

## VK9DWX News

### News #1 - 12.01.2008

After a very successful DXpedition to Norfolk Island in February 2007 with over 60.000 QSOs logged under VK9DNX the activation of Willis Island is planned for October 2008. The same experienced team from VK9DNX (DJ7EO, DJ9RR, DL1MGB, DL3DXX, DL5LYM, DL6FBL, DL8OH und DL8WPX) will be QRV with four high power stations for about 17 days from 160m to 10m in CW, SSB and RTTY.

The landing permission is granted, the license is expected to be issued the next days and a suitable charter vessel is secured.

Stay tuned and please consider contributing to the high costs especially for the charter of the boat. Thank you very much for a generous donation.

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### News #2 - 14.01.2008

#### License

Our license is issued. We got our vanity callsign VK9DWX following the great success of VK9DNX. It is still time to edit your country database of your logging software.

#### Website

With the help of Christian (DL6KAC) we installed an RSS feed. With it we want to inform you about news before, during and after the DXpedition, about website updates and about online log updates.

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### News #3 - 24.05.2008

The DXpedition Team was rather active during the last couple of months. Here the latest news:

#### Local support

We are happy to have found substantial support in VK-Land through Dale, VK4DMC who lives near Cairns, Queensland. Dale is a very valuable help in talking to our local partners like ship-owner, authorities and logistic companies.

#### Team Update

We are also very happy to welcome Robert, SP5XVY, as a new team-member. Robert was part of the very successful VP6DX-operation and will strengthen our SSB and RTTY positions. We also want to welcome Gerd, DJ5IW, as a new team member.

#### QSL manager

And we are very pleased to announce that QSL-Service will be again in the hands of Mario, DJ2MX, who did a very reliable job after our VK9DNX-DXpedition.

#### Technical issues

Planning of antenna and station concepts is going on and not yet finished. Joerg, DL8WPX, is still working on this very intensively. So far, we evaluated our concept of four stations with full legal

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power, operating at the same time and on the same band in different modes, if situation is requiring. As our location will be very close to the beach, antennas will be vertical antennas on all bands, with arrays from 80m to 10m. We will have beverages for better receiving possibilities on the low bands.

### 6m operations

Right now, we have not yet decided, whether it will be meaningful to operate 6m, because it will require more costs and time and we are not sure if the (probably only small) results are worth the efforts. Maybe we will hear more on this in our guestbook soon. Let us know, how strong you would support a 6m operation.

### Donations Update

Raising funds to cover the considerable costs of this expedition is a crucial factor in our planning. Therefore, your contribution and financial support is welcome and helpful to relieve the tight DXpedition budget.

We are very happy that Uli, KK8I, offered his services to help us with donations in US dollars. Now available on our website is an additional PayPal button for donations in US dollars. Also, cheques are welcome which should be made payable to Ulrich Ann.

We are also proud to announce that the Northern California DX Foundation supports our DXpedition with a notable contribution. The NCDXF also offered that donations of \$100 or above from the US can be made to NCDXF and obtain Tax Deductibility (consult your advisor). Make the check payable to NCDXF and on the check memo line write: "directed contribution - VK9DWX Willis Island Expedition 2008".

Mail the NCDXF check to:

Bruce Butler, W6OSP<br />  
4220 Chardonnay Court<br />  
Napa, CA 94558<br />

We want to say thank you to the first financial contributors. So far following clubs have promised their support or are already supporting us:

- Northern California DX Foundation (NCDXF)
- European DX Foundation (EUDXF)
- German DX Foundation (GDXF)
- Clipperton DX Club (CDXC)
- GM DX Group (GMDXG)
- Swiss DX Foundation (SDXF)
- Danish DX Group (DDXG)
- Central Virginia Contest Club (CVCC)
- Chiltern DX Club (CDXC)
- The Twin City DX Association (TCDXA)
- DARC OV Schkeuditz S41 (DLOXM)
- Northern Illinois DX Association (NIDXA)

Many thanks also to our individual contributors so far.

A special thanks to Spiderbeam with Con (DF4SA) who supported us with material for most of the vertical antennas!

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## News #4 - 10.07.2008

We fixed our station concept so far. We plan to install 2 camps on the island with 2 stations each. There might be an additional 5th station for spare and for Pactor connection to upload the online log, pictures and news to our website. Heye (DJ9RR) is working on a reliable solution for a Pactor link.

