

Submission to

The Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific

by

Supporters of Australian Broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific

Note: This document includes a section of text ('The competitive context affecting the reach of Australian Broadcasting in the Asia Pacific') inadvertently omitted from the submission of the *Supporters of Australian Broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific* as submitted 0/8/18. The additional text was approved by signatories and accepted by the Review 10/8/18. The document is presented here as a .pdf for the first time.

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Who are we?

Supporters of Australian Broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific is a loose group of Australians with experience or interest in the Asia Pacific region and people in the Asia Pacific region interested in what the Australian media has to offer them. It includes experts in broadcast technology and members of the audience in the region. The group was established in response to the present Review and has grown rapidly. In the past few weeks our Facebook page¹ has welcomed more than 950 new members with representation from most Australian states and from people from Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, American Samoa and Palau. We also have a presence on twitter and LinkedIn. This submission was prepared by a core group including journalists and former media executives with many years' experience in the Pacific and Asia including recent experience at the ABC's Asia Pacific service as well as commercial media. Our group of authors also includes technology experts, academics, consultants and members of Asia Pacific diaspora communities. A full list of signatories appears at the end of the submission. Most of the group's expertise and experience is focussed on the Pacific but some supporters have worked extensively in Asia including for international and commercial media organisations. While this submission includes perspectives on Asia its primary focus is on Papua New Guinea, the Pacific and Timor-Leste.

Executive summary

This submission recommends the rebuilding of Australian international broadcasting based on the ABC's existing international radio, television and digital services.

Australia is at an important juncture in its international broadcasting. It is on the verge of losing its critical mass of Asia Pacific literate journalists and media executives with deep Asian or Pacific knowledge.

With increasing geo-political tensions in the Asia-Pacific Australia needs a clear voice in its region. Broadcasting is a proven and effective 'soft power' tool. Other international broadcasters are expanding their activities (China dramatically so) and most are targeting our region².

Three options are suggested, ranging from a full international broadcasting and digital service across Asia and the Pacific to a small project for enhanced service only to the Pacific, Timor-Leste and Indonesia (priority countries named in the 2016 Defence White Paper)³.

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/239918206767173/>

² BBC, NHK Japan, Al Jazeera and more.

³ <http://www.defence.gov.au/WhitePaper/Docs/2016-Defence-White-Paper.pdf>

Funding proposals for the three options have been developed by members of our group based on published research, our experience as media industry insiders and consultation with current and former media executives from international broadcasting corporations (both commercial and publicly-funded). Given the lack of available open-source information they are ballpark estimates.

The funding options three options are:

- 1) **Full Asia-Pacific television, radio and digital services** \$55-\$75 million per annum. This option would significantly enhance services in the Pacific, Timor-Leste and Indonesia, including establishing new language services. Near-neighbours among the developing nations of ASEAN would be the next priority along with enhanced services for Mandarin-speakers globally, including in Australia. At its most effective (with a budget around \$75 million), this option could include tailor-made services for audiences in India. This option would include a wide range of programs made specifically for Asia-Pacific audiences with priority on news and current affairs (including arts, business, sport, science and technology), new English language-learning programs and children's programs. In any of these options news and current affairs would meet all the ABC's rigorous guidelines for independence. This option would enable the ABC to significantly rebuild audiences in Asia and the Pacific and Australia to achieve its soft power goals and re-establish a significant and respected voice in the region.
- 2) **Budget Asia-Pacific television radio and digital services** \$40-\$55 million This option would enhance services in the Pacific, Timor-Leste and Indonesia, including language services. Services for near-neighbour developing nations of ASEAN and China would be enhanced but without as much bespoke programming for audiences in each country. Bespoke services for India would be beyond the range of this option. Considering the requirement for more streaming, mobile and online services in 2018 and beyond, satellite delivery of television would probably not be an option under this scenario.
- 3) **Television, Radio and Digital in Papua New Guinea, the Pacific, Timor-Leste and Indonesia** \$35-\$50 million per annum. This option would provide for significantly enhanced radio and television content and access to digital platforms and transmission in the priority countries identified in the 2016 Defence White Paper only PNG, the Pacific and Indonesia). At its upper funding-level this option would provide services of a standard similar to option 1 (above). At its lower funding-level it would provide services at slightly lower level to option 2 above. Funding for this option recognises that establishment costs do not scale proportionately with the geography covered by the service, and that maintaining services in the Pacific is comparatively costly. This option would include the restoration of shortwave radio (standard AM and in the future DRM) and 24-hour FM radio stations in Pacific Forum nation capitals and in other regional areas of the Pacific. At its upper funding level this option would also provide for a new series of the ABC's English-language learning programs.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation: That full television, radio and online/digital services be re-established in Asia and the Pacific with total funding provided by the Australian government of between \$65 million and \$75 million a year.

Recommendation: That the ABC manage the revitalisation of Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific subject to robust transparency and accountability mechanisms.

Recommendation: That a new model of Australian broadcasting in the Asia Pacific build deeper partnerships with media organisations and use employment of local journalists and contestable podcast and video funds a priority.

Recommendation: That the renewed broadcasting organisation actively engage and train journalists and broadcasters from the region to produce content relevant to the aims and objectives of the services.

Recommendation: That new Asian and Pacific languages be added to the ABC's Asia Pacific service and existing language services be significantly enhanced.

Recommendation: That creation of new best-in-class English language learning, news and 'near news' programs be a priority for new Australian broadcasting in Asia.

Recommendation: That content initiatives in the Pacific focus on significantly expanded news and current affairs capability, emergency and weather forecasting and 'near news' and other specialist programs and events.

Recommendation: That 24-hour FM Radio Australia stations be established in all Pacific Island Forum member nation's capital cities.

Recommendation: That Radio Australia program placement, and support for local FM, stations be expanded across the Pacific in major towns of all Forum nations and in important Pacific territories such as Tokelau, American Samoa and others.

Recommendation: That 24-hour FM Radio Australia stations be established in a selection of ASEAN capitals and significant provincial cities, with a particular focus on Indonesian cities.

Recommendation: That the ABC re-establish its shortwave service to the Pacific and work with other international broadcasters to bring DRM to the consumer market as soon as practicable.

Recommendation: That Australia rebuild television broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific as well as arrange for rebroadcast of television service and programs by local partner stations, networks and cable operators.

Recommendation: That new Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific provide a comprehensive bespoke online and digital service.

Recommendation: That new Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific recognise the important role of online, text and transcripts as an historical record for the Pacific.

Introduction

The objective of the Review as set out in the terms of reference is to ‘assess the reach of Australia’s media in the Asia Pacific region, including examining whether shortwave radio technology should be used’⁴.

Reach is dictated by two components:

- 1) **Content.** Radio and television and their online/digital counterparts have the potential to touch the hearts and inspire the minds of the audience. Wide reach with international broadcasting is dependent on the quality, attractiveness and appropriateness of the content provided, including the language in which it is delivered
- 2) **The technology used to deliver content.** In the ever more converged media world the most appropriate technology for each audience is different and changes rapidly. A mix of technology will be needed for all audiences, including those in the most challenging remote and media poor environments.

We argue that a rapidly changing geo-political environment of increasing uncertainties and challenges makes it urgent that Australia rebuild its publicly-funded, independent, public-interest broadcast capability across Asia and the Pacific. Done well, state-funded international broadcasting is an efficient and effective way to shape long term attitudes and preferences in the region through positive attraction and persuasion. Despite reservations about the direction of recent Asia Pacific broadcasting initiatives by the ABC, there is no doubt that the ABC is best placed and the most appropriate institution to operate the service under its charter.

It is important that such a service should provide bespoke programming for audiences in Asia and the Pacific, including a genuine partnership, engagement and cultural exchanges with journalists and creatives in the region and with our with Asian and Pacific diaspora communities in Australia. The service would utilise the best material from commercial and other Australian media, such as SBS and NITV, as well as the ABC - just as the Australia Network did under ABC management.

This submission examines

- Why Australian broadcasting is needed in the Asia Pacific,
- The audience Australia should seek to attract through broadcasting
- The state of Australian broadcasting in the region
- The competitive context affecting the reach of Australian broadcasting
- Why the ABC is the appropriate vehicle for future Australian Asia Pacific broadcasting
- Options for future Australian broadcasting including
 - Technology
 - Content
 - Governance
- Funding for future Australian broadcasting in the Asia Pacific

⁴ <https://www.communications.gov.au/have-your-say/review-australian-broadcasting-services-asia-pacific>

Why broadcast to Asia and the Pacific?

An effective 'soft power' tool

Australia's international broadcasting is an effective 'soft power' tool. Australia's geo-political and security environment in Asia and the Pacific has changed. The Defence White Paper 2016⁵ and the Foreign Policy White Paper 2017⁶ highlighted Australia's neighbours in the Asia Pacific as priority areas. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull spoke of the new challenges Australia faces at the Shangri-La dialogue last year: *'In this brave new world we cannot rely on great powers to safeguard our interests. We have to take responsibility for our own security and prosperity'*⁷.

The Foreign Policy White Paper increased focus on the need for more attention to 'soft power'. In a globalised and contested world, it said, *'a systematic and sophisticated approach to soft power is in our national interest'*⁸. The White paper noted that *'having the ability to influence others through the power of attraction and ideas is ... vital to our foreign policy'*⁹. However, The White Paper did not examine the role of international broadcasting or the value of independent media and journalism as 'soft power' tools¹⁰.

Since the publication of those two White Papers, security analysts across the political spectrum¹¹ have been warning the strategic environment is only becoming more difficult and competitive. It is an environment in which Australia needs more than ever to speak for itself¹² and to revitalise its publicly-funded independent media as a foreign policy instrument¹³. The need to rebuild an Australian Asia Pacific broadcasting presence is urgent, as Australia's institutions are at risk of losing their critical mass of journalists and media managers with expertise and contacts in the region. A landmark study by the Lowy Institute found independent broadcasting is an effective public diplomacy tool¹⁴ with a unique ability to establish and maintain people-to-people connections between Australia and neighbours in our region and to enhance Australia's influence.

Other international broadcasters are expanding their activities (China dramatically so) and most are targeting our region¹⁵. The British government's Strategic Defence Review 2016¹⁶ recognised the potency of international broadcasting as a soft power tool¹⁷, particularly in its efforts against ISIS. Another recent study of British international broadcasting concluded that *'Simply put, paying*

⁵ <http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/docs/2016-defence-white-paper.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/foreign-policy-white-paper>

⁷ <https://www.malcolmturnbull.com.au/media/keynote-address-at-the-16th-iiss-asia-security-summit-shangri-la-dialogue>

⁸ P107 <https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/foreign-policy-white-paper>

⁹ P109 <https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/foreign-policy-white-paper>

¹⁰ <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/time-sharpen-edge-australia-soft-power>

¹¹ Paul Dibb <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/new-security-reality-demands-new-australian-policy/>

Alan Gyngell <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/australias-response-to-changing-global-orders/>

Hugh White <https://www.quarterlyessay.com.au/essay/2017/11/without-america>

Rowan Callick <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/inquirer/beijing-appears-to-know-no-bounds-in-expanding-its-influence/news-story/a3ece864967e5821ac00e869f1f3e26c>

Peter Jennings <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/trump-administration-sick-of-winning/>

¹² <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/oz-voice-in-the-asia-pacific-speak-for-ourselves/> and

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/time-sharpen-edge-australia-soft-power>

¹³ <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/oz-voice-in-the-asia-pacific-part-3-foreign-policy-and-media-revolutions/>

¹⁴ <https://archive.lowyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy>

¹⁵ BBC, NHK Japan, Al Jazeera and more.

¹⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575378/national_security_strategy_strategic_defence_security_review_annual_report_2016.pdf

¹⁷ <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/radio-australia-soft-power-tool-eroded-neglect>

for the BBC World Service represents the most public way the British government carries out public diplomacy¹⁸. The BBC World Service is currently undergoing its biggest expansion since the 1940s. More details later in this submission.

The most comprehensive study of Australia's international broadcasting and its existing and potential contribution to public diplomacy was completed by the Lowy Institute in 2010¹⁹. Although its discussion of technology is now out-of-date, its other conclusions remain more valid now, in more complex times, than when it was published.

The Lowy paper was written before recent cuts which have brought Australia's international broadcasting by the ABC to the lowest point in its history. Key points made in the Lowy paper include:

- Public diplomacy is an important mainstay of international diplomatic activity.
- Governments of both sides of politics have failed to grasp the importance of either public diplomacy or international broadcasting.
- International broadcasting is a key tool of public diplomacy and is effective in enhancing a nation's international image, standing and perceptions amongst foreign publics. However:
 - independence is crucial to the credibility of the broadcaster and its ability to attract and maintain audiences;
 - longevity, consistency, stable funding and effective cooperation with the ministry of foreign affairs are important factors in success.
- Australia's public diplomacy is poorly funded and lacks strategic focus and coherence, and this affects its international broadcasting endeavours²⁰.

Australia's position as a regional security partner of choice

Australia's international broadcasting enhances its position as security partner of choice in the region. In the wake of the Defence White Paper 2016 Australia's defence relationships are expected to grow with almost every country in the Asia Pacific²¹ and Australia is seeking to be the security partner of choice in a wide area, including in the Pacific. As noted in a document prepared by Pacific expert and commentator Dr Tess Newton-Cain for this submission:

'A key part of how Australia contributes to regional security in the Pacific island region is as a first responder during natural disasters via participation in the FRANZ²² partnership. Appropriate resourcing of international broadcasting will allow for these contributions to be enhanced in terms of disaster preparedness and response. At both of these stages, providing access to accurate and appropriate information gives invaluable support to

¹⁸ P7 <http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/sites/uscpublicdiplomacy.org/files/useruploads/u35361/2014%20Paper%201.pdf>

¹⁹ O'Keefe, A & Oliver, A, 2010, International Broadcasting and its Contribution to Public Diplomacy, Lowy Institute Working Paper, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy>

²⁰ <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy>

²¹ <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/the-2016-defence-white-paper-good-posture/>

²² A mechanism for military cooperation in response to natural disasters between France, Australia and New Zealand.

Pacific island governments and their agencies who are responsible for leading in this space.'

See Appendix 1 for the full document.

The critical role of Australian international broadcasting during times of disasters was seen in the aftermath of the ABC's decision to end its shortwave broadcasting in January 2017. Vanuatu's Prime Minister Charlot Salwai wrote to a senate committee on his fears for the loss of Radio Australia shortwave services during disasters²³. He told the senators that the loss of ABC shortwave 'could cost many, many lives in the likelihood of another major natural disaster like Cyclone Pam in 2015'. Cyclone Pam was Vanuatu's worst ever cyclone, leaving 15 people dead and 75,000 homeless²⁴. Prime Minister Salwai's concerns were echoed by Australian aid agency ActionAid and in a call for the reversal of the ABC's decision²⁵ to end shortwave and by the Pacific Freedom Forum (PFF)²⁶. Many of signatories of an online petition²⁷ sent to then ABC Chairman James Spigelman and ABC Managing Director Michelle Guthrie highlighted the value of shortwave for remote communities in times of disaster.

A powerful partnership enhancing foreign policy

Partnerships are an important element of Australia's foreign relations; one that the Foreign Policy White Paper tells us 'are essential to effective foreign policy'²⁸. International broadcasting, from its most rudimentary text-in radio to more complex collaborative cross-border program-making, is an under-recognised partnership in its own right. The rich engagement made possible by new technologies will only make this more so in the future. Professional audio, video, podcasts, vodcasts, social media and quality journalism have the potential to add emotional depth and resonance to other partnerships of importance to the Australian government. Australia's Pacific Labour mobility schemes are an example. Stories of challenge and triumph of people's individual experience of these programs would make compelling listening or viewing, while at the same time highlighting the value of this partnership between Australia and its rural communities and people of the Pacific (Appendix 1).

