

CHANNEL CHATTER

Published each April - August - December

The HF Radio Communications Network for ...
Remote Area Travelling by Land or Sea



VMD 750



Radio Network



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MERRY CHRISTMAS

News & Information For Austravel Members

December 2023 EDITION



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Austravel SafetyNet Inc. Committee

Kim Rhodes	President	7880
Brad Kark	Vice President	2261
Rick Shea	Secretary	3097
Ken Fischer	Treasurer	9618
Russell Ashdown	Committee 1	4333
Neil Burton	Committee 2	1386
Ray Archibald	Committee 3	1923

Committee Support Roles

Channel Chatter Editor	John Hall	6014	Social Media	Pim Cahill	7255
Sked Coordinator (east)	Ken Fischer	9618	IT Support	Andrew Griffin	4053
Sked Coordinator (west)	Roy Watkins	6001	IT Support	Peter Schrader	2513

PRESIDENTS REPORT

I want to thank our new committee members for very productive meetings since the last AGM. I think a comment was made there is a lot to learn about in the background and operation of Austravel and there is, but they will rise to the challenge I am sure. I am finishing my term as president next AGM and it will be time for someone else to take the reigns of the club and steer it forward, perhaps in a slightly different direction. I have been predominately focused on the technical side of Austravel, getting bases in place and refining software with Scott at TakeThis, prior to the hand over of software to Austravel. This is mostly done now. My thoughts are perhaps for someone can strengthen the social aspect of the club. Austravel is a strong club with around 600 selcall members but as many are couples in people this represents around a 1000. We have many common interests of travel, camping 4x4 exploring etc, so more social networking activities maybe a good direction. If you feel this maybe your forte, please think seriously about putting your hand up. You may have completely different ideas for the club and don't need to be technical. I have been supported by a team of people as volunteers for base installations and a management committee supporting all other aspects of the running of the club. So consider your skill set, bring it to the table and consider being on committee or president as the time comes around. I will drop back to a technical supporting role and will still be around with others to help keep things running as best I can.

We will also see some new technologies for remote area communication come to the market in the next few years. These will have some benefits to us travellers but they will come with a cost and limitations. As a club we can help identify these issues to members and potential new members but all in all I believe HF radio will stay in favour for most of us. Marketing of Austravel is still going to be very important.

We have a works program as part of the future proofing of the club. The changing of old equipment for new before it fails by implementing the latest telephone ATA units which connect our bases to the phone network, new modems and computers. We have some preliminary works in motion at the moment for the construction of Busso base. This makes provision for the moving of Perth base when needed as property tenure changes.

As much as a new president does not need to be technical, we have considerable technical achievement in Austravel. Our Australia wide network is far more complex than most commercial HF installations. We have HF radios of course, antennas, batteries, solar, 3CX Voip telephone network, Linux computers, java software, PHP software, data bases on servers, java ios and Android phone apps and remote SDR receivers. Our internet structure is predominantly on Telstra using 4g Modems to the mobile phone network as bases are generally remote and all equipment needs to be 12 volt battery backed or solar. All of the above needs some input from time to time either at a maintenance level or up-grade to stay in favour with the latest operating systems on mobile devices. To this I invite members with technical skills and an interest to be involved. You are welcome to become technical support and have involvement at a level that continues to inspire your brain after retirement, or before. A committee position or ex-officio where you have close contact with committee.

So if you want to keep your technical brain ticking we have a lot you can be involved with.

On another note Telstra are considering closing its 3g mobile phone network June next year. This will not affect Austravel operation at all. However I have seen another HF network web site where they suggest they will not up-grade equipment to cater for this closure. This will disconnect their bases from making incoming or outgoing calls whether direct dial or quick dial selcall numbers. If you have friends on another HF network you may like to mention this for them to investigate and perhaps it could be time for them to move to Austravel.

I am here for a while yet so you will be hearing from me again.

Kim Rhodes (7880)

President

Austravel SafetyNet Inc.



MY STORY ABOUT ROY'S LIFE MEMBERSHIP.

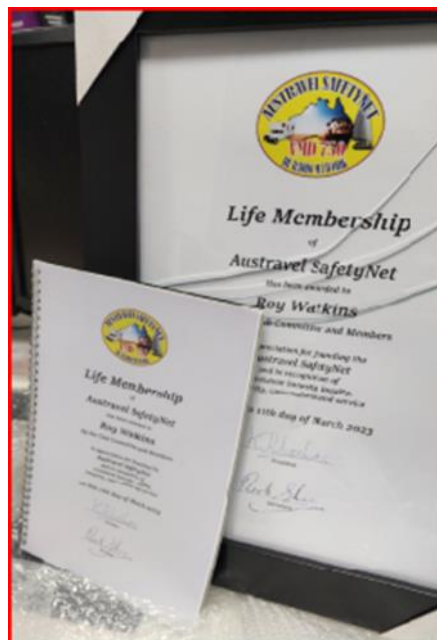
BY COLIN INGHAM (6355)

In early February Ken Fischer emailed me to see if I would support a submission to the Austravel Committee requesting a Life Membership for Roy Watkins. I was more than happy to! So I called around the members here in WA to get more support for Ken's cause, and by the end of March Ken had emailed Roy's Life Member Certificate with the view of looking at how we might do the presentation.



Unfortunately, at the time Roy was in Hospital for what turned out to be one of many visits he was to have over those few months. It was getting desperate as Roy's prognosis was not that great with a rapidly failing heart valve, at one point we were looking at doing a hospital bed presentation but there never seemed to be a suitable time where we could get enough people to make a presentation as we wanted the event very special for Roy, so it was decided to leave it and hope that he recovers.

In the meantime, Ken decided that rather than me running around finding a frame and having it all printed, he would get it all done over there and put it in the post. I was very excited to unwrap it all to see how well it all turned out, well, it was just another bump in the road that should have been a smooth as tarmac, the glass in the frame had taken a heavy impact, (surprise surprise, Australia Post!) so off to OfficeWorks to find a replacement frame.



