

International Broadcasting Downunder: A Content Analysis of Organizational Submissions to the Review
of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific

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Abstract

As we approach 100 years since the first deliberate use by a country to broadcast to audiences beyond its own borders via radio, this research describes the state of international broadcasting in the Pacific region. Using an international broadcasting framework, and a content analysis of organizational submissions to the *Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific*, this paper reveals key themes from the submissions that illustrate the challenges and opportunities for the two regional international broadcasters, Radio New Zealand International and Radio Australia, as they strive to continue to reach audiences throughout the Pacific region.

Government sponsored international broadcasting has been used by countries around the world for almost 100 years (Rawnsley, 1996). Throughout its history the primary medium of transmission for international broadcasters was via shortwave, or by retransmission of a stations programming by local terrestrial broadcasters. By the turn of this century, with technology advancing, international broadcasters expanded their options to include television, satellite, the Internet and social media. Shortwave as a means of transmission fell out of favor partly due to cost, partly due to these other platforms of communication, and partly due to changing government priorities.

One area of the world where the debate over shortwave usage still rages, and where international broadcasting is as important as ever, is “downunder” in the Pacific region. Two stations Radio Australia, and Radio New Zealand International have long represented their respective countries in the international broadcasting community sending programming throughout the region and the world. This research examines the current state of international broadcasting in the Pacific region.

International broadcasters are funded, but not always controlled, by individual governments, and therefore the content of programming offered by the stations stems from clear government objectives. Over the years some stations such as Radio Havana Cuba, or Voice of Russia, have been obvious propaganda arms of their respective governments, while others, such as the BBC World Service and Voice of America, have managed to maintain journalistic independence despite receiving government funding. Boyd (1999) classified the type of programming offered by international broadcasters into four broad categories: enhancement of national prestige; promotion of national interests; the attempt of religious or political indoctrination; and the fostering of cultural ties.

Clark and Christie (2005) postulated that programming delivered by international broadcasters has a basic goal of impacting public opinion and they developed a framework to illustrate the functions of the broadcasters. The programming of broadcasters such as those funded by the United States government, and other countries with a similar ideological focus, fall into three categories: Facilitative, Counter Disinformation, and Survival (see Figure 1).

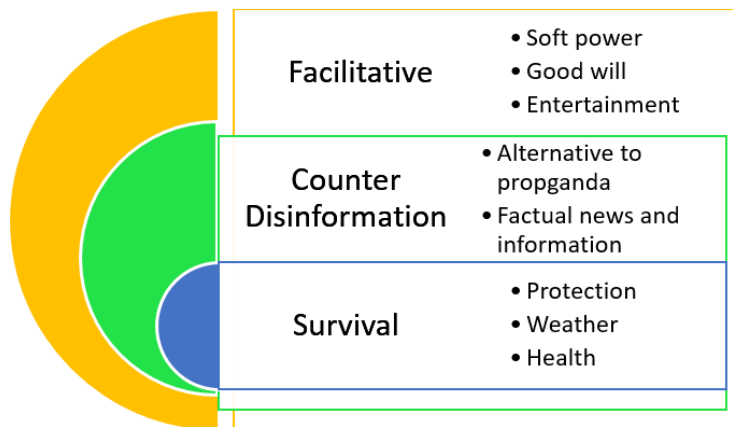


Figure 1: Framework for use of International Broadcasting

Boyd’s (1999) categories of enhancing national prestige and fostering cultural ties would fall under what Clark and Christie label *Facilitative Communication*. That is programming designed to engender good will between the broadcaster, host country, and the audience. Facilitative is what Joseph Nye (2004) calls “soft power” which is programming that has “the ability to shape the preference of others...Soft power rests on some shared values...By definition soft power means getting others to want the same outcomes you want, and that requires understanding how they are hearing your messages, and fine-tuning it accordingly” (Nye, 2004, p. 5).

The *Counter Disinformation* function is served through programming that transmits “key news events and policies” (Clark & Christie, 2005, p. 142) in an effort to pre-empt or correct the record of false reports (propaganda) by other broadcasters or media to the desired audience. For many years international broadcasters were pitted against each other in a technological and programmatic battle of the airwaves. Now, however, information comes from so many sources that countering disinformation by a radio broadcaster against another radio broadcaster is just one part of a multifaceted media strategy.

Finally, *Survival* programming contains content for the “basic protection and well-being of the affected population” (Clark & Christie, 2005, p. 142). This could be in the form of news reports or documentaries alerting a population about a major health crisis and offering preventative strategies, or it

could be as simple as providing warnings of cyclones or other weather emergencies. In times of war it could be delivering information that would help people know what the enemy was doing and enable them to take measures to ensure their physical safety.

