

## 2016 Keith Roget Memorial National Parks Award activation weekend

This is the report on last weekend's Keith Roget Memorial National Park Award 2016. (Formerly the VK3 National Parks Award)

The activation period was held across 4 days. Friday November 11 to Monday November 14. 2016 was the 6th annual activation weekend.

The aim of the activation period was to stimulate Portable Amateur Radio "activity" in as many of the 45 VK3 National Parks as possible, to assist both Hunters and Activators to gain "credits" in order to progress their points tally towards achieving their Award program goals..... And, of course, to also have fun in the Great Outdoors.

In 2016 a total of 41 VK3 National Parks were activated across the 4 day period by 25 (possibly 26) Operators. The number of Parks activated was a substantial increase from the previous record of 34 Parks (2015), as indeed was the number of park activators braving the elements and the QRN.

As a brief comparison: 2011: 11 Parks / 2012: 15 Parks / 2013: 26 Parks / 2014: 34 Parks / 2015: 28 Parks / 2016: 41 Parks.

Again in 2016 the weekend attracted many; much welcomed and appreciated Portable Activators from VK2, VK4 and VK5. A **BIG** thank you to you all! Your efforts contributed to the activation of many VK3 National Parks which would otherwise not have been available to Hunters.

The Interstate visitor breakdown was as follows:

**VK2AWJ/3, John**, has been a regular Activator participant since 2011, and many look forward to chatting with John as he travels in his trusty Campervan visiting VK3 National Parks. John teamed up this year with **Peter, VK3ZPF**, to successfully activate French Island on Friday and later travelled to Wilsons Promontory NP, Morwell NP and finally Tarra-Bulga NP. Thanks John!

**VK5AV/3**, Tim travelled from Mt. Gambier to activate the much sought after Mt. Eccles NP. Unfortunately, Tim was plagued with an intermittent transceiver problem and was forced to abandon operations early in proceedings. Thanks for giving it a go Tim!

**Paul, VK5PAS/3** once again made the journey from the Adelaide Hills, visiting the Murray River region with activations of the very wet Gunbower and Barmah National Parks. Paul also visited Victoria's answer to Ayers Rock..... Terrick Terrick National Park. While in the region Paul was able to activate several VKFF Regional Parks and one SOTA peak. Thanks Paul!

**Lesley VK5LOL/3** and **Hans VK5YX/3** travelled once again to enjoy a weekend in Wyperfeld National Park and the Murray –Sunset National Park. The weather conditions in this area were very taxing as I understand it. Thanks for being there Folks and assisting with the KRMNPA weekend.

**David, VK3TUN / VK5DG** made 35 contacts from the Lower Glenelg NP. Three of those Park contacts were via the Oscar-29 Satellite. David also bagged 8 new VK3 National Parks. David has also achieved the basic Award across the weekend as **VK3TUN** with 15 Parks worked. Well done David.

While travelling around Australia with XYL, Doris, well known activator **Rob, VK4AAC/3** has been busily going Portable in the Parks. Rob was heard with his usual big signal from Heathcote-Graytown NP on Friday and Little Desert National Park. Keep up the good work Rob, and thanks for being there.

The remaining Parks were activated by an equally keen group of VK3 Amateurs:

**Warren VK3BYD/P** travelled to the rarely activated Burrowa-Pine Mountain National Park on Sunday after a full day in the Alpine National Park working from Mt. Nelse on Saturday. Warren used CW and SSB for his many contacts (40 & 80m) including SOTA activations. Warren reports one P2P with Peter VK3PF (Baw Baw) on 80m. Thanks Warren for your continued support.

**Tim VK3MTB/P** again supported the weekend with activations from The Lakes NP and Tarra Bulga NP with great results for many Hunters. Thanks Tim for participating in 2016.

**Peter VK3TKK/P** was out and about across the weekend with activations in the Chiltern- Mt. Pilot NP, Warby-ovens NP, Mount Buffalo NP and the Churchill NP and on Sunday the Organ Pipes NP. Peter also added a few VKFF activations during his travels. Thanks Peter for your support and providing a few VKFF new ones at the same time!

**Mick VK3PMG/P**, travelled from home town Stawell to the Kara Kara NP Saturday morning followed by a quick trip to the Grampians in the afternoon. Mick was also spotted deep in the Warby – Ovens NP giving out much needed contacts. Thanks again for your participation Mick in 2016.

**Norm, VK3XCI/P** travelled from Mildura on Friday to the Wyperfeld NP..... Reports indicate Norm suffered huge QRN due to the local severe storm activity as did **Rex VK3OF/P** and **Greg VK3BRQ/P** who were also in the Park on Friday night. When questioned about the Storm activity Rex commented “it was an interesting night. Let’s leave it at that” So the message is “it’s not *always* fun!”

Rex and Greg also activated Hattah-Kulkyne with solid signals while Norm moved to the Little Desert NP and had serious problems keeping the Squid Pole standing. 22 Park

contacts for Norm from Little Desert and on Monday with an audience of mystified Asian and European tourists Norm managed 10 quick contacts before the Squid Pole went horizontal and it was QRT. Thanks Rex, Greg and Norm!

**Hiro, VK3EHG/P**, was putting out a great signal from Dandenong Ranges National Park, both on CW and SSB once again in 2016. Thanks Hiro. Great to have you on board again.

**Bernard VK3AV/P** was also very busy out and about activating the Lake Eildon NP with 11 contacts including DX contacts with Christchurch, Fiji, and Tonga. And 4 other VK3 Parks: Brisbane Ranges, Organ Pipes, Kinglake and finally the Yarra Ranges NP on Sunday afternoon. Bernard reports many trees were down in the area following the wild storms of the weekend. Thanks Bernard for your efforts.

