



School Radio Club

Purpose:

The purpose of the School Radio Club is to provide an opportunity for interested students to explore and experience the fascinating world of **amateur radio communications**. It also provides a safe, friendly and informative dialog between primary school children living in urban and regional areas of Australia. The key learning outcomes are a basic understanding of radio technology, radio operating techniques, a historical perspective and conversational skills.

Background:

Amateur radio, unlike mobile broadband and Internet services, does not rely on any established network infrastructure. It is often the first line of communications available in natural disaster situations. There are many fascinating forms of amateur radio communications including microwaves, shortwaves, repeaters, satellites, balloons, telegraphy, telephony, teletype, television and computers: World-wide, shortwave radio communications is an ethereal process powered by the sun and the earth's ionosphere. The science, skill and art of using shortwave radio makes amateur radio communications even more extraordinary. Shortwave radio also provides a historical insight into the role of outback radio in the settlement of Australia, notably: The "Royal Flying Doctor Service" and the "School of the Air".

Modern amateur radio is a community-aware, technology-based and rewarding hobby. It has become an outdoor sport of sorts for many enthusiasts engaged in portable radio operation from mountain summits, national parks, museums, lighthouses, remote islands and many more. Amateur radio clubs actively support local community activities and provide free communications for public events. Recently, there has been a resurgence in amateur radio participation due to simplified licencing conditions, availability of low-cost equipment and no minimum age requirement. This has provided a new opportunity for primary school students, as young as nine years old, who have successfully obtained their own amateur radio foundation licence. Unlike "Citizens Band", all amateur radio operators are licenced and must use proper operating procedures and call signs. Amateur radio communications is regulated by the Australian Media and Communications Authority providing an open, safe and friendly environment for children.

Format:

A small, safe, portable amateur radio station has been set up in the school library. It transmits less power than a light bulb (10W). It uses a simple wire antenna suspended from the library building, across the playground, about 8 metres high. The antenna is safe and is professionally installed. Other school radio club resources include posters, booklets, maps, kits, videos, mobile apps, games, Morse code practice sets, badges and certificates.

Operation:

The school radio club operates each week on library day. It is open to selected students during lunch time as well as to parents before and after school. Every few months a different group of 6 interested students from years 2 through 6 can participate in supervised club activities. Each week there will be learning, practice and on-the-air sessions. Graduates of the radio club program can demonstrate their skills at school events. Students need written permission to talk on-the-air and to be photographed using the equipment. Photographs may be published in Amateur Radio magazine and on web sites to promote the club and encourage participation from other primary school libraries. The amateur radio station is operated by the school's library technician, Julie Gonzales, who is licenced by the ACMA.

