



CREST NSW Incorporated

AFFILIATED WITH THE NSW VOLUNTEER RESCUE ASSOCIATION.



With our organisation's commitment to public safety by providing CB repeaters for community use; supplying radio networks in emergencies; and assisting community events, we seek additional consideration by the IPART review tribunal. With minimal government funding and donations, under the IPART draft changes and rental increases, as well as the removal of rebates, with our current funding we would not be in a position to continue our community work.

- Providing communication in areas where the local communications do not exist, while many of these are temporary, we try to establish repeater sites, saving the need to setup equipment ad hoc.
- Providing repeaters for Citizens Band users, this provides no income to pay any invoice. We would have to remove this equipment, leaving communities with no means of communications should the local radio and Telco resources fail such as happened in the Newcastle earthquake.

Most charitable organisations providing communications to assist communities receive their communications licences free. The Federal Government can see the asset we and others provide to the community, they have also removed the red tape, so these organisations do not have to complete annual forms for renewal.

To fund the Government charges proposed by IPART, we and others would be required to raise additional funds. Under the current fundraising requirements, we would be required to tell the public what we are raising the funds for. This may be politically embarrassing to the Government, when it is explained we are raising public funds to pay government charges.

While it may become possible to apply for a rebate, most volunteer organisations have a mountain of paperwork that is required to keep the organisation operating, our organisation has a mountain just in training.

Yet to gain a rebate (if one is applied) we would need to apply annually, more to deal with. This is also made worse by the fact that we would have to apply for a funding offset to a separate agency for costs incurred from the first agency, plus we would be completely at their mercy regarding as to whether funds would be provided.

While the logic behind the charges for towers on Crown Lands may provide funding to 3 government departments, we find the explanation for this is out of left field. On many of these communications sites the access is a goat track, 4WD only with no maintenance, the tracks cause access issues, with farmers charging ridiculous fees to use their roads as the road to the site as it is not in the easement.

It has been explained that this funding goes to the maintenance of the public lands, yet the amount of direct involvement in additional expenses incurred as a result of community or charitable organisations would be miniscule in the overall maintenance budgets of Government agencies.

In the best interests of the community, any volunteer or charitable organisation should not be charged to operate communications equipment on a radio communications site, this would be in line with the Commonwealth application in licensing of the equipment.

CREST NSW