



QUARTZ HILL ANNUAL REPORT – 2010 YEAR

Our station at Quartz Hill was dismantled in 4Q 2007 to make way for Meridian Energy to construct a wind farm in the area. RF noise measurements in 2009 confirmed that it would not be possible to continue operating an amateur radio HF station in the vicinity of Quartz Hill due to the high level of radiated noise interference from the wind turbine infrastructure.

Over the past year we have been searching for an alternative site in the wider Wellington area that will allow us to continue the legacy started at Quartz Hill. Our goal is to build a new HF station that has the potential to equal and surpass the achievements at ZL6QH. We have been seeking a site that ideally offers:

- A low angle of elevation to the horizon, preferably less than 5 degrees.
- Separation from potentially significant radio frequency noise sources like high voltage transmission lines, industrial areas, and wind farms.
- All weather 2WD access
- Preferably within 1 hour drive from Wellington city.
- Room to erect several guyed masts and poles, potentially up to around 60 metres in height.
- Availability of AC power.
- Access to accommodation.
- Access at any time during the year.
- Affordable long term tenure.

After extensive searching it has been difficult to find any sites in the Wellington area that are close to meeting all of the above criteria. We spent several months investigating a promising site within Belmont Regional Park but it eventually turned out to be unsuitable due to the high level of noise that is radiated in damp weather from nearby high voltage transmission lines.

More recently (in January 2011) we have been investigating a site near the telecommunications station on the hills to the west of Pukerua Bay Township, about 30 minutes drive from Wellington city. This site has an excellent radio horizon and initial HF noise measurements indicate that it also has potential to be a quiet radio site. The local farmer and Telecom NZ (main lessee of the telecommunications property) have been very cooperative and it appears likely that we could gain access on reasonable terms. We would have to install our own accommodation (e.g., a converted container or Portacom style buildings) and the access road is unlikely to be suitable for 2WD vehicles in poor weather. However, given the difficulty in finding a site, we think that this is a reasonable compromise and our best option; subject to further tests confirming that the level of background HF noise is low enough for our requirements. We hope to be able to make a final decision and secure access within the next month or two.

Our group has assets in the form of various lattice and tubular masts and the contents of two containers. Radio New Zealand kindly agreed to provide storage space at its Titahi Bay site for these assets, while we are searching for a new site. This arrangement was originally intended to expire in December 2011 but has since been extended to 30 June 2011. We cannot rely on a further extension so it is important that the group is in a position to move its assets to a new site by the end of June. In the meantime we are making plans to rationalise our asset holdings and only keep items that are likely to be useful for the Pukerua Bay site. In particular, we plan to dispose of the larger lattice masts, as they are unlikely to be suitable at the new site due to resource consent and practical constraints.

We are also giving consideration to the most appropriate governance arrangements for our future operations, noting that these may need to be different to the arrangements for Quartz Hill in order to gain a wider support base for the project. As noted at the Special General Meeting of WARC in November, it is possible that the creation of a separate Incorporated Society may be appropriate. We will report back to the club and group in due course with further advice on this matter.

Our accounting records for the year ending 31 December 2010 show the expenditure being \$1,718.50 (the majority of this being attributed to crane and truck hire to remove our assets from Quartz Hill) and income being \$905.55, to produce a net loss of \$812.95. The closing bank balance (current and term deposits) was \$21,071.57.

It was pleasing to see the number of financial supporters in 2010 increase to 31, the highest number since 2006 when we had 36 supporters. The membership fee for 2010 was reduced to \$10 on the basis that expenses would be minimal while operational activities were suspended. We propose to continue the \$10 fee in the 2011 year while there is still uncertainty about the new site costs. It is likely that a significant increase will be required in 2012, to cover the actual ongoing site costs and investment in the building of a new station.

A total of 171,733 QSOs was logged at ZL6QH and we continue to receive requests for QSL cards. Another 197 QSL cards were processed over the past year, bringing the total number of cards dispatched up to a total of 35,994.

There are some changes to the makeup of the committee in 2011. After chairing the committee since its inception in 1997 I am stepping down due to a pending move to Australia. I will continue to support the project from Australia but unfortunately it will no longer be possible for me to have a 'hands-on' role. Bob Vernal ZL2CA and Mike Kerr ZL2BCW have also stepped down due to other priorities and interests. Bob and Mike have also been on the committee since 1997 and we are most grateful to both of them for their significant contributions over the years.

The good news is that we have some new faces joining the committee. Mike Woods ZL1AXG, Bernard Robbins ZL2BD and Malcolm Wheeler ZL2UDF have all agreed to join the committee. All three new members have been long standing supporters of the group and bring valuable experience and expertise to the next phase of our work. Mike ZL1AXG has kindly agreed to take over chairing the committee, at least for an interim period.

Thankyou to everyone who has provided support over the past year, in particular the Quartz Hill Supporter Group members for their ongoing contributions of finance, time and other resources; ZL1AXG for hosting the web site; ZL2AOH for his long standing services as QSL Manager; and the other members of the Quartz Hill Management Committee (ZL2AOH, ZL2AMI, ZL2BCW, ZL2CA ZL2AOV, ZL2ACG, ZL2BD, ZL1AXG and ZL2UDF) for their advice and practical contributions.

I am sure that 2011 will be an exciting year as we make arrangements to move to a new site, and start building a new station. We look forward to the ongoing support of the club and the wider amateur radio community to help make it all happen.

Brian Miller ZL1AZE
Chair of Quartz Hill Management Committee
6 January 2011