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CONSULTING

Renewing a Vital Indigenous Voice and Community Asset – The Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Sector

Report commissioned by the National Indigenous Australians Agency

February 2021

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Chapter 1. Acknowledgements

I would like to pay my respects to both the Yuin people where I was born and to the Ngunawal/Ngambri people on whose land I live, work and leave my footprints on every day. I pay my respects to their elders, past, present and emerging; and to those of all First Nations people across Australia.

I would also like to thank the members of the roundtables and those who took part in the consultation sessions for their ready willingness to share ideas and information which determined the course of this process. We honour and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

We were pleased to be joined throughout the roundtables by Dr Lyndon Ormond-Parker, Senior Research Fellow (Discovery Indigenous) in the Centre for Health Equity, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health. Lyndon was born in Darwin and of Alyawarr decent from the Barkly tablelands region of the Northern Territory.

Brendan Moyle, Stacey Lange, Robyn Mellor and Laura Harris from the Culture and Heritage Branch of the National Indigenous Australians Agency gave generously of their time and advice and were central to organising the roundtables. We thank them.

Hugh Watson

Chapter 2. Abbreviations

The following is a table of abbreviations used in this report.

ABA	Australian Broadcasting Authority
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ACCAN	Australian Communications Consumer Action Network
ACMA	Australian Communications and Media Authority
APY	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
ARDS	Aboriginal Resource and Development Service, Yolngu Radio - Nhulunbuy, Northern Territory
ASIC	Australian Securities and Investment Commission
BRACS	Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme
CAAMA	Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association – Alice Springs, Northern Territory
CBAA	Community Broadcasting Association of Australia
CBF	Community Broadcasting Foundation
CBL	Community Broadcast Licence
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects Program
CDRC	Central Desert Regional Council
CLC	Central Land Council
CTG	Closing the Gap
DITRDC	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications
EMA	Emergency Management Australia
FNMA	First Nations Media Australia
IAS	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia
ICTV	Indigenous Community Television – Alice Springs, Northern Territory
ICV	Indigenous Community Volunteers
IBP	Indigenous Broadcasting Programme
IEI	Indigenous Employment Initiative
MAMA	Mid-West Aboriginal Media Association, Geraldton, Western Australia
MOG	Machinery of Government
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NIMA	National Indigenous Media Association
NITV	National Indigenous Television, Sydney, NSW
NLC	Northern Land Council
NINS	National Indigenous News Service
NIRS	National Indigenous Radio Service
OFTA	Office for the Ministry for the Arts
ORIC	Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations
PAKAM	Pilbara and Kimberley Aboriginal Media, Broome, Western Australia
PAW	Warlpiri Media Association, Alice Springs, Northern Territory
PRK	Puranyangu-Rangka Karrem, Halls Creek, Western Australia
PSAR	Programme Specific Assessment Reports

PY	Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Media Aboriginal Corporation
QRAM	Queensland Remote Aboriginal Media – Cairns, Queensland
RIBS	Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services
RIMO	Remote Indigenous Media Organisation
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
TCBL	Temporary Community Broadcasting Licence
TEABBA	Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association - Northern Territory
TSIMA	Torres Strait Islander Media Association, Thursday Island, Torres Strait
TSIRC	Torres Strait Islands Regional Council Regional Authority

Chapter 3. Executive Summary

The Indigenous broadcasting and media sector provides a voice to engage, inform, educate and entertain Indigenous communities, facilitating active participation and cultural and language preservation in Indigenous communities.

The sector's wide reach has enabled its capacity to assist Government to communicate and engage with Indigenous communities throughout Australia to help meet the objectives of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) and the Closing the Gap (CTG) targets, and ensured it was well placed to deliver key messages during the current national health emergency.

At a time when the mainstream media (and particularly the news) is undergoing major change in terms of diminishing reach, as well as reduced diversity, ownership and revenue, the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector is playing an important role in maintaining media and communication diversity, enhancing social capital and providing leadership in Indigenous communities.

However, with limited policy direction provided by Government, no real funding increase in a decade, advertising revenue constrained by Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) regulations, ageing equipment and facilities impeding service delivery, and limited staff training and development opportunities available, the sector's capacity to deliver outcomes is hampered and its potential to achieve community and Government expectations is limited.

Nevertheless, the sector has adapted and innovated. With radio still as its base, the sector has moved to adopt numerous other platforms to reach its audiences and continues to deliver wide-ranging services and activities across Australia. However, the untapped potential of the sector needs to be acknowledged, restrictions impeding delivery should be removed and sufficient tools should be provided to enable the sector's capacity to deliver improved and additional outcomes.

3.1 This project

The consultants were commissioned by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) to obtain the views of the Indigenous broadcasting sector regarding the most efficient, effective and appropriate use of Government's IAS investment in Indigenous broadcasting and media.

They were asked to prepare a report on the sector's views and make appropriate recommendations for the IAS's investment in the Indigenous Broadcasting sector.

The consultants were asked to interview key sector stakeholders and conduct and report on six video conferencing roundtables with 12 remote, regional and urban broadcasters chosen by the NIAA. After further discussion between the consultants and the NIAA on extending the consultation process, additional interviews, two further Consultation Sessions and a survey of the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector were added.

The two further video conferencing consultation sessions were opened to the Indigenous broadcasting sector to consider the outcomes from the roundtable process and a further 21 broadcasters attended. Another consultation session was held with NIAA Regional Managers before the roundtables.

The roundtable process was further informed by interviews with First Nations' broadcasting and media organisations, relevant Australian Government departments and non-IAS funded organisations as well as analysis of previous reviews, additional research, a survey of the sector and documents and other information received. The online survey of the sector with outcomes from the roundtables received 39 responses.

A description of the process for the roundtable process can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2   Previous reviews

Our review of previous significant reviews and studies into the Indigenous broadcasting sector highlights a persistent commonality of conclusions and recommendations on unmet needs and desirable improvements in policies and in the delivery of services to Indigenous communities. Many of the proposals to the recurring problems have not attracted sufficient favour among policymakers over the years and several of the needs they were meant to address were still evident in the course of this study. The following are some of the matters that continue to merit attention by policymakers.

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

♦ The sector is not appropriately recognised as a professional component of the broader broadcasting and media sector that provides an essential service to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whether they live in urban, regional or remote locations.

♦ The categorisation of Indigenous broadcasting services as community broadcasters has serious implications to their access to spectrum, their

participation in the broadcasting industry co-regulatory processes, and in their financing and staffing. They would be better served by the creation of a separate category of licensing exclusively for Indigenous broadcasters.

♦ Infrastructure is ageing and forward-looking policy that allows the sector to take advantage of new and rapid developments in technology is required.

♦ The Indigenous broadcasting and media sector would be better served by a broad ranging strategy that aims to optimise the sector's contribution to the cultural, social and economic development of Indigenous communities.

♦ Training and career pathways, programs and support for ongoing employment in the sector are limited.

♦ There is inadequate support for maintaining broadcast services in communities, including technical and building maintenance, and power and water security.

3.3   Roundtable outcomes

The outcomes for sector stability and strengthening agreed by the roundtables and consultation sessions and affirmed in the sector survey can be categorised under four headings:

1. recognising the contemporary Indigenous broadcasting and media sector
2. maintaining and modernising the sector's physical infrastructure
3. building and maintaining skills and capabilities
4. broadening and strengthening the funding base.

3.3.1   Recognising the contemporary Indigenous broadcasting and media sector

Recommendation 1: The NIAA should adopt a policy and evaluation framework that demonstrates the contribution of Indigenous broadcasting and media to Closing the Gap.

Recommendation 2: The program name should be changed to the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program (IBMP).

Recommendation 3a: The NIAA Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program description, funding schedules and contracted and reporting requirements for funded broadcasters should acknowledge the diversity of activities undertaken and the variety of platforms utilised to develop and deliver content to their audiences.

Recommendation 3b: A pool of KPIs be developed which validly and reliably measure operational requirements and achievement of Program outcomes. Consideration be given to a more sophisticated performance analysis methodology for RIMOs such as DEA (Data Envelopment Analysis).

Recommendation 4: The NIAA should begin discussions with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications to develop an Indigenous Broadcasting licence.

Recommendation 5: Government should provide funding to support the development and administration of an annual survey of media consumption and communication preferences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences.

3.3.2   Maintaining and modernising the physical infrastructure

Recommendation 6: The NIAA, in collaboration with the Australian Communications and Media Authority, First Nations Media Australia and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, should undertake an infrastructure needs survey and cost analysis for an infrastructure upgrade program.

Recommendation 7: The NIAA should work with the sector to investigate where it is possible to implement remote monitoring systems and other new technologies to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

Recommendation 8: NIAA should undertake discussions with Emergency Management Australia to ascertain what assistance might be provided to assist with infrastructure maintenance, replacement and upgrades for emergency management purposes.

Recommendation 9: The NIAA should support the proposal for individual broadcasters from the sector to seek regional licences from the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

3.3.3   Building and maintaining skills and capabilities

Recommendation 10: The NIAA should work with the sector to investigate the feasibility of an online help desk for repairs and maintenance.

Recommendation 11: The NIAA should set aside an amount of funds for the development of a central database for broadcast and media course registration and development.

Recommendation 12: The NIAA, in concert with First Nations Media Australia, should approach SBS/NITV and the ABC regarding assistance for sector-wide training.

3.3.4   Broadening and strengthening the funding base.

Recommendation 13: The NIAA should initiate discussions with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications regarding the transfer of the Indigenous grants element of the Community Broadcasting Foundation to the NIAA for use on sector-wide projects.

Recommendation 14: The NIAA should support the First Nations Media Australia to ensure that the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector is considered when the legislation to compel Google and Facebook to negotiate with Australian media companies is passed.

Recommendation 15: The NIAA should consult with First Nations Media Australia regarding a joint approach to philanthropic organisations to assist with sector-wide initiatives.

Recommendation 16: The FNMA should be funded to identify grant opportunities and programs that could be accessed by the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector and assist the sector to access that funding.

3.4   This report

It was clear from the roundtable discussions and other evidence that the current Indigenous broadcasting policy and evaluation framework would benefit from substantial clarification and simplification. With a clearly defined policy and evaluation framework, the defined public value of the sector can be summarised in terms of policy-based value:

♦ the direct outcomes it achieves in the domains of Indigenous culture and language, in providing a community voice, and in meeting human rights obligations; and

♦ the indirect outcomes it achieves through its contribution to outcomes in Closing the Gap domains such as health, justice, well-being, education, employment and economic participation and the Indigenous voice process.

Chapter 4 outlines the state of the sector and Chapter 5, the contribution of the sector to the IAS and CTG targets. Chapter 6 provides a program logic, description and requirements for the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program (IBMP).[1] Chapter 7 describes the outcomes from the roundtable process and priorities for sector renewal agreed by the roundtables and Chapter 8 considers the recommendations from previous reviews. Chapter 9 discusses accessing other agencies' programs and Chapter 10 how the outcomes from the process might be taken forward.

Appendices provide background information used in developing the report including:

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[1] The subject of this report is the Indigenous Broadcasting Program. Our Recommendation 2 is that it be renamed the "Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program (IBMP)" and we will refer to it as such throughout the report.

