

# ABC Radio

## Our DAB+ journey so far

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## Quick agenda

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- Context: Radio at The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)
- DAB+ specifically
  - Transmission savings from shared infrastructure
  - Spectrum efficiency
  - Opportunity to niche format, broaden the range of content and serve audiences better by making content available on multiple platforms
  - Extend the ABC brand
  - Pop-up stations
  - Summary

## The Australian Broadcasting Corporation

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- The ABC is one of two public broadcasters in Australia
- Launched in 1932, with a single radio service, the ABC has developed into a multi-platform media operation and a public broadcaster of international renown, delivering Australian stories and conversations across the nation and to the region.
- The ABC Charter, set down by Parliament, requires the Corporation to provide informative, entertaining and educational services that reflect the breadth of the nation.
- Amongst other things, ABC Radio is proud to broadcast a range of services on DAB+, and we work closely with Commercial Radio Australia on a range of common interests and industry initiatives – specifically including further development of DAB+ in Australia

## DAB+ is part of our Radio strategy

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### 1. Audience focus

ABC Radio will have compelling content for a broad audience and deliver it with confidence, creativity and efficiency.



### 2. Digital leaders

**Actively promote and expand DAB+ coverage**

Strategy for the connected car, and other third-party opportunities.

Class-leading ABC RadioPlayer app with high levels of personalisation.



### 3. Reinvestment

Investment strategy will see financial resource re-prioritised to areas of greatest potential.



### 4. Fit for purpose

To deliver all this, we will be leaner, agile, and fit for purpose.



## Some DAB+ highlights include

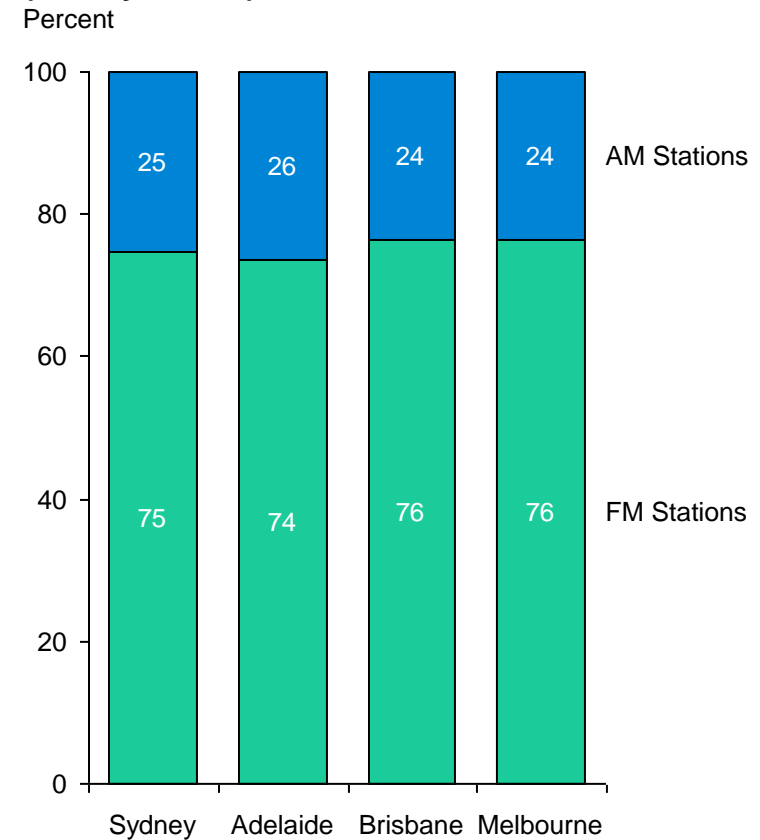
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- Significant increase in audio quality for AM stations in particular – a path to the future
- Excellent branding opportunities - listeners tune in by station name, now-playing information is also available. Some sets feature an electronic program guide or images alongside broadcasts
- Significant additional choice, with around 30 additional radio stations in cap-city markets
- Automatic search of the stations available.
- Opportunity for multimedia, also to pause and resume listening

# In Australia, share of listening for AM networks has been trending downwards, and AM listening makes up less than one quarter of total radio audiences

- Australia has had a long and successful relationship with AM radio, but the trends suggest we are past “peak AM”
- DAB+ represents a substantial audio improvement and level playing field for AM in cap-cities

**Cumulative audience on AM and FM stations in capital cities (Survey 7 2015)**



## Transmission savings from shared infrastructure

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- ABC is a joint-venture partner with SBS (another public broadcaster) for DAB+ transmission services in Australia
- DAB+ roughly 30 times cheaper than AM to operate, 8 times cheaper than FM\*
- We work closely with Commercial Radio Australia (CRA) on strategic planning, industry marketing and various technical issues. *This cooperative approach has been essential*











