

## Our Media Matters

Renewing Australian  
Government Policy for First  
Nations Broadcasting and  
Media

Introducing the 9 Calls for  
Action

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June 2018



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| ESSENTIAL | PROFESSIONAL | LOCAL & CONNECTED |  
| CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE |

# Our Media Matters: the 9 Calls for Action

Our Media has a strong and proud history. Our elders fought hard to establish First Nations media organisations to ensure that our cultures, languages, laws and stories were represented our way. We acknowledge the many ways in which Australian and State governments have supported us to carry that legacy forward over 30 years.

However, government policy and funding has not kept up with changes in our sector. There has been no First Nations broadcasting and media government policy since the late 1990s. Funding has declined significantly in real terms over the last ten years, creating challenges for us to move forward in a convergent era.

The lack of policy and inadequate funding is compromising our ability to upgrade equipment, expand employment for our young people and tell the stories that are so vital to the well being of our peoples and communities.

The 2017 Social Return on Investment Study of our sector demonstrated our creativity and resilience in meeting these challenges. But we cannot keep on making do without increased government support.

We are now calling on the Australian Government to support and partner with us to help fully realise the potential of our sector through the programs and actions set out in our Call for Action documents. We ask Government to be part of growing and sustaining our sector for the benefit of First Nations



peoples, as well as growing greater understanding of our cultures for the benefit of non-Indigenous Australia.

**Dot West**  
**First Nations Media Australia**  
**Chairperson**

**| ESSENTIAL | PROFESSIONAL | LOCAL & CONNECTED |**  
**| CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE |**

1

**Broadcasting Act Reform.** Recognise First Nations broadcasting as a separate category of broadcasting under the Broadcasting Services Act 1992.

### THE ISSUE

The inclusion of First Nations broadcasting in the category of community broadcasting negatively impacts First Nations broadcasters access to spectrum, their participation in the co-regulatory processes of the broadcasting industry and their financial position.

The First Nations broadcasting sector has lobbied for decades for a separate licence category. First Nations broadcasters provide a primary service to First Nations communities and people. They are the preferred channel for First Nations audiences due to their cultural appropriateness and for their positive representation of First Nations issues as compared to the negative stereotyping in mainstream media. As representatives of the First Nations of Australia they have a right under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People to their own media.

Through their inclusion in the BSA under the community broadcasting category, First Nations broadcasters are required to compete for spectrum with community broadcasters. This has led to significant gaps in the provision of First Nations broadcasting in capital cities such as Adelaide, Canberra and Hobart, as well as in regional areas with large First Nations populations.

The lack of separate categorisation has meant that First Nations broadcasting has been marginalised in consultations and discussions on broadcasting regulation and reform as led by the Department of Communications and the Arts. There are impacts of regulation on First Nations broadcasting that need specific consideration.

Furthermore, the inclusion of First Nations broadcasting under the community broadcasting category of the BSA reduces the sustainability of First Nations broadcasting due to the limitations on sponsorship (maximum 5 minutes per hour). First Nations audiences are generally characterised by low income levels. Alternative income models of fees based membership and community fund raising are extremely limited in their applicability to First Nations broadcasting.

A separate category of First Nations broadcasting would enable alternative income streams through opening up advertising and sponsorship at an appropriate level.

#### First Nations Media calls for:

- The Australian Government to reform the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 to provide for a separate broadcaster license category for First Nations broadcasting and to make the necessary regulatory changes for spectrum allocation and codes of practice.
- The relocation of First Nations broadcasting policy and funding management to the Department of Communications and the Arts.

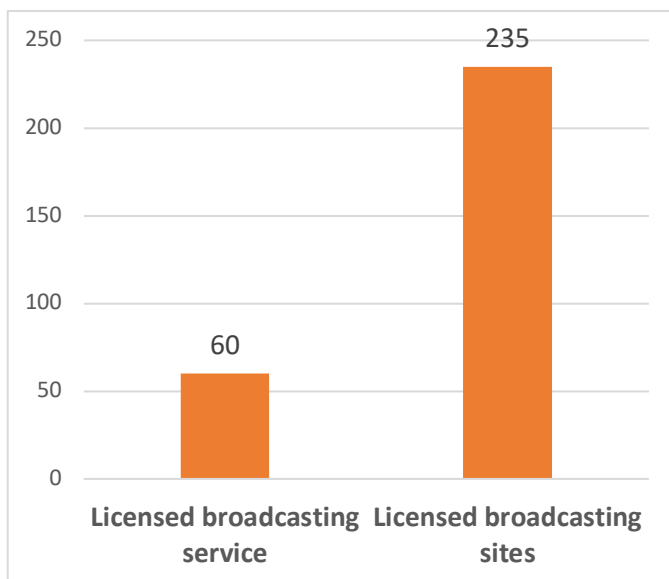
Indigenous Remote Communications Association  
2/70 Elder Street Alice Springs NT 0870.  
Ph 08 8952 6465  
w [www.irca.net.au](http://www.irca.net.au)