- key recommendations from the most relevant previous reviews including tables showing where action has been taken as a result of the reviews
- suggestions, queries and requests made at the roundtables and consultation sessions.

There have been a number of reviews in the area of Indigenous broadcasting over the past 20 years. Many of the recommendations from previous reviews are still relevant and could be included in a refreshed policy framework for sector investment and renewal. A major continuing issue is funding for sector stability and strengthening.

Over the past two decades the Indigenous Broadcasting Program has moved from one agency to another as a result of Machinery of Government changes. That has certainly contributed to a loss of corporate memory and limited follow-through. Change has also been restricted through nominal annual funding growth over a long period, and completely static funding for the past six years. Now however the program sits with the National Indigenous Australians Agency: the government body with major responsibility for enabling achievement of CTG and IAS outcomes.

The IBMP sits within the Culture and Heritage Branch of the NIAA. The Indigenous broadcasting sector (the sector) does much more than just radio broadcasts. The broadcasters are community assets that contribute to strengthening culture, community development, emergency management and the local economy. The sector contributes to many of the CTG targets and IAS outcomes and has become particularly relevant during the COVID pandemic as a significant source of health information for Indigenous communities as exemplified in Chapter 4. It is an underutilised resource.

Chapter 4. Today's Indigenous broadcasting and media sector: Value, opportunities and challenges

4.1 Introduction

The sector has grown, evolved, innovated, diversified and consolidated in the 33 years since it was established. It provides many kinds of value in return for government investment and the contributions of its other stakeholders. It is an important element of **Indigenous voice** and social and cultural infrastructure of communities. It also plays a key role in government communication to Indigenous communities and individuals: a role that facilitates and supports many government programs that contribute to CTG targets and outcomes.

Although the foundations of the sector are in terrestrial and satellite radio and television broadcasting, it has embraced digital convergence with enthusiasm. We can expect this trend to continue and expect the sector to play an important ongoing role in Indigenous digital inclusion. Figure 1 shows the range of media currently used by IBMP organisations.
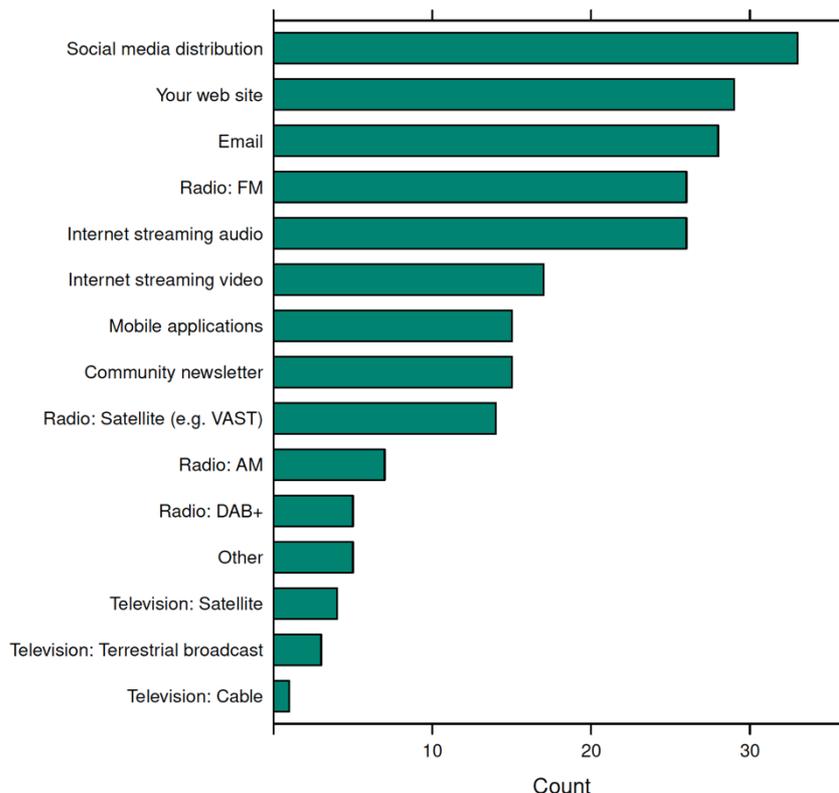
Figure 1. Media currently used by IBMP organisations to communicate with, engage with or promote communities. Data from survey conducted for this consultancy.

It will be argued in this report that the scope and nature of the contributions of the sector, and the inevitability of continuing evolution and innovation, are not

fully taken into account by the regulatory and funding arrangements under which it operates.

In this chapter we draw on a range of data sources, and especially on the roundtables, consultations and submissions, to paint a more detailed and three-dimensional picture of the state of the sector, of the environment in which it operates and of its successes and challenges. We describe the changing technology landscape, and the convergence of broadcasting, the internet and social media. We draw attention to the pressing need for training, and we suggest how the sector can help reduce the Indigenous digital inclusion gap.

With the exception of the peak body, First Nations Media Association (FNMA), the entities funded under the IBMP qualify by virtue of holding licenced community radio or television licences, issued by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).[2] These licences include strict technical configuration and performance requirements for the associated radio transmission infrastructure. ACMA and the IBMP funding conditions include the expectation that the transmission infrastructure will be maintained in operating condition and actually used for broadcasting. These requirements are challenging for a significant proportion of licensees because of ageing equipment, exposure to severe weather events, remoteness, high maintenance and replacement costs and lack of in-house technical qualifications and expertise. More data are needed about the extent of this problem and the best ways to address it.

Technical expertise in maintaining and operating transmission infrastructure is critical, but there is a much wider spectrum of skills and capabilities needed to deliver the value expected by governments, communities and other stakeholders. They include skills and capabilities for the operation of studios, and the creation and delivery of content through both radio and television broadcasting, and increasingly through online channels including social media. Broadcasters, like all organisations, also need expertise in planning and management of financial and physical assets, intellectual property and their human resources.

Funding under the IBMP has not increased in real terms for many years. Organisations funded under the IBMP have accessed supplementary funds from various sources, but these are mostly not regular income streams. Some are able to generate income from advertising and commercial sponsorship, but the terms of their community broadcasting licences place constraints on that

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[2] A number of the Shire Councils or Aboriginal Councils do not hold the licence but their funding will support employment, accommodation and provide general assistance to the RIMO.

income. Unless these constraints can be mitigated, or new funding sources tapped, the sector will be unable to innovate and provide greater value to its investors and communities.

4.2   The value generated by the sector

The IBMP has its origins in 1987 with the funding of the Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme (BRACS). It was initially piloted in the remote communities of Ernabella (Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands) and Yuendumu (Walpiri lands) as a small scale, community-based program, designed to transmit over short distances. In 2020, after many twists and turns in policy, administration and funding arrangements, there are now 53 licensees responsible for 214 community broadcasting licenced transmission sites across remote, regional and urban Australia. Many of the funded media organisations are active, not only in radio or television broadcasting, but also in online content distribution and especially through social media. The program also funds a peak body, the FNMA.

The NIAA explains the rationale for the IBMP in the following terms (NIAA, 2020).[3]

> Indigenous broadcasting helps give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a strong voice and increases their social and economic participation in society. It strengthens Indigenous cultural expression and conservation.
> Radio in remote communities is a way of life. Local radio stations are trusted by communities and are their main source of information for health, education and community services.
> Indigenous radio is important for promoting music by Indigenous artists. Local culture is also strengthened by broadcasting in regional Indigenous languages.

The sector has evolved significantly since the establishment of the IBMP. This reflects experience and organisational learning, as well as responses to social and demographic change, and the increasing importance of social media and app-based content distribution.

The wider broadcasting and media sector has been undergoing substantial changes in technology, associated cost structures and business models and the Indigenous sector has, for the most part, been innovating to keep up.
It is important to think of IBMP organisations in terms of their diverse activities, their social capital and networks and the opportunities they provide for governments and communities to communicate and engage.

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[3] https://www.niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/culture-and-capability/indigenous-broadcasting

Today, broadcasting ranges from highly acclaimed documentaries on NITV/SBS[4] to shout-outs to small communities by local Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Service (RIBS) broadcasters.[5] The diverse range of activities include:

> **Radio:** Live shows, interviews, radio documentaries, news, emergency information, community events, government and other messaging within community broadcasting guidelines.
> **Video & film production:** Production of culture and language-based content for broadcast and online distribution.
> **Television:** National (NITV) and regional (ICTV) TV services; local TV services (Goolarri) TV at Broome, Larrakia TV at Darwin.
> **News production:** National, regional and local news and current affairs services for broadcast, as well as print and online news media

(Source: FNMA 2020).

FNMA states that Indigenous radio services can 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.

The First Nations media industry currently employs 500 to 600 staff, around 79% of whom are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, a figure that could easily grow with investment. This includes part-time and casual employees, working in organisations in urban, regional and remote locations. Approximately 28 per cent of those positions are full time, with 72 per cent part-time or casual (FNMA 2017).

The Indigenous broadcasting and media sector is continually being asked to demonstrate its reach and impact. Audience reach is discussed in more detail in Section 7.1.

Here is a brief summary of the two most recent surveys.

The Department of Finance (2014) *Media consumption and communication preferences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences: Quantitative research*, published the findings of Orima Research's survey of 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged 15 years and over, across metropolitan, and inner and outer regional areas. 70% were internet users, 73% were radio listeners and 40% of radio listeners mentioned, unprompted, that they had

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[4] NITV has an audience of 2 million according to Director of Indigenous Content at SBS Tanya Denning-Orman.
[5] The "shout-out" is the morning introduction from a RIBS volunteer community presenter to inform community members of daily events e.g. the visit of a doctor.

listened to Indigenous radio in the last 4 weeks. The Indigenous radio listeners by age group are shown below in Figure 2.
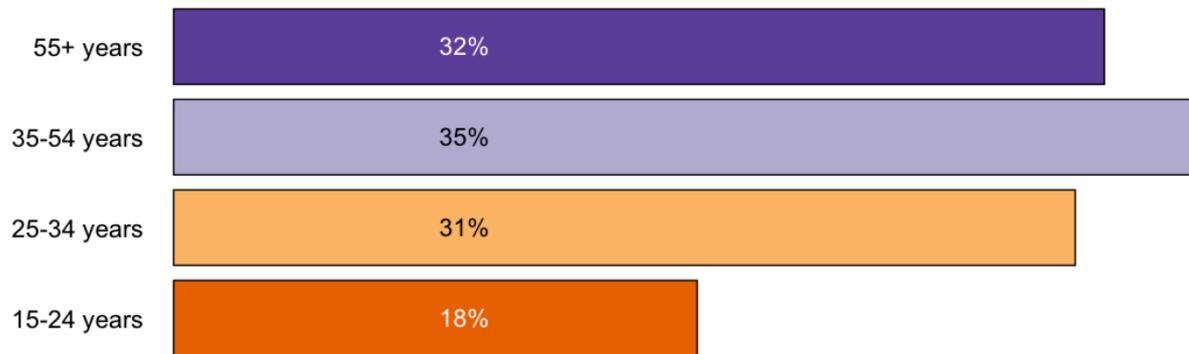
Figure 2. Radio listeners by age group, Orima survey

McNair Ingenuity Research (McNair) conducted a Remote Indigenous Communications and Media Survey for the Indigenous Remote Communications Association in 2016. In metropolitan and regional areas and some remote areas, the survey was conducted amongst the SurveyMob panel, a national panel of Indigenous Australians who opted-in to being contacted for research. In the remote communities, 218 face-to-face interviews were conducted across the Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia, by members of the local communities or nearby communities. The interviewing was spread across 10 different communities.