As we already published on our website our antenna concept will be based on vertical antennas. Please have a look at ... the equipment site where we provide more information about our antenna concept.

## Preparation of equipment

In the last weeks we were very busy (and we still are) preparing our equipment. Nearly all antennas are completed now and ready to ship. Our team members Dietmar (DL3DXX) and Tom (DL5LYM) got a lot of help in preparing the 4-squares for 80m, 40m and 30m from their clubs. There you get also an impression of Joerg's (DL8WPX) working place when he assembled all the boxes for our beverage antenna system. Meanwhile Chris (DL1MGB) finished the five Vertical Dipole Arrays for 20m to 10m. Dale (VK4DMC) was also very active for us. He tested the first tents we bought in Australia.

By the end of July, we will send our first pile of equipment via sea cargo.

## 6m operation

We decided to take 6m equipment with us. As we don't have enough people to man a separate station on 6m we plan to install CW Skimmer on a separate radio which is always on stand-by. If there will be any signal on the band, we will get notice of it via our network and can easily man the 6m station.

## Visit VK9DWX

During our preparation of the power concept we decided to charter a second boat which will deliver some more fuel to the island, necessary for continuous operation during our planned extended timeframe. The only purpose of this second boat until now is to bring fuel, fresh food, drinks and maybe needed equipment to Willis Island. As there is place for 16 people on this boat we thought: Why not offer a four-day trip to visit VK9DWX?

And here are the conditions:

- Four-day trip with the Rum Runner
  - Start: October 15th, 2008 in Cairns, Queensland, Australia
  - Finish: October 19th, 2008 in Cairns, Queensland, Australia
  - Accommodation onboard the Rum Runner
  - Including meals and soft drinks (alcoholic drinks on own account)
  - See the VK9DWX operators live at working Pile-Ups (guest operation possible)
  - Flight to Cairns is NOT included
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- Every guest must ensure that he is on the Rum Runner in time as we depend on the supplies for our operation
- Costs: EUR 1000,- per person

If you are interested in this exciting trip please contact us via the contact form on our website.

### Donations Update

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We again want to inform you that Uli, KK8I, processes donations in the USA. Cheques are welcome which should be made payable to Ulrich Ann.

There is also the possibility to donate directly to the Northern California DX Foundation (for donations of USD100 and above from the US) and to obtain Tax Deductibility (consult your advisor). Make the check payable to NCDXF and on the check memo line write: "directed contribution - VK9DWX Willis Island Expedition 2008".

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4220 Chardonnay Court  
Napa, CA 94558

A special thanks to microham (support with micro Keyer II) and Titanex (support with low band verticals).

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### News #5 - 17.08.2008

Over the last weeks we were very busy in testing the last antennas and get nearly everything ready to ship.

### Equipment

All antennas have been tested the last weeks. The 4-square for 80m even did a very good job in the IARU HF Championship where it was used as one of some main antennas at DA0HQ at the 80m CW station.

Dale, VK4DMC, got all our tents and tested them. So, we are ready to build Willis Island City.

### Transportation

If you travel to a lonely sand spit on the other side of the world you must take care of a lot of things. And of course, these things must be available on the island. Our next hardware store will be about 500km away, so it is not easy to pick up some tools or screws. Therefore, we compiled a list of materials which contains over 600 positions now. All the heavy items were brought together in Goch at the location of DR1A where we had the place, a workshop and all the Peli Cases from Markus (DJ7EO). On a 5-day-weekend Markus, Joerg (DL8WPX), Dieter (DL8OH) and Chris (DL1MGB) put all

the material into boxes, cases and tubes, labeled them and prepared the shipping documents. The week after the material was transported to the harbor of Hamburg where it is now waiting for being shipped to Australia.

In total we packed 29 cases, boxes and tubes with a total weight of over 1,300kg. This included following main items:

- 5 ACOM1000 amplifiers
- Over 1000m of coax cable
- Nearly 300m of power cable
- All antennas
- Power distributions
- Tools
- Most parts of the station equipment
- ...

Transceivers, notebooks and MK2s will be carried on the flight baggage as they must be tested in advance in Germany for proper interaction.

### Visit VK9DWX

Thinking about a short holiday in October? Still not knowing what to do? Here is the answer: **Visit VK9DWX!** Not only work VK9DWX, experience VK9DWX live on Willis Island! There are still places available on the Rum Runner!

