■ Equipment Review

Yaesu FT-10R 2 m Hand Held Transceiver

*Reviewed by Ron Fisher VK3OM**

The first thing that strikes you with the FT-10R is its diminutive size. It is only 57 mm wide by 123 mm high and 26 mm deep and that includes the battery. To put some perspective into that, have a look at the photo that compares it with a somewhat older Yaesu, the FT-208. In appearance, the FT-10R has a family resemblance with the slightly larger FT-51R dualbander reviewed last June. Operating the FT-10R is, like most VHF handhelds, not self evident; however, the instruction manual is very helpful and easy to follow.

One feature that is not obvious from the advertising information is that the entire keyboard is removable and can be replaced with three others. This determines the operating features that the transceiver provides. The version sold by Dick Smith Electronics has an A16D key board provided, which is the second top model. The top version, the A16S, has a digital voice recorder included which is the only feature missing from the A16D. I am not sure if the other keypads are available in Australia or what their cost would be.

The first thing you might want to know is where the battery is. Well, it is, in fact, the back half of the package. A push button at the top back allows the battery to be removed. The Australian version has an FNB-41 battery supplied which has a 600 mAh capacity at 9.6 volts. This gives a maximum transmitter output power of five watts as standard, unlike most other 2 m handhelds on the market. Naturally, selectable lower power is also available (2.8, 1.0 and 0.1 W).

A very handy belt clip is attached to the rear of the battery pack. Two other batteries, the FNB-40 which is 6 V at 650 mAh and the FNB-42 which is 9.6 V at 1100 mAh, are available. Also, no battery charger was supplied with our review transceiver which necessitated a few haywire connections when the battery went flat. I am assured that all FT-10R transceivers sold will come with a charger and adaptor to connect to the battery.

The FT-10R On Air

If you have been used to a ten year old handheld, you will find some unusual features. The power on/off switch is a small red button at centre left. Its one of those controls that you have to push and hold. It takes half a second for something to happen either for the on or off function.

Next, the push-to-talk button is on the

The reviewer holding the diminutive FT10R in the palm of his hand.

The FT-10R alongside the old FT-208. How things have changed!

top left hand corner which is the ideal position for it. There are two buttons on the side which operate the display illumination and open the squelch for very weak signal reception.

The antenna connector does not have the usual BNC socket but uses the smaller SMA type. If you intend to use an antenna other than the supplied flexible whip, you will need a CN-3 antenna adaptor for use with BNC connectors. There are only two normal rotary controls and these are mounted concentrically on the top of the transceiver.

The larger outer control is the audio gain control and the smaller top knob is a multi-function control. It acts as a tuning control, memory selector and controls 27 other functions such as squelch, transmitter power output and memory labelling, to name a very few. You will be able to spend hours playing with this transceiver without even getting on the air.

All of these functions are clearly displayed on the large (relatively) LCD. The actual size of the LCD is 3.5 cm wide by 1.5 cm high. There are around thirty status indicators built into the display in the normal situation with perhaps double that number when the multi-function control is in use. There is also a ten segment "meter" showing relative received signal strength and transmitter power output.

The tuning control can be set to give a choice of steps. The sizes available are 5, 10, 12.5, 20, 25 and 50 kHz with 1 MHz steps available with the push of a key pad button. In addition to all of this, a frequency can be entered directly via the keypad. If you want 146.700, just push 4,6,7,0,0 on the pad. I would guess that, with 99 memories, most of the time you will use the VFOs and keyboard to tune frequencies that will be entered into the memory, and that most normal operation will be from memory selection.

The frequency coverage of the FT-10R is 144 to 148 MHz on transmit and receive, with an extended receive coverage from 140 to 174 MHz. Unfortunately, the receive coverage does not include the aircraft band.

Naturally, there is an excellent selection of scanning modes either in VFO or memory. In VFO mode, you can scan the entire tuning range or you can store upper and lower scanning limits. It is also programmable to resume scanning after five seconds on a signal or to wait until the carrier goes off air.

One half of the FT-10R is transceiver, the other is the battery.

As with many modern VHF transceivers, the FT-10R has a wide selection of tone signalling functions built-in. However, it seems that these systems are not used to any extent in Australia that I have heard of. Anyhow, if you do use these, they are all available in the FT-10R, so go to it.

With all of this, how does the FT-10R perform on air? In a word or two, very well indeed. The received audio quality is really quite remarkable considering the size of the speaker. The acoustic output is also excellent. On transmit, reports on the audio quality indicated plenty of deviation and good frequency response. There is an input/output socket for an external speaker microphone but it requires a special four contact plug about 3.5 mm in diameter, so my old Yaesu speaker microphone could not be connected without the optional CT-30 microphone adaptor. The matching MH-34B4B speaker mic is available from Dick Smith Electronics stores as an alternative.

Can you use the FT-10R on packet? Yes, indeed you can, and the instruction book gives a simple circuit to show you just how to do it.

The FT-10R – the Bottom Line

I have always been an enthusiast for Yaesu handhelds. I have two in my collection from which I have had faithful service over many years. While these new models are getting more complicated from an operational point of view, they are still straightforward in their basic features. To add to this, Yaesu instruction books set the standard and are easy to follow and apply.

The FT-10R is priced at $455 and the matching speaker microphone is $49.95. Talk to your local Dick Smith Electronics store for more information on this amazing little hand held transceiver.

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