



Citizens Radio Emergency Service Teams
Australia Incorporated.

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Assisting the community through emergency communications

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30th August 2019.

Management and Board of Directors,
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal,
New South Wales.

Submission by CREST Australia Incorporated organisation in respect of Government charges proposed by IPART.

I forward this submission on behalf of the CREST Australia Incorporated body, which was re-introduced in 2013, and is constructed with senior members of our organisation to assist all States of Australia that have CREST Incorporated organisations within them. At this time, we have CREST organisations in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and recently re-opened in South Australia.

Our organisation members are trained for the specific services as follows, which are our objects:

- 2.1 To serve and provide assistance to the community through the use of two-way radio, in particular to maintain voluntary monitoring services to process:
 - (a) emergency communications involving the immediate safety of life of individuals or the immediate protection of property, and,
 - (b) communications necessary to render assistance to travellers.
- 2.2. To provide assistance to recognised emergency services and Government bodies in the event of emergencies and disasters, both nationally and locally.
- 2.3 To do such other lawful acts and things as may appear to be incidental or conducive to the above objects or any of them.

Since the inception of the CREST organisation in 1976 and through to 1993, CREST was represented in all States and Territories of Australia and monitors combined over each year to take many thousands, yes thousands, of calls from motorists who were passing or involved in incidents that required Emergency Services or Utilities to attend a scene. This service then, as it is today, is totally free of charge to the Citizens Band (CB) fraternity who still exist in their many thousands and travel our lands.

In 1993 a number of States were not able to continue and the then remaining States of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria continued on as they do today, where, even with the advent of mobile phones, monitors who are CREST members, are still taking calls for assistance from the general public through the two-way Citizens Band radio network.

In New South Wales, as in Queensland, Victoria and South Australia various repeaters are set up in locations where people are aware of them and know that they can use them in the event of an emergency or the need for passing a message.

To obtain these repeaters for our radio network and the locations to place them into operation Executive members of each State, have to go above and beyond their normal monitoring capabilities to obtain sites with the permission of land owners and then with mostly donated time and work, have persons erect the repeaters, so that they are able to be used by members of the Australian public when they are in need.

As totally "Not for Profit" organisations in each State, the incorporated CREST bodies struggle each year to obtain sufficient funds to operate these repeater sites let alone survive and continue to supply a necessary service to the public. Our organisation and its members are totally committed to the safety and well-being of members of the public as well assisting at various community activities such as fun runs, traffic control, or cycling events.

In the event that fees were charge to a Not for Profit organisation as ours is, then those Repeaters would have to be removed, and in doing so, would remove a valuable and monitored link for many, many people who own and operate Citizens Band Radios, such as travellers through our vast nation, farmers with radios in their farm equipment and vehicles not to mention their homesteads in the event of an emergency.

As a Not for Profit organisation, registered with ACNC, the ACMA (Australian Communications and Media Association) allow us to have "No Fee" licences so that our service to the public can be continued, year in year out.

In operating a four State organisation it is clearly seen that the amount of paperwork, mainly situated around both training, attending meetings and monitoring is submitted each year to continue to run the organisation is quite substantial and the notion that we would have to apply in New South Wales for a funding "offset" from one area of Government in order to pay another area of Government to remain active in the community, may become a little embarrassing to both of those areas of Government, when accounting for the monies payed out. It also fails for me to see, as the National Director of CREST, that there is any guarantee at all that each year, these funds will be paid out to applicants.

It appears that an explanation that the funding then given back, goes to the maintenance of any public lands, yet it may also be looked upon that the amount of maintenance carried out on public lands even though public funds would be transferred to the required department, it would be less than anywhere near substantial enough in the overall incomes or budgets of Government agencies.

As a member of CREST, since 1981, I have seen the work that volunteers put into our organisation and I firmly believe that volunteer or charitable organisations such as CREST, who literally rely on donations to operate communications networks on any type of radio communications site or sites, should in no way be charged any type of fee at all due to their community work, concern for other residents of our nation and the hours, unpaid, that they put into the safety of persons within our communities, through those networks.

If our sites are removed as we cannot pay for them, our service to those who rely on us to be there when needed ceases, as well as our ability to serve the public by supplying a missing link to emergency service or utilities when they are required.



**Jeffrey .C. Smith, ESM,
National Director,
CREST Australia Incorporated.**