

The Director
National & Community Broadcasting
Department of Communications & the Arts
GPO Box 2154
Canberra
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Submission – Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia-Pacific area.

Having been in the Broadcast Industry (Commercial) continuously since 1970, I know more than most about the value and power of Radio.

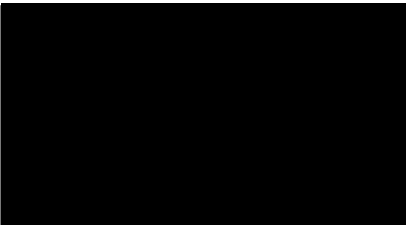
In countries such as Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea etc, Radio Australia was a household name. Many isolated villages with no internet connection were able get the news from an Australian perspective in Pidgeon English via an inexpensive \$40 shortwave Radio. This “soft diplomacy” has been grossly under estimated by the Federal Government.

Turning to home, in Australia 80% of our land mass has no mobile phone coverage. Therefore, no wireless internet.

From personal travels, I note that most of this area has no AM or FM Radio coverage. To date, the only way an outback traveller could receive Radio, whilst travelling, was by HF (shortwave) Radio. The frequency of 4835 kHz Alice Springs for example. For a major part of the day, this service covered most of the outback with only 50 kilowatts. I know this from personal experience, having travelled extensively in the Outback.

I understand that Radio Australia HF cost less than \$4 million a year to run. By comparison Radio National which only attracts around 1% of Australian population cost \$24 million a year to run.

The decision to close H.F. was ill considered, city-centric and very stupid. If the ABC can't be directed to re-open these HF services, perhaps the Department of Foreign Affairs could be given an additional charter to operate these transmitters. Programmes could come from various sources including, but not limited to, the ABC (News) & SBS.



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