Here are the facts:

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- See the VK9DWX operators live at working Pile-Ups (guest operation possible)
- Flight to Cairns is NOT included
- Every guest must ensure that he is on the Rum Runner in time as we depend on the supplies for our operation
- Costs: EUR 1000,- per person

If you are interested in this exciting trip please contact us via the contact form on our website.

### Newsletter

Our service to you is to offer a newsletter that will be send to you via email. It will inform you about the latest news available about our DXpedition. The only thing you must do is to subscribe for the newsletter on our homepage in the News section.

## News #6 - 06.09.2008

### Young DXpeditioners on Willis

The crew of VK9DWX wants to invite two young hams who have a passion for Ham Radio, DXing and contesting to take part in the DXpedition to Willis Island in October this year.

One young ham from 6th October till 19th October and the other one from 15th October till 28th October.

You can reside in any country in the world, you hold a valid amateur radio license in your country, you have some experience in working pile-ups and you are between 18 and 29.

For qualification you must send an email to [contact@vk9dwx.de](mailto:contact@vk9dwx.de) which must include an essay of 500 words minimum (in English) describing how you got started in ham radio, who your Elmer was and why you should be selected for this DXpedition opportunity. Please include also your full name, callsign and home address.

The VK9DWX crew will pay for all expenses except your flight from your home to Cairns, Queensland, Australia. You must have a valid visa for Australia and a medical insurance with worldwide validity.

Send us your application now to [contact@vk9dwx.de](mailto:contact@vk9dwx.de). We will receive applications until September 15th and will make a fast decision.

#### **Some notes**

Travelling to Willis Island is not like a holiday trip to somewhere in the Caribbean. The boat trip of nearly 500km takes over one day. Arrived on the island you must build your infrastructure and radio station from scratch. Also, the medical care is very limited. Small injuries can be treated on-site while more complicated ones must be treated on the mainland which means at least one day travelling back to civilization. Each team member is travelling on his own risk. He must take care of his own and the group's health.

DXpedition are exciting in many ways. For the community at home in front of the radios it means pure adrenalin, until they got the rare one. Family life and business can be affected when a new one is on the air.

For the DXpeditioner it means a lot of thoroughly planning, developing technical concepts for antennas and stations, buying and testing of equipment, raising funds and communication with the DX-Clubs and forums.

Operating from a tiny little sand is one of the last adventures for hamradio operators, establishing a good and decent signal in faraway countries, working all small pistols and giving everyone a chance for a new one is the ultimate challenge every single day.

And it is a dream.

Friendship in the team, lonely sunsets on sandy beaches and endless pileups are memories for the whole life.

The VK9DWX-Team has decided to share this experience with two young DXers or contesters. They should not only look into the DXpedition, but become part of the team, eat, sleep and operate with us. Build antennas and enjoy leisure. Get to know new friends and enjoy the stunning nature in the wilderness. Learn how to manage pileups and discover the secrets of successful low band DXing. Learn to work in a team respecting team decision in any situation.

Respect the wildlife and environment during the boat trip and on the Island.

Taking two Youngsters on our DXpedition is a new approach and aspect in DXpeditioning. We are anxious who will make it and we are sure that this will be an interesting experience for us as well.

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## News #7 - 19.09.2008

### Young DXpeditioners on Willis

We have decided!

It was a very difficult decision for us, we have got 22 applications, all of them avid contesters and DXers, unfortunately some of them did not meet the age criteria, others with visa-problems had to withdraw.

Two of them were outstanding in performance, dedication and commitment.

These two rookies to join our expedition to Willis Isl. are

- On the first part:
  - o W4WJF, William Joshua ("Josh") Fischer, from North Carolina, USA, 21 years old
- On the second part:
  - o ZS6DXB, Rhyndardt ("Rhy") Louw from JHB, Rep. of South Africa, 25 years old

We are very happy to announce this decision to the DXers community and hope that this will encourage further DXpeditions to take similar or even better approaches to promote and "elmer" young DXers and Contesters.

### Preparations

All our preparations are entering the final stage. 1.4 tons of material are on its way and as our carrier told us, it is about to arrive in Australia with the "MS Ute Oltmann" in these days.

