

## **2012 Otago Rally from the perspective of Martin ZL4JH**

For me, it was quite frenetic leading into it as we were doing the tank upgrade and the Highcliff cross-bander upgrade.

The brilliantly fine weather leading into the rally meant it was too tempting to finish painting the Karetai Road tank instead of organising weekend working bees, complicated by the need to do major repairs to my trailer to get it warranted again to finish the tank water-blasting. (But that saga is another story!)

On the Tuesday before, it became even worse when my main laptop failed during a Marine Radio course. With the main laptop unavailable on the Wednesday and Thursday, I had to set up temporary systems to complete the radio course and also to programme all the official's radios plus my own. Fortunately, I had all my Icom programming backed up on a penstick but this all just added an unwanted complication.

Thursday afternoon was spent sorting a temporary 665, installing it, and preparing cables, aerials etc for the Main Base installation at the Southern Cross.

From Friday morning it was simply busy but routine and all went well – leading the team on the roof installing all the aerials while the second team installed the base radio set-up. Then installing the six official vehicles radios – apart from one vehicle that was 24 volts, no issues and all straight forward. I omitted to note which radio and related equipment went into each radio – need to do that next time but no problems tracking all the equipment at the end. We made sure we used only mag-mount aerials with RG58 coax and all ciggy lighter adaptors were in heavy duty cable which while it might be inflexible is rugged.

Saturday and Sunday were very routine – no radio issues to resolve, Terry ZL4TAE had handled the installation and de-installation of the STSP repeater, and for the first time, 665 didn't need to be restored immediately after the event. Ask Terry about the de-installation. Something about he was very grateful Brady ZL4PDX and a group of friends were available to help as the supplied key for the padlock wouldn't work and they had to backpack the whole system about a kilometer – and that battery is very heavy!

The only suggestion in the “official radio” department if we do it again, is to have the stage start radio operator stick his head in each official vehicle as they pass and check the channel they are on and any changes that might be needed during the stage, and if the operator enters via the stage as sometimes occurs do a coverage survey through the stage. Doing this up the Waipori Gorge enabled me to explain to each official car that coverage at the start was very marginal on Maungatua, died after a few hundred metres, and then contrary to earlier advice, the Swampy repeater was the one to use from half way down until the end.

And the longest network in use – at the start of Waipori Gorge stage - handheld on UHF to cross-bander in car – to 6675 on VHF, to Highcliff crossbander to base via UHF. Two crossbanders and one repeater – three repeats using 4 different frequencies – other links would have been similar

## Summary

The most technically complex yet, with the most repeaters in use, and arguably the most successful with few difficulties, and no army to wreck our crucial repeater.

### 6 aerials – 6 radios and 8 channels, or was it nine!

1	VHF dipole	VHF radio
2	VHF dipole	VHF radio
3	Dual band colinear	Dual band radio
4	Discone	UHF radio/VHF Radio
5	Dual band collinear	Dual band radio
6	UHF dipole stack	Teamtalk trunking radio

### Existing services used

690 + Mosgiel crossbander

665

915

### STSP

6675 in the Berwick Forest with fixed crossbander at Highcliff.

### Commercial/CD services used.

ESB 130 North Otago CD on Mt Ob

+ crossbander at ZL4JH

ES 52 TE Radio on Swampy summit

+ crossbander at ZL4TAE.

Downer Edi Works network for official vehicles.

Teamtalk organised by and used by OSSCC

Not used but available as back-up - CDA and CD 19/02

### Installation/de-installation team at the hotel

Lindsey ZL4KS, Martin ZL4JH, Dave ZL4TAQ, Vernon ZL4VM, Bede ZL4KX, Stephen ZL4SLG

### Operators at the hotel

Lindsey ZL4KS, Dave ZL4TAQ, Paul ZL4PH, Bede ZL4KX, Vernon ZL4VM, Ross ZL4RC, Dave ZL4SB, Stephen ZL4SLG

### Field Operators

Roy ZL4RP, Stephen ZL4SLG, Bob ZL4OC, Martin ZL4JH, Kevin ZL4QD, Arthur ZL4TIK, Lindsay ZL4LDS, Bede ZL4KX, Alan ZL4XDJ, Braidy ZL4PDX, Alan ZL4FM, David ZL4DK, Bill ZL4AE, Alan ZL4QC, Terry ZL4TAE, Elizabeth ZL4JC, Robin ZL4BX, Mike ZL4DM, Ron ZL4TL and Dave ZL4SB.

Plus many partners, friends, and other helpers both at base and out in the field.

Martin Balch ZL4JH