



Am I talking to Aliens / the Russians / Astronauts?

Hi there!

If you've wandered past and found yourself wondering "what on earth is going on here?", you're not alone. Most people have never seen amateur radio in action, especially outside of a movie.

I'm taking part in **Parks on the Air**, usually shortened to **POTA**. It's a worldwide activity where licensed amateur radio operators like me set up a temporary radio station in a park and make contact with other people using radio waves rather than the internet or mobile phones.

You can find out more about **POTA** at the QR code here:



If that probably raises more questions than it answers, that's fantastic, you may have just found your next hobby!

What you're seeing here is a very small, portable setup. The radio itself is much more compact than most people expect, and it's usually powered by a battery rather than mains power. The thin wire you might notice disappearing into a tree or stretching off into the distance really is the antenna. It's designed to be lightweight, discreet, and easy to remove, so it doesn't damage the environment or get in the way of anyone else enjoying the park.

Most of the time, people walk past without even realising they've passed a working radio station, which I think is kind of lovely.

Yes, I really am just sitting in a park talking to people I can't see, using equipment that looks far less exciting than it actually is. ☺

So why do this in a park?

Part of the appeal of POTA for me is slowing things down. It's about stepping outside, enjoying a natural place, and using simple technology to connect with people far away. Every park has its own unique identifier, and when I make a contact, both of us log that the conversation happened from this exact place.

Some contacts are local. Others might be interstate or overseas. Each one is a small moment of shared discovery. Two people briefly connected by radio waves passing invisibly through the atmosphere.

If you're wondering whether this is something you could do yourself, the answer is yes.

Anyone can become a licensed amateur radio operator. You don't need to be an engineer or a technical wizard. Plenty of people start simply because they're curious.

If you'd like to see what amateur radio looks like day to day, there are some excellent Australian creators on YouTube who explain it far better than a pamphlet ever could:

Ham Radio DX (VK7HH)



Amateur Radio VK3YE



If this has made you wonder how you'd become an amateur radio operator, contact the lovely folks at my club (the Brisbane Amateur Radio Club) below and they can answer your questions.

You can also find lots more information and information about your local amateur radio clubs at the Wireless Institute of Australia's website below.



Thanks for stopping by and have a lovely day!