GEOGRAPHIC ADVANTAGE AREAS: NEW LIMITATIONS FOR AMATEUR OPERATORS



South Africa hosts world class radio astronomy facilities, including the SKA and associated instruments. The draft amendments strengthen protections for Astronomy Geographic Advantage Areas, expanding the scope of radio quiet zones and tightening restrictions on emissions that may interfere with sensitive astronomy devices.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR AMATEUR RADIO



- Portable HF/VHF/UHF operations near Karoo/SKA regions



- Microwave experimentation, especially above 1 Ghz



- High power EME, beacon projects, or test transmissions



- Club field days held within or near protected zones

OPERATING NEAR PROTECTED AREAS



The intention is not to restrict amateur activity broadly, but to ensure that scientific installations remain free from harmful interference. Operators should familiarise themselves with protected area boundaries and avoid high power or wideband emissions when operating nearby.

A SHARED SPECTRUM



As astronomy infrastructure expands, these limitations may grow. Awareness and cooperation will help maintain amateur access to shared spectrum. Once again, concerned amateurs must take note of the underlying message: Our spectrum is not an infinite resource.

GOVERNMENT STEPS UP EFFORTS TO CUT SOUTH AFRICA'S MOBILE DATA COSTS



More competition.
Lower costs.
A connected South Africa.



UNCREDITED ARTICLE ON BROADCASTMEDIAAFRICA.COM



South Africa's Department of Communications and the communications regulator ICASA are stepping up efforts to increase competition in the electronic communications market and reduce the cost of mobile data and other communications services.



More competition

Lower costs

Better connectivity



A WORD OF CAUTION FOR AMATEUR RADIO OPERATORS

While reducing mobile data costs sounds like great news, there is a little bit of a warning in there for us Amateur radio hobbyists

According to the article, Communications Minister Solly Malatsi outlined the measures saying the goal was to lower barriers to entry and create greater competition among network operators. This all started a little while ago with the Electronic Communications Amendment Bill, 2026, introduced in April. Here is the kicker - the proposed legislation includes a "use it or share it" approach to radio frequency spectrum. While this is not currently in our spectrum, it does show the intention and if we don't use our spectrum we are going to lose it - or at best share it.



ICASA LAUNCHES INQUIRY

Let that sink in for a while and then we can move on with the good news. ICASA has launched an inquiry into the cost of communication services with the view of identifying additional regulatory and market interventions that could improve affordability.



CONSUMER PROTECTIONS

ICASA's End-User and Subscriber Service Charter regulations, include consumer protections such as:

- * Automatic rollover of qualifying unused bundles
- * Bundle transfers
- * Restrictions on out-of-bundle usage
- * First Expiry, First Out principle

Malatsi said these measures are intended to address persistent consumer concerns about bundle expiry, out-of-bundle charges, and managing unused voice, SMS, and data bundles.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE:

[Government Steps Up Efforts To Cut South Africa's Mobile Data Costs - Broadcast Media Africa](#)



South Africa's Balloon Carrying Amateur Radio (BACAR) programme continues to be one of the most exciting technical initiatives in local amateur radio, combining near space experimentation, multi mode payloads, and nationwide operator participation.

While VHF and above will provide challenges to local ZS2-land citizens, it is worth mentioning that if you are travelling in or near to the launch area there is a lot of fun to be had!

Over the past few years, BACAR and its associated pico balloon projects have delivered a string of successes, proving that South African amateurs can design, build, launch, and track sophisticated high altitude platforms on a global scale.



The BACAR archive reads like a timeline of innovation. Numerous pico balloons - including ZS6SRC 21, ZS6SRC 24, ZS6SRC 25, ZR6TG 2, and ZS1ERZ - have been launched and tracked across continents. Some achieved multiple circumnavigations, with ZS6SRC 21 famously approaching its third lap around the planet. These ultra light flights typically carry WSPR, APRS, LoRa, and HF telemetry modules, allowing operators worldwide to follow their progress in real time.

The programme has also celebrated special milestones, such as the "Pico Nico" launch honouring SARL President Nico (ZS6QL) for his decade of service. Each mission has showcased incremental improvements: lighter payloads, more efficient solar power systems, better telemetry boards, and refined tracking dashboards.

The community engagement has been equally impressive, with amateurs across South Africa monitoring packets, decoding WSPR spots, and submitting reception reports. Together, these flights have built a strong technical foundation - and a passionate following - for the next major step.



