

1 May 2009

Perth first to switch on digital radio

Commercial radio stations in Perth - Mix 94.5, 92.9, Nova 93.7, 6PR, 96 fm, 6ix, Radar, Pink Radio and Novanation create radio history on Monday, 4 May 2009 when they begin broadcasting the first permanent DAB+ digital radio services in Australia.

Joan Warner, chief executive officer of Commercial Radio Australia the industry body that has driven the move to digital radio said Monday was a milestone for the industry in Australia and is the biggest innovation in radio since the introduction of FM in the 1970's.

"The switch on of digital radio is a culmination of seven years work with the Federal Government, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), commercial broadcasters, the ABC and SBS, together with retailers and manufacturers of digital radios to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated switch on of a compelling new way of listening to radio," said Ms Warner.

"The Australian radio industry has invested in and created its digital future and will compete with other digital technologies and continue to maintain radio's relevance in listener's lives," said Ms Warner

Ms Warner said for the first week to 10 days the DAB+ broadcasts will be in interference test mode which means that the power may be lower at night while any interference is assessed.

"Digital radio is the radio you know and love plus new programming such as Austereo's Radar and Pink Radio and DMG's Novanation and Koffee, digital quality sound and interference free reception, the ability to tune to the station by name, rather than frequency, and on some radios, the ability to pause and rewind a few minutes if you missed a song you like, plus scrolling news, sport and weather text and the capacity to transmit on screen on some receivers, a picture of a radio host, cover of a CD or a product picture," said Ms Warner.

Digital Radio Channel Plans (DRCP) by the Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA) show a very high level of coverage from day one of the new technology - with well over 90% of the Perth population able to access digital radio.

AM and FM services will continue to be broadcast for sometime to allow for the change over of the estimated 50 million analogue radios currently owned by Australians.

Digital radio will be free to air – all you need is a new digital receiver – no subscription fees or signing up, just tune in. Listeners can go to the website www.digitalradioplus.com.au and type in their postcode to see if they live in an area where they can receive digital radio or where they will be able to buy a digital radio.

Alternatively, simply SMS your postcode to the mobile phone number 0409DRPLUS (0409 377 587) to find out if you can receive digital radio in your area.

DAB+ digital radios will be available in all shapes and sizes including MP3 style devices, hi fi, portable players, clock radios, car adaptors and PC radios. Prices will vary depending on their features. Entry level radios are likely to start from around A\$150 and a radio with all the digital capabilities will start at around A\$299.

Manufacturers producing DAB+ digital radios include; Pure, Roberts, Bush, Revo, Grundig, iRiver, Sangean, Yamaha and Teac with other manufactures expected to introduce further products throughout 2009.

Digital radios will be available to purchase from May at leading retailers including; Harvey Norman, Dick Smith, The Good Guys, Myer, David Jones, Clive Peeters, Big W, Retravisio and specialist retailers.

Commercial digital radio services are expected to be switched on in each city from the dates below barring any weather delays. For the first 10 -14 days services might be on low power at night as any potential interference is addressed.

Perth - 4 May
Melbourne - 11 May
Adelaide - 15 May
Brisbane - 25 May
Sydney - 30 May

ABC and SBS are expected to commence digital services throughout June/July. Please continue to check the www.digitalradioplus.com.au website where information will be regularly updated.

For further information on digital radio visit: www.digitalradioplus.com.au
Media contact Melissa Fleming, CRA PR Manager Digital on – 0417 499 529.