

Reply to the ARTANZ "Open letter to NZART Members"

It is unfortunate that the Amateur Repeater Trustees Association of New Zealand has to resort to political lobbying to try and discredit one of two candidates standing for the position of NZART President in the 2013 elections.

It is important for you to be aware that although the ARTANZ title implies a wide membership of repeater trustees, this is not in fact the case as the large majority of New Zealand trustees do not belong to ARTANZ.

This type of behaviour is unprecedented to the best of my knowledge. I can only hope that the action taken by ARTANZ President Dick Greenbank ZL2TGQ had the majority support of the small number of ARTANZ members before it was made public.

I have been approached by many NZART members (and a number on non-members) urging me to correct the misinformation in the ARTANZ letter.

NZART Council did have to come to the decision that the Association could not afford to keep paying for the National System. At the time, the fees payable were just under \$10,000 per year and if the Association committed to paying that for the foreseeable future to keep the National System going, then Association funds would have been quickly depleted. Council's view was that this was not a responsible use of member's funds, given that the National System is just one of many important amateur radio activities your Association wants to support.

In my email of 4 May 2011 I said that *"I cannot predict the outcome of the on-going political lobbying so for now I would proceed on the basis that we will still have to vacate those Kordia sites where amateur equipment is located by June 2011, unless other individual arrangements are made directly with Kordia."* The ARTANZ letter interprets this to mean that NZART Council had abandoned the task. This is not correct. I was still actively supporting those Branches who had equipment at Kordia sites, and asking them to make as much "political noise" as possible, in an on-going effort to let the Minister for SOE (Stephen Joyce) know of our concerns regarding the fees charged by Kordia. A number of Branches including Whangarei, Gisborne, New Plymouth, Christchurch and Otago did a great job, working through their local Member of Parliament, to raise the political noise level.

The outcome, as reported in the ARTANZ letter, was a new Network Services Agreement between Kordia and NZART (not ARTANZ) for a five year period. At the NZART Conference in Upper Hutt in June 2011 I reported to the AGM on the outcome and acknowledged the contribution ARTANZ had made. I am happy to do so again. There is no doubt in my mind that a combination of factors contributed to a successful outcome: the Otago Branch submission; the ARTANZ proposal and the change of SOE Minister (Tony Ryall who responded promptly to the receipt of the Otago Branch submission).

The special conditions attached to the Kordia Network Services agreement are:

~ We will not charge you for co-location fees during the term of this Schedule as part of a Sponsorship agreement.

~ We will still charge you for power usage and this will be reviewed on an annual basis

~ Sponsorship of NZART is based on the proposal from ARTANZ dated 4th April 2011 and includes promotion of Kordia as a premier sponsor of NZART.

~ We will be promoted as the premier sponsor on the NZART website, in the NZART “Break-In” magazine

~ We will be promoted to NZART members as the premier sponsor of NZART.

As part of the sponsorship agreement, Kordia was given one of the prime advertising pages in Break-In – the inside front cover. You will have seen their corporate advertising information on that page. More recently, at Kordia’s request, they have relinquished the inside front page and on-going recognition of Kordia’s valued sponsorship is in the form of the Kordia logo on the bottom of the front cover of Break-In. We continue to recognise them with a link from the NZART web site home page. Recognition of Kordia’s sponsorship is also maintained with the naming of the annual Kordia National System contest.

We continue to pay the annual power bill for the electricity used by amateur equipment at the Kordia sites, currently \$975 + GST per annum. This includes payment for power at Hedgehope, a site negotiated by ARTANZ for the extension of the National System south towards Invercargill which has yet to be used.

I trust this information helps put a more balanced perspective on the “Open letter to NZART Members”. As valued members of NZART, you will have received voting papers with the latest issue of Break-In. Please do take the opportunity to vote for your choice of President for the next two year term.

Thank you for your time,

Vaughan Henderson ZL1TGC
NZART President