From a listener's perspective, the programming from international broadcasting stations has been of value for many reasons. People listened for companionship and connectedness to a world or culture they may have read about, but that now became much closer. Expatriates listened for news from their home country. People listened to gather information that provided a different perspective than that of media in their country, while others listened because they gained hope from what they heard and a sense that they were not alone. In other words these broadcasts helped with their physical and emotional well-being. (Clark A. M., 2006).

As we approach 100 years since the first deliberate use by a country to broadcast to audiences beyond its own borders, international broadcasting is still relevant, but it has changed and, as mentioned earlier, the approach to reaching audiences depends not just on radio, and in particular shortwave, but video, web pages, blogs, and social media. International broadcasting in the Pacific provides an important study on how international broadcasting is changing, the dilemmas facing the governments that fund these stations, and the desires of the audiences who listen to their programming.

The Pacific Region

The Pacific region, also known as Oceania, covers over 100 million square kilometers of the Pacific Ocean including Australia, New Zealand and the 22 countries and territories of the Pacific Islands making up Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia (International Union for the Conservation of Nature, 2020). The region stretches almost 12,000 km from East to West and 6,000 km from North to South, with a combined Exclusive Economic Zone of close to 40 million square km. In contrast, the total land area is just over 8.5 million square km, with the larger islands of Australia (7 million square km), Papua New Guinea (463,000 square km) and New Zealand (268,000 square km) accounting for approximately 93% of this total land area. The total human population is estimated at 35 million, ranging from Australia (pop.

25.6 million), Papua New Guinea (pop. 8.5 million) and New Zealand (pop. 4.7 million) to islands as tiny as Niue (pop. 1,611) and Tokelau (pop. 1,499).

The remoteness of some of the islands cannot be understated and is illustrated in this anecdote from Adrian Sainsbury, of Radio New Zealand International in an interview with the author,

I'm on my way to the Tokelau Islands in a couple of weeks' time. Tokelau's two days sailing from Samoa, there are no airfields, the atolls are too small to support anything like that. They have a population of about 1500 people spread out over three tiny atolls...now to get there I fly to Samoa, then I get on the ship, two days sailing I get to Tokelau...so some places are still very inaccessible (Sainsbury, 2019)

Australia and New Zealand as regional powers have strong cultural, political, and economic ties with the region and have had a long history of using international broadcasting to maintain and strengthen these ties. Radio programming providing news and information, in particular, is very important to the Pacific Island nations, and also to other parts of the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. Research has been conducted on the history and operation of Radio New Zealand International (see Clark A. M., 2006, and Mollgaard, 2016) and Radio Australia (see Hodge, 1995, Thomas, 1980, and Clark A. M., 2003), but the last five years have seen changes for both stations that have affected the region, and need addressing. It is therefore important to first offer a brief history of both broadcasters to put the current situation into context.

Radio Australia

As would be expected, both Australia and New Zealand began their foray into international broadcasting with a clear purpose. In Australia's case, Radio Australia (which began broadcasting on December 20, 1939) was created to counter disinformation being disseminated by other international broadcasters, both about Australia as a country, but also about its reason for entering the war. This is best seen in the opening statement by Prime Minister Menzies who stated,

Our reasons for establishing broadcasts of this kind may be quite simply stated. We have decided that over some of the propaganda stations to which you listen, so many strange things are said, not only about Australia, but about the whole of the British Empire, that the time has come to speak for ourselves. . . . (as cited in Hodge, 1995, p. 8).

As is typical of any international station, the languages used, and the areas of the world targeted through shortwave broadcasting depended on the priority of the Australian government. Initial languages used in programming were English, Dutch, French, German and Italian. Right from the outset there was debate over control the station between the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) wanted control because it had experienced staff that could put together professionally sounding programs. In addition, there would be less chance of governmental interference if the ABC had control. The Department of Information felt the ABC, as a public service broadcaster, would be beholden to the Australian taxpayers who would be unlikely to want to spend money on a service targeting an overseas audience. This would increase the chance the station would be eliminated or given less of a priority than a government department would give it (Thomas, 1980). Eventually Radio Australia would become the responsibility of the ABC, with funding provided by the government.

Control, Direction, and Budget Cuts

Two key events stand out over the past 35 years that both shaped Radio Australia, and summed up the issues that have plagued the station. In 1983 the *Australian Broadcasting Act* was passed, and in 1997 the *Mansfield Report* was issued. The *Australian Broadcasting Act* was significant because it established the Charter of [the ABC] and outlined its functions and duties (Jackson, 2000). Section 6(1)[b] of the charter provides the rationale for the existence of Radio Australia:

[The ABC is to] transmit to countries outside Australia broadcasting programs of news, current affairs, entertainment and cultural enrichment that will:

- i. encourage awareness of Australia and an international understanding of Australian attitudes on world affairs; and
- ii. enable Australian citizens living or traveling outside Australia to obtain information about Australian affairs and Australian attitudes on world affairs.

