

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST RADIO BROADCASTS

Walter Coxon first held a Morse code licence (callsign XYK) at Darlington in Perth. Walter was the first Western Australian to communicate with South Africa, Java, Holland, England, and America using Morse code. In 1918 Walter was the first in Australia to publically demonstrate music and speech broadcasts. This was from one side of the Perth Agricultural Show to the other during five days in October using a 78 RPM wind-up turntable and a telephone mouth piece, with a home-made transmitter. He was then granted Western Australia's first broadcast licence as **6AG**, transmitting from Highgate. He often broadcast concerts from his lounge room.

Walter was appointed President of the Wireless Institute of Australia (W.A. Division). He was the first person in Australia to use a water-cooled transmitter valve, and was described as "**The Father of Radio in Western Australia**", by the *West Australian* newspaper in 1928. He was the original Chief Engineer of Perth's first commercial station, **6WF**, and later equipped commercial stations **6ML**, **6BY**, and **6AM**. Walter designed the popular Mulgaphone receiver which was built by **6WF**, selling 1,200 at £50 each (10 weeks average wage). Walter also pioneered the technical work for the Royal Flying Doctor Radio Service in Western Australia.



13-08-1919 was the date of the **first A.W.A. demonstration of music broadcasts**. This was by A.W.A. Chairman, Ernest **Fisk** during a lecture at the Royal Society of N.S.W., at 5 Elizabeth Street, Sydney. The single valve A.W.A. built transmitter was at Wireless House, 97 Clarence Street, and the signal travelled approximately 100 yards. 20 telephone earpieces with tin horns attached were hung from the ceiling as loudspeakers. The transmission only lasted long enough to play the record "God Save the King". Earlier, using 21 KHz. in 1918, **Fisk was the first to communicate directly between Australia and the United Kingdom** (using Morse code). In 1920, A.W.A. experimented with regular broadcasts of weekly concerts.

13-10-1920 saw a demonstration of music broadcasting by A.W.A. Chairman, Ernest **Fisk**, to members of Parliament in Melbourne's Queens Hall, at the request of the Prime Minister, the Right Hon. Billy Hughes. This signal also travelled approximately 100 yards, again using the record "God Save the King". Weekly test broadcasts commenced three months later, being heard up to 1,600 kilometres away. Their 500 watt Marconi transmitter was at the Brighton home of the A.W.A. manager, Lionel Hooke. Lionel had previously accompanied Shackleton's Polar expedition to Antarctica as the shipboard Morse code wireless operator. He was knighted in 1957, and appointed Chairman of A.W.A. after Ernest **Fisk** in 1962.

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST LICENCED BROADCAST STATION

2CM Sydney 1921. Before becoming Australia's first licenced broadcast station, **2CM** was an experimental station owned by "**Australia's Leading Amateur**", **Charles MacLurcan**.



The Will James band practising in the Wentworth Hotel Ballroom before a live broadcast on 2CM

Australia's first licensed broadcast station in 1922. (Pictured is Charles shortwave QSL card).

Charles's station was first licenced in 1911 as a Morse code station (callsign XDM). Charles broke numerous long distance radio records, including a .0037 watt transmission heard in New Zealand. He was also often heard in San Francisco. He was the only Australian licensed amateur allowed to operate during WWI. Situated at Strathfield after tests atop his family's Wentworth hotel. **2CM** started on longwave 214 KHz. using seven watts with Sunday night classical concerts.

Following new Government legislation, **Charles was issued with the first broadcasting licence in Australia (licence number one signed by the Prime Minister, Billy Hughes) in December 1922** (most historians wrongly credit **2SB** 23-11-1923, as our first licensed broadcaster). Charles then received over 2,000 letters praising his first transmissions.

2CM was the first Australian station to publish a program guide, and every program ended with "*don't forget to wind up the cat and put out the clock*". **2CM** moved to shortwave on 2-2-1924. Charles MacLurcan was President of the Wireless Institute following Ernest Fisk and designed and built the popular MacLurcan radio receiver. Callsign **2CM** is the only one listed by the Federal Government as "*never to be reissued*" in recognition of the pioneering broadcasting achievements of Charles MacLurcan. The photo is of Josie Melville on air in the **2CM** studio on 6-3-1923 as Australia's first female announcer.