There will be a vanguard consisting of Joerg (DL8WPX), Gerd (DJ5IW) and Robert (SP5XVY) who will fly to Cairns by Friday 26th, followed by Dieter, DL8OH, who departs two days later. They will meet our man in Australia, Dale (VK4DMC), and together will take care of all necessary work. To meet our boat charter, get all material cleared and all additional purchases done. The idea is, to fight Murphy as effective as possible and to prepare the departure of our vessel, the "MV Floreat", as actual as we can, before the crew steps in and the show will begin. We will keep you informed! Check this website for more details in the next 2 weeks!

In the meantime, check your station, build a new beverage or ewe to improve your listening abilities on the lowbands, inspect your antennas and radios and blow the dust out of your amplifiers.

We will soon be with you !!

## Donations Update

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## News #8 - 01.10.2008

### News from down under

Last Friday Gerd (DJ5IW) and Joerg (DL8WPX) left Germany and headed to Cairns, Australia. Dieter (DL8OH) followed on Sunday. They used the time until now to organize a lot of things, to meet with locals, to assemble the last parts of the station and to clarify the status of the sea freight transport. Here a report from Dieter (DL8OH):

*Getting the ocean freight on time to Cairns is one of the crucial points of success. Without these 1.4 tons of material, packed in nearly 30 boxes, we would have been forced to shut the expedition down completely.*

*All material came on board of the container vessel "Ute Oltmann" to Australia and was unloaded in Sydney. Bad mistake, because it was bound to Brisbane, where the carnet-papers were and where all clearance- work should have been done.*

*So, it took us a long time together with the local carrier agent in Brisbane to locate the appropriate container, unpack it, separate our DXpedition equipment and bring it to Cairns. It took us two days, endless phone calls with the agent until most problems were fixed. Now the equipment is on the road to Brisbane, where it will be awaited very urgently tomorrow morning local time by the quarantine inspection and the customs. Quarantine because the boxes were packed on wooden pallets. Wooden pallets are a problem, because Australians fear to be infected by possible unfriendly germs on imported natural material.*



*We will see, what tomorrow will bring to us, but we are in good hope, that by tomorrow evening all equipment will be on its way to Cairns. We will keep our fingers crossed and you informed!*

*In the meantime, DJ5IW is about to finalize a couple of beverage-boxes in our hotel room, which will help us to hear and copy you better on the lowbands. Today we visited the Honda shop and inspected the generators which made a very reliable impression on us. Marcus, skipper of the MV Floreat dropped by and discussed with us the huge amount of cargo which must be stowed away onboard and taken to Willis Isl. He is confident too that everything will go onboard properly on Monday as planned.*

Robert (SP5XVY) left Warsaw today. All other team members including the youngster on the first trip (Josh, W4WJF) will meet the vanguard team on October 6th in Cairns.

## Website

During the DXpedition we will offer of course an online log. The update frequency will depend on the reliability of the email link, but we will do our best to offer an excellent service. When you will find a QSO in the online log (indicated by a green tick in the band/mode table) and move the mouse on this tick you are shown the operator made this QSO with you.

Beneath the band/mode table you will find links to "QSO Statistics" and "Propagation" (also accessible through the navigation bar on the left-hand side). In "QSO statistics" you will find different statistics which are automatically generated after every new log upload. By default, you see the statistics for all QSOs. But you can also select DXCC, WAZ Zone or Continent in the top of this site. The "Propagation" site shows bar graphs (also automatically generated after a new log upload) indicating the best times to work VK9DWX on different bands. These graphs are selectable by DXCC, WAZ Zone or continent.

## QSL Information

Our QSL manager will be again Mario, DJ2MX. With the help of the team he will handle the QSL cards after the DXpedition. But to minimize the workload we offer the Online QSL Request System. There you can choose between direct QSL card and bureau QSL card.

The advantages for you:

- No need to send your QSL card (directly or via bureau)
- Don't lose any money with direct post, just transfer your donation online
- Get your QSL card earlier than through the old-fashioned way
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The advantage for us:

- Much less work!

We will not offer any spectacular QSL card! We will offer a fast QSL service! Remember VK9DNX? Exactly one month after we returned home from DXpedition we got our QSL cards from the printer. And only a few weeks later the first direct QSL cards were on the way to their recipients. And exactly this QSL service we want to offer again!

So please help us and try to request your QSL card online and help to make a good service better. Thank you!

After the DXpedition we will go online with the Online QSL Request System on our website. It will guide you through the way of QSLing. So please have a look on the site after the DXpedition.