Amplifying Australian government communications strategies

The Australian government is putting more focus on its communications strategies and its digital engagement²⁹. It is important for a country, such as Australia, that overseas business, tourists and potential migrants understand government policies, regulations and processes. At the same time,

²³ Submission no 15

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/Shortwaveradio/Submissions

²⁴ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-13/cyclone-pam-vanuatu-one-year-on/7242620>

²⁵ Submission 46 -

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/Shortwaveradio/Submissions

²⁶ The Pacific Freedom Forum is a 'network of Pacific media colleagues, with the specific intent of raising awareness and advocacy of the right of Pacific people to enjoy freedom of expression and be served by a free and independent media' according to its submission to a recent Senate inquiry - submission 45

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/Shortwaveradio/Submissions

²⁷ <https://www.change.org/p/abc-chair-hon-james-spigelman-save-lifesaving-shortwave-radio-to-the-pacific>

²⁸ Pp107 <https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/foreign-policy-white-paper>

²⁹ Pp107-115 <https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/foreign-policy-white-paper>

effective independent international broadcasting goes well beyond functions of government. It exists to share the stories and the conversations within the Australian community and widen people-to-people dialogue with the rest of the world. As such it amplifies and extends the work of government communications strategies.

A country's international voice reveals much about the openness, transparency and confidence of the society it represents. The independence and honesty with which those stories are told gives credibility and assessments made by the international community about Australia are informed accordingly³⁰. The BBC World Service and Russia's RT News network are both examples of large international broadcasters operating with significant resources. There is, however, a significant difference between the two in terms of audience credibility of the news they carry³¹.

Appealing to foreign publics sceptical of the Australian government

Across our region, including in Indonesia and our nearest neighbours in the Pacific, there are growing numbers of people who misunderstand or are critical of, or hostile to, Australia's stance on certain issues. In Fiji, there has been a sea-change in the attitude of the government since 2006. With media freedom under challenge, the opportunity for unanswered negative assessments to take hold in the community are increasing. Anecdotal evidence suggests there has been more public criticism of Australia in PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and elsewhere in recent times. As the Lowy Institute report pointed out 'Australia ... has a limited appreciation of how uninformed other countries in the region are about Australia, and in some cases, their ambivalence³².

In 2010 Indonesia's President told the Australian parliament:

*'the most persistent problem in our relations is the persistence of age old stereotypes— misleading, simplistic mental caricature that depicts the other side in a bad light ... in Indonesia there are people who remain afflicted with Australia phobia — those who believe that the notion of White Australia still persists, that Australia harbours ill intention toward Indonesia and is either sympathetic to or supports separatist elements in our country.'*³³

International broadcasting has proven its ability to tackle these problems. The Lowy Institute report concluded that building understanding and trust is precisely the function of soft power:

*'Australia has at its disposal international broadcasters of established reputation to play a role in informing populations in the region and addressing misconceptions. When relations between Canberra and governments of neighbouring countries become fractious, international broadcasting can play a positive role in maintaining Australia's reputation.'*³⁴

³⁰ See also Appendix 1

³¹ <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy>

³² P63 <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy>

³³ Susilo Bambang Yudhuyonho, address by the President of Indonesia to Parliament, Hansard, House of Representatives, 10 March 2010, p 2139 quoted in <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy>

³⁴ Pp64-65 <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy>

A uniquely powerful reach

Australia has many soft power tools³⁵ all of which can be significantly enhanced by the power of broadcasting. Where individual events or exchanges create a relationship or experience, broadcasting by its every-day presence and discussion, has the power to re-affirm relationships and develop more nuanced understandings and deeper engagement over many years.³⁶ Business-people and trading partners can keep in touch with developments in Australia through specialist business programs for Asia or the Pacific while reporters in the region for those programs work every day to build networks of value to Australians with an interest in the region. Similarly, arts, sports, science and environment programs not only showcase Australia's creative talent but establish an ongoing conversation between creatives, sports-people, administrators and scientists and the wider public in the region. International broadcasting has a particular role to play in maintaining links with Alumni of Australian educational institutions who often feel a lasting bond with the country.

As a mass medium international broadcasting has the potential to reach millions of people in the Asia Pacific region, including those well out of reach of, or sceptical about, national government communications and engagement campaigns. The experience of ABC journalists who find they are known and warmly received, even in remote communities in the Pacific, attests to the reach of radio in particular. The reach of international broadcasting's digital engagement is seen in the ABC's English language learning Facebook page which has an enviable 4.4 million likes³⁷, and is still growing despite the fact that no new programs have been made since 2014. Audience statistics show there is appetite for Australian broadcasting in the Asia Pacific and a significant audience (when that audience is not neglected). Audience statistics appear later in the submission.

A model of democracy and a source of debate

The new geopolitical climate has created a contest of ideas in which the governments of non-democratic nations are actively questioning liberal values. This has been seen recently with increased Chinese and Russian³⁸ propaganda in the region. Demonstrating the role of free and independent media in democratic societies is an important role of international broadcasting. Independence from government and commercial interests is both essential to international broadcasting and one its major assets³⁹. In her first public speech as ABC Managing Director (called *A Global ABC*⁴⁰) Michelle Guthrie highlighted the ABC's Q&A program as an example of democracy in action. In an international context a debating program focussing on regional issues is likely to attract a wide and influential audience as would other more specialist programs. High quality international broadcasting is uniquely placed to increase understanding and foster debate about a wide range of issues. There is already a sophisticated conversation going on between Australians and Australian institutions and the region, out of view of the mainstream media. International broadcasting could again bring this to public attention. The deeper conversation allowed by interactive technology makes it more possible than ever before to engage large numbers of people in this process.

³⁵ Pp107-115 <https://www.fpwhitepaper.gov.au/foreign-policy-white-paper>

³⁶ P63 <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy>

³⁷ https://www.facebook.com/ABCEducationLearnEnglish/?hc_ref=ARRToGhxwh2KmirOCjAzanOceCK-ezs1lfYtM7wSWDdAU-2bFQMXCg_2-wO6Q1O6To&fref=nf

³⁸ <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/russias-disinformation-game-southeast-asia>

³⁹ Mark Scott speech

⁴⁰ <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/global-abc-address-michelle-guthrie-2016-lowy-institute-media-awards>

Supporting media freedom in Asia and the Pacific

Media freedom is under assault across the Asia Pacific region as shown in the Reporters without Borders (RSF) 2018 Media Freedom Index⁴¹. In Asia, China's influence is having a chilling effect on press freedom. RSF focussed its 2018 Asia Pacific analysis on the theme 'Asia-Pacific democracies threatened by China's media control model'⁴². In China, President Xi Jinping has introduced unprecedented levels of [surveillance](#) and control⁴³ of the population and the media, as well as [dramatically increased](#)⁴⁴China's [media presence overseas](#)⁴⁵. In Australia, Australian-Chinese language media organisations [have been pressured](#)⁴⁶ by Chinese state agencies. As RSF pointed out 'The Chinese model of state-controlled news and information is being copied in other Asian countries, especially Vietnam and Cambodia'. In Cambodia independent media has been shut down or neutered. The Chinese model's influence is being seen by media in [Thailand](#), [Malaysia](#) and [Singapore](#). Myanmar's Press Freedom ranking has slipped by 8 places in a year. In India, Pakistan and the Philippines violence against journalists is escalating. All these countries (other than Australia) rank in the lowest third of the 2018 World Press Freedom.

Similarly, all the Pacific countries RSF assessed, other than Fiji, dropped in their rankings. RSF concluded Samoa's status as a model of media freedom is in danger, Tongan media are facing pressures as they try to play their watchdog role, PNG's media freedom is real but fragile and Fiji, still bottom of the Pacific nations despite its improved ranking, is showing little real desire to restore media freedom.

Other examples of existing or potential challenges to media freedom and free speech in the Pacific include

- Public broadcasters across the region under [editorial pressure](#)⁴⁷ from governments so they are unable to play their role as a watchdog on government.
- Legislative and other moves to limit what can be said on social media such as PNG's threatened month-long shutdown of Facebook (now not proceeding) and its 2016 [Cybercrime legislation](#)⁴⁸.
- [Re-instatement](#)⁴⁹ of criminal libel laws.
- [Violence](#)⁵⁰ and threats to journalists.
- Arrests and legal challenges in Fiji (a sedition case against Fiji Times and questioning of Islands Business International journalists). Even if journalists are eventually vindicated these cases suggest a use of the law to intimidate.

⁴¹ <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>

⁴² <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-index-2018-asia-pacific-democracies-threatened-chinas-media-control-model>

⁴³ [https://theconversation.com/chinas-dystopian-social-credit-system-is-a-harbinger-of-the-algorithm-88348](https://theconversation.com/chinas-dystopian-social-credit-system-is-a-harbinger-of-the-global-age-of-the-algorithm-88348) and <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-31/chinas-social-credit-system-punishes-untrustworthy-citizens/9596204>

⁴⁴ <https://money.cnn.com/2018/03/21/media/voice-of-china-propaganda-broadcaster/index.html>

⁴⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/21/china-state-media-merger-to-create-propaganda-giant>

⁴⁶ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/chinese-language-newspapers-in-australia-beijing-controls-messaging-propaganda-in-press-20160610-gpg0s3.html>

⁴⁷ <http://www.abc.net.au/radio-australia/programs/pacificbeat/tongan-government-broadcasting-ceo-nanise-fifita/8488738>

⁴⁸ <http://www.looppng.com/png-news/act-will-not-censor-social-media-nicta-49630>

⁴⁹ <http://www.pmc.aut.ac.nz/pacific-media-watch/samoa-parliament-votes-bring-back-criminal-libel-law-over-social-media-10056>

⁵⁰ <http://www.ifj.org/nc/news-single-view/backpid/50/article/png-journalist-assaulted-by-government-officers/>

- [Fiji implementing a surveillance system](#) with help from China⁵¹, that has very similar characteristics to [China's 'social credit system'](#).

People in the region need the rich debate, impartial reporting and investigative journalism. These are assets Australia has and can develop further through its international broadcasting. In the past the ABC has provided a powerful role-model and, through its presence and reporting empowered journalists in the region to tackle stories that are difficult, but of important public interest. Similarly, in Australia, the Chinese language media are experiencing pressure from China to change the content of their stories⁵². Chinese Australian journalists wait for organisations such as the ABC to break stories about sensitive issues before covering them themselves by quoting that organisation's story. They are keen to see more coverage of both international and domestic issues in Chinese by institutions that will not buckle to Chinese pressure, so that they can provide their readers with free and fair reporting rather than a diet of news approved by Beijing. Australian citizens of Chinese background currently number 1.2 million. A high proportion read news in Chinese rather than English.

The Pacific is media poor and has a special need for Australian broadcasting

Media in the Pacific is becoming more diverse and sophisticated and is developing rapidly. In the past few years we have seen high-quality locally-owned online media established⁵³ and longstanding and respected print media move into indigenous ownership⁵⁴. However, overall the region is still lacking in high-quality media. Radio Australia (RA) has always played a vital role. Radio Australia used to be available to audiences in all member nations of the Pacific Islands Forum, including citizens living in rural and remote areas. This was vital for a sense of regionalism and connecting people to debate about the region's future. Radio is still the leading medium for news and current affairs in the Pacific. Since 2014, cuts to the ABC transmission has left 10 Pacific Forum nations with no radio service from Australia. Those countries include Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu⁵⁵. There is more discussion of this topic later in this submission.

There is demand for ABC services in the region

People in the Pacific, Indonesia and beyond have shown they value the ABC's quality journalism. Each time the ABC has cut its international services there has been an angry reaction from members of the audience. In 2014, the then ABC Pacific Economic and Business reporter Jemima Garrett received more than 60 emails in the first few days after it became apparent the ABC may make substantial cuts to Radio Australia. These included letters from a cabinet minister, an intergovernmental agency head and many opinion leaders, academics and concerned citizens⁵⁶. Similarly, in 2017 when the ABC announced the end of shortwave broadcasting there was a rash of

⁵¹ <http://fijisun.com.fj/2018/05/31/commissioner-looks-at-national-cctv-crime-fight/>

⁵² <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/news-and-media/multimedia/audio/panel-discussion-australia-china-and-fallout-foreign-influence>

⁵³ For example Pacific note in the north Pacific and the expansion of PNG and Pacific Loop.

⁵⁴ For example <http://117.53.167.71/pacific/radio/program/pacific-beat/islands-business-magazine-bought-by-leading-fiji-journalists/1432914>

⁵⁵ http://asopa.typepad.com/asopa_people/2018/07/heres-how-you-can-help-revive-abc-services-to-png.html

⁵⁶ More detail available on request see also <http://www.devpolicy.org/the-time-is-right-for-a-step-up-in-abc-broadcasting-to-the-pacific-20180709/>

reaction including media statements from journalist organisations⁵⁷ in the region and a petition signed by more than one thousand people. After the current Review of Australian Broadcasting services in the Asia Pacific was announced debate on Facebook and other social media platforms has again pointed to the continuing demand for Australian International broadcasting⁵⁸.

A cost-effective way of reaching foreign publics

Independent analysis shows international broadcasting is a value-for-money way to reach large numbers of people in the Asia Pacific. The Lowy Institute report concluded '*As a tool of public diplomacy, international broadcasting is a remarkably cost-effective way of reaching audiences in their millions on a regular basis*'⁵⁹. See more discussion of this issue later in the 'Why the ABC is the appropriate vehicle for future Australian international broadcasting' and 'Funding' sections of this submission, below.

What audience should Australia's International broadcasting seek to attract?

Traditionally, Australia's international broadcasting has had three key audiences each with different needs and each given a different priority over the years. Those audiences are:

- decision-makers and opinion leaders in the region
- foreign publics
- Australian expatriates

With the revolution in the availability of online news, streaming services, podcasts and other digital offerings, Australian expatriates (other than those living in remote areas of developing countries) have little difficulty accessing information about Australia or a wide variety of programming from Australia.

This allows new international broadcasting initiatives to focus more closely on the audiences that matter to Australia's national and security interests in their broadest sense. We suggest three new target audiences in Asia and the Pacific:

- decision-makers and opinion leaders in the region
- foreign publics
- alumni of Australian educational institutions and exchanges

Many among these audiences have more media choice than ever before. In the globalised media market audiences are seeking original high-quality media offerings of direct relevance to their interests and aspirations.

⁵⁷ <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1612/S00045/stop-shortwave-cut-to-pacific.htm>

⁵⁸ See appendix 2 for some of the comments on the Facebook site of Supporters of Australian Broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific

⁵⁹P63 <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy>

In the Pacific and significant parts of Asia there are still many people on the wrong side of the digital divide. Even in areas of high mobile phone and internet penetration marginalised members of foreign publics can find it difficult to afford mobile and internet services and so rely on old fashioned free to air media. Similarly, in remote areas where media choice and connectivity are limited, free to air services are more important.

The state of Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific

Australia's broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific is at its lowest ebb since the establishment of Radio Australia in 1939.