**Budget request:** Budget neutral

1

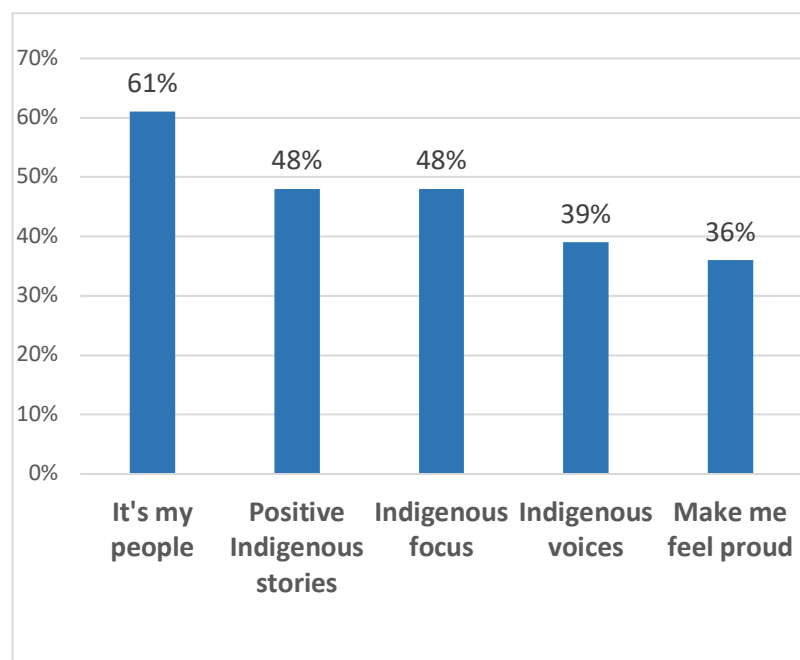
**Broadcasting Act Reform.** Recognise First Nations broadcasting as a separate category of broadcasting under the Broadcasting Services Act 1992.

## CONTEXT



ACMA licence statistics: First Nations broadcasting services and First Nations broadcast sites (transmission & retransmission)

Why First Nations people listen to their radio stations



**Operational & Employment Funding.** Address the need for adequate operational and employment funding of First Nations broadcasting and media services.

### THE ISSUE

The current funding levels allocated to First Nations media organisations are inadequate to maintain essential broadcasting and media services, employ and train a professional workforce, and undertake necessary technological changes as a result of convergence. Coupled with reduced sponsorship income, many organisations are under significant financial stress.

Communications and media are essential and primary services in First Nations communities. It is also a growing field of employment for First Nations peoples. However, this has not been acknowledged in government policy, severely impacting on the funding available to these services under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy and its predecessors. The 1999 'Digital Dreaming' report noted the operational funding for the sector was "demonstrably inadequate" and needed to be increased from \$12 million (as it was at that time) to \$22.35 million.

Despite a significant increase in the number of First Nations media organisations across Australia, and demand for funding more than doubling since 1996, the funding level for operations have remained virtually unchanged at about \$15 million per annum for the last decade. The lack of CPI increases over those years has meant a loss of around \$3.6 million to the sector in real terms.

Since 2009, employment funding of \$6 million per annum has been provided additional to operational funding. However, this does not address the issue of inadequate operational funding. Nor does it address the expansion of funding needed to meet the Australian Government's requirement for 90% First Nations employment in Indigenous Advancement Strategy funded organisations.

Nevertheless, despite these funding challenges the sector has returned \$2.87 of social and cultural value for each dollar invested as shown in the 2017 Social Return on Investment Study of Indigenous broadcasting service. That study found that First Nations broadcasters are contributing towards more of the Government's priorities than is currently recognised.

The study also noted that there is a minimum resourcing threshold that must be maintained to enable Indigenous Broadcasting Services and their staff to diversify their activities and seek alternative income streams.

The generally low socio-economic status markets within which First Nations broadcasters operate are not conducive to membership fund raising, and as community broadcasters they are limited to 5 minutes in the hour for income producing sponsorship. The financial sustainability of the First Nations broadcasting and media sector needs urgent attention through the provision of adequate funding.

First Nations Media Australia calls for a funding increase to \$30 million per annum, indexed annually for CPI, for operational and employment funding of the existing First Nations broadcasting organisations.

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2/70 Elder Street Alice Springs NT 0870.  
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w [www.firstnationsmedia.org.au](http://www.firstnationsmedia.org.au)

**Budget request:** Additional \$9 million per annum to provide for \$30 million per annum funding.

## OUR MEDIA MATTERS CALL FOR ACTION 2

- 2 Operational & Employment Funding.** Address the need for adequate operational and employment funding of First Nations broadcasting and media services.

### CONTEXT

#### First Nations broadcasting and media locations

- 103 Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services
- 26 regional and urban radio services
- 8 Remote Indigenous Media Organisations
- 1 national radio news service
- 1 public TV broadcaster
- 3 community TV broadcasters
- 1 commercial TV service

#### First Nations broadcasting and media reach

Remote, Regional and Urban radio services reaches:

- Around 320,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons, including around 101,000 very hard to reach people in remote Indigenous communities.
- Approximately 47% of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

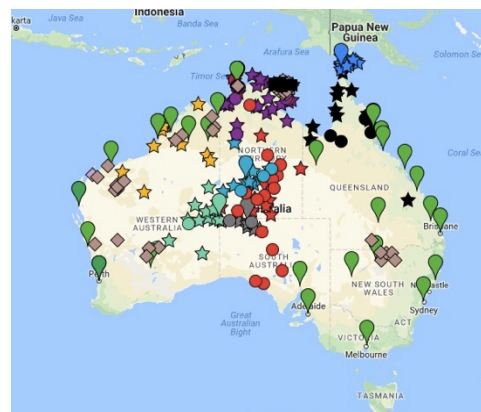


Image 1 First Nations radio services  
<https://irca.net.au/our-industry/radio-services>

#### First Nations radio listenership<sup>1</sup>

- 32% Nationally
- 20% Urban
- 24% Regional
- 63% Remote
- 80% Very Remote

#### First Nations radio engagement (nationally)<sup>2</sup>

For positive stories on First Nations people	48%	Makes me feel included	34%
For the First Nations focus in programs/news & current affairs	48%	First Nations voices/personalities	39%
To hear people talking in my own language	28%	I think of it as my station	32%

<sup>1</sup> Figures from 2016 Indigenous Media and Communications Survey conducted by McNair Ingenuity and IRCA.  
<https://irca.net.au/projects/indigenous-communications-and-media-survey-2016>

<sup>2</sup> ibid

- 2 Operational & Employment Funding.** Address the need for adequate operational and employment funding of First Nations broadcasting and media services.

