

VK9HR - Lord Howe Island 2011

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Planning by the Hellenic Amateur Radio Association of Australia for the DXpedition to Lord Howe Island (OC-004) between July 23rd and August 2nd 2011 began in February 2011. The VK9HR (Hellenic Radio) callsign was issued on April 6th 2011 by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).

Team Leader Tommy Horozakis VK2IR (HARAOA President) and Co-Leader John Chalkiarakis VK3YP (HARAOA Treasurer) began the long process of organising all the equipment, antennas and logistics.

The aim was to put together an international team including VK's and thus we were delighted to have David EB7DX as the QSL Manager and webmaster for VK9HR. David EB7DX was most recently the QSL Manager for the very successful 4A4A Revillagigedo Archipelago DXpedition in March 2011.



Location of Lord Howe Island

All the equipment was shipped from Australia to Lord Howe Island using both sea freight (boat) for the antennas etc. and air freight for the HF radios and Amplifiers in the week prior to the start of the DXpedition.

The entire VK9HR team comprising of Tommy VK2IR, John VK3YP, Peter VK2NN, Bruce VK2KLM, Raffy VK2RF, Ed G8GLM, Don N4HH, Les W2LK, Saul K2XA and Alex OZ7AM all met at Sydney Airport for the flight to Lord Howe Island on the morning of Saturday July 23rd 2011.

The team arrived safely at Lord Howe Island late afternoon and we began the task of setting up the stations. We managed to get the Steppir BigIR vertical installed that afternoon before dark so we could begin making contacts. Early next morning and the remainder of Sunday were spent setting up all the

antennas from 160M to 6M located at two separate sites. By the evening we had everything setup and everyone was very tired but we finally had all the six HF stations operational.

Our Many Antennas:

- 160M Inverted L using a Spiderbeam 18m fibreglass mast and a 200 metre long RX beverage.
- 80M 1/4 wave vertical and also a 1/2 wave Dipole.
- 40M – 2 Element Moxon Beam and also a 1/4 wave vertical
- 30M – Steppir BigIR Vertical (additionally covered 80M – 6M as well).
- 20M – 3 Element Yagi
- 17M – 2 Element Moxon
- 15M – 3 Element Yagi
- 12M - 2 Element Moxon
- 10M – 3 Element Yagi
- 6M – 3 Element Yagi

All the antennas performed very well with the 160M vertical (located close to the water) performing exceptionally well with strong signals into NA, JA and VK.



Lord Howe Island (Goole Earth View)

For the first few days the band conditions were not the best with the SFI around the 80's, but slowly the SFI started to climb to over 100 and the bands become alive with massive openings on 20M, 17M, 15M and

even 12M. We also had an opening on 10M and even a couple of contacts on 6M.

Our six (6) HF Radios comprising of 3 x Kenwood TS-590S, 2 x Yaesu FT-857's and an ICOM IC-7000 where all connected via CAT and digital interfaces (built in USB on the TS-590S) to N1MM for logging and also DM-780 for RTTY. We used three (3) SPE Amplifiers comprising of 2 x SPE-1K-FA and 1 x SPE-2K-FA and also 3 x RM-ITALY HLA-300V amplifiers. The Kenwood TS-590S radios performed exceptionally well with our CW operator Alex OZ7AM commenting that he had previously used a Elecraft K3 on CW and he could not pick any difference in performance on CW between the K3 and the TS590S. Our SPE amplifiers were also a stand out in performance – all running nearly 24 hours a day and not missing a beat.

In the pileups, the North American and JA discipline was excellent. The European discipline was mostly very good, as is often heard with DXpedition stations, there was minimal jamming activity.

The RSGB IOTA contest was also entered on the weekend of July 30-31 using the callsign of VK9IR, thus allowing our other stations to continue operating as VK9HR on the other bands. Almost 2,000 contacts and 12,153 contest points was realised for the IOTA contest.

The cost for this DXpedition was over \$25,000. Many thanks go to the sponsors (including many personal contributors) who assisted in offsetting some of these costs.



Corporate Sponsor list: RF Solutions, SPE, Steppir, Kenwood, Spiderbeam, The Pest Control Company, Ham Radio Outlet, ATRC, Begali, Island Connection and Tower Tees.

DX Foundation Sponsor list: Nippon DX, Danish DX Group, EUDXF, German DX Foundation, SEDXC, HVCDX, Chiltern DX Club, MDXC, Clipperton DX Club and Swiss DX Foundation.

Great Planning, Great Operators and a lot of hard work prior to and during the DXpedition and many operating hours by the team realised some 17,000 contacts during a seven day operating period. A special thanks to our CW operators of Alex OZ7AM, Don N4HH, Les W2LK and Saul K2XA .

All QSL ing for this expedition is via EB7DX.

To all the VK9HR team and most importantly our corporate and DX foundation sponsors we thank you. Stay tuned for another HARAOA DXpedition in 2012.

(Edited for GDXF by Prof. Dr. Uwe Jaeger DJ9HX)

