



# The South African Radio League Annual Report 2025/2026

The South African Radio League is the National body for Amateur Radio in South Africa  
The South African Radio League is a Member Society of the International Amateur Radio Union



## The 2025/26 Annual Report

Nico van Rensburg, ZS6QL, President – South African Radio League.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. A warm welcome to everyone in attendance here today as well as online, thank you for joining us at the 101-year AGM here in Port Elizabeth, or Gqeberha as it is formally known.

The past year has been one of significance and we are extremely grateful for everyone who is part of SARL's history—beginning with our founders in 1925 and continuing with the dedication and commitment of current members and community partners.

The SARL has continued to grow and thrive, thanks to the robust foundation built on our members' commitment and passion, and I am pleased to report that for now, the SARL maintained stability both from a membership and a financial perspective. However, the SARL is a member's society and to grow and retain members is of utmost importance. Yet, for the first time, individual numbers entering the world of amateur radio is becoming very disappointing, locally and internationally. There is a definite trend associated with a drop in RAE candidate numbers and dwindling RAE class opportunities, as very few clubs present lectures, practical workshops, and online classes compared to a few years ago.

As mentioned last year, we are without a doubt in a difficult situation when it comes to volunteerism and leadership within the SARL and clubs. It is a well-known fact that our clubs are the backbone of the SARL and amateur radio, fulfilling an important role within society. A noticeable trend is clubs dying off, either because the members who could have led them into the future were never coached, or because those able never raised their hands to step up to the plate. This leaves us with a challenging scenario which needs to be addressed if we would like to grow amateur radio in South Africa into the future.

Participation and growth amongst our younger generation is similarly disappointing and urgently requires a renewed focus. This year will be the first time since 2015 that South Africa and the SARL will not have any representation at the annual IARU R1 YOTA Summer Camp that continues to provide an outstanding experience for young radio amateurs from across the region.

Although we are experiencing many challenges, it is not panic worthy, though we need to set our focus on what we can control: our capacity to connect, build and focus on the successes to date. Everything has a context and many opportunities present themselves every day.

Over the past year, I have experienced a remarkable level of support and assistance from members and council to the SARL. Without these members' dedicated support, the League will not be able to function and provide the service that is due to our members.

I have no doubt in my mind that the SARL will continue to grow and thrive into the future. As Franklin D Roosevelt once said, "The only limit to our realisation of tomorrow is our doubts of today."

On the international front, the SARL as a member society of the IARU Region 1 will attend the General Conference 2026 in Vienna, later in this year.

The SARL is also participating in the ongoing IARU restructuring process of merging the three regions of the IARU into a single entity. It is ongoing work to ensure that the interests and operational continuity of Region 1, including its committees and working groups, are properly represented and safeguarded in any future organisational structure.

### **SARL Centenary Publication**

I would like to step back for a moment and mention the significant effort started in 2021 by Anette ZR6D, who volunteered to capture and document the rich history of the SARL since 1925.

These artefacts, documentation and related information collected during the execution of this project will serve as a valuable reference for current and future generations, detailing the achievements and challenges faced by the league over the past century.

The outcome of this project at present is a Commemorative Handbook as pledged and I am pleased to announce that it was published a few days ago.

The research and processing of all historical information into a book is an enormous task and, in all fairness, does not end, as the League's history will need to be recorded and kept alive as we journey into the future.

Congratulations on this historic achievement and a sincere thank you to Anette ZR6D and Brian ZS6YZ who took on this enormous task to ensure that the history of the League will be preserved for future generations.

### **SARL Volunteers and Appointees**

The well-known American college football player and coach Paul "Bear" Bryant once said, "Set goals – high goals for you and your organisation. When your organisation has a goal to shoot for, you create teamwork, people working for a common good."

These words are just as applicable to the League's group of dedicated volunteers and appointees as the SARL depend entirely on these individuals to perform various tasks and to fill several portfolios.

The list is long indeed, from the news bulletins every Sunday, a monthly bumper edition of Radio ZS and weekly HF Happenings publications from the editor, Awards Management, the Repeater Coordination working groups, the V/UHF working group, QSL Bureau Management, Contest Management, Lecturers, Invigilators and RAE Management.

Then there are the volunteers for the Amateur Radio Today-program and Regulatory Affairs, SARL/ICASA liaison committee, the work done by our Legal Advisor, the SARL HAMNET organisation, serving our communities and providing a public service.

It is therefore important to provide an overview of activities and work being performed by these individuals and working groups:

### **SARL Standards and Technology Work Group**

The work group does excellent work and the individuals working behind the scenes are James Archibald ZP6NS, Brian Jacobs ZS6YZ, Guy Eales ZS6GUY, Karel Bezuidenhout Jnr ZR6K, Peter Leonard ZS5PL and Hans van de Groenendaal ZS6AKV (convener). They have been working on the new MOU with ICASA, looked after the TC3 EMC affairs, are monitoring the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC) discussions with WRC-27 around the corner, and have their finger on the pulse with the Draft National Frequency Plan 2025. Read more about their work in the 2026 SARL Annual Report.

### **Contest Working Group**

Contesting is an integral part of our hobby and popular from a national and international sporting perspective. Under the experienced leadership of Johann Bezuidenhout (ZS6JBZ), together with team members Gerhard Coetzee ZS3TG, Phillip van Tonder ZS6PVT, Karel Bezuidenhout ZS6WN, Karel Bezuidenhout Jnr ZR6K, Phillip ZS6FY and Danie ZS6DPS, contest participation has grown exponentially over the past two years because of sincere commitment from this group of gentlemen.