### FIRST NATIONS BROADCASTING SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT KEY FINDINGS

**For every dollar invested in First Nations broadcasting and media,  
\$2.87 of cultural, social and economic value is returned.**

**1. Indigenous Broadcasting Services provide much more than radio – they are community assets that contribute to strengthening culture, community development and the local economy**

- Indigenous Broadcasting Services effectively execute their core business of broadcasting Indigenous information, news, interviews, music, community events and stories to large audiences.
- They also achieve a wide range of valuable outcomes that go much further than simply delivering a radio service.
- Indigenous Broadcasting Services core funding enables them to help keep culture alive by creating culturally rich environments and by recording, preserving and broadcasting culture in an appropriate way.
- Indigenous Broadcasting Services also play a crucial role increasing community cohesion, building community resilience and supporting people into meaningful employment.

**2. The outcomes achieved by Indigenous Broadcasting Services appear consistent but the activities they undertake are varied**

- All three Indigenous Broadcasting Services analysed are delivering outcomes consistent with the four themes of communication, strengthening culture, stronger communities and increased employment and participation.
- But their approach to achieving those outcomes vary dramatically; from a Claymation video studio in Yuendumu to puppets delivering public safety messages in Port Augusta and a programme supporting young musicians to develop their careers in Sydney.

**3. The activities Indigenous Broadcasting Services undertake are tailored to the specific needs of the community which helps build trust amongst the community**

- Indigenous Broadcasting Services must have the trust and support of the community in order to operate effectively. Without that trust and support, Indigenous Broadcasting Services would not have such significant and engaged listener bases.
- Community needs vary greatly and Indigenous Broadcasting Services understand and respond to those community needs, which in turn builds the necessary community trust. Examples of activities that have built that trust include managing a cultural archive of national significance, facilitating job skills training and CV writing support and running Indigenous festivals for 35,000 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to celebrate culture.
- Indigenous Broadcasting Services further build trust through a close connection to the community. All three Indigenous Broadcasting Services analysed are controlled and largely staffed by local Indigenous people, they have welcoming physical premises and cultivate an active network of connections to members of the community.



**Operational & Employment Funding.** Address the need for adequate operational and employment funding of First Nations broadcasting and media services.

### FIRST NATIONS BROADCASTING SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT KEY FINDINGS

#### **4. Indigenous Broadcasting Services are achieving a range of social returns on investment, heavily informed by their context, and value flows to a variety of stakeholder groups**

- Across all analyses, the stakeholder group experiencing the greatest share of value are listeners and community members.
- Other stakeholders experiencing significant value from Indigenous Broadcasting Services include employees, volunteers, Indigenous musicians, artists and the Australian Government. Value was split relatively evenly across outcome themes, which reinforces the interrelationship of outcomes.
- All three Indigenous Broadcasting Services are achieving substantial value. Different ratios are influenced by the size of an IBS's listener base, the level of investment the IBS receives, the relatively high costs of servicing a remote area and the investment a RIMO must make to service multiple RIBS.

#### **5. Indigenous Broadcasting Services are contributing towards more of the Government's priorities than is currently realised**

- The Australian Government's Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Priorities are being achieved by Indigenous Broadcasting Services and nearly all of those priorities can be mapped to material outcomes identified in this analysis.
- Indigenous Broadcasting Services are contributing to more of the Australian Government's IAS objectives than is currently realised. Indigenous Broadcasting Services contribute to all of the objectives under the Culture and Capability programme – including culture, community development and reconciliation – as well as priorities under other programme streams through employment, support for education and wellbeing outcomes and investment in remote Australia.

#### **6. Indigenous Broadcasting Services can leverage government funds to generate additional revenue – and greater impact – but only if they have sufficient resourcing available**

- The Indigenous Broadcasting Services receive approximately 75 per cent of their funding through PM&C and an additional 8 per cent from other government sources (at the state and federal level).
- Indigenous Broadcasting Services have demonstrated their capacity to generate their own revenue but there is a minimum resourcing threshold that must be maintained to enable Indigenous Broadcasting Services and their staff to diversify their activities and funding.

For more information see <https://firstnationsmedia.org.au/about/social-value-study-2017>



3

**Live & Local Expansion Program.** Create an innovative program (Live and Local) to expand First Nations radio to unserved areas with significant First Nations populations.

### THE ISSUE

A significant number of First Nations communities are without a culturally appropriate and locally relevant First Nations radio service.

Approximately, fifty-three percent (53%) of First Nations are without access to a First Nations radio service. The other forty-three percent (43%) are reached by one hundred and thirty-seven (137) licensed First Nations radio services in Australia. Many of these are in remote and regional areas, using a hub and spoke broadcasting model to reach to multiple locations. Many “spoke” communities are resourced with a radio studio, enabling local broadcasting and regional network contributions. This model provides opportunities for local employment throughout the First Nations radio network footprint.