A summary of key points is shown below in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Remote listenership, McNair survey

Another study by ACMA showed that adults in remote WA spend most of their AM/FM radio listening time in the car. Most of the total time remote Western Australians spend listening to AM/FM radio (12.9 hours on average/past seven days) is in the car (eight hours), compared to at home (4.9 hours). The time spent listening to AM/FM radio in the car is significantly lower at regional (3.3 hours) and national (3.4 hours) levels (ACMA, 2017).

Two-thirds of remote Western Australians reported having experienced emergency situations (fire or weather event) in the last 10 years, compared with 38% in regional Australia. For this group, the Bureau of Meteorology at 51% was the most often reported source of information, followed by local ABC radio at 45%. Nevertheless 31% reported that community radio was their main source of information during emergencies (ACMA, 2017).

The roundtables agreed that a more comprehensive method of collecting audience listening, viewing and digital transaction data was needed. This will be taken up in Section 7.1.

4.2.1   Examples of sector community initiatives: Broadcasters

Broadcasters do not just produce a radio service. That is their primary task – but in reality, their secondary roles are to act as community innovators, leaders, event managers, educators and secondary health workers. These secondary activities complement their broadcasting and help build their communities. Here are just some examples provided by Roundtable members and other sector members.

First Nations Broadcasting in Darwin highlighted their COVID work. They are a commercial organisation but they operate as a not-for-profit – all profits go back into the organisation. They highlight positive stories to strengthen their community. Examples include the following.

♦ They service 26 communities and have made 640,000 community service announcements. During the Period 1 July to 31 December 2020 they broadcast a number of government messages and also in Aboriginal languages. For COVID-19 they broadcast 35 different messages in English and Aboriginal Languages covering Federal Treasury Recovery, job keeper advice and how to apply, domestic violence in communities, mental health, COVID-19 SAFE community closures and NT Government messages in Languages.
♦ They developed the Indigenous Broadcast Training Program including Registered Training Organisation (RTO) accredited programs based around basic computer, information technology, production for broadcasting, radio and television broadcasting, mobile phone technology, film and television production and broadcasting. They have put 115 people through since starting the program in 2006 and currently there are eight full time in the program.
♦ They developed the First Nations Broadcasting Scholarship Program for further education at TAFE and University. They have graduates from

Bachelor Institute, RMIT, Flinders and Bond Universities in areas of business, finance and audit, CPA, and business entrepreneurship.

♦ They have digitized 40 boxes of tapes from the Northern Land Council which comprises a 50-year history of the Land Council. This required 550 hours of editing – at their own expense.

♦ They offer a reasonably priced interpreter/translator service.

♦ At Easter this year they conducted a church service broadcast that had 40,000 hits on YouTube and was re-broadcast by 3KND in Melbourne.

3KND in Melbourne hosted an online NAIDOC event in partnership with the government and the arts sector in Victoria. There were 170,000 views online from all over Australia and the world, indicating to the government the importance of Indigenous broadcasting.

3KND responded in a different way to the pandemic. Broadcasters were receiving up to 35 calls each morning from concerned community members seeking clarification on different restriction announcements and arrangements for managing COVID-19. Concerned about the mental health and wellbeing of some isolated listeners, 3KND staff coordinated contactless delivery of donated gardening items, firewood, food packages and phone cards to help Elders stay in touch with families and maintain their homes and health.

Bumma Bippera in Cairns had 35 events booked before COVID. They were very busy as the community was highly engaged: they were invited to Yarrabah community as well as schools and festivals. They are not funded for these events but see community engagement as their number one priority.

Wilcannia River Radio FM 103.1 is located in Wilcannia on the Darling River. The town has the slogan "Keepin' it alive" as its catch cry. From this, a logo was produced which is now the symbol of the station. The logo, which means "Community of all ages", and the River, are represented by the different coloured dots. The station employs announcers-in-training and one full-time announcer. The station provides a great service, bringing the community together and creating employment opportunities, while building confidence and social inclusion.

The station was involved in a significant initiative during the COVID lockdown, assisting the music teacher and students at Wilcannia Central School film to record a rendition of a beloved Australian song that told the story of COVID-19 in Wilcannia. Making the recording assisted students to manage home schooling and online learning fatigue and the finished product won the 2020 ARIA Music Teacher of the Year Award.

Noongar Radio 100.9 in Perth held a widely successful Book Week, inviting 300 children from 20 schools to the radio station. The children took it in turns to read books and the recordings were broadcast to their communities. Parents and grandparents tuned in to hear their child's voice, resulting in an audience that week of over 30,000 listeners. This was a wonderful example of community engagement where radio was used effectively to broadcast culture and positive messages.

Torres Strait Islander Media Association (TSIMA) responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, by holding on-air discussions with health and Torres Strait Regional Council representatives. These became facilitated discussions between four senior officials about how to manage travel, hygiene, contacting family and other immediate concerns. Residents from outer islands were able to phone in and have their questions answered without having to travel to Thursday Island and everyone could hear the information, like an on-air community meeting.

Ngaarda Media in Roebourne was asked by community members to film some funerals and other significant events to enable community participation where physical attendance was restricted due to the pandemic. This request was due to the strong relationships between the station and community, which trusted Ngaarda Media to contribute and engage with cultural activities and practices even during extraordinary circumstances.

Umeewarra Media in Port Augusta coordinated the NAIDOC celebrations in Port Augusta. This included live streaming morning smoking ceremonies on the beach each day through the week, running media workshops in schools, photographing and broadcasting a NAIDOC March, coordinating fireside yarns to share stories between community members and a NAIDOC Ball live music event to finish the week. The only NAIDOC activities arranged for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Port Augusta in 2020 were organised, resourced and run by Umeewarra Media and the turnout was incredible.

Koori Radio in Sydney broadcasts the annual Yabun Festival, a major event in Sydney held on 26 January. The station co-produces the broadcast with the ABC, ensuring First Nations voices from the Eora nation resonate nationally on this important date. The station has input into the entertainment program, and uses the festival as an opportunity to train young staff members in live production skills. Previously they have had an exchange with Central Australia Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) to give broadcasters from remote communities a chance to participate in a large-scale event of this type. This is a fantastic opportunity for the station to be very visible to its Sydney based audience and to broaden the diversity of voices heard on air.

Cherbourg Radio 94.1FM is owned by Cherbourg Council. As the Council owns the Radio Station premises, rent is not necessary. In addition, Council has completed a full internal and external renovation of the Radio Station premises in the past 12 months with its own funding and using local trades people and/or Council staff. The Council covers the following costs: electricity, financial management/audits etc., and human resource associated and general management expenses outside of the Service Manager role.

4.2.2 Examples of sector initiatives: FNMA – the peak body

As the national peak body for the First Nations media and communications industry, FNMA represents the interests of a broad array of members working in and alongside the community-controlled sector. It represents 56 organisations - of which 43 are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned and controlled media organisations - and 156 individual members. First Nations Media Association represents the sector at national level and has a number of sector-wide initiatives under way including the following.

♦ FNMA is currently in the pilot phase of a First Nations Community Archive project, working with Pilbara and Kimberley Aboriginal Media (PAKAM), Umeewarra Media and PAW Media as the initial pilot sites, with an intention to roll out support to other locations over the next couple of years.

♦ FNMA is building a news content sharing platform to support the sharing of local news stories across multiple media organisations.

♦ FNMA supports inter-industry collaboration and networking through regular online meetings called "industry huddles" which provide a space for raising challenges or concerns and workshopping shared solutions.

♦ FNMA creates frameworks and partnerships to help members access expertise in a range of ways. Some examples include: providing training through the Community Media Training Organisation (CMTO) and Charles Darwin University; organising cross industry collaborations with the ABC on relevant areas of mutual benefit; working with the Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Education to connect trainees with media organisations; collaborating with the University of Melbourne and McNair on sector research projects; approaching various Government Departments and agencies for funding and sector resource issues; and consulting with the Bureau of Meteorology regarding the distribution of emergency information to relevant media organisation contacts.

♦ In partnership with the Jambunna Institute and the sector, FNMA developed an Employment and Skills Development Strategy, which has an associated Workplace Development Action Plan.

- Following consultation with the sector at CONVERGE Alice Springs in 2019 and a series of online meetings, FNMA secured $187,000 in funding from the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) to expand a remote monitoring system piloted by Ngaanyatjarra Media to 36 sites across the PAKAM, Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Media (PY Media), PAW Media, TSIMA and Mid West Aboriginal Media Association (Radio MAMA) networks.
- In late 2019 the First Nations media industry helped promote engagement in Coalition of Peaks consultation processes to identify community priorities for the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap. FNMA's understanding is that Government surveys of this nature usually get a response of around 200 people. This engagement process produced engagement from more than 4,000 people who attended community meetings, participated in online surveys and attended online events to have their say. It is a significant demonstration of community engagement (and action) as a direct result of promotion from First Nations media organisations.

4.2.3 Digital inclusion

The consultants met with the Digital Transformation Agency to gain an appreciation of their remit and in particular to explore the significance of the Indigenous broadcasting sector for digital inclusion.

The Agency relies on the Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) for tracking digital inclusion (Barraket et al., 2020). The ADII is prepared annually from a stratified survey. It has three dimensions:

Digital Ability: based on measurements of attitudes, basic skills and digital activities.
Access: based on measurements of internet access, internet data allowances and access to internet technology.
Affordability: based on measurements of relative expenditure and the value of expenditure.

The ADII's empirical research concludes that:

Indigenous Australians living in urban and regional areas have a relatively low level of digital inclusion, with a 2020 ADII score of 55.1 (7.9 points below the national score). In the past year the ADII score for Indigenous Australians remained unchanged.

The digital inclusion gap between Indigenous Australians and other Australians is evident across all three dimensions.

Further details about the research methodology and results are provided in Appendix 7.

Digital media now play a major role in achieving the objectives of the IBMP, and it was very clear from the consultations that this role is expected to grow. A digital inclusion gap means the value created by the investment in the IBMP Indigenous voice is not as widely distributed and effective as it should be. A digital inclusion deficit restricts the ability of Indigenous broadcasters to communicate and engage with communities as well as the capacity of communities to interact with each other. It also constrains the effectiveness of the sector in facilitating the activities of other programs targeting Closing the Gap outcomes.

Indigenous broadcasters can help enhance digital inclusion by contributing to the first dimension, Digital Ability: attitudes, basic skills and digital activities. They can do this by:

♦ educating consumers of broadband and other digital services about costs and benefits, and value of expenditure
♦ creating stronger demand, including a larger customer base for broadband and digital services by providing attractive content: the hope is that this may lead to more affordable internet access and data
♦ motivating individuals to improving their digital ability by shaping attitudes, using the links between broadcast and digitally delivered content to motivate basic skill acquisition, and providing a wider range of accessible digital activities.

