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SIGNING THE CONTRACT: WIA PRESIDENT, MICHAEL OWEN (LEFT) AND ACMA CHAIR, CHRIS CHAPMAN. STANDING ARE (LEFT TO RIGHT) WIA DIRECTOR, PETER YOUNG; ACMA EXECUTIVE MANAGER, MARK LONEY; AND ACMA GENERAL MANAGER, GILES TANNER.

ACMA signs contract with Wireless Institute of Australia for amateur radio services

ACMA Chair, Chris Chapman, has signed a contract with the Wireless Institute of Australia (WIA) for the provision of a range of services to the amateur radio community. These include issuing amateur certificates of proficiency and managing call signs. Through the contract, the WIA will also continue to provide examination services to the amateur community, as it has since 1991.

ACMA staff met with representatives of the WIA on 27 February 2009 to discuss the contractual arrangements. The discussions included the role of the WIA in amateur spectrum administration. 'The new contractual arrangements demonstrate ACMA's commitment to industry participation in the administrative aspects of radiofrequency spectrum management,' said Mr Chapman. 'The WIA has provided examination services for the amateur community for over 15 years on behalf of the Australian Government. They are uniquely qualified to contribute further to amateur spectrum administration.'

The Chair and WIA personnel also discussed

the help given during disasters (such as the recent Victorian bushfires) by amateur radio communication. Amateur emergency communications are extremely valuable during times of crisis, particularly when conventional communications such as telephone lines and radio antennas are destroyed. There are approximately 15,000 amateur licences held by operators across Australia.

The WIA will provide the functions and services to the amateur community as a delegate of ACMA. The contractual arrangements include government oversight mechanisms appropriate to the delegation of Commonwealth functions to private providers.

These mechanisms are necessary to ensure accountability and transparency and will support efficient provision of the functions and services.

Under the new arrangements, ACMA will continue to issue and vary amateur transmitter licences. This includes the allocation of call signs to amateur licences. The WIA will manage all other matters pertaining to amateur licensing, including the administration and recommendation of amateur call signs. The WIA will host a public list of all call signs available for allocation. Amateurs wishing to vary their licences or be issued a new licence by ACMA will need to approach the WIA to be recommended an appropriate call sign.

All queries on the new arrangements should be directed to the WIA at www.wia.org.au. Information on the new arrangements is also available on ACMA's website www.acma.gov.au (go to For licensees & industry: Licensing & regulation > Radiofrequency spectrum: Radiocommunications licensing > Apparatus licences > Types of licences > Amateur licensing).