Compounding the issue of lack of resourcing for a First Nations primary radio service for the 53%, is the lack of spectrum in the capital cities of Adelaide, Canberra and Hobart, and in many major regional areas.



First Nations broadcasters provide a primary service to First Nations communities and people. They are the preferred channel for First Nations audiences due to their cultural appropriateness, local relevance and positive representation of First Nations issues as compared with negative stereotyping prevalent in mainstream media.

National and commercial broadcasters do not provide content on a continuing basis that can support the interests, languages, cultures and needs of First Nations peoples. Such media is often perceived as being racist and breaching complex and nuanced cultural protocols. First Nations modes of production cater for community needs interests, cultural protocols, and delivery of information in local languages where appropriate.

There are innovations possible through a range of technological and community engagement models that can retain local relevance and live broadcasting over distributed networks. A Live and Local Innovation program is needed to enable effective expansion of First Nations broadcasting into priority areas, including leveraging capacity of existing First Nations broadcasters.

IRCA calls for the funding of an innovative First Nations radio broadcasting expansion program into those First Nations communities without a primary First Nations radio service.

Indigenous Remote Communications  
Association  
2/70 Elder Street Alice Springs NT 0870.  
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w [www.irca.net.au](http://www.irca.net.au)

**Budget request:** \$3 million per annum

3

**Live & Local Expansion Program.** Create an innovative program (Live and Local) to expand First Nations radio services to unserved areas with significant First Nations populations.

## CONTEXT

### Why First Nations people listen to First Nations radio<sup>1</sup>

	Total	Metro	Regional	Remote	Very Remote
For positive stories on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	48%	48%	26%	63%	79%
The First Nations focus in the programs/news & current affairs	48%	61%	35%	50%	54%
To hear people talking to me in my own language	28%	31%	20%	32%	56%
Its my own or neighbouring community members who are the presenters	40%	44%	35%	42%	46%
Provides jobs for remote First Nations community members and I want to support it	34%	37%	23%	41%	48%
To hear about my own people and my own community	61%	71%	67%	52%	65%
I think of it as my station	32%	25%	23%	42%	37%
First Nations voices / personalities	39%	45%	29%	43%	44%
Makes me feel proud	36%	41%	26%	40%	46%
Makes me feel included	34%	34%	29%	37%	36%

### Areas of high First Nations population without a dedicated First Nations radio service

City	State	Indigenous population Census 2011 <sup>1</sup>
Canberra	ACT	2,876
Central Coast	NSW	9,020
Dubbo	NSW	4,682
Newcastle	NSW	3,926
Tamworth	NSW	6,406
Wagga Wagga	NSW	3,300
Wollongong	NSW	4,228
Gold Coast	QLD	6,195
Sunshine Coast	QLD	4,589
Toowoomba	QLD	5,242
Adelaide	SA	15,595
Hobart	TAS	6,895
		<b>72,954</b>

A map of current First Nations broadcasters is available at [www.irca.net.au/our-industry/radio-services](http://www.irca.net.au/our-industry/radio-services)

<sup>1</sup> Indigenous Communications and Media Survey 2016. <https://www.irca.net.au/projects/indigenous-communications-and-media-survey-2016#download>

**Strengthen News Services.** Increase the news and current affairs capacity of First Nations broadcasters through a targeted funding program.

### THE ISSUE 4

Reporting on First Nations matters by mainstream media is often problematic, focusing on the “problems of First Nations people” and taking a deficit approach. The representation of First Nations peoples in mainstream media negatively impacts on the development and implementation of government Indigenous policy<sup>1</sup>.

Effective policy and funding is needed to:

- Establish a news capacity building program to support the expansion of news gathering and journalism jobs across the country, producing for radio, TV, print and online; and
- Establish a First Nations news desk for multi-platform content sharing.



First Nations news services are a vital part of the diversity and integrity of Australian news media, especially following the recent media reform legislation changes. The public interest of First Nations peoples and communities has not been well served by much of the mainstream media. First Nations peoples are largely excluded from the news making process and commentary, and despite journalism protocols are often represented negatively.

First Nations broadcasting and media has a vital role in providing a balanced and culturally appropriate media and greater local representation. Journalism must include the “full range of First Nations media voices” in both mainstream as well as in First Nations radio, TV and print media in order to promote awareness and understanding among non-Indigenous Australians, correct historical inaccuracies and promote reconciliation.

A news capacity building program needs to be funded to support the expansion of news gathering and journalism jobs across the breadth of the sector, and the development of a First Nations news desk for multi-platform content sharing.

Reference: Kerry McCallum (ed). 2012. The media and Indigenous policy: how news media reporting and mediatized practice impact on Indigenous policy. p4. Available at [http://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/faculties/arts-design/attachments2/pdf/MIP-Report\\_Combined\\_Final.pdf](http://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/faculties/arts-design/attachments2/pdf/MIP-Report_Combined_Final.pdf)

First Nations Media calls for the funding of:

- A development program to provide training and mentoring in journalism to First Nations media workers.
- Operational support for national First Nations news and current affairs services, including support for gathering news from First Nations community journalists.
- Development of a news sharing platform, with editorial staff, to enable sharing of relevant news items with First Nations broadcasters and media outlets as well as with mainstream media.

**Budget request:** \$1 million per annum

- **Strengthen News Services.** Increase the news and current affairs capacity of First Nations broadcasters through a targeted funding program.