From updating the SARL Blue Book, advertising all contests, the generation of tools and lately also the direct upload of logs to the SARL website, these gentlemen are serious about contesting.

Results of these contests are diligently published in SARL News, the Website and in HF Happenings, providing participants with timely feedback on their performance and encouraging a healthy competitive environment.

### **The SARL Centenary Marathon QSO Party**

To celebrate the centenary of the League, the SARL Centenary Marathon QSO Party was introduced and ran as a year-long activity during 2025.

Worldwide participating radio amateurs worked South African amateur radio stations. Those who submitted their logs containing confirmed QSOs made during 2025 with South African amateur radio stations received Gold, Silver, Bronze and Participation certificates, depending on the number of stations and special event call signs contacted.

### **Centenary Call Sign – ZS100SARL**

During the centenary year the SARL, assisted by members and associated clubs, was on the air with a special event call sign ZS100SARL.

QSOs were made on all amateur frequencies on SSB, CW and Digital modes. 4332 QSOs were logged during the year with 3051 unique call signs worked across 115 DX zones.

The special event callsign achieved the requirements for a Worked All ZS (WAZS) certificate on the SA-QSL system and the 100 DXCC entities have received a DX Century Club award from the ARRL.

Theunis ZS2EC was responsible for 3 561 of these QSOs, while Karel ZS6WN made most of the CW QSOs.

### **Workshop and Presentations**

#### **SARL Annual Technical Symposium**

This event was held online on Saturday, 11 April with presenters from the USA and individuals from South Africa, a programme that covered a broad list of topics and organised by Hans van de Groenendaal ZS6AKV. The presentations are available from the AMSAT SA website for those who could not attend.

#### **AMSAT South Africa Space Symposium**

Another event that deserves to be mentioned involving many of our members is the AMSAT South Africa Space Symposium held in August 2025. Every year, this event attracts local and international interest. The aim of the AMSAT SA Space Symposium is to take amateur radio into space and encourage more amateur satellite operation, development, and research.

#### **Sandton Club – Power Hour Tech Talk**

A monthly event that deserves to be mentioned is the online Sandton Club (ZS6STN) Power Hour Tech Talk. With open access available every month, this talk is packed with adventure and technical amateur radio topics to encourage fellow amateurs and fuels enthusiasm.

### **Annual BACAR Launch**

The BACAR launch and recovery event in Secunda is an annual highlight that many amateurs look forward to. Another launch is earmarked for October this year. The team of the Secunda Radio Club is a group of seasoned experts offering us their commitment under leadership of Christo ZR6LJK.

A newcomer in the balloon arena is the Pico balloon launches that were introduced last year. This is another aspect of amateur capability being tracked all over the world with much enthusiasm. Gert ZS6CG is the man to thank for starting this most successful initiative. Join the WhatsApp ZS Pico Balloon group for in-depth details and to participate in tracking these balloons.

### **SARL HAMNET**

SARL HAMNET, the SARL division for disaster communication, under the leadership of Brian ZS6YZ, the national HAMNET Director and Keith Lowes ZS5WFD, the Deputy National Director,

as well as the regional directors, provides an excellent service that allows for awareness and public relations pertaining to amateur radio.

SARL HAMNET works closely with the South African Search and Rescue (SASAR), a division of the Department of Transport, Local Government Disaster Management and disaster management in local municipalities, the Western Cape with Wilderness Search and Rescue, the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination (ARCC) and the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre. The work being done on national level is an important task of providing emergency communications during search and rescue incidents and we are most grateful for the individuals willing to provide this service to society.

A detailed report from the SARL HAMNET National Director is available in the 2026 SARL Annual Report.

Should any SARL members be interested in joining SARL HAMNET, please do not hesitate to contact the regional or national directors.

### **Affiliated Clubs**

As mentioned, the SARL and amateur radio community depend on our clubs to fulfil an important role to sustain and grow the radio amateur service.

Throughout amateur radio's history, clubs have recruited and trained new radio amateurs and have provided a community setting in which radio amateurs have been able to continue their education and training.

I would like to appeal to our clubs to continue investing the necessary resources to ensure that we continue to present classes promoting amateur radio. It is vital to a club's survival and growth to continually recruit newcomers, both young and old, to ensure the sustainability of the club and the SARL

Always remember, the objective is to allow RAE candidates of all ages to become active, knowledgeable, and responsible members of the amateur radio community in the country, now and into the future.

### **QSL Bureau**

Amidst the challenges posed by the postal service situation in South Africa, the South African Radio League (SARL) continues to ensure that QSL cards are forwarded and distributed. However, it is becoming more difficult to maintain and sustain the service and, although electronic QSLing has become the norm, many amateurs worldwide still prefer and enjoy a physical card to confirm QSLs.

The man behind the work of the QSL Bureau is Gert du Plessis ZR6GRT, our QSL Manager. Do not hesitate to contact Gert to offer personal assistance or club participation to assist in distributing QSL cards.

## **Annual RAE Examinations**

The annual RAE examinations during May and October are administrated by the SARL on behalf of ICASA, in line with the Memorandum of Understanding between ICASA and the SARL.

In preparation for the examination many newcomers rely on guidance and lectures, including practical training provided by clubs. On a national level, a huge coordination and administrative effort is required to accommodate the two examination sessions.

