Press Release

**Help Revitalise Australia’s voice in the Asia/Pacific.**

A group of Australian based supporters is trying to revitalise Australian broadcasting in the Pacific and Asia.

For more than 50 years, ABC-Radio Australia was a trusted and respected friend in the region broadcasting independent news and information.

But five years ago, the service was almost silenced by budget cuts.

It’s recently been revealed that Radio Australia’s shortwave frequencies into the Pacific and Asia have been taken over by China Radio International.

The supporters group says that now because of a new political environment in Canberra and across the region, the time is right to propose a major upgrade of ABC radio, television and digital services to the Asia Pacific.

The group wants people to have their say at a review of Australia’s broadcasting in the region being held by the Australian department of foreign affairs and the department of communication and the arts.

It would like to see the Review recommend the reinstatement of full ABC Asia Pacific broadcasting with a new model of stronger partnerships between Australia and the region.

The supporters group includes household names in the Pacific like former ABC-Radio Australia correspondents Sean Dorney and Jemima Garrett along with former Radio Australia Network Manager Sue Ahearn.

Ms Garrett says the Australian media, in the form of the ABC’s international services [Radio Australia, Australia Plus TV, and digital and online services) has played a crucial role in promoting debate, transparency and good governance in the Pacific and Asia.

She says the ABC has provided a powerful role-model and, through its presence and reporting empowered journalists in the region, to tackle stories that are difficult but of important public interest.

Ms Ahearn says this is a chance for those who care about independent journalism and democracy to be heard. “Your submission does not need to be long, even a few sentences is valuable. The more perspectives the Review receives the better”.

The Review is asking for submissions from individuals and organisations in Asia and the Pacific as well as Australia.

A link to the submission portal is here. <https://www.communications.gov.au/have-your-say/review-australian-broadcasting-services-asia-pacific>

Submissions close on August 3, 2018.

You can join our Facebook site at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/239918206767173/> Or join us on Twitter <https://twitter.com/broadcasing>

For more information and interviews, please contact Sue Ahearn or Jemima Garrett.

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Please let us know if you would like photos of the group members.

**Background.**

The purpose/objective of the review ‘is to assess the reach of Australia’s media in the Asia Pacific region, including examining whether shortwave radio technology should be used’. The review is instructed to analyse:

• the coverage and access of existing Australian media services in the Asia Pacific region

• the use and value of Australian shortwave technology in the Asia Pacific region.

And the review will cover:

• all media distribution platforms (television, radio and online)

• commercial, community and publicly funded services

• different types of technologies such as analogue, digital and satellite radio and television services and online services.