Radio Australia, as the international arm of the ABC, was the organization charged with fulfilling this mandate. Instead of countering propaganda as mentioned in Prime Minister Menzie's opening address, the focus now is squarely on a more facilitative approach; telling Australia's story to the Pacific and beyond as far as its signal would reach.

Radio Australia, like most international broadcasters, was founded in a time of crisis. Its raison d'être will always be tied to that purpose, and it seems that in times of crisis its usefulness is more apparent to those funding and controlling it. However, in times of relative peace the need for an external radio service diminishes in the eyes of the government which looks for other areas to allocate its public diplomacy resources. As noted by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, "the ABC's international operations are directly shaped by available resources, and international services have fluctuated with the availability of funding and services" (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2020).

The second key event took place in 1997 when the Australian government commissioned an independent review of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in a bid to cut the Corporation's budget; Radio Australia, with its focus on external audiences, was once again on the chopping block. The review was titled the *Mansfield Report* after its author businessman Bob Mansfield. The report recommended closing Radio Australia providing the ABC with \$20 million in cost savings. Brown (2001) writing about the report noted that,

[Mansfield] argued that international broadcasting should not be a priority for the Corporation and...recommended that it be downgraded to a "subsidiary function" in a new ABC Charter. RA has always labored [sic] under the difficulty that it is virtually impossible to estimate with any accuracy the size of its audience, especially in China and Vietnam. Mansfield's recommendation to cut off funding to RA was therefore not based on any quantified cost-benefit analysis. (p. 113)

Following the cutbacks transmitters were shut down, programming and language services were cut, and staff were laid off. Despite a period of optimism and some funding increases, in 2014 the Australian Broadcasting Corporation suffered severe budget cuts leading to the dismissal of 80 staff from its International Division and, specifically in terms of Radio Australia, the Lowy Institute, an Australian think tank, termed it "a gutting of the service and a fundamental misunderstanding of the importance of the service into the Pacific" (Lowy Institute, 2019).

RNZI

The other major broadcaster in the Pacific, Radio New Zealand International (RNZI), has also travelled a rocky road in terms of lack of funding and cuts to its services. In 1948 the external services division of Radio New Zealand began broadcasting to South Pacific region as the primary audience, although, due to the property of shortwave transmission that signal may have been received a lot further away. Initial programming was facilitative focusing on tourism, listener questions about New Zealand, and various cultural aspects of New Zealand life including Maori music and folklore (Clark A. M., 2006). It was designed to engender goodwill and educate and entertain the listeners. Similarly to Australia's reason for starting an international service, the feeling at the time was the New Zealand had been the recipient of programming from other broadcasters, and now it was time for New Zealand to tell its story. Twenty years after it first signed on, RNZI began programming in languages other than English. The initial languages were Samoan, Niuean, and Cook Islands Maori (Clark A. M., 2006).

Radio New Zealand International has suffered from a lack of financial support and sufficient staffing over the years. In 1976 the service was shut down for a few months until pressure from around the region and the world forced the government to change its mind and start it back up again (Clark B. D., 1985). By the early 1990's optimism over the future of RNZI was high and funding along with new transmitters seem to bode well for the stations future. However, by 1997 the station was once again in jeopardy and it took public outcry from individuals, broadcasting organizations, and government officials for the station to continue. Lack of financial support has led to a reduction in technology affecting some programming. Mollgaard (2016) notes, that in 2016, Radio New Zealand International shut down one of its two transmitters, reducing programming in the morning for many Pacific listeners. A replacement would have cost NZ\$1-2 million which RNZI could not afford. RNZI still uses "a mix of analogue shortwave, digital DRM shortwave, satellite, partnerships and online content delivery" (p. 114) to reach listeners throughout the Pacific and beyond.