By now, we are leading into May and with Roy being in and out of hospital several times since the beginning of the year, he was finally on the mend with a new heart valve and a new lease on life, so we thought we could finally look at a time to do a surprise presentation at his home in Chittering. Just as we were getting close to a presentation, Roy called me to say that Jane's health has deteriorated to the point that she was placed into palliative care. This completely shattered Roy, after 52 years of marriage and nearly 30 years of caring for Jane, his life was about to change forever. These were very tough times for Roy, between Jane's last days and the pursuing funeral he was in a very sad depressed state and as such he needed the support of his friends to get him through the next couple of months. The days, weeks and even a couple of months went by with Ross Roberts (1954) checking on him all the time, making sure he was eating ok, driving him around and out for dinner once a week or so, Roy's new life was getting a new routine.

We again were at a point where we thought it was an appropriate time to look at making the presentation, again probably at his home in Chidlow, then I get a call from Ross (1954), Roy has had a nasty fall at the local IGA, well Roy being Roy, he was fine and didn't want to be taken away in an ambulance, Ross convinced him to go for a ride just to get checked out and he would follow and give him a lift home after the doctor gives the OK. Well, this is Roy being ok, they released after 10 hours with a suspect eye socket fracture, multiple shoulder fractures and 3 broken ribs, he was not going anywhere soon...

By now the Austravel AGM was only about 6 weeks away, it was going to be a good couple of weeks before Roy was well enough to travel, so I contacted Ken, and it was decided that we would "Live Telecast" the presentation via Zoom at the up-and-coming AGM at Narrogin on the 9th of Sept.

So that was the plan, all we had to do is to get Roy there, easy enough, you would think, as time went by Roy was on the mend but still looking like he had been 10 rounds with Mike Tyson, black and blue all over and initially wasn't that keen to go to the AGM as he still wasn't in a good place both mentally and physically. I finally convinced him that it would be good for him, and that Di and I would pick him up and take him down and we would book into an AirBNB house. All great, a week out from the AGM, Roy was having second thoughts and looking at getting some scan done that would clash with the AGM, much cajoling was required to get him on side to do the trip, although I was not going to be convinced until we had him in the car.



The funny thing was that on our drive to Narrogin, Roy was sitting in the back of the cruiser right alongside a large, padded bag which contained his Framed Certificate and Life Membership documents all the time with no idea on what was coming the next day.

The next day things progressed as it would normally for an AGM day, and I'm not sure when it might have been when Roy smelled something was up, it may have been when a motion put forward to amend the by-laws to include Life Memberships. It was just before I seconded the motion that I had been to the car and retrieved the large padded bag and just after the motion was passed, Kim Rhodes (7880) asked Roy to come forward and between Kim and myself we presented him with his Life Membership, Roy was completely taken by surprise and overwhelmed, as part of his acceptance speech Roy gave us all a brief history of how the Austravel Safety Net Group started out.



Many photos were taken of Roy and his new honour as well as Hazel who had the honour bestowed on her earlier in the year.



Roy Watkins

6001





Secretary/Membership/Travel Report

This has been a busy year for the club and me personally, I signed up 85 new members for the year which takes our total to more than 600 members.

Hazel and I left Rockhampton near the end of May for a get together at Blackbutt in Qld, the highlight for us was Hazel being presented with her life membership certificate. We continued South through Broken Hill and on to Penong in SA where we caught up with friends, we had made the year before when we installed Penong Base.

Continuing West we crossed the Nullarbor to Norseman and then North through the centre to Port Hedland, and then South down the coast through Perth, and eventually Albany and Esperance. Another highlight of the trip was attending the AGM at Narrogin Speedway where Roy was presented with Life membership of the club he founded.

A special mention must go to John and Jodie for their effort in preparing the venue and Jodie for the afternoon tea she prepared, the presentation was nothing short of magnificent, we also won a raffle prize prepared by Jodie and the wine bottle still sparkles even though the wine has gone and the glass flashes when you put rum or whiskey in them well done Jodie.

We also spent time at Kim's properties at Yarloop and Busselton, thanks Kim, whilst at Yarloop we had dinner with Colin and Diane looking out over the valley fantastic. Whilst in Albany taking in the local sites we stayed with Paul and Lea, thank you both.

There has been a suggestion that we host next years AGM in Penong, the members that where there for the base installation enjoyed it so much they would like to go back, more of that in the future.

Finally the camaraderie and hospitality we encountered in the West was exceptional, thank you.





From the Treasurer

Membership Fees: Thanks to all members who have paid their fees for included the four-digit selcall number as your payment reference. Your selcall number is your identifier not only in your programmed radio but also in the club database.

After paying your membership dues, you should receive your Authority to Transmit (ATT) for the membership period 1 December 2023 until 28 February 2025. If you do not receive your ATT after payment, please contact me so the issue can be addressed as soon as possible.

This membership period of 15 months is a one-off payment period to enable the transition of membership payments to the post-Christmas period. The purpose of the change is to enable future volunteer treasurers to be in the role for several months and become conversant with membership payments and the accounting package prior to the busy period of membership dues.

Membership fees for the 15-month period are as follows: -

1. Full Member \$100 for 12 months + \$25 for 3 months = \$125
2. Household member \$35 for 12 months + \$8.75 for 3 months = \$43.75
3. Household member with Telcall+ \$65 for 12 months + \$16.25 for 3 months = \$81.25
4. Basic Member \$70 for 12 months plus \$17.50 for 3 months = \$87.50
5. Social Member \$30 for 12 months + \$7.50 for 3 months = \$37.50

Thanks for your commitment to Austravel. Your membership payment is greatly appreciated.

Regards Ken Fischer 9618. treasurer@austravelsafetynet.org.au

From the Sked Operators' Desk

September was a busy month for sked operators as members travelled to their chosen AGM destinations.

