

## Review Of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific

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I have been a radio and electronics enthusiast for most of my 52 years. Starting with a simple crystal radio set and growing into a hobby that has developed to the latest software defined radio systems.

Experiencing first hand developments in and the changing world through short wave (high frequency) radio, from Cold War broadcasts involving the Soviet broadcaster *Radio Moscow* and USA's *Voice Of America*, an at war Britain in the Falklands with the *British Broadcasting Corporations World Service*, and a once silent but now powerhouse that is *China Radio International*.

Witnessing soft diplomacy delivering a nations philosophy and message. Shortwave radio has been an easy and effective method for sending a message to a region or globally.

Though not an internationally powerful shortwave broadcaster, the "friendly voice" of Radio Australia did, and should once again, play a strong role within the Asia/Pacific region. Broadcasting in many of the regions languages, the nations overseas broadcaster could precisely target a specific audience. Day to day and during times of need Radio Australia can target the individual with news, current affairs and an Australian perspective.

The destructive devaluing of Radio Australia since 1996 has cost this nation more than it has saved. The ramifications of which in geo political, security terms may not be clearly understood for decades. Our nations diplomatic effectiveness and security in the region is hand strung and our soft contact is compromised leading to more expensive and harder methods. To justify his governments cuts, I recall Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer explain how people could simply tune into satellite broadcasts. My response, "try setting up a satellite dish!"

Shortwave radio allows individuals to easily, with minimal cost, and maximum portability/ convenience have access to a free and if necessary covert method of listening. A simple receiver and small bit of wire will outperform the internet with its limited access, firewalls and monitoring by government agencies. Outperforming satellite setups requiring considerable equipment and knowledge, or FM relay systems which can be compromised by geography or cut by individuals, foreign governments or natural disasters.

I agree a range of platforms should be used to service the Asia Pacific Region. If we are to gain the confidence of the region, a quality shortwave broadcaster with the track record and trust developed by Radio Australia over decades should exist. Our nations role and security is at stake and Australia needs to act in its best interest and the interest of the region.