BACAR-14:

The October Flagship Launch

The upcoming October BACAR launch, scheduled for 17 October at 06:00 UTC, promises to be the most ambitious mission yet. BACAR 14 will carry a multi band, multi mode payload suite designed to showcase the full breadth of amateur radio experimentation.

Expected payload highlights include:



APRS

on 144.800 MHz for real time tracking



LoRa

telemetry for high efficiency data transmission



SSTV

imaging, providing near space photos as the balloon ascends



WSPR

beacons on HF for long distance propagation studies



ADS B

aircraft monitoring at 1090 Mhz



Crossband FM voice repeater

allowing operators to work the balloon directly



Additional experimental modules

on 433 MHz, 868 MHz, and L band

With a target altitude of 30-35 km, the balloon will offer wide area VHF/UHF coverage, excellent HF reach, and a unique opportunity to receive SSTV images from near space. Operators are encouraged to monitor across all supported modes, submit reception reports, and make use of the crossband repeater while the balloon is in view.



Why BACAR Matters

BACAR is more than a technical exercise - it's a showcase of what amateur radio can achieve when experimentation, education, and community come together. The programme inspires newcomers, supports STEM outreach, and demonstrates the value of amateur radio in scientific exploration. Each launch is a reminder that the spirit of innovation is alive and well in South Africa's amateur radio community.



Get Ready for Lift-Off

With strong heritage from past pico balloon missions and a powerful payload lineup for October, BACAR 14 is set to be a highlight of the 2026 amateur radio calendar. Whether you're decoding LoRa packets, chasing WSPR spots, or working the crossband repeater, this mission offers something for every operator.

Clear the logs, warm up the radios, and prepare your antennas - BACAR is heading back to the edge of space.

*Small balloons...
Big dreams!*



*Clear the logs, warm up the radios,
and prepare your antennas —
BACAR is heading back to the edge of space.*



KEY PALAU DXpeditions AND THEIR NOISE EXPERIENCES



Noise on T8 has been an issue for a while now with DXpeditions reporting unshielded cables and several other local noise issues. The US Air Force has targeted Palau due to its geographical location as a great location for the new Over The Horizon Radar (OTHR) system called TACMOR. Let's take a look at OTHR, the plans for Palau, and the impact for Amateur Radio as a hobby.

WHERE IS PALAU?



A search on Google Maps is an easy way to find the small island nation, but if you are old school and want to locate Palau on a paper map, you need to look in the **western Pacific Ocean North-East of Papua New Guinea, West of the Philippines, and South-West of Guam.**

A small island nation with not much around it. A rather expensive tourist destination known for world class diving, beaches right out of a movie, and stunning views including caves, rock outcrops, and waterfalls. And DXpeditions.



KEY PALAU DXpeditions

1 T8GJ (2016)

THE MOONBOUNCE (EME) SPECIALIST

Lance, W7GJ, conducted a highly specialized 6-metre Earth-Moon-Earth (EME) DXpedition to Palau. EME communications rely on catching microscopic, weak signals bouncing off the moon, meaning even an S2 noise floor can ruin the operation.

THE CULPRIT:

- Power line arcing
- Urban industrial hash from the capital of Koror,
- Severe terrain blockage.



THE MITIGATION:

Lance used extensive pre-trip terrain modeling to choose a very rural village located precisely on top of an isolated ridge line. This placed his antennas physically above the localized ground-level utility noise and gave him a clear shot at the horizon to take advantage of ground gain, letting the sea surface naturally boost his weak signals while keeping the urban noise behind the back-lobes of his directional antennas.



2 T88WA (Nov 2022)

THE RF1 INVESTIGATORS

The T88WA team from the Western Washington DX Club ran into what they described as an intractable S9 noise floor across all primary HF bands upon arriving at their intended operating location at the Traditional Bai near Choll Village.

"

THE CULPRIT:

Using a specialized MFJ Ultrasonic RFI Locator rushed to the island by [DX Engineering](#), the team traced the noise directly to unshielded underground fiber-optic, telecom, and utility cables running tightly parallel right beneath the island's main overhead power lines. The entire island grid was essentially acting as a giant, radiating noise antenna.



THE MITIGATION:

They realized the local noise was impossible to filter out at that site. Their primary mitigation was a complete site relocation. After inspecting six alternative locations across the islands, they relocated their entire operation to a highly elevated, remote site with an expansive, unobstructed view facing north across the open ocean, drastically lowering their local noise floor.