With 111 travelling members calling into skeds, 43 in the East and 68 in the West and a total of 144 members calling into skeds, the operators were kept busy.

In recent months, new operators have been welcomed to the sked operator desk. Thank you 0322 Grant Stowell, 1923 Ray Archibald and 1970 Jim Atchison for joining the team. The giving of your time and commitment to being the voice behind the microphone at sked times is immensely appreciated.

The warmer months are approaching and this generally results in a reduced number of members travelling. The sked operators however, will always be listening for calls. If you have some spare time at sked time, please consider using your radio and calling into an operator during the summer months.

Catch you on the airways. Ken 9618 Sked Coordinator East Coast. skeds@austravelsafetynet.org.au

Roy Watkins Life Member

If you have joined Austravel SafetyNet in recent years, you may not have ever heard of Roy Watkins who, at the recent AGM, was presented with Life Membership. This honour was conferred by your committee after receiving a detailed submission endorsed by in excess of twenty selcall numbers.

You may be interested in reading the contents of the submission.

Roy Watkins -

A man of vision and foresight

A man who put his name, his finances and reputation as a radio enthusiast on the line as he embarked on the establishment of the radio network, known Australia wide as Austravel SafetyNet

A man of action, not just words

A man who demonstrated an ethical approach to radio

A man who embraced and nurtured the connection of people by radio for comradery, safety, support and enjoyment

Who:

- In October 2010, founded and personally financed the establishment of the radio club originally called 'Austravel Safety'
- Had an objective from the very beginning to "provide a link to family and friends so that you may share your adventure of a lifetime"
- Located and financed Perth Base 6199 on his property upon the inception of the network in 2010.
- Was passionate about the capacity to provide help and emergency services so established bases at Perth 6199, Townsville 4199, and Bateman's Bay 2199 and a test base a Warawagine 6299
- Encouraged support gatherings for members, the first of which was at his property on 24 September 2011 just 5 days after a two month stay in hospital.
- Encouraged members of the network to support each other by calling into the scheduled base nets (skeds)
- Has been a voice for Austravel SafetyNet since establishing the network, by completing innumerable radio skeds, encouraging the newbies to the network to join in, participate in skeds and supporting them in learning network procedures and protocols.
- Supported the transfer of ownership of the Austravel Safety Network to Austravel SafetyNet Inc in 2012 after which it was managed by an elected committee with Roy as the President.
- Continued his service as President until October 2018 after which he served as a committee member until October 2022.
- In 2016 sold the radio equipment and infrastructure owned by him to Austravel SafetyNet Inc. for a nominal sum, much less than the replacement of the equipment.
- Attended numerous gatherings, accompanied by his wife Jane, both in the East and the West supporting the further expansion of the club's safety features for members.
- Personally approached and encouraged members to take on a sked operator's role, resulting in the appointment of many sked operators for the network.
- Wanted to keep members informed so produced the first newsletter, Volume 1, Issue 1, dated November 2011 celebrating the first anniversary of the network with the headline being "NEW HF RADIO NET ON THE BLOCK One year old this month" The edition was eleven pages in length, covering a myriad of topics including 4357 Help calls, dealing with non-emergency situations, telephone interconnect procedures, tributes to Frank Sleep 6455 who had recently passed away, stories from members and reports on social gatherings which focused on profiling members radios.

Since establishing the club, Roy has upheld and demonstrated his belief in the principles of honesty, loyalty, integrity, and comradery, the same principles that we, as a club, embrace today. Roy Watkins is a truly remarkable and admirable man.

Lowood GM/AGM

7th-10th SEPTEMBER 2023

Members and guests gathered at the showgrounds from Wednesday 6th with Austravel being offered a separate section of the grounds with both power and water connections and only a short distance from our undercover gathering area.

There were 14 sites taken up with 31 in attendance, everyone settled in well and enjoyed the camaraderie, we utilised the undercover area for morning and afternoon teas and for Friday nights sausage sizzle, a separate hall was made available to us for the GM and AGM gatherings, many thanks to the Show Society and the wonderful caretakers who looked after us extremely well.



Friday nights sausage sizzle was well attended with a couple of locals (past HF Club members) attending at the invitation of Ian and Janette (0116) great to catch up Geoff and Maureen.



Many thanks to Graeme (2002) and Lindsay (2262) for your valued help, very much appreciated, complimentary tickets in 3 lucky door prizes were given out with every sausage purchase - 1st prize was a Kings fire pit and grill which was won by Steve, friends of Glen and Rhonda (4055) with Ed and Irene (4748) taking out second prize of a quality wine and Peter (4050) picking up a nice bottle also, thanks to all for your support. Comments from all in attendance was very positive and all was going well until just after the BBQ was cleaned and put away when the "mother of all storms" hit us - rain, lightning and some very light hail was reported although may well have been sleet, fortunately no one suffered any damage although there was some water inundation - but all survived and battened down the hatches for the night.

Saturday's chatter over morning tea was all about the storm and how lucky we were not to have copped the full brunt of the action as other centres reported heavier rain and plenty of hail. The afternoon GM/AGM was attend by all members with a number of Laptops tuned in via Zoom, the meeting went well and pleasing to see all in attendance. Check the members area for the "minutes".

Later in the afternoon we headed off to the Hotel Lowood for an early happy hour and an evening meal which was enjoyed by all with many compliments on the quality of the meal at reasonable prices, its worth a call in for Lunch or Dinner if you are in the area.



Sunday's morning tea and recovery was also well attended with some members receiving assistance with their radios and the Out-n-about operations, always good to see members assisting others at every opportunity.

I believe the local bakery got a workout from some of the "sweet tooth's" and coffee lovers.

Thanks to all members and their friends who attended and made the gathering another memorable one.

Cheers to all Bob and Carmel 1750

Dear Rick,

Thankyou for the new Sked.

More importantly and I am sorry this is so late, the service from Austravel Safetynet on our trip to the Simpson Desert was superb as with all other trips.