The above reference to DRM stands for Digital Radio Mondiale, a digital radio standard designed by broadcasters, transmitter and receiver manufacturers, and other entities including regulatory bodies (Digital Radio Mondiale, 2020). The DRM website states, “DRM exploits the unique propagation properties of the AM bands...meaning international broadcasters can broadcast on SW and MW, but with a signal comparable to local FM services...enhancing the listener experience with easier tuning and added data services. In fact one listener demonstrated listening to RNZI in Spain using a DRM receiver (<https://youtu.be/kkD01FuXOsg>). Instead of using satellites to transmit the signal, RNZI uses a 100 kw DRM short-wave transmitter and antennae to cover the Pacific region. The signal can be received by direct by listeners in the region or received and retransmitted by local stations (Radio New Zealand, 2020)

Mollgaard (2016) points out that, “funding Radio New Zealand International appropriately is critical to its ongoing performance and capacity to enhance the lives of the diverse peoples of the South Pacific, but also in projecting New Zealand’s values into its own region and beyond” (p. 114). These values are projected through the programming, but also in the way that the journalists operate without government interference, a point made by Adrian Sainsbury, RNZI Technical Manager, who said,

Our journalists are totally independent. They get no political instruction at all from our government. We're totally free of any of that. And we see it as our job to report news accurately as really as we find it. Um, and so one thing that we keep getting feedback from, from the islands and people, like some people in Fiji was that they knew that if they tuned in to us that they would get trusted information and accurate (Sainsbury, 2019).

Different Directions

Currently both stations appear headed in different directions. On January 31, 2017 Radio Australia’s shortwave broadcasts to the Pacific were officially cut and in July 2018, Radio Australia, as it had been known for 80 years, was to be renamed ABC Radio Australia. The Lowy Institute report on *International Broadcasting and Soft Power* stated, “The demise of Australia's international broadcasting was almost complete, driven by domestic political agendas on both sides of Federal Parliament, combined with the financial priorities of the government and the ABC itself...” (Lowy Institute, 2019).

In New Zealand a name change also took place; RNZI was rebranded as RNZ Pacific although on-air is still referred to as RNZI. The reason for the change according to its website is to,

more clearly reflect what the service does, and make content easier to find. It is also in line with the service's push to engage with the domestic Pasifika audience in New Zealand. For now, the RNZI brand will continue to be maintained on-air through our international service, but domestically it is now known as RNZ Pacific (Radio New Zealand, 2020).

Radio New Zealand's CEO, Paul Thompson said, the relationship with the Pacific Islands is still paramount. Shortly after Radio Australia was shut down, he announced, "Remote parts of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu who may be feeling the loss of the ABC can rest assured RNZI will continue to provide independent, timely and accurate news, information and weather warnings as well as entertainment to its Pacific listeners" (Radio New Zealand, 2017). His statement reflected clearly the facilitative, counter disinformation, and survival functions provided by RNZI.

In June, 2018, due to public outcry over the changes to Radio Australia, and the loss of its shortwave frequencies, the Australian government through the *Department of Communications and the Arts* and the *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade* reviewed Australian media services in the Asia Pacific, including the role of shortwave radio. Individuals and organizations were invited to submit their responses between June 4 and August 23, 2018. These submissions were collected and made available via <https://www.communications.gov.au/have-your-say/review-australian-broadcasting-services-asia-pacific>

Although there has been research conducted on both Radio New Zealand International and Radio Australia individually, there has not been research conducted on the state of international broadcasting in the Pacific region using a specific framework to analyze the functions of international broadcasters in the region, and describing the various internal and external forces influencing international broadcasting in the Pacific region. With this in mind three research questions were developed.

Research Questions

RQ 1. What were the most prominent themes in organizational submissions from key stakeholders to the *Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific*?

RQ 2. How do these prominent themes relate to the functions in the Framework for Use of International Broadcasting?

RQ 3. What do the prominent themes reveal about state of international broadcasting in the Asia Pacific region?

Method

Research for this article was conducted through a computer-assisted content analysis of documents retrieved from the Australian government website *Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Pacific* (<https://www.communications.gov.au/have-your-say/review-australian-broadcasting-services-asia-pacific>). This review attracted “92 submissions from private individuals, 31 from organizations or groups and 310 signatories to pro-forma submission” (Heriot, 2019).

Analysis was conducted on those submissions publicly available on the website and labeled “organisations” [sic] (n=29) because these submissions would provide a holistic perspective on the state of international broadcasting in the Pacific from a broad range of stakeholders engaged in, supporting, and benefiting from international broadcasting. Although the report was commissioned by the Australian government, and looking at Radio Australia, the submissions raised broader issues and almost all of the submissions “focused on issues surrounding broadcasting to the Pacific” (\$40 million of benefits from shortwave: ABC Shortwave Review report released, 2019). The full list of organizations submitting to the review ranged from community broadcasters, universities and think tanks, and a Prime Minister of a Pacific Island nation, to submissions from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and alumni of the corporation.