3 T88SF & T80K (2025/2026)

DIGITAL MODES TO THE RESCUE

Operators like Fumio (T88SF) operating from Malakal Island, and the massive T80K Czech team (more below), have actively documented the evolution of Palau's noise environment.

THE CULPRIT:

Unstable local AC power lines, regular power surges, and wideband sweeping radar interference.



THE MITIGATION:

To bypass the crushing S9 voice noise floors, these modern expeditions have largely pivoted to FT8 and FT4 digital modes as their main operational frontline. Because these digital modes utilize deeply optimized DSP math to decode signals up to 24 dB below the noise floor, teams are able to log tens of thousands of contacts even when human ears can hear nothing but radar pulses and power line hum on SSB and CW. Thank you Joe Taylor (K1JT) and Steve Franke (K9AN)!



T80K DXpedition NOISE REPORT

"It's nearly impossible to work CW and SSB" and "the interference is overwhelming"



More recently, however, the T80k DXpedition reported in March this year that "it is nearly impossible to work CW and SSB" and that "the interference is overwhelming". The T80K Czech DXpedition team (consisting of operators OK1BOA, OK2ZA, OK3RM, and OK6DJ), who activated Palau, published direct field reports highlighting the extreme RF noise environment they encountered.



THE T80K NOISE REPORT

During their operational stint, the team issued an urgent update regarding severe local spectrum interference that heavily crippled their operation:

"We've been experiencing several power outages, and we've made a minor adjustment to our transmitter's power supply. We're looking for interference, as it's nearly impossible to work CW and SSB; the interference is overwhelming."

CONTEXT OF THE INTERFERENCE IN PALAU

The "overwhelming" noise that teams like T80K encounter on Palau stems from a combination of localized infrastructure issues and military hardware deployment:

The S9 Local Noise Floor:

Previous teams in the area (such as the T88WA expedition) documented an intractable S9 noise floor across all primary HF bands. This wideband, buzzing interference originates from unshielded underground power lines and local telephone infrastructure running tightly parallel under the island's main power poles. It routinely blots out weak CW and SSB voice signals, mirroring the frustrations logged by T80K.

The TACMOR Proximity Impact:

The ongoing deployment of the TACMOR over-the-horizon radar transmitter on Babeldaob Island means that DXpeditions are essentially operating inside an active high-power military HF testbed. The proximity causes immense receiver desensitization, explaining why modern teams find traditional narrow-band voice and Morse code modes completely jammed, frequently forcing them to pivot to digital modes like FT8 just to be decoded.

Unshielded cables and arcing powerlines fade into the distance as the new TACMOR system gets approved. With the onslaught of the TACMOR system being put in by the US Air Force and US DOD, these "little issues" are not even going to be noticed anymore!

WHAT IS OTHR?

Over-the-Horizon Radar (OTHR) is a class of HF radar systems that exploit ionospheric refraction to detect targets hundreds to thousands of kilometres beyond line-of-sight.



HOW IT WORKS

Uses powerful HF transmissions—often sweeping across wide bands—to bounce radio waves off the Earth's ionosphere.