Annette and I travel with a Toyota LC200 GX with an AOR Quantum Plus by ourselves, with the correct equipment and Austravel Safetynet and an Epirb.

The camaraderie, humour and information we got made the trip safer and more enjoyable.

Information was exchanged on road conditions, GPS position and weather regularly. On one occasion when I missed a sked call I was politely reminded of this by saying the next action was to contact a ranger in Diamantina NP then after that the police.

Finally, the comfort and security knowing you have fantastic and dedicated operators, members who are on for a chat and the exceptional coverage, make these trips to the Red heart of Australia so much more enjoyable.

We are currently in Argentina and Chile and wishing we were in the camper with the security of Austravel Safetynet.

It really is like being a member of a trusted family.

Please use these comments as you wish

Kindest regards,

Ray and Annette 1446

www.rjroberts.com.au

Kindest

Dr Ray Roberts

Advanced Wetting Technologies Pty Ltd



Toni 3329
&
Kim 7880

Toni (3329) and I (Kim 7880) attended the Track Care WA Inc. event in April this year, the one advertised on the Austravel Web page at the time. The main Track Care crew departed in convoy on the 10th April from Perth, but we couldn't leave Busselton until the arvo of the 11th. We arrived at Jimba Jimba station in the Gascoyne region of Western Australia a day or so after they had started work. This is about 1050Km drive North of Perth. The trip purpose was to build some toilets and a shower at a camp area called Winnemia on Jimba Jimba Station. Winnemia camp area is on the way to the Kennedy Range national Park which is about another 15Km along the track. The river was flowing and you couldn't get across to the Kennedy Ranges at Winnemia at that moment.



As Austravel members we were all invited to come along if we wished. This is a great way for Austravel members to get additional travel and camping events over and above what we may have ourselves.

Who is Track Care? Have a look at their web page <https://trackcare.com.au/> and facebook group for a more real time as to what is going on. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/trackcare>

A few people have suggested that Track Care is a kind of mobile mens' shed or one I like better is 4 wheel driving and camping with a purpose. Suffices to say that Track Care have been doing good work for a long time to keep remote W.A. open for all us travellers.



The site and camp from the air.

The event meant some days of hard work at site but a great opportunity to meet new people with a passion for the bush, camping and building. A wide range of jobs and skillsets were provided by the many attendees. A bit like when we Austravel build a base.

There was one other Austravel/TackCare member (Peter 1010) in the group and some interest shown by others in HF radio. I did a bit of demonstration of HF and of course just being up the road a bit from Perth Base (1000Km) I had clear strong signals on skeds and general base usage.

Back to the work, as you are a volunteer you do what is appropriate to you, your body, skills fitness and desire. In the process we got to feel a few muscles we had forgotten we had, (much better than going to a gym).

The final result was that the group built two very nice flushing, wheel chair access toilets and a cold water shower, all from scratch in a 7 day period.



The Beginning.



I did do some work.



The Shower



The Toilets.

On a prior visit Track Care had re-built the old shearers kitchen hut and verandas and made it a usable camp kitchen area. (The big shed behind the tank in the picture below. Toilets to the right and shower extreme right.)



Materials were mostly second hand from around the station and old shearing shed. Water is gravity feed from an old tank windmill stand up the hill a bit about 200 meters away.

On our Saturday arvo off we were taken on a guided tag along of Jimba Jimba station by Maggie from the station, ending at the Gascoyne Junction pub for dinner. We didn't get to see the whole station of course as it is 100,000 acres (40,469 ha) with some 5000 cattle. Once a major wool producing area but the slump in wool prices has changed the animal demographic.

Our tag along tour took us to an old shearing shed still standing, which apart from dust look like everybody just went to lunch, permanent fresh water holes and enjoyed a running commentary of daily life and the work on the station.

We did have some wind dust and flies and a few hot days but all in all a terrific experience meeting a new passionate crowd. In support, Toni and I are joining Track Care and we look forward to the next Track Care event that we can attend.

Ever wanted a quick note taker on your phone one that is easy to read and use?

Try this Vnotes app. Produced out of necessity. A small app no fuss, definitely no data leaking or Stealing from your phone. One long easy to use list.

Take text notes, Pictures, set reminders,
Find and delete items easily
You can learn to use it in less than 3 minutes.
Change text size by pinching screen.
Many simple to use features.

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=b4a.starchild.vnotes>

Get it here. \$3.99 (Sorry Android only)



SCAN ME





Hi all Austravel members.

We are having some technical issues regarding the operational service of the Out-n-About app at the moment. Even those with Android devices may find they cannot access the app and it says No Internet where as it worked before. We are fully aware of the issue and are working on it as fast as we can.

Austravel has highly skilled technical people working on this as it is all part of the change over to our eastern states servers. However, highly skilled people also have highly skilled full time jobs and all our committee and Ex-office job positions are members like you and they offer up their time as volunteers. Only a few can be involved with this high level internet setup and apply time to the task as available. It is way beyond my personal capabilities so on this issue I am not much help either.

I would like to thank Austravel general members for their patience and I assure you that the Out-n-About app will be returning for both Apple and Android devices.

There are some addition services available on our web page login area for forwarding locations to friends which may you may like to use.

Click the link and then click Locator/Messenger, put the persons email address in click the agree box and submit, you can add up to 20 last positions.

<https://members.austravelsafetynet.org.au/members.php>

Thank you again

A reminder to all members please use your selcall number when communicating with the club.

Kim Rhodes (7880)

President

Austravel SafetyNet



AUSTRAVEL SAFETY NET H.E.L.P. 4357

ARE YOU REALLY PREPARED TO USE IT CORRECTLY?

From the get go....

Why is it called H.E.L.P. 4357 ?