### Sponsor Update

We want to say thank you very much for all the donations made so far. They really helped to do the final payments for the boats, generators and fuel.

There will be no update of the sponsor sites from this weekend till we arrive back home after the DXpedition. Thanks for understanding.

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### News #9 - 03.10.2008

#### News from down under

Here the latest news from Cairns:

*Today we got the really good news: Our ocean freight arrived in Brisbane and has been cleared by quarantine and customs in Brisbane. Now it is on another truck again and on its way to Cairns, where we will await it by Sunday evening. We expect it to be delivered directly to the harbor, where the MV Floreat is situated. So, we keep our fingers crossed, that everything runs in time and we will not experience any further setbacks.*

*We finished all additional purchases and stored them in the DXpedition's mini-warehouse.*

*Today the fourth man of the crew arrived in Cairns. We all went to the airport and welcomed Robert, SP5XVY, who now joins us in our preparations. We also made a walk to the Marina, introduced Robert to skipper Marcus and visited the MV Floreat, who is just about to be prepared for her trip to Willis Island. Several drums for fuel were already placed on the deck and the ship is ready to take our cargo either on Sunday or on Monday.*

*Good news is also that the rough weather calms down. It stopped raining and the heavy winds dropped considerably. The skipper expects much better weather in the next few days, so we might have a good chance for a relatively comfortable boat ride to Willis Island.*

*We expect the rest of the crew at Monday noon (local time) to arrive in Cairns to complete the VK9DWX DX-pedition team then.*

*We are also going to set up a radio on the MV Floreat during our short trip and become QRV on 20m as "op callsign"/MM.*

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### News #10 - 12.10.2008

The Willis Islands Group, Mid Isl. Sunday, October 12th

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After 30 hours of sea-voyage we reached the Willis Group at midnight and set anchor in front of South Islet. The sea was rough and the MV Floreat was rolling and stamping its way through the waves. A few of us could not enjoy the voyage because they became seasick, soon after we left the harbor. The others enjoyed the magic of a tropical night at sea under the light of stars a half-moon with a few drinks and exciting talks about what to do in the next days.

We also managed to set up a moderate rig on the ship and enjoyed a few radio contacts under the VK9DWX/MM callsign.

The ship's crew consists of Marcus (Skipper), Gordon (Marcus' father) and Susy, our cook. Next morning, we payed a visit to the met-crew on South Island, where the BoM maintains a permanent weather station in the cyclone warning net. It is populated by 4 persons who will be replaced every 6 months. We had a warm welcome and got an invitation for another visit at the end of our trip. We exchanged gifts and made it back to the MV Floreat again, who raised anchors and sailed to Mid Islet next.

Mid Islet is the smallest Island of the Willis Group, only 300 m in diameter, full of scrub and small bushes. It's a rough and extremely lonely place in the middle of the Coral Sea. It is populated by thousands of birds, mostly different kind of boobies. They are just about everywhere on the island screaming all day and night. They hatch and feed the young birds in nests or on the ground. They are very curious and have no fear of us at all. They do not run away, but simply stay where they are! But there is plenty of space for all of us and we were able to build our antennas and radials around them. But they smell.....!!!! May be after two weeks we can create a "Willis Island Smell Contest" (known as the WISC): Who smells most? We or the birds !!

Thousands of hermit crabs, who live in sand holes and enter the beaches and bushes by the evening. A few big turtles inspecting us from day to day.

Within two days of heavy work, we ferried all gear (1.5 tons) with a tiny dinghy from the ship to the island (Marcus did an extremely good job: nothing was left or even got wet!!). Then we installed camps and antennas next.

The weather is typical tropic: Brutal heat during the day and heavy, gusty winds (6-7 Bft) day and night. The tide is between 1,5 to 2,5 m and due to the heavy winds, the surf rolls on the beach in huge waves. (Surfers paradise but a nightmare to our vertical antennas on the beach !) Antenna building is a tough challenge and requires the help of everyone, putting up Verticals for 160m and 80m is absolutely at the limits with these winds!! Tents must be secured very firmly otherwise they would be simply blown away. small pegs, which normally come with the tents, are useless. Fortunately, we brought some 200 heavy duty plastic pegs with us: A wise decision!

Weather is not stabile, tonight we had a heavy storm with rainfall and gusty winds. Luckily no damage on the tents so far!! Today we have an overcast sky, hot temperatures, high humidity and gusty winds as usual.

