

Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific

Submission made by Mark William Dunning

My background is that I am a professional engineer normally working in the area of railway signalling and data communications. A hobby is amateur radio where I hold the call sign VK6WV. In the past I have taught electronics to individuals and part time at community colleges.

My submission is that the decision to cease shortwave broadcasting has been detrimental to Australian interests in four different ways.

- (a) Loss of influence in the Asia Pacific region. Through my amateur radio interests I have spoken to a number of persons throughout the Asia Pacific region who used to listen to Radio Australia on short wave. A number of these people live in areas not likely to be covered by FM translators. A common comment made to me is that with Australia vacating short wave broadcasting, the field has been essentially left open to the various versions of Chinese short wave broadcasts to dominate this area. Although the internet is increasingly available, short wave reception remains in many cases the only practical means of obtaining news of the outside world for some people.

My understanding is that at the time the service was shut down was that it was supposedly done to save something less than \$2M Australian per Year. I would contend that if that is the case, the cost of the short wave broadcasting was a most cost effective means of maintaining Australian views and influence in this area. According to news reports Chinese broadcasting has occupied the frequencies vacated by Radio Australia. I believe that this is consistent with other similar initiatives to broaden their influence in this area at the detriment of countries such as Australia.

- (b) Loss of influence in areas outside its normal designated coverage areas. Due to the nature of short wave propagation Radio Australia's broadcasts were often received and listened to outside its primary service zone. The decision to shut down these services has been noted with sadness by listeners around the world.

<http://theradioboard.com/rb/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=7426&p=72606&hilit=Radio+Australia#p72606>

- (c) Loss of service within Australia. Although intended to service the Asia Pacific area the broadcasts were well receivable within Australia and these frequencies were commonly listened to by long distance trackers in the outback and isolated primary industry workers. I myself used to listen to radio Australia when involved in field survey work in the Pilbara. It seems there was no consideration given to these persons when the service was shut down.

- (d) It removed an incentive for technically inclined persons to develop their skills by removing a source of an understandable short wave service. Having taught individuals and in college I am aware that there needs to be incentives to such persons to help maintain their interests while learning theory. Building a short wave receiver and receiving Radio Australia was a thrill to many persons I have been involved with over the years. Australia needs technical people and should support their training.

In summary I urge the review to make a finding that supports the re-introduction of a Radio Australia short wave service.

