

SARC Education Update 3rd February 2019

ACMA announced on Friday that the Australian Maritime College (AMC) was awarded the tender to provide various services to ACMA including amateur radio examinations, issue amateur certificates of proficiency and related call sign management. From midnight Friday 1st February WIA exams as conducted by WIA assessors will not be approved examinations for the purpose of amateur qualifications. The ACMA expects AMC to progressively deliver services from 25th February 2019.

The immediate impact is that **SARC examinations is out of business.**
The good news is that **SARC education continues on.**

At the moment the world of Australian Amateur Radio is awash with speculation and snippets of information. Hence the date forming the above heading. New information is appearing every few hours.

SARC Education officer Duncan VK2DLR believes that there is action taking place in the background that will allow radio clubs and former WIA assessors the opportunity to become part of the new structure.

The immediate downside is the suspension of all exam activity until the new system is operational. Consequently all SARC courses will be suspended until exams become available. There's no sense in running courses and priming candidates for exams just to have their focus dulled while waiting for the new system to provide an exam.

The scant information available makes it reasonable to assume that AMC will run amateur radio examinations similarly to the way they run marine radio examinations. The assumption is that AMC will run an exam service similar to the WIA system. Also, similar to the WIA system they won't care how a candidate prepares for an exam. The means that candidates can still come to a non-accredited body like SARC, attend a course and sit an external exam as before. The cost, location and timing of exams is unknown at this stage. There are suggestions that the new exam system will be streamlined and Internet orientated. The WIA had similar visions and a move into the 21st century will be refreshing regardless of who implements it.

Exactly how the exams will be conducted is unknown at this stage. The multiple choice questions will still be based on the syllabus and will undoubtedly change over time to reflect the expertise of AMC in setting exams. The ACMA had previously indicated that they intended to review the syllabus but that's a separate issue and was not part of the tender process. Revision of the Syllabus is an ideal opportunity to match learning and licence levels with new privileges. Interesting possibilities.

Nothing is certain but the future looks promising. SARC courses are very likely to resume in later this year. There's also the possibility that alliance with AMC could lead to non amateur radio related courses and a broader community profile. Interesting times ahead.

Duncan VK2DLR
SARC Education Officer