



Australian Government



The Aurora service is closing. It's time to upgrade to the new VAST satellite service.

The Remote Area Broadcasting Service, also known as Aurora, will be switched off on **25 June 2013** in regional and remote Western Australia. That is, all areas except metropolitan Perth.

The Aurora satellite service will be switched off on **10 December 2013** in all remaining areas of Australia.

Do you currently receive TV through the Aurora satellite service?

Viewers who are currently watching TV through the Aurora service and are unable to receive the full range of digital TV services from a local terrestrial transmitter will need to upgrade to the new Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) service.

Aurora viewers should check if they are able to receive terrestrial digital TV services or if they will need to move to the VAST service before the Aurora service is switched off. This will ensure that viewers do not lose their access to free-to-air TV.

What Channels are available on VAST?

The VAST service carries the full range of 17 digital free-to-air channels together with news channels.

VAST services for Western Australia

The VAST service in Western Australia will carry the 17 digital TV channels replicating the range of free-to-air channels available in metropolitan areas. The service features channels carrying programs from WIN Television, Prime (GWN) and West Digital (Ten). It also includes the main national broadcaster services of ABC1 and SBS ONE, together with standard definition (SD) channels ABC2, ABC3, SBS TWO, 7TWO, GO!, Eleven and the high definition (HD) channels of ABC News 24, SBS, 7mate, GEM, and ONE. ABC news is available through ABC1 on a state basis so viewers in Western Australia will be able to watch the ABC WA News.

The Western VAST service also provides National Indigenous Television Service (NITV) and Indigenous Community Television (ICTV). As well as the Rural Health Channel which is the first specialised free-to-air non-commercial channel to be provided on VAST. The Health channel delivers the latest health news, information and training to health professionals and communities.

VAST service for Central and Eastern Australia: QLD, NT, NSW, ACT, SA, VIC and TAS

The Central and Eastern VAST service features channels carrying programs sourced from Southern Cross Seven, Imparja Nine and the Ten network, and the main national broadcaster services, ABC1 and SBS ONE. In addition, the VAST service also mirrors the new multi-channel services available in metropolitan areas: ABC2, ABC3, SBS TWO, 7TWO, GO! and Eleven in standard definition, and ABC News 24 HD, SBS HD, 7mate (Seven HD), GEM (Nine HD), and ONE HD (Ten HD) in high definition.

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

The Central and Eastern VAST service also provides viewers with access to the local regional news services currently broadcast by the commercial broadcasters in their relevant terrestrial license areas. The news services of the national broadcasters, the ABC and the SBS, are also provided. ABC news is provided through ABC1 on a state basis and the national news broadcasts through ABC News 24.

Additional channels provided specifically on VAST also include NITV, CITV and the Rural Health Channel.

ABC and SBS radio services on VAST

The ABC and SBS provide radio services on the VAST satellite platform. In addition to the current range of ABC radio services on the Aurora platform, VAST also carries the ABC's digital-only radio channels Dig, ABC Country, ABC Jazz, ABC Grandstand and Triple J Unearthed.

The SBS radio services on the VAST platform comprise Sydney Radio 1, Sydney Radio 2, Melbourne Radio 1, Melbourne Radio 2 and National South East, as well as SBS's digital-only audio services *Chill* and *Asia Pop*.

The ABC and SBS will continue to provide radio services on the Aurora satellite platform until analog TV transmissions cease on **10 December 2013**.

Who is eligible to receive VAST?

Any viewers who currently rely on the existing Aurora satellite service, who are unable to receive the full range of terrestrial digital TV services, can apply for the VAST service now.

There may be some viewers in Western Australia, who are currently receiving their TV services via the Aurora satellite that may now be able to pick up new terrestrial digital services that have been set-up in areas of Western Australia.

Viewers who are currently watching TV on Aurora, and who may now be able to receive the full range of digital TV services via terrestrial signal, should consult an Endorsed Antenna Installer. These viewers will not need to switch to the VAST service.

To find out if terrestrial digital TV coverage will be available at your residence, enter your full address into the *mySwitch* tool on the Digital Ready website at www.digitalready.gov.au. Viewers who are predicted to receive a variable terrestrial signal can apply for the VAST service.

Viewers can also find an Endorsed Antenna Installer by using the *mySwitch* tool or by calling the Digital Ready Information Line on 1800 20 10 13.

Can I use my existing satellite dish to access VAST?

In most cases, Aurora viewers will be able to use their existing satellite dish to access VAST. The existing satellite dish will need to be equipped with a wideband low noise block down converter (LNB). Satellite dishes purchased in the last seven years are likely to have a wideband LNB.

For more information regarding LNBs, please visit www.digitalready.gov.au or call the Digital Ready Information Line on 1800 20 10 13.

What equipment do I need to access VAST?

Aurora viewers will need a VAST set-top box and a smart card in order to receive the new satellite service. The retail cost for a high definition VAST set-top box with the smart card is approximately \$280 (including GST).

Viewers will need to put in an application to receive VAST and authorisation for the set-top box smart card. Once the smart card has been authorised, viewers will be able to connect the new VAST set-top box to the existing satellite system and watch the full range of digital channels provided through the VAST satellite service.

A VAST set-top box will be required for each TV in your house that you would like converted to the VAST service.

While the VAST service is free to viewers, with no annual subscription fees, there are no rebates, subsidies or compensation for Aurora users who move to VAST. The cost of the set-top box/es and any upgrade to an existing satellite dish is a matter for the householder.

How do I apply for VAST?

Applications to receive VAST can be made by entering your full address into the *mySwitch* tool at www.digitalready.gov.au, following the VAST link and clicking on the 'satellite eligibility' tab. You can also apply by calling the Digital Ready Information Line on 1800 20 10 13 which operates from 8 am to midnight (AEST) seven days a week.

Assessment of applications may require investigation by the broadcasters and can take up to 15 business days before a decision is reached. The specific circumstances of each application will be considered.

The Household Assistance Scheme

Some viewers may be eligible for assistance under the Household Assistance Scheme (HAS) if they do not already have access to a digital TV, and they receive the maximum rate of one of the following:

- Age Pension
- Disability Support Pension
- Carer Payment
- Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Service Pension, or
- DVA Income Support Supplement.

If you receive the maximum rate of one of the above, you can test your eligibility for assistance under the HAS by calling the Department of Human Services on **1800 55 64 43**.

If you are potentially eligible you will be sent a letter from the Department of Human Services inviting you to apply for the HAS.

Need some help or more information?

There are tools and resources available to help you.

A good start is the Digital Ready website at www.digitalready.gov.au and the Digital Ready Information Line **1800 20 10 13** (8am to midnight AEST). You can also find localised information on the *mySwitch* tool on the Digital Ready website.