

Viewer Access Satellite Television service

Remote Central and Eastern Australia services: Queensland, Northern Territory, New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania

The Australian Government's objective in the switch to digital TV is to address, as much as possible, long-standing issues in regional and remote areas of Australia where residents have poor or in some case no access to terrestrially broadcast television services.

The government is investing \$375.4 million over twelve years to provide transmission of digital free-to-air services from the new satellite platform known as the Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) service. In providing funding for the VAST service, the government aims to ensure that anyone in Australia who cannot receive digital terrestrial services will have access to a reliable and professionally operated free-to-air service, now and into the future.

The VAST service is a first class direct to the home digital television satellite service which covers all of Australia. It employs cutting edge transmission technology to provide high quality viewing of the same number of television channels that are available in capital cities in both standard definition (SD) and high definition (HD).



Australian Government

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What channels are available on VAST?

The VAST service features channels carrying programs sourced from Southern Cross Seven, Imparja Nine and Network Ten. It also includes the main national broadcaster services, ABC1 and SBS ONE, together with SD digital channels ABC2, ABC3, SBS TWO, 7TWO, GO!, Eleven and the HD channels ABC News 24, SBS HD, 7mate, GEM, and ONE.

All programming is provided on NSW time, except for the Queensland and Northern Territory SD channels, which are provided on Queensland time.

The VAST service also provides viewers with access to the local regional news services currently broadcast by the commercial broadcasters in their terrestrial licence areas. The regional news services are provided through dedicated news channels. See the list on page 4 for channels currently available.

The news services of the national broadcasters, the ABC and SBS, are also provided. ABC news is available through ABC1 on a state basis.

When will VAST be available in my area?

The VAST service commenced on 15 December 2010 and is being made available progressively in all parts of Australia as they switch to digital TV.

Eligible viewers will generally be able to access the VAST service about six months before the switch to digital TV in their area.

Who is eligible to receive VAST?

Viewers who are unable to receive adequate digital commercial terrestrial services in Mildura/Sunraysia, regional South Australia, Broken Hill, regional Victoria and regional Queensland can access the VAST service now.

Viewers in the remote Central and Eastern Australia switchover areas, and viewers who are authorised to receive their television services from the existing Aurora satellite platform may also access the VAST service now.

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How do I access the VAST service?

Applications to receive VAST services can be made by going to mySwitch at **www.digitalready.gov.au** and entering your full address. When the map comes up showing your location, click on the 'Satellite Eligibility' tab and follow the links.

Viewers are advised not to purchase a VAST set-top box before establishing they are eligible to receive the VAST service.

To complete the application form, viewers should use the dummy smartcard number provided on the application form. After your application is approved, you will need to provide your VAST set-top box and a smartcard number.

The smartcard number is provided with the VAST set-top box. Viewers will need to activate the smartcard to receive the VAST commercial television services.

How much does VAST equipment cost?

The retail cost for a high definition VAST set-top box with the smart card is about \$280 (including GST). A satellite dish is about \$100-\$500, depending on the size of the dish required. In most parts of Australia a small to medium dish will be adequate. However, in some parts of far north Australia a larger dish will be needed. To find out what the recommended dish size is for your area, go to mySwitch.

Installation costs will depend on your location and the individual circumstances of your household. Viewers who live in cyclone

areas, or who need to have a larger dish size for some other reason, are likely to have higher installation costs because of the more complex mounting requirements for larger dishes.

Viewers who already receive their television services from the Aurora remote area broadcasting service will need to buy a VAST set-top box, but they will be able to use their existing satellite dish.

One VAST set-top box will be required for each TV to be converted to VAST.

Where can I buy VAST certified equipment?

As of July 2011, there is only one VAST certified set-top box available in the market. This set-top box is manufactured by Altech UEC and is available from retailers and installers or direct from Altech UEC. Upgrades to the UEC set-top boxes to include recording features are expected to

be available in late 2011. Enquiries about direct sales from UEC can be made by calling (02) 9425 5777.

Additional suppliers and distributors of VAST certified set-top boxes are expected in late 2011.

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Additional television and radio services on Aurora?

Additional programs currently available through the Aurora platform, such as ABC radio, NITV or other services, will continue to be available until the end of 2013.

You can connect both an Aurora and a VAST set-top box to your TV, either through different inputs (for example AV1 and AV2)

or with a small switchbox. If you need help to connect both set-top boxes to your TV, you may wish to contact an endorsed Antenna Installer. To find endorsed Antenna Installers in your area, go to mySwitch and look under 'Switchover information'.

Where can I get more information?

- call the Digital Ready Information Line on **1800 20 10 13**
- visit the Digital Ready website at **www.digitalready.gov.au** and check mySwitch

Technical specifications for the VAST service are also available on the Digital Ready website.

VAST regional news services (channel 4)

WIN News	Southern Cross News	7 Local News	NBN News	PRIME news
401 Cairns, Townsville	410 Qld, NT, NSW, Victoria	412 Cairns, Townsville	415 Gold Coast, Lismore	418 NSW North Coast
402 Mackay, Rockhampton	411 Tasmania, SA & Broken Hill	413 Mackay, Rockhampton	416 Coffs Harbour, Tamworth	419 NSW & Victoria
403 Bundaberg, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba		414 Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast	417 Newcastle, Central Coast	420 Orange, Wagga Wagga
404 Orange, Wagga Wagga				
405 Wollongong, Canberra				
406 Albury, Gippsland				
407 Bendigo, Shepparton				
408 Ballarat, Mildura				
409 Tasmania, Mt Gambier, Nine News Darwin				

Want more information?

Contact the Digital Switchover Taskforce:

- 📞 1800 20 10 13
- 🌐 www.digitalready.gov.au