The software used for the computer-assisted analysis was *WordStat 8* a text-based content analysis and text-mining tool that allows the researcher to “identify the most frequent words and phrases and extract the most salient topics in their documents through topic modeling” (Provalis Research, 2020). In addition the keyword retrieval function allows researchers to review the keywords in context with the text the keywords were derived from. A search of google scholar reveals wide use of *WordStat* across

disciplines for content analysis. Compared to human coding procedures, precise reliability is realized with such a computer search (Krippendorff, 2004), eliminating the need to include test for intercoder reliability.

Results

Between June 4, 2018 and August 3, 2018 the Australian government conducted a *Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia Pacific* to assess “the reach of Australia's media in the Asia-Pacific region, including examining whether shortwave radio technology should be used...[and] examining all media distribution platforms, funding models including “commercial, community and publicly funded services” and “technologies such as analogue, digital and satellite radio and television services and online services” (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2020).

In answer to RQ 1, the analysis of the organizational submissions revealed 9 main themes along with associated keywords and phrases mentioned in the majority of submissions and with considerable frequency.

Theme	Frequency	Cases (percent)
Platforms	1277	27 (93.10%)
Presence	1270	29 (100%)
Option	906	28 (96.55%)
Soft Power	863	27 (93.10%)
FM	804	28 (96.55%)
China	794	28 (96.55%)
Tok Pisin	531	25 (86.21%)
Entertainment	525	27 (93.10%)
Natural Disasters	503	29 (100%)
Projects	418	24 (82.76%)

Figure 2 Key themes from organizational submissions

To answer RQ 2 and 3 a descriptive analysis of the themes was conducted revealing their connection to the functions stated in Clark and Christie’s Framework for Use of International Broadcasting. The analysis also provided insight into the state of international broadcasting in the Pacific Region.

Platform, FM and Option themes

The three themes *Platform*, *FM*, and *Option* were similar, yet distinct. *Platform* was more general and mentioned broad topics such as “reach, strategies and effective distribution” to the region as a whole. *Option*, while also general, referred, through keywords such as “wide, priority, budget, full range,” to the wide-variety of programmatic and technological options available for audiences in the Pacific from broadcasters in their region, and around the world. This theme may also have been in response to the Australian government’s review which sought to explore all available means to reach audiences in the Pacific, but within available resources. In contrast to the other two, the *FM* theme was more specifically focused on various specific means of sending and receiving content such as “Internet, mobile phone, digital radio, Digital Radio Mondiale, shortwave radio, and FM.” These are all alternatives, or additions, to using FM as a means of transmission.

One particular phrase associated with the *FM* theme that stood out was “remote areas.” All of the other keywords or phrases pertained to means of delivery, but “remote areas” speaks to both the justification for keeping shortwave as a platform and also highlighted the problems associated with the other means of delivery. One of the big arguments by shortwave proponents (whether digital or analogue) is that by cutting shortwave and focusing on other means of transmission including streaming is that broadcasters are targeting the “haves” in the big cities, or on larger islands, and ignoring the “have-nots” in the rural or remote areas and islands. In this sense, “remote areas” fits the *survival* function of international broadcasting as the programming provided via shortwave can sometimes be a matter of life and death for people in remote areas where no other signal can get through (this will be explored later in the Natural Disaster theme).

Adrian Sainsbury, Technical Manager for RNZI provides a good illustration of the issues facing listeners when international broadcasters rely on streaming or technology other than radio to try to reach audiences in the Pacific region:

international broadcasters [like] the BBC are an example of this. They used to broadcast [into the Pacific] for many years and they said, no, no, we've got the Internet now, we don't need it

anymore, people can live stream. Well that's totally unrealistic if you go to visit any of the Pacific islands with the possible exception of American Samoa, which is quite well served with high speed Internet. Um, but having said that, because of the small populations, it's very expensive to um, to have it. So you'll find, you might remember Internet cafes, right. And dial up that sort of thing. Well, they're alive and well in parts of the Pacific still and [the] Internet cafes...will be full because ordinary people cannot afford to have a computer and pay the outrageous fees for them to have Internet (Sainsbury, 2019).

A report published by the Lowy Institute illustrates how the cuts to Radio Australia have affected its ability to reach audiences. “Radio Australia currently offers only 13 FM relay frequencies across 7 countries, compared with 21 before the ABC’s budget cuts...and that the ABC services no longer reach significant parts of the PNG Highlands and Islands, Bougainville, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and that ten Pacific Island Forum countries no longer receive any radio service from the ABC (O’Keeffe & Greene, 2019).

In justifying the move to FM, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation noted that using shortwave would cost 25.5% of its budget available for international broadcasting (\$2.8 million Australian dollars per annum, of a total budget of \$11.0 million) and that it did not “regard shortwave radio as an efficient or effective way of delivering services to audiences in PNG and the Pacific” (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2020). Instead it opted to use FM and internet streams.

