

18 February 2019

Big audience boost for commercial digital radio stations

The number of DAB+ digital radios in Australia increased by more than 930,000 last year, helping to boost average weekly audiences for digital-only radio stations to over two million, according to the latest DAB+ update released by industry body Commercial Radio Australia.

More than 4.21 million people, or 30% of the population aged 10 and over, listened to DAB+ digital radio each week in the five metro capital cities in 2018, up from 3.62 million in 2017.

The commercial radio industry's digital-only radio stations, which offer alternative formats including chillout music, country, specialist rock, 80s and retail services, reached 1.35 million listeners each week, a 30% jump over the previous year.

CRA chief executive officer Joan Warner said the growth figures were pleasing and would open the way for further commercialisation.

"Digital radio represents one of the growth areas for commercial radio. More listeners are discovering the new stations and more media agencies are including DAB+ as part of their advertising buy," Ms Warner said.

Consumers need to upgrade their AM/FM radios to DAB+ radios to tune in to the digital-only stations or listen via streaming. The total number of DAB+ radios in Australia, including those in cars, rose to 4.73 million at the end of 2018, a 24% increase from 3.80 million at the end of 2017.

Sixty-five per cent of all new vehicles sold in Australia were factory-fitted with DAB+ radio in 2018.

The latest data, compiled from GfK radio surveys, GfK sales reporting and new vehicle sales data provided by Glass's Automotive Business Intelligence, shows DAB+ grew strongly last year:

- Weekly listeners to DAB+ radio rose 16% to 4.21 million
- Commercial digital-only stations gained 315,000 listeners
- More than 930,000 DAB+ radios were sold in 2018, including 745,000 in new vehicles
- The number of DAB+ portable and home receivers in market totalled 2.56 million at the end of 2018, and the number of vehicles with DAB+ reached 2.17 million.

DAB+ technology offers superior sound quality and up to 30 extra commercial and public radio stations. These include Triple M Aussie, which launched on Australia Day with an all-Australian music format, the Christmas pop-up station Elf Radio, as well as Coles Radio, Triple M Classic Rock, The 80s iHeartRadio, NTS News Talk Sport, Koffee, Easy Hits, Kinderling Kids Radio and KIX Country Music.

For more information on DAB+ visit www.digitalradioplus.com.au.

Media contacts: Judy Shaw – 0418 415 965 and Melissa Fleming - 0417 499 529.

Sources: GfK Radio Ratings, Surveys 1-8, 2017-2018, SMBAP, All people 10+, Mon-Sun 12mn-12mn; GfK Point of Sale DAB+ Fusion Reporting, including coverage extrapolation (excludes sales of aftermarket DAB+ devices in vehicles) Q4.2018 and Glass's Automotive Business Intelligence Q4.2018.