Commercial media

In the past two decades Australian commercial media broadcasting in the region has not been sustainable. Other than News Corp's Australian News Channel, commercial media have generally found it unprofitable or unattractive and have withdrawn, leaving program sales and online offerings as their primary contribution. Examples include the experience of Australia's Network 7 which, in 1998, in the wake of the Mansfield report⁶⁰ was contracted by the Australian government to operate Australia Television (ATV) across the Asia Pacific region. Network 7 faced criticism for the quality of its content. It found it impossible to make a profit and ended up running its operation as a shopping channel⁶¹. By 2001 Australia Television had been returned to the ABC⁶². Australia's Nine Network put Papua New Guinea's first television service EMTV on the map establishing its popularity but in 2006 sold out to Communications Fiji Pty Ltd (which recently on-sold to PNG Telikom). In 2016, News Corp Australia bought the Australian News Channel⁶³ owner of Sky News Australia, Sky News New Zealand and the international streaming service Australia Channel⁶⁴. The Australia Channel offers three subscription-only channels of live news, sport and business channels as well as programs on demand to audiences around the world. It promises programming 'on the issues that matter to Australians and our international trade and tourism partners'⁶⁵. Sky is known for its attention-seeking stable of commentators such as Andrew Bolt and (until recently) Mark Latham, who provide opinionated but one-sided perspectives on Australian politics. Such programs give a limited and skewed impression of Australia and its engagement with the region to an overseas audience. In 2011, Sky was a bidder for the Australian government's contract for the Australia Network but was ruled out in controversial circumstances⁶⁶. In the Pacific, the Australia Channel is little known and less used. It is interesting to note that in the past decade the extra-regional broadcaster Al Jazeera has often provided more coverage of Papua New Guinea than the Australian commercial networks combined.

⁶⁰ Mansfield, Bob. (1997a). *The challenge of a better ABC: The review of the role and functions of the ABC*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

⁶¹ <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/oz-voice-in-the-asia-pacific-part-2-adjust-the-tv-picture/>

⁶² <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/oz-voice-in-the-asia-pacific-part-2-adjust-the-tv-picture/>

⁶³ <https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/news-corp-buys-sky-news-in-australia-and-new-zealand-from-seven-and-nine-20161201-gt1kuz.html>

⁶⁴ <http://www.australiachannel.com.au/>

⁶⁵ <http://www.australiachannel.com.au/>

⁶⁶ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-12-05/sky-news-expects-australia-network-compensation/3714136>

SBS and NITV

The Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) and National Indigenous TV (NITV) have a mandate to broadcast within Australia. Although both have programs of interest to audiences in Asia and the Pacific, program sales and online offerings are their only services reaching audiences in the region.

The ABC

Between 1939 when Radio Australia first went to air and 2014, the ABC was a major force in the region with audience figures rivalling and sometime exceeding those of the BBC World Service. The ABC suffered significant funding cuts in 1997 in the wake of the Mansfield Enquiry and again in 2014 when the Australian government cancelled the \$220 million ten-year contract for the Australia Network. In each case the cut amounted to around half the staff of the service.

The ABC's Service in Asia and the Pacific prior to June 2014

Prior to the loss of the Australia Network contract, the ABC's international service was the world's only independent specialist Indo-Pacific Broadcaster. It provided radio, television and digital services to cities and remote areas across the region. The ABC, with Radio Australia and Australia Network, was the leading broadcaster in the Pacific Islands and the leading media institution breaking Pacific stories globally, as its online statistics for these stories in regions such as north America attest.

In Asia and in the Pacific, as in Australia, the ABC was and is recognised as Australia's most trusted source of media⁶⁷ primarily due to its editorial independence. Broad-ranging independent news and current affairs programs, made especially for audiences in Asia and the Pacific, lay at the heart of the ABC international service but arts programming, children's programming, documentaries, entertainment, sport, science, business and community-based programs were also important.

ABC International's English language-learning programs attracted millions of viewers and followers on social media (and currently has 4.4 million likes on Facebook⁶⁸). The ABC used a rich mix of technologies, platforms and rebroadcasts by partner stations to reach people in a geographic area stretching from India in the west to French Polynesia in the eastern Pacific and to China in the north, as shown in the map below⁶⁹. Radio Australia reached millions of people on shortwave radio, FM stations and through placement of radio programs on local stations and networks in the Pacific and Asia. Twenty-one FM stations with services 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week, were located in Cambodia, Laos, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Palau⁷⁰. Most of these services were situated in capital cities serving opinion-leaders, expatriate Australians and the wider population with a variety of programs including news, current affairs, music culture and entertainment programs made specifically for the regional audience. Radio Australia was delivered through nine separate streams on shortwave and FM including streams for Asia in English, for Asia in English and different Asian languages, for the Pacific in English and for the Pacific in English and Pacific languages⁷¹. In Cambodia, Radio Australia had better audience figures for its English language broadcasts than other leading international broadcasters including

⁶⁷ <http://www.essentialvision.com.au/trust-in-media-8>

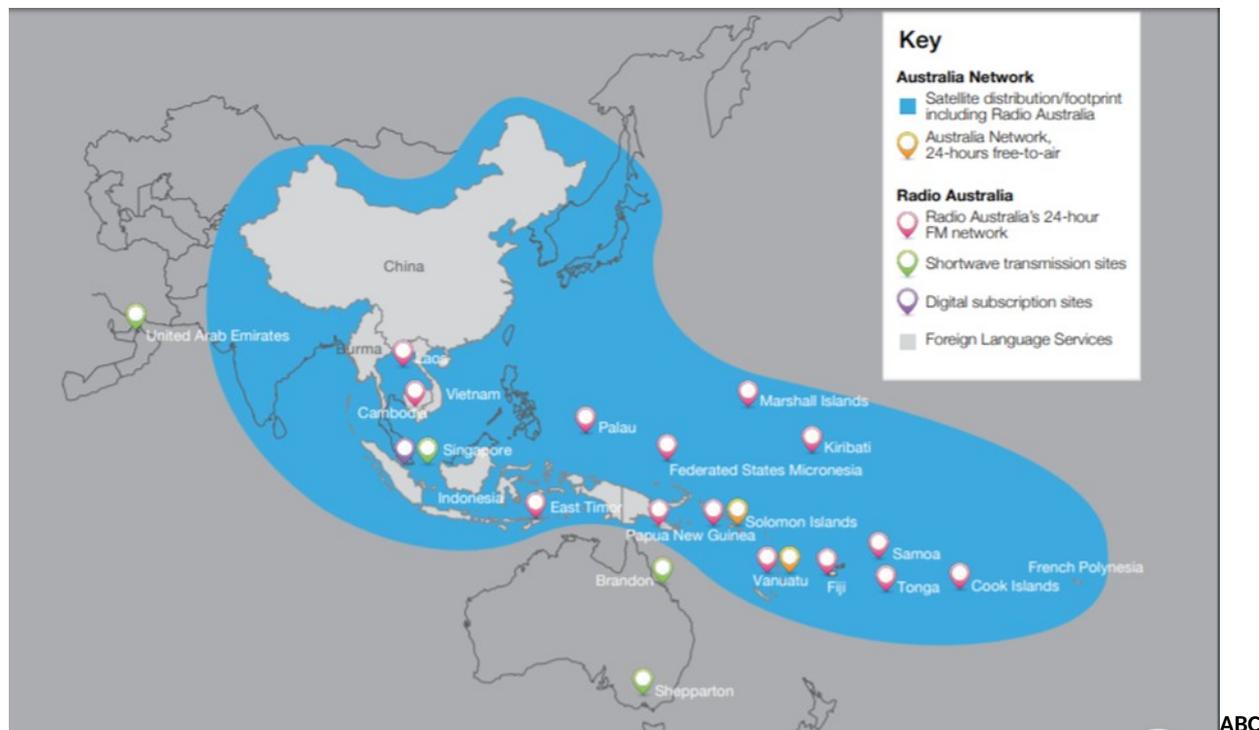
⁶⁸ https://www.facebook.com/ABCEducationLearnEnglish/?hc_ref=ARRToGhxwh2KmirOCjAzanOceCK-ezs1lfYtM7wSWDdAU-2bFQMXCg_2-wO6Q1O6To&fref=nf

⁶⁹ P62 ABC Annual report 2014

⁷⁰ <http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/hottest100/12/parties/downloads/RadioAustraliaFrequencyList.pdf>

⁷¹ P69 <http://about.abc.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ABC-AR-2012-combined-web-revised-17-Oct.pdf>

the BBC world Service and Radio France International⁷². In Papua New Guinea, in the same year, surveys of six regional centres indicated that Radio Australia reached a third of adults on a weekly basis⁷³. Radio Australia language services in the recent past have included Mandarin, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Khmer, French, Tok Pisin and Burmese (which was successfully established in 2009). In 2011, Radio Australia had 122 confirmed rebroadcast partner stations across Asia and the Pacific⁷⁴ and at its peak over 200.



Services to the Indo-Pacific June 2014 - Source: ABC Annual report 2013-14

Australia Network television provided six thirty-minute, bespoke news bulletins for Pacific and Asian audiences each day including rich current affairs content from journalists such as Jim Middleton and others from the Melbourne-based Asia Pacific News Centre making reporting trips to the region. It also included wider programming, ranging from the English language-learning programs to business, food, community and other specialist programs made for Asian and Pacific audiences. The service was available via satellite in an estimated 31.2 million homes in 46 countries⁷⁵, including on the Indian sub-continent. Rebroadcast arrangements with cable operators in the region numbered over 660 at their peak⁷⁶. Australia Network distinguished itself among international television competitors as a multi-genre provider that offered the best of Australian children's educational content, English-language learning, lifestyle, drama and documentary, rather than simply news and current affairs⁷⁷. These programs were drawn not just from the ABC but from Australian commercial networks and SBS as well, showcasing the best of what Australia has to offer.

Online, mobile and digital services developed rapidly with online news and mobile apps available to audiences who could afford smart phones and internet connections. Flagship Radio Australia

⁷² P71 <http://about.abc.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/AnnualReport2010-2011CompleteReport.pdf>

⁷³ P1 <http://about.abc.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/AnnualReport2010-2011CompleteReport.pdf>

⁷⁴ P71 <http://about.abc.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/AnnualReport2010-2011CompleteReport.pdf>

⁷⁵ P66 <http://about.abc.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ABC-AR-2012-combined-web-revised-17-Oct.pdf>

⁷⁶ P66 <http://about.abc.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ABC-Annual-Report-2013-lo-res.pdf>

⁷⁷ P66 <http://about.abc.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ABC-AR-2012-combined-web-revised-17-Oct.pdf>

programs (such as *Pacific Beat*, *Asia Pacific* and *Connect Asia*) and Australia Network programs had dedicated online sites. These included full transcripts of leading stories. For the Pacific, where media diversity is poor, this provided an important and unique journal-of-record for events, issues and policy debates.

As well as its broadcasting services the ABC International Development unit supported journalism and robust media institutions across the Indo-Pacific through Australia aid-funded projects such as the Pacific Media Assistance Scheme. At its height ABC International development worked in 14 Pacific Island nations, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam and elsewhere in the Asia Pacific region. International Relations unit fostered links and hosted visits by a wide array of journalists and media organisations across the region.

ABC Asia Pacific services since the 2014 cuts

In 2014, the government's decision to end its \$220 million 10-year contract for the Australia Network⁷⁸ just one year into the contract almost silenced the ABC's voice. The contract paid for online services as well as television. In the new world of converged media, the ABC decided there was a need to maintain its video and television capability. As a result, it decided to make a substantial reduction in Radio Australia services and smaller cuts to its online services to maintain a much-reduced television service once the government contract funding was no longer available.

The ABC Asia Pacific television service (renamed Australia Plus and since 1 July 2018 rebranded as ABC Australia⁷⁹) has now lost all its news programs made specifically for audiences in Asia or the Pacific. In their place is 'The World' a daily one-hour program of international news and current affairs screened on ABC News24 as well as the international service. While this program includes news and discussion from Asia and the Pacific it also has a strong focus on events in North America, Europe and the Middle East, regions that are amply covered by other international broadcasters. Other high-quality ABC programs of interest to the regional audiences have also been cut. The reduction by a half in the number of episodes produced each year of the program 'Foreign Correspondent' is an example.

The ABC direct satellite to home distribution service to Asia was axed as a result of the 2014 cuts⁸⁰. In Asia its distribution is now restricted to cable operators and syndication. In its most recent annual report (2017) the ABC stated that its television service is available in 40 countries across Asia and the Pacific and that viewers can access the full service through a network of over 200 rebroadcasters throughout the region, as well as syndication of select content to media partners in China, Indonesia, Japan and India⁸¹. At the time of writing, the ABC Australia 'Ways to Watch' page advertises cable options in 44 countries and territories⁸², however this may not be up to date. Investigations by 'Supporters of Australian Broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific' show at least three of the rebroadcasters mentioned by the ABC do not advertise the ABC as one of their services. Specifically, the Palau National Communications corporation - the only advertised ABC provider in that country - does not advertise Australia Plus or ABC Australia services⁸³. Similarly, in the Federated States of Micronesia of 35 channels listed in its schedule by the FSM

⁷⁸ <http://about.abc.net.au/press-releases/abc-budget-response/>

⁷⁹ <https://mediaweek.com.au/international-abc-plus-rebranding-abc-australia/>

⁸⁰ <http://www.abcaustralia.net.au/tuning>

⁸¹ P77 http://www.abc.net.au/corp/annual-report/2017/documents/ABC_AnnualREport-2017_Volume-1.pdf

⁸² <http://www.abcaustralia.net.au/tuning>

⁸³ PNCC schedule: <http://affiliate.zap2it.com/tvlistings/ZCGrid.do?fromTimeInMillis=1532224800000>

Telecommunications Corporation neither Australia Plus nor ABC Australia appear⁸⁴. In Fiji, Al Jazeera features prominently in the Fiji Broadcasting TV schedule⁸⁵ but not ABC Australia or Australia Plus. The ABC's main distribution in Asia is to hotels or apartment blocks (in 14 countries not including China⁸⁶). Satellite to home dish is available in the Pacific but it is unlikely many people can afford to install and maintain dishes.

In order to pay for this much-reduced television service, the ABC chose to make dramatic cuts to Radio Australia (RA). All bespoke RA programs in English, other than the flagship Pacific news and current affairs program Pacific Beat (and its 'best of' weekly Pacific Review), were cancelled as were region-wide events such as the Pacific Break song competition (similar to Triple JJJ's Unearthed). The staff of those programs were made redundant as were Radio Australia and Australia Network's Canberra-based diplomatic correspondents: Catherine McGrath and Karen Barlow, Pacific correspondents Sean Dorney and Campbell Cooney and many others. This left Pacific Beat and its online offering inadequately staffed to maintain its position as the leading current affairs program in the region. Without a Canberra correspondent Pacific Beat is not able to adequately cover important diplomatic developments, including statements and speeches by Australian ministers, including the Foreign Minister Julie Bishop. A recent example is the Foreign Minister's keynote address on Pacific Partnerships to Pacific communities in Queensland earlier this month⁸⁷, which was not covered by any Australian media but would have been of wide interest in the Pacific.

Similarly, without a dedicated Asia and Pacific specialist Canberra Correspondent Radio Australia is unable to adequately cover visits by Pacific and Asian government ministers and dignitaries. Pacific Beat has continued to lose experienced staff, the most recent being high-profile presenter Bruce Hill earlier this month. Compared to other ABC flagship current affairs programs Pacific Beat is very significantly understaffed. Other government cuts to the ABC in 2014 contributed to a rationalisation of ABC overseas offices in Asia and the Pacific with a scaling-back of activities in Tokyo, Bangkok, New Delhi and Auckland and the loss of a further 20 staff⁸⁸. Staffing for the Tok Pisin pidgin service to Melanesia has been cut to just two staff members who produce the daily program Wantok, a Herculean task even when neither staff member is sick or on leave. In December 2016, as part of an initiative to refocus its international service on China, Indonesia and the Pacific, the ABC axed its Khmer, Burmese and Vietnamese language services⁸⁹. In the past four years the ABC has lost hundreds of years of accumulated Asia Pacific knowledge and contacts.