4.2.4 Broadcasting and digital convergence

According to Bridge Ratings[6], broadcast radio (AM/FM) has sustained a barrage of technical competitors for share-of-mind since 2000: music file sharing, music downloads, internet radio, on-demand streaming (Van Dyke, 2020). Through it all, radio has managed to remain a popular choice among all age groups though younger consumers are spending more time with their smartphones, tablets and computers at the expense of AM/FM radio. Nevertheless, a growing number of listeners finds their favourite radio station is an important part of their streaming experience, particularly for music, primarily because it adds value through curation.

Indigenous broadcasters have adapted to this new reality and most provide live streaming of their programs; even smaller stations like Muda Aboriginal Corporation (2cuz FM) in Bourke and Bumma Bippera Media 98.7FM in Cairns.

Indigenous broadcasters have also utilised social media platforms to deliver their content and engage audiences. Facebook is the most popular but many also use Twitter, Sound Cloud Instagram and YouTube. Estimates of usage based on our perusal of the websites of the 47 NIAA-funded organisations are shown in Figure 4.
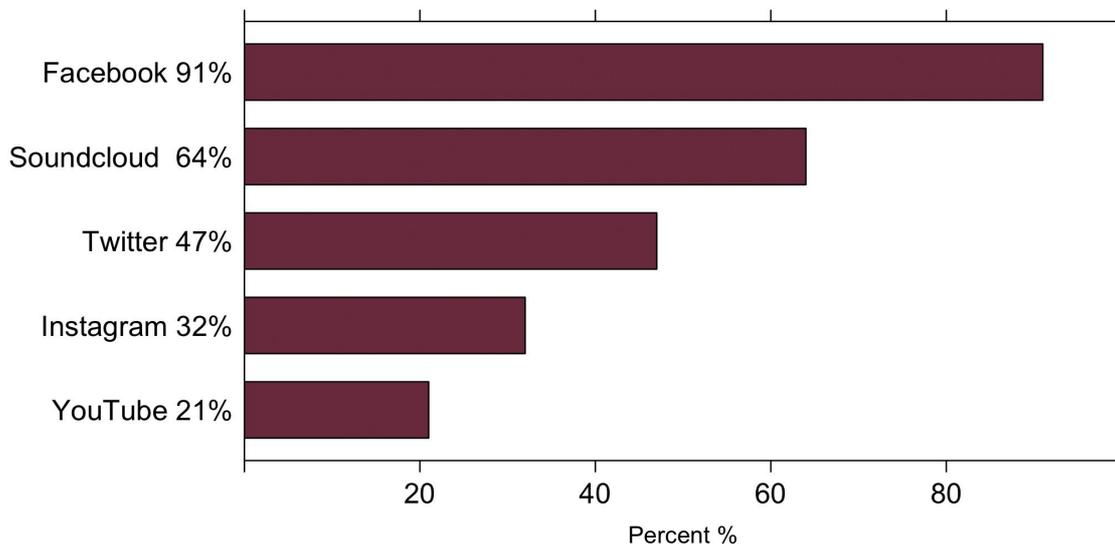
Figure 4. Estimated proportions of usage by IBMP-funded organisations using popular social media platforms

Mobile apps are also in use, for example PAKAM has mobile apps for Android and iPhone devices to listen to the PAKAM Radio network. They stream their radio in the apps and on the website at 56kbps, which is about 25mb/hour.

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[6] Van Dyke, Dave (2020) How music streaming helps broadcast radio, Bridge Ratings, accessed 17 December 2020. https://www.bridgeratings.com/music-streaming-broadcast-radio

Podcasts have also become another way to disseminate content. For example in November 2020 3KND Kool and Deadly in Melbourne released podcasts covering such topics as The Koori Women's Place, The Family Matters Report 2020 and Balit Durn Durn – how Indigenous voices will be embedded into Victoria's Mental Health system.

Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) provides free-to-air television (FTA TV) to Australians unable to receive a reliable terrestrial transmission. The service provides television access to channels, which are broadly comparable to metropolitan services, and to a range of radio channels. Approximately 200,000 households and an additional 30,000 travellers rely on VAST for access to FTA television.

The Review of the Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) service—final report (2018) concluded that satellite remains the most effective option to deliver FTA TV to viewers unable to receive a terrestrial transmission. Satellite broadcasting provides clear advantages that other delivery technologies cannot, including Australia-wide coverage, reliable and uncongested reception, and access to a broadly metropolitan-comparable FTA TV service.

The recommendations included:

♦ Recommendation 1: To promote consumer and industry certainty, the current satellite delivery model should be continued, for the next 5 years, as it currently provides the only available cost effective and fit-for-purpose service delivery model for free-to-air television in areas not served by a terrestrial transmission service.

♦ Recommendation 2: In negotiating the next phase of the program, the Government should explore what scope there is to adjust the satellite delivery model to include:
  – expanded channel selection, including high definition channels
  – enhanced news and radio services
  – improved local content and advertising, and
  – access to a broader and more competitive set-top box market

♦ Recommendation 4: The Government should explore opportunities to support users in remote communities by leveraging existing Indigenous employment programmes to train local job seekers to undertake repair and maintenance of user equipment and develop job opportunities in these areas.

4.3　Broadcast infrastructure and licencing

ACMA records 214 transmitter licences held by 54 Indigenous broadcasting organisations. Of these, four are AM radio, one is TV and the remaining 209 are FM.[7]

ACMA classifies these as: 6 Metropolitan, 24 Regional and 184 Remote. As Figure 5 shows the Northern Territory accounts for 53% of the transmitters, and another 40% are shared between Western Australia and Queensland.
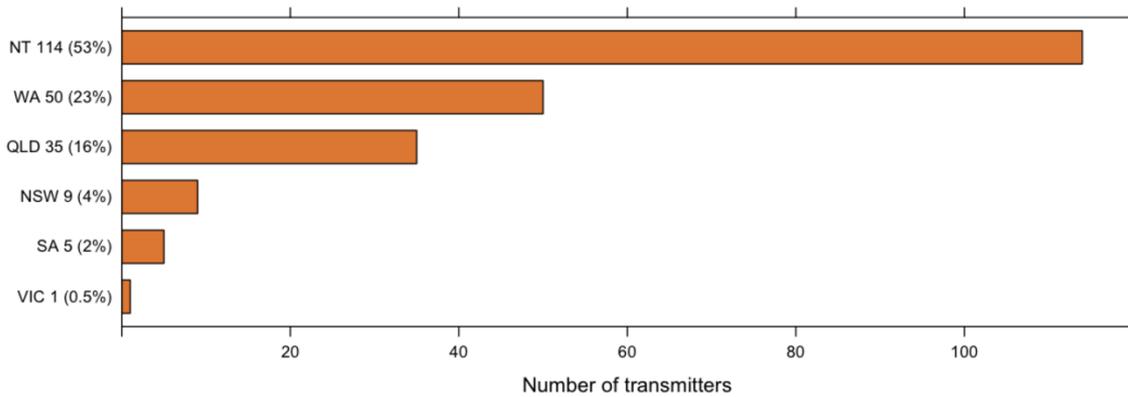
Figure 5. ACMA licenced Indigenous radio and TV terrestrial transmitters by state

The geographical distribution of transmitters supported by the Indigenous Broadcasting Program is shown by the blue markers in Figure 6.

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[7] This section is based on analysis of the ACMA Spectra data set https://www.acma.gov.au/radiocomms-licence-data and personal communications with ACMA officials.
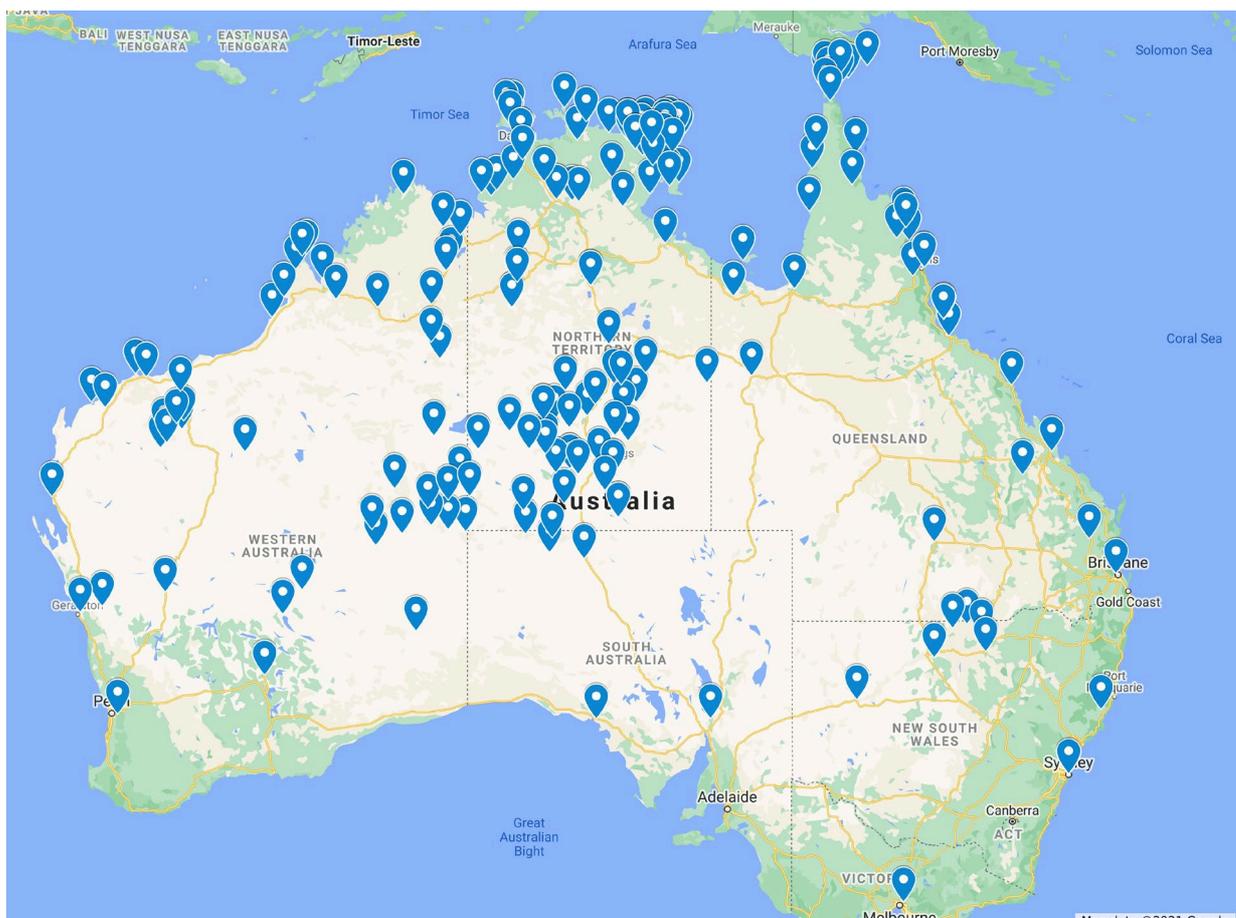
Figure 6. Distribution of community broadcast licenced transmitters supported by the IBMP

[Figure Description in the Appendix](#)

Unfortunately, not all sites are able to transmit because of old or damaged equipment. Much needed infrastructure repairs and upgrades cannot be undertaken because of decades of static funding levels. Five areas are of particular concern:[8]

Broadcasting transmission infrastructure: radio transmitters, decoders, satellite receivers, broadcast towers, power conditioners, or UPS, FM combiners, and associated equipment racks.

