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**Media Release**  
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## **Free TV Welcomes VAST Funding Extension**

Free TV today welcomed the announcement from Minister McKenzie to extend funding of the VAST satellite service until 2021.

Free TV CEO, Bridget Fair said “This announcement is great news for the people of regional and remote Australia. Commercial television is a critical source of local content, emergency information and news services for all Australians but particularly those served by the VAST platform. Our services provide a much needed sense of connection for people in rural and remote areas. We congratulate Minister McKenzie and the Morrison Government on this decision which will be welcomed by the almost 500,000 Australians who rely on the VAST platform for their free television services.

“We note that it is a key recommendation of the review that the service should continue to be delivered through the current satellite delivery model. Free TV looks forward to continuing discussions about future delivery of the VAST television services post 2021.”

A 2017 Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) survey in regional Australia found that commercial free-to-air TV was the most preferred source for local news. In addition, commercial free-to-air TV was found to be the most trusted media news source for regional Australians across all platforms.

Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) has been and remains critical to delivering these services in regional and remote Australia as well as other areas where terrestrial coverage is deficient. VAST was introduced in 2010 to close the digital TV divide between regional and remote Australians and those living in cities, and to ensure that all Australians can access reliable free-to-air television services.

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