Distribution of Radio Australia in the Asia Pacific region has also suffered substantial cuts. In 2014, 24-hour dedicated FM stations were closed in Asia (Cambodia and Laos), Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati and in the Cook Islands⁹⁰. Since then three new FM stations have been opened in Papua New Guinea: in Goroka and Mt Hagen and Arawa. In

⁸⁴ <http://www.fsmtc.fm/node/37>

⁸⁵ <http://tv.fbc.com.fj/>

⁸⁶ <http://tv.australiaplus.com/tuning>

⁸⁷ https://foreignminister.gov.au/speeches/Pages/2018/jb_sp_180709.aspx?w=tb1CaGpkPX%2FISOK%2Bg9ZKEg%3D%3D

⁸⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/nov/12/abc-funding-cuts-target-11-foreign-news-bureaux-with-20-jobs-facing-axe>

⁸⁹ P74 http://about.abc.net.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ABC7171_AR_2017_Vol1_tagged_v4.pdf

⁹⁰ FM station list 2013:

<http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/hottest100/12/parties/downloads/RadioAustraliaFrequencyList.pdf>

January 2017, the ABC ended all shortwave broadcasting⁹¹. The ABC argued shortwave technology was 'old' and served a very limited audience. It promised to 'redirect funds towards an extended content offering and a robust FM distribution network'. Political leaders in the Pacific, listeners and many Australians who have worked on the ground in the region do not believe it is possible to replace shortwave with FM. Former ABC South Pacific Correspondent Jemima Garrett summed it up for the Australian National University's devpolicy blog recently,

"FM radio is high-quality audio but its signal rarely reaches beyond a 70 km radius and is known to be blocked by hills and mountains. Shortwave on the other hand can have a powerful signal that can be received on low cost, battery powered radios by remote communities over tens of thousands of square kilometres (as heard [here](#) in Pentecost, Vanuatu, in 2012). With its transmitters located in Australia, shortwave cannot be turned off by hostile regimes (such as in Fiji in 2009) or put out of action by heavy weather. Shortwave penetrates rugged landscapes and its reach is not limited to major cities. The critical value of ABC services to the region is seen in the unusual step taken by Vanuatu's Prime Minister Charlot Salwai when he wrote to a [Senate inquiry](#) last year⁹². He told the senators that the loss of ABC shortwave 'could cost many, many lives in the likelihood of another major natural disaster like Cyclone Pam in 2015'." ⁹³

The combined effect of the end of shortwave and cuts to FM services in the Pacific along with little to no marketing of the remaining service has had a catastrophic effect on the role and standing of Radio Australia in the region. Through Radio Australia the ABC used to be the only broadcaster bringing audiences in Pacific Forum nations together in one conversation about the impact of and potential responses to international and regional issues. Radio is widely acknowledged as the primary medium for news and discussion in the Pacific. There are now ten Pacific Islands Forum countries that no longer receive any FM or shortwave radio from the ABC. They are Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu⁹⁴. In the populous Melanesian nations of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu the vast majority of the population lives outside the capital city or major towns. As a result of the end of ABC shortwave broadcasting none of those people, including in sensitive areas in Papua New Guinea such as wider Bougainville and around the site of the Exxon PNG LNG project (recipient of the Australian government agency, the Export Finance and Insurance Corporation's biggest single loan of \$350 million⁹⁵), are able to access Radio Australia.

In January 2018, the ABC took the historic, if somewhat belated step, of creating its first program in English for the Pacific audience with an Australian-Pasifika producer/presenter team ⁹⁶. It is called 'Pacific Mornings' and brings to three the number of programs made specifically for the English-speaking Pacific audience. Unfortunately understaffing of the program led to a decision to

⁹¹ <http://about.abc.net.au/press-releases/shortwave-radio/>

⁹² Submission no 15:

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/Shortwaveradio/Submissions

⁹³ <http://www.devpolicy.org/the-time-is-right-for-a-step-up-in-abc-broadcasting-to-the-pacific-20180709/>

⁹⁴ http://asopa.typepad.com/asopa_people/2018/07/heres-how-you-can-help-revive-abc-services-to-png.html

⁹⁵ <https://www.efic.gov.au/resources-news/case-studies/png-lng/> - see also <https://theconversation.com/papua-new-guinea-gets-a-dose-of-the-resource-curse-as-exxonmobiles-natural-gas-project-fosters-unrest-70780>

⁹⁶ <http://about.abc.net.au/press-releases/abc-radio-australia-launches-new-extended-morning-show-to-png-and-the-pacific/>

cut its daily broadcast hours from two-and-a-half-hours a day to one-and-a-half-hours before the show was even six months old. Changes to the format of Pacific Beat, made to complement the original longer version of Pacific Mornings have also attracted criticism⁹⁷ from Australians with connections in PNG. Staff working on Pacific Beat do an excellent job, but their work is undermined by increasing understaffing and failure to back-fill during staff absences.

Recent developments in online and digital include the provision of news in three languages other than English (Chinese, Indonesian and Tok Pisin) on the ABC app. In English, that app has no specialist focus on the Asia Pacific region. Radio Australia is now available on the ABC Listen app and ABC iview has cleared rights to be available for international audiences. ABC material is also carried on third party platforms such as YouTube, which are popular with international audiences especially for ABC news and science stories. Opinion leaders in Asia and the Pacific have access to digital services but the mass audience particularly in developing countries (especially those in the Pacific) still struggle to afford internet and smart phone data. This is borne out by the fact that the vast bulk of international visitors to ABC Online and ABC apps are from North America and Europe and that audience figures from our nearest, most important developing neighbours are low to very low. While Facebook is offered free by some mobile phone providers in the region this does not provide a sufficient platform for a full broadcast experience or even for narrower aims such as an ability to engage the audience in discussion of issues affecting the region's interests. In PNG 40 per cent of mobile phone users are still served only by 2G and many in other areas people do not have smart phones. Anecdotal evidence and personal on-the-ground experience of members of our group in PNG and the Pacific suggests that even in places that are not remote mobile phone access is patchy and subject to frequent outages. We have received multiple recent reports from Manus Island in PNG (for instance) of the unavailability of mobile coverage. Similarly, even on the east coast of Santo island in Vanuatu, a well-developed key tourist area, mobile phone coverage is not sufficient to be to reliably receive even minimal ABC services. In August 2017 the ABC board approved a new international strategy. This will continue the rationalisation of ABC Asia Pacific social media sites with more being folded in to existing domestic ABC sites.

The ABC continues its valuable role in journalism and media training in the Asia Pacific through management of the Pacific Media Assistance scheme (PACMAS), the Media for Development Initiative in Papua New Guinea, Women in News and Sport and other projects⁹⁸.

Despite the reduced state of ABC broadcast services to the region, the ABC is still the leading Australian broadcaster in the Asia Pacific. It has on-the ground reporters in Beijing, Tokyo, Jakarta and Port Moresby as well as globally and it has Australian based reporters who travel to the region, including its Pacific Affairs reporter, Liam Fox.

Across the wider media industry, Australia is at risk of losing its critical mass of journalists and media executives with expertise and contacts in the region. In recent years, leading media organisations including News Corp Australia, Fairfax and Australian Associated Press have reduced the number of correspondents they support in the region. In the Papua New Guinea and the Pacific, the withdrawal is particularly stark. Where once most of the major media organisations and wire services had correspondents covering these regions, now the only the ABC and SBS do. There is only one Australian journalist based in Port Moresby (the ABC's Correspondent) and none in Fiji.

⁹⁷ <https://www.radioinfo.com.au/news/pacific-beat-changes-are-not-cuts-says-abc>

⁹⁸ <http://www.abc.net.au/abc-international-development/projects/>

The competitive Context affecting the reach of Australian broadcasting in the Asia Pacific

The main competition for Australian broadcasting in the Asia Pacific region comes from other international broadcasters.

Asia and the Pacific are two very different markets and need to be considered separately. Asia is a crowded, highly complex and competitive market in which Australian broadcasting will only be one of many players. In Asia increased broadcasting could and should be a significant asset for Australia.

In the Pacific Australian broadcasting faces new and increasing competition. Prior to the 2014 funding cuts the ABC had unrivalled credibility and reach as seen above. A current comparison shows

- the BBC's international service broadcasts in the Pacific but does not and it not intending to provide daily news reporting of Pacific issues.
- Voice of America is absent from the Pacific region but a range of US commercial broadcasters (including CNN) are present. None of these provide regular coverage of Pacific issues.
- Chinese services in Radio and Television are growing rapidly but are not independent. While these services can be sophisticated and attractive their lack of independence makes them struggle credibility in some quarters. China's international broadcasting does report regularly on Pacific issues⁹⁹ but there is significant curiosity in the region about China – a fellow developing nation making an unprecedented rise to power.
- New Zealand's international services report on the Pacific but do not have staff based in Asia. While Radio New Zealand Pacific's transmission (on standard shortwave, digital shortwave (DRM) FM and rebroadcast by partner stations) significantly outstrips the ABC it is not as powerful as was the ABC's before the 2014 cuts.
- Radio Australia is the only international broadcaster serving the biggest Pacific language group: those speaking Melanesian Pidgins (Tok Pisin, Solomon Islands Pidjin and Bislama). These pidjins are important for national cohesion as they are the only language the many people who do not speak English are able to use to communicate with people outside their own language group. There are estimated to be around 7 million pidgin speakers in PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. In PNG some provinces do not use Tok Pisin, for instance Western Province, Gulf province and Central province.

Australian broadcasting could fairly easily again be the leading broadcaster¹⁰⁰ in the Pacific region and re-establish itself in Asia. As will be seen elsewhere in this submission and from other submissions to the current Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific there are demands from the Australia and the region for a better service from Australia.

A more detailed country-by-country analysis of Australia's international competitors is below.

⁹⁹ <https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/programmes/datelinepacific/audio/2018653383/china-radio-international-seeks-to-address-misunderstandings>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/oz-voice-in-the-asia-pacific-part-3-foreign-policy-and-media-revolutions/>

China

China's state-owned international broadcaster is the fastest growing in the world second only in size to the BBC. Unlike the BBC and the ABC, China's media is not independent of government. In March 2018 the Chinese Communist party announced the amalgamation of China's key international broadcasting agencies into one agency to be known as 'Voice of China'. It will be the world's largest propaganda machine¹⁰¹. This move came as part of a series of measures by Chinese President Xi Jinping to consolidate communist party power and extend his control over the nation.

Since 2007 China has dramatically increased in its funding for 'soft power'. Its annual budget for these activities has reached an estimated USD\$10 billion per annum¹⁰². Detailed figures are hard to obtain, but it is known that much of this has been spent on state-owned media. In contrast, the US government (State Department) spent \$666 million (2014)¹⁰³ on public diplomacy and \$752 million (2016) on the Broadcasting Board of Governors (which oversees Voice of America, Radio Free Asia and other US international broadcasters)¹⁰⁴.

In 2014 Xi became publicly identified with the expansion of its international broadcasting calling for a stronger national effort to link China's popularity and likeability to its meteoric rise¹⁰⁵. This is part of a new and much-wider contest of ideas and legitimacy in which China's desire to promote its system as an alternative to Western democracy¹⁰⁶ is challenging the liberal world order with significant implications for Australia¹⁰⁷. The contest is at its fiercest in the Asia Pacific. It is this background that motivated China's decision to create Voice of China, bringing the more than 14,000 employees of the state-run agencies China Central Television (CCTV), China Radio International (CRI) and China National Radio (CNR) together¹⁰⁸. Prior to that amalgamation CCTV (rebranded as China Global Television Network for international audiences since December 2016¹⁰⁹) had over 70 foreign bureaux, broadcasting to 171 countries, CCTV is ubiquitous in Asia and available in English and mandarin in the Pacific Islands through streaming, satellite and rebroadcast on local cable or rebroadcast by local stations¹¹⁰. China Radio International (CRI -the second biggest global radio station after the BBC) broadcast in 64 languages from 32 foreign bureaux, reaching 90 radio stations worldwide¹¹¹. China Radio International broadcasts on shortwave and has English language FM stations across Asia and in Pacific nations

¹⁰¹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-20/xi-creates-voice-of-china-broadcaster-to-improve-global-image>

¹⁰² Albert, E. 2018, China's Big Bet on Soft Power, Council on Foreign Relations <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-big-bet-soft-power> also Shambaugh, D, 2016 China's Soft Power Push, Foreign Affairs, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-06-16/china-s-soft-power-push>

¹⁰³ Shambaugh, D, 2016 China's Soft Power Push, Foreign Affairs, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-06-16/china-s-soft-power-push>

¹⁰⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadcasting_Board_of_Governors#Funding

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-big-bet-soft-power>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/xi-jinpings-ideological-ambitions-1519950245>

¹⁰⁷ Gates, G, Jakobsen, L 'China Matters: Getting it Right for Australia', 2017, La Trobe University Press & <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-06/stan-grant-china-xi-jinping-communist-party-north-korea/9516860>

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-20/xi-creates-voice-of-china-broadcaster-to-improve-global-image>

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2058429/chinas-state-broadcaster-cctv-rebrands-international>

¹¹⁰ <http://fijisun.com.fj/2011/09/22/china-tv-here/> and <https://asiapacificreport.nz/2016/08/11/vanuatu-launches-new-digital-tv-service-for-the-nation/>

¹¹¹ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/08/how-chinese-media-is-going-global/>

including Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa¹¹². CRI had a suite of online and digital services including China Plus mobile apps¹¹³. Industry information in Australia suggests CRI has gained control of shortwave radio frequencies left vacant by the ABC in the Pacific in 2017¹¹⁴.

Other official Chinese media including the Global Times, China Daily, People's Daily, Economic Daily are also expanding. The Chinese government's primary news agency, Xinhua, has grown to 180 foreign bureaus and has plans to [reach 200](#) by 2020. Xinhua provides coverage of every region on the world including Pacific Island countries. After a relaunch in 2015¹¹⁵ Xinhua's Facebook page 'likes' have now surpassed those of BBC, 48 million to 46 million respectively¹¹⁶. Xinhua has an effective global Twitter and YouTube presence and in early 2018 launched an English-language news app¹¹⁷.

China is more active in the Pacific than Australia in engaging local journalists for familiarisation visits by media personnel. Similarly, at the bi-annual Pacific Media Summit (the peak event for Pacific journalists) a rep from CCTV appeared as a speaker. There was no Australian-based representation at the summit although the ABC was represented by its part-time in-country development co-ordinator.

Japan

Japan's international public broadcaster reaches around 290 million households in 160 countries (including in the Pacific) and is expanding its international services in the lead up to the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020¹¹⁸. NHK World TV provides news, current affairs and a rich variety of programs in English 24-hours a day via satellite, cable and streaming. NHK World Radio Japan broadcasts in 17 languages as well as English. Both services include an extensive online presence and smartphone apps¹¹⁹. NHK has 81 correspondents in 30 locations outside Japan¹²⁰. NHK prides itself on providing accurate and impartial news coverage and its ability to respond to international disasters¹²¹.

United Kingdom

In 2016 the British government provided a major funding boost to allow the BBC World Service to announce its biggest expansion since the 1940s¹²². This expansion is being driven by additional funding for digital, TV and radio of £85 million per annum (AUD\$156.5 million) from 2017-18.

