



Australian Government

Department of Broadband,
Communications and the Digital Economy



Regional Queensland: It's time to get ready for digital TV

Between 2010 and 2013 analog free-to-air TV signals are being switched off and replaced with digital-only signals. The switch to digital TV represents a milestone for Australia and on 6 December 2011*, areas of regional Queensland will be switching off their analog TV signals.

* Switch off may occur earlier in some towns relying on a self-help transmission tower. Residents in these areas will be informed about the switchover dates.

What is digital TV?

The word 'digital' simply refers to the way in which TV signals are broadcast (sent) and received by TVs around Australia. Currently, in Australia TV is broadcast in both digital and analog. However, the analog signals will be gradually phased out across the country between 2010 and 2013, and Australian TV will become digital-only.

Why is Australia moving to digital TV?

To improve your viewing experience

- There are many new channels, plus your current free-to-air favourites
- Digital TV can offer better sound and picture quality
- You can watch TV in widescreen

To embrace worldwide developments in technology

- Overseas programs are increasingly made in digital format only
- Australia will join those nations who have already switched or are currently switching, including the United States, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden and New Zealand

To free up broadcast space for exciting new services

- It's costly and inefficient to continue to broadcast both analog and digital signals
- Turning off the analog signals will free up spectrum space that can be reused for new services such as mobile broadband.

What is happening in Queensland?

Areas of regional Queensland will be switching to digital-only television on 6 December 2011. This means households will need to be watching digital TV either through a set top box or through a digital TV in order to continue to receive free-to-air TV from this date.

The areas of Queensland that will be switching are

- Capricornia
- Darling Downs
- Far North Queensland
- North Queensland
- Queensland Central Coast and Whitsundays
- Wide Bay

Residents living in the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Noosa will be switching to digital-only TV along with Brisbane on 30 June 2013.

The green coloured areas on this map show the areas of regional Queensland that are switching to digital TV on 6 December 2011.

Switching to digital TV early

There are a number of towns that will need to make the switch earlier because the equipment at the local TV transmitter needs to be replaced to introduce new digital TV services. Information sessions in and around the early switchover towns will take place. To find out if your area is switching early, visit mySwitch on the digital ready website and look out for the public notices advising of the upcoming information session.

Switchover for the rest of Queensland

All other parts of Queensland will have their analog TV broadcast signals switched off in the second half of 2013.

Further details about which areas of Queensland are switching can be found on the digital ready website, www.digitalready.gov.au, on the regional Queensland page.



Which parts of the country have already switched to digital?

Mildura/Sunraysia in north-western Victoria was the first region in Australia to switch on 30 June 2010, followed by areas of regional South Australia and Broken Hill on 15 December 2010.

Recently, on 5 May 2011, analog television transmitters throughout areas of regional Victoria were switched off for good and residents are now watching digital-only free-to-air TV.

What do I need to do?

To keep receiving free-to-air TV after the analog signals are switched off in your area, you'll need a television that is capable of receiving digital signals. Most importantly, you do not have to buy a new TV if you don't want to. You can convert your analog TV by connecting a digital set-top box or a digital TV recorder. If you are buying a new TV make sure it has a built-in digital tuner.

How do I know if I'm digital-ready?

If you can receive ABC2 or SBS TWO you are already watching digital TV and you don't need to change or upgrade your equipment.

Find out more about set top boxes and other digital TV equipment [here](#)

How will I find out more about the digital switchover?

The Digital Switchover Taskforce has a variety of information resources available from the website, www.digitalready.gov.au to help people make the switch to digital television. These include fact sheets, handbooks and instructional videos. You can also call the Digital Ready Information Line on **1800 20 10 13**.

Local television, newspaper and radio advertising will also appear in your area, and a brochure with general information will be sent to all households in regional Queensland.

If you are eligible for the government assistance programs you will also receive a letter specifically about these programs.

myswitch

mySwitch is designed to provide the information you need to prepare for switchover in your area. This includes your predicted digital TV coverage and channels, your switch off date for analog TV, links to your nearest Australian Government endorsed antenna installers, retailers participating in the Retail Advisor Scheme and events.

Enter your full address and the mySwitch tool will retrieve your switchover information. mySwitch works best with your full address as switchover information is based to your exact location. If you only enter a postcode, you will receive general information about switchover and no coverage information. Your information is safe and not stored by the Australian Government.

Local support available to help people to switch

Digital Switchover Liaison Officers

Digital Switchover Liaison Officers will be available in each of the switchover areas and will work with local communities across regional Queensland to help them make the switch to digital TV. The liaison officers will be available to help community groups and organisations with advice on getting ready for the switchover.

The liaison officers for regional Queensland will be published on the Digital Ready website and can be contacted by calling the Digital Ready Information Line, **1800 20 10 13**.