Presence and Soft Power

The *Presence* theme fits with the theme of *Soft Power*. Keywords associated with presence were “issues, lack, understanding, reporting, relationships, engagement, and journalism.” Keywords and phrases associated with *Soft Power* were “diplomacy, policy, influence, effective, values and broadcasting.” Where the two themes intersect is that the goal of soft power is to influence people outside of the host country in a diplomatic and non-threatening manner. International Broadcasting has been, and still is, a central component of many nation’s soft power efforts. A key part of influencing populations is by establishing a presence in a particular region and by delivering facilitative programming that informs and entertains, often in the language of that region.

Presence also has to do longevity, and being proven trustworthy particularly in terms of delivery reliable news and information. Both Radio New Zealand International and Radio Australia had established trust among audiences particularly in times of crisis such as the military coups in Fiji (Clark A. M., 2006). The presence of both stations and the programming they broadcast countered the disinformation put out by the coup leaders when they took control of radio and TV facilities. Radio New Zealand International and Radio Australia provided listeners with some of the only reliable information available. Therefore, the keywords of “engagement, reporting and journalism” also make sense in terms of *Presence*, but also *Soft Power* as accurate news and information enhances the influence of the host nations in the region and promotes favorable public opinion among key audiences.

China

The *China* theme represents the reality that China is making inroads into the Pacific region in terms of international broadcasting, and media in general. Keywords include “China, culture, programming, knowledge, streaming, partnerships, frequencies, and soft power”. Interestingly BBC World Service was also a common phrase along with China Radio International which speaks to its historic influence in the region.

When the ABC shut down shortwave, China’s international broadcaster, China Radio International, took over Radio Australia’s former shortwave frequencies. Claire Moore of Australia’s Labor Party said, "It was always an issue to see if shortwave was available, if it was being used and we weren't using it, that other players would come into the space" (ABC, 2018). China Radio International produces content which it either delivers directly to the audience (it currently broadcasts in 65 languages) or it delivers content that is retransmitted by local broadcasters. Another strategy is the use of a network of local stations around the world that are “backed by the Chinese government and broadcast China-friendly programming around the world” (Quin & Shiffman, 2015). As (Lulu, 2015) notes, previously CRI’s

radio and web content used traditional formats that clearly identified it as coming from the Chinese state. In the new strategy, content is produced closer to the audience, in tandem with

non-CRI staff, at a number of companies...where the state broadcaster's role is hardly mentioned. Such content is then delivered through media platforms where the connection to a Chinese state entity is further obscured.

While there do not seem to be such stations in the Pacific Islands, Reuters identified four in Australia and two in New Zealand. The intent is to disguise the fact that the content is broadcasting the views of the Chinese government.

Whenever there is a void or a vacuum, something will step in to fill that void. By abandoning shortwave, Radio Australia created a void that was filled by the Chinese. The point is that although the Chinese broadcasts may seem non-threatening (the Chinese President has openly talked about using media as a form of Soft Power), they represent an ideology that is the antithesis of the values that Australia, and New Zealand have long strived to model and champion in the region. In 2016, before Australia cut its shortwave broadcasts, Mollgaard (2016) wrote about what could happen if a nation like New Zealand abdicated its role as Australia has done:

At the moment, New Zealand enjoys relatively uncontested opportunities in news gathering, access and broadcasting in the region. To weaken or abandon this privileged position may provide impetus to other players, reducing New Zealand's influence considerably. This might also threaten the development of strong, independent media outlets in the region, with news services mimicking the well-documented state-controlled censorship of news being replicated in other players' international broadcast services. (Mollgaard, 2016, p. 113).

The BBC World Service has been a major international broadcast player in the Pacific region, but no longer broadcasts via shortwave directly to the Pacific region (although it still does to South Asia). As noted on its website, "...the BBC Asia-Pacific Service broadcasts can be heard on medium wave (AM), FM and the Internet. Programmes (sic) are either mixed with the local output of a partner station or are a continuous stream on a dedicated frequency" (Service, n.d.). Again, by removing its shortwave presence, the BBC has somewhat diminished its presence in the region and its ability to counter disinformation put out by totalitarian regimes either within or outside of the region.

Tok Pisin

Tok Pisin was the only language mentioned as a key theme, and refers to "the lingua franca of the entire country of Papua New Guinea, known by an estimated three quarters of the country's four million

inhabitants. It is, in fact, the most widely used language of urban areas. Tok Pisin is used to some extent in radio and television broadcasting, especially in interviews and news reports” (Siegel, n.d.).

