



*MERRY
CHRISTMAS
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR*

BRANCH 27 NEWSLETTER December-January 2026

Hello Everyone,

Exciting times ahead in the next few months with Christmas celebrations, BBQ s etc and our Field day 2026 coming up.

I would like to welcome all our new members who have joined us since the Ham cram.

Hopefully the weather will settle and we can look forward to a lovely warm summer to do outdoor hobbies and activities.

Please consider doing some of the outdoor radio outdoor radio activities like SOTA, POTA, and Lakes on the Air which are amateur radio programs that encourage operators to set up portable stations in scenic or special locations to make radio contacts. **SOTA (Summits on the Air)** involves activating designated mountain summits, while **POTA (Parks on the Air)** uses national, state, and other protected Parklands.

There are also other variations like **Lakes on the Air (LOTA)** or **WWFF (World Wide Flora Fauna)**, which focus on specific types of locations. Participants (activators) earn points for making contacts from these sites, while other operators (hunters) earn points for contacting them.

Next Branch meeting

Tuesday 18th November - 6:30pm committee meeting and 7:30pm club night at TEMO 45 Robe St New Plymouth

AGM Tuesday 16th December - 7:30pm

also at TEMO 45 Robe St

Please make an effort to attend this

Presidents Report November 2025.

Hi all,

We're fast approaching the end of the year, with the AGM coming up next month and the new Constitution to be passed and implemented, so there's still a bit of work to do.

For Tuesday's club night, I had planned to run the fox hunt that was rained out last month — but once again, the weather is looking a little wet. If it is, I'll set up an antenna and radio instead, as I'd like to test a different configuration. The setup I used last month picked up a large amount of noise, likely coming from the equipment inside TEMO.

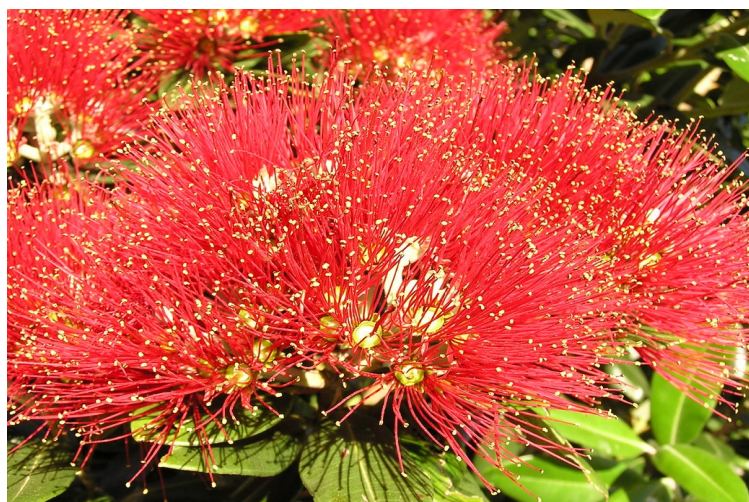
I've just arrived home from the Ham Cram we hosted over the weekend, and I'm pleased to say we now have eight new hams in the Taranaki area. Congratulations to them, and we hope to see them at club night tomorrow evening. The age span of participants was 12 to 73years.

It would be great to have as many of you as possible come along to meet and welcome them. An informal chat and a bit of mentoring would go a long way in helping them get started in whichever direction they'd like to take in the hobby. As you know, there's the requirement for 50 contacts and a three-month period before they can use the 5–25 MHz bands, so bring your hand-held radios along — if their call signs have been allocated, we can help them make some simplex contacts during the evening.

Please also start considering any roles you might like to put your hand up for next year, or any non-committee tasks you'd be willing to assist with. Over the last two years, I've found myself taking on many jobs that could easily be handled by others in the club. With the administrative workload increasing under the new Constitution, extra help with events and club activities would be greatly appreciated.

This may be the last report I write as President, so I'd like to offer my sincere thanks to everyone who has supported me over the past two years — especially the executive committee, Trevor vice President, the rest of the committee, and all those who have pitched in with guidance, field days, repeater maintenance, and more.

Terry ZL2TNB.



ON the 25th October Some of the Branch 27 club members meet at ZL1TDS's QTH to help erect her aerial.