Broadcast facilities: buildings, furniture, security, air conditioner and services such as electricity, water and telephone. Air conditioning is critical in many cases because other essential equipment will fail from over-heating without it.

Network infrastructure: internet connectivity via ADSL, satellite or 3G/4G, used for IP radio streaming, remote monitoring, email and social media; cabling between the studio, transmission facility and local servers.

Studio infrastructure: radio panel, playout computer and software, tie-line/codec, speakers, UPS, microphones.

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[8] Information provided in email from Dr Daniel Featherstone, 19 November 2020.

Back-up power generators: required in cyclone prone areas where radio services can be out for prolonged periods if power lines are down or the local generator fails.

These problems were acknowledged in the roundtables.

"We have a looming infrastructure problem with the older technicians able to repair the ageing infrastructure are not being replaced."

"A big issue is the cost of this to licensees… Site fees, electricity costs… we can't afford it… The cost is huge, especially in the capital cities… this must be addressed in this review."

"AM is over 100 years old and the satellites are becoming increasingly unreliable."

"A major failure of the program is that after all this time there is no technical repair infrastructure… You can fix digital desks remotely but not hardware."

"The VAST network has problems with transmitters, and we don't have the staff to help… it takes 6 months to get funding from VAST… can funding be redirected to the RIMOs to help with this?"

"This is a big problem… there used to be rich traineeships for technicians but no longer… this is an important issue for the whole industry… we need a plan to differentiate between repairs and upgrades… we need a bucket of money (capital expenditure bucket) for repairs and upgrades, separate from our operational costs."

The major issues identified by the Roundtable process are:

♦ ageing and poorly maintained infrastructure with high risk of failure
♦ a high proportion of remote transmitters inoperative
♦ a shortage of skilled technical repair personnel
♦ remoteness and skills shortage adds significantly to delays and costs of service and or repair
♦ some types of modern equipment may be more reliable and/or able to be remotely fixed, thus reducing down time and saving costs.

The remote broadcasters also drew attention to the many additional tasks they have to undertake including:

♦ driving countless kilometres on non-sealed roads
♦ extra vehicle servicing and repair costs and overpriced light air travel
♦ climbing roofs/masts to install equipment
♦ maintaining equipment with antennas, dishes and cabling
♦ lobbing to Government for funds for equipment, technology changes and upgrades to the RIBS units
♦ managing ACMA guidelines and paperwork
♦ maintaining on-going working relationships with Regional Councils and providers (local Council, Aboriginal Corporation, Sports & Recreation, Community Development Program)
♦ arranging participation in cultural festivals
♦ conducting outside broadcasts including National ones (which are offered to all Stations/Orgs both Indigenous and (Non-Indigenous)
♦ conducting regional RIBS workshops.

In the area of broadcast automation technology there are several projects underway to install remote monitoring systems at remote studio and transmitter sites to reduce operational expenses involved in maintenance and technical callouts. Queensland Remote Aboriginal Media (QRAM) already has such a system (the Black Star model) and is looking to roll it out to Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association (TEABBA) and CAAMA. The FNMA has some limited funding from the CBF for the hardware and installation of equipment at 36 sites for PAW Media, PAKAM, Radio MAMA, PY Media and TSIMA.

4.4   Capabilities, skills and training

Given the diversity of activities in the sector, and the rapidly evolving broadcasting environment, there is a clear need for the sector to train its staff and volunteers, both to meet current operating requirements and to innovate.

It also apparent that beyond these "operating requirements" there are expectations the IBMP will create employment and train Indigenous people to a level that would make them employable in the broader broadcasting and media sector. That is to say that, in addition to routine operational training, there is an expectation "employment market training" should be an outcome of the program. Operational training of staff and volunteers is a normal part of running a community broadcast station, and the IBMP agreements clearly envisage the application of program funds to that purpose. Table 1 provides an idea of the range of operational skills and capabilities for which training might be needed.

Much of this training will be routine and could be undertaken "on-the-job", but some will be more complex or technical.

Table 1. A partial list of skills and capabilities desirable for managing an Indigenous broadcasting organisation and its operations

TRAINING	APPLICATION
Training for certification of broadcasters	Support festivals and events
Archiving of audio and video	Funding applications
Music recording	Funding acquittals
Initial training of broadcasters	Recruitment of Indigenous broadcasters
Repair of transmission equipment	Monitoring whether a RIBS is operating
Preventive maintenance through scheduled visits	RIBS audit
Help desk	RIBS accounting
Management of Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA) licensing	Employ and pay Indigenous broadcasters
Responsibility for securing permission for use of material	Payment of licence fees
Marketing and publicity	Management of licence renewals and applications
Responsibility for broadcast content to meet ACMA regulations	Broadcast and Production equipment contents insurance
Monitoring whether a RIBS is generating local content advocacy	Internet access
Support for workers to attend festivals and events	Phone line maintenance and account payment
Managing RIBS adherence to IBMP objectives	Holds Community Broadcast: CBL/TCBL/Open Narrowcast licences
Supervise and support Indigenous broadcasters	Social media moderation

As a sector with over 50 participants, there should be economies of scope and scale through collaboration in offering the more complex and technical operational training, especially if this can be undertaken online.

COVID-19 has reinforced that operational training can be effectively delivered remotely. The roundtables discussed what training could be developed and delivered cooperatively or developed centrally and delivered remotely. It was felt that both media training and technical training could be delivered remotely.

There will still be challenges, as this quote from one of the roundtables suggests.

> I worry about not being able to mentor trainees properly… some are sitting by themselves in a remote radio station without support – of course they don't succeed… this rotating door is hard to watch.

There was also a general concern about the ageing workforce particularly among general managers, technicians and technology experts. No real succession planning is in place for these leaders in the Indigenous broadcasting sector.

In a submission to the roundtable process Radio MAMA said that:

It is very apparent that we must look seriously at what a modern day First Nations Media operation looks like:

– Network Manager FTE
– Community Engagement FTE
– 2–4 Media Presenters with Radio, vision, podcast that can be located across the Network FTE
– 1–2 Trainees position FTE
– Administration/Grants Acquittal .6 to FTE
– Content/IT/Technical FTE
– Digital Producer FTE
– 3–10 volunteers across the network.

To be able to produce modern First Nations Media it is vital that all outlets have modern day skills, this requires industry and cultural specific training and of course local long term employment and career opportunities.

Employment market training was raised repeatedly in the roundtables.

"We recruit our trainees through the school-based traineeships – this cadet core is now running the station. An enormous amount of time is put into mentoring/mothering our trainees… we are not always successful, but we try really hard to keep them engaged."

"The NIAA has unrealistic expectations… We are broadcasters doing training for free – relies heavily on the goodwill of the staff to conduct in house training."

"We have a problem with training – our volunteers want money or the promise of a job."

Previous reviews have also made recommendations for enhanced employment market training and development for the sector. In 2010, the Stevens Review of Australian Government investment into the sector said:

Consultations revealed that a lack of training and ongoing employment opportunities within the Indigenous broadcasting sector resulted in many people viewing broadcasting as something to do while waiting around for an alternate job offer – rather than as a real, sustainable career choice. In many cases

organisations could not offer full-time jobs because they did not have enough funding, or better wages were on offer in other sectors. Retention was a major concern.

Indigenous media workers wanted "real jobs" and professional training and they wanted training that would allow them the ability to move between Indigenous broadcasting and mainstream if they chose to do so. This cross-sector movement was seen as mostly positive as people tended to move to and from the mainstream and Indigenous media sector, bringing with them newly acquired skills and experience each time (Stevens, 2010, p. 69).

Stevens proposed jobs and training programs that did not draw on the IBMP, and for the most part involved provision of employment market training and actual recruitment by mainstream media organisations such as the ABC and SBS.

The Watson report on operational partnerships in the Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Sector (2014) recommended the conduct of some employment market training within the IBMP sector.

A RIMO should have the capacity to provide continuing technical support to RIBS. It should have the capacity to provide training to Certificate IV level and the opportunity for further study and a pathway to mainstream media if desired.

The Watson Review went on to recommend as part of its criteria for an effective RIMO:

1. It should have the capacity to provide training or access to training up to Certificate IV level.
2. It should provide the opportunity for further study and a pathway to mainstream media if desired.
3. It should monitor operators at RIBS and provide support where required.
4. It should either supervise or arrange for the supervision of operators at RIBS.

A small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasters are indeed Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) delivering Certificate II, III and IV in Radio Broadcasting and Certificate IV in Screen and Media (see First Nations Media in Section 4.2.2 above). Other organisations provide employment market training from their operational funding. For example:

Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association (TEABBA) provides a good example of a pathways model that aims to support a range of career objectives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. Broadcasters complete formal qualifications (TAFE certificate) in Event Management to develop the leadership and planning skills required to deliver outside broadcast events, but

also to build confidence and transferable skills for a range of scenarios. Broadcasters are encouraged to participate in professional development training, including undertaking VET qualifications in Project Management and Training and Assessment, which has resulted in organizational capacity to deliver appropriate and engaging training to emerging media workers. (FNMA)

The FNMA's Nine Calls for Action highlighted a different, and important perspective, that of extended on-the-job training including mentoring and "shadowing", to develop management and senior-level expertise in the sector, particularly to meet the government's 90% ATSI employment target in IAS funded programs:

A lack of operational funding has limited opportunities for mentoring and job-shadowing to develop management and senior-level expertise. In the media industry, this represents the difference between the current 79% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment level across the sector and the 90% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment target set by the Government for all IAS funded programs in 2017. There are currently about 46 First Nations media organisations which are funded through NIAA for the delivery of broadcasting activities, of which 22 have a non-Indigenous manager. Nineteen of those organisations have more than 90% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment levels. This is an area of focus within our industry to upskill and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into management positions.

The development of management mentorship and shadowing programs would build capacity and skills in specific areas such as management, production and coordination. Many of these roles are currently filled by non-Indigenous staff, particularly in remote and regional areas, as the experience needed to fulfil these roles takes a long period of time to build. These types of jobs cannot be easily taught through courses and would be more suited to shadowing, where specific skills can be learnt on the job. (FNMA, 2020)

Reflecting the confused boundary between operational and employment market training, and unrealistic expectations of stakeholders, one roundtable member commented that:

Recruitment, training and development needs clarification and context. The sector is primarily funded for radio broadcasting; it is not funded to do training. Not everyone has RTO status, however, local councils look to stations to be all things.

Another said that the priorities included local Indigenous engagement, languages and upskilling of employment. Other members concurred with comments about the high turnover, an underdeveloped career structure and NIAA reporting not allowing grant recipients to report all training and

development undertaken. Others suggested the training was piecemeal and inconsistent: "They usually blow in for a one-off workshop – we want them to commit to more than this."

Employment market training programs are prominent features of the operational practices of several major Indigenous broadcasters. Roundtable members provided the following examples.