This has allowed the opening of 11 new language services, 12 new or expanded television bulletins per day and created 1300 jobs. Pidgin English is also being expanded. The BBC Director General Tony Hall commented at the time:

¹¹² See country pages worldradiomap.com

¹¹³ <http://chinaplus.cri.cn/>

¹¹⁴ Personal communication

¹¹⁵ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/08/how-chinese-media-is-going-global/>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/XinhuaNewsAgency/> & <https://www.facebook.com/bbcnews/>

¹¹⁷ http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-01/23/c_136917445.htm

¹¹⁸ Pp19-20 NHK Corporate Profile 2017-2018

https://www.nhk.or.jp/corporateinfo/english/publication/pdf/corporate_profile.pdf

¹¹⁹ P20 https://www.nhk.or.jp/corporateinfo/english/publication/pdf/corporate_profile.pdf

¹²⁰ P11 https://www.nhk.or.jp/corporateinfo/english/publication/pdf/corporate_profile.pdf

¹²¹ P8 https://www.nhk.or.jp/corporateinfo/english/publication/pdf/corporate_profile.pdf

¹²² See initial announcement Nov 2015 <http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-34902244> & details of expansion plans here <http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-37990220>

"The millions announced today will help the BBC deliver on our commitment to uphold global democracy through accurate, impartial and independent news reporting. The World Service is one of the UK's most important cultural exports and one of our best sources of global influence. We can now further build on that."

The BBC has comprehensive service in South-East Asia¹²³, East Asia¹²⁴ and South Asia¹²⁵ including satellite and cable television, shortwave and FM radio, and comprehensive online and digital news. Of particular note, is its roll out of digital shortwave (DRM) across India which coincides with a much larger roll out across the country by All India Radio. Around the time the ABC reduced its services to the north Pacific the BBC also ended some of its Pacific broadcasts (including in Palau, Kiribati, the Federated States of Micronesia). With Britain opening three new diplomatic missions in the Pacific and paying more attention to the region there may again be opportunities for sharing the costs of transmission infrastructure. Despite the very low priority the BBC places on the Pacific Islands and its almost non-existent Pacific content offering, the BBC has radio and television transmission in the Pacific on a par with the ABC's, although more research is needed to confirm the exact details of this.

United States of America

Voice of America and Radio Free Asia are widely available in Asia¹²⁶. However, none of the United States' international broadcasting agencies have a footprint in Oceania. Its largest international broadcaster Voice of America (VOA) has no affiliates or FM stations in any of the independent Pacific states including those in Micronesia with which the US has Compacts of Free Association¹²⁷. US Military radio is available on Kwajalein Atoll where the US has its military base. Private US media companies such as CNN are available in the Pacific through Sky Pacific.

New Zealand

Radio New Zealand Pacific (RNZ Pacific) broadcasts in digital shortwave (Digital Radio Mondiale) and analogue shortwave to partner stations and listeners across the Pacific¹²⁸ and offers live streaming and podcasting of its Pacific programs. Around twenty Pacific radio stations rebroadcast RNZ Pacific material each day. This includes news, current affairs, sport and business programs including news and programs in Pacific languages¹²⁹. Radio New Zealand's Pacific languages include Tongan, Samoan, Niuean and Cook Islands Maori.

Radio New Zealand Pacific also has a comprehensive online news and current affairs offering¹³⁰. TVNZ provides news and programming to Pacific television stations, including its weekly flagship Pacific news program Tagata Pasifika¹³¹, in addition to online news¹³². Together RNZ Pacific and TVNZ have more than double the staff of the ABC working on TV, radio and digital services for the Pacific. One of the strengths of New Zealand international broadcasting is the high-quality group

¹²³ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-radio-and-tv-12927616>,

¹²⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-radio-and-tv-12926920>

¹²⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-radio-and-tv-12926922>

¹²⁶ See VOA shortwave schedule here <http://www.shortwaveschedule.com/index.php?station=172>

¹²⁷ <https://www.voanews.com/a/voa-around-the-world/4113370.html>

¹²⁸ <https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/about>

¹²⁹ <https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/programmes>

¹³⁰ <https://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news>

¹³¹ www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/tagata-pasifika

¹³² <https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/pacific-islands>

of journalists it has nurtured and developed to create its Pacific stringer network. Developing such a network takes resources, time and consistency.

In its most recent budget the New Zealand government an additional NZD\$15 in funding to public media ¹³³, \$4.5 million of which will go to RNZ¹³⁴ for projects including its Pacific programs. Further increases in funding have been foreshadowed. The Pacific and other priorities will come ahead of the much-talked of establishment of public television.¹³⁵ Michael Stiasny, Chair of a recently-announced ministerial advisory group, told RNZ *'We have a responsibility to the Pacific and indeed a lot of our people have ties to the Pacific so those are really important things that we need to deal with urgently'*.¹³⁶

New Zealand is now the leading international broadcaster in the Pacific.

Why the ABC should be at the centre of Australia's International broadcasting

The ABC is the most suitable institution to take on the role as Australia's international broadcaster and public-service broadcasting the most suitable model. Notwithstanding further discussion of new options for governance of international broadcasting there is a strong argument that Australia's Asia Pacific broadcasting stay with the ABC because:

- 1) Australians trust the ABC more than any other source of news¹³⁷ and they believe the ABC is more important in an age of social media and fake news (68% of respondents to a Research Now poll)¹³⁸. Credibility is essential to the 'soft power' role of Australian international broadcasting. The ABC's credibility has taken years to develop and is a carefully guarded asset.
- 2) The ABC has the necessary experience and expertise and has proven its ability to do the job. The Lowy Institute report referred to earlier in this submission catalogued the 'impressive achievements' of Radio Australia and Australia Network. While there have been recent concerns that the ABC is not placing enough priority on its Asia Pacific service, it is still the leading Australian broadcaster in the region and the overall quality of what is left of that service is not in doubt.
- 3) The ABC has an obligation to provide a wide variety of program content for international audiences under its charter. Specifically, the charter requires the ABC *'to transmit to countries outside Australia broadcasting programs of news, current affairs, entertainment and cultural enrichment that will: encourage awareness of Australia and an international understanding of Australian attitudes on world affairs and enable Australian citizens living*

¹³³ <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/public-media-funding-allocation>

¹³⁴ <https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/361587/rnz-gets-4-point-5m-extra-funding-this-year>

¹³⁵ <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/public-media-advisory-group-established>

¹³⁶ <https://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/checkpoint/audio/2018653209/rnz-gets-4-point-5-million-extra-funding-this-year>

¹³⁷ <http://www.essentialvision.com.au/trust-in-media-8>

¹³⁸ <http://www.tai.org.au/content/abc-still-australia-s-most-trusted-news-source>

or travelling outside Australia to obtain information about Australian affairs and Australian attitudes on world affairs'¹³⁹.

- 4) The ABC's brand is already well known and respected in the region, as shown by the 4.4 million Likes¹⁴⁰ it has achieved on its English language learning page on Facebook. Individual testimony from regional leaders and members of the audience as well as audience figures alluded to elsewhere in this submission show the ABC is a known and trusted force in the region.
- 5) International broadcasting is a more sensitive undertaking than broadcasting to a domestic audience. The risk to Australia's relations with other nations, from parachute journalists or journalists with a commercially-inspired instinct to beat up the story, is real - as highlighted recently in a recent 60 Minutes story on China's aid agenda in the region:

'Much of the reporting by the Australian media has bordered on the hysterical, and risks itself damaging Australia's standing in the region.' ...

'What could Australia do differently? More informed and less alarmist reporting would be a good start, and would be helped by a greater media presence in the region' wrote Matt Dornan, Deputy Director of ANU's Development Policy Centre in a recent edition of the Diplomat. ¹⁴¹.

- 6) The ABC is independent of government. Its charter requires that independence¹⁴² and its editorial policies insist content be accurate, fair and impartial with a diversity of perspectives¹⁴³. These are the very values that make it an effective tool of 'soft power'.
- 7) At the same time, as the ABC is funded by government it is also identified by audiences in the region as a government initiative, winning respect for the willingness of democracies like Australia's to support transparency and accountability even when the results are not always comfortable.
- 8) The ABC is independent of commercial interests. For credibility in the region this is just as important as independence from government. Commercial operators are used to aligning their editorial agenda to suit their commercial agenda. In an organisation based around serving shareholder interests this an acceptable commercial practice¹⁴⁴. News Corporation's Australian News Channel has shown interest in the past but as noted earlier airs partisan programs that do not reflect the full sophistication diversity of Australian links with the region. The ABC is obliged to work in the interests of every Australian and has won their respect in doing so¹⁴⁵.

¹³⁹ <http://about.abc.net.au/how-the-abc-is-run/what-guides-us/legislative-framework/>

¹⁴⁰ [https://www.facebook.com/ABCEducationLearnEnglish/?hc_ref=ARRToGhxwh2KmirOCjAzanOceCK-
_ezs1IfYtM7wSWDdAU-2bFQMXCg_2-wO6Q1O6To&fref=nf](https://www.facebook.com/ABCEducationLearnEnglish/?hc_ref=ARRToGhxwh2KmirOCjAzanOceCK-
_ezs1IfYtM7wSWDdAU-2bFQMXCg_2-wO6Q1O6To&fref=nf)

¹⁴¹ <https://thediplomat.com/2018/07/australias-pacific-island-myopia/>

¹⁴² <http://about.abc.net.au/how-the-abc-is-run/what-guides-us/legislative-framework/>

¹⁴³ <https://edpols.abc.net.au/policies/>

¹⁴⁴ <http://about.abc.net.au/speeches/soft-power-public-diplomacy-and-the-role-of-the-public-broadcasters/>

¹⁴⁵ <http://about.abc.net.au/speeches/soft-power-public-diplomacy-and-the-role-of-the-public-broadcasters/>

- 9) While there have been demands in Australia in the past for international broadcasting to be outsourced to the private sector, other nations have chosen not to do this. Of the 9 major international broadcasters the Lowy Institute investigated not one had outsourced its international broadcasting¹⁴⁶.

Recommendation: That the ABC manage the revitalisation of Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific subject to robust transparency and accountability mechanisms

Options for the future of Australian broadcasting in the Asia Pacific

International broadcasting is a far more complex activity than many other forms of mass media. It aims to engage highly diverse audiences, in multiple languages, geographies and topographies. These audiences have widely different life experiences, aspirations, knowledge of Australia and access to the internet and mobile data.

Achieving maximum reach depends on compelling, culturally appropriate and tailor-made content as well as an effective mix of broadcast and online/digital technology.

While this review began with an interest in the role broadcast technology (such as shortwave) in achieving reach, it needs to be recognised that technology will only ever be as good as the content it carries. Partnerships with local broadcasters, including placement of Australian programs on local high-rating media networks is also an important route to achieving maximum reach.

Content options for Australian Asia Pacific broadcasting

A revitalisation of Australian Asia Pacific broadcasting offers the opportunity for a new model of international broadcasting, one that would create a much deeper partnership with the region. This new model would better reflect the sophisticated conversation happening between people in Australia (including Asia Pacific diaspora communities) and people in the region. Currently, with rare exceptions the mainstream media in Australia is failing to highlight these interactions.

In Australia content would be sourced from the full spectrum of Australian media companies and producers including the ABC, NewsCorp/Skynews; Nine/Fairfax, Seven, SBS, National Indigenous Television (NITV) and independent production companies and producers. There is much Australian drama, sport, culture and entertainment that would find a ready audience in the region. However, most of these programs would need repackaging for an international audience. The rebroadcast in Asia and the Pacific of uncontextualized programs made for local consumption in Australia can fail to meet audience expectations and so struggle to attract an audience. This particularly applies to programs put together for continuous news services which, by highlighting parochial debates, can make Australia look insular. Much mainstream media news also fails to show the richness of Australia's multicultural community, many of whom are members of the diasporas from countries in the Asia Pacific region.

The new model in international broadcasting should make maximum use of co-productions between the ABC and media companies, creative professionals and journalists in the region.

¹⁴⁶ Pp70-71 <https://archive.loyyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy>

Contestable podcast and video funds offered with mentoring for successful production companies (on the model of the ABC's domestic podcast fund¹⁴⁷) would provide Australia's international broadcasting service with innovative content as well as strengthening media capacity in the region.

To enhance its news service, Australian international broadcasting needs to build a rich and diverse network of stringers in every country in the region. This would be a long-term project that would take time to mature.

Training of journalists and producers is also a vital role for Australia's broadcaster in the Asia Pacific. Offering training has value for improving the quality of content for Australian and regional media organisations and for the role it plays in building stronger partnerships between Australia and the region.

Original content is king in any broadcast venture, but never more so than in the increasingly connected and converged media world. Most audiences have many more media choices than ever before, so unique, high-quality, culturally appropriate content is vital to achieving reach. Broadcasting in languages of the region is an important part of providing a culturally appropriate service. This applies as much in the Pacific (where Tok Pisin and other pidgins are widely spoken) as in Asia. New languages in addition to those already provided by the ABC could include Burmese, Thai, Khmer, Loatian, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Bahasa Melayu, French (for the Pacific) Samoan and Tongan. The importance of Tok Pisin broadcasts has been highlighted by the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Dame Meg Taylor¹⁴⁸ who hails from Papua New Guinea.

In Asia and the Pacific, the cost and accessibility of internet, mobile and other digital services is still challenging for much of the population¹⁴⁹. As a result, much of this discussion of content and technology options uses terminology based around radio, television and online/digital rather than using 'audio' and 'video' which is more common parlance in media organisations that have already moved to a full digital-first strategy.

Recommendation: That a new model of Australian broadcasting in the Asia Pacific build deeper partnerships with media organisations and use employment of local journalists and contestable podcast and video funds a priority.

Recommendation: That the renewed broadcasting organisation actively engage and train journalists and broadcasters from the region to produce content relevant to the aims and objectives of the services.

Recommendation: That new Asian and Pacific languages be added to the ABC's Asia Pacific service and existing language services be significantly enhanced.

¹⁴⁷ <https://radio.press.abc.net.au/abc-announces-1-million-podcasting-fund>

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.abc.net.au/radio-australia/programs/pacificbeat/pacific-shortwave/9930222>

¹⁴⁹ <http://business.inquirer.net/213798/un-body-digital-divide-in-asia-pacific-disturbing>
<https://thediplomat.com/2016/09/closing-asias-digital-divide/> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/201232/forecast-of-mobile-internet-penetration-in-asia-pacific/>

Content options in Asia

In Asia's crowded market, media offerings need to be tightly focussed and best-in-class to achieve significant reach. In almost all Asian countries best-in-class requires a tri-media offering (radio, TV and online/digital, including social media) that can be broadcast by local partners as well as by the Australian international broadcaster. In Asia priorities should include

- 1) **English language lessons.** Asian countries are increasingly prioritising English as a development tool. More recently some Asian governments are seeing English language proficiency as one way to counter the growing influence of China. English is the language of the internet and employment and individuals, as well as governments, see it as a path to education and better jobs. English language learning programs allow Australia to be source of a significant development dividend for partner countries and an entirely positive experience for the audience. The best English language learning programs are put together in partnership with local stations with tri-media production. The ABC is already a proven best practice producer of English language programs. Even though the ABC has not made a new series since 2014, people across the region are still using re-run ABC language-learning programs. Generally, English language-learning programs are regarded as having maximum shelf -life of around 10 years so there is clearly a limited time in which these programs will continue to be viable.
- 2) **News** Providing high quality news bulletins and news programs, including copyright, to local partners is a crucial role for Australian broadcasting in the Asia Pacific. Again, in this competitive market a smaller quantity of best-in-class programs (daily rather than more frequently) is the most effective way to build partnerships and reach significant audiences. Providing access to copyright allows partners to mine the footage for their own bulletins throughout the day.
- 3) **Near News.** 'Near news' is up-to-the-minute material on topics such as health, agriculture, science, environment, business, arts and culture, sport or technology. It focuses on topics of specific interest to the audience and the development requirements of the partner country, regional or sub-regional grouping for whom or with whom it is made. Australian 'near news' should play to Australia's strengths such as science, agriculture, health, sport and arts and culture.

