

Receiving broadcast TV over the air or via satellite

In addition to a TV set, most viewers will need a TV antenna connected by cabling to the RF (Radio Frequency) input to their TV – it’s a round socket and may be marked something like ‘Antenna/Cable In’.

If there isn’t an existing antenna and cable, in good condition, available where you are setting up your TV, a reputable local TV antenna installer is going to be your best friend.



Terrestrial TV signals may not be available in remoter areas and viewers may need to access satellite TV. This requires a satellite dish connected to a VAST-certified set-top decoder box with a smart card. There is an application process to ensure only eligible viewers are able to receive satellite commercial TV. There is also a process for travellers in remote Australia. As with terrestrial TV reception, a reputable local installer of antennas and satellite dishes is your best guide.

To receive broadcast television in Australia, you should try these simple steps:

1. **Check coverage in your area:** Most households are located in the coverage areas of terrestrial (VHF or UHF) transmitters that broadcast local versions of all five networks. People living or travelling through remoter parts of the country can receive most of the same services via Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST), which requires a satellite dish. You can use the [MySwitch](#) tool, provided by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA), or other websites, to check the coverage in your specific location. Just key your address into MySwitch and it will tell you which services are available, including the type of antenna you’ll need and the direction to point it in. If there is inadequate terrestrial coverage at your address, mySwitch can also direct you to the [MySatTv](#) website, which deals with eligibility to receive satellite commercial TV.



2. **Ensure you have a suitable antenna:** the most common cause of TV reception problems is worn-out or inappropriate rooftop TV antennas or degraded antenna cabling. If you don't have a suitable TV antenna already installed, your antenna installer will select an appropriate antenna based on your location and the frequency bands used for broadcasting in your area.
3. **Outdoor or rooftop is best:** Outdoor or rooftop antennas generally provide better reception than indoor antennas and may be essential for reliable coverage. Your installer should ensure the antenna is pointed towards the most appropriate available transmission towers of the local TV stations for optimal signal reception. Handy hint: While many rooftops have one or more existing TV antennas, these may have been installed when TV used different frequencies in your area, or before a more nearby transmission site was built, giving better coverage. Or they may be in poor condition or broken. TV services nowadays are either all-VHF, or all-UHF - we don't recommend combined VHF/UHF antennas, as they can do a poor job of receiving either type of signal!
4. **Connect the Antenna to Your TV:** Connect the antenna cable to the RF (Radio Frequency) input on your television (it may be marked something like "Antenna In"). Modern TVs have a built-in digital tuner, but if you have a very old TV, you may need a separate digital set-top box with a tuner.
5. **Scan for Channels:** Once the antenna is connected, go to your TV's menu and perform a channel scan or auto-tune to search for available channels. This process allows your TV to locate and store all the channels available in your area. From time to time, local broadcasters may add new channels. While most modern TV sets will rescan automatically, with some older models it is good practice to perform a channel scan periodically to ensure that your TV recognises all available channels.
6. **Consider External Factors:** Keep in mind that external factors like interference can affect signal quality. If you're experiencing issues, the ACMA's website has some useful tips about [TV reception and interference](#) . Depending on the issue, you may wish to contact a TV antenna installer, or the ACMA itself.
7. **People living in multi-storey apartment blocks or new housing estates:** apartment dwellers often rely on community antenna systems to connect TVs to rooftop antennas. Some local councils and new developments don't allow individual rooftop antennas for aesthetic reasons. In these estates, free TV is commonly distributed by community cabling systems such as NBN Fibre TV. Talk to your neighbours or Body Corporate if you cannot mount an external antenna and you are unclear how broadcast TV is distributed in your community.

By following these steps, you should be able to set up and receive broadcast television signals anywhere in Australia. If you encounter persistent issues, you may wish to seek assistance from a professional installer.