♦ Bumma Bipera recruit their trainees through school-based traineeships – this "cadet core" is now running the station. It is a successful model but with low numbers (92 in 12 months). A lot of time is put in by elders, the manager and volunteers in mentoring these trainees. The manager commented: "It's not always successful but we try really hard to get local engagement – we mother them."

♦ QRAM gave examples of training and development leading to seven new job roles from Wide Area Network (WAN) technicians through to content directors.

♦ First Nations Broadcasting has an Indigenous Broadcast and Training Program.

♦ Triple A Training, a division of BIMA, is registered training organisation delivering nationally accredited and non-accredited media training.

♦ Goolarri Media provide the opportunity for volunteers and employees to gain media skills and qualifications in a fully operational industry environment, meshing national competency standards with a strong Indigenous ethos.

FNMA identified future employment expansion in the following areas:

♦ media
♦ community journalism
♦ digital archiving
♦ digital inclusion
♦ communications growth industries.

The Roundtable requested NIAA to work with the sector to investigate the possibility for collaborative remote training and also to pressure State and Territory governments to provide more funding for foundation training.

4.5   The IBMP funding base

Funding is a major continuing issue for sector stability and strengthening. A decade ago, Stevens 2010, concluded that the sector was "substantially under-resourced for what it is attempting to achieve" and recommended:

> … a significant increase in core operating funding for Indigenous radio stations under the IBP – to be phased in over the next two years. It also recommends allowing this core funding to be used for funding multi-media equipment, training and content creation to enable Indigenous producers to follow the lead of mainstream broadcasters into the developing world of convergent media.

The recommendation was not implemented and in the following decade the sector has had to adapt to static funding in different ways. In the remote sector some RIMOs have developed new technologies that have provided efficiencies in both broadcasting and monitoring the status of their RIBS. Most however have reduced staff, reduced training and development and cut back on repairs and maintenance. Most rely on volunteers to keep on air. Anecdotally we are told that other important aspects such as governance training have also been reduced or have lapsed.

FNMA have noted that:

> In a content-driven media environment, First Nations media organisations have had to prioritise broadcast personnel while making some tough decisions in relation to support personnel. The result is a hollowing of administrative resources across the industry, which leaves gaps in career pathways into management positions and lack of human resources for business development, fundraising, promotion, financial management and programming oversight. In many cases, a Station Manager is expected to carry out all of these roles. Similarly, individual broadcasters in the First Nations media sector are delivering the same amount of content that a team of 4 or 5 people would be working on at an equivalent mainstream service.

The Culture and Heritage Branch analysed around 50% (around $10 million) of the broadcasting budgets, using three criteria: operational, employment related and technical (including licences etc) costs. The very rough figures suggest funding is directed in the following ways:

♦ Operational – 36%
♦ Employment – 52% – only a very small amount is spent on training.[9]
♦ Technical – 12%

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[9] The Watson Review (2014) reported that RIBS provide on average $620 (3.8% of their budget) for training and it hardly figures in RIMO budgets despite the fact that it is being conducted.

In a paper provided to the roundtable process the FNMA made the following points regarding the impact of restrained funding and reducing revenue opportunities.

Indigenous broadcast services receive approximately 75 per cent of their funding through the National Indigenous Australians Agency and an additional 8 per cent from other government sources. Government funding has been supplemented by sponsorship and social entrepreneurship income sources. Over the past 15 years, economic pressure has resulted in shrinking sponsorship income with Indigenous licensed radio stations reporting a reduction from an average 248 minutes of sponsorship per week in 2011-12 to 97 minutes per week in 2015-16, with an average revenue rate of $10 per minute.

Unlike other community broadcasters, Indigenous licensed radio stations have not been able to turn to their audiences for financial support. Membership/subscriber revenue for Indigenous stations is just $1 per member (on average) as compared to an average $38 per member across the wider community broadcasting sector, with audiences for some license types (fine music/educational) paying up to $66 per member to support their preferred station. Societal and socio-economic pressures mean that First Nations broadcasters can't supplement other revenue streams in this way.

Social Ventures Australia found that First Nations media organisations have demonstrated their capacity to self-generate revenue through other social entrepreneur activities (such as revenue from video production) but are constrained by the current minimum resourcing levels allowing only for the maintenance of essential services with no provision for staffing to diversify activities. We welcome discussion with the NIAA on resourcing business development within our sector to increase self-generated income

4.6   Summary

Looking to the future the three principal areas for focus agreed by the roundtables were infrastructure, technological improvements and employment, training and development. These are key to maintaining the capacity of the sector to innovate and deliver value to their communities. Chapter 5 explores alignment between the sector's activities and Closing the Gap and the Indigenous voice process. There is also much background information, and some important and still apposite recommendations in past reviews, which are covered in Appendix 2. These include:

♦ Review of Australian Government Investment in the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Sector (Stevens, 2010)
♦ Review of Operational Partnerships in the Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Sector (Watson, 2014)

- ♦ Review of the Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) service – final report (DCA, 2018)
- ♦ The Future of Radio (ACMA, 2020)
- ♦ Remote Indigenous Communications (Featherstone, 2020).

Chapter 5. Alignment of the sector with Closing the Gap and the Indigenous voice process

5.1   Introduction

The Stevens Review's (2010) overriding conclusion was "that Indigenous broadcasting and media is a powerful tool that needs to be more effectively harnessed to assist the Australian Government to realise its broad Indigenous affairs policy objectives, such as *Closing the Gap*" (Letter of Transmittal).

Two key principles that now guide Indigenous policy and program evaluation are, firstly that ATSI people must determine, drive and own the desired outcomes, alongside all governments, and secondly that governments build on the strong foundations ATSI people have, through their deep connection to family, community and culture.[10]

As we have shown in Chapter 4Chapter 3, the IBMP sector is engaged in a diverse range of activities and has, over many years, built up a large audience, rich social capital and networks that provide opportunities for communication and engagement between governments and communities.

At the policy co-design level the sector is ideally placed to support the Indigenous Voice co-design process, not just through outward one-way communication, but also through two-way communication and the facilitation of engagement activities.

At the level of policy and program delivery, the sector has a key value proposition in providing channels for communication, education and motivation, for nearly all the Closing the Gap life outcomes.

We begin this chapter by examining the potential role of the sector in supporting the Indigenous voice co-design process.

We then look more broadly at the alignment of this value created by the sector and government policy priorities. In Chapter 6, we illustrate how this alignment can inform policy and evaluation frameworks.

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[10] Closing the Gap web site: https://www.closingthegap.gov.au accessed 9 December 2020.

5.2 The IBMP sector and Closing the Gap

5.2.1 The Closing the Gap outcomes

The Closing the Gap is a government strategy that aims to reduce disadvantage among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The National Agreement on Closing the Gap has 16 targets, each with an associated outcome. This list of outcomes is as follows.

Health:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy long and healthy lives.
2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are born healthy and strong.

Education, employment and economic participation:

3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education in their early years.
4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their early years.
5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential.
6. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reach their full potential through further education pathways.
7. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are engaged in employment or education.
8. Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

Housing:

9. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need.

Justice and safety:

10. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.
11. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.
12. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system.
13. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe.
14. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enjoy high levels of social and emotional wellbeing.

Culture and language:

15. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters.
16. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.

5.2.2 The IBMP's role in Closing the Gap

The IBMP sector plays a key role in Closing the Gap outcomes in many areas including, strengthening cultural Identity, informing communities, education, childhood development and adult health by:

♦ delivering content and access to historical and contemporary Indigenous programming that reflects and enhances cultural identity and expression
♦ contributing a positive sense of identity and healthy outcomes
♦ helping to maintain and strengthen Indigenous languages, particularly in remote and regional Australia
♦ providing opportunities for economic development for Indigenous Australians
♦ providing a range of training and employment pathways for Indigenous Australians within the sector that enhance employment opportunities in mainstream media and other industries.

The July 2020 *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* acknowledges that "strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are fundamental to improved life outcomes" and notes that "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media, in particular community-controlled media, have a central role in communicating activities under this Agreement to allow culturally relevant messages to be developed and shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people".(NIAA, 2020a, p. 4, paragraphs 20, 24).

Table 2 contains a small selection of examples of the range of content, delivery mechanisms and modes of engagement that characterise the sector and give Indigenous people a voice.[11]

Table 2. Content and platforms for delivery

Content Type	Current Methods/platforms of Delivery
Broadcasts in language.	RIMO/RIBS and other First Nations radio broadcasts (up to 25 languages broadcast weekly); IndigiTUBE radio streaming and language portal; ICTV Play InLanguage

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[11] This information was provided by FNMA.

Content Type	Current Methods/platforms of Delivery
Community news. Regional news. State/Territory news. National news.	Local news from First Nations radio services; NIRS/NINS; NITV; Koori Mail; ABC Radio, including news in three languages (Arrente, Walrpiri, Kriol); CAAMA News; Ngaarda Radio news; IndigenousX[12]; plus mainstream news
Community information e.g. visits by govt. or other services.	RIMO/RIBS and other First Nations radio broadcasts
COVID and other health news.	First Nations radio services; indigiTUBE COVID channel; NITV; FNMA (have coordinated messaging to sector and funding for localised production and broadcast of messages); social media from all orgs; noticeboards in communities; mainstream media
Local stories.	RIMO/RIBS and other First Nations radio; ICTV/ ICTV Play; community social media sites
Education.	All First Nations radio services provide some educational content;
Information/ stories of interest through e.g. podcasts Entertainment.	First Nations radio services and websites; indigiTUBE; CBAA National Feature and Documentaries
Music.	First Nations radio services; indigiTUBE- music sharing platform for stations, also run the First Sounds quarterly compilation of new First nations music with AMRAP;
Sport.	First Nations radio services/ RIMOs (most orgs do live OBs of local sports events); NIRS/NINS; NITV (do some live coverage); ICTV (do some live coverage in Alice Springs or nearby communities)
Connection (social groups).	Most media orgs are very active on Facebook and other social media; NITV;
Emergency and weather warnings.	First Nations radio services (working closely with BOM); NIRS/NINS; ABC and mainstream services
Archives	First Nations Media Archiving hub (using Mukurtu);

Indigenous broadcasters have always considered themselves as an integral part of their communities with a strong commitment to improve community wellbeing that extends well beyond the traditional broadcasting role of delivering content to an audience. Effective community engagement is critical to their successful operation.

Numerous examples of community engagement by the sector were highlighted in the course of the Roundtable Process and Consultations undertaken for this review. The following are some examples:

TEABBA, Daly River region. In July 2020, a small team of TEABBA broadcasters and Kyle the TEABBA Tech, headed to the Daly River region to check on RIBS sites and to meet some people in the communities. They

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[12] IndigenousX is a 100% owned and operated, independent media, consultancy and training organisation.

travelled to Wadeye, Peppimenarti, Palumpa and Nauiyu Nambiyu. The roads were still dry and they got to meet some great locals. Irene Chula who is the Youth Services coordinator in Wadeye was interviewed. She also got a language lesson and some insight into bush tucker from that region from Adrian Lanjen aka Wildhorse. (TEABBA Newsletter: Christmas 2020)

CAAMA. The Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) offers film/TV production, music production and distribution, technical services and audio and lighting services to major events in central Australia such as the Parrtjima Festival of Light.