## CONTEXT 4

### First Nations News and Current Affairs Services

- National Indigenous News Service, National Indigenous Radio Service
- Strong Voices, CAAMA Radio
- NITV: Awaken, Living Black, NITV News, The Point
- Away, ABC
- Indigenous X
- Koori Mail
- First Nations radio local news

### First Nations News Preferences: Very Remote Communities

McNair Ingenuity Research in partnership with First Nations Media conducted a survey in 2016<sup>1</sup> in very remote Indigenous communities about their media behaviours and preferences. That survey showed that remote First Nations community radio was highly valued for its culture and language role. It showed that remote First Nations media organisations play an important role in the provision of locally relevant and accessible news and information.

In contrast to the frequent poor representation of First Nations people in mainstream media, remote radio was highly valued for its positive representation as well as for its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus.

### First Nations Audience Preferences

Top 6 reasons for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander listenership of remote Indigenous radio	
1	For positive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories 77%
2	Hearing about own people and community 67%
3	For the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus in programs and news 56%
4	Hearing people talk in own language 56%
5	Supports local employment 51%
6	Feel proud when listening 51%

<sup>1</sup> 2016 Remote Indigenous Communications and Media Survey. [www.firstnationsmedia.org.au/projects/indigenous-communications-and-media-survey-2016](http://www.firstnationsmedia.org.au/projects/indigenous-communications-and-media-survey-2016)

### Expand Training & Career Pathways Programs for the First Nations broadcasting and media sector.

#### THE ISSUES

1. Low level of employment in First Nations broadcasting and media due to restricted funding, plus challenges in establishing First Nations career pathways in regional and remote areas.
2. Wage levels in funded programs are inconsistent with modern Award rates.

The First Nations broadcasting and media sector provides an effective opportunity to address high unemployment rates in First Nations communities, especially with emerging roles in a rapidly changing convergent media industry. It provides a culturally appropriate employment environment that builds on the culture and language skills already held by First Nations peoples. The 2017 Social Return on Investment study of First Nations broadcasters found that these organisations strengthen employment through:

- Offering flexible working arrangements in culturally safe environments.
- Creating work opportunities that are aligned with the interests of individuals.
- Building pride through being connected with these organisations.



The Australian Government's target of 90% First Nations people in Indigenous Advancement Strategy funded organisations provides a target that now requires a funding commitment for expansion of employment funding. There has been no substantive increase in funding to the sector for nearly 20 years. Operational funding for the approximately one hundred and twenty (120) Indigenous remote, regional and urban radio stations has stayed steady at around \$15 million per annum and is unable to cater for expanded employment. Employment funding of \$6 million per annum now integrated into Indigenous broadcasting funding under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy has been welcome but insufficient to enable the 90% target to be met across the board.

Expanding employment needs to be underpinned by a concerted, accredited training effort. The target of 90% First Nations employment requires targeted career pathways development programs and ongoing support for First Nations people to progress to coordination, management and technical roles. IRCA is currently developing a **Skills Development and Employment Strategy** consistent with First Nations learning and delivery needs. This will provide a framework for employment expansion, addressing new and emerging media jobs, job retention and management career pathways development. The strategy development is being led by key First Nations people in the broadcasting and media sector.

First Nations Media Australia calls for funding for implementation of IRCA's training and employment strategy.

First Nations Media Australia  
2/70 Elder Street Alice Springs NT 0870.  
Ph 08 8952 6465  
w [www.firstnationsmedia.org.au](http://www.firstnationsmedia.org.au)

**Budget request: \$5 million per annum**

### 5 **Expand Training & Career Pathways Programs** for the First Nations broadcasting and media sector.

#### CONTEXT

##### **First Nations Media Australia Skills Development and Employment Strategy**

The Strategy is due for completion in July 2018. The Strategy is being coordinated by Pauline Clague and Matthew Walsh of the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research of the University of Technology, Sydney. The team is working to IRCA's brief, namely:

- Development of a Skills Development and Employment Strategy for the First Nations media industry, that includes:
  - Audit- Undertake survey of existing employment and training within the sector, and current plans/strategies by member organisations and stakeholders
  - Employment and Career Development Action Plan
  - Training and Skills Development Action Plan
  - Strategy and action plan templates for member orgs to address the IAS Indigenous Employment Target policy
  - Recommendations of future projects and policy actions

##### **Employment rates**

In 2014, two hundred and seven (207) remote First Nations people were employed across one hundred and fourteen (114) remote Indigenous media services. Most of these were working on work-for-the-dole salary levels under the National Jobs Program. This is a very low rate of employment reflecting the low levels of funding for the sector. The wage rates are not consistent with national Awards and do not reflect the levels of training, experience, cultural knowledge and language capability.

##### **Profile of First Nations broadcasting and media employers**

First Nation broadcasters reach nearly 50% of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. The sector comprises:

- Radio services able to reach around 320,000 First Nations people, including around 100,000 very hard to reach people in remote Indigenous communities, or approximately 47% of the First Nations population.
  - A wide range of First Nations news and current affairs services including:
    - National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS) and its National Indigenous News and Weekly News-in-Review
    - Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association's news service, including its Strong Voices program.
    - Koori Radio's news and current affairs programming
    - NITV News and Living Black
    - Print media including Koori Mail, National Indigenous Times, Land Rights News
- A regional satellite TV service reaching 240,000 remote households and a free to air national TV service.
- Over 230 radio broadcast sites across Australia.
- Around 35 First Nations community owned and managed not-for-profit media organisations.

A map of First Nations broadcasters is available at <https://firstnationsmedia.org.au/our-industry/radio-services>



**Upgrade Infrastructure.** Upgrade broadcasting and digital infrastructure to meet current industry standards and work health and safety requirements.