Austravel Safety Net founding father Roy Watkins (6001), had a vision for a rural and remote area HF radio “*assistance required*” call system not just dedicated to medical emergency situations in rural and remote areas of Australia, more to the point, his vision was for a benevolent group of like-minded people, experienced in both HF radio communications and outback travel, who could band together and offer a valuable communications link to whoever or whatever a travelling member needed to get themselves, or others they may have come across; out of trouble.



It started out as a selcall on 4357 on any channel, with the then Austravel base stations in WA and the east listening, then connecting a successful selcall via HF radio interconnect phone call to Roy and one or two others via the base telephone interconnect,

Roy (and others) would ascertain the problem and arrange a solution.....not that dissimilar to how the old RFDS red button system operated, where a push of the red button for at least 20 seconds would activate the RFDS base, via a two tone carrier signal generated by the HF radio.

Roy’s system was directly related to the use of selcall number 4357, for those who have not yet figured it out the word**H.E.L.P.** directly relates to **4357** on all HF radio alphanumeric key pads, the idea being of course that if you can never remember the selcall number, just spell out HELP on your keypad. This still relates in today’s terms, even though the **red button** automates this process to a large degree. (*more about the red button later*)

It seemed logical to Roy that not only did the Austravel special service “HELP” program name portray a universal description of what was available to Austravel members, it defined what was the primary reason for the club’s existence!

It also means that no matter which brand/make/model of HF radio an Austravel member uses, as long as it can send a selcall on 4357 it will be acknowledged by an Austravel base, as all Austravel bases are listening 24/7 for that special selcall ID.

Non selcall capable HF radios (very rare these days) with only the old technology red button call, where a two tone carrier signal generated by holding the red button for 20 secondswill not work with the Austravel HELP system, nor will it work with the RFDS of today, although at the time of writing this article, Port Augusta RFDS are rumoured to be still using this system (unconfirmed).

What happens when you press the “Austravel” profiled red button?

As most Austravel members know, the need for the old RFDS red button idea, whilst now dead in principal, lives on for Codan 9323/NGT/Envoy models, and the Barrett 4050, the red button can be modified to operate with a single press (Barrett 4050 two button press)....however for all other brand/models HF radios rely on sending a 4357 selcall on any channel manually. (e.g. Qmac, Codan 8525/8528, Barrett 550/980/2050, Icom etc.....see “Non Red Buton” calling later)



Note that a Barrett 4050 is a two button push !

It's not the case of what you hear and see, it's what you don't hear and see.....

As the red button system automatically cycles through the channels and sends each a selcall, you ought to be able to hear the revertive from each base that successfully "locked on" to the 4357 selcall, sometimes it may be only one base, but it can be more than one, therefore you may hear multiple revertives.

As soon as the first successful 4357 selcall was acknowledged by a base, an SMS is generated to all Austravel incident responders. For example if two bases locked onto say the first 4357 selcall, then that would generate two SMS messages (one for each base).

The SMS is generated to all Austravel incident responders. As this automatic selcalling process continues more bases may react, each base sending another SMS in sequence.

Each subsequent successful 4357 selcall received by one or more bases, will generate one or more SMS to each incident responder. Each incident responder may receive several SMS messages, each message carries the same member information but obviously what differs is

- the base that heard it
- and the channel in which it heard it.

On any day, one or more of these volunteer responders will use the information contained within the emergency SMS to dial into an Austravel HF radio base, and begin the task of making contact with the radio that was identified in the emergency SMS.

OK my radio doesn't have a red button...now what?

Sending a HELP(4357) call without a red button is not a problem.

As a matter of fact, going back to the beginning of this article, where Roy (6001) started out, there was no red button system back in the day, and the emergency calls functioned successfully as a single selcall, and it still does today.



As per Austravel's KISS 03 Emergency Call document found within the clubs website, using the 4357 manual selcalling technique may seem a little "old hat" as compared to the red button system, but it is something all members do with their radios on a regular basis. Sending GPS positions or sending a beacon, sending a message, are all variations of sending a selcall to say Casino base 2199, or Penong base 5199 (etc.)

The difference of course is when sending an individual base selcall (e.g. Casino Base 2199), you are targeting that particular base, and that base only, whereas when you send the HELP selcall 4357, you are targeting any or all bases within the whole Austravel HF radio network.

Austravel members travelling with a radio incapable of the red button system, are encouraged to download the KISS 03 Emergency Call sheet, and keep it handy for ready reference.

A word of warning though !

The Austravel red button emergency call system is admired by both its membership, HF radio techos / dealers and other HF radio clubs. One other club in particular seemingly likes the idea so much they have attempted to replicate the system and make it available to its membership as well.

The Austravel management committee are proud to see other clubs take up the challenge to develop and deliver a system similar to Austravel's HELP(4357), as these other clubs see value in this technology for their membership as well.....we wish them all the best and trust that what they have accomplished deliver's the outcomes needed for their membership and its network.



What the Austravel management committee doesn't fully know and understand:

- is if Austravel members are also members of other clubs (quite common)
- and that club offers a similar "red button" emergency call system to that offered by Austravel

- then it needs to be clear that Austravel cannot guarantee that the already installed HELP(4357) red button system, that Austravel has successfully validated by its members use over several years
- may not deliver the prescribed outcomes, if the other clubs red button system is overlapped or installed beside/in conjunction with the Austravel system.

This is what Austravel suggest

Because of the variable unknown factors associated with somebody else's red button technology, it's the Austravel's management committee's view that its members should choose which version of the red button emergency call system they ought to use.

For the reliability factor alone, its important that if and when you need to use this emergency call feature that it works as expected. Unintended contamination of two systems side-by-side is likely problematic!

Austravel therefore suggest that members use one or the other red button system for their HF radio, certainly not both.

This is why we highlight that in any or all cases, if the Austravel red button system fails for any reason, or your radio can't technically support the red button system, it doesn't matter, as the fall back position is the use of the "send a single selcall".

The outcome of a successful selcall to 4357 via a red button or single selcall system will deliver exactly the same response.....just understand what you need to do slightly different in either case.

Moving on.....

