



MEDIA RELEASE

25 July 2012

Canberra & Darwin digital radio trials extended

Commercial Radio Australia (CRA) today welcomed the decision by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) to extend the DAB+ digital radio trial licences in Canberra and Darwin for a further 12 months.

The scientific licences first issued in 2010 and further extended in 2011, have been extended once again to allow; for further field testing and continued coverage modelling to be used by the industry and ACMA in the planning of the DAB+ rollout to other regional areas.

Commercial Radio Australia chief executive, Joan Warner said: "The DAB+ trials in Canberra and Darwin have been led by Commercial Radio Australia with staff from the Australian Communications and Media Authority working closely and co-operatively for the ongoing development and improvement of the DAB+ technology. In Canberra, commercial broadcasters are also working closely with the public sector broadcasters."

Both regional trials have provided valuable information, in particular understanding the tradeoff between signal robustness and improved capacity which would allow the commercial stations to share a multiplex with the public broadcasters for the most cost effective and efficient roll out to regional Australia.

"Another area we have been testing on the Canberra trial is the use of the DAB+ screen and text based features for the distribution of emergency information during critical events such as flooding, cyclones, fires or traffic incidents," said Ms Warner. "This type of testing will also be carried out in Darwin in the next 12 months."

An area of on going investigation is gauging the impact on the digital signal of extreme weather and ground water and importantly to develop more information about the use of a single high powered site with some repeaters, similar to the current FM model, in the rollout of DAB+ digital radio to regional Australia.

The Darwin trial has attracted interest from international broadcasters considering the DAB+ technology, including Indonesia and Thailand both with similar climatic conditions. It also uses a multiplex not previously tested in Australia so it is important to understand the interoperability of these digital systems for future roll out.

Commercial radio stations 2CA, 2CC, Mix 106.3, 104.7, Classic Hits Plus, My Canberra, Hot Country and Radar, plus multicultural and multilingual stations SBS Radio 1 and SBS Radio 2, SBS Pop Asia and SBS Chill continue to broadcast on the low power DAB+ trial. ABC stations – 666 ABC Canberra, ABC Jazz, Radio National, triple j Unearthed and ABC Grandstand joined the trial in 2011 and these are all adding to the choice of services available to regional audiences..

Hot 100 and Mix 104.9 and digital only services, Top Country Digital, Classic Rock and Radio TAB will continue DAB+ trial services in Darwin.

Canberra and Darwin DAB+ trials have been the first outside the metropolitan capitals of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.

The DAB+ trial signal in both cities is at low power but tests have indicated coverage at low power has been able to extend to a large part of the Canberra and Darwin areas. A boost was required to retransmit the trial signal into Parliament House. This has provided additional testing opportunities for "in building" coverage in a challenging structure.

The trial services continue to be subject to occasional interruptions and changes in power for ongoing technical testing.

Digital radio celebrates three years on air in the five state metropolitan capitals on 24 August. More than 50 commercial, ABC and SBS radio stations will broadcast live in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth at central city locations. For more information www.digitalradiotoyota.com.au

Media contact: Melissa Fleming: 0417 499 529.

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

BACKGROUND

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| December 2003 | <i>Trial begins in Sydney of Eureka 147 or DAB technology.</i> |
| March 2007 | <i>Legislative framework for more spectrum efficient DAB+ technology in place.</i> |
| May/June 2009 | <i>Commercial radio DAB+ digital radio services switch on in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Perth.</i> |
| July 2009 | <i>ABC and SBS commence DAB+ digital services.</i> |
| August 2009 | <i>Radio United - major all of industry commercial and public broadcaster consumer launch of permanent high power digital radio services in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth .</i> |
| May 2010 | <i>DAB+ Canberra trial announced by commercial radio broadcasters Canberra FM and Capital Radio along with SBS</i> |
| July 2010 | <i>Canberra DAB+ trial begins.</i> |
| August 2010 | <i>Darwin DAB+ trial begins.</i> |
| March 2011 | <i>DAB+ digital radio trial system switched on in Parliament House and Black Mountain tower trial power is increased slightly.</i> |
| August 2011 | <i>DAB+ trials in Canberra & Darwin extended</i> |
| August 2011 | <i>ABC joins the Canberra trial</i> |
| July 2012 | <i>DAB+ trials in Canberra & Darwin extended.</i> |