Is your VHF marine radio set up to access coastal repeaters?

Given that both Victoria and Tasmania now have a series of marine VHF radio repeater channels established along their coastlines it is now a good time to ensure your VHF marine radio is correctly setup for use of these channels.

Australia adheres to the International marine frequency allocations. However there are also USA/Canadians standards with some important differences between the two. VHF radios can be configured to operate to any of the three standards.

As far as sailing/boating in Australian Coastal waters is concerned the important differences are that the International standard has Channels 21, 22, 80, 81, 82 as repeater channels whereas in the US/Can they are simplex (non-repeater) channels.

It is therefore important that your radio is set to the International standard. Your VHF radio instruction manual provides instructions on how to do this. Many radios now indicate **Int** on their screen display.

A number of yachties purchase radios directly from the US. These radios have the US standard as the default and need to be changed to the International standard.

When set to the US/Can standard you will access the repeater channel when you transmit but you will not hear the output of the repeater. However, you may hear other nearby boats when transmitting on the repeater channel but will not be able to communicate with them.

Listening to the radio traffic when in southern Tasmania during the 2007 Melbourne to Hobart race it was obvious that some yachts were unable to receive the Ch 81 repeater on entry into the Derwent yet were able to communicate on other VHF marine channels. It would appear that these yachts were not set to the International standard.

Complete a radio check on a repeater channel to ensure you radio is correctly set up. Given there can be many nautical miles between you and the repeater it also confirms your boat radio system is operating effectively. Eg: for yachts in Port Phillip Bay check Ch 82 at Arthurs Seat.

The inability to correctly access these repeater channels causes communications confusion and increases the risk to safety, negating very reason these channels have been installed.

Rik Head
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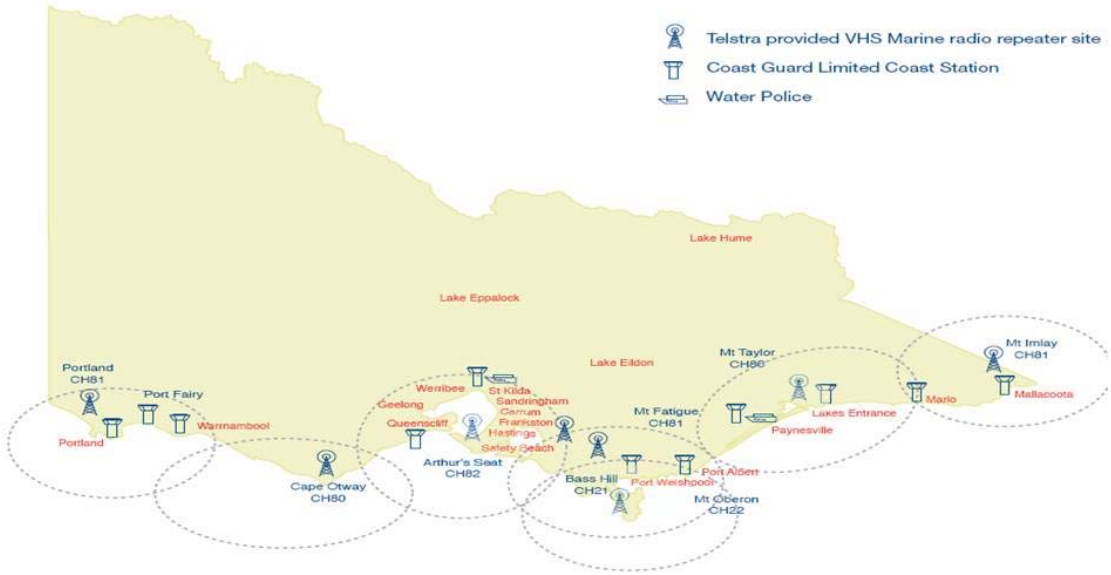
Telstra provided VHS Marine radio repeater site
Coast Guard Limited Coast Station
Water Police
Lake Hume
Lake Eppalock
Lake Eildon
Portland CH81
Port Fairy
Warrnambool
Portland
Cape Otway CH80
Werribee
St Kilda
Sandringham
Carrum
Frankston
Geelong
Queenscliff
Hastings
Safety Beach
Arthur's Seat CH82
Mt Fatigue CH81
Bass Hill CH21
Port Albert
Port Welshpool
Mt Oberon CH22
Mt Taylor CH80
Lakes Entrance
Paynesville
Mario
Mallacoota
Mt Imlay CH81


TASMANIA
KING ISLAND
Currie
FLINDERS ISLAND
Whitemark
0 50
kilometres
BASS STRAIT
CH 21
Three Hummock
CH 81
Bluff Hill Point
CH 80
Dazzler Range
CH 82
Mt Horror
CH 80
Cape Sorell
CH 80
Cape Toureville
CH 82
Maatsuyker Island
CH 81
Mt Raoul
Smithton
Stanley
Marrawah
Wynyard
BURNIE
DEVONPORT
George Town
Bridport
Gladstone
Scottsdale
Beauty Pt
Latrobe
Lilydale
St Helens
Railton
Sheffield
Deloraine
Westbury
LAUNCESTON
Perth
Longford
Evandale
St Marys
Cressy
Fingal
Avoca
Campbell Town
Bicheno
Coles Bay
Swansea
Waratah
Savage River
Cradle Valley
Rosebery
Zeehan
Queenstown
Strahan
Waddamana
Tarraleah
Bothwell
Cutlands
Ouse
Hamilton
Kempton
Bagdad
Triabunna
Orford
Maydena
Bridgewater
Strathgordon
New Norfolk
HOBART
Sorell
Dunalley
Eaglehawk Neck
Port Arthur
Marcate
Huonville
South Arm
Geeveston
Dover
Scotts Peak
Melaleuca
SOUTHERN OCEAN
TASMAN SEA
144°E
145°E
146°E
147°E
148°E
40°S
41°S
42°S
43°S
TASMAP