Two camps are set up now, 4 stations are running in CW and SSB, 9 antennas from 160 to 10m are erected (plus one beverage across the island), generator power supply works nice and smoothly.

Our ship, the MV Floreat anchors half a mile away in deeper waters.

We are supplied every day with food and water (Susy's sandwiches are a dream!).

Operation is challenging. Noisy Wind gusts bending tent walls and the bird's screaming penetrates the even biggest headsets! Generators produce some noise, depending on frequency (most probably the inverters) but working fine in general. All verticals are situated directly on the beach and from time to time the surf washes over radials and feedpoints! (We even had to dislocate the 40m 4square!). Due to the vicinity to salt water the radiation of all antennas turns out to be excellent and reports from over the world are very encouraging. Our LAN works fine and only the THURAYA-DSL data-link fails from time to time, makes it a bit difficult for log-update and PR-access.

We got more than 15.000 Qs in the log so far and even managed to work the first couple of Europeans on 160m. Its great fun anyway!

We hope, propagation will still improve, and we will be able to serve you with an increase of our QSO rate. If you did not work us so far, don't panic. We are only just at the beginning of our DXpedition and there will be plenty of possibilities to get the NEW ONE in the next two weeks!

We are awaiting your comments on our website. They are welcome and will be input for further decisions.

We hope, to have your call in our log soon !!

73 de VK9DWX-Team

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## News #11 - 16.10.2008

### The Willis Islands Group, Mid Isl. Thursday, October 16th

This is the seventh day of operation. We had two days with heavy gusty winds. The long enduring rainfall for more than a day gave us some relief. It was refreshing to have a sweet-water shower from the sky and temperature dropped to 28 degrees C. Today the sun is back again, and we are experiencing 39 degrees in the operator tents, with linears running.

Our receiving situation on the lowbands is heavily influenced by static noise, which usually comes up to 20-30 dB over S9, a real challenge for our operators. We obviously built the 30m 4 square too close to the water, because two Verticals were nearly washed into the sea by the heavy surf. We managed to fix the guy-ropes and pegs again and could keep the antenna into operation. For the same reason, we also moved the 40m 4-square a few meters away from the beach. We also put up a 6m-antenna, but there is no activity at all so far.

Today we crossed the line of 40.000 Qs. Stations are pouring in in great numbers still. Unfortunately, especially the W-path is interfered and jammed heavily on 160m. but we will do our very best to get as many of you as possible in the log. We also have set up a fifth station and now are able to operate from all five positions at the same time, to cater the needs of all of you even better.

Tomorrow, we are expecting the "Rum Runner", who will bring us more supplies, out friend Dale, VK4DMC, Bernd (DK2JW; our "tourist") and the new rookie Rhy, ZS6DXB. Unfortunately, Josh, W4WJF will be leaving with the "Rum Runner" in the next day, but this also means that Rhy will be

joining our effort. Josh says he has loved working you all on the bands and has greatly enjoyed his experiences so far. He came in mainly as an SSB operator but has made quite a few CW contacts with you on-the-air. Even though he said some operators complained of his slow speed, his proficiency has improved so far. He is lucky since he doesn't have to help break down the antennas and the camp AND can go home and put VK9DWX in his log! He thinks the idea of inviting rookies along on DXpeditions is a great idea. In the US, he said many DXers were inspired by this idea and he hopes to give a few presentations about his trip in order to motivate others to sponsor a rookie on their next DXpedition.

We are expecting a great weekend and another exciting week full of pile-ups on the Island.

We will enjoy working you in CW, SSB and RTTY on all bands!

73 de the VK9DWX-Team

P.S.: Just a few minutes ago the Rum Runner arrived at Willis Island. Around noon we will start to transfer the persons and the ordered supplies.

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## News #12 - 25.10.2008

### The Willis Islands Group, Mid Isl. Thursday, October 25th

Due to heavier winds to be expected on Monday we must take down the complete camp tomorrow on Sunday October 26th and transport all equipment to the Floreat. That means that we will stop radio operation latest on October 25th at about 22:00z. We want to have a controlled shutdown and a secure trip back to Australia mainland for all members and all the equipment. Therefore, we must leave earlier as planned.

We will take part in the CQWW SSB Contest for the first 24 hours with three stations. The remaining stations will be still available for WARC operation.