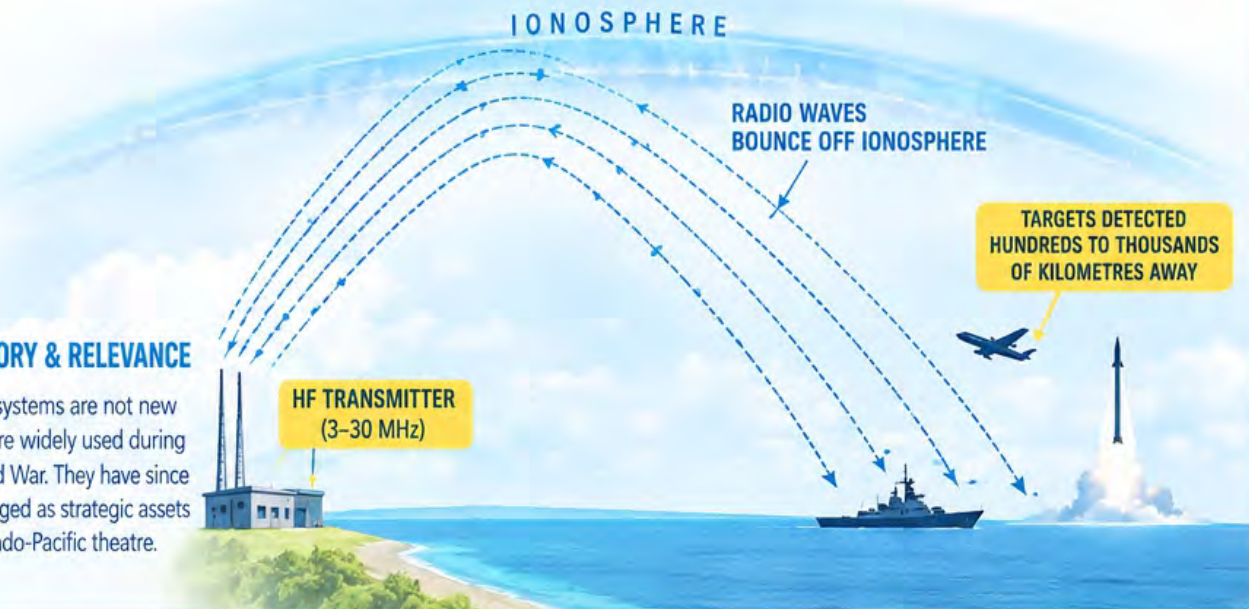
WHAT IT DETECTS

Can detect aircraft, ships and missile launches hundreds to thousands of kilometres away.



HISTORY & RELEVANCE

OTHR systems are not new and were widely used during the Cold War. They have since re-emerged as strategic assets in the Indo-Pacific theatre.



WHAT IS TACMOR?

TACMOR is a sub-scaled OTHR system designed to provide long-range air and maritime tracking across the Western Pacific, specifically targeting gaps near the South and East China Seas. Unlike traditional line-of-sight radars, it uses the HF spectrum (3 to 30 MHz) to bounce radio waves off the Earth's ionosphere.



HF SPECTRUM

Uses 3 to 30 MHz radio frequencies to reach beyond the horizon.



TRACKS

Air and maritime activity across the Western Pacific, focusing on gaps near the South and East China Seas.



SPLIT-SITE SETUP

Transmitter facility in Ngaraard State (Babeldaob Island) and receiver array 60 miles south on Angaur Island.

TRANSMITTER FACILITY
Ngaraard State
(Babeldaob Island)



RECEIVER ARRAY
Angaur Island



TIMELINE

Initially slated for completion in 2026, the project has faced local legal challenges regarding environmental impact and construction delays, pushing its full operational timeline back.



HOW IS TACMOR DIFFERENT?

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TACMOR AND THE MAJOR GLOBAL OTHR SYSTEMS



	TACMOR (U.S.) Tactical HF Radar	VS	MAJOR OTHR SYSTEMS (Australia, Russia, China, Iran) Strategic HF Radar
1  MISSION PROFILE	- Tactical HF radar - Designed for regional surveillance (Indo-Pacific maritime + air) - Supports mobile or semi-fixed deployment - Optimised for rapid installation, modularity, and flexible basing - Smaller footprint, lower infrastructure requirements		- Strategic HF radar - Designed for continental-scale early warning - Permanently installed, massive antenna farms - Integrated into national air-defence networks - Extremely high power, long-range, persistent operation 
IN ESSENCE, TACMOR = REGIONAL TACTICAL SENSOR JORN/CONTAINER/ETC. = NATIONAL STRATEGIC SENSOR			
2  PHYSICAL SCALE & INFRASTRUCTURE	- Modular antenna arrays - Transportable or semi-transportable components - Requires cleared land but not multi-square-kilometre antenna farms - Built to be installed in remote island nations under defence agreements		- Multi-kilometre phased arrays - Massive transmitter and receiver sites separated by tens of kilometres - Dedicated power infrastructure - Permanent hardened buildings and control centres 
EXAMPLE: Australia's JORN uses three enormous sites spanning thousands of kilometres. TACMOR is physically tiny by comparison.			
3  POWER LEVELS & HF FOOTPRINT	- High power, but lower than strategic OTHR - Designed to cover regional distances (1,000–3,000 km) - HF footprint still large enough to disrupt amateur bands locally		- Extremely high power (megawatt-class effective radiated power) - Designed for 4,000–6,000+ km detection - HF footprint can be seen across continents - Known to cause interference thousands of kilometres away 
IMPACT DIFFERENCE: TACMOR WILL DEVASTATE HF LOCALLY (E.G., PALAU). JORN/CONTAINER CAN BE SEEN GLOBALLY.			
4  WAVEFORM & OPERATIONAL BEHAVIOUR	- Likely uses modern, agile waveforms - Frequency hopping - Narrower sweeps compared to strategic systems - Designed to operate in contested RF environments - More flexible duty cycles		- Wideband, high-power sweeps - Long, continuous chirps - Large bandwidth occupation - Less flexible, more persistent operation - Designed for stable, long-range ionospheric propagation TACMOR – AGILE, HOPPING, NARROWER SWEEPS  STRATEGIC OTHR – WIDEBAND, CONTINUOUS CHIRPS 
IMPACT DIFFERENCE: TACMOR WILL DEVASTATE HF LOCALLY (E.G., PALAU). JORN/CONTAINER CAN BE SEEN GLOBALLY.			
5  DEPLOYMENT MODEL	- Built for forward deployment in allied nations - Uses defence agreements (e.g., Compact of Free Association with Palau) - Can be relocated or expanded - Smaller political footprint		- Always located inside the operator's own territory - Immovable - Part of national defence infrastructure - Politically sensitive and highly-regulated 
6  REGULATORY & LEGISLATIVE DIFFERENCES	- Installed under bilateral defence agreements, not domestic legislation - No public spectrum legislation changes - Amateur radio is secondary → no protection - Environmental and land-use disputes may occur (as in Palau) - Spectrum coordination handled internally by defence agencies		- Installed under domestic legislation - Spectrum allocation often formalised through national laws - Military use takes precedence - Extensive environmental assessments conducted - Protected by national security frameworks 

