



## Digital radio trial on air in Darwin

Commercial Radio Australia and Grant Broadcasters Pty Ltd announced that a trial of DAB+ digital radio would begin in the Northern Territory capital of Darwin today.

Hot 100 and Mix 104.9 and a digital only service called Top Country NT will begin broadcasting in DAB+ from the start of the trial and an additional new digital only station will follow shortly.

Commercial Radio Australia chief executive officer, Joan Warner said the trial in Darwin indicated how enthusiastic regional commercial broadcasters are to provide digital radio services to their clients and listeners.

"The family owned and operated Grant Broadcasters has been a leader in local regional radio for more than 60 years and is representative of the enthusiasm for, and interest in, DAB+ digital radio in regional areas," said Ms Warner.

Grant Broadcasters has interests in 33 commercial stations covering every Australian state and territory. Director of Grant Broadcasters, Grant Cameron said: "We are supporting the digital radio trial to ensure the people of Darwin get to experience the benefits of digital radio first hand. We are excited to be able to offer additional multi-channeling and data to our listeners as part of the trial.

"We also want to demonstrate to Canberra that people and broadcasters in regional Australia are just as interested in digital radio as those in the five capital cities that have already been given the right to have permanent digital radio services," said Mr Cameron.

The signal will be at relatively low power for the trial and in the first couple of weeks there may be minor interruptions as the start up procedures are fine tuned but it is still expected to cover a large part of Darwin and will be broadcast from Broadcast Australia's Deloraine Road transmission tower.

Business Manager – Commercial Broadcast at Broadcast Australia, Salvatore Mattera said, "Broadcast Australia is committed to working with the radio industry to support digital radio trials in regional centres. We actively support CRA, the commercial and national broadcasters in their rollout of the new technology."

Through a digital radio trial many Darwin radio listeners will be able to experience digital quality audio, robust transmission, text and images on screen, plus pause and rewind on some receivers.

Leading retailers Harvey Norman and Dick Smith will be supporting the digital radio trial in Darwin by stocking DAB+ radios to allow Darwin listeners to sample the new trial services but consumers will need to remember that until the Government commits to making provision for DAB+ digital outside of the five major cities, these services will remain trial services.

All sectors of the radio industry have made detailed submissions to the Federal Government's Digital Dividend Green Paper requesting the allocation of vacated VHF Band III spectrum for digital radio as analogue TV switches off and that this allocation take precedence over the reallocation or sale of this spectrum for other new services.

Permanent full power digital radio services began in Sydney, Melbourne Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth in August last year and a trial began in Canberra in July. The industry recently released updated figures indicating there are already 523,000 people listening to digital radio across the five metropolitan markets and almost 150,000 digital radios sold.

Digital radio is broadcast free to air. To listen all that is needed is a new DAB+ digital radio. From the end of next week, listeners in Darwin can check if it is predicted that they will receive digital radio, by logging on to the website [www.digitalradioplus.com.au](http://www.digitalradioplus.com.au) and typing in their work or home postcode. Alternatively, listeners can SMS their postcode to the mobile phone number 0409DRPLUS (0409 377 587).

Other possible digital radio trial locations being considered are Townsville and Hobart.

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For more information about digital radio, visit [www.digitalradioplus.com.au](http://www.digitalradioplus.com.au).