According to the *International Broadcasting Research Group* (IBRG) submission, “the 2014 funding cuts slashed the number of hours of Radio Australia’s purpose-made English and Tok Pisin content to the region and replaced much of it with uncontextualized content made for Australian audiences” (2018). Tok Pisin was one of the languages that Radio Australia provided programming in for many years, but now the service offers “The Wantok Program...30 minutes of news and current affairs broadcast on Radio Australia twice a day Monday to Friday in Papua New Guinea Tok Pisin, Solomon Islands Pijin and Vanuatu Bislama pidgin languages” (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2020). The Wantok program only has two staff and as mentioned covers other languages as well as Tok Pisin. Broadcasting in specific languages like this can provides facilitative, counter disinformation, or survival depending on the circumstances.

Entertainment

Entertainment is indicative of the facilitative programming function articulated in the Clark and Christie (2005) framework. When looking at the keywords and themes the label *Entertainment* is perhaps a little too specific. It is associated with words including “cultural, current affairs, news, information, programs, wide, source, charter, understanding, content, Australian Broadcasting Corporation and interestingly Pacific Beat” which speaks to a wider variety of programming than just entertainment. Obviously “charter” refers to the ABC charter which as mentioned earlier focused on the broadcasting of “news, current affairs, entertainment and cultural enrichment” to encourage awareness of Australia and Australian attitudes and provide information on Australia to the world. This theme also highlights the importance of news and current affairs to promote Australian values and provide an understanding of Australia.

However, the mention of *Pacific Beat* is telling. It refers to a program that was very popular, but now is not as robust as it was. According to the *International Broadcasting Research Group* submission after the cuts to Radio Australia,

The highly respected Pacific current affairs program Pacific Beat remains, albeit in a shorter format, and the new daily Pacific magazine program is arguably hugely under-resourced. Now Australia lags behind Radio New Zealand International in terms of Pacific coverage, at the same time as other international broadcasters, particularly China, are stepping up their coverage in and of the region (2018)

Programs such as *Pacific Beat* can fit facilitative, counter disinformation and survival functions. For example it may offer news stories that provide information on how to deal with COVID-19 and the importance of wearing masks. It may also offer Australia's perspective on the crisis and in doing so provide a perspective from one of the two regional powers. Critics would say that the ability to reach people who need this information has diminished due to the funding cuts and the loss of shortwave.

Natural Disaster

Natural Disaster fits the survival function of International Broadcasting which has seemingly been abandoned by Australia in large measure by the closing of the shortwave broadcasts. Words such as “Vanuatu, cyclone, Solomon Islands, PNG, reliable, democracy, remote, shortwave, vital, critical, and loss” were all associated with this theme. Obviously it speaks to a need for reliable and often life-saving information. The Prime Minister of Vanuatu in that nation's submission mentioned how the shortwave service has saved lives in the past and that many of its citizens live in remote areas or outlying islands with little access to modern communication technology. The Prime Minister wrote,

In times of crisis when other forms of media like FM and digital services are unavailable such communities rely on broadcasts safely transmitted from outside the disaster zone. This is exactly the role Radio Australia shortwave broadcasts played during Cyclone Pam. For us shortwave is not out-dated technology – it is appropriate and ‘fit for purpose’ and an important means to inform and safeguard Ni-Vanuatu people (Vanuatu, 2018)

Despite the importance of survival programming as a crucial function of international broadcasting throughout the years, Geoff Heriot writes, that the ABC, does not necessarily see survival programming as a key function. “The idea of Radio Australia playing a key role during natural disasters

“misunderstands Radio Australia’s purpose and structure.”...neither Radio Australia’s program schedule nor its structure allows for late-breaking information or emergency alerts” (Heriot, 2019).

Meanwhile survival programming is still an important function for Radio New Zealand International. Adrian Sainsbury, RNZI Technical Manager, said that when bad weather is about to strike, or does strike, that High Frequency signals (or shortwave) may be the only signal to get through,

when you have serious cyclones, that go through that cause flooding and so on, and the first thing that usually falls over is communications in these islands. Um, satellite communication can be interrupted all the rest of it. But HF usually gets through. And, again, it's, it's, that's been a life saver in a lot of situations (Sainsbury, 2019).

Sainsbury said that this type of programming speaks to the value of shortwave.

generally speaking, shortwave is still very valuable in the Pacific. For the people in the boats, Yachties, a lot of fishing vessels and we broadcast weather warnings, that this is coming, and so quite often they'll get it, get it that way. Um, so yes, shortwave still has some value in this part of the world as it does, I think in parts of Africa where it's still going to be quite some time before Internet becomes nearly free and available (Sainsbury, 2019).

