

IF ASKED: About the announcement that the Australia Network has gone to open tender.

The Government values the ABC's international broadcasting services - the Australia Network and Radio Australia - which play an important role in presenting Australian values and perspectives to the world.

Australia Network is an important element of Australia's public diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region. The service supports Australia's national interests by providing a credible, impartial and independent voice to an international audience, promoting an image of Australia as a dynamic, innovative and culturally diverse nation, presenting Australian perspectives on the world, increasing awareness of the strong links between Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, and of Australia's global and regional role.

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- The ABC currently provides the Australia Network international television service under contract to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The current contract between DFAT and the ABC expires on 8 August 2011.
- ~~Following a review of the current contract, On 23 November 2010, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, announced on the 23 November 2010, that the Government's decision to open a public tender for a ten year contract for the next Australia Network, contract would be put to a competitive open tender process.~~
- A competitive tender process ensures the Government receives the best return on the Government's investment. ~~This will ensure the possible service in return for its investment.~~
- The Government also intends to move Australia Network to a ten-year contract ~~for the period 2011-2021~~ to provide greater certainty to the service provider.
- ~~The tender was issued on 4 February 2004, and opened on 4 February 2011, and closed with a closing date of 25 March 2011.~~
- The Government has approved a maximum of \$223.1 million for the contract, excluding GST, which represents the current contract cost of \$94.2 million over five years, with an adjustment for inflation.
- The tenders are currently being assessed by a Tender Evaluation Board. The Board is chaired by an independent

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appointee and includes senior ~~which has~~ representatives from relevant departments - ~~the Departments of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Treasury, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Finance and Deregulation, and Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and the Treasury.~~