Donovan van Loggerenberg ZS2DL, the SARL appointed RAE manager, was responsible for the successful 2025 October RAE and have completed the necessary preparation work for the exam to take place during May 2026.

Donovan, you have done a sterling job, and I would like to extend a warm thank you. Congratulations to you and your team to ensure that this important work continues to support the growth of amateur radio as well as SARL membership in the country.

## **Group Activity**

Our beloved past time involves interaction and QSOs with fellow amateurs, and I would like to mention the tremendous work being done to activate and motivate fellow amateurs into various activities. Activities such as the very popular Summits on the Air (SOTA) needs recognition. It would be unfair to mention call signs as there are quite a list. Then long-distance V/UHF and Satellite activity are well organised with WhatsApp groups. A personal thank you to everyone involved, all your efforts make a huge difference and results in many hours of enjoyment on the air. Keep up the good work.

I have touched on various topics in this report. The detailed information on these topics is available in the 2026 SARL Annual Report. Please read more about these topics, achievements, and work done by the League, working groups and appointees, as compiled by our Secretary, Dennis Green ZS4BS.

Council and I are extremely grateful for the excellent work being done by these volunteers and working groups with families and full-time occupations, committing their personal time and expertise at no cost, to run the SARL successfully.

In closing, to have a vision and believe in the power of education ensures that amateur radio will not only survive but thrive in the 21st century and beyond.

It is through education, training, and hands-on experiences that we assist to shape the next generation of radio amateurs and innovators for the future.

To our AGM hosting club, PEARS, thank you so much for the huge amount of effort and hard work to ensure a successful AGM and Awards Dinner here in Gqeberha.

Last but not the least, I convey my sincere gratitude to my fellow councillors for your support and dedicated work in running the SARL – it is sincerely appreciated.

As I conclude, I sincerely thank our members for the confidence and trust bestowed upon us. Council remains committed to sustain and continuously improve the SARL's operations to live up to members' expectations.

Thank you all for your kind attention this morning.

## Regulatory Affairs

Hans van de Groenendaal, ZS6AKV



### TC3 EMC

At the 2024 meeting the SARL requested that the increasing noise level on the HF spectrum be added to the agenda as an emerging need. At the TC3 meeting on 8 April 2025, Hans van de Groenendaal delivered a presentation entitled *“What anyone using radio frequencies needs to know about the increasing level of RF noise.”* The presentation was well received. The chairman requested attendees to submit feedback on the way forward which the SARL will collate and present in a report at the November meeting. The TC3 Admin failed to distribute the presentation. After two successive TC73 meetings, the Chairman instructed the Secretariat to place the presentation on the TC73 portal. The relevant section of ICASA has been share what ICASA is doing to prevent the problem from escalating and TC73 members are urged to comment by 31 August 2026.

### SARL Standards and Technology Work Group (STWG)

The workgroup, James Archibald, ZS6NS; Brian Jacobs, ZS6YZ; Guy Eales, ZS6GUY; Karel Bezuidenhout Jnr, ZR6K; Peter Leonard, ZS5PL and Hans van de Groenendaal, ZS6AKV (convener) have been working on the new MOU with ICASA.

One segment of the SARL's STWG is the monitoring of the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC) discussions which may be relevant to radio amateurs in South Africa. James Archibald leads this. He reports as follows, *“The STWG continues to participate in South Africa's WRC-27 National Preparatory Work Group, which is coordinated by the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies, both virtually and physically.”*

*Although the agenda items for WRC-27 pose no direct threat to the radio amateur's frequency bands, concerns are that some agenda items may impose constraints in some bands by enforcing stricter spurious and emission limits so as not to interfere with adjacent bands used by the radio astronomers, aeronautical services, satellite users and International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT).*

*The IARU, through its regional organizations, is closely monitoring inputs from countries to ensure that radio amateur's interests are heard and protected before the WRC-27 conference that will be held in Shanghai, China.”*

## **Draft National Frequency Plan 2025**

The plan was revised from the original plan submitted in March 2025. The SARL commented and pointed out the various issues affecting amateur radio. The following is the SARL submission to the second draft.

10 December 2025

Dear Davis and Richard

Thank you for the second draft of the Draft National Radio Frequency Plan 2025. The SARL appreciates the amount of work you have put into the second draft and congratulates you on a project well executed.

The SARL would like to participate in the public hearing on 15 and 16 January 2026 and herewith provide information about the points we would like to raise on behalf of the Radio Amateurs in South Africa

### **Pre-amble**

**To facilitate the reading and discussion of our submission, we have included extracts of the ITU Radio Regulations (2024)**

**1.56** *amateur service*: A radiocommunication service for the purpose of self-training, intercommunication and technical investigations carried out by amateurs, that is, by duly authorized persons interested in radio technique solely with a personal aim and without pecuniary interest.

**1.57** *amateur-satellite service*: A radiocommunication service using space stations on earth satellites for the same purposes as those of the *amateur service*.