Projects

Projects speaks to the importance of training, development that New Zealand and Australia can, and do provide to the region. Keywords associated with this theme were “assistance, aid, training, development, education, partnership, trade, research, investment, impact and funding.” An important function of international broadcasters such as RNZI and Radio Australia, is modelling what fair and independent reporting looks like, and being involved in training indigenous people to report from and about their own country and region through their parent entities Radio New Zealand and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Ties between the broadcasters and universities throughout the region are also very important. For example, Professor David Robie of the *Pacific Media Center* says that the Center works with the overseas broadcasting services of Australia and New Zealand, and has a content sharing agreement with Radio New Zealand Pacific. Robie notes,

Auckland University of Technology is directly engaged with Pacific islands communities, providing media services, training and education for practitioners, conferences and colloquia which bring together participants from academic or media settings to discuss and analyse key issues, with an overall objective to assist with communication and media development, especially in cultivation of civil society... (Robie, 2018).

Training in sound journalistic practices enables local journalists with the tools to counter disinformation propagated by politicians and others within their own countries and from outside the region.

Conclusion

The content analysis revealed nine key themes related to international broadcasting in the Pacific: Presence, Option, Soft Power, FM, China, Tok Pisin, Entertainment, Natural Disasters, and Projects. The themes, and the content of the submissions, shows the means by which the content is delivered, to whom it is delivered, and content itself are all of paramount importance. As has been demonstrated throughout, funding, and support from the host nations seems to be key. In looking at funding for international broadcasters throughout the world, China is top with between 6 and 11 billion US dollars, The BBC Germany's Deutsche Welle receive over \$300 million USD, while Australia's international services receives \$7.8 million USD (11 million AUS) and Radio New Zealand Pacific (International) receives about \$1.2 million USD (1.9 million NZD) (O'Keeffe & Greene, 2019). What the funding disparities illustrate clearly is the importance placed on media as a form of soft power by the respective governments. That Radio New Zealand Pacific (International) is able to maintain a strong and steady presence with such a meager budget is a credit to the committed staff of the service. However, the size of the budget cannot inspire confidence throughout the region.

In many parts of the world, including the Pacific region, the mobile phone is today's transistor radio. It is portable and provides access to information untold. However, the Pacific is a geographically and politically challenging and completed part of the world. One size does not fit all and while there are many people that have access to the Internet and mobile technology, there are many that do not. And therein lies the dilemma that continues to plague international broadcasters the world over. Do they cater to, the perceived opinion leaders and influencers, with technology? The ABC seems to think so as it "lists its priority audiences as: highly educated and mobile influencers in key Asian markets, PNG and wider audiences in the Pacific, the Australian diaspora, and culturally diverse communities in Australia"

(Heriot, 2019). Or should international broadcasters still find a way to reach those who by choice or circumstance do not have access to technology?

Policy makers the world over will argue that shortwave is a relic that needs to be retired, and indeed many including legacy services such as the BBC World Service, Voice of America and now Radio Australia have removed shortwave in favor of FM or digital platforms. The argument against that move is that when disaster strikes and survival messages are needed immediately, or when military turmoil occurs and messages that counter the disinformation propagated by the government are needed, that many of these “new” platforms are unavailable or unreliable. What is needed is content from broadcasters who have credibility with the listeners. As Nye (2004) writes, credibility “is the crucial resource, and an important source of soft power” (p. 106). Not only are the broadcasters fulfilling a need they are building and cementing ties between the host nation and the listeners.

If New Zealand or Australia as regional powers are not doing their part, then, as noted in the themes, others, such as China, will step in crowding an already crowded media environment. As the ABC points out in its submission what makes the Pacific region so challenging for broadcasters is that “there is no regional media market. Instead, each nation within the Region is a media market in its own right, with its own set of domestic media providers, as well as its own unique audience behaviours (sic) that reflect among other things, the mix of platforms and technologies use to meet their particular needs” (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2020). And broadcasters such as Radio New Zealand International and Radio Australia have to try and get their message out across these diverse platforms and technologies. Nye (2004) makes the point that in the current age the battle is not for information, but attention. He says,

Plenty of information leads to scarcity of attention. When people are overwhelmed with the volume of information confronting them, they have difficulty discerning what to focus on. Attention rather than information becomes the scarce resource, and those who can distinguish valuable information from background clutter gain power (p. 106).

The challenge for New Zealand and Australia in particular is to provide content that demands the attention of the audience and that stands out from the clutter. If they do not continue to do that then

someone else will. The battle for the hearts and minds of audiences throughout the region is not lessening, if anything its getting fiercer and international broadcasters are on the frontlines.

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