So without getting into detail about what information is received by each incident responder and how they use that information, what is important here is that the first thing they will do is attempt to make voice contact with you, meaning they will use one of the seven Austravel base stations to selcall you first to establish voice contact and activate a plan to assist you whether it's a medical or non medical situation that you are facing.

These Austravel H.E.L.P.(4357) responders are the same people listed in the Out- n- About app. If you ever wanted to know more about the H.E.L.P.4357 call system, or needed quick refresher on how and why before starting out on your next outback trip.....phone any of these responders and clarify or ask questions on those subjects that your unsure about.

Also leave key family members or friends with at least one contact phone for an Austravel incident responder, so that if they need to contact you in a hurry, they will know who to call and ask for help in passing on any urgent message to you while your travelling.

How many Austravel Incident Responders handle my emergency call?

Although you are likely to communicate by voice with only one Austravel incident responder over the HF radio, there will be others listening in on other base stations ready to step in, in the unlikely event that something goes wrong with your first responder. Its typical to have up to three incident responders working in the background while situation awareness is established.

Are you ready and organised to receive the incoming selcall response from the Austravel incident responder?

Some members reading this article might be scratching their head at this point, but as I learnt at a recent Queensland muster, not all things are understood by all members using their HF radios.

Let me explain.....#1 thing to remember :

- **red button** calling >>>> don't forget that your radio needs to be on selcall scan at the end
- make sure you MUTE is off and volume up
- without red button calling >>>> refer to "03 KISS Emergency Call" document

- once you hear the first revertive response from a base
- stop selcalling and stay on that channel (do not selcall scan)
- make sure you MUTE is off and volume up
- If your radio has a GPS connected, its better to send a “GPS send” call, rather than a selcall

H.E.L.P.(4357) Conference Calling

Its possible, and if needed, your Austravel incident responder can involve your remote area situation with a 3rd party on air. An example of this conference call capability maybe, urgent life saving / first aid advice from say the RFDS can be directly transmitted to you in your remote location from the RFDS nurse or doctor “on air”.



Another scenario maybe, mechanical breakdown information could be provided from your own mechanic if we can contact him and bring him to the phone.....he knows your vehicle first hand, what better way to take advice on your mechanical issue at that time.

And yes, you could obviously use your telephone interconnect directly, but utilising the HELP(4357) system, the Austravel HELP responder can take the time to clarify the situation with the RFDS or mechanic, coach them briefly on what to expect with an “on air” HF radio interconnect call, and connect you with the situation explained, leading all participants into a more stable communications environment. Importantly if the HF communication breaks down for some reason, the Austravel responder can re-establish HF communication as the convener of the HF radio 3-way conference call.

QUICK SUMMARY

- **Understand your radio’s present emergency calling capability**
 - red button or non red button ?
- **Regardless of the emergency calling method**
 - know what you need to do next, once the emergency 4357 call has been sent
- **Do you know how your radio sounds/reacts when an incoming selcall is sent rom another station ?**
 - There are Austravel members who have never received an incoming selcall from another station, therefore are insulated from knowing how their radio sounds and reacts. Its seems obvious that knowing what to listen for and what to do when this occurs, as acknowledging an incoming selcall is the beginning of voice contact with the other station, who in emergency conditions will be the Austravel incident responder.
- **Make sure that your “MUTE” is turned off**
 - you need to hear all that background noise in your radios speaker, and turn up the volume so as to make sure you can hear any incoming voice from the Austravel incident responder.
- **Explain / train others on your trip how to use the HELP (4357) emergency call system**
 - It’s too late if you are the one and only person knowing what to do and when, and you are incapable because you maybe the one requiring the assistance
- **Not sure how the HELP (4357) system works?**
 - Please, please, pleaseask an Austravel incident responder for advice and guidance before you start your trip. Their contact details are listed in the Out & About app for a reason, don’t be shy asking for guidance.
- **Use the “My Member Information” section within the Out & About app.**
 - Its here that you can store important information that an Austravel incident responder may need to know, in regards your trip before you head off. In particular In Case of Emergency (ICE) details relevant to you or others that maybe travelling with you. Review this information on each trip and ensure its relevant at that time, before you leave home. This information is detailed in the SMS received by each incident responder.



SAFETY CHAIN SHACKLES AND HOOKS - THE FACTS.

YOU CAN BECOME THE 'EXPERT' AT THE NEXT SOCIAL MEDIA OR CAMPSITE DISCUSSION WITH THIS INFORMATION.

ROBERT PEPPER - AUTOMOTIVE JOURNALIST has spent several weeks researching, analysing, and questioning all aspects of this contentious subject.



Robert questions Govt legislation, ratings, labelling, colours and all aspects of safety chain shackles and hooks. He speaks with Government officials.

Are colours relevant?

What is a 'rated shackle' and is there really such a thing?

Many quote 'shock load' – do they know what that actually is, and is it really relevant?

Can the shackle or hook correctly fit your chain?

Are Mawby Hooks legal to use and do they properly fit your chain?

Can you legally use hooks on your caravan / trailer?

Does legislation vary from state to state?

How do you find out if your connection device is legal and safe to use?

All these answers and much more can be found in this video by Robert Pepper – Automotive journalist.

Being very blunt – it should shut up a few people on social media and others who simply have not done the research. Here are the facts.

Yes, it is a ½ hour video, but well worth a watch, but with lots of background and legislative information.

There is a summary at the 32.47 min mark if you are running short of time, but I strongly recommended that you view the full video at least once to understand what to look for and why when choosing a connection for your caravan safety chain.

PLEASE VIEW THE VIDEO BEFORE COMMENTING. We do not want you to be found incorrect by quoting some Facebook fiction on this emotive subject.

I hope that all will view it and gain some understanding of the, what, when, how and why's of safety chain connections. Robert has many videos on his YouTube channel on many aspects of 4wding and towing.

Thanks to Robert Pepper for taking the time to research and share this information with Truck Friendly caravan road safety program.