In addition to these three flagship products Australian International broadcasting should prioritise programs for 24-hour FM radio in key cities and radio program placement with partner stations. Radio production does not require long lead times so can respond quickly to new situations. It is information dense and very easy to repurpose to create parallel high-quality online and digital offerings.

Television has a wide audience in the region. A multi-genre service highlighting Australian media strengths such as comedy, entertainment, children's programs, sport, science etc as well as bespoke news bulletins would give Australian television a unique and attractive offering.

Recommendation: That creation of new best-in-class English language learning, news and 'near news' programs be a priority for new Australian broadcasting in Asia.

Content options in the Pacific

Content priorities in the Pacific should be based around

- 1) **Enhanced news and current affairs capability.** This is a vital service for the Pacific. The ABC's current service has become too focussed on domestic audiences. The Australian audience's understanding of the Pacific is limited. Improving that understanding of the Pacific is vitally important, but this should not come at the expense of the service for communities in the region who have a much deeper understanding of the Pacific and whose needs are completely different. Significant additional staffing is needed in Australia, with more capability to make reporting and partnership trips to the region. A strong, well-paid and well-supported network of Pacific journalists working for the ABC is also needed. The time and effort RNZ Pacific has put into its stringer network is one of the reasons it is now the leading broadcaster in the region. We suggest that rather than hiring two or three full-time stringers in each country, more stringers be employed part-time. The journalists working with the ABC are expected to be among their nation's best. Most of these journalists play an important role in their own national media and media organisations. Part-time, well-paid contracts with the ABC would allow them to continue to play this important role while also working for the ABC. Hiring more part-time ABC stringers in the Pacific would avoid a brain-drain of local talent from national media organisations, minimise political pressure on ABC stringers by spreading the reporting load and increase diversity of reporting voices on the ABC.
- 2) **Emergency broadcasting** This is an expensive but essential and lifesaving service for the Pacific. The ABC is a world leader in emergency broadcasting. Disaster preparedness and response is a key focus of Australia's aid in the region. Emergency content would be prioritised on radio and online/digital delivery.
- 3) **'Near news' and other programs.** High quality specialist 'near news' programs including environment, music, culture and the arts would be a priority along with sports broadcasts and programs connecting Australian Pacific diaspora communities and South Sea Island communities in Australia with the communities. A strong focus on collaborative production with media organisations and journalists in the region will set Australian broadcasting on an innovative path that would rebuild respect at the same time as supporting media in the region by creating jobs and sharing expertise. To regain its role as the premier broadcaster in the region and the unique role it used to play in debate on regional issues, the ABC needs a stable of specialist programs and podcasts on radio and specialist programs on television. Re-instating region-wide events such as the Pacific Break song competition should also be a priority.

Recommendation: That content initiatives in the Pacific focus on significantly expanded news and current affairs capability, emergency and weather forecasting and 'near news' and other specialist programs and events.

Technology options for Australian Asia Pacific broadcasting

Media markets in Asia and the Pacific are very diverse and need a very different mix of technologies. In hyper-connected urban centres such as Jakarta or Bangkok this might focus on a digital-first strategy providing audio, video and text to a variety of platforms along with 24-hour FM radio and television. In remote parts of the Pacific this might focus on standard (AM) shortwave radio (and in the future digital shortwave) backed-up by mobile-phone based services. In more connected parts of the Pacific a full radio (FM and shortwave) and television service should be provided.

The mix of technologies chosen must be responsive to audience needs and change along with those needs over time.

Radio options

Radio's strengths are in ideas, immediacy, the creation of ongoing and in-depth conversation with listeners on any number of specialist subjects and inspiring audiences with music. Radio is significantly cheaper than television.

Natural disasters affect Asia and the Pacific to a greater extent than other regions of the world. The poorest countries and communities of these regions are hit hardest¹⁵⁰. Radio is the medium of choice for disaster warnings and information dissemination in the post-disaster period.

FM Radio

FM radio provides high-fidelity audio and is the service of choice in urban and heavily populated areas. It is inexpensive to establish and transmit by the broadcaster, receivers are cheap for consumers to buy and it is a free-to-air service. FM is widely available in cars and public transport in the region as well as in the home. FM is not suitable for many rural and remote areas as its signal cannot reach more 70 kilometres from its transmission tower and is blocked by hills and mountains. International broadcasters have the option of providing their own 24-hour FM stations and/or placing programs of particular interest on local stations. Both options should be utilised. 24-hour FM stations provide a clear identity for Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific.

Rebroadcast of flagship programs (such as ABC's Pacific Beat) by local networks is an effective way to reach wider audiences. Top-rating local stations are trusted by their listeners, many of whom are unlikely to tune in to an international broadcaster. The process of negotiation for program placement establishes new partnerships, helps the Australian broadcaster understand the local audience better and can play an important role in supporting quality journalism in the local partner organisation.

Recommendation: That 24-hour FM Radio Australia stations be established in all Pacific Island Forum member nation's capital cities.

Recommendation: That Radio Australia program placement, and support for local FM, stations be expanded across the Pacific in major towns of all Forum nations and in important Pacific territories such as Tokelau, American Samoa and others.

Recommendation: That 24-hour FM Radio Australia stations be established in a selection of ASEAN capitals and significant provincial cities with a particular focus on Indonesian cities.

Shortwave Radio – standard and digital

Shortwave radio is the only mass medium capable of reaching diverse and widespread rural and remote communities with a reliable service. It is broadcast using transmission towers at a distance of hundreds or thousands of kilometres from the target audience, so it is unaffected in times of natural disaster (such as cyclones when local mobile phone and FM towers are often blown over) and immune from attempts by hostile regimes to switch off (although it can be jammed). It is available in public transport in many parts of the region. Shortwave can have a strong signal but sometimes sounds scratchy. A link appears below to an ABC news bulletin heard in Vanuatu on

¹⁵⁰ . <https://www.unescap.org/publications/asia-pacific-disaster-report-2017-leave-no-one-behind>

standard shortwave in 2012¹⁵¹. By bouncing off the ionosphere a single shortwave signal can be heard over hundreds of thousands of square kilometres of the earth's surface.

Shortwave technology may be 'old technology' but that does not mean it is not fit for purpose. In 2013 the BBC's former World Service Chief John Tusa said: 'If (standard) shortwave had been discovered today instead of eight decades ago it would be hailed as an amazing new technology with great potential for the world.'¹⁵² Broadcasters in areas where seamless FM coverage is possible, or where the penetration of internet and mobile based data services is high, have been moving away from standard shortwave transmission. In many areas and in places where media freedom is restricted shortwave is still the only technology that is able to reach audiences. Many international broadcasters including Voice of America¹⁵³, Radio China International¹⁵⁴ and the BBC World Service¹⁵⁵ continue to broadcast in standard shortwave even in Asia where FM radio and internet and mobile penetration is much more advanced than in the Pacific. China is an important focus for the BBC World Service's shortwave services to Asia. In September 2017 the BBC World Service announced an expansion of its standard shortwave services to Africa¹⁵⁶.

The BBC and other international broadcasters are also investing in digital shortwave known as Digital Radio Mondiale (DRM). This has the same capabilities as standard shortwave in terms of reach but with the added benefit of high-fidelity sound and additional capabilities in metadata. All India Radio (AIR) has a plan to roll out DRM across India and the BBC also has plans for DRM services in India. They are currently testing transmitters. Until now the cost of DRM consumer receivers (around USD\$200) has been an obstacle to commercialising the technology for use in developing countries. However, electronics companies around the world and have been working to reduce the cost. Most car manufacturers operating in India have either already incorporated DRM receivers in their cars or are in the process of incorporating them¹⁵⁷. By May 2018 more than 800,000 cars in India have been fitted with DRM receivers¹⁵⁸. In our region RNZ Pacific is using DRM to send high quality audio to local partner stations for rebroadcast. A full list of DRM broadcasters globally is available below¹⁵⁹.

Shortwave has a special role in disasters, especially in the Pacific. For the millions of people who live in remote areas without access to FM radio and internet technology, shortwave radio can be the only way they receive disaster warnings and information. Vanuatu's Prime Minister, Charlot Salwai, wrote to a Senate inquiry last year appealing to the Australian Parliament to act to restore ABC shortwave services for this very reason¹⁶⁰. In his letter the Prime Minister warned many, many lives could be at risk in his country from future national disasters if ABC shortwave was not restored. There was visible hurt across the region that Australia and the ABC should consider ending its lifesaving services:

¹⁵¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0bcWS2MrwM&feature=share>

¹⁵² <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/world-radio-day-2013/shortwave-radio/shortwave-article/>

¹⁵³ <http://www.shortwaveschedule.com/index.php?station=172>

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.shortwaveschedule.com/index.php?station=44>

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.shortwaveschedule.com/index.php?station=7>

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2017/world-service-ethiopia-eritrea>

¹⁵⁷ <http://www.drm.org/drm-digital-radio-broadcasting-in-india/>

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.drm.org/drm-digital-radio-broadcasting-in-india/>

¹⁵⁹ <http://www.drm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/SCHEDULES-OF-DRM-BROADCASTS-WORLDWIDE-A18-5.pdf>

¹⁶⁰ Submission no 15

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/Shortwaveradio/Submissions

"As Pacific nations are going through the usual cyclone season, it's just such a shame that they will lose a key, credible information source to rely on," said Monica Miller Chair of the Pacific Freedom Forum in a media release.

"It's clear that no thought was given to the link between disaster communications and this service, or even the fact that FM is largely unreliable in bad weather and only available in urban areas."

"It's a slap in the face for the millions who've connected to Australia and to regional news through this service, because they are unlikely to be the ones targeted in the new digital content offerings being touted by ABC.¹⁶¹"

Natural disasters are becoming more frequent and intense and disaster risk is outpacing resilience in Asia-Pacific¹⁶².

In Papua New Guinea and the Pacific where terrain conspires to make FM radio, television and mobile phone coverage difficult, shortwave will be needed more in the future. This is recognised by Australian aid agencies and professionals working in the region¹⁶³. The ABC argues that few people listen to shortwave radio based on a study it conducted in Papua New Guinea 2014¹⁶⁴. However anecdotal evidence received by members of our group suggests people were listening and would still listen to Australian shortwave if it were available. Members of the *Supporters of Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific* have heard many recent stories of the need for and experiences with shortwave. Recent industry figures show less than 50 per cent of Papua New Guineans have access to mobile phones of any kind¹⁶⁵.

These people live in areas that used to be serviced by ABC shortwave. The results of the ABC's 2014 study may not fully reflect the listening habits of Papua New Guineans. Whilst the study attempted to get the perspective of remote rural Papua New Guineans they are by their nature difficult to reach. Census figures show the vast majority of Papua New Guineans live in rural areas¹⁶⁶ and the study itself acknowledged that it did not fully reflect the census data¹⁶⁷.

The same ABC research showed that disaster preparedness in PNG is low and that radio is an essential source of information during disasters¹⁶⁸. See graph on the next page of this submission. As FM and mobile phone towers are often damaged during disasters shortwave is the only technology that maintains its integrity in times of greatest need.

As seen earlier in this submission there is a proven demand for shortwave from people in the Pacific - so much so that The Pacific Freedom Forum petition calling on the ABC to rescind its decision to end shortwave broadcasts attracted signatures from many Pacific countries¹⁶⁹. People

¹⁶¹ <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO1612/S00045/stop-shortwave-cut-to-pacific.htm>

¹⁶² <https://www.unescap.org/news/un-report-says-natural-disasters-become-more-destructive-asia-pacific-without-action-disaster>

¹⁶³ See, for instance, ActionAid Submission 46 - https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/Shortwaveradio/Submissions

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.abc.net.au/cm/lb/9080250/data/report---citizen-access-to-information-in-png-2014-data.pdf>

¹⁶⁵ See submission to the Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific from Peter Marks 2018

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.nso.gov.pg/index.php/document-library?view=download&fileId=65>

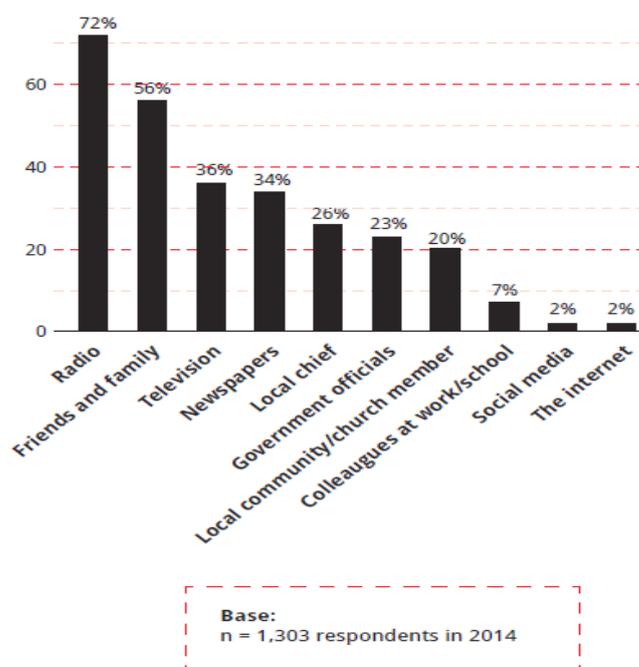
¹⁶⁷ P82 <http://www.abc.net.au/cm/lb/9080250/data/report---citizen-access-to-information-in-png-2014-data.pdf>

¹⁶⁸ P 70 <http://www.abc.net.au/cm/lb/9080250/data/report---citizen-access-to-information-in-png-2014-data.pdf>

¹⁶⁹ <https://www.change.org/p/abc-chair-hon-james-spigelman-save-lifesaving-shortwave-radio-to-the-pacific>

living in remote areas tend to be media poor. Many of the comments on the Pacific Freedom Forum petition mentioned how important Radio Australia’s shortwave service was for the sense of connection it gave to the outside world. People appreciated the wide range of programs but saw news and debate about events and issues in their neighbouring countries as particularly important.

**Figure 37:
Most used sources for information on natural disasters**



Source: Citizen Access to Information in Papua New Guinea 2014¹⁷⁰

In August 2017 John Greenshields visited around 30 islands in PNG’s Milne Bay Province. His account is revealing.

“Our contacts there expressed great disappointment at the loss of Radio Australia services in January 2017. So much so, that they discussed the prospect of raising a petition at local government level to the Australian government. There is a patchy and expensive mobile phone service in Milne Bay, and it gets worse as you move to the islands where it becomes non-existent in places. There is no internet or AM/FM radio service for most of these islands. They have no other alternatives for news. We brought the PNG election results to one island 10 days after urban voters knew. The argument that alternatives are or will become available is not acceptable. That is patently untrue of the 30 islands we visited. These people are well disposed towards Australia, and we have abandoned them. They have a great need for news, comment, and sport, with rugby union, league, cricket and Australian Rules being of particular interest.¹⁷¹”

¹⁷⁰ <http://www.abc.net.au/cm/lb/9080250/data/report---citizen-access-to-information-in-png-2014-data.pdf>

¹⁷¹ <http://www.devpolicy.org/australia-must-restore-shortwave-radio-pacific-20170919/>

As John Greenshields notes, shortwave radio is also vital source of news, debate and connection with the outside world. This applies equally to remote areas in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu as well as the ten Pacific Island Forum nations that since January 2017 have no longer had any radio service from the ABC.

It is interesting to note that for people living in remote areas in Australia, shortwave is also the best technology available for providing radio service. A submission made to last year's Senate Inquiry into Senator Nick Xenophon's bill to Restore ABC Shortwave by an Alice Springs-based Uniting Church pastor Benjamin Gilliam suggested the ABC explore DRM for Australian regional areas. He noted the ABC led the world in implementing DAB+ radio and suggested it do the same by trialling and rolling out DRM¹⁷² in remote Australia and the Pacific.

