



# WICEN NSW Newsletter



## October 2022

### New 40m HF Net

The inaugural WICEN NSW HF Net was conducted on 40m last Sunday evening, 16<sup>th</sup> September.

The first net was reasonably well attended with 11 stations calling in. There were a number from the Sydney region as well as stations from Canberra, Yass, Shellharbour and the Central Coast.

There were also some receive only stations from Northern Rivers, Oberon and Sydney.

Most stations heard all the other stations on the net.

The net is held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month at 6:30pm on 7110 kHz.



*Mal, VK2YVA, Net Control*

### WICEN NSW Activation

On Saturday morning, 8th October 2022 Steve Diekman was contacted by the VRA Rescue NSW Commissioner to respond to a search and rescue operation at Byrrell Creek in the Murwillimbah area. WICEN NSW was tasked with deploying a team of specialist communications operators with repeater and handhelds to join a four day multi-agency search for a missing person in remote and rugged terrain.



From the time of receiving the warning order to activate on Saturday morning, a team and equipment was committed within 2 hours and stood ready to deploy. Deployment orders were given on Saturday afternoon with instructions to depart on Sunday morning due to operational weather and road conditions.

Three operators deployed from Sydney with the VRA Rescue Forward Communications Vehicle (VRA62) and specialist equipment, and were joined by a further two operators from the Port Macquarie area, with additional liaison officers on duty in Sydney. Fortunately, the missing person was found by the multi-agency search with only minor injuries after the WICEN team's arrival on Sunday afternoon. The WICEN team was immediately stood down and began the long journey back home.

While ultimately, WICEN's operators were not needed, this operation demonstrated WICEN's core capabilities of being able to activate and deploy a specialist communications team and equipment to a remote area of NSW at short notice, drawing on its most valuable asset, a dedicated state-wide membership of highly skilled and trained radio operators.

## VRA Rescue NSW AGM

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October saw VRA Rescue NSW hold its AGM in Dubbo which was attended by Steve our Secretary.

The new Search Dogs Specialist Squad was launched

WICEN NSW was praised for its prompt response to the request for communications support for the

search at Byrrell Creek on the far north coast of the state.

Our Secretary, Steve, also used the opportunity to network with other VRA attendees and the VRA Executives to discuss a range of topics including new uniform items, training and ongoing support of VRA, other ESO's and the Community. Steve tells us it was a very productive weekend.

## VRA Rescue NSW Search Dogs

On Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the Hon. Dugald Saunders, Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales, representing Hon. Steph Cooke, Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, launched a new volunteer-based search and rescue dog capability, the VRA Rescue NSW Search Dogs.

VRA Rescue NSW Commissioner, Mark Gibson said,

“Our volunteers regularly undertake searches for vulnerable people, such as small children or those with dementia, autism, or threatening self-harm. In these situations, the missing person may intentionally, or unintentionally hide from the search teams. This is where search dogs make all the difference, using their incredible sense of smell to quickly locate them.

We are very fortunate to have experienced people in the team who have trained search and rescue dogs in other countries. They have worked tirelessly for several years, training their dogs and building relationships with the emergency services to establish this capability.”

WICEN NSW was involved in some initial training with the Search Dogs squad, along with Steve Diekman as part of the VRA ICT team setting up radios for the teams. WICEN NSW will also be providing ongoing communications support.



For more information on VRA Rescue NSW Search Dogs visit [sardogs@vrarescue.org](mailto:sardogs@vrarescue.org)

## Government House Services Reception

On Friday evening, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022 three WICEN NSW members attended a reception at Government House on behalf of VRA Rescue NSW. There were a number of New South Wales Services including, Rural Fire Service, Fire & Rescue NSW, NSW SES, St Johns Ambulance, Corrective Services, Army, Navy and Air Force.

The reception was hosted by Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales.

The Governor gave a short address where she thanked all of the many volunteers and services staff who gave considerable time during the recent drought, fires, floods and the pandemic that had such a great impact on many people in New South Wales.



*WICEN Members attending were Neil Fallshaw, Malcolm Alexander and Simon Brown who was accompanied by his wife Jenn Davis.*

## Hawkesbury Classic Paddle - CANCELLED

As a result of ongoing safety concerns for paddlers, land crews and volunteers, a decision has been taken to CANCEL this year's Classic.

The Hawkesbury Canoe Classic Association has taken this decision in consultation with our safety network partners, including NSW State Emergency Service, Marine Rescue NSW, WICEN NSW together with our First Aid and Physio team.

This decision revolves around the condition of the Hawkesbury River itself as a result of flooding, together with the damage caused to the infrastructure at the land-based safety checkpoints along the river.

Last week's flood, a lesser event than the March and July floods, was the fourth flood in the region this year.

The event is planned to return next year.

If anyone would like an item published in the Newsletter please email [wicen.media@vrarescue.org](mailto:wicen.media@vrarescue.org).