

THE TREC STORY

The history of the Tablelands Radio and Electronics Club.

In 1988 the amateur population of the Tablelands had started to grow, and some of those people living in the Atherton area had a loose association with one another.

Some belonged to the Cairns Amateur Radio Club, some to the VHF group in Cairns and some were members or ex members of a CB club

Some months before July of 1988 there had been talk amongst a few of the local hams that perhaps a radio club could be formed in the district as it seemed the amateur ranks had risen considerably over the last couple of years, and that there would be sufficient interest shown by these people to doing something in that regard. A 2 metre repeater had been installed at Longlands Gap, VK4RTA, on the 10th of May 1986 and because it was on the Tablelands, and a group of us were already maintaining it, although at this stage the unit still belonged to the Cairns club it was felt that the time was right to get a club going of our own on the Tablelands.

As it turned out, one of first items of business as a club was to buy the repeater from the Cairns club. Mick Lohse VK4JHM (now VK4CRC), decided to do something positive about it. To get a club started less talk and some positive action was needed. Mick at that time lived at the base of Hallorans Hill in Atherton and ran a small radio and TV repair business. Mick was a member of the then Tropical VHF group in Cairns, VHF being Mick's primary interest in amateur radio. Because of his business and location he seemed to run across more hams than the rest of us put together so when, on his own initiative, he wrote to every amateur operator he knew inviting them to a meeting at his place in July 1988 others who had been talking about forming a club were only too willing to go along with the idea.

The meeting was held and those who attended were: Mick Lohse VK4JHM (now VK4CRC) and his mother, Dale McCarthy VK4KDM (now VK4DMC), Peter Ricketts VK4ZUG (now VK4BUG), Aub McKibben VK4AFO, Ian Baty VK4AFC, Bill Jessop VK4FET, and Wilf Booth VK4ZNZ and his XYL Helen. There may have been others at the meeting but there is no record of persons attending.

Those present at this meeting decided that there certainly was enough interest to form a club so another meeting was planned to be held at Dale McCarthy's residence in Atherton on the 27th August 1988. Wilf Booth was nominated as the interim co-ordinator. Other hams who did not attend the meeting at Mick Lohse's place were duly notified of the next meeting that was to be held in Atherton.

The aim of this meeting was to formalise the formation of an amateur radio club, the aims and objectives of the club, to form a committee and decide on the meeting times and place for such meetings to be held. Persons who attended this meeting were: Wilf Booth, Dale McCarthy, Ian Baty, Aub McKibben, Bill Jessop, Richard Barham, Ron Goodhew, Alan Whiting, Brian Seawright, Peter Ricketts, Martin Willys, John Schumacher, Brian Walters, and Mick Lohse. There may be others who attended but were not recorded. This meeting formalised the club and some of the names suggested for the club were Tableland Amateur Radio Group, Tableland Amateur Radio group and friends, Tableland Electronics and Radio Group and Tableland Radio and Electronics Club (TREC) It was decided that the Tablelands Radio and Electronics Club be adopted as the club name. It was also decided that meetings would be conducted on the 1st Thursday of the month. The prime objectives of the club were to promote mutual and fraternal goodwill amongst those interested in amateur radio

and electronics, CB radio and computers, also to promote a good relationship with the general public and to help encourage and educate people in all areas of amateur radio and electronic technology.

Unfortunately, after doing much of the groundwork to get a club up and running Mick Lohse left the district and moved to Brisbane

The club was fortunate to get the use of the SES facilities to hold meetings and the first official meeting of the newly formed club was held there in September 1988. A steering committee was formed with Wilf Booth being elected as steering committee chairman and Dale McCarthy being elected as steering committee secretary.

The next meeting was held on the 06 October 1988. The club committee was formed with Wilf Booth being elected as the Inaugural President, Bill Jessop Vice President, and Dale McCarthy Secretary/Treasurer. Club fees were set at \$10.00 p.a. The club constitution was drafted with David Conn VK4KGV doing the bulk of the work. The constitution was accepted by the club members in December 1988.

By August the club membership had grown to 35. Ron Goodhew proposed that another repeater be built and installed at the QAS site on the Hann Tableland. Ron worked very hard to obtain permission for the club to use the QAS and permission was granted by QAS and a formal agreement drawn up.

In March 1990 the Atherton Shire Council took over control of the old Atherton Primary School site and decided to make the rooms available for community organisations to use. TREC applied for an area suitable for a clubroom and was granted the old headmaster's office rent free with power supplied. By April TREC had clubrooms of its own. This was around the same time as TREC started up the local packet repeater with David Conn doing the vast majority of the work and providing the local ham population with a very good and reliable packet BBS operating from the VK4RTA site at Longlands Gap. Willy Bloch VK4HB and John Mahoney VK4JON were also involved in this project.

By July 1990 the Hann Tableland repeater VK4RHT was up and running. Another repeater site was established around 2000 on Bones Knob operating in the 70cm band. This repeater provides a very reliable coverage of most of the Tablelands area.

The VK4RTA repeater was totally rebuilt and installed in 2008 and has proved to be a stunning success providing coverage to users within approximately a 150 to 200km radius.

Over the ensuing years the club has seen many changes in the way our hobby grew and has actively been involved with the Wireless Institute of Australia in training and assessing new operators into the hobby. TREC has 2 WIA accredited assessors and 1 accredited learning facilitator within its membership.

TREC is also actively involved in field day events, fox-hunts and, of course, the social side of amateur radio.