We would love to hear your thoughts and experiences.

<https://youtu.be/oemjGl4HgRM>

Stay safe.

Cheers

Ken Wilson

Truck Friendly caravan road safety program

[#truckfriendly](https://www.instagram.com/truckfriendly)





YOU MUST HAVE AN AUTHORITY TO TRANSMIT AND HAVE A TYPE APPROVED RADIO TO USE THESE FREQUENCIES

(Network range is restricted by license to calls within Australia and Australian commercial waters zone.)

Amateur radios generally are ARE NOT TYPE APPROVED.

Operating protocol

- Always use your selcall ID upon initial contact.
- Using the network callsign is not essential as the base operators will announce at the statutory intervals.
- If your radio does not have a roger beep, please use OVER at the end of your turn. (The base operators may sometimes find it difficult to determine if you have finished without the roger beep or an OVER.)
- Take your time when talking, HF conditions can make conversations difficult to follow if you speak too quickly or too far away from the microphone. Project your voice and enunciate clearly, however there is no need to shout! Hold the microphone near your mouth tilted at an angle, imagine talking across the face of the microphone in a slightly elevated, normal speaking voice. Phonetics are useful if the conditions are poor, we strongly recommend learning them but it is not essential. You may be asked to "say again" by the base operators, take your time there's no rush.
- There is a slight delay through the phone network and release time for a base to return to receive after the operator is speaking. Allow about 1 second before replying to the operator.

Note that our or base operators and emergency responders are unpaid volunteers.

MEMBERS TAKING BROCHURES

Have you ever found yourself chatting to a fellow traveller about the antenna on your car and what you can do with the HF radio, but then have nothing to give them as a take away from the conversation? If you talk about Austravel now and then, to others and would like to see a new member or two evolve from your conversation, we do have brochures you can give out.



This helps people remember your conversation and gives contact information for follow up.

How do you get some? Simple, just send me an email with your postal address, a bit of a note about this and I will post a few to you.

Remember if you help get new members it helps keep your fees lower, not to mention that you are helping someone get a lifeline from the bush.

Kim Rhodes Email:- president@austravelsafetynet.org.au

How to Contact Me

Three simple methods to contact a travelling Austravel member who has a HF radio switched on.

There are three (3) methods of message delivery available to any Austravel member travelling in rural and remote areas, or mariner members sailing in coastal waters:-

- 1. Voice Mail**
 - Family and friends can dial Austravel's 24/7 office number - 07 2101 3457 and leave a voice mail message for the Austravel member to be passed on via selcall contact, or morning and afternoon scheduled net.
 - Ensure the message contains the name and selcall number of the targeted travelling member. Please write it in the box above.
- 2. Call a specialist Austravel member for assistance.**
 - Family and friends can call one of the listed Austravel members (in the list below) and detail their needs person-to-person. The specialist Austravel member will attempt to contact and pass on your message as requested.

Selcall	Location	Name	Phone
0951	QLD	Gauff Peck	0403 309 020
1750	QLD	Bash Carver	0407 936 289
9618	QLD	Kim Fischer	0439 749 449
7880	WA	Kim Rhodes	0427 983 329
6355	WA	Colin Ingham	0417 097 043
- 3. Out-n-About MAILBOX**
 - Alternatively, family and friends can run the Out-n-About app on their mobile phones or tablets and send messages to your radio as well as monitor your travel's. However, Out-n-About MAILBOX direct messages are not infallible so if it is **very urgent** it's advisable to "double up" on message delivery by initially contacting us via method 1 or 2 (or both if you wish).

Travelling members - to make the contact with you as above possible, please note!
 For members **travelling with a radio installed GPS** like Hamel & Girel, leave an electronic breadcrumb trail by frequently logging your GPS position and/or log in via the morning and afternoon sked.
 For members **travelling without a radio installed GPS**, log your position daily via either the morning or afternoon sked (or both).
 This will provide H.E.L.P. (4357) operators with key information from which to assist in track and trace scenarios.
 For selcall contact from a base - leave your radio on and scanning, particularly while driving!



DON'T FORGET.....a copy of the "How To Contact Me" sheet is included in this newsletter (last page) and all future new editions. Tell people where you are going and show them you can be contacted in a hurry if the situation arises. If it's an urgent message that needs to find you, double down on the urgent message delivery:-

- 1** family & friends can send an urgent message via the Out-n-About app MAILBOX.
- 2** and also...family & friends can request an urgent message be passed on via a morning or afternoon sked . To have an urgent message passed on, call Austravel's 24/7 VOICEMAIL service or phone an Austravel responder PERSON to PERSON .

(details found within the "How To Contact Me" sheet)



FOLLOW WHAT WE'RE UP TO ON SOCIAL MEDIA
PIM CAHILL (7255) SOCIAL MEDIA OFFICER
 Email: socialmedia@austravel.org.au



Welcome New Members

Shane Bradford 3990

Ermes Tegon 2040

Stephen Hartley 0220

Ron Mathers 4688

Lian Williams 6749

Bruce Drake 0726

Donald Speldwinde 1076

Mike Slegers 6284

Gary Hawkins 0329

Andrew Wilson 0161

Jeff Gazelle 4268

Wayne Harvey 1991

Phillip Argy 6114

Grant Stowell 0322

Bob Coops 4071

David Harper 1969

Shane Groom 0221

Ray Watson 2123

Tim Smith 5948

James Myburgh 6597

John Gray 1026

Adam Howden 9151

Tim Fitzgerald 7963

David Goddard 3367

Rod Bussey 6062

Sherwin Nazarith 0269

Aaron O'Donoghue 3242

Andrew Lentin 0405

Michael Abbott 1317

Wayne Feenstra 0135

Frank Moriabito 2622



**DON'T FORGET TO DOWNLOAD THE LATEST
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- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Cable & Connectors | Contact: Mark Rawlings |
| • Mobile | Austravel Member : |
| • Wire Antennas | Selcall 6622 |
| • Feed Systems & Baluns | Lot 25 Brand Hwy. Dongara |
| • Parts | W.A. |
| • CB Antennas | Ph: 0455 463 452 |

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Codan Envoy X2 Digital Mobile Package



Codan Envoy X2 Base Transceiver



4050 D HF SDR



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- SMS—Pagecall
- Multiple Self ID's
- Wi-Fi Adaptor
- 2019 Auto tune HF antenna with internal GPS receiver
- Address books

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Designed and built in Australia for the world's harshest conditions, Barrett HF equipment thrives in the outback and has the track record to Prove it. The Barrett "Outback Traveller Pack" should be considered as standard equipment for anyone travelling in remote areas.