### **ARTICLE 25 AMATEUR services**

#### Section I – Amateur service

**25.1** § 1 Radiocommunication between amateur stations of different countries shall be permitted unless the administration of one of the countries concerned has notified that it objects to such radiocommunications. (WRC-03)

**25.2** § 2 1) Transmissions between amateur stations of different countries shall be limited to communications incidental to the purposes of the amateur service, as defined in No. **1.56** and to remarks of a personal character. (WRC-03)

**25.2A** 1A) Transmissions between amateur stations of different countries shall not be encoded for the purpose of obscuring their meaning, except for control signals exchanged between earth command stations and space stations in the amateur-satellite service. (WRC-03)

**25.3** 2) Amateur stations may be used for transmitting international communications on behalf of third parties only in case of emergencies or disaster relief. An administration may determine the applicability of this provision to amateur stations under its jurisdiction. (WRC-03)

**25.4** (SUP - WRC-03)

**25.5** § 3 1) Administrations shall determine whether or not a person seeking a licence to operate an amateur station shall demonstrate the ability to send and receive texts in Morse code signals. (WRC-03)

**25.6** 2) Administrations shall verify the operational and technical qualifications of any person wishing to operate an amateur station. Guidance for standards of competence may be found in the most recent version of Recommendation ITU-R M.1544. (WRC-03)

**25.7** § 4 The maximum power of amateur stations shall be fixed by the administrations concerned. (WRC-03)

**25.8** § 5 1) All pertinent Articles and provisions of the Constitution, the Convention and of these Regulations shall apply to amateur stations. (WRC-03)

**25.9** 2) During the course of their transmissions, amateur stations shall transmit their call sign at short intervals.

**25.9A** § 5A Administrations are encouraged to take the necessary steps to allow amateur stations to prepare for and meet communication needs in support of disaster relief. (WRC-03)

**25.9B** § 5B An administration may determine whether or not to permit a person who has been granted a licence to operate an amateur station by another administration to operate an amateur station while that person is temporarily in its territory, subject to such conditions or restrictions it may impose. (WRC-03)

## **Section II – Amateur-satellite service**

**25.10** § 6 The provisions of Section I of this Article shall apply equally, as appropriate, to the amateur-satellite service.

**25.11** § 7 Administrations authorizing space stations in the amateur-satellite service shall ensure that sufficient earth command stations are established before launch to ensure that any harmful interference caused by emissions from a station in the amateur-satellite service can be terminated immediately (see No. **22.1**). (WRC-03)

### **Technology developments have also impacted on Amateur Radio.**

As technology has developed so has the amateur service with a current greater emphasis on technical investigations as set out in 1.56 of the definition. This also requires a fresh look at some of the power limits still in the Radio Frequency plan. In term of 25.7 of the regulation this paper will make recommendations for consideration by ICASA before the final plan is gazetted.

**135,7 – 137,8 kHz** Footnote 5.67A limits the power to 1-watt EIRP.

**472 - 479 kHz** Footnote 5.80 not applicable in South Africa. Footnote 5.80A covers the power restriction in countries at least 800 km away from a list of countries. As South Africa meets that criteria 5 Watt EIRP is permitted.

As the transmit power of stations operating on the 135,7 and 472 kHz bands will not impact on other countries, the SARL proposes that 20 dBW is allowed, which is the power limit on amateur bands where the allocation is secondary. The aim is to encourage more experimentation on these two bands, as envisage in the definition of Amateur Radio in 1.56.

**1810 - 1850 kHz** Footnotes 5.98, 5.99, 5.100

**1850 – 2000 kHz** Footnotes 5.92, 5.103

Various power limits are indicated for different areas in footnotes 5.2, 5.96 and 5.100. The SARL proposes that the power limit on 1810 – 2000 kHz is set at 20 dBW as in annexure I of the 1995 Radio Regulations Gov Gazette 38641

### **430 – 440 MHz**

There are many footnotes pertaining to this band which have little impact on Amateur Radio except the ISM allocation 433,5 – 434,79 MHz. According to annexure B3 of the 1995 Radio Frequency Regulations the power limit is 10 mW. Equipment freely available in South Africa operates on 5 watt and is not programmed to operate within the frequency spectrum for ISM. Many owners of the equipment operate outside the ISM band. We understand that this is an enforcement issue and not a spectrum issue. However, it is a protection issue for which ICASA as the regulator is responsible, hence we are bringing it to your attention.

24,0 – 24,05 GHz Notes and comments should refer to Annexure I

24,05 – 24,25 GHz Notes and comments should refer to Annexure I

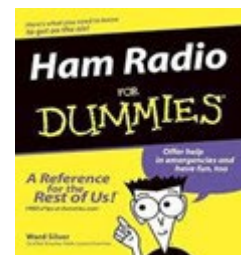
We look forward to the opportunity to further discuss our contribution to the final plan,

Hans van de Groenendaal and Brian Jacobs attended the public hearing following the SARL submission.

## **RAE Report 2024/2025**

Donovan van Loggerenberg, ZS2DL, SARL RAE Manager

Being new to this position, I was always aware that it was going to be quite a job. Herewith my report on the October 2025 exam.



The SARL RAE Staff if you wish to call us that was reduced to only 4 people for the October exam which I do believe streamlined the operation and as a result made it effective. Rassie, ZS1YT; Noel, ZR6DX; Kelley and myself, Donovan, ZS2DL.

We had 95 registrations for the October exam of which 81 sat the exam of which 69 passed. This is a pass rate of 85%.

A few things came to light from my first exam as manager. Firstly, Amateur Radio was never intended as a hobby for the masses. However, it continues to be eroded by people doing the exam in the hopes of being licenced for the wrong reasons. These reasons include owning equipment they could not otherwise own, for “Civil defence” and because it might aid their real passions be that mountain climbing, parasailing or sea rescue to name but a few. Many of these people find the course irritating and leave before its conclusion and many write, get licenced and then leave the “Hobby” almost immediately because they never meant to get involved in the first place.