Recommendation: That the ABC re-establish its shortwave service to the Pacific and work with other international broadcasters to bring DRM to the consumer market as soon as practicable

Television Options

All TV is expensive to produce. Broadcast via satellite and cable are also expensive to deliver. Nevertheless, TV is a vital medium for Australian international broadcasting. In Asia, satellite and cable television has huge reach but is starting to be affected by the move to online/digital media consumption by more well-heeled audiences. In the Pacific, television is still a growing medium. In countries in which literacy and English language literacy cannot be taken for granted, media providing images as well as audio will continue to have a major role.

Recommendation: That Australia rebuild television broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific as well as arrange for rebroadcast of television service and programs by local partner stations, networks and cable operators.

Online and Digital options

Online and digital consumption of news will continue to grow in both Asia and the Pacific. This includes everything from live streaming, catch-up audio and video and text-based stories for online and mobile platforms. The ABC is generally across the technology in this space. It has done some excellent work in clearing international rights to enable more news and programs to be made available to audiences, including on its popular iView platform, the ABC Listen App and the ABC News App.

However, at the same time there has been a reduction in the number of bespoke online and digital services for the region. The move by the ABC to concentrate on Australian audiences has resulted in a reduced variety of stories for the Asia Pacific as well as a dumbing-down of some of the content.

A glance at ABC News' Asia Pacific section on its website will show that the ABC is no longer a contender as a provider of comprehensive news on Asia and the Pacific. Similarly, while the ABC has the knowledge and capability to provide a best-in-class online and digital service for the Pacific it has chosen not to. It took months before the new *Pacific Mornings* program had any online presence and when that online presence appeared it provided no information on the stories of the

¹⁷² Submission no 53 by Benjamin Quilliam

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/Shortwaveradio/Submissions

day or the interviewees, only an audio file of each day's program. Pacific Beat, the ABC's flagship Pacific program, no longer provides information on all its stories (similarly just an audio file).

The lack of adequate online offering by both of these programs is a reflection of lack of commitment by the ABC and lack of staffing for Pacific programs. The ABC has also failed to recognise the important role its online archives have played as a journal-of-record in the Pacific. Policy-makers and academics from around the world as well as the region used to rely on the invaluable archive of text, news stories and transcripts provided by Radio Australia and Australia Network. The ABC no longer maintains that archive. Worse still parts of its Asia Pacific archive have ceased to exist. It is also worth noting that texts, graphics and transcripts have a residual revenue value which is undervalued and underutilised by the ABC.

Recommendation: That new Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific provide a comprehensive bespoke online and digital service.

Recommendation: That new Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific recognise the important role of online text and transcripts as an historical record for the Pacific.

Governance

There is concern among those who have watched the ABC's management of its service to the Asia Pacific about the Corporation's apparent failure to meet the international dimension of its charter¹⁷³. This concern extends to audience members across Asia and the Pacific, Australians with an interest in the region and media professionals inside and outside the ABC. While it is clear from the discussion elsewhere in this submission that the ABC is the best placed Australian institution to manage broadcasting in the Asia Pacific it requires close oversight and is likely to need the creation of a new governance structure to ensure Australia's goals for its Asia Pacific broadcasting are met¹⁷⁴.

There are a variety of proposals for new management structures. These need further examination. An independent board for any new governance structure is important as is the involvement on that board of expertise from within Australia's Asia Pacific diaspora communities. Graeme Dobell's suggestion for an Australian International Broadcasting Corporation includes many of the key requirements of a new governance structure.

'The AIBC should be born of the ABC, reflect ABC traditions and standards and draw on ABC resources—but the AIBC must have its own corporate identity as an expression of its distinct, international purpose.'

The AIBC would have its own chair and board and its own separate budget.

The deputy chair of the ABC and the ABC managing director should be on the board of the AIBC, but so should the head of the Special Broadcasting Service.

*Replicate the successful ABC model with a staff-elected board member, and then gather board members with international experience from business, diplomacy, aid and one of the major generators of Oz soft power in the years ahead, the universities.*¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/oz-voice-in-the-asia-pacific-part-3-foreign-policy-and-media-revolutions/>

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/time-sharpen-edge-australia-soft-power>

Supporters of Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific support moves for greater transparency and accountability by the ABC for its international mandate.

One of the roles of the board of any new management structure would be to monitor the effectiveness of Australian international broadcasting. At present there is no reliable data on audiences for Australian content in either Asia or the Pacific. These data are not easy or cheap to collect. The ABC's stewardship of international broadcasting for many years has been marked by a consistent failure to invest in either marketing or audience research to the levels adopted by similar broadcasters elsewhere. It is essential that that both are a part of the robust accountability mechanisms that should go hand in hand with new Asia Pacific broadcasting.

Recommendation: That the ABC manage the revitalisation of Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific subject to robust transparency and accountability mechanisms – as per earlier recommendation.

Funding for future Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific

In 2010, Australia spent \$36 million dollars annually¹⁷⁶ on international broadcasting including transmission costs. At the time a Lowy Institute study found:

“Australia’s international broadcasters have been operating in a policy and financial environment which has impaired their ability to keep pace with these transformative developments. ... Australia’s funding of international broadcasting still falls considerably short of that of its international counterparts¹⁷⁷.”

In today's dollars adjusted for CPI increases a budget that 2010 figure would amount to \$42 million for a budget that would fall 'considerably short of its counterparts'.

In 2017, Australia spent around \$11 million on international broadcasting¹⁷⁸, a decline of 74 per cent on the inadequate 2010 figure (adjusted for CPI).

Unlike many other nations with strong international broadcasters, Australia is located in a region of rich diversity and rapid change. It is a region in which our neighbours will not necessarily share our world view. Strategic competition and the contest of ideas in Asia and the Pacific is intensifying making this Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in Asia and the Pacific timely.

Forty-two million dollars is a significant sum. But as the Lowy Institute pointed out in 2010:

¹⁷⁵ <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/oz-voice-in-the-asia-pacific-part-4-the-australian-international-broadcasting-corporation/>

¹⁷⁶ P 68 <https://archive.lowyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy>

¹⁷⁷ P 68 <https://archive.lowyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy>

¹⁷⁸ Understood to be the current figure the ABC spends on its international services. This figure is missing a level of due diligence as it has not been possible to obtain clear figures from open-source information.

‘The amounts are small in comparison with the investment of other nations in their international broadcasters. In Australia’s particular geopolitical situation, international broadcasting provides a cost effective way to project Australia’s soft power and strengthen its presence in the region’¹⁷⁹

In preparing our recommendations for funding for future Australia broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific members of Supporters of Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific have consulted current and former media executives in Australia and the region and those with years of experience in publicly-funded international broadcasting and with commercial operators. The funding proposed is based on the experience of the ABC and other organisations and recognise that Australian international broadcasting is at the lowest point in its history.

As noted earlier in this submission the BBC World service is undergoing its biggest expansion in 70 years, with additional funding of \$AUD 156 million per year. If Australia were to allocate a similar increase to its international broadcasting (proportional to Australia’s population) it would amount to more than \$50 million per year. However, Australia’s international broadcasting is starting from a much lower base.

A new initiative in Australian broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific would need substantial new government funding.

As mentioned above the ABC current spends around \$11 million of its annual budget from the government on Asia Pacific Broadcasting. It is clear that as the ABC budget for domestic broadcasting has come under pressure, the corporation has mined its international service for funds to maintain services at home. Exact figures are difficult to obtain but a best estimate suggests that at the time the Australia Network contract was cancelled, the ABC was spent approximately \$14-15 million a year¹⁸⁰ on international broadcasting over and above the \$22.3 million a year it received as part of the AN contract. That means somewhere in the vicinity of \$3-4 million has been directed away from international broadcasting over the past few years. The ABC’s total budget is smaller in real terms than it was in 2014, but it should still be expected to contribute at least the same proportion of its funding to Asia Pacific broadcasting as it did prior to the cancellation of the AN contract.

The dividend to Australia from revitalised Asia Pacific broadcasting in increased trade, visibility, relationships and goodwill in the region may be difficult to quantify, but what is clear it that now is the time to act.

The three suggested funding options are:

- 1) **Full Asia-Pacific television, radio and digital services** \$55-\$75 million per annum. This option would significantly enhance services in the Pacific, Timor-Leste and Indonesia, including establishing new language services. Near-neighbours among the developing

¹⁷⁹ Pp 63-64 <https://archive.lowyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy>

¹⁸⁰ Based on a verbal briefing to staff by Mark Scott in Sydney 14/5/14. Mark Scott told staff the \$22.3 annual Australia Network funding amounted to around 60 per cent of the total ABC Asia Pacific News Centre and International division budget (not including International Development activities) so the remaining 40 per cent from ABC funds would have amounted to around \$15 million. ABC internal documents handed to staff 14/7/14 when details of job losses were announced confirmed ‘The ABC’s converged International media service must now be delivered for the 2014/15 FY with a 60% reduction on the funding previously available’.

nations of ASEAN would be the next priority along with enhanced services for Mandarin-speakers globally, including in Australia. At its most effective (with a budget around \$75 million), this option could include tailor-made services for audiences in India. This option would include a wide range of programs made specifically for Asia-Pacific audiences with priority on news and current affairs (including arts, business, sport, science and technology), new English language-learning programs and children's programs. In any of these options news and current affairs would meet all the ABC's rigorous guidelines for independence. This option would enable the ABC to significantly rebuild audiences in Asia and the Pacific and Australia to achieve its soft power goals and re-establish a significant and respected voice in the region.

- 2) **Budget Asia-Pacific television radio and digital services** \$40-\$55 million This option would enhance services in the Pacific, Timor-Leste and Indonesia, including language services. Services for near-neighbour developing nations of ASEAN and China would be enhanced but without as much bespoke programming for audiences in each country. Bespoke services for India would be beyond the range of this option. Considering the requirement for more streaming, mobile and online services in 2018 and beyond, satellite delivery of television would probably not be an option under this scenario.
- 3) **Television, Radio and Digital in Papua New Guinea, the Pacific, Timor-Leste and Indonesia** \$35-\$50 million per annum. This option would provide for significantly enhanced radio and television content and access to digital platforms and transmission in the priority countries identified in the 2016 Defence White Paper only PNG, the Pacific and Indonesia). At its upper funding-level this option would provide services of a standard similar to option 1 (above). At its lower funding-level it would provide services at slightly lower level to option 2 above. Funding for this option recognises that establishment costs do not scale proportionately with the geography covered by the service, and that maintaining services in the Pacific is comparatively costly. This option would include the restoration of shortwave radio (standard AM and in the future DRM) and 24-hour FM radio stations in Pacific Forum nation capitals and in other regional areas of the Pacific. At its upper funding level this option would also provide for a new series of the ABC's English-language learning programs.

Recommendation: That full television, radio and online/digital services be re-established in Asia and the Pacific with total funding provided by the Australian government of between \$65 million and \$75 million a year.

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Appendix 1

International broadcasting & Australia's relationships with the Pacific island region

The provision of international broadcasting services to the Pacific island region is an integral part of Australia's relationships with her nearest neighbours. The quantity and quality of broadcasting is both a part of how Australia conducts relationships with the countries of the Pacific island region and a reflection of them.

Appropriate investment in both content and technology in this space is critical in terms of Australia's national interest and will provide a key component in what Australia brings to the table in terms of enhancing bilateral and regional partnerships, including within the Pacific Islands Forum, of which we are a full member.

There are several ways in which enhanced and improved international broadcasting will contribute to the enhancement of Australia's relationships with the countries of the Pacific island region:

(a) Supporting democratic culture and practice through independence

The credibility and impact of our international broadcasting rests on the knowledge both at home and abroad that we are providing a service that is independent, both editorially and managerially. This also represents our point of difference vis-à-vis some of the other actors in this space, notably Voice of China. Whilst it may be accepted in the Australian context that publicly funded broadcasting does not mean 'state broadcasting', this is a concept that is more problematic in a number of Pacific island countries. Properly resourced international broadcasting from Australia to the Pacific island region provides an opportunity to 'teach by doing', thus supporting the democratic bedrock of our neighbourhood.

(b) Underpinning our position as security partner of choice

A key part of how Australia contributes to regional security in the Pacific island region is as a first responder during natural disasters via participation in the FRANZ¹⁸¹ partnership. Appropriate resourcing of international broadcasting will allow for these contributions to be enhanced in terms of disaster preparedness and response. At both of these stages, providing access to accurate and appropriate information gives invaluable support to Pacific island governments and their agencies who are responsible for leading in this space.

(c) Building a domestic constituency for Pacific engagement

Investment in broadcasting to the Pacific island region presupposes more and better reporting on what happens in the Pacific, including the activities of Australia and Australians. This content can then be made available to domestic broadcasters to increase and improve how they inform, educate and entertain the Australian public about Pacific countries and Pacific peoples. There are many good news stories to tell about how the Australian taxpayer supports health, education, governance, sport, the arts, and much more, in the countries that are closest to us. These are the stories that can help to build a more comprehensive and nuanced sense of the Pacific island region in the minds and hearts of the wider Australian public.

In addition, independent, free and fair reporting of the use of public resources (including but not limited to aid) funded by the Australian taxpayer will provide more and better oversight of government decisions. In turn this can lead to issues of Australia's relationships with her near

¹⁸¹ A mechanism for military cooperation in response to natural disasters between France, Australia and New Zealand.

neighbours becoming much more central to the policy discourse in our country than is currently the case.

(d) Enhancing our people to people links

Whether it is via tourism, sporting and cultural exchanges, or migration we can look forward to Australians spending more time in Pacific island countries, and vice versa. Real investment in international broadcasting will generate a return by way of increased understanding and contribute to relationships that are built on mutual respect, shared values, and true friendship. These are the bases for relationships with our near neighbours that are more meaningful, sustainable and valuable in the longer term.

As an example of how international broadcasting can play a significant role in enhancing our people to people links, consider the increasing importance of labour mobility between countries in the Pacific island region and Australia. Building on the Seasonal Workers' Program, the government of Australia has now introduced the Pacific Labour Scheme to facilitate more opportunities for low and semi-skilled workers to be employed in Australia. The availability of good quality international broadcasting from Australia to the Pacific islands region will allow for these opportunities to be made known to a wide range of people; facilitate engagement between visiting workers and diaspora communities to support pastoral care; and provide greater understanding of what living and working in Australia involves.

Prepared by Dr Tess Newton Cain 24/07/18

Appendix 2

A selection of Comments on the Facebook page from supporters.