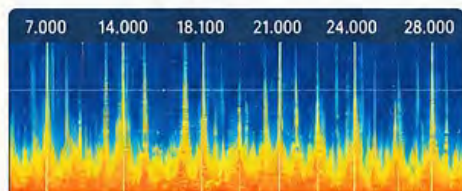
HOW WILL IT IMPACT AMATEUR RADIO?

TACMOR IN PALAU: WHAT HAMS NEED TO KNOW



FOR DXERS

Expect Palau to become significantly harder to work on HF once TACMOR is active. Noise levels will rise, and radar sweeps will occupy multiple bands.



RADAR NOISE FLOOR RISING



FOR CONTESTING

Palau's role as a competitive Pacific multiplier will diminish. Operators may shift to other Micronesian entities (e.g., V6, KHO, T30) depending on future U.S. radar deployments.



FOR LOCAL HAMS

Palauan amateurs will face chronic interference, especially on 20–10 m. Night-time low-band operation may remain partially viable depending on radar duty cycles.

LIKELY IMPACT BY BAND

10m	Severe
15m	Severe
20m	High
40m	Moderate
80m	Low-Moderate

WHY THE U.S. IS BUILDING TACMOR IN PALAU



- TACMOR is intended to provide long-range detection of aircraft and maritime vessels.



- Data will feed into U.S. and allied command centres for real-time tracking and post-event analysis.



- The radar complements an earlier U.S. surveillance installation announced in 2017.

The strategic logic is simple: Palau sits in a critical geographic corridor between Guam, the Philippines, and the South China Sea. An OTHR placed there gives the U.S. a powerful early-warning and monitoring capability.

PHILIPPINES

GUAM

PALAU

TACMOR INSTALLATION IN PALAU

According to the EIS filed by the USAF, the TACMOR installation spans several sites.

NGARAARD STATE (BABELDAOB ISLAND)

PRIMARY SITE



All the HF emissions will originate here. This is effectively the "QRM Epicenter".



ANGAUR ISLAND

CALIBRATION & MONITORING SITE



Will house the calibration and monitoring equipment. Transmissions from this site will not be high power, but will assist in making the Ngaraard site more accurate.



ADDITIONAL SITES

AROUND PALAU



Several supporting sites are located around Palau to support operations and accuracy.



LEGAL CHALLENGES

Legal challenges from both Ngaraard State and Angaur State have been filed and are wanting the project stopped for various reasons ranging from land use to unpaid fees!



These challenges are marking a pattern of state-level pushback against defence infrastructure associated with the expanding U.S.-Palau security cooperation.

WHAT OTHER OTHR SYSTEMS ARE THERE CURRENTLY?

These are not TACMOR, but they are OTHR systems:



AUSTRALIA

JORN

(Jindalee Operational Radar Network)

Long-range HF radar covering northern approaches.



CHINA

Several OTHR systems

Believed to include skywave and surface-wave HF radars.