### THE ISSUES

1. Broadcasting, transmission and digital networking equipment has not been upgraded in a coordinated program since the IRRR of 2007-2009.
2. Broadcasting facilities in many remote communities are not compliant with workplace health and safety requirements.

A targeted broadcasting, infrastructure and digital network upgrade program is needed to bring First Nations radio services up to industry standard. Lack of a capital equipment and R&M funding program over the last 15 years, has hampered the First Nations broadcasting sector in migrating to new IT based technologies. The last coordinated upgrade program was the Indigenous Remote Radio Replacement Program 2007-2009. Contingency funding previously available through Australian Government Indigenous broadcasting funding has not been available since 2015/2016.

Changes in the broadcasting and transmission industry are characterised by increasing utilisation of Internet technologies and by rapid advances especially in relation to smart technologies. Smart technologies provide for cost-effective network management and monitoring of remote broadcast facilities saving R&M and travel costs for remote Indigenous media organisations. In addition, the utilisation of modern IP network technologies and broadcast software systems has advantages for radio services with multiple broadcast sites, enabling targeted location specific information and sponsorship messages.

Associated with the equipment upgrade need, is the failure of a number of remote radio studios (Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services (RIBS)) to meet workplace health and standards requirements. Inadequate building conditions, including lack of toilets, were identified in around 19 of the 103 RIBS in the 2014 Audit of Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services. Employment retention is affected by poor working conditions, with the condition of buildings also putting them at risk of vandalism and consequent disruption to broadcasting services.

At the community level, remote Indigenous communities are experiencing failures in the Direct-to-Home satellite TV and radio services delivered through VAST. Up to 1/3 of households have no access to VAST. Funding of a rectification program is urgently needed.

#### Definitions:

- Smart technologies are those capable of adapting and responding automatically to changes in its operating environment and providing data to support operational decision making.

#### First Nations Media Australia calls for:

- Funding of a broadcasting and digital infrastructure and equipment upgrade program.
- Funding of a facilities upgrade program.
- Provision of a R&M program, through remote housing, for VAST DTH installations in remote communities.

First Nations Media Australia  
2/70 Elder Street Alice Springs NT 0870.  
Ph 08 8952 6465  
w [www.firstnationsmedia.org.au](http://www.firstnationsmedia.org.au)

**Budget request: \$2 million per annum**



## OUR MEDIA MATTERS CALL FOR ACTION 6

- 6 Upgrade Infrastructure.** Upgrade broadcasting and digital infrastructure to meet current industry standards and work health and safety requirements.

### CONTEXT

#### First Nations Broadcasting and Media Radio Services

- 103 Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services
- 26 regional and urban radio services
- 8 Remote Indigenous Media Organisations
- 1 national radio news service

#### 2014 RIMO and RIBS Audit

RIMO	No of RIBs buildings needing significant R&M	RIMO	No of RIBs buildings needing significant R&M
CAAMA	10	QRAM	4
PAKAM	3	TEABBA	2

#### Indigenous Remote Radio Replacement Program

The Indigenous Remote Radio Replacement (IRRR) Project was initiated through a commitment of \$3.3 million under the Australian Government's Backing Indigenous Ability (BIA) program.

#### VAST DTH Installation Status Remote Indigenous Communities 2016

Working and in use	Doesn't work, not in use or don't have	Don't know
64%	34%	2%

Source: Remote Indigenous Communications and Media Survey. 2016. <https://www.irca.net.au/projects/indigenous-communications-and-media-survey-2016>

#### Examples of RIBS Buildings



Bidyadanga RIBS



Yungnora RIBS

7

### **Primary Channel for Government Messaging to First Nations Audiences.**

Recognise the First Nations broadcasting and media sector as the preferred channel for First Nations targeted information campaigns.

#### **THE ISSUES**

1. The delivery of First Nations targeted government information campaigns through non-First Nations organisations with limited understanding of effective messaging for First Nations audiences.
2. The diversion of campaign fees away from First Nations broadcasters and media organisations.

The First Nations broadcasting and media sector has a strong record for effectively delivering information campaigns. This strength lies in its:

- Capacity to produce and/or customise campaigns that align with local cultural protocols.
- Capacity to deliver campaigns in language.
- Capacity to effectively manage campaigns and produce broadcast campaign slots.
- Current audience reach to nearly 50% First Nations people.



However, with limited exceptions, information campaign management is contracted by government departments through 3<sup>rd</sup> party non-Indigenous organisations. These 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisations contract First Nations (and non-Indigenous) media organisations to deliver the campaigns, usually without production funding to adapt the content to improve local audience engagement. This results in loss of potential income and sustainability for the First Nations media organisations and reduced effectiveness of messages.

There is an opportunity to directly work with First Nations broadcasters and media organisations to implement customised messaging that will increase engagement and impact. Identification in Australian Government policy of First Nations broadcasters as the primary providers of First Nations focused information campaigns is needed to effect this opportunity.

First Nations Media Australia calls on the Australian Government to establish a policy identifying First Nations broadcasters and media organisations as the provider of government First Nations focused information campaigns, including production, customisation and distribution.

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Ph 08 8952 6465  
w [www.firstnationsmedia.org.au](http://www.firstnationsmedia.org.au)

**Budget request:** Budget neutral

## OUR MEDIA MATTERS CALL FOR ACTION 7

7

### Primary Channel for Government Messaging to First Nations Audiences.

Recognise the First Nations broadcasting and media sector as the preferred channel for First Nations targeted information campaigns.