The mast was 3 sections of galvanised metal pipe welded to produce a tapered mast 10 metres in total length. A 1:1 balun in a 3D printed housing was mounted at the top of the mast and connected to a 40 metre dipole with RG-58 coax run down to the ground and from there into the house. The mast pivoted into a galvanised fitting dyna bolted to the path outside the house and a further fitting on the eaves of the house gave support. The antenna was brought out at an angle from the mast to also act as 2 guys and the 3rd guy was a UV stable cord to the other side of the house. SWR was best at around 7.2 MHz, a little high but well within the range of the tuner for the lower part of 40 metres.

A flower pot antenna was also installed as part of the job. This antenna has a remarkable performance with very acceptable SWR on both 2 metres and 70 cm bands and an excellent signal out.



Many hands make light work Club members erecting new aerial

On the 18th October Some of the Club guys met at the Branch 27 repeater sight to do some maintenance work

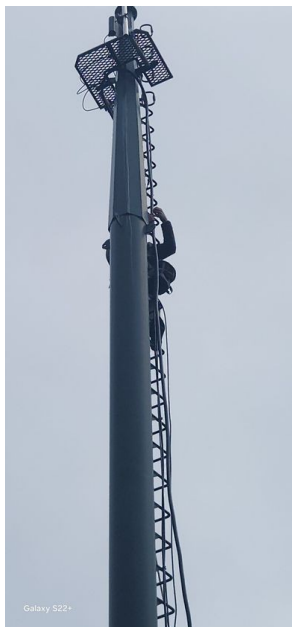
They replaced the UHF coax and cleaned up all the mounting bolts for the mast and denso wrapped them.

They also installed an earthing system for the tower and tied it to the shack ground
Replaced the 2 meter repeater radio because of the speech distortion problem

Still have the VHF connector up the tower to attend to.



The tower is now Grounded.



The VHF coax being installed



Greg ZL2BZH new repeater install



Trevor ZL2TWJ, Terry ZL2TNB, Ross ZL2RPW



Brett ZL2VZ Terry ZL2TNB
Ken ZL2KJT



Photo of repeater site with some of the club members

NZ Straight Key Night

New Zealand Straight Key Night (Summer Edition) will be held on Sunday 7 Dec from 9pm to 10pm NZT (0800 to 0900 UTC) on 80 metres.

SKN honours the original amateur radio mode in an easy-going style. Operators send signal report, name, location, type of key, type of transmitter and power output. Stations are limited to 100W output power.

SKN is not a contest - but the operator who gets the most votes for the quality of their sending will win the Bruce Scahill Best Fist Award. Please email your award nomination to ZL1NZ within one week following the event.

SKN uses the QSY Rule. Any station that calls CQ must QSY after making a contact.

Full details about SKN are available at <https://z1.nz/skn> or you can email neil@z1.nz or call ZL1NZ during or after the NZ Net.

SKN welcomes all straight key operators, regardless of skill level or speed.

73, Neil ZL1NZ, SKN Manager

A young lady has a date with a ham. They are sitting at the dinner in a romantic restaurant. She asks "so what is your favourite band?" And he replies "7 MHz!"

On the weekend of the 15th & 16th November Branch 27 & 87 held a Ham Cram for 9 participants. Such a lot of work goes into this and we must thank Warren Harris ZL2AJ for his teaching ability in assisting our successful participants to pass on the weekend

One of the participants Francois ZL2GLK is only 12 and we welcome you to our Club, our youngest member.



Ham cram participants

For our new Amateur operators who have just passed Ham cram Congratulations & Welcome to Amateur Radio!

Getting Started After Your Licence

1. Setting Up Your First Station

You don't need to spend thousands to get started. A simple VHF/UHF hand-held (HT) can get you on the local repeaters and nets straight away. Popular entry-level brands include Yaesu, Icom, and even the budget-friendly Baofeng or Radioddity models.

If you'd like to reach further afield, consider a 2 m/70 cm mobile rig and an external antenna — even a simple quarter-wave whip or J-pole mounted outside will outperform the “rubber duck” on a hand-held by a long shot. Consider a Flower Pot aerial also, our members can help you with this.

For HF (short wave) operation, which lets you talk across the country and around the world, start small — a second-hand 100 W HF transceiver and a basic wire antenna can provide endless enjoyment. Local hams are usually happy to help you set up and tune an antenna safely.

2. Costs and Where to Buy

A realistic “starter budget” could look like this:

- **Hand-held radio:** \$60 – \$200
- **Mobile/base dual-band rig:** \$300 – \$600
- **Entry-level HF transceiver:** \$700 – \$1500 (second-hand often much cheaper)
- **Antennas, coax, and accessories:** \$100 – \$400

You can find new gear through New Zealand suppliers like **ZLham**, **Ham Radio Outlet NZ**, or **DX Shop**, and second-hand bargains on **Trade Me**, **club sales**, or **ZL Swap nets** on air.