I do believe this is a phenomenon that needs to be address by the

SARL and Clubs as it has been a cancer for many years. It is sadly the old problem of numbers vs quality.

Secondly there is a lack of co-ordination between what is required by the SARL and ICASA and what the Clubs and their tutors are actually doing. Many Clubs do not even want to be involved with the RAE process. Many of these Clubs are now under direct control of those who fall into the first category that I mentioned above.

In this vein it is also very evident that Class B candidates have all but dried up and it seems that none of the clubs are actively pursuing Learners under the age of 20 to get involved in the hobby. 2025 saw only one new Class B licence issued.

Then, I do see the RAE evolving slightly to keep up with modern trends and will look at including a VHF and Repeater usage element to the HF assessment procedure as I do believe that is where many start and it is important to expose the candidates to this as early as possible.

Finally running this RAE without a dedicated database and system for generating automated letters and certificates is impossible. Noel, ZR6DX has perfected a system that works. It is important that Noel remain involved in the RAE and in control of this system as he knows how it works as he designed it. I cannot emphasise this more than I have.

The Website also needs to assist in this regard and due to the poor quality of the site since it was hacked, we have now for the May 2026 exam introduced a form system which will hopefully reduce the amount of manual labour, registration involved for October 2025.

In conclusion, once we are assured of stability in the form of a functioning website, database accessible to RAE staffers and a revised Practical Assessments, we can start to look at increasing the RAE question pool, reducing the amount of exam centres and evaluating and improving the tuition the various clubs are providing.

The RAE remains a vital function of the SARL as it is the life blood of the organization and ensures the continuation not only of the League but the hobby as a whole. It is important that it receives the recognition and attention it deserves.

## **SARL Hamnet**

Brian Jacobs, ZS6YZ

SARL HAMNET, the Emergency Communications Division of the South Africa Radio League has been very active over the year 2025 to 2026.

There are currently active SARL HAMNET groups in Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Free State and the Northern Cape. The busiest groups are in Gauteng and the Western Cape. Both these groups are active not only with South African Search and Rescue (SASAR), which is a division of the Department of Transport, but also with both Provincial and Local Government Disaster Management and in the case of Western Cape with Wilderness Search and Rescue as well.

Due to the National Disaster Management Centre being in Gauteng there are also discussions taking place at a National Level with the NDMC being led by SARL HAMNET Gauteng. SARL HAMNET is acting in a consulting/advisory role as it simply does not have the resources that may be required when systems start to fail and it is vitally important that plan for Emergency Communications Systems to be successful, the systems need to be planned from the top down and that all spheres of government can intercommunicate when needed. SARL HAMNET can only be the last resort when all else fails.



In Gauteng, SARL HAMNET has also been requested to be the communication specialists for the South African Urban Search and Rescue Team USAR SA-01. This is a specialist search and rescue team currently comprising of specialists from the local fire and rescue and emergency medical services in Gauteng and are trained to international standards based on the UN INSARAG guidelines. During 2025 three members from Gauteng attended regular USAR training sessions and formed a strong relationship with the team. They also received training on the operation of an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre which is responsible for the coordination of all teams in a search and rescue.

Between 1 – 5 December 2025, Brian, ZS6YZ deployed as a Communications Specialist with the USAR SA-01 Team to the Eastern Cape to participate in the INSARAG Earthquake Response Exercise (ERE-2025) in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality.

This ERE was a large-scale tabletop simulation exercise which will be attended by International USAR Teams, Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs), UNDAC members, NGOs, UN Agencies / Humanitarian Country Teams as well as National and Regional Agencies and other international response organizations. Members from SARL HAMNET Eastern Cape were requested to participate in the event by Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality Disaster Management. This exercise was an invaluable experience that exposed SARL HAMNET members to what happens in an Operations Coordination Centre where its operators will be required to operate when providing emergency communications.

In January 2026 two SARL HAMNET operators deployed with the USAR SA-01 team to Mozambique to assist with the floods. There were at that time no cellular communications in the affected areas in Mozambique. Due to administrative issues the team did not cross the border into Mozambique and were re-assigned to assist in Limpopo. The SARL HAMNET members demobilised as there was no need to provide communications in Limpopo as all commercial services were still operational.

Gauteng, Western Cape, KZN, Eastern Cape and the Free State SARL HAMNET members have also been actively involved in providing radio communications for sporting events in their

areas. These events have always been a good training for fundamental emergency communications, although it involves primarily VHF and UHF FM communications and makes extensive use of APRS mainly for tracking of resources during the events. It also trains the SARL HAMNET members how to work in a command-and-control environment.

SARL HAMNET country wide has also assisted the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC), with locating emergency beacons that have been activated. These beacons being PLB, ELTs and even EPIRBs are used aboard aircraft and vessels at sea in the event of an emergency to be able to locate the persons, aircraft, vessels or life rafts and when the beacon is activated it is of utmost importance that the beacon be located as soon as possible. SARL HAMNET members have excelled in this task.

This year there has only been a few aviation incidents that SARL HAMNET has been requested to assist with. The most notable one was the Barberton incident where teams from Mpumalanga and Gauteng deployed to assist with locating an aircraft that had crashed in the Lebombo Mountains between Barberton and Eswatini. SARL HAMNET's role was to provide communications as there was no cellular services in the Lebombo Mountains. Again, this was an invaluable experience and all the senior SARL HAMNET members who deployed learned a lot of what worked, what challenges were experience and how one can be better prepared in the future.