Name	Location	Date	Comment
Mary McBeath	Darwin	20/7/18	Having lived in the Top End of Australia for some years one could realise the informational, educational and cohesive effect of the ABC Overseas broadcasts. It was our near neighbours pipeline to both Australia and the wider world, and most importantly brought English language skills and current news to remote communities. An important and positive impact. Let's not lose it again. (nb I remember several decades ago it was defunded and sold to a religious group which did not succeed. Thankfully it was reinstated)
Francis Nii	Kundiawa, PNG	20/7/18	My family and I here in Kundiawa are in no uncertain terms appealing to the Australian government and ABC to rescind their decision to axe Pacific Beat and their shocking earlier decision to get rid of shortwave ,
Darryl Fallow		16/7/18	Rejuvenation of Australian International Broadcasting is long overdue and eagerly sought, particularly from Pacific nations.
Renata Netaf	Vanuatu	13/7/18	<p>A Ni-Vanuatu ABC Radio Australia listener in Santo has issued a plea to the Australian government to bring back shortwave broadcast which was discontinued in January 2017.</p> <p>Renata Netaf said many people in remote Pacific Island communities have been shut out of the outside world since the closure of the service.</p> <p>She said many communities also relied on the Radio Australia shortwave service for news and information in times of natural disasters.</p> <p>Speaking to Radio Australia's Tok Pisin service, Mrs Nataf became emotional when she said she had to tell her dad who lives on Ambae, that the ABC shortwave service has stopped and he will not be able to listen to Radio Australia anymore. She said her dad thought there was something wrong with his radio when he could not get the Radio Australia signal.</p>
Chris Baria	Bougainville	13/7/18	Much of rural Bougainville doesn't get any news and updated information on referendum and other issues confronting the region
Jone Dakavula	Fiji	11/7/18	Radio Australia is an important source of information about the Pacific and the world. it must continue this valuable service
Harold Obed	PNG	12/7/18	I hope the big brother come back to its sense and resumes Radio Australia's shortwave transmission
Paul Barker	Institute of National Affairs, PNG	12/7/18	Listening to the ABC - including programs like Pacific Beat and the Tok Pisin service - has been a way of life for many people across PNG and the Pacific over the decades. It's played on PMVs (buses) in PNG's urban areas and likewise, using

			<p>shortwave channels in the past, travelling along the highways as well as across villages, where shortwave is the only available service. Most of PNG's population and much of the Pacific live in rural areas and are on islands far removed from FM services, and the ABC provides both a valued source of news, information, commentary and discussion, but also needed warnings which are particularly critical during times of crises, whether from natural hazards, or human-induced disputes. It was unfortunate that the ABC took what seemed to be a hasty and ill-informed step of closing its SW services across the Pacific, and if there's now a chance of reconsideration it is strongly suggested that such services should be restored promptly, as alternatives, such as those provided on the web, are far from available across this region at the moment.....</p>
Neil Netaf	Vanuatu	11/7/18	<p>ABC Asia Pacific plays an integral role in development across the region. Historically it represents the voices of neighbouring PICs to the global media who can't afford the modern mediums to represent themselves on the global stage. ABC Asia Pacific's long assistance in building capacity skills of media personnel in the pacific is crucial, as the role the media played in independent democracies, balanced reporting and more importantly the role of women in the media. ABC Asia Pacific must remain committed to its traditional and historical role it played in our backyard, the Pacific.</p>
Tuimaleali'ifano Morgan	Professor, USP, Fiji	9/7/18	<p>Radio Australia is a major voice of the Pacific community. In strong support for its continuity as a Pacific voice.</p>
Lynne Miniru	Madang, PNG	11/7/18	<p>Full support, Jemima Garrett.</p>
Deni Tokunai	PNG	9/7/18	<p>Lots of noise re: the ABC cutting its shortwave services to PNG and the Pacific. Talk of resurrecting a similar service is admirable, but the ABC not valuing what it had speaks volumes. Hard to believe that Canberra was unaware. Aus has had a decent chance. Time to give China a shot.</p>
Keith Jackson AM		15/7/18	<p>Here at PNG Attitude I've been tied to my desk today with comments on Australia's abandonment of shortwave to the PNG and the Pacific. This has clearly turned out to be a major strategic, diplomatic and cultural error. It was forecast as such - now it has become so. It needs to be fixed.</p>
Gabriel Ramoi	Northeast PNG	15/7/18	<p>The absence of an Australian perspective on events within our region as once heard through shortwave is frightening as PNG is targeted both by Indonesia and China through the airwaves.</p>
Robert Lenton	PNG	15/7/18	<p>The day I heard that Radio Australia was closing</p>

Parer CMG, MBE.		8	<p>down I just could not believe it and thought it was the most insane, crazy, decision ever made by Canberra. All the \$billions spent in gaining respect in Asia/South Pacific just gone down the drain. Madness to the nth degree. China must be so trilled. I remember in the 1950s the only radio station we could pick up at Aitape in West Sepik was Radio Holland in Dutch New Guinea with good music and the Radio America with USA propaganda and then at some stage Radio Australia increased its strength and a whole new life as an amazing lot of programmes for the next 60 years.</p>
Sir Kenneth Roberts	Queensland	8/7/18	<p>The ABC is believable, whereas the "news" provided from countries thru other than the ABC can be suspect. Australia should be prepared to strengthen, not weaken its influence in the Pacific and the ABC is an accepted medium, not chatting to PIC leaders. Other countries seeking to obtain support have "other" ways of commanding leader's influence. The ABC can help level the lies.</p> <p>Sir Kenneth Roberts (Fiji resident 1969-2009)</p>
Peter K Wangi	PNG	8/7/18	<p>In PNG we are having problems with our media organisations where the main issue would be a lack of balanced reporting. In fact, there is a boycott with the two main newspapers going into the third week now. The reporting is biased or watered down so much to suit the big end of town. Of course, the reporters must also put bread on the table, for sure. We, in the Pacific need a fair and balanced reporting of news and current affairs from someone we have grown up with</p>
Chris Overland	Australia	10/7/18	<p>Given this general context, the decision in 2017 to cease short wave radio services into PNG and the wider Pacific and Oceania was a disastrous error in judgement.</p> <p>At one stroke, Australia lost its ability to communicate with and influence the thinking of a very large segment of the population in that region and simultaneously denied those people access to a well-established and valued source of information and entertainment.</p> <p>The people who made this decision apparently did so without much regard to its likely impact on listeners, both short and long term. Presumably, the budget impact upon the ABC was the most important consideration.</p> <p>This enquiry presents an opportunity for key decision makers to reconsider the various factors involved in this decision. It is an opportunity to give much greater weight to the geo-political, strategic and human factors involved than to the budgetary issues.</p> <p>In short, it provides an opportunity to reverse an unwise and short sighted decision that has harmed Australia's reputation in PNG and deprived it of a way to maintain contact with people whose goodwill and support is an important national asset.</p> <p>Thus, for entirely selfish reasons alone it makes sense to resume short wave broadcasting across PNG and the wider Pacific. The fact that it will bring information and entertainment to people who are often starved of both is simply an added, altruistic benefit.</p>

			<p>It is not too fanciful to suppose that, one day, Australia will again have very good reason to rely upon the goodwill and support of our nearest northern neighbour. The re-establishment of short wave radio services is an easy, sustainable and relatively inexpensive way to do this and I urge the enquiry to recommend this course of action to the government and the ABC."</p> <p>Hopefully, common sense will prevail.</p>
Vanessa Gordon	Brisbane	9/7/18	<p>There are villagers in remote parts of Papua New Guinea and other parts of the Pacific who rely on radio as their only source of news, information and vital breaking news on matters that directly impact their livelihood.</p> <p>I am half Papua New Guinean and have witnessed firsthand how the ABC has added value to the lives of my own people who live in remote parts of PNG.</p> <p>Broadcasting services into the region are a necessity. Period.</p>
Carol Taweel	Melbourne	8/7/18	Thank you! With you all the way for this most valuable service.
Lilliah McCulloch	Melbourne	8/7/18	You have my heartfelt support!
Plt Harian Rlc	Indonesia	1/7/18	We are RADIO LISTENERS CLUB in Indonesia, established in 1972. We are all missed RADIO AUSTRALIA.
Tjipto Marnantho Basuki	Jakarta	1/7/18	Love to hear laughing kookaboora and singing Mathilda again very soon, Radio Australia
Monica Cumming	Queensland	1/7/18	I lived west in qld. No tv no normal radio just the bbc. And then the abc. We were kept well informed and didnt feel isolated.
John Highfield	Sydney	1/7/18	The links between confused entities which led to anihilating the considerable ABC contribution to Australia's good standing in Asia/Pacific affairs have never been held accountable for their stupidity. Content and journalism apart, the sell-off to private interests of national transmitters, both domestic and regional-focussed short-wave, was such short-sighted, ignorant expediency.
Rob Sharp	Melbourne	24/6/18	Radio Australia. Some shortwave listeners in the remote centre of Pentecost Island, Vanuatu. It's been a pleasure reading the news via shortwave to villagers where this is their only way of learning what's happening elsewhere. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0bcWS2MrwM&feature=share
Barbara Dutton	Sydney	18/6/18	I have been visiting various Pacific Islands since 1987, the last time this May, and lived and worked there for eight years from 1995 to 2004. I am very concerned about the need to maintain a strong Australian media presence. Although it may not be possible to stop China's influence through its rapid advance into the Pacific, I feel it is essential that the ABC be provided with significant additional funding so it is able to provide viable alternative broadcast programmes. Australia is a Pacific nation, which should be in a position at the very least, to offer a wide variety

			<p>essential radio and digital services to small island nations relying on unbiased reporting of news, as well as other cultural services. If Australia is to forestall some of China's influence it needs a fully-fledged international broadcasting service providing radio, television and digital services able to encourage and create a conversation between citizens of Australia and Pacific nations. This requires multiple technologies and a great deal more staff in Australia and the region.</p> <p>It is embarrassing that the Government has made cuts to the ABC's very important international service at a time when other countries are increasing their funding.</p> <p>The ABC is known and, I believe, respected throughout the region and must have adequate funding so it can again provide its excellent services on a scale the region deserves.</p>
Talita Kefu	Tonga	15/6/18	No doubt a NEED, strong supporter
Vivien Altman	Sydney	15/6/18	Vitally important work in our region. We need to broadcast to our near neighbours.
Mona Palu	Tonga	15/6/18	Awesome work. Fully support this and thanks for all your hard work.
Ofakilevuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki	Tonga	1/6/18	I support 101%
Philip Fitzpatrick	Pacific Islands	18/7/18	<p>We seem to have reached a point in our political development all over the world where the economic benefit is of much more concern than the social benefit.</p> <p>This is perhaps highlighted by President Trump, who is re-shaping America's relationship with the world on the basis of a good (commercial) deal on everything.</p> <p>The decision by the ABC to axe the shortwave service seems to be part of this trend.</p> <p>In simple terms it means we are losing our humanity.</p> <p>For those heralding the end of neo-liberalism, maybe it's time to think again.</p>
Jeremy Smythe		15/7/18	<p>Clearly, the ABC is not the organisation to run any form of media input to the Pacific.</p> <p>They cancelled the shortwave service of Radio Australia (to save a measly \$2.0m), they closed their own International Department, they caused the historical shortwave transmitter site at Shepparton to be closed and now to be sold for future housing development, they have no full-time news correspondent in the Pacific (apart from PNG), they have resigned from international professional broadcasting organizations in the Asia-Pacific (e.g. the ABU, of which they were a founder member) and they do not broadcast any programme in Australia in any language except English.</p> <p>So, why should they be rewarded with money to run anything in the Pacific? They deserve nothing.</p> <p>Yes, Australia should be involved in media development and the projection of Australia's interests via radio/TV</p>

			<p>into the Asia-Pacific, but not through the ABC. They have shown themselves to be not interested and, quite frankly, incompetent.</p> <p>Time to let modern thinkers have a go, not the boring and outdated troglodytes of the past living in their ABC ivory tower on the banks of the Yarra River in chilly Melbourne.</p> <p>They have no idea of what is happening in the modern world of Asia and the Pacific. Have any PNG Attitude writers actually listened to "Pacific Beat"?</p>
William Dunlop		9/7/18	<p>The word we use in Ireland to describe gross stupidity is 'edjits' - a very objective description in the case of the decision makers that created the demise of our Radio Australia.</p> <p>One of my first purchases on my posting to Kundiawa in 1969 was an Zenith Trans Oceanic American made shortwave set from Alan Atkins' store in Kundiawa at the then cost of \$300 - a not inconsiderable amount of money in those days.</p> <p>Without this radio my awareness of what was happening in the world would have been severely restricted.</p> <p>No doubt caused by Auntie's bean counters exercising their misplaced right's to be tail wagging the dog \$ slashers of the ABC.</p> <p>I need add no more comments as they have been well covered by other correspondents.</p>
Gabriel Ramoi		8/7/18	<p>The word we use in Ireland to describe gross stupidity is 'edjits' - a very objective description in the case of the decision makers that created the demise of our Radio Australia.</p> <p>One of my first purchases on my posting to Kundiawa in 1969 was an Zenith Trans Oceanic American made shortwave set from Alan Atkins' store in Kundiawa at the then cost of \$300 - a not inconsiderable amount of money in those days.</p> <p>Without this radio my awareness of what was happening in the world would have been severely restricted.</p> <p>No doubt caused by Auntie's bean counters exercising their misplaced right's to be tail wagging the dog \$ slashers of the ABC.</p> <p>I need add no more comments as they have been well covered by other correspondents.</p>
Will Self		8/7/18	<p>"Good afternoon,</p> <p>"I am an expatriate in PNG. I have lived here for 30 years.</p> <p>"I tried to send a small submission to this Inquiry, but of course one has to have an Australian phone number - which I do not. Seems strange that no-one outside the Australian telephone regions can make a submission to such an Inquiry - but there you are.</p>

		<p>"So, my thoughts, for what they are worth are as follows:</p> <p>"1. The ABC - particularly radio - was a trusted service into the Pacific region and played no small part in nation building. It was independent and high standard, informed and informative. The PNG and Pacific citizens knew and relied on the service.</p> <p>"2. ABC radio and TV are tools of diplomacy displaying Australia to hundreds of millions of your neighbours whose views of your nation were formed by that service.</p> <p>"3. All that changed as the ABC became a political loudhailer for every dingbat shallow and perverted interest group in the country.</p> <p>"4. Here is a sample of what I have heard on my car radio over the last few years mid morning on ABC "lifestyle programs" - and I am not making this up:</p> <p>"1. A revolting interview with a handicapped gay man explaining in nauseating detail that his life was changed after he was sodomised by a rent boy;</p> <p>"2. An interview with a cook who wanted to eat human flesh - but settled for his wife's placenta after she gave birth;</p> <p>"3. A religious program on witchcraft as accepted practice - this into a region plagued with sorcery killings and witch burnings;</p> <p>"4. An interview on an "arts program" with a female lesbian "artiste" whose entire act consisted of walking on stage and pulling a handkerchief from her vagina.</p> <p>"ABC TV is even worse.</p> <p>"All this into conservative societies and hundreds of millions of people right on your doorstep. On the basis of the content served up by the ABC, they rightly hold you in contempt.</p> <p>"These cultural offerings and many more like them, have completely isolated and alienated those who once faithfully followed the ABC.</p> <p>"My father in law is a good example. Every day he would tune in to hear the news and daily programs. He no longer does so because he does not know what his wife, children or bubus will hear. Now he uses the BBC - as do many, many others.</p> <p>"This perverted filth might pass for intellectual discourse in Australia but it does you no favours in Asia or the Pacific.</p> <p>"So, until the ABC can reclaim some sort of authority, independence and act as an educative force, I am afraid that it is probably better that it keeps inside Australia - where the perverted, empty, vapid and vacuous content it exhibits is appreciated by its vapid, vacuous audience."</p>

Signatures

The following Supporters of Australian Broadcasting in Asia and the Pacific have endorsed this joint submission and are happy to be listed publicly. Records of signed permission for publication of signatures are available by request. Note that some signatories will also put in separate submissions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jemima Garrett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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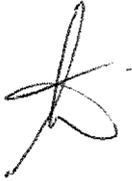
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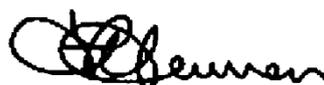
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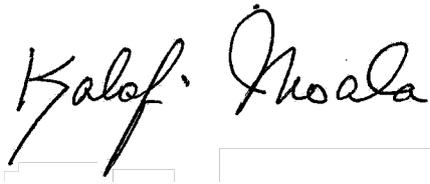
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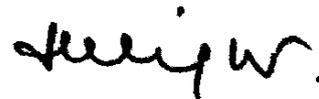


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