



AUSTRALIA

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Government must put 20+ million Australian TV viewers first in spectrum future review

The Government has today announced a review of the broadcast spectrum band. This spectrum has been designated for the delivery of broadcasting for decades for the simple reason that free, universal Australian television services are critical to the fabric of our society.

This must remain the underlying principle of this review. Speaking in response to the announcement of the review, Free TV CEO Bridget Fair said: "Free TV has a strong future over the next decade and beyond. Our services reach more than 20 million Australians every week. It is essential that the Government recognises and supports this through this latest consultation process and we will be playing an active role in this process to ensure the best outcome for Australian TV viewers.

"While many Australians are now delighting in being able to watch their Free TV services by streaming live channels and catching up at their convenience or exploring all the on demand free content that could never have been conceived as possible to access even one decade ago, millions of Australians will continue to rely upon having access to television that's delivered over the air using broadcast spectrum. This will still be the case 10 years from now" said Free TV CEO Bridget Fair.

"Planning for the future is sensible, and understanding how or if high quality free TV services can be delivered with less demand on spectrum but no reduction in quality or quantity will be critical in ensuring free Australian TV remains available to everyone.

"Free TV delivers vital services that no other platform does – free locally relevant services available to every Australian no matter where they live, or how much they earn.

"We spend \$1.67 billion on Australian content, deliver live and free sport that brings the country together and produce trusted local news. We are the cornerstone of the Australian production industry and our news services are vital to Australian democracy. The upheaval in the media sector dominated by global digital platforms means that our services are more important than ever. No other platform is going to replicate these contributions to the Australian way of life.

"Right now, the industry needs the Government to recognise that Free TV services are a critical element of our media mix and act decisively to support their sustainability. The most important thing the Government can do is to remove the onerous and outdated Commercial Broadcast Tax that should have been addressed before 2022. We are still waiting for a Government response to Meta pulling out of the News Media Bargaining Code which has seen millions of dollars bleed from our sector," Ms Fair said.

ENDS



For media enquiries, please contact:

Bridget Fair
Chief Executive Officer
Free TV Australia
M: 0417 260 478
E: bfair@freetv.com.au

ABOUT FREE TV AUSTRALIA

Free TV Australia is a leading media industry organisation. It represents all of Australia's commercial free-to-air television licensees through advocacy, innovation and strategic advice. The members of Free TV Australia are Seven West Media, Nine Entertainment Co, Network 10, Southern Cross Austereo, WIN Network and Imparja Television.