SARL HAMNET leadership attends both the ARCC and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) meetings on a regular basis, but going forward will require more active participation from SARL HAMNET members in the port cities of Richard's Bay, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town and Saldanha Bay as the MRCC establishes Sub-Rescue Centres in these ports that are run by the local Harbour Masters. The exact requirements and terms of engagement still need to be established.

## IARU Monitoring Service

James Archibald, ZS6NS, Coordinator

The SARL remains a member of the IARU Region 1 Monitoring and Intruder Watch, known as IARUMS.



Over the past year the monitoring service has continued to document non-amateur intrusions which are typically:

- Over-the-horizon radars.
- Military digital modes.
- Broadcast stations operating inside amateur allocations; and
- Various unlicensed or misallocated signals.

Although these intrusions hinder radio amateurs from making full and proper use of their HF bands, the geo-location of South Africa makes us partially immune to the interference experienced in the Northern Hemisphere.

During the period of this report, the League received no formal reports of intruders in the HF bands (*but they do exist*).

For amateurs interested in obtaining further detailed information on where and what type of signals are received in our HF bands, a monthly newsletter is available from <https://www.iaru-r1.org/spectrum/monitoring-system/iarums-r1-newsletters/>. The monthly IARUMS Newsletters are published by Gaspar Miró, EA6AMM.

Recordings of military transmissions can be found on the Signal Identification Guide Wiki at [www.sigidwiki.com/wiki/Category:Military](http://www.sigidwiki.com/wiki/Category:Military).

Monitor the short-wave bands on-line with a web based SDR receiver at [www.websdr.org/](http://www.websdr.org/) IARU Monitoring System (IARUMS) [www.iarums-r1.org/](http://www.iarums-r1.org/)

James has indicated that he is stepping down as the IARUMS Coordinator for the SARL.

## The QSL Bureau

Gert du Plessis, ZR6GRT

A substantial amount of QSL cards were received during the year.

The QSL cards for Division 1 to 5 were distributed and forwarded via PUDO. Currently here are quite a few cards for division 6 that need to be sent to the clubs and to the SARL members who do not belong to a club. This will be done within the next month as I am moving house and should pay more attention to the cards by the end of May.

The current situation with the Post Office with a likely risk of the state-owned entity entering liquidation failing to achieve financial sustainability make it difficult to send mail overseas and within South Africa with the assurance that the mail will reach its destination.

Council is working on an agreement with the German Amateur Radio Society, the DARC QSL Bureau on providing a QSL service for international QSL cards. A difficult process at present as the standard service that the DARC QSL Bureau is not suitable for the SARL requirement thus work in progress.

## Publications

Dennis Green, ZS4BS

### Radio ZS

Twelve issues of Radio ZS were published in the period under review. Thank you to the regular contributors and thank to the Clubs who provide me with a copy of their newsletters. Radio ZS can be found at <https://mysarl.org.za/radio-zs-archives/> and the IT Team is working on the archive of previous issues. Gert, ZS6GC provides the monthly updated Radio ZS Index. Thank you Gert.

### HF Happenings



The HF Happenings newsletter is published almost every week (there are times when I miss out because of other activities!) The Newsletter is sent out via e-mail and can be found at <https://mysarl.org.za/hf-happenings/>.

You can subscribe at [HFHappenings+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:HFHappenings+subscribe@groups.io).

## On the Air Activity

### Amateur Radio Today

Amateur Radio Today is produced weekly by Hans van de Groenendaal, ZS6AKV with input from Dave Reece, ZS1DFR (SARL Hamnet), Dave Long, ZS5FR (Satellites), Brian Jacobs, ZS6YZ (Focus on VHF) and Dennis Green, ZS4BS (HF News). The hour-long programme is transmitted on Sunday at 10:00 CAT on various VHF/UHF repeaters with a relay by Louis Veldkamp, ZR4DJL on 7 115 kHz. What is the possibility of having a relay on 60 metres (5 MHz)?



There is a repeat transmission on Monday evenings at 19:30 CAT on 3 620 kHz by courtesy of Andy Cairns, ZS6ADY. Amateur Radio Today is also available for download on [www.sarl.org.za](http://www.sarl.org.za).

### SARL News Team

The SARL News Team ensures an Afrikaans and English bulletin every Sunday morning. The length of the bulletin is dependent on news items received in the News Inbox.



Each week an invitation is extended to Clubs and members to submit news items, but very few take the opportunity to do so. Clubs do not want to advertise their activities or achievements. "We invite clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, in both English and Afrikaans where possible, by uploading the news item at [mysarl.org.za/news-inbox/](https://mysarl.org.za/news-inbox/) or by sending items to [news@sarl.org.za](mailto:news@sarl.org.za) no later than Friday morning preceding the bulletin date."

The text bulletins are uploaded to <https://mysarl.org.za/hq-sunday-bulletin-and-archives/> while the audio bulletins are available at <https://sarlnews.podbean.com/>. The bulletins are sent out on a Saturday afternoon via the SARL Communications mailing list (781 members). You can subscribe at [sarlcommunications+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:sarlcommunications+subscribe@groups.io).