Community events

The Digital Switchover Taskforce will be taking part in a number of regional shows, including:

- The Townsville Show, 1-4 July
- The Cairns Show, 20-22 July

Come along and find out more about the digital switchover, staff will be available to provide information and answer your questions about switchover.

Endorsed Antenna Installers

Endorsed antenna installers are local technicians who have their registration for participation approved and then have their skills and knowledge assessed against industry agreed minimum standards.

Installers can apply to be endorsed at three levels: Domestic, Commercial and/or Satellite. They must complete the Domestic level of assessment before continuing to the Commercial and/or Satellite assessment.

Industry agreed minimum standards are based on units of competency from Certificates II and III in Telecommunications Digital Reception Technology, accepted into the national accredited training framework in 2009.

An endorsed antenna installer will be able to advise you on any antenna or cabling changes that may be required to improve your picture quality and help you get ready for digital TV.

All endorsed antenna installers must wear a badge carrying the Australian Government's Get Ready for Digital TV logo. The badge also displays the installer's name, photograph, ID number, endorsement end date, and the type of installation they are endorsed for (Domestic, Commercial and/or Satellite).

Use [mySwitch](#) to find your nearest endorsed antenna installer.

Approved Digital Advisors

Approved digital advisors are available at participating retailers to help you understand your digital TV options. They can also tell you when the switchover will happen in your local area as well as the full range of equipment options available to you.

Approved digital advisors wear a badge displaying the Government's 'Get Ready for Digital TV' logo, their name and the date their digital advisor status expires. You can find your nearest approved digital advisor by using mySwitch or by calling the Digital Ready Information Line.

Government assistance schemes

Assistance is available for people who need help getting ready for digital TV.

The Australian Government recognises some people may find it difficult to make the switch to digital TV. To address this issue, two schemes have been developed.

The Household Assistance Scheme (HAS) helps older Australians and others on the maximum rate of certain Centrelink and Department of Veterans' Affairs benefits to get ready for digital by sending an official representative to provide and install digital ready equipment.

If you're eligible, you will receive a letter from Centrelink inviting you to apply for the scheme approximately six months before your area is due to switch. Visit the digital ready website for more information or call the Digital Ready Information Line to get a copy of the Household Assistance Scheme brochure.

The Satellite Subsidy Scheme (SSS) has been developed to help those receiving analog signals from a self-help tower — usually people living in remote areas — with practical and financial assistance to install satellite equipment that will provide access to the free-to-air digital broadcast.

To find out if you are eligible for the Satellite Subsidy Scheme and to apply, call the Digital Ready Information Line on 1800 20 10 13 or use the Household Eligibility Checker on the Digital Ready website www.digitalready.gov.au/subsidy

Applications for households in regional and remote Queensland close on **2 October 2011**.

What is VAST?

The Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) service, is a new digital satellite service that will provide people living in regional and remote areas of Australia with access to the same number of channels as viewers in metropolitan areas. VAST provides 17 free-to-air TV channels including a dedicated local news channel.

For more information about VAST see [here](#).

More information on digital TV

Improving digital TV reception

Digital television provides more channels, and better sound and picture quality. However, some households may report complaints about the quality of their digital TV reception, including issues such as pixelation, freezing of their picture, or signal drop-out.

These are symptoms of poor reception or interference at the household and in most cases can be addressed most effectively by ensuring that plugs and cables are securely connected and in good working order. In some cases, it may be necessary to upgrade the antenna, particularly if the antenna is older, in poor condition, has broken or missing elements, and is not designed for the channels that are used for local digital TV services. Reception can also be improved by checking that the antenna is correctly positioned and pointed towards the closest digital TV transmitter. An [endorsed antenna installer](#) can help you with this.

Like all other forms of wireless communication, television reception can also be affected by household appliances that generate electrical interference, or severe weather. The effect of these causes can be minimized by ensuring that antennas are optimised for local digital TV services and through the use of good quality shield cabling and connectors.

More information on how to improve reception can be found [here](#).

Regional Queensland digital switchover timetable:

Activity	Start date	End date	Location
MAY			
Queensland Satellite Subsidy applications open	30 May		Regional QLD
Emerald Show (Community Event)	31 May		Emerald (Capricornia)
JUNE			
Letters sent to HAS applicants. Scheme opens			Regional QLD
CRT Farm Fest (Community Event)	7 June	9 June	Toowoomba (Darling Downs)
Mackay Show (Community Event)	21 June	23 June	Mackay (QLD Central Coast)
JULY			
Townsville Show (Community Event)	1 July	4 July	Townsville (North QLD)
Cairns Show (Community Event)	20 July	22 July	Cairns (Far North QLD)
AUGUST			
SEPTEMBER			
OCTOBER			
Queensland Satellite Subsidy applications close		2 October	Regional QLD
NOVEMBER			
DECEMBER			
Regional Queensland switch off	6 December	6 December	Regional QLD