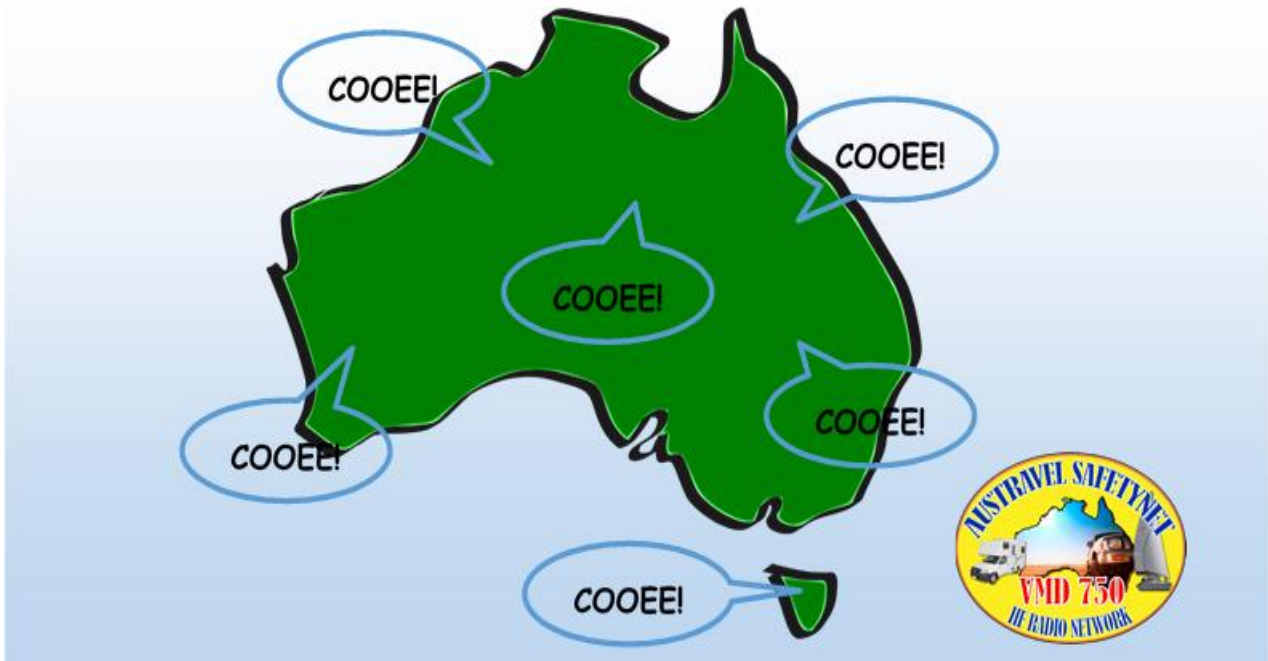
Utilising the "free to air" nature of HF communications, the "Outback Traveller Pack" provides access to essential safety and emergency services with no ongoing call charges.



The Barrett 4050 D handset app supports iOS, Android and Windows devices for wireless voice and radio control.



4050 D



The COOEE! call

Many members have enquired about a way they could informally talk to each other outside of sked times. We have come up with the idea of the **Cooee Call**.

Cooee! is a shout originated in Australia to attract attention, find missing people, or indicate one's own location. It is also known as a call of help, distinct amongst the natural sounds of the bush.

The word "cooee" originates from the Dharug language of Aboriginal Australians in the Sydney area. It means "come here" and has now become widely used in Australia as a call over distances.

We think this is a fitting name for the call Austravel SafteyNet members can use to call each other across this fantastic country of ours.

How does it work?

- Cooee calls are made on **channel 5** (on the hour for 15 minutes) or **channel 9** (for digital radios at 30 minutes past the hour for 15 minutes).
- Cooee calls should not be made during sked times (8:00am—8:45am or 4:30pm—5:15pm).

To comply with ACMA regulations we need to use the full club callsign on the initial call of each operator eg:

This is VMD750 Mobile 6789 calling Cooee! The response would be ***6789 this is VMD750 Mobile 2345 over.*** Once the initial call is finalised only Selcall numbers need to be identified on each over.

- Members should allow a short pause between overs to allow any other member to join in the conversation.
- Members should pause communication if they hear a Selcall being transmitted in case it is an emergency call.

We hope you enjoy calling Cooee to your fellow members and we hope to hear you on the air.



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Leave your name and selcall number for your friends	Selcall

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2. Call a specialist Austravel member for assistance.

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Selcall	Location	Name	Phone
1928	WA	Roy Watkins	0427 000 995
1750	QLD	Bob Carne	0407 936 289
9618	QLD	Ken Fischer	0439 749 449
7880	WA	Kim Rhodes	0427 983 329
6355	WA	Colin Ingham	0417 097 043

3. Out-n-About MAILBOX

- Alternatively, family and friends can run the Out-n-About app on their mobile phones or tablets and send messages to your radio as well as monitor your travel's. However, Out-n-About MAILBOX direct messages are not infallible so if it is very urgent it's advisable to "double up" on message delivery by initially contacting us via method 1 or 2 (or both if you wish)

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This will provide H.E.L.P. (4357) operators with key information from which to assist in track and trace scenarios.

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