

DAB+ radio set to launch on the Gold Coast, commercial DAB+ audiences surged 10% in 2021



28 March 2022

DAB+ digital radio will launch on the Gold Coast on April 4, bringing nine new commercial radio stations to Australia's sixth largest city, industry body Commercial Radio Australia said today.

The launch will make Gold Coast the tenth city in Australia to have DAB+, which stands for Digital Audio Broadcasting. DAB+ is a greener and more spectrum efficient technology than AM and FM and offers better audio and text information.

Broadcasters ARN and SCA will launch the new DAB+ stations, while existing stations Sea FM, Triple M and Hot Tomato will be simulcast on DAB+ and continue on FM.

Listeners can buy a DAB+ radio to listen to the new stations, although the technology is already widespread with 4.47 million cars on the road with DAB+ radios. Last year, 78% of all new vehicles sold in Australia were factory fitted with DAB+.

"The rollout of digital broadcasting technology allows the radio industry to bring more stations, new music formats, enhanced sound quality and more innovation, including pop-up stations, to Gold Coast listeners," said Joan Warner, chief executive officer of CRA.

"This significant investment in improving commercial radio services recognises that Australians use a variety of technologies and devices to listen to radio. As people move between the car to the home and to mobile devices, we want them to have a reliable, high quality listening experience across all platforms."

SCA CEO, Grant Blackley, said: "As a successful early adopter of the digital radio spectrum, we are delighted that Gold Coast listeners will now be able to access new DAB+ stations from the Hit and Triple M family. Nationally our DAB+ stable reaches more than 970,000 people every week* and is

continuing to grow. DAB+ offers a higher quality listening experience and for SCA the ability to increase our audience in southeast Queensland. We will be announcing our DAB+ Gold Coast station line up shortly.”

ARN Regional, COO, Michael Harvey, said: “As leaders in local content, we're excited to be able to elevate the current FM listening experience onto the DAB+ spectrum, but beyond that, given that the Gold Coast is Australia's sixth largest city with one of the fastest growing economies in the country, it presents a significant opportunity for national advertisers to connect with an audience at scale.”

Nearly five million people tuned in each week to all DAB+ stations (including simulcasts) across the five major metro capitals and Canberra in 2021. This reflected strong growth of 8.5% compared to 4.6 million in 2020.

The weekly commercial DAB+ audience surged by 10% to 3.7 million people from 3.3 million previously (comprising those listening to simulcast stations via a DAB+ radio and those listening to DAB+ only stations on any device).

Fifteen commercial DAB+ only stations ended 2021 with more than 100,000 weekly listeners**. Triple M Classic Rock was at the top with a cumulative national audience of 248,000, Coles Radio was second on 243,000 and KIIS 90s attracted 190,000 listeners. Tik Tok Trending (184,000 listeners) and Smooth Relax (163,000) rounded out the top five commercial stations.

The average time spent listening via a DAB+ radio was 9 hours and 50 mins each week.

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

Sources: GfK Radio Ratings, SMBAP S1-8 & Canberra S1-3 2021, SMBAP S1-2, 6-8 & Canberra S1 2020, Cume (000), Mon-Sun 12mn-12mn, All People 10+, Listen to simulcast stations via DAB+ radio or listen to DAB+ only stations on any device (total listening/commercial listening), unless otherwise stated. NB. 2020 figures based on SMBAP S1-2, 6-8 & Canberra S1 2020 due to survey pause.

**SMBAP S1 2022, SCA DAB+ Stations (Buddha, Easy 80s, Oldskool 90s, RnB Fridays, Dance, Classic Rock, Modern, Country, 90s, 80s, and Hard n' Heavy).*

***SMBAP S8, 2021.*

Glass's Information Services Report, December 2021 and VFACTS.

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About Commercial Radio Australia

Commercial Radio Australia is the peak industry body representing the interests of commercial radio broadcasters throughout Australia. CRA manages industry codes and standards, regulatory and legislative matters, metropolitan and regional audience measurement surveys, revenue reporting, industry innovation including the automated trading platform RadioMatrix, RadioApp, the Australian Podcast Ranker, consumer research, marketing and industry training and development programs. CRA also hosts the Australian Commercial Radio Awards and the Siren Creative Awards.

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