



Switchover to digital TV

From 30 June 2010, Australia will begin to gradually switch off the analog TV signal. Starting in Mildura, Victoria, the switchover to digital-only TV will take place progressively on a region-by-region basis until 31 December 2013.

The Digital Switchover Taskforce (the Taskforce) within the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy is responsible for coordinating and overseeing Australia's transition from analog to digital free-to-air TV.

The Taskforce is working closely with the broadcasting industry and the retail and housing sector as well as a number of other stakeholders to ensure Australians experience a smooth transition to digital TV and enjoy the associated benefits.

For most people, the switch from analog to digital TV will be relatively straightforward. However, the Australian Government has also introduced a number of schemes to help you get ready for digital TV:

Public awareness campaign

The national advertising began in March 2009 as well as the launch of the:

- Digital Ready website: www.digitalready.gov.au
- Digital Ready Information Line: 1800 20 10 13.

Periodic bursts of national and region specific TV, radio and print advertising will take place as we approach the switchover in each region. The campaign materials for the current phase of advertising can be viewed on the website, www.digitalready.gov.au/tvcs.aspx

To support the strategy, public relations activities will be implemented to assist with engaging and providing relevant information to the general community.

Household Assistance Scheme

For the vast majority of people, making the switch to digital TV will be a relatively straightforward and inexpensive exercise. However, some Australians—the elderly, people with disabilities and their carers—without access to family, friends or community support, will require assistance to switchover to digital TV. Recognising these difficulties, the Australian Government will be providing in-home assistance to eligible households in the Mildura, regional South Australia, regional Victoria and regional Queensland TV licence areas. Lessons learned from these areas will help inform the approach taken to the broader switchover of the rest of Australia.

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The Household Assistance Scheme will, at no cost to eligible households, supply, install and demonstrate a high-definition set-top box specifically chosen to meet the needs of the elderly or those with a disability and conduct any cabling and antenna work where necessary. A household will be eligible for assistance where at least one resident is receiving a **maximum rate**:

- Age Pension
- Disability Support Pension
- Carer payment
- Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) service pension or the DVA income support supplement payment.

The scheme will be rolled out on a region-by-region basis, commencing approximately six months before each region switches over and concluding one month after switchover.

Letters inviting eligible households to opt into the scheme will be sent out approximately six months before each region is due to switchover. Those residing in the Mildura TV licence area will receive their letters in January 2010.

On 4 December 2009, Hills Industries was announced as the successful contractor for the Mildura switchover region. Eligible households who opt-in to the scheme, will be contacted by Hills to arrange a time to carry out their switchover to digital TV.

Digital Tracker Survey

The Digital Tracker provides quarterly research on Australian households' preparedness for digital switchover. Questions on TV equipment and behaviour on switchover are asked—via computer assisted telephone interviews—to approximately 9900 households. Participating households are randomly selected from the 33 switchover areas.

The Digital Tracker reports on the six key measures of household preparedness for switchover:

- **awareness** of switchover
- **understanding** of what needs to be done to convert to digital
- **attitude**
- **intention** to convert (for those who think they are not digitally ready)
- **conversion** status
- **satisfaction** with digital TV (among the converted households).

The reports are available at www.digitalready.gov.au

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Digital Switchover Labelling Scheme

As part of the quality assurance scheme, three labels have been developed which can be applied to TVs, set top boxes and digital TV recorders. The labels are:

- Digital TV Ready High Definition (HD)
- Digital TV Ready Standard Definition (SD)
- Digital TV Ready Capable Only with A Set Top Box

Suppliers are invited to partner with the Australian Government to place these labels on their products. More information on becoming a licensed supplier is available from www.digitalready.gov.au

Retail Advisor Scheme

Retailers can choose to partner with the Australian Government to help consumers get ready for the digital switchover. Staff from participating retail stores will complete an online Government assessment to become approved Digital Advisors. Digital Advisors will wear a badge displaying the Government's 'Get Ready for Digital TV' logo and will be able to inform consumers about what the Government labels mean, the full range of options to get digital ready, digital switchover and where to find more information.

Retailers can also use the 'Get Ready for Digital TV' logo in participating stores and in product advertisements for the participating store.

The scheme is not available to retailers operating door-to-door or other roaming type businesses.

Antenna Installers

The Government has created an endorsement scheme for antenna installers. To take part in the scheme, installers will need to demonstrate that they have the skills required to provide a digital TV antenna solution for you.

Endorsed antenna installers will receive a badge displaying the Government logo, their name and photograph, an ID number, the type of installation they are endorsed for and the date their endorsement status expires. This lets consumers know the installer they are dealing with has the necessary knowledge to help them.

The scheme is not available to door-to-door or other roaming-type businesses.

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Digital TV Antenna Systems Handbooks

These handbooks were developed by the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) in co-operation with the Digital Switchover Taskforce and TV-associated industries.

- The *Digital TV Antenna Systems Handbook* will assist developers, owners, managers and tenants of buildings with shared antenna systems prepare for digital TV switchover.
- The *Digital TV Antenna Systems for Homes Handbook* provides guidance on the conversion of free-to-air analog TV systems in single dwellings so that they can receive free-to-air digital TV transmissions. Single dwellings include houses and other properties with stand alone antenna systems.

Find out more about the digital switchover and the range of programs available by visiting www.digitalready.gov.au

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