I extend a word of thanks to the SARL News Team – Hannes, ZS6JDE; Dave, ZS1DFR; Kevern, ZR2BK; Herman, ZS6CTA; Deon, ZR1X; Andy, ZS6ADY; Paul, ZS1S; Viv, ZS6VD; Rory, ZS2BL; Irene, ZS6IEA and Christo, ZS3CDW. Johan, ZS6JHB became a silent key during the year, unfortunately nobody volunteered to take his place.

## Advertisers on the Web and Radio ZS

Dennis Green, ZS4BS, Editor of Radio ZS

The Council and Members would like to thank the following businesses who advertise on the League web site and in Radio ZS - Sam's Radios; RF Design; ICOM Hamshack Pretoria; ZS2BL's S.A. Hamshack; Hot Tools, Bombastik and Ronnies Shop. Please support our advertisers!

## SARL Awards

Dennis Green, ZS4BS, SARL Secretary

Tjerk Lammers, ZS1J handles the issuing of the Certificates for the All Africa Award, the Worked All ZS Award and the Top Band Certificate and this information can be found in the SARL Awards Directory [http://www.zs6p.com/SARL Awards Directory.pdf](http://www.zs6p.com/SARL_Awards_Directory.pdf).



The Trophies and Awards for 2025 will be handed to the various recipients at the 2026 Awards Dinner at the Willows in Port Elizabeth on 2 May. The names of the worthy recipients will be announced at the Dinner and published in the June 2026 issue of Radio ZS.

## Contest Working Group

Johann Bezuidenhout, ZS6JBZ

Contesting is an integral part of our hobby and popular from a national and international sporting perspective. Under the leadership of Johann Bezuidenhout, ZS6JBZ with team members Gerhard Coetzee, ZS3TG; Phillip van Tonder, ZS6PVT, Karel Bezuidenhout, ZS6WN; Philip Fischer, ZS6FY; Danie Schnetler, ZS6DPS and Karel Bezuidenhout, ZR6K (the Younger) ensures that this important aspect of our hobby functions extremely well.



I would like to thank this team sincerely for your continued support and dedication in executing this important work, ensuring that the contesting management required continue to cater for the contest preferences of a broad spectrum of amateur radio operators.

The Contest Working Group of the SARL has been actively involved in enhancing and promoting the competitive spirit within the amateur radio community through various contests throughout 2025 and into 2026.

The group has successfully executed and managed a comprehensive schedule of contests, contributing significantly to the vibrant contesting environment in South Africa. The results of these contests were published on the SARL Contest Information WhatsApp Group, in SARL News and HF Happenings, providing participants with timely feedback on their performance and encouraging a healthy competitive environment.

Participation in contests during 2025 improved over 2024. The VHF/UHF contests has remained a challenge.

For 2026, a two leg 20 m Club Contest has been introduced with the intent that those in ZS1 will be able to more successfully participate with better propagation to the Northern reaches of the country.

It is most pleasant to work with this group of individuals and I would like to thank you all sincerely for your continued support and dedication in providing and executing this important work.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Contest Working Group is focused on not only maintaining the momentum gained in recent years but also expanding participation in and the reach and impact of contests within the amateur radio community.

### **ZS100SARL and the 2025 SARL Centenary Marathon QSO Party**

In 2025, the South African Radio League (SARL) celebrated its 100th anniversary - 20 May 2025 to 19 May 2026.



1925 saw the birth of the South African Radio Relay League. At the outset membership was strictly restricted to experimenters in possession of a licence and capable of conducting two-way telegraphic communication. In 1926 there was a membership of 90, all experimenters actively engaged in transmission work. QTC was the first printed magazine issued by the League in May 1928. In 1947 the word Relay was dropped and the SARRL became the South African Radio League (SARL).

In 2025 the SARL has over 1 500 members, presents two radio amateur's exams (RAE) per year, runs a QSL bureau, publishes a weekly HF Happenings newsletter and a monthly Radio ZS magazine. The SARL transmits a weekly news bulletin and the on-air magazine programme called Amateur Radio Today. The SARL runs several local and international contests to promote the radio amateur hobby. The SARL represents South African radio amateurs at the South African Regulator as well as in IARU Region 1.

### **The SARL Centenary Marathon QSO Party**

In conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the SARL, the SARL Centenary Marathon QSO Party ran as a year-long operating event starting at 00:00 UTC on 1 January 2025 and ran through to 23:59 UTC on 31 December 2025.

Participating amateur radio operators worldwide worked South African amateur radio stations. Operators who submitted their logs containing QSOs made during 2025 with South African amateur radio stations received Gold, Silver, Bronze and Participation certificates depending on the number of stations and special event call signs contacted.

Operators who wish to submit their 2025 operating log (in ADIF or excel format) to [sarlcentenary@sarl.org.za](mailto:sarlcentenary@sarl.org.za) have until 30 June 2026 to apply for an award certificate.

### **Centenary Call Sign ZS100SARL**

During 2025 the SARL, with the aid of its members and associated clubs, was on the air with a special event call sign ZS100SARL. Two-way QSOs were made using CW, phone and digital on 160, 80, 60, 40, 30, 20, 17, 15, 12, 10, 6, 2 metres and 70 centimetres. All QSOs were uploaded to the ARRL Log of the World, QRZ.com, Club Log and the SARL SA-QSL systems.

### **Operating Activity**

4 332 QSOs were logged during the year, 353 CW, 425 SSB, 11 FM, 9 FT4 and 3 534 FT8 QSOs. Theunis, ZS2EC was responsible for 3 561 of those QSOs. 3 051 unique call signs were worked across 115 DX zones. Bands worked 160 m to 70 cm. 324 South African stations and 2 727 DX QSOs were worked.

