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## **We want digital radio - regional awareness campaign launched**

The commercial radio industry has launched a national information campaign urging listeners to support digital radio's expansion into regional areas, chief executive of Commercial Radio Australia, Joan Warner said today.

A nationwide radio and online banner advertising campaign will begin today urging listeners to register their support for digital radio expanding into regional Australia with local MPs, via a specially set-up website: [www.wewantdigitalradio.com.au](http://www.wewantdigitalradio.com.au). The ad campaign will be run on more than 200 regional radio stations throughout Australia, targeting the estimated 6.9 million Australians who listen to commercial radio in regional Australia each week.

"Audiences in regional areas have expressed frustration that they do not have access to the quality and diversity of free to air digital broadcast radio services enjoyed by their metropolitan counterparts as a result of the roll-out of DAB+," Ms Warner said.

Ms Warner said it was only fair that people in regional areas receive the same type of access to free to air digital radio services as those people living in the city. Radio plays a particularly vital role in the regions with the provision of local news and local emergency services information, so it is very important we have free to air broadcast radio services that will take us into the future."

"DAB+ digital radio will result in a significant upgrade to towers and site infrastructure in regional Australia. The rollout will provide an opportunity for commercial and public service radio operators to provide a greater diversity of local radio programming in regional areas," Ms Warner said.

The industry is seeking Federal assistance of around \$500 million over a 16 year period to phase in digital radio services into major regional areas and has submitted a detailed proposal to both the Government and Opposition. The funding, of which about 50% accounts for ABC and SBS services, will help cover infrastructure set-up and operational costs to service all regional licence areas.

"To move digital radio forward we need a policy commitment to a national roll-out and an indicative timeframe ASAP."

"Federal Governments have supported the television industry with over \$1 billion in funding over the past twelve years to facilitate the roll-out of digital television into regional areas – it is only fair that radio receives similar treatment."

Ms Warner said a commitment was needed to ensure the future of free to air broadcast digital radio: "Motor vehicle manufacturers are waiting for some form of commitment before expediting market options for their vehicles - although some progress has been made in this area largely as a result of the industry's efforts."

Digital radio had been available to metropolitan areas of Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, with trials in Darwin and Canberra, for the past three years. It offers listeners more channels, greater choice, digital sound quality, scrolling text and pictures on screen and a diversity of services.

“Take-up of digital radio over the past three years has exceeded the industry’s expectations with nearly 1.4 million people listening to digital radio each week in the five state capitals and over a million DAB+ devices sold in a very tough retail environment.”

“I urge everyone in regional Australia to go online and register their support. Our listeners need to let all their local Federal MPs and Senators, regardless of political party, that this important free to air broadcast service is made available to all Australians in a timely manner and provide people living in regional and rural areas a digital radio future.”

To listen to the radio ads click [here](#). To see the website click here [www.wewantdigitalradio.com.au](http://www.wewantdigitalradio.com.au)

Follow us on twitter [@drplusinfo](https://twitter.com/drplusinfo) and like us at [fb.com/drplusinfo](https://fb.com/drplusinfo) .

For further information on digital radio visit: [www.digitalradioplus.com.au](http://www.digitalradioplus.com.au)

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**Media Alert - Please note:** Official updated data relating to digital radio broadcasts in Australia, which includes digital radio sales from the Christmas and New Year period and, for the first time, the total number of new vehicles with DAB+ installed, will be released by Commercial Radio Australia (CRA) on Monday, 25 March in the **2013 Digital Radio Industry Report**.

The 2013 Digital Radio Industry Report will be the fourth wide ranging report released by the industry and includes; listening data from the official radio industry audience measurement survey company, Nielsen, digital radio sales market data from GfK’s MarketScope report, consumer research by Hoop Group, number of new vehicles sold with DAB+ and a tracking update of household uptake from PwC.