3. Getting Help

New Plymouth Branch 27 & Branch 87 South Taranaki are our local clubs and have very active amateurs of all ages able to help and support new comers.

There are also on-air nets most evenings, where you can check in, practice operating, and meet other hams. If you're unsure which repeater to use, the Repeater Map on the NZART website is an excellent resource.

Branch 27 has a Wednesday evening net 8pm on local 720 repeater

Usually we have a net controller but over the summer break it's open for anyone to chat.

Branch 27 meetings are every 3rd Tuesday of the month

7.30pm at TEMO

45 Robe St New Plymouth

Br87 VHF net On the Western Link 147.200, 147.050, and 147.900

@ 2000Hrs every Sunday Night

All welcome.

Club Activity nights

4th Monday Night of the month

1930Hrs @ Club rooms 48 Union Street Hawera

4. Should You Try CW (Morse Code)?

CW isn't required for licensing any more, but it remains a rewarding and effective mode. Morse contacts can get through when voice fails — and learning CW is an excellent way to build operating skill and discipline. Apps and online tools like **LCWO.net** make learning fun and flexible.

5. Logging Your Contacts

You don't *have* to keep a log, but it's highly recommended. It helps you remember who you've spoken to, track your progress, and verify contacts for awards. Many hams use **electronic logs** like **N3FJP**, **Log4OM**, or **QRZ Logbook**; but a simple notebook works just as well at first.

Don't forget to look up your call sign on **QRZ.com** and set up your profile — it helps others confirm who they've contacted.

6. Microphone Technique and Good Operating

Good operating habits make a big difference:

- Speak **clearly and steadily**, not too fast.
- Hold the mic a few centimetres from your mouth — not right against it.

- Pause briefly before speaking after pressing PTT, so your first words aren't clipped.
- Listen before you transmit. Make sure the frequency or repeater is free.
- Be courteous. Amateur radio is a self-policing service — we all set the tone.

7. Keep Learning

Amateur radio offers endless directions — HF DXing, digital modes like FT8, satellites, APRS, emergency communications, home construction, and more. Try a bit of everything and see what captures your interest.

And remember — *every experienced ham was once brand new too*. Don't hesitate to ask questions on air or at club meetings. Most of us are delighted to help newcomers find their feet.

73 and welcome to the bands!

Branch 87 information

Br87 VHF net On the Western Link 147.200, 147.050, and 147.900
@ 2000Hrs every Sunday Night
All welcome.

Club Activity nights

4th Monday Night of the month
1930Hrs @ Club rooms 48 Union Street Hawera
All Welcome

November's activity 29th November

Note there will be no Club activity night this month
it will be an activity afternoon instead.

On the 29th November we will be holding a HF portable activity afternoon where we would like everyone to participate at some remote location, portable on 40 metres, My suggestion is we use 7130KHz to make a contact and then move up or down by 5KHz to continue the contact. This can also be done in your own back yard but prefer you to operate on battery supply and portable antenna system. Parks, lakes, hill tops. Beaches etc in your local area would be Ideal to put Amateur Radio in front of the public. We encourage all Taranaki operators to get out and participate in the activity. Logs can be sent into ZL2TLF branch Secretary and a PDF certificate will be supplied for the day. Start time will be 1400hrs and we will wrap up around 1600hrs.



After the activity Branch 87 will be holding a Christmas BBQ at ZL2TLF/ZL2TZG/ZL3LT's place 29 Kapuni Street, Manaia. You are all welcome to attend a great evening of fellowship and bragging who got the most contacts and who had the best antenna etc. The BBQ is BYO salad's, meat and drinks. We will supply paper plates and cutlery. Also bring some seating as well.

Regards

Dave Sargent

ZL2TLF

021340839

Really hope those of you who have just passed the exam enjoy the hobby, please don't be afraid to come on the air, people understand if you are new

If you are after your 50 contacts come on the branch net on Wednesday evenings and catch up with quite a few contacts all at once.

If there is no controller on the night just give out your call sign and say you are after your 50 contacts and hopefully someone will come back to you.

National system is also available for contacts if you haven't got HF aerial up yet.



Merry Christmas from Ngaire ZL2UJT