

Commissioners Robertson and Byron:

As a couple who live on and cruise our boat internationally, we have a vital interest in digital ship-to-shore amateur radio communications to report emergencies and, more importantly, to provide timely information to prevent them. The most reliable means for sending and receiving amateur radio communications is via WinLink 2000 - a digital communications network operated by radio amateurs, 24 hours a day. WinLink 2000 (over which this e-mail is being initiated) is our lifeline and safety net. It is not available yet in Australia.

However, Australian amateur radio operators traveling worldwide are able to avail themselves of the existing WinLink 2000 participating mail box operators (PMBOs). There are Australian radio amateurs who would like to reciprocate. Having PMBOs in Australia would add to the comfort and security of cruisers in Australian waters and the neighboring high seas.

We understand that all that is needed to bring these volunteer Australian radio amateurs into the WinLink 2000 network is to change the ACA Determination to allow interconnection between amateur radio and the Internet. We are informed that Mr. Anthony Van Vugt has already placed a detailed submission before you. Your Review provides a unique opportunity to liberalize amateur radio operations in Australia. It would allow Australians to participate in this international cooperative effort and support advances in Information and Communications Technology.

We ask you to recommend that the ACA Determination be suitably amended.

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