## Spectrum efficiency

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- ABC radio has experimented with bit-rates and has been pleasantly surprised at the quality – there is little obvious need to increase it from current levels
- With a well-installed antenna in coverage areas, reception on the move is robust and, without multipath interference, is significantly better than FM.
- The use of a Single Frequency Network allows broadcasters to be economical with frequency use. Different transmitters combine their signal to offer more robust reception
- The use of multiplexes - single transmitters carrying a number of different services - means a level playing field in terms of reception quality.



## Opportunity to niche format, broaden the range of content

Network	Offer	Delivery	Network	Offer	Delivery
	59 local stations – topical talk, news and local events	Mix of AM and FM <b>Simulcast in DAB+ markets</b> IP audio streams VAST, Podcasts		All things Jazz	<b>DAB+ markets</b> IP audio streams VAST Audio on DTV
	The best new Australian music	FM <b>Simulcast in DAB+ markets</b> IP audio stream VAST, Podcasts		Music for those graduating from triple j	<b>DAB+ markets</b> IP audio streams VAST Audio on DTV
	A showcase of Australian classical music	FM <b>Simulcast in DAB+ markets</b> IP audio stream VAST, Podcasts		New and unsigned bands from across Australia	<b>DAB+ markets</b> IP audio streams VAST
	Regularly updated news on a near continuous basis. BBW Worldservice overnight	Mix of AM and FM <b>Simulcast in DAB+ markets</b> IP audio stream VAST, Podcasts		Country music, with high focus on Australian content	<b>DAB+ markets</b> IP audio streams VAST
	News and current affairs, ideas and the national conversation	Mix of AM and FM <b>Simulcast in DAB+ markets</b> IP audio stream VAST, Podcasts		Pop-up station	<b>DAB+ markets</b> IP audio streams VAST

## Serve audiences better by making content available on multiple platforms

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All of these Radio services are simulcast on IP audio for playback via

- Dedicated ABC Radio app
- Dedicated triple j apps
- ABC web sites
- Third-party services such as TuneIn audio - app and website
- Industry apps such as the Radio Player app, iHeartMusic app and so on
- Some radio brands simulcast on the ABC digital TV platform
- All of the stations found on our DAB+ services are also carried on the VAST satellite platform for Regional and remote Australia

**However, the biggest audience numbers (with respect to “non-analogue” platforms) is DAB+**

## Extend the ABC brand

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- Australian audiences outside the DAB+ markets can hear the IP audio streams, but ultimately we would like to see DAB+ available to more of the country.
- Currently Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth (with trial in Canberra) covering some 65% of the population
- New markets of Hobart, Darwin and full service in Canberra will see DAB+ services become available to 72% of the population - this extension of DAB+ into the remaining capital cities provides a cost effective means of providing a superior digital service to approximately 700,000 listeners.

## Pop-up stations

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We have used spectrum set aside for pop-ups to cover

- Radio New Zealand feed after the Christchurch earthquake
- Replay of Apollo moon landing on 40th anniversary
- Beatles special anniversary weekend, Nirvana special anniversary weekend
- Various writers and arts festivals
- Sport – e.g. The Australian Open, The Tour Down Under, Australian Cricket Tour of India
- Chinese New Year, NAIDOC Indigenous week, Science Week
- AUSmusic month, Summer of Podcasts
- Australia Day, World Radio Day, TEDx Sydney,

...and so on

Reserving spectrum for periodic pop-up usage has been great positioning and promotion

## Other thoughts

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- It is easy to under-appreciate the value that people assign to listening to a radio (device). *Don't do that!*
- **Anyone can do IP audio, but very few can do DAB+ so make the most of it**
- IP audio is critical in partnership with DAB+. But it is not a bigger than broadcast, not yet anyway – maybe in 10 to 15 years?
- Car penetration improving all the time – but after market kits are important as average age of a car in Australia is 12 years (old)
- Graphics remain an opportunity. While one of Radio's great strengths is you don't have to look at it, we could do more with the GUI

## For populated areas, DAB+ is a perfect choice for radio listeners and broadcasters

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- It offers significantly improved choice, far better reception, and a level playing field in terms of quality.
- It is more popular than internet streaming, and cheaper for broadcasters.
- DAB+ is not yet available in enough cars, needs more marketing within the industry, and needs to continue building awareness in the wider market
- **Its problems are not technological.**