### **Confirmations**

2 693 QSL on LotW  
3 035 confirmed QRZ.com

### **Awards received**

The QSL requirements for WAZS on SA-QSL were met and a certificate received  
The ZS100SARL call sign achieved QSLs with 100 DXCC entities and has received a DX Century Club award from the ARRL.

### **QSL activity**

QSLworld.com was used to send out an e-QSL card to all call signs contacted (1 card per station). The ZS100SARL QRZ.com page is active, including its ClubLog OQRS QSL card request link. ZS100SARL QSL cards can be requested via ClubLog OQRS or by e-mailing QSO details and a request to [sarlcentenary@gmail.com](mailto:sarlcentenary@gmail.com)

## **VHF/UHF and Microwave Manager**

### **SARL Repeater Coordination Working Group**

Phillip Van Tonder, ZS6PVT

### **The Past Year**

As expected, the past year was relatively quiet regarding new repeater applications. The SARL Repeater Work Group processed three applications and provided ongoing assistance with license renewals and ICASA support.

### **License Updates and Re-licensing – Gauteng (Pretoria)**

The SARL Repeater Work Group was tasked with assisting the Pretoria Amateur Radio Club (PARC) with various club and repeater licenses. These applications were successfully completed and transferred to the SARL ICASA license system. This transition offers significant

benefits to organizations like clubs; by having licenses held by the SARL rather than individuals, license administration becomes far more flexible and sustainable.

A special thank you goes to Noel, ZR6DX for his ICASA liaison work and management of the ICASA Portal. I would also like to acknowledge Rassie, ZS1YT for his time, effort, and expertise with the ICASA system, which was instrumental in achieving this ideal outcome.

The list of updated repeaters includes:

- ZU9NSD: Wonderboom (438,825 MHz) – PARC
- ZU9OSE: Radcliff (145,725 MHz) – PARC
- ZU9NSF: Midrand (439,025 MHz) – PARC

### **New Application**

New application was done with assistance given to Mpisi Club close to Vryheid and the Polokwane Repeater interest group. All three the new licenses are in the 70 cm band and frequency is listed below:

- ZU9MPS: Mpisi Mountain Vryheid (438,750 MHz)
- ZU9PLR: Radar Hill Polokwane (439,100 MHz)
- ZU9PLY: Ysterberg Polokwane (439,150 MHz)

### **Record Keeping**

The repeater list was updated by cross-referencing known active repeaters with the records on the previous SARL website. To bolster the accuracy of the database, several calls were made to clubs and repeater custodians to update their records; these requests were also broadcast via the SARL Sunday News Bulletins.

Response to these requests was limited, and very few new or previously unknown records were updated. Simultaneously, the Repeater-Book application was updated using the data received. Following Noel's, ZR6DX resignation in June 2025, record keeping has been maintained via a spreadsheet, which can be viewed on the MySARL webpage. A copy of the repeater records, including custodian contact details, was sent to SARL HAMNET for use in emergency situations.

### **Unlicensed and Incorrectly Operated Repeaters**

It remains a well-known fact that several unlicensed and unlisted repeaters are still in use. In these cases, no attempt has been made to update information or present a valid license to the Repeater Work Group. Instances of "applied self" licenses were observed last year and brought to the attention of ICASA in hopes of eliminating this practice. A formal letter was sent to ICASA requesting co-operation in addressing this phenomenon.

### **Digital Repeater Network**

The Repeater Work Group continues to monitor the digital repeater network closely. Digital communication and talk-groups have grown in popularity, with a national DMR net now active on Tuesday nights as well as other nets during the week and lots of activity on the popular talk groups. D-STAR has also seen a resurgence in popularity, bolstered by the technical talk presented on the Sandton Power Hour Tech Talk platform by Dick, ZS6BUN.

The implementation of transcoders bridging the DMR and D-STAR realms is a breakthrough, showing great potential for newcomers and the younger, tech-savvy generation. We extend a special thanks to the digital administrators working behind the scenes - Johann, ZS6JPL and Jan, ZS1Z for their many years of dedicated service.

I wish everyone increased repeater activity and continued enjoyment of the amateur radio hobby!

### **SARL VHF/UHF/SHF: DXCC, VUCC and Distance Records Table.**

Paul Smit, ZS6NK

Twelve updates were made over this period, eleven in 2025 and one in January 2026. Members, as in previous years, have been asked for inputs although a handful do send claims without prompting. The records can be found at <https://mysarl.org.za/vhf-uhf/>.

### **Report on Beacons from the VHF Working Group**

Brian Jacobs, ZS6YZ

The Karoo Beacon Project has been put on hold due to a shortage of time and resources.

The site is still available in Strydenburg. The security on the site still needs to be upgraded and the solar power system needs to be specified and quotes obtained. All the beacon hardware has been purchased and is now waiting to be integrated into a fully operational beacon and to be thoroughly tested before being installed on the site in Strydenburg. All antennas and splitter cables have also been purchased.

The hope is to get more younger enthusiastic amateurs involved in the project to take it to fruition. The project still holds great value to the amateur community even though the general interest in VHF and above still has not recovered since the key of Carl, ZS6CBQ fell silent.

### **IARU Region 1 President's Report 2024**

Sylvain Azarian, F4GKR

The report of the IARU Region 1 President was published on pages 105 to 142 of the April 2026 Radio ZS.