Goolarri Media in Broome offers commercial film production services, music development, writers development programs and training services and runs events such as the internationally recognized Kimberley Girl Program, regional NAIDOC activities and A Taste of Broome annual tourism event along with running an open narrowcast television service.

Yolngu Radio in Arnhem Land offers a range of translation services, including cultural awareness training and cross-cultural publications. These activities provide growth and development opportunities for community and staff.[13]

Other examples of community engagement include:

PAW Media Yuendumu, NT. In June 2010 a PAW Media video crew accompanied the Sims family to Ethel Creek Outstation to record aspects of the Milky Way Jukurrpa. P. Japaljarri Sims was the senior custodian for the Jukurrpa and wished to have parts of the Jukurrpa recorded for the Warlpiri Media Archive, given his age and failing health. The videos of the trip are sensitive cultural content and are being secured in the Warlpiri Media Archive (they will not be distributed). This is a key area for PAW Media work, which highlights the vital archiving role of Indigenous media organisations in creating content in support of cultural preservation.[14]

TEABBA Darwin, NT. During the COVID shutdown, TEABBA responded to an emergency at Gunbalayna after reports the community had no radio services at all. After obtaining a one-off permit from the Northern Land Council, the technical crew was able to attend to the problem and restore an essential communication service to the local community.[15]

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[13] FNMA material provided to Roundtable Process, November 2020
[14] https://www.pawmedia.com.au/productions/milky-way-jukurrpa-6
[15] https://www.teabba.com.au/gunbalanya-tech-trip

QRAM, Cairns, QLD is currently running a project "A Yarn That Could Save A Life" as part of a series of community health information initiatives that engage listeners with appealing, informative, and sometimes humorous radio plays to:

♦ raise awareness among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the facts about organ and tissue donation

♦ address existing barriers that may be preventing people from discussing organ and tissue donation and becoming donors

♦ raise awareness of the importance of discussing and knowing the donation decisions of family members

♦ promote Donate for Life Week and the availability of information and resources relating to organ and tissue donation.[16]

Umeewarra Radio, Port Augusta, SA also promotes community health as part of its programming. One important message being delivered is about the eye disease, Trachoma. Umeewarra brought health specialists and community Elders together to ensure delivery of the message in languages other than English to help to break down barriers and improve health outcomes. Umeewarra also helps to "close the gap" in other ways. Its boardroom is available for public use for training workshops and other meetings, and JobWatch uses Umeewarra's broadcasting power to advertise job vacancies.[17]

Goolarri Media, Broome, WA assists the development of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous media and communications in the Kimberley region. It supports the enhancement of Indigenous musicians throughout Western Australia, creates and produces valuable event activities for the entire community and delivers nationally accredited training in media and events management with a goal of creating stronger social cohesion across the diverse peoples of the Kimberley and ultimately, invest in Indigenous people through education, training and employment pathways.[18]

Bumma Bippera Media, Cairns, Queensland create culturally-appropriate radio, print and online resources for First Nations people of Australia on a broad range of topics covering health, education, employment, law, housing and culture.[19]

Academic research suggests that negative representation of Indigenous issues tends to perpetuate in mainstream media.[20] More recent evidence

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[16] https://qram.com.au/projects/
[17] https://www.umeewarramedia.com/breaking-down-barriers-through-broadcasting/
[18] https://goolarri.com/about-us/
[19] https://989fm.com.au/category/community/
[20] See for example Stoneham Goodman and Daube (2014) and Balvin and Kashima (2012).

demonstrates that the non-Indigenous media, especially mainstream news outlets, tend to focus on negative or sensational stories about Indigenous people and communities.

The evidence was presented at a series of webinars conducted by UTS in August 2020 entitled: "Black Stories Matter: Does the Media Fail Aboriginal political aspirations?" Drawing on a study of 45 years of news media reporting of Aboriginal activism, this seminar series posed the questions: Is the media failing in the way it tells Aboriginal stories? How can the media more effectively and fairly represent Aboriginal political worlds? What does the shift from print to online and social media mean for Aboriginal stories? The Zoom seminar series brought together media researchers, historians, former policy makers and members of the growing cohort of Aboriginal journalists whose work is disrupting the patterns of the past, to discuss these questions.

The Indigenous broadcasting and media sector can counter negative or sensational stories, at least for its own audiences, by presenting positive narratives, stories that educate and motivate in alignment with the CTG outcomes and targets. This can include, but certainly go well beyond government-sponsored public service announcements.

5.2.3 The direct contribution of the sector to CTG outcomes through IAS investment

A significant proportion of government investment in achieving these outcomes is gathered together under the IAS. Government investment in the IBMP sector falls within the Culture and Capability stream of the IAS. The objectives of the Culture and Capability Programme are to:

♦ support the expression, engagement and conservation of Indigenous culture
♦ increase Indigenous Australians' participation in the social and economic life of Australia through healing, and strengthening the capability, governance and leadership of Indigenous Australians, organisations and communities
♦ promote broader understanding and acceptance of the unique place of Indigenous cultures in Australian society.

There is a clear and direct relationship between these objectives and some of the CTG outcomes, especially:

8. Strong economic participation and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.
15. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain a distinctive cultural, spiritual, physical and economic relationship with their land and waters.

16. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.

Consequently, evaluations of the success of the IBMP should take account of both its direct and indirect contributions to the achievement of these outcomes. For example, the sector makes direct contributions by:

♦ strengthening cultural identity
♦ assisting reconnection with culture
♦ the maintenance of Indigenous languages
♦ preservation of archives
♦ sharing cultural knowledge and history across generations and with non-Indigenous Australians collecting and broadcasting Indigenous stories
♦ supporting community building/cohesion initiatives that empower Indigenous Australians
♦ recognising significant events or people in Indigenous history
♦ broadcasting Indigenous news – local, regional and national
♦ providing a vehicle for the exchange of ideas on all issues impacting on Indigenous Australians
♦ providing a trusted culturally appropriate channel of official communication with Indigenous communities
♦ strengthening and promoting Indigenous music, dance and spoken word.
♦ providing opportunities for economic development for Indigenous Australians
♦ providing a range of training and employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians information.

The sector also has a unique role as a principal vehicle for the NIAA to communicate and engage with its constituency.

Engaging successfully with Indigenous communities requires:

♦ an appreciation of, and the cultural competency to respond to, Indigenous history, cultures and contemporary social dynamics and to the diversity of Indigenous communities
♦ valuing the cultural skills and knowledge of community organisations and Indigenous people
♦ clarity about the purpose and the relevant scale for engagement, which may call for multi-layered processes
♦ engagement to relate to Indigenous concepts of wellbeing

- effective governance and capacity within both the Indigenous community and governments themselves
- appropriate time frames, including for deliberation and responsive funding, where applicable.

5.2.4 The indirect contribution of the sector to the CTG outcomes

In addition to its direct contributions, the sector plays, or has the potential to play, important intermediate roles in a wide range of government and community activities targeting the full range of CTG outcomes in the areas of health, education, employment and economic participation, housing, justice and safety, as well as culture and language.

This is because Indigenous community broadcasters are much more than just radio stations. They are community assets, with audiences, social capital and social networks that have been built up over decades, and which contribute to strengthening culture, community development and local economies. They are essential services that provide trusted information. They have skills not just in content creation and broadcasting, but also in communication and the organisation of events among their communities. This has become very clear recently in the health domain through the sector's activity during the COVID pandemic, particularly as a principal source of health information for Indigenous communities.

These indirect contributions are a central part of the policy and evaluation framework discussed in Chapter 6.

5.3   The IBMS and the Indigenous Voice

The Indigenous Voice co-design process was announced by Minister Wyatt in October 2019. We argue that Indigenous broadcasters can play a valuable role in supporting the co-design process.

The *Interim Report* of the process (NIAA, 2020b) describes the high-level outcomes in the following terms:

> We want a robust system in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and our communities are able to work in true partnership with governments, to have our advice heard by the Parliament and Australian Government and to be part of shared decision making with governments at the local and regional level.
>
> An Indigenous Voice provides an appropriate mechanism for the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be heard on issues that affect us. The consideration of our vast and diverse experiences through an Indigenous

Voice will provide for better policy outcomes, strengthen legislation and programs and, importantly, achieve greater and more sustainable outcomes for our people across a wide range of areas.

The first step in the design process was the establishment of three groups working together to develop options and models for an Indigenous voice:

♦ a Senior Advisory Group with 19 members to guide the process
♦ a National Co-design Group with 16 members developing models to ensure Indigenous people are heard at a national level on decisions that affect their lives
♦ a Local and Regional Co-design Group with 17 members developing options for a local and regional voice/voices to ensure Indigenous Australians have a genuine say in the decisions that affect their lives.

These three groups met and began their work over late 2019 and early 2020. Initially they sought to identify what is in place and working well around the country, as well as past and international examples. Once options and models for an Indigenous voice are developed, all three groups will provide recommendations to the Australian Government and a process of urban, regional and remote consultation will begin.

It is important that these groups, especially the Local and Regional Co-design Group, take into account both the current and potential ways in which Indigenous broadcasting and media can contribute to an Indigenous voice.

Furthermore, during the co-design process, the sector can assist the Groups by promoting the co-design process, both in the development and the consultation phases.

5.4   Summary
We have seen that the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector both contributes directly to Closing the Gap life outcomes and, very importantly, provides expertise, services and communication channels for other sectors directly charged with achieving those outcomes.

At the policy co-design level the sector is ideally placed to support the Indigenous Voice co-design process, not just through outward one-way communication, but also through two-way communication and the facilitation of engagement activities.

In the next chapter we describe a proven approach, emphasising the creation and utilisation of outputs, which can guide the development of a policy and evaluation framework.

Chapter 6. Towards an IBMP policy and evaluation framework

6.1   Introduction

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap sets targets across outcome areas: education, employment, health and wellbeing, justice, safety, housing, land and waters, and languages. The National Agreement places strong emphasis on evaluation of the achievement of these outcomes, through data, indicators and measurement against targets.

A challenge for the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program is to articulate a policy and evaluation framework that will enable the sector to demonstrate its direct and indirect contributions to these outcomes.

In this chapter we describe, in some detail, a logical approach to developing a policy and evaluation framework for the program. It is critically important that policy frameworks include and are informed by program evaluation.

6.2   The current requirements of funded organisations

There is at present a complex set of requirements variously expressed as objectives, contractual requirements, broad policy statements and KPIs for funded. This has arisen over the past two decades as the program has shifted portfolios and government priorities have changed. Many of these are summarised in Figure 7.

IAS Culture and Capability – Objectives

- Support the expression, engagement and conservation of Indigenous culture.
- Increase Indigenous Australians' participation in the social and economic life of Australia through healing, and strengthening the capability, governance and leadership of Indigenous Australians, organisations and communities.
- Promote broader understanding and acceptance of the unique place of Indigenous cultures in Australian society.

Closing the Gap objectives

build and strengthen structures to empower Indigenous people to share decision-making with governments

build Indigenous community-controlled sectors to deliver services to support closing the gap

transform mainstream government organisations to improve accountability and better respond to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's needs

improve and share access to data and information to enable Indigenous communities to make informed decisions.