#### CONTEXT

##### First Nations broadcasting and media locations

- 103 Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services
- 26 regional and urban radio services
- 8 Remote Indigenous Media Organisations
- 1 national radio news service
- 1 public TV broadcaster
- 1 community TV broadcaster

##### First Nations broadcasting and media reach

Remote, Regional and Urban radio services reaches:

- Around 320,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons, including around 101,000 very hard to reach people in remote Indigenous communities.
- Approximately 47% of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

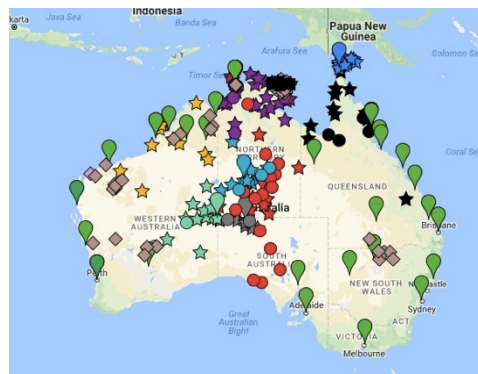


Image 1 First Nations radio services

<https://irca.net.au/our-industry/radio-services>

##### First Nations radio listenership<sup>1</sup>

- 32% Nationally
- 20% Urban
- 24% Regional
- 63% Remote
- 80% Very Remote

##### Sources of government information<sup>2</sup>

	Very Remote	Remote	Regional	Urban
Local First Nations radio	69%	39%	13%	12%
Internet	44%	49%	56%	48%
Newspaper	35%	31%	18%	23%
Posters	37%	32%	10%	9%
Public meetings	49%	25%	8%	9%

<sup>1</sup> Figures from 2016 Indigenous Media and Communications Survey conducted by McNair Ingenuity and IRCA.  
<https://irca.net.au/projects/indigenous-communications-and-media-survey-2016>

<sup>2</sup> ibid

**Preserve Archives.** Conserve, preserve and maintain First Nations Archives to sustain culture and language and create meaningful employment.

### THE ISSUE

The unique and culturally important media archives of First Nations broadcasting and media organisations are at risk of loss due to the unavoidable deterioration of magnetic tape and the lack of resourcing for digitisation and archive management.

**There is now consensus among audiovisual archives internationally that magnetic tape that is not digitised by 2025 will in most cases be lost forever.**

First Nations media organisations have been making audio and video recordings in First Nations communities since the early 1980s with a significant component of their archives in magnetic tape format. The recordings are held by these organisations in a range of formats and under a range of environmental and storage conditions. The cultural importance and sensitivity of the content necessarily means that the collections need to be maintained on-country under the custodianship of cultural law keepers. On-country archiving work is more cost-effective, enabling local decision-making about access and media handling, and identifying cultural metadata for cataloguing.

Stretching from the early 1980s through to the present the collections provide an unbroken record of language usage, cultural knowledge, traditional skills, community events, family histories and oral histories. The collections have a high value for education, cultural identity, language teaching, cultural and linguistic heritage, and for researchers into First Nations media history.

The collections are important for the provision of culturally meaningful employment for First Nations people living in remote communities, and have the potential, with additional resourcing, to expand employment. Preservation and enhancement of the remote First Nations audiovisual collections is a vital activity for the cultural heritage and well being of local communities and as a contribution to the Indigenous cultural heritage of the nation.

A digitisation program, including collection management support, training and digitisation equipment, is urgently needed to enable the digitisation of significant media in the collections. There are over 30 organisations that would benefit from the provision of archiving funding.

IRCA has led the development of the National Plan for Preserving First Nations Audiovisual Collections. The Plan has broad support from First Nations media organisations and partners. Progress has been made on methods and standards. However, digitisation progress has been hampered by lack of funding for the equipment, software, training, employment and support needed to manage digitisation and preservation on-country.

First Nations Media Australia calls on the Australian Government to fund a coordinated funding program over 5 years to enable digitisation of high priority items in First Nations media collections.

First Nations Media Australia  
2/70 Elder Street Alice Springs NT 0870.  
Ph 08 8952 6465  
w [www.firstnationsmedia.org.au](http://www.firstnationsmedia.org.au)

**Budget request: \$2 million per annum over 5 years. \$10 million total**

**Preserve Archives.** Conserve, preserve and maintain First Nations Archives to sustain culture and language and create meaningful employment.

### CONTEXT

#### National Plan for Preserving First Nations Audiovisual Collections

In response to concerns about the loss of First Nations archives, the Indigenous Remote Communications Association initiated a Reference Group in October 2013 of First Nations representatives and major State/Territory/Australian collecting agencies to work towards the development of a Plan that would set the pathway for ensuring that the significant cultural and language resources held in the collections is not lost to the communities or the nation.



