

Submission to:
The Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific

Submission sent to:
asiapacificmediareview@communications.gov.au

From: Eugene Conron BSC (UPNG) Grad Dip T (QUT)

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Currently on the road in Northern NSW.

I confirm that my submission can be made public and published.

“Scope

The review will analyse the:
coverage and access of existing Australian media services in the Asia Pacific region; and use and value of Australian shortwave technology in the Asia Pacific region.

The review will cover:

All media distribution platforms (i.e. television, radio and online); commercial, community and publicly funded services; and different types of technologies such as analogue, digital and satellite radio and television services and online services.”

My input does not include Television or commercial broadcasting

My Submission:

Of course Australia should resume Short wave transmissions to

Asia and the Pacific and perhaps the world. To keep English as the Official Language in countries where it is now. And to show that we care about the people of the Asia Pacific more than the Chinese do.

These are my suggestions:

There should be a number of Short Wave transmissions.(SW)

ABC Asia SW

ABC Pacific SW

ABC Radio National SW

Australians should be able to drive anywhere in Australia and Listen to the Australian Broadcaster.

Short wave is not the best for music. This may be a reason why over time we affluent people stopped using SW for mainland Australia.

On the Internet

ABC Asia App

ABC Pacific App

ABC World App

These should provide indexes to Programs by Language and By Country.

The above 3 could be in the ABC Listen App if they do not get lost in there; e.g; It is difficult to find Radio Australia Frequencies on abc.net.au)

On Australian FM

ABC Asia FM in Australia

ABC Pacific FM in Australia

To show we care about migrants, migrant workers, and people from other lands.

ShortWave Receivers

Car importers should be encouraged to include shortwave receivers in their vehicles

Legislate?

With appropriate frequencies. Many SW sets could not get NT SW stations.

DAB+

DAB+ is suspect for me at 203 Upper Lyndale Street Shailer Park Logan City Queensland. In a north facing house there is only one west facing window without a hedge where I can get reliable reception (= 0 count drop outs). Sometimes it still drops out. Where it works ABC Asia & ABC Pacific should be repeated.

Background to my recommendations.

The history of the shutdown of these services can be read by following all the links in the ABC article:

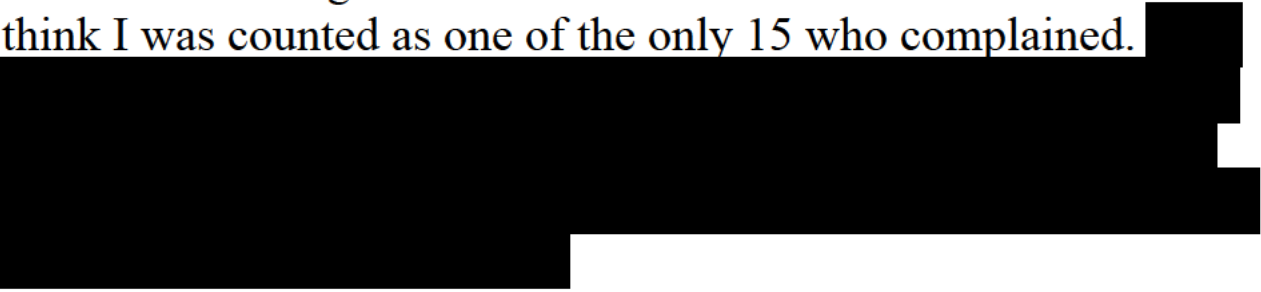
“China takes over Radio Australia frequencies after ABC drops shortwave - ABC News (Australian Broadcasting Corporation)”

The Axe Man

In 2014 Australia was shocked by a mean spirited budget that was to address an economic crisis that no one I knew thought existed. Some suspect that the ABC shutdown of broadcasts to Asia on the 31st of January 2015 was a retaliation for the ABC's budget cuts. Disgracefully the Pacific Broadcasts were stopped a year later. Closing down three NT transmitters and Radio Australia's Shepparton Transmitters. The ABC announced a saving of 1.9 million Australian dollars resulting from these closures. That's about the price of a bargain priced house in Forestville.

False Statistics

On hearing of the Pacific and NT short wave closures from Macca on The ABC's "Australia All Over", I personally complained immediately online to ABC and received an automated reply on how I could still get ABC broadcasts from VAST and FM. I do not think I was counted as one of the only 15 who complained.



There should be ABC Radio reception for Australians Everywhere

Since the closures I have travelled remotely in Queensland and found many gaps in ABC AM and FM reception. Most towns have rebroadcasts, but down the road there is nothing that can be received on either the car radio or a powerful portable radio above Mt Isa. Fortunately Radio New Zealand can be received. It has some Australian news some times.

South of Mt Isa there is good reception for Local Radio but the Radio National content that Radio Australia used to repeat is missing. In my opinion it is Radio National Content that the people in remote Australia really need. As for VAST there were few automatic tuning in sets on caravans, e.g; 7 out of 60 in Croydon. The best caravan parks have lots of trees that block reception from the satellites. George Town Information said they frequently lost all FM transmissions. Internet radio was unavailable at Lawn Hill because their 4G phone system did not support internet. There is no radio reception there. Karumba has 3G but downloads are extremely slow, so its not for streaming. Undara Lava Tubes Resort has a 400 people capacity but no radio reception. Birdsville had everything!

