

DAB+ digital radio in Parliament House

The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Senator Stephen Conroy officially switched on a system for the broadcast of DAB+ digital radio in Parliament House last night, allowing Federal politicians to experience firsthand the broadcast of 12 local stations on the DAB+ platform.

Government, Opposition and Independent MPs and Senators, plus digital radio manufacturers and retailers attended the official switch on function last night hosted by Commercial Radio Australia's Board and commercial radio CEO's and owners.

MC, Melbourne's 3AW radio presenter, Neil Mitchell introduced, Commercial Radio Australia, chief executive officer, Joan Warner who spoke briefly, thanking the Government for support so far and reinforcing the radio industry's desire to rollout digital radio throughout all of Australia.

Before pushing the button to begin the digital trial, Senator Conroy spoke of the success of digital radio in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, mentioning more than 200,000 radios had been sold a year on from the August 2009 launch, time spent listening to radio via a DAB+ device has outstripped listening to radio on the internet by around 2 to 1, and 5% of all radio listening is now via a DAB+ device.

"Digital Radio has proven to be a popular option for radio listeners in mainland state capital cities," Senator Conroy said. "Consideration of the complex policy and planning issues associated with the rollout of digital radio to regional areas is underway and the Government looks forward to working collaboratively with the radio industry to achieve the best outcome for regional radio audiences."

All Members of Parliament and Senators were presented with a digital radio donated by digital radio manufacturers; Bush, Grundig, NextWave Digital, OXX Digital, Philips, Pure, Roberts, Sangean, Tangent and Teac.

"The radio industry believes that by transmitting the DAB+ trial signal into Parliament House and providing digital radios to all Members of Parliament and Senators, they will experience the benefits of digital radio and support the rollout of digital radio for all Australians," said Ms Warner.

The Parliament House digital radio signal is a re-boost of the Canberra regional trial that commenced on 22 July 2010. Reinforcement of the signal was required to navigate the manmade and natural challenges of the unique Parliament House structure.

Commercial radio broadcasters, Capital Radio, ARN and Austereo; and public service broadcaster SBS, have jointly funded the trial.

Supporters include; broadcast transmission infrastructure company Broadcast Australia, and multiplex infrastructure providers and systems integrators UGL Infrastructure/Radioscape as well as digital radio receiver manufacturers; Bush, Grundig, NextWave Digital, OXX Digital, Philips, Pure, Roberts, Sangean, Tangent and Teac.

Stations available on the Canberra & Parliament House DAB+ digital radio trial include:

- 2CA - Capital Radio Network
- 2CC –Capital Radio Network
- my Canberra Digital - Capital Radio Network
- Hot Country Canberra Digital – Capital Radio Network
- Mix 106.3 FM - Canberra FM (Austereo/ARN)
- 104.7 FM - Canberra FM (Austereo/ARN)
- Radar Radio (Austereo)
- Classic Hits Plus (ARN)
- SBS Radio 1 – News & Information Network
- SBS Radio 2 - News & Information Network
- SBS Pop Asia
- SBS Chill

Background

December 2003

Trial begins in Sydney of Eureka 147 or DAB technology.

March 2007

Legislative passed for more spectrum efficient DAB+ technology.

May/June 2009

Commercial radio DAB+ digital radio services switch on at low power in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Perth as interference is monitored. ABC and SBS commence DAB+ digital services.

July 2009

August 2009

Commercial and public broadcaster full-power consumer launch of digital radio.

July 2010

Low power Canberra DAB+ trial begins.

August 2010

Low power Darwin DAB+ trial begins.

March 2011

Parliament House DAB+ system switch on as part of the Canberra trial.

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For more information about digital radio, visit www.digitalradioplus.com.au.