

Brian Stokes

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Australian Government
Department of Communications and the Arts
Via online submission

Re: Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific

To Whom It May Concern,

Shortwave radio may be an old technology but it is the most appropriate technology to cover wide areas of the Australian continent and surrounding islands.

Shortwave coverage of the entire continent requires very few transmitter sites compared to any other technology and no sophisticated transmission equipment. Two or three transmitters can cover the entire continent. It is not unusual to be able to hear a single shortwave transmitter across all of Australia with the right choice of transmission frequency and time of day.

Most importantly, shortwave does not require expensive, energy hungry, sophisticated receivers as does DAB and satellite broadcasting. It does not require internet service, as do streaming and podcasting services.

Shortwave receivers are rugged, inexpensive and can be battery or solar powered- no mains power is required. Shortwave receivers can be portable or vehicle mounted, which is very important for people in remote areas of the continent or those traversing the middle of Australia, such as semi truck drivers, tourists and indigenous communities.

Shortwave services can serve to back up medium wave AM and VHF FM local broadcast stations in WA, NT & QLD coastal areas, which are prone to damage from cyclones. Shortwave is an essential means of communicating cyclone and tropical storm information to islanders and ships at sea.

Radio Australia was an important avenue for bringing world and Australian news into the tiny island nations in the Pacific, one which is free from influence of despotic and corrupt governments. Radio Australia is a very important means of maintaining a democratic influence in places like Fiji, which has been under control of a military junta after a coup

some years ago. Radio Australia is also a stellar example of how journalism should operate in a free society. Radio Australia stories often give small broadcasters and publishers in island nations cause to publish their own works to supplant the information supplied by Radio Australia. This can have dramatic influence on the democratic nature of island nations in the region, improving quality of life for their inhabitants.

Moreover, shortwave broadcasting is very inexpensive to operate. A \$3 million to \$3 million annual budget can easily support all the transmitters that are required to provide a necessary service to our entire quadrant of the globe. This is a very tiny expenditure compared to the annual budget of the ABC. It is very good value, not just for the Australian people but for all in the region.

Please consider restoring the Radio Australia shortwave broadcasting services. The transmitting facilities still exist and content is still being generated for the Radio Australia online service; it's a simple matter of flipping the switches to turn the transmitters back on.

Kind Regards

Brian Stokes