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## News

### RFDS committed to HF radio

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The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (RFDS) maintains its commitment to High Frequency (HF) radio monitoring and that service will continue despite public infrastructure and technology changes in two states as part of the Service's on-going commitment to emergency communications throughout Australia.

"Despite technology alternatives, the HF radio network remains an important back-up communication system in rural and remote areas, and the RFDS is committed to its monitoring and use in case of emergencies in all outback regions of Australia – 24 hours a day, seven days week, across all States," says Robert Williams, Acting RFDS National Chief Executive.

"People can continue to make contact with the RFDS in case of an emergency via the HF radio network either directly on RFDS frequencies, or using Selcall numbers on the VKS-737 radio network," he said.

"Landholders, workers and tourists to the outback should always plan and re-check the appropriate HF frequency and system for their nearest RFDS Base as part of their safety and emergency plans as there are subtle differences from state to state."

Respective HF radio frequencies and Selcall numbers for RFDS Bases are available here and summarised below:

- New South Wales – no change to 24/7 voice and alarm monitoring via RFDS Broken Hill Base on Call Sign VJC on frequencies 4055 (primary), 2020 and 6920. Emergency Call Button facility remains unchanged.
- South Australia – no change to 24/7 voice and alarm monitoring via RFDS Port Augusta Base on Call Sign VNZ on frequencies 4010 (primary), 6890, 8165 and 2020. Emergency Call Button facility remains unchanged.
- Northern Territory (south of Tennant Creek) – no change to 24/7 voice and alarm monitoring via RFDS Port Augusta Base on Call Sign VNZ on frequencies 4010 (primary), 6890, 8165 and 2020. Emergency Call Button



facility remains unchanged.

- Western Australia – state-wide switch to Selcall monitoring on 24/7 basis to RFDS HF Bases at Derby, Port Hedland, Carnarvon, Meekatharra and Kalgoorlie via RFDS frequencies or the VKS-737 radio network channels. Emergency Call Button facility is no longer available.
- Queensland – statewide switch to Selcall monitoring on 24/7 basis to RFDS HF Bases at Charleville, Mt Isa and Cairns via RFDS frequencies or the VKS-737 radio network channels. Emergency Call Button facility is no longer available.

The switch to Selcall voice monitoring in Western Australia and Queensland in October 2010 followed the decision by Telstra to terminate the voice grade dedicated lines (VGDL) that have previously supported the HF radio network. The RFDS sections in these states did not believe they could meet the capital costs required to facilitate internal monitoring.

In these two states, the RFDS has established a formal agreement with VKS-737 to provide HF equipment and telephone interconnects for any emergency messages broadcast over the HF radio network to the RFDS.

HF users who do not have Selcall technology on their handsets can broadcast their emergency on VKS-737 channels, or alternatively they can fit their HF transceiver with RFDS frequencies.

Anyone who requires advice in relation to the changes to the HF network is urged to contact VKS-737 Administration Manager Steve Johnston OAM on (08) 8287 6222.

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# VKS-737 & HF-Tel

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## How to contact the RFDS via HF Radio in the case of an emergency.

To contact the Royal Flying Doctor Service in an **emergency** by HF radio you will need a HF transceiver fitted with either VKS-737 frequencies or RFDS frequencies for the area of operations (i.e. Cairns, Derby etc.).

**An Emergency Call is when you may need medical assistance from an RFDS Doctor.**

### Important Notes:

- This service is available to all HF users (not just VKS-737 subscribers) in cases of genuine emergencies as defined in Section 49(1) of the Radiocommunications Act No. 174 of 1992.
- The RFDS Emergency Call Facility is no longer available at Carnarvon, Derby, Meekatharra and Port Hedland in Western Australia and Cairns in Queensland. Calls to these bases (using Selcall) are now via VKS-737 Base Stations through a partnership between the VKS-737 Radio Network and RFDS Western Operations and RFDS Queensland Section.
- The RFDS Emergency Call Facility will cease at Charleville and Mount Isa at the end of December 2010 and will be replaced by VKS-737 Selcall facilities as above.
- The RFDS radio base at Kalgoorlie ceased operation from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010.
- Calls to the RFDS can be made via ANY VKS-737 Base Station using VKS-737 frequencies or the relevant RFDS frequencies where VKS-737 Base Stations are located at RFDS sites – refer to Page 2 for details
- The first two selcall digits indicate the VKS-737 base station i.e. 92 – Derby, 68 – Newcastle etc. The last two selcall digits indicate the RFDS base i.e. 11 – Jandakot, 16 – Cairns etc.
- Calls can be made on RFDS frequencies to the RFDS bases at Broken Hill and Port Augusta using the RFDS Emergency Call Facility. Refer to the RFDS website for a list of Broken Hill and Port Augusta frequencies.