We did the last onlinelog update for now. This includes all QSOs till 25.10.2008 00:00z (before the contest). We will put all QSOs to the online log when we are back home.

More information will be available after our return to Australia.

Vy 73s VK9DWX team

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## News #13 - 30.10.2008

The "VK9DWX-Willis Island DX-pedition 2008" is history.

We closed the log with more than 95.000 QSOs (that's our first merger of all logs except the VK9DWX/mm QSOs during the voyage). A great adventure full of unforgettable moments and sweet memories lays behind us. We enjoyed a beautiful time of ham radio operation and are very happy of

being able to serve so many hams around the world with a new one or at least with new and additional bandpoints for the DXCC.

We enjoyed nice and trusty fellowship within our team. Our two rookies Josh, W4WJF, and Rhy, ZS6DXB turned out to be a real surprise for us: They not only slipped into the team very easily, but they also shouldered the operating burden in amazingly good performance, they became a valuable support for the DXpedition.

After 10 days of operation we welcome the sailing boat "Rum Runner" which brought us new supplies (food and fuel) as well as the exchange of our rookies: Josh had to leave and Rhy was coming to replace him. Also, our DXpedition visitor Bernd, DK2JW, came in as well as Dale, VK4DMC, our valuable, trusty and very important support in Australia. They were very happy to have solid ground under their feet again, because the voyage was somewhat rough and not a real pleasure. We spent a nice evening with exiting talks and a few cool beers. They stayed overnight with us on the island. Next morning it was time to say good bye, because the "Rum Runner" went back to Cairns.

Operation on this DXpedition was a real challenge to everyone:

Fresh to strong winds every day, some days so powerful that the tents were threatened to be blown away or at least heavily damaged. High tide climbed the beaches often higher than expected and swept over the feed points of the arrays, (perfect ground conductivity at least !!) disordering the radial system completely. Turtles are really heavy (some 75 kg!) and snagged the coax or other cable from time to time, but fortunately caused no major trouble with that. Hundreds (or were it thousands ??) of different birds, screaming (and smelling !!) all day and night and whom you might have noticed as the background noise in our SSB-QSOs. Small crabs, flies and moths were perennial companions in our tents, but luckily did not bite at all. Day after day the sun poured down and let the temperature soar to 35 to 40 degrees Celsius in the tents. Unfortunately, we could not open tents due to the wind and the brightness of the sunlight: We simply would not have seen anything on the laptop-screens anymore. Fans were only of little help and not a real relief. Despite these unfavorable conditions, the equipment worked to our satisfaction. No major faults to mention. Only internet access was limited to several hours a day, which made it impossible to update the log in shorter periods.

Food was cooked on the MV Floreat daily and supplied to us day by day. A great hug to our chef Susy who did a marvelous job in feeding the team with delicious meals and perfect sandwiches as well as fresh fruit most of the days. MV Floreat's skipper Marcus Oke inspected the weather forecast very thoroughly, took the development of wind and waves as well as the tide in consideration and concluded that Sunday would be the best choice for ferrying our material safely from the beach to the ship. Safety of all our members first and the material second was our biggest concern and we would never doubt the decision of our experienced skipper.

So - sad to say - but we had to finish the CQWW SSB -Contest already by Sunday morning.

We took down all the 4 squares, vertical, and Vertical-Array-Dipoles (VDAs) which served us as trusty companions throughout our DX-pedition and made these many contacts possible. To tear down the whole stuff turned out to be much easier than erecting it. We began very early in the morning - just on sunrise - to get most of the job done before the tropical sun would burn out our brains. It was a perfect maneuver, everyone knew what to do. We packed all material in boxes, pelicasas and Skipper

Marcus took all the stuff safely back to the MV Floreat. We did not miss a single item, and nothing got wet at all. So, we luckily managed to finish the complete work already by early afternoon.

Once we were all back on the ship, the MV Floreat hoisted the anchors and headed west back to Cairns. We waved a last Good Bye to the island each of us with his own personal memories, leaving thousands of boobies, frigate birds, hermit crabs and green turtles in their ancestral environment.

After Norfolk Island in 2007 as VK9DNX we are very happy having performed a new adventure with VK9DWX now in 2008. We enjoyed it very much and hope that we could meet at least part of your expectations. May be not everyone could make it into our log. We are sorry for that and hope that there will be a next chance for you soon.

