

16 December 2009



ABC
Australian
Broadcasting
Corporation

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Senator Kate Lundy
Chair
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital
and External Territories
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator Lundy

I refer to your letter of 29 October 2009 and your inquiry into the changing economic environment in the Indian Ocean Territories.

Following are the responses to the questions using the same numerical notation. For ease of reference I have included the original question.

Q1. What is the main content and how are radio broadcasts made available to Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands?

- A. The ABC does not have a local radio service to either Christmas Island or Cocos (Keeling) Islands radio service. The ABC believes the present radio services on both islands are licensed by the Australian Communication and Media Authority (ACMA) as "Self Help" services. It is therefore the ABC is unable to provide advice on the current content being broadcast via either AM or FM radio on Christmas Island.

ABC services are available to Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands via satellite are;

1. Optus Remote Area Broadcast Service (RABS)

- ABC 1 TV
- ABC Local Radio Northern WA
- ABC Local Radio Gold Fields (Kalgoorlie)
- ABC Classic FM
- ABC JJJ
- ABC News Radio
- ABC Radio National

2. Intelsat (International Satellite)

- Radio Australia
- Australia Network TV can be received in these territories off Intelsat but the network does not have rights for some content in Australia (including its territories).

Radio Australia cannot provide a reliable short wave service to Christmas Island and Cocos Island because they are outside RA's SW footprint.

The live online streaming of RA's radio services (English 24/7 and mixed languages including Indonesian 24/7) would be available depending on the online connectivity in the islands. However it should be noted that no live sport is carried on RA's live online streams because of content rights issues

Radio Australia and Australia Network are both available free to air via the Intelsat 8 satellite. However, some sporting events carried on Australia Network are encrypted due to rights issues and a smart card is required to decode the signal during these programs. Enquiries regarding smart cards should be sent directly to Australia Network – amy.williams@australianetwork.com. Technical information about receiving satellite services is available at: <http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/waystolisten/indonesia.htm> (scroll to bottom of the page for satellite details).

Q2. Has the ABC considered having its own frequency for Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands? If so, what measures have been taken to progress this?

- A. The ABC does not have any current plans to directly establish any local transmission facilities on either Christmas Island or Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

Q3. What would prohibit the ABC from broadcasting to Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands via its own frequency?

- A. The ABC would find it difficult to support such a remote transmission service on Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands. At present Broadcast Australia, the ABC's transmission service provider does not have any infrastructure or personnel on either island. The ABC would fully support any Federal or State government initiative to fund additional "Self Help" transmitters on both islands. The ABC would be pleased to provide technical assistance to the local authorities on establishing these services as it does in many remote areas of Australia.

Q4. Who would residents of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands need to contact to enquire about ABC radio broadcasts?

- A. The ABC Reception Advice line <http://www.abc.net.au/reception/> or 139 994.

Please contact my office should you need further information.

Yours sincerely



Mark Scott