The Reference Group's work during 2014 resulted in the development of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Audiovisual Collections Plan and its release in November 2014. The Plan can be located at <https://firstnationsmedia.org.au/projects/archiving-project>

#### Where are the Collections?

First Nations audiovisual collections are located across remote, regional and urban Australia. Examples of the collections are:

1. **The collections of the Remote Indigenous Media Organisations (RIMOs).** RIMOs coordinate Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services, also known as BRACS. RIMOs provide coordination services to 106 RIBS and media support to another 30 remote communities. The RIMOs are:
  - Central Australia Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA). Alice Springs, NT
  - Ngaanyatjarra Media (NG Media). Irrunytju, WA
  - Pilbara and Kimberley Aboriginal Media (PAKAM). Broome, WA
  - Pintupi Anmatjerre Warlpiri Media (PAW Media). Yuendumu, NT.
  - Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Media (PY Media). Umuwa, NT
  - Queensland Remote Aboriginal Media (QRAM). Cairns, Qld.
  - Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association Australia (TEABBA). Darwin, NT.
  - Torres Strait Islander Media Association (TSIMA). Thursday Island, Qld.
2. The collections of **regional and urban radio stations** such as:
  - 6DBY Derby.
  - Koori Radio.
  - Noongar Radio.
3. The collections of **specialist remote community museums and cultural centres** such as:
  - Buku-Larnggay Mulka Centre. Yirrkala, NT.
  - Kanamkek-Yile Ngala Museum. Wadeye, NT.
4. **Specialist organisations and programs** working directly with remote communities to build and further develop remote audiovisual collections. These include:
  - Ara Irititja Archival Project.
  - Community Stories program of the Northern Territory Library.
  - Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages ARC project.
  - Strehlow Research Centre. Alice Springs.



**Annual Content Production Fund.** Fund an annual and competitive content production fund for First Nations broadcasters and media producers.

### THE ISSUES

1. Content funding for the First Nations broadcasting and media sector was severely impacted in 2007 with removal of video production support from the Indigenous Broadcasting Program.
2. Indigenous content funding from the Department of Communications and the Arts managed through the Community Broadcasting Foundation has remained static.

The capacity for content production in the sector, other than for live radio shows, has been significantly compromised by:

- The loss of video content funding through changes to the Indigenous Broadcasting Program in 2007;
- Overall loss in content production capacity through inadequate funding under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy for broadcasting, and through the Community Broadcasting Foundation.

Content production is vital to the preservation and maintenance of First Nations language and culture. The 2017 Social Return on Investment Study found that First Nations broadcasting services are “community assets that contribute to strengthening culture, community development and the local economy.” First Nations produced media (radio, video, music, multimedia) also has a broader role beyond First Nations audiences. It is a strong force for enhancing understanding of First Nations language, culture and communities across the wider Australian society.

Alternative sources of funding for First Nations media content, beyond NITV for video content, are limited. Local producers are unlikely to have the level of broadcast credits required for funding through screen agencies. The VAST satellite delivered community TV service, Indigenous Community TV, is largely dependent on contributed content from First Nations media producers and does not itself have a content development fund. Similarly, IRCA’s IndigiTUBE web media distribution platform (currently being redeveloped) has First Nations and non-Indigenous audiences, but does not itself have a content development fund.

An annual competitive funding pool would enable increased production outputs, improved production values, and opportunities for integrated training of First Nations media producers and industry placements.

First Nations Media Australia calls for the funding of an annual competitive First Nations content development fund open only to First Nations broadcasters and media producers and managed through an agreed funding agency.

First Nations Media Australia  
2/70 Elder Street Alice Springs NT 0870.  
Ph 08 8952 6465  
w [www.firstnationsmedia.org.au](http://www.firstnationsmedia.org.au)

**Budget request: \$2 million per annum**

## OUR MEDIA MATTERS CALL FOR ACTION 9

9

**Annual Content Production Fund.** Fund an annual and competitive content production fund for First Nations broadcasters and media producers.

### CONTEXT

#### First Nations Broadcasting and Media Producers

- 103 Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services
- 26 regional and urban radio services
- 8 Remote Indigenous Media Organisations
- 1 national radio news service
- 1 public TV broadcaster
- 3 community TV broadcaster (ICTV, Goolarri, Larrakia)

#### Sector Distribution Platforms

- **Indigenous Community Television**  
ICTV is a not for profit First Nations organisation that delivers cultural and community video content to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities around Australia, and to any VAST eligible location. ICTV enables the sharing of cultural stories, song and dance, language and essential information through two accessible platforms – a satellite delivered television service and an on-demand internet-based service (ICTV Play). ICTV Play can be viewed at <https://ictv.com.au/>
- **IndigiTUBE**  
IndigiTUBE is managed by the Indigenous Remote Communications Association. Currently it provides streaming radio services for First Nations radio services, smartphone apps for those services, and music streaming. IndigiTUBE has no content development role or funding. IndigiTUBE is located at <https://www.indigitube.com.au/>
- **National Indigenous Television (NITV)**  
NITV is delivered via free to air TV, VAST and pay TV. NITV was relocated to SBS in 2012. It has a limited content production fund that is aimed at content relevant over a number of audiences.
- **Local First Nations media producer websites, viewing rooms and other distribution modes**  
First Nations media producers have a variety of distribution platforms available locally including video on demand through websites, cultural archive viewing rooms, DVD and CD distribution, USB shares, YouTube and in some limited cases through community WiFi.
- **National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS)**  
NIRS is a national service provided from a hub station sited in Brisbane. It aggregates material from and for First Nations media organisations. First Nations media organisation radio shows can be scheduled on the NIRS service, allowing other First Nations radio organisations to include NIRS programming within their own scheduling. NIRS does not have any content funding for First Nations media organisation content development.

#### Review of Australian Government Investment in the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Sector 2010

<https://irca.net.au/sites/default/files/files/Stevens-Review-2010-review-broadcasting-investment.pdf>

*Recommendation 8 (3<sup>rd</sup> dot point p14 :*

The IBP funding arrangements be restructured to establish an Indigenous content and project fund of \$5 million a year, with funds allocated annually on a competitive basis for purposes including content creation, innovative broadcasting applications, urgent capital equipment and training.