China is reestablishing its historical place in the world

after the barbarians destroyed their economy with drugs.

Australians are in the main descendants of Europeans who cut China up into spheres of influence, so we really can not expect

them to like us. Australia has been in China's supply chain for trepang harvested by Macassans and Yongu (First Australians in Arnhem Land) for centuries. Their civilisation has known about and visited Australia over many centuries and if they were expansionists as they claim Japan and the United States are they would have a prior claim to that of Great Britain under their “Barbarian Queen” (Li Sing, Shanghi Manderin circa 1830).

Australia, Japan and the United States of America are waking up to China's Moves

Slowly, e.g:

Through infrastructure loans China has increased it's presence and influence in our region. Some island nations are having difficulties repaying these loans. China took a port from Shrilanka as payment for a loan default. Australia simply sold them the Port of Darwin.

A US, Japan, Australia Security Pact against China was announced on ABC radio yesterday. (31/7/2018).

Australian Aid to Asia and the Pacific

The Axe Man cut the Australian aid budget to .23% of GDP. The UN recommends .7%. With the China scare/reality it must go up. Now we are paying for internet cable links to pacific islands it will go up. Eventually we may simply be unable to compete with China.

International Frequencies and SW in PNG

My father and my foster father Les Rabel worked under Engineer Bill Boil for Posts and Telegraphs.

Bill designed the VHF link between Mount Laws (Port Moresby Papua) and Mt Kindy (Wau) for Lae in New Guinea. He bounced the signal off mountains to transverse the country. His reward was a top job in Geneva approving international frequencies for the UN agency there. Perhaps he made sure that Australia got the best day and night frequencies and directions for Radio Australia.

Those frequencies were air-wave territory analogous to Australia's Antarctic territory. As I feared we have given them away.

When Sukano took Dutch New Guinea off the Dutch and called it West Irian he called Australia, South Irian. Les Raebel designed and installed aerials for half a dozen PNG local stations, so that the signals reached all of West Irian. ABC in Port Moresby broadcast sport on the weekends on Shortwave. There are many SW receivers in PNG, because of the effectiveness of these frequencies getting signals over mountains.

Louise Alley, Strategic Communications Manager, ABC Radio, in “ABC Exits Shortwave Radio Transmission” posted 6th December 2016

<http://about.abc.net.au/press-releases/s-shortwave-radio/>

did not know that today's SW receivers are in fact very easy to use:

They have memories, that a listener fills just like any car radio. In the day they scan the frequencies for Radio New Zealand when it is found they enter it into memory. They repeat the process at night. Hence they have memories to recall day or night for Radio New Zealand. As China takes over old Radio Australia frequencies they would be best advised to play English Language Propaganda on these frequencies because many sets in the Pacific will still have the frequencies in memory. They would get an instant audience of once Faithful Radio Australia Listeners . China's broadcasts are no longer extreme as they were with Radio Peking in Chairman Mao's time, “Imperialists ██████” are now expansionists.

English language for the Pacific

English is the official language of most of the Pacific. This resulted from Colonisation and wars between colonisers etc.

Australia and the US should be maximising the Pacific's exposure to English in every way. This to realise the best possible

communication with pacific nations. In many countries Pidgin English is now the local language, but the aspiration is to speak English. We should cultivate this in order to insure that future leaders in the islands see things our way.

END OF ACTUAL SUBMISSION

Addendum

This is what I sent to Nick Xenophon and other Australian Senators before the citizenship debacle

Ref

Nick Xenophon to introduce legislation to force ABC to reinstate shortwave radio service.

Pacific Beat, Updated 31 Jan 2017, 3:25pm

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-31/xenophon-leads-calls-for-abc-to-reinstate-shortwave-radio/8225694>

"ABC Exits Shortwave Radio Transmission" Posted 6th December 2016

<http://about.abc.net.au/press-releases/shortwave-radio/> this has FAQ's

Subject ABC Shortwave Radio Transmission for Australians every where.

Honourable Senator

I refer to the above references particularly with a view to inputting three ideas:

1. Radio Australia's Shepparton Transmitters should be used to broadcast to all Australians in Australia as well as

Internationally.

2. The ABC should promote the service referred to in 1.
3. The ABC radio charter should include a citizen's rights clause.

E.g “The ABC must endeavour to insure that every Australian can receive ABC transmissions/programs everywhere in Australia.

Up until the end of January 2017, I could receive Radio Australia almost anywhere in this land.

Many Australians did not know this about our International Service because of the international purpose of Radio Australia, numerous remote Australian mainland listeners were not surveyed by the ABC before closing down the Shepparton Transmitters.

The web page “ABC Exits Shortwave Radio Transmission”and it's “Frequently Asked Questions” made fatuous claims about shortwave broadcasting. These included; old technology, difficult to use, expensive for listeners and unreliable for emergency broadcasts.

