



**9 September 2008**

## **Digital Radio Switch-On Set for May 2009**

The radio industry announced today that the national switch-on for digital radio will take place on 1 May 2009 following resolution of infrastructure issues relating to the rollout of transmission equipment.

Commercial Radio Australia and ABC Radio have consistently taken the position that the successful introduction of digital radio in Australia is dependent on an integrated national industry rollout with both public and commercial broadcasters switching on simultaneously in the 5 mainland capital cities.

"We have maintained from the outset that the digital radio rollout in Australia would be on a national basis, with the first five markets in the mainland capital cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth to be launched simultaneously," Joan Warner, CEO of Commercial Radio Australia said.

"Given we have timeline infrastructure issues in a number of the launch cities and after consultation with the commercial sector, the industry has made a united decision to officially launch digital radio to listeners on 1 May 2009 in all markets," said Sue Howard, Director of ABC Radio

Ms Warner said the timeline issues had arisen as a result of intensive and collaborative work being done on a second draft of the Digital Radio Channel Plans (DRCPs) developed by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). These will now not be finalised until December 2008.

"It's from these technical specifications that the antenna design is developed and the final specifications of broadcast system can be finalised. After close collaboration between ACMA and the industry, we are looking forward to a set of specifications which will allow much improved coverage to that offered by the earlier DRCPs released late in 2007. The infrastructure build of an entirely new broadcast technology is a complex one. We are committed to ensuring that we get it right from day one. Transmission networks last a very long time," Ms Warner said.

Des DeCean Austereo Director of Technologies and Chair of the Commercial Radio Australia Digital Technical Advisory Committee said, "All of our transmission equipment has been ordered and is in production. The finalisation of the antenna design and installation will allow us to move forward to complete the infrastructure build."

"In addition, the radio industry is briefing all stakeholders on the new brand and logo for digital radio on Thursday 11 September in Sydney and on Friday 12 September in Melbourne. This unavoidable extension of the launch date allows all those involved – radio networks, retailers, manufacturers and advertisers - more time to collaborate on the launch and to deliver a fantastic product to the marketplace," Ms Warner said.

Free to air digital radio will allow radio broadcasters to provide additional audio channels, a superior quality sound, a pause and rewind facility, plus a new visual aspect to radio with the introduction of scrolling news, sport and weather text and the ability to transmit a picture of a radio host or band, the cover of a CD or an animated logo on screen.

**Media Contact:           Melissa Fleming – 0417 499 529**  
**Jenny Stevenson – 0402 214 039**