



VIEWER ACCESS SATELLITE TELEVISION (VAST)

The majority of Australians receive TV signals from local transmission towers. However, there will always be places that cannot receive a reliable signal from a tower and need to rely on satellite. The Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) service provides free-to-air TV services over satellite for around 200,000 homes and businesses in mainly regional and remote locations where reliable reception is not available. VAST is also used by people who have mobile homes and caravans, with mobile satellite reception equipment.

Who can access VAST?

ABC and SBS VAST services are available to any household. Viewers who are able to get reliable terrestrial TV reception of commercial free-to-air services from metropolitan or regional broadcasters, are unable to obtain access to the commercial VAST services.

Viewers with mobile satellite reception equipment can apply for temporary access to VAST, which is granted for six months. Around 30,000 viewers, such as those in a caravan or on a houseboat, access VAST in this way.

What reception equipment do you need?

In contrast to viewers of terrestrial TV, who generally require a roof mounted terrestrial antenna, VAST viewers require a satellite dish. For each television set, VAST viewers also require an authorised VAST decoder (VAST set-top box or VAST integrated TV).

As with terrestrial TV, viewers are responsible for the purchase, installation and maintenance of their own television reception equipment, including screens, set-top boxes, recorders,

cabling and satellite dishes. There are no subscription fees or other ongoing costs to view the VAST service.

What services are available on VAST?

VAST carries free-to-air TV services which are delivered by an Optus satellite. ABC and SBS provide a full range of TV services including multiple streams to accommodate different time zones. The commercial channels are determined by where you are located:

- > **South eastern Australia:** New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, Australian Capital Territory, Norfolk Island, Jervis Bay Territory
- > **Northern Australia:** Queensland, Northern Territory, Coral Sea Islands Territory, and
- > **Western Australia:** Western Australia, Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands Territories.

Accurate channel and programming information for each area is generally available from the volunteer run website: sattvguide.com.au

The VAST service also carries a range of other services from content providers that have established agreements with Optus. This includes a range of ABC and SBS radio services (see www.abc.net.au/reception/tv/vast.htm#1 and www.sbs.com.au/transmissions/index.php) and a number of indigenous and religious channels.

What news channels are available?

Aside from Western Australia, regional viewers can access news on VAST through dedicated channels carrying commercial TV bulletins and updates.

These are rebroadcast approximately 30 minutes after the original TV broadcast and contain the same advertising. The delay is because of the time needed to upload the bulletins to the satellite.

Broadcast times are available online:
www.mysattv.com.au/NewsServices.aspx

There are no dedicated news channels in Western Australia as all relevant bulletins are carried on the main broadcast channels.