We thank you very much for your cooperation and your understanding during times of heavy pile-ups and difficult traffic, especially on the low bands.

Thanks also to the many ham radio operators and other sponsors (like Ham Radio-clubs, -societies and -foundations) from all over the world who helped us with small and bigger financial contributions. Bringing this all together makes a DXpedition like ours not only feasible but also rather successful.

Good Bye Willis!

Thank you for this once in a lifetime adventure.

The VK9DWX Operation Team DJ5IW, DJ7EO, DJ9RR, DL1MGB, DL3DXX, DL5LYM, DL8OH, DL8WPX, SP5XVY, W4WJF, ZS6DXB

P.S.: When entering Cairns harbor after a smooth journey, Dale, VK4DMC already awaited us with his car and trailer and helped us to unload the MV Floreat. We sorted out everything which was to stay in Australia, and which was to send back to Germany by cargo-spediton. In the evening we in invited the MV Floreat's Crew (Marcus, Gordon and Susy) as well as Dale, VK4DMC for dinner. We dined in a fashionable steakhouse overlooking Cairns' harbor in a stunning view and enjoyed a beautiful farewell dinner with those, who gave us so much support and help and made this DXpedition to come true.

### [Online-Log / QSO statistics](#)

We are very sorry that in the last days of operation the online log was not available. Due to a crash of the database on our server we were not able to fix it from the island (not at a rate of 6 EUR/MByte...). But now the online log is available again and the QSO statistics.

### [Donations Update](#)

We were very happy to see so many donations being sent from all over the world to support our DXpedition. Nearly most of them are online in our sponsor list. If anyone misses his donation, please contact us via our contact form.

### [Online QSL Request System](#)

Our Online QSL Request System (OQRS) is available now. Please support us, help to minimize our workload and use this OQRS. There you can choose between direct QSL card and bureau QSL card.

The advantages for you:

- No need to send your QSL card (directly or via bureau)
- Don't lose any money with direct post, just transfer your donation online
- Get your QSL card earlier than through the old-fashioned way

The advantage for us:

- Much less work!

We will not offer any spectacular QSL card! We will offer a fast QSL service! Remember VK9DNX? Exactly one month after we returned home from DXpedition we got our QSL cards from the printer. And only a few weeks later the first direct QSL cards were on the way to their recipients. And exactly this QSL service we want to offer again.

So please help us and try to request your QSL card online and help to make a good service better. Thank you!

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## News #14 - 23.11.2008

### QSLing

We already received over 1800 direct QSLs and over 3500 online requests through the OQRS. The design for our QSL card is in progress. We expect to get the QSL cards from the printer before X-mas. The first direct cards should be sent at the turn of the year.

We again want to encourage you to use our Online QSL Request System if you have not already done it. It's a lot less work for us and you will get your QSL card much faster. If you have already donated but not entered your data in the online form, you may do it now to get your QSL directly to your address.

### LOTW

As soon as we get the certificate to upload QSO data to the LOTW database we will do the first upload for our sponsors. If you need your DXCC credit for Willis Island before December 31st, 2008 we encourage you to support VK9DWX and make a little donation which we should receive before December 30th to do the upload in time. We will upload all the remaining QSO data to LOTW in spring 2009.

### Donations Update

We want to say a big thank you to all sponsors so far! You really made it happen! If you still do not find your donation on our website don't hesitate to contact us.

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## News #15 - 21.12.2008

### QSLing

We are very sorry to say that the QSL cards will not be delivered this year. We expect them to arrive from the printer by the end of January 2009. Meanwhile we encourage you to use LOTW to get your



DXCC credit before the end of the year. Please also support our DXpedition's efforts with a small donation and you will get your LOTW upload within some days.

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## News #16 - 05.04.2009

### QSLing

It was not an easy job, but our QSL manager Mario DJ2MX did a great one! Over 2,500 letters from the OQRS users, the cards for DX clubs using their own QSL service and the first 1,500 letters for the direct QSL senders were sent. Further letters will follow the next weeks. Still Premium OQRS users have higher priority as they help us saving a lot of work.

We ask you not to send more than one QSL request, either through mail or through OQRS. Several requests only cause a lot of extra work which doesn't help anybody. Thank you!

Many thanks again to Stan SQ8X for the phantastic design and QSL-Shop Berlin for printing the QSL cards!