OTHR

Large HF radar system for western and eastern surveillance.



IRAN

Sepehr OTHR

Claimed long-range HF radar capability.



UNITED STATES

Relocatable Over-the-Horizon Radar (ROTHR)

Located in Wyoming, Texas, and previously in Puerto Rico.



WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?



IARU MONITORING SYSTEM

The IARU along with national with national member societies like the SARL are fighting for our spectrum. Reporting intruders won't stop TACMOR or other OTHRs but it does register our objections. If we do nothing, we go silently into the night.



KEEP REPORTING

Accepts intruder reports and has published reports for years. Monthly reports from 2017 are available on the IARU region 1 Website. These include many of the differences listed (e.g. Russian Container, Australian JORN, deep sea fishermen, etc.)



SOUTH AFRICA IARU MS COORDINATOR

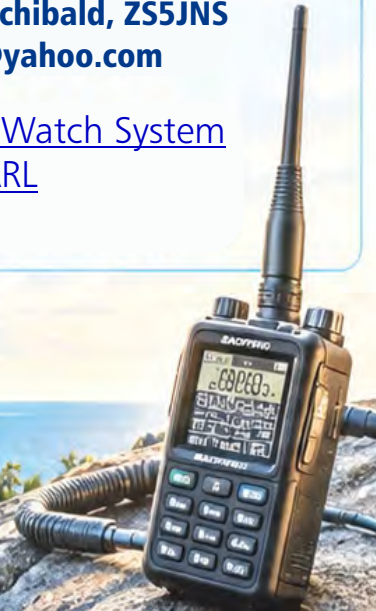
James (Jem) Archibald, ZS5JNS

E-mail: zs5ns@yahoo.com



[IARU Intruder Watch System \(IARUIWS\) SARL](#)

Our Spectrum → Our Hobby → Our Voice





THE FAMILY FREQUENCY



Because every great signal has a story behind it.

Behind every great QSO, there's often a family member who has heard "just one more contact" a hundred times, watched antennas appear where flowers used to grow, and learned that QTH, QSL and CQ are actually part of everyday household vocabulary!

This is the place for the stories, laughs and real-life adventures that happen beyond the shack — from proud moments and memorable events to the things only an XYL, partner or ham family can truly understand.

So grab your coffee, share your story and help us build a little survival guide for the rest of us!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Submit your stories