Old technology nearly 100 years old is a pointless comment. Radio New Zealand has now modernised their shortwave to broadcast in digital as well as amplitude modulation (AM) shortwave.

I can list sites across Northern Australia where I listened in the day and night to Radio Australia on a portable radio that cost \$120 or on one that cost \$35.

The difficulty cited was switching frequencies, for best reception between day and night. These radios have memory holding the day and night frequencies. Pressing a memory button ain't real hard.

It is difficult to imagine why they claimed shortwave was unreliable for emergencies when they claim emergency shortwave

transmissions from the Bureau of Meteorology will ensure safety at sea. While travelling, we were staying in touch with mainstream Australia. Most emergencies that would affect us emerge slowly via news and weather.

Eg On Monday 15 August 2016 at 3pm . At 13°14'21.52”S134°43'52.69”E on the Central Arnhem road I was still listening to Radio Australia as I had been along the road from Nhulunbuy now 350 kilometres away and still 300 crow fly kilometres from Katherine. (If you paste the latitude and longitude into Google Maps you will see the gravel pit we camped in.) This site is beyond the range of any NT shortwave station.

The VAST satellite dish option only works when stationery and tuning in is painful as a daily chore on a \$600 tune it yourself set up. No problem tuning in with an automatic system for \$3000 satellite dish but it will not track the satellite while your vehicle is moving.. In our case on our ute there is no room up top for a dish with the solar panels and roof top tent. We have a personal emergency beacon \$260, but can not see why we would buy/rent the recommended satellite phone. Would anyone call us if there was an emergency?

The same web page may have a good case for closing down the ABC NT Shortwave services if low indigenous listening revealed indigenous listener surveys were the only reason. However when mustering starts after the wet there will be protests by those listeners who were not surveyed. These stations were designed using Near Vertical Incident Transmission which only works with lower shortwave frequencies up to 8000 kHz. The frequencies used were not very common on the most shortwave receivers in vehicles or portable radios. I purchased my \$120 radio because my \$35 set did not receive the night time frequencies for Katherine and Tennant Creek. Most modern, pll (phase locked loop) receivers with shortwave can scan for frequencies in use. How

many who heard the secret that ABC NT shortwave existed, tried and said it did not work, because not all shortwave sets are equal.

In 2014 NT radio announcers mentioned the shortwave frequencies they were to be heard on. In 2016 I could no longer get the Katherine Night Frequency. Was the ABC preparing the axe, but not canvassing listeners ?

City slickers can drive their car and listen to the ABC. Why is the ABC denying county and bush people the same right in Australia all over.

I trust and hope you will have success with this cause. I will help in any way I can.

Regards

Gene

Eugene.Conron

Post Script.

The following is a copy of the email I sent to Queensland politicians.

It was also forwarded to:

Bob.Katter.MP@aph.gov.au

With comment: "Bob Please do what you can about this penny pinching shutdown. I've heard that less than 2 million dollars has been saved to rob folks in the bush of their radio reception.

Regards Gene"

And forwarded to:

senator.roberts@aph.gov.au

With comment: "What does One Nation think about this issue?"

Apparently less than 2 million dollars is saved by these closures that deny bushies radio reception and lower Australia's International presence.

Regards Gene”

From: Gene Conron [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, 5 February 2017 11:04 AM

To: bert.vanmanen@aph.gov.au

Cc: Mick de Brenni MP

Subject: Radio Australia Shortwave Closed Down January 30, 2017

I was hopping mad when I heard that the short wave ABC stations in the Northern Territory had closed down.

This morning , on Macca's Australia All Over on ABC Local this morning a fellow from Shepparton, Victoria, where the Radio Australia Shortwave transmitters are located, said that transmissions from it had ceased.

We are retired, in the winter when the Victorians invade Queensland we travel across the top end and have relied on Radio Australia's Shortwave News, and in the NT and the Kimberley on the ABC shortwave signals from Alice Springs (Roe Creek), Tennant Creek and Katherine.

In Queensland there have been many places where the only Australian News we could get was from Radio Australia.

If we want News now, we have to get it from China, PNG or New Zealand Shortwave stations.

The ABC's

Reception Advice <Advice.Reception@abc.net.au>

Lists NT radio stations to listen to instead of the shortwave

stations that have closed. Newcastle waters 106.1 and 107.1 FM transmissions can just be received 30k away at Longreach Water hole, only if the radio is put on top of a ladder.

It also suggests getting a VAST Satellite Dish. We can not fit one on top of our Utility which already has a roof top tent and solar panels on top.

I come from Papua, where Radio Australia was regular listening as it is in the rest of the Pacific.

Shutting down Radio Australia has left many Australians without Australian News and Weather and Our Regional Countries prey to China Radio International.

As our local Federal MP can you try to reverse this penny pinching move by dumb city slicker bureaucrats. ABC/Radio Australia should also be programming and beaming short wave services for all the many no radio reception areas in Australia as well as the Pacific.

Regards

Eugene Conron

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