

STATE OF THE MEDIA TUVALU

RESEARCH BRIEF

ABC
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT



PACMAS
Pacific Media Assistance Scheme



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AT A GLANCE



1. Radio as primary source of public interest information for Tuvaluans



2. Infrastructure improvements have led to high-speed internet coverage



3. Declining pay TV subscriptions are impacting media viability



4. Climate change threatens communications infrastructure

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

This report provides an up-to-date snapshot of the state of the media in Tuvalu. It is part of the State of the Media project, which comprises 12 country reports and one regional report. These reports serve as an accessible resource for media, civil society, and government organisations in support of development goals in the region.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a multi-method approach. The research team began with a desk-based review of primary and secondary literature. Additionally, three media practitioner interviews were conducted. At each step, feedback and advice were sought from the Tuvalu country media expert adviser, Puaseiese Adrienne Pedro, who cross-checked the accuracy of findings and co-authored this report. The research was approved by the University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee, and steps were taken to mitigate risks to all research participants, including maintaining their anonymity.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Radio as primary source of public interest information for Tuvaluans

Radio remains the main media platform for the dissemination of information, including emergency and disaster information, and has the widest reach. Local news and world current affairs programs translated into Tuvaluan language, are broadcast via radio to the population in the capital Funafuti and to the outer islands of the archipelago.

2. Infrastructure improvements have led to high-speed internet coverage

The telecommunication network and internet coverage have improved with the establishment of new infrastructure. Kacific, a broadband satellite operator managed by the Tuvalu Telecommunications Corporation (TTC), has provided high-speed broadband internet connectivity since 2020, enabling a strong ICT environment for businesses and communities. At the time of writing, the Tuvalu government is in the process of granting a licence for the deployment of Starlink, an internet service that provides high-speed internet via low orbit satellites even to remote areas, is anticipated to boost internet connectivity; findings show that residents in the outer islands are already using Starlink unofficially. With improved network coverage and internet access, it is expected that Tuvaluans will rely more on streaming services.

3. Declining pay TV subscriptions are impacting media viability

Monthly subscription fees have been one of TVBC's main sources of revenue since the establishment of Tuvalu.TV in 2019. Respondents noted that pay TV subscriptions have decreased as TV decoders have malfunctioned or been damaged.

4. Climate change threatens communications infrastructure

Tuvalu's susceptibility to sea-level rises and associated climate vulnerabilities reinforces the need for a resilient and effective communications system. Radio remains one of the most effective means of communication, and maintenance of radio infrastructure is crucial to ensure a robust information ecosystem for disaster preparedness and messaging. Tuvalu has shown its willingness to embrace digital technology in the face of existential climate threats, through projects such as the Digital Nation project, which seeks to recreate its land, history and cultural heritage in a digital format.

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