Share your funniest ham moments



Give us your survival tips for other XYLS



Tell us about an event you were proud to support your ham at

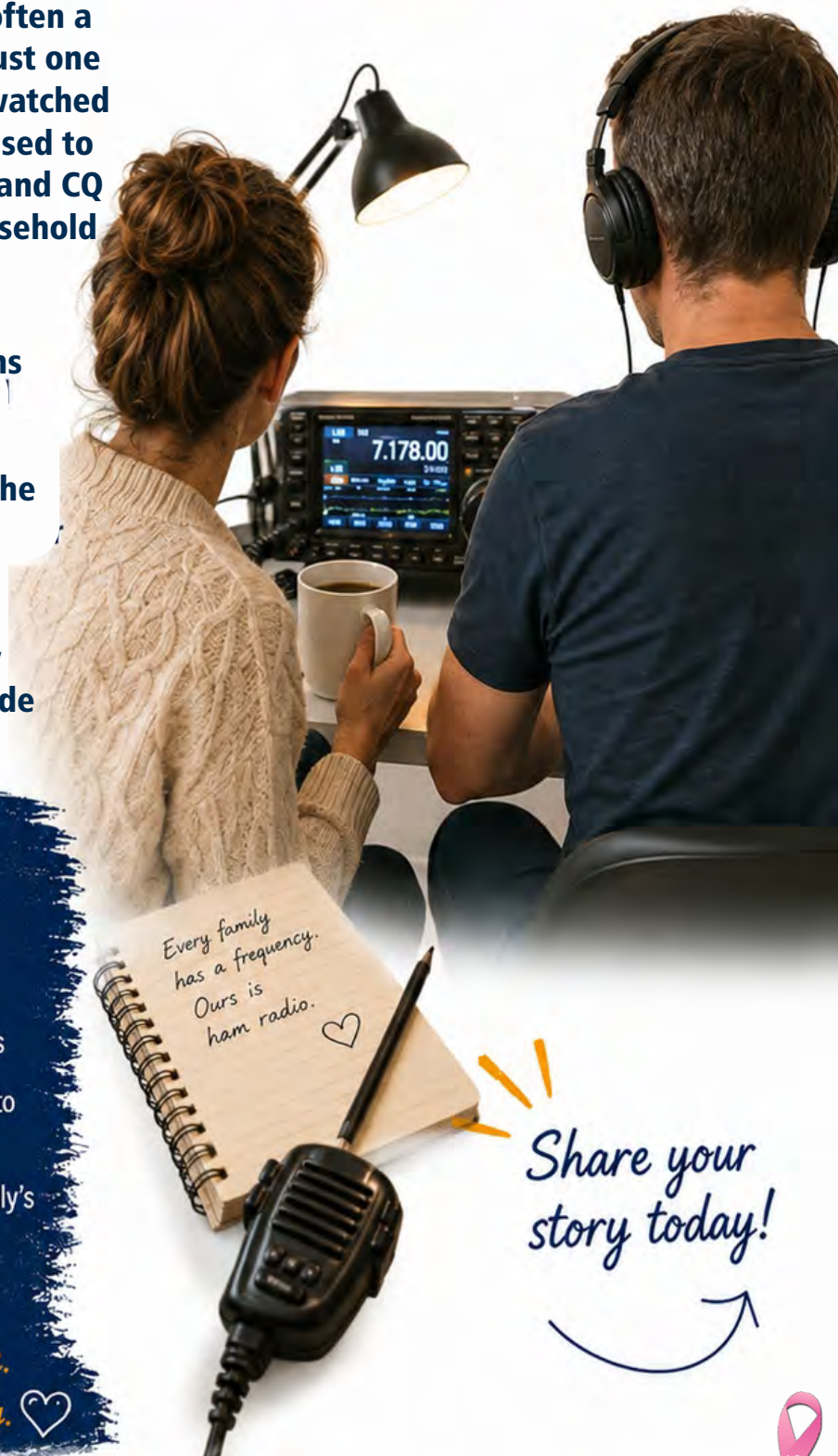


Share a special memory from your family's radio journey



Let the kids have their say too!

*Your stories. Your laughs. Your family.
That's what keeps our frequency strong.* 



*Share your
story today!*

Living With a Ham

The Family's Perspective



by Eugenie XYL of ZR2BK

When Kevern first got into amateur radio, I honestly didn't understand it. My first thought was, **"Why do you want to talk to someone on a radio when we have WhatsApp, cell phones, video calls and all this amazing technology?"**

But over time, I started to understand that amateur radio is about so much more than simply talking to people.

Living in St Francis Bay has certainly helped me appreciate the practical side of it. We have experienced situations where the normal communication systems aren't always reliable — fires, power outages and emergencies. When the power has been off for more than 24 hours, having radios suddenly becomes a lot more useful! During some of the fires we've experienced in St Francis Bay, Kevern was also one of the first people getting communications going.

So yes, I now fully understand why having a radio when there is no cellphone signal, no power or an emergency can be incredibly valuable.



But I think what really changed my view was seeing the people and the passion behind the hobby. My first radio event with Kevern was the Trans Baviaans. I met Glen and I got to see the other side of this hobby. On the Saturday afternoon, they set up a station, got everything going and started making contacts. What struck me was the amount of effort, preparation and excitement that went into setting everything up — all for the possibility of making a few contacts.

One thing I have come to appreciate is the friendships and connections Kevern has made through amateur radio. The people he has met and the friendships that have developed are something really special. It isn't just a hobby where you sit behind a radio and talk to strangers. There is a whole community behind it.



When there is a competition happening on a Sunday afternoon, and you have a very active 4 year old who wants to be wherever Daddy is, keeping her out of the "shack" and keeping things quite, can be quite a challenge!

And now, just when I thought I had accepted having one ham in the family...

Kaitlyn loves going into Daddy's shack and looking at the radios and wanting to talk! Maybe it's just because she thinks everything in there looks cool - but I know Kevern has other plans. He would love nothing more than for her to become the youngest ham! Watch this space in a couple of years!

I may moan about the time spent in the shack and the occasional "just one more contact", but I am proud to support him in something that has brought him so much joy, wonderful friendships and, importantly, the ability to be there when communication really matters.

I may not always understand the radio, the frequencies or why one contact is somehow more exciting than another... but I definitely understand the passion behind it.

And I suppose that's what being married to a ham is all about - learning to appreciate the hobby, supporting the passion, accepting that the shack will always be part of family life!



Kaitlyn admiring her Dad whilst he operates the radio!



