

# media release

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

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## ABC Exits Shortwave Radio Transmission

06 December 2016

The ABC will end its shortwave transmission service in the Northern Territory and to international audiences from 31 January 2017.

The move is in line with the national broadcaster's commitment to dispense with outdated technology and to expand its digital content offerings including DAB+ digital radio, online and mobile services, together with FM services for international audiences.

The majority of ABC audiences in the Northern Territory currently access ABC services via AM and FM and all ABC radio and digital radio services are available on the VAST satellite service.

ABC International's shortwave services currently broadcast to PNG and the Pacific. Savings realised through decommissioning this service will be reinvested in a more robust FM transmitter network and an expanded content offering for the region that will include English and in-language audio content.

Michael Mason, ABC's Director of Radio said, "While shortwave technology has served audiences well for many decades, it is now nearly a century old and serves a very limited audience. The ABC is seeking efficiencies and will instead service this audience through modern technology".

The ABC, working alongside SBS, is planning to extend its digital radio services in Darwin and Hobart, and to make permanent its current digital radio trial in Canberra. Extending DAB+ into the nation's eight capital cities will ensure ABC digital radio services can reach an additional 700,000 people, increasing the overall reach of ABC digital radio to 60% of the Australian population.

ABC Radio is also investigating transmission improvements to address reception gaps in the existing five DAB+ markets. It aims to ensure a resilient DAB+ service in every capital city, with enhanced bitrates and infill where necessary.

"Extending our DAB+ offer will allow audiences in every capital city in Australia equal access to our digital radio offering, as well as representing an ongoing broadcast cost saving owing to lower transmission costs," added Michael Mason.

ABC International's Chief Executive Officer Lynley Marshall said the reinvestment from closing international shortwave services would maximise the ABC's broadcast capabilities in the region.

"In considering how best to serve our Pacific regional audiences into the future we will move away from the legacy of shortwave radio distribution," Ms Marshall said. "An ever-growing number of people in the region now have access to mobile phones with FM receivers and the ABC will redirect funds towards an extended content offering and a robust FM distribution network to better serve audiences into the future."

Once international shortwave ceases transmission, international listeners can continue to access ABC International services via:

- the web stream at: <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/listen>
- in-country FM transmitters: see Radio Australia's 'Ways to Listen' at: <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/international/radio/waystolisten/fiji>
- the Australia Plus expats app (available in both iOS and Android)
- partner websites and apps such as [www.tunein.com](http://www.tunein.com) and [www.vtuner.com](http://www.vtuner.com).

Audiences can access further information via the reception advice line 1300 139 994, online at [abc.net.au/shortwave](http://abc.net.au/shortwave), or via ABC Local Radio ([Darwin](#) and [Alice Springs](#)).

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Notes:

AM and FM - ABC Local Radio content is available on AM and FM frequencies across the Northern Territory. The top five population centres in the Northern Territory comprise 166,626 people and are served by ABC AM and FM radio. Total population coverage for the Northern Territory is estimated at 177,224 for Local Radio, approximately 84% of the Northern Territory population.

Online - Darwin and Alice Springs Local Radio programs are available live online via the ABC App across a range of online platforms.

VAST - The VAST platform is available throughout the whole of the Northern Territory with television and both Darwin and Alice Springs Local Radio as well as the national radio services Radio National, NewsRadio, triple j and ABC Classic FM. Also on VAST are the ABC digital radio services Double J, ABC Jazz, ABC Extra, triple j Unearthed, ABC Grandstand and ABC Country. Installation of a VAST satellite dish and set top receiver costs around \$650 and once installed has no annual subscription fee.