### How to Contact the RFDS via HF Radio using Selcall

1. Select the most suitable frequency for the base you are trying to contact (dependant upon distance & time of day). A list of frequencies appears on Page 2.
2. If using a tapped whip antenna ensure that the antenna tap matches the frequency selected on the radio. If using an automatic tuning antenna, press the “tune” button on the radio before proceeding.
3. Send a Selcall to the **Beacon Test** of the relevant base as listed on Page 2.
4. If you receive a poor Beacon Revertive (musical tones), or no revertive, try another frequency or another base.
5. If you receive a good Beacon Revertive send a Selcall to the number listed on Page 2 for the RFDS base you wish to contact.
6. If your selcall is successful you will hear 6 short beeps, telephone dial tone, and then the ringing tone of the base being called.
7. An Operator will respond and ask you your callsign and the nature of your emergency.

### How to Contact the RFDS via HF Radio Emergency Call Button Facility – Broken Hill and Port Augusta Only

1. Select the most suitable frequency for the base you are trying to contact (dependant upon distance & time of day). If using a tapped whip antenna ensure that the antenna tap matches the frequency selected on the radio. If using an automatic tuning antenna, press the “tune” button on the radio before pressing the emergency call button.
2. Press the **“Emergency Call”** button on your radio for a minimum of 20 seconds. Newer model radios have a timer that allows you to press the button for a few seconds and then let go and the timer will activate for a period of time.
3. Within 2 minutes of pressing the alarm, the base will respond with a tone for 10 seconds
4. If you do not receive a reply try again, if this is also unsuccessful then try another frequency, alternatively try contacting another base.
5. Once you get a response there is no need for further activation of the Emergency Call Button.
6. An Operator will respond and ask you your callsign and the nature of your emergency.

## Emergency HF radio contact to RFDS using Selcall via VKS-737 Bases

<b>VKS-737 Base Station through which call is to be made.</b>	<b>Beacon Test</b>	<b>To Call RFDS Cairns</b>	<b>To Call RFDS Charleville</b>	<b>To Call RFDS Mt Isa</b>	<b>To Call RFDS Jandakot (All WA)</b>	<b>To Call RFDS Broken Hill<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>To Call RFDS Port<sup>2</sup> Augusta</b>
Calls can be made on ALL VKS-737 frequencies plus the RFDS frequencies listed for the individual bases below							
<b>Adelaide 1</b> VKS-737 only	0699	0614	0615	0616	0611	0612	0617
<b>Adelaide 2</b> VKS-737 only	9699	9614	9615	9616	9611	9612	9617
<b>Alice Springs 1</b> VKS-737 only	0899	0814	0815	0816	0811	0812	0817
<b>Alice Springs 2</b> VKS-737 only	9799	9714	9715	9716	9711	9712	9717
<b>Cairns 1<sup>1</sup></b> VKS-737, 2020, 2260, 5145 & 7465kHz	7799	7714	7715	7716	7711	7712	7717
<b>Cairns 2</b> VKS-737 only	8699	8614	8615	8616	8611	8612	8617
<b>Carnarvon<sup>1</sup></b> VKS-737, 2280, 2656, 4045, 5360 & 6890kHz	7499	7414	7415	7416	7411	7412	7417
<b>Charleville<sup>1</sup></b> VKS-737, 2020, 4980 & 6845kHz	8199	8114	8115	8116	8111	8112	8117
<b>Charters Towers 1</b> VKS-737 only	8099	8014	8015	8016	8011	8012	8017
<b>Charters Towers 2</b> VKS-737 only	9599	9514	9515	9516	9511	9512	9517
<b>Darwin</b> VKS-737 only	9499	9414	9415	9416	9411	9412	9417
<b>Derby<sup>1</sup></b> VKS-737, 2792, 5300 & 6945kHz	9299	9214	9215	9216	9211	9212	9217
<b>Meekatharra<sup>1</sup></b> VKS-737, 2280, 4010, 5360, 6825 & 6880kHz	7599	7514	7515	7516	7511	7512	7517
<b>Mount Isa<sup>1</sup></b> VKS-737, 2020, 5110 & 6965kHz	8299	8214	8215	8216	8211	8212	8217
<b>Newcastle</b> VKS-737 only	6899	6814	6815	6816	6811	6812	6817
<b>Perth</b> VKS-737 only	0599	0514	0515	0516	0511	0512	0517
<b>Port Hedland<sup>1</sup></b> VKS-737, 2280, 4030, 5300 & 6960kHz	7899	7814	7815	7816	7811	7812	7817
<b>St Marys</b> VKS-737 only	0799	0714	0715	0716	0711	0712	0717
<b>Swan Hill</b> VKS-737 only	8999	8914	8915	8916	8911	8912	8917

### Notes:

Date of issue 07/12/10

1. VKS-737 base station located at RFDS Base
2. Port Augusta handles emergencies for South Australia and the Northern Territory south of Tennant Creek. Calls to Port Augusta are dealt with as normal incoming telephone calls for assistance.
3. Broken Hill handles emergencies for New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania. Calls to Broken Hill are dealt with as normal incoming telephone calls for assistance.
4. VKS-737 Bases shown in grey to be commissioned shortly – please regularly check this page for updates.