And who knows... maybe one day I'll be the one sitting next to him in the shack, waiting for my turn on the radio. ♥



You know you are
married to a **HAM**

when the garden has more antennas
> than flowers! <



 **COLOUR IT. SEND IT.**  **SEE IT IN QSX!**

Ham Radio

Small signals...
make **BIG**
friendships! 

LISTEN

LEARN

EXPLORE

CONNECT

7.100.00

CQ...
CQ...
CQ...



Radio
brings people
together



 We can't wait to see your colourful creations! 



CALLSIGN SEARCH

Z	Q	Z	Z	S	2	A	L	N	S
S	S	Z	S	L	Z	K	Z	Z	Z
2	P	2	S	2	B	S	S	S	Z
P	I	O	V	2	G	D	2	2	S
E	S	U	R	R	G	V	U	Z	2
2	G	Z	S	2	M	I	C	U	B
C	2	Z	Z	S	2	P	T	Y	K
Z	S	2	A	A	W	Z	S	2	G
A	Z	Z	S	2	O	D	N	M	V
Z	S	2	T	W	Z	R	2	T	X



CALLSIGN SEARCH

ZS2EC
ZS2MIC
ZS2PE
ZR2BK
ZS2G

ZS2VR
ZS2BK
ZS2OD
ZS2AAW
ZS2U

ZS2GS
ZS2GV
ZS2PTY
ZS2ZU
ZS2ALN



TEST *your* HAM RADIO KNOWLEDGE!



How well do you know your way around the airwaves?

1 What does "QTH" mean?

- A) What is your location?
- B) What is your call sign?
- C) Are you receiving me?
- D) What frequency are you on?



2 Which band is commonly known as the 20-metre band?

- A) 7 MHz
- B) 14 MHz
- C) 21 MHz
- D) 28 MHz



3 What does "73" mean?

- A) Goodbye / best regards
- B) Roger that
- C) Emergency
- D) Stand by



4 What is a "DX" contact?

- A) A contact using digital modes
- B) A long-distance contact
- C) A contact on 10 metres
- D) A satellite contact



5 What does SWR measure?

- A) Signal strength
- B) Antenna efficiency
- C) Standing Wave Ratio
- D) Transmitter power



6 Which mode uses dots and dashes?

- A) SSB
- B) FM
- C) CW
- D) FT8



7 What does "QRM" refer to?

- A) Atmospheric noise
- B) Man-made interference
- C) Weak signals
- D) A strong DX station



8 What is the purpose of an antenna?

- A) To amplify the microphone
- B) To transmit and/or receive radio signals
- C) To regulate voltage
- D) To reduce SWR automatically



9 What does "CQ" generally mean?

- A) Stop transmitting
- B) Calling any station
- C) Emergency traffic
- D) Changing frequency



10 BONUS:

You hear: "ZS6ABC, this is ZS2XYZ, you are 5 and 9."

What does "5 and 9" refer to?

- A) Frequency and power
- B) Signal report
- C) Distance and direction
- D) Antenna height



YOUR ANSWERS

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____

6 _____
7 _____
8 _____
9 _____
10 (BONUS) _____



- ★ "I'm just going to check the bands for five minutes. Two hours later... "Where did the afternoon go?"
- ★ "The antenna is temporary." It has been temporary for seven years.
- ★ "I only need one more country for DXCC."...and then you discover there are 340 more reasons to keep going.
- ★ "I'll tidy up the shack after this QSO." The shack has heard that promise before.
- ★ "I don't need another antenna." — a sentence no true ham has ever successfully defended.





A TASTE OF WHAT IS TO COME.



In next month's edition we will take a deep dive into QO-100 - what it is, why it is such a big deal, and what you need to join the party.



**MORE
CLUB NEWS**



CONTESTS



DX NEWS



**TECHNICAL
ARTICLES**

*Stay
tuned!*

THANK YOU

And that brings us to the end of another edition of QSX!

We hope you've enjoyed the stories, ideas, experiences and a little bit of the humour that makes our amateur radio community so special.

Have something to share? We're always looking for new stories, interesting projects, memorable contacts, radio adventures, shack photos, technical tips and anything else that might be of interest to fellow amateurs. Send your articles and photos our way — your story could feature in the next edition of QSX!

Until then, keep experimenting, keep learning, keep making those contacts, and most importantly, keep enjoying the wonderful world of amateur radio.

Until November...
≡73 and happy DXing!≡