Regular Park activator and hunter **Brett, VK3FLCS/P** was able to spend a few hours on Saturday, activating the Greater Bendigo National Park and adding to his growing list of portable activities. Excellent to see another Foundation Licence in the mix. Well done Brett!

Brisbane Ranges NP was, as usual, a well activated Park with **Malcolm, VK3MEL** joining in the fun across the weekend. Thanks Mal.

The dynamic duo, **Joe VK3YSP** and **Julie VK3FOWL**, were kept busy running the **VK3SRC** call sign..... School Amateur Radio Club Network..... from both the Mornington Peninsula and the Point Nepean National Parks. **VK3SRC** worked over 25 VK3 National Parks across the weekend and has already applied for the Level Two KRMNPAward. Well done Joe and Julie.

Over in the east of the state, activity was also high with well-known Calls working from National Parks.....

**Allen VK3ARH** reports a "big and successful weekend". Allen worked hard to activate all of his 5 registered parks including Lind, Alfred, Croajingolong, Coopracambra and Errinundra Parks. Great effort Allen and much appreciated by all.

**Peter VK3PF/P** reports working from home QTH on Saturday morning with 10 National Parks worked and 10 VKFF references as a bonus. Baw Baw was visited by Peter in the afternoon with 48 contacts including 13 VK3 National Parks. Peter went portable again on Sunday in the Mitchell River National Park, (one of the rarer parks) to ensure as many Hunters as possible were able to secure Mitchell River. From Mitchell River NP VK3PF/P made a contact with David VK5PL which resulted in a KRMNPA Merit Award. (see below) Well done Peter.

**Peter VK3ZPF** was once again busy across the weekend. Peter joined **John VK2AWJ/3** on French Island on Friday and later moved to fill some spots in the much need Snowy River and Errinundra parks in a camping trip to the region. To break the drive home, Peter reports he caught up with **Tim VK3MTB** in the Morwell National Park and later with **Peter VK3TKK** while he was activating the Bunyip State park during his travels. Peter logged 126 QSOs which included 7 DX and 13 VK3 National Parks. Thanks Peter.

Amateur Radio Victoria (ARV) call sign, **VK3WI**, was available from the Brisbane Ranges for a short period on Friday evening making 37 contacts before going QRT.

And finally me..... **Tony VK3XV** managed to activate 5 Parks across the weekend being Lower Goulburn, Greater Bendigo, Chiltern-Mt. Pilot, Heathcote-Graytown and Warby Ovens. Sheryl and I got just a little wet on the Sunday which slowed us down, however overall we were able to contribute 170 contacts for park hunters. And the best part of those 170 contacts was hearing "thanks for the new one". Like many activators across the weekend that was a regular exchange. Terrific.

And one of these Happy Hunters was **David, VK5PL**, who after chasing VK3 National Parks for the Award for 2+ years finally snared the elusive Park 45 with a contact to the Mitchell River National Park being operated by **Peter VK3PF/P**.

**David, VK5PL** has already successfully applied for the Hunters Merit Award. Well done David.

I will let David tell his story:

Before the weekend I had worked 43 of the National Parks so I was looking for just 2 to complete the set. Mitchell River NP and Warby Ovens NP.

On Friday I had a short time at the radio and worked 3 parks but not the missing two. Conditions had improved from previous weeks where I had only been able to hear a couple of parks over the past 3-4 weeks.

On Saturday I was able to spend a bit longer on the radio and picked up 7 parks including Warby-Ovens NP courtesy of Tony 3XV, so now only one to go!

Sunday now and conditions are not too good, a little local rain and quite a bit of noise about. I saw a spot that 3PF Peter was in Mitchell River but on tuning the frequency I could hear his voice but was unable to make out words so was unsure when he was calling or listening to another call so I tuned around looking for others but kept coming back in case conditions improved. I worked Paul 5PAS in Barmah, listened for Peter then heard Rex 3OF booming in at 59 and gave him a call. I wasn't really listening to his next contact as I entered the contact in the log, but thought he mentioned 3PF so my ears perked up. He then called me back and told me to go up 5 to try a contact, as Peter had heard me & I think he knew I needed the park. On 7.140 I called in and I could now make out words, exchanged reports and I became emotional about the final park to complete the award and almost could not finish the contact, but a deep breath and I had done it.

Thanks to Amateur Radio Victoria for supporting the award that has taken me 2 years to finish. Thanks to all the activators who have braved all weathers to enable us Hunters to have fun chasing them. I have worked quite a lot of the parks several times as the Activators also need us Hunters to get the award for themselves as activators.

As the ARV Awards Manager I have no doubt I will also be getting other Applications in the next few weeks as other Hunters and Activators tally up their totals. I look forward to receiving applications in due course and these will be announced on the Group as usual.

Again in 2016 ARV will be providing a 2016 Participants Certificate to all Activators. I will begin processing these in the next few weeks and will soon begin posting Certificates to Activators.

The **2017 KRMNPA** activation weekend will take place **Friday November 10 - Monday November 13**. Please put this Date in your Diary now.

In closing, sincere thanks to **ALL** who participated ..... Both Hunters & Activators.

And also special thanks to Allen VK3HRA (Parks N Peaks and AR publicity) Peter VK3PF (AR Publicity and supporter), Paul VK5PAS (Parks supporter/ VKFF Award Manager), Jim Linton VK3PC (ARV Publicity) and the Amateur Radio Victoria Council..... Without your interest and support of Portable activities, the Bands would be a very different scenario from what we have now. Thanks to all!

73 Tony VK3XV