

# Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific.

I wish to make my comments to the above review.

I own a four wheel drive vehicle and off-road camper trailer. I have done several trips around parts of the Australian outback. Whilst in these remote locations, there is no internet, due to the telecommunication towers (which use UHF or Ultra High Frequency transmissions) being out of range. Also, the FM (Frequency Modulation) broadcasting stations are unable to be received, because being VHF (Very High Frequency) transmissions, they are also out of range. Even the AM (Amplitude Modulation) stations, which have a typical range of a "few" hundred kilometres (dependant on the time of day and atmospheric conditions), have been unavailable in some parts of Australia to which I have travelled.

My only source of Australian radio reception was (past tense) from the ABC short wave service. This service ceased, on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017. On my last trip (after this date), the main service I listened to was Radio NZ (The New Zealand short wave service). The most commonly heard other stations I could hear on the short wave bands were from China. I also note that recently, Chinese short wave stations have now been allocated frequencies previously used by Radio Australia, the former short wave service of the ABC.

The advantage for listeners wishing to receive short wave services are the simplicity and affordability of a small radio. Mine cost me about \$80 and it runs on two little AA batteries. Some might argue for satellite reception in the outback, however, setup and running costs are high. A satellite system requires several hundred dollars for a dish and decoder, and the decoder has a much higher battery drain than a little short wave radio. Also, the dish needs to be pointed in the correct direction to the satellite, whereas a short wave radio typically has an omni-directional whip antenna which does not have much directivity so there is little need to aim it at the transmitter. Both the decoder and the dish are also quite large compared to a little short wave radio, so there is a storage problem for travellers like me.

I am retired, having paid taxes in Australia for over forty years, and I was very disappointed when I heard that the short wave service of the ABC was ceasing, due, I believe, to cost restraints. I have no problem with my taxes paying for a continuation of the short wave services here, and I believe there would be many other Australians who have not or cannot (for various reasons) reply to this submission who would agree with me. The cost of running the short wave service is small compared to the benefits to the Australian public (including the thousands of travellers here), as well as overseas residents in the Asia/Pacific region, as well as overseas visitors to our country.

According to the *Submission to the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee Inquiry into the ABC*, the short wave services were costing about four million dollars per annum. This equates to less than twenty cents per Australian, per year. This is a small cost to provide the service to outback travellers and residents.

In summary, I believe the restoration of the short wave service would benefit many Australians, as well as promote our country to overseas listeners, so I request this review committee to seriously consider its re-introduction.

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