Contracted requirements in current contracts

1. Broadcast and media activities, including broadcasting in language(s) where appropriate, that reflect the interest of the local Indigenous community, and that identify and are responsive to community needs for information and entertainment;
2. Training and employment for Indigenous people;
3. Servicing, repairing and updating broadcasting and related equipment;
4. Broadcast of government/community messages;
5. Programming covering local and regional events and activities;
6. Programming covering information about national Indigenous events and activities, including NAIDOC activities, Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week and other Indigenous festivals, cultural and economic events; and
7. Other community-specific activities identified by the Agency and/or representative community structures.

Closing the Gap Priority Reforms

1: Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making

2: Building the Community-Controlled Sector

3: Transforming Government

4: Shared Access to Data and information at a Regional Level

Priority outcomes in current contracts

1. Systematic monitoring of and response to community communication needs
2. Contribution to cultural expression and maintenance
3. Contribution to community economic and social development
4. Cooperative engagement on communication of community and government priorities

Figure 7. IBMP objectives and outcomes

Figure Description in Appendix

Notwithstanding this multitude of objectives, there is a strong perception in the sector that their principal obligation is to report against six Key performance Indicators (KPIs) as shown in Table 3, four of which relate to employment.

> We will all change how we broadcast and the NIAA also needs to change. Standard measures are fine but also needs to be flexible… these conversations are important – one size does not fit all – similar but different – (gave example of gender balance and the need to be flexible) – different from community broadcasting… We as a sector need change and you as an agency need to listen". (roundtable participant)

Table 3. IBMP Key performance indicators[21]

Number	Key Performance Indicator	Target and data
1.	MKPI.M1 – Indigenous Employment	50 per cent of hours worked in the reporting period under the activity, are worked by an Indigenous person. Source: Service providers
2.	MKDI.D1 – Employment Numbers	Number of Indigenous people employed, and the total number of people employed, under the activity (by gender) Source: Service provider
3.	MKDI.D2 – Hours worked – Indigenous staff	Number of hours worked in the reporting period by all Indigenous people employed under the activity. Source: Service provider
4.	MKDI.D3 – Hours Worked – All staff	Number of hours worked in the reporting period by all people employed under the activity. Source: Service provider
5.	MKPI.M2 – Core Service Provision D401.01 – Broadcasting Organisations	Core activities or service being delivered meet or exceed requirements. Source: Agreement Manager review of Service Provider performance reporting Number of broadcasting organisations supported: Source: Service provider.

Of these No. 1 is simply the ratio of No. 3 to No. 4. Thought should be given to whether these kinds of indicators create perverse incentives, for example to minimise hourly pay for Indigenous employees so as to maximise the hours worked.

These three KPIs, together with No. 2 are based on counts of employment of Indigenous people in the organisation. It is certainly desirable that sector organisations have a high proportion of Indigenous employees, but if it is necessary to set targets then they should be treated as operating requirements under the funding agreements. This point is developed further in Section 6.7.42 below.

KPI No. 5 would appear to require some degree of subjective judgment about "core activities" and clear specification of "requirements" in common units of measurement. Careful thought should be given to how this KPI can be assessed reliably, using a methodology that would minimise the risk of unconscious bias.

KPI No 6, which is used only for RIMOs, is not, as it stands, a performance indicator. It could be improved by expressing it as a fraction of, say, annual

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[21] Under the former Minister, 90% of hours worked by an Indigenous person was mandated. Contract managers and organisations are now free to determine the percentage of hours worked by Indigenous people.

funding. However it is reasonable to expect that RIMOs enjoy considerable economies of scale, which should be taken into account if comparisons are to be made fairly.

It may be appropriate to trial a more sophisticated approach to measuring the operational performance of RIMOs such as Data Envelopment Analysis ("DEA"). This requires specialist skills but support for this may be available within the APS.[22]

The current situation then, is that although there is a plethora of objectives, as shown in Figure 7, and some of these are incorporated into funding agreements, the roundtable discussions suggest that organisations in the sector are mainly assessed by a small set of indicators which are mostly operational and unrelated to culture and capability outcomes.

6.3   The IBMP and NIAA's Corporate Plan

The IBMP is not currently directly reflected in the NIAA's corporate plan except possibly with Activity 3 – Progressing co-design of a Voice for Indigenous Australians. Activity 3's Intended Result is to "Support the co-design process and establish advisory groups to provide advice to the Government on options for local and regional decision-making models and a national Indigenous Voice by end 2020".

The Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program needs a clear policy framework that gives clear direction, expected outcomes and a reporting and evaluation framework that demonstrates how it assists to achieve NIAA's corporate responsibilities.

6.4   Motivation for a policy and evaluation framework

Dr Daniel Featherstone in his PhD thesis (2015) sets out principles to inform the development of a Remote Indigenous Media and Communications Policy.

He makes the point that a new policy framework needs to recognise that Indigenous media organisations provide a first level of service to remote Indigenous audiences, particularly for those who speak an Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander language as their first language. Indigenous media has been recognised as an essential service in numerous reports (ATSI, 1999, Productivity Commission, 2000; Stevens, 2010) but this has yet to be enshrined in policy.

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[22] Productivity Commission paper on DEA with case studies:
https://www.pc.gov.au/research/supporting/data-envelopment-analysis .

Featherstone continues that the framework should also: consider rights and equity, participation and access, promote reconciliation, convergence and two-way communications, recognise sector diversity, build partnerships, industry development and capacity, develop new models for RIMOs and RIBS, and support cultural and linguistic development and appropriate technologies.

As a result of the roundtables and consultation with the sector we propose a durable policy framework which for the next five to ten years:

♦ clearly articulates how the Sector creates defined public value, especially in terms of the agreed priorities.
♦ is focused not just on technology and assets, but also on the creation of community value and retention of an essential service.
♦ stipulates how Government and the sector can co-design and build an evidence base for achievement of outcomes, that is credible and relevant to Indigenous communities.

Given contemporary economic challenges this can be done by:

♦ leveraging and/or reconfiguring the resources and capabilities accumulated over decades of Government investment and hard work by the sector
♦ supporting new forms of collaboration, including those which can exploit technological innovation, and economies of scope and scale
♦ re-aligning the patterns of Government investment over time to reflect changes in communities and technologies
♦ adjusting Commonwealth and where necessary State Governments policies, regulations and practices that constrain or impose burdens on the sector.

6.5   Policy and evaluation framework logic

It was clear from the roundtable discussions and other evidence that the policy and evaluation framework needs substantial clarification and simplification.

The general form of a logical program policy and evaluation framework is that the NIAA provides funding and perhaps other support to a broadcasting organisation in the sector, and the organisation is expected to:

♦ **deliver outputs**, such as broadcasting and content creation infrastructure and capabilities

- ♦ **utilise its delivered outputs** to achieve direct outcomes specific to the IBMP for example outcomes in the domain of "expression, engagement and conservation of Indigenous culture"
- ♦ **make its infrastructure and capabilities outputs available to other organisations to utilise to achieve their outcomes**, many of which will be CTG outcomes in, say, health or education, or in the Indigenous voice process. These are indirect outcomes from the perspective of the IBMP. The availability of infrastructure and capabilities for others to use might itself be an outcome for the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program
- ♦ **conform to operating requirements** such as ACMA licencing compliance, transmitter up-time, good governance, timely and complete reporting, collection and provision of data, achieving a target percentage of Indigenous employment within the organisation, best efforts to generate revenue from other sources.

There needs to be a shift to measuring outcomes and outputs as part of a new policy framework

Clear guidelines for these four components are the essential features of both a policy and an evaluation framework for the Program. The guidelines should be operationalised in the specific and explicit terms of funding agreements for each organisation funded under the IBMP.

Each funded organisation is then directly accountable for its outputs, its utilisation of its outputs to achieve IBMP-specific direct outcomes related to Indigenous culture, and its compliance with operating requirements. It is also accountable for making its outputs available, subject to resource constraints and on reasonable terms, to other entities to be utilised for the achievement of outcomes that fall within the broad framework of the CTG. These are indirect outcomes.

Other organisations which are funded by government and should be making use of IBMP sector infrastructure and capabilities to achieve their outcomes should be evaluated on the success of their utilisation.

Note that the operating requirements include provision of data and timely and complete reporting. This reflects a key principle of the CTG Agreement and is essential for good quality evaluation.

The operationalisation of the guidelines in funding agreements will vary somewhat, especially between RIBS and RIMOs and might be quite different for a non-broadcasting peak body such as the FNMA. A policy framework would

also include the operational aspects to implementation including service level standards

At times, the guidelines may include outputs or operating requirements that require **collaboration or standardisation among** organisations funded under the Program. Examples might be a centralised training register, standardised data collection and reporting systems, and adoption of common broadcasting technologies.

Finally it should be noted that there will be cases where organisations funded by the IBMP will contribute directly to outcomes in other CTG outcome areas such as health, education, justice and well-being. Conversely, there will be cases where organisations funded to deliver outcomes in those areas will also contribute to outcomes within the scope of the IBMP. These contributions should be welcomed and celebrated but need not be formally included in a policy and evaluation framework.

Figure 8. Diagram of inputs, outputs and outcomes

JUSTICE AND WELL-BEING OUTCOMES

9. Appropriate, affordablen housing

10. Not over-represented in criminal justice system

11. Young people not over-represented in criminal justice system

12. Not over-represented in the child protection system

13. Safe families and households

14. High levels of social and emotional wellbeing

INDIGENOUS VOICE PROCESS OUTCOMES

CULTURE AND LANGUAGE OUTCOMES

15. Maintain relationships with land and waters.

16. Strong, supported and flourishing cultures & languages

HEALTH OUTCOMES

1. Long & healthy lives

2. Strong, healthy children

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION OUTCOMES

3. Quality early childhood education engagement

4. Young children thrive

5. Students achieve full potential

6. Students fully achieve in further education

7. Youth employed or studying

8. Strong economic participation & development

Funding & other Government Support

Indigenous Broadcasting & Media Program outputs created

Justice & well-being program outputs created

Health program outputs created

Education, employment & economic participation program outputs created

Utilisation

CLOSING THE GAP

[Figure Description in the Appendix](#)

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Referring to Figure 8, the key input to a range of programs, including the IBMP, is government funding and other support. In most or all cases these are not the only inputs, but they represent the government investment that is governed by a policy and evaluation framework. These inputs are transformed through the work of funded organisations into outputs. In the case of IBMP organisations, these outputs would include the creation, broadcasting and distribution of content, and much of the wide range of activities presented during the roundtable discussions and in the survey responses. Some outputs will be ongoing products or services, or maintenance of physical infrastructure, and some will be new deliverables and innovations.

6.6　Examples

Outputs are intermediate deliverables that are utilised to achieve outcomes. Organisations in the sector will typically be funded to deliver outputs (e.g., content to audiences), and also to utilise some of their outputs, including access to their audiences, to achieve outcomes. In Figure 8 we focus on the CTG outcomes and the Indigenous voice. Although for some of these outcomes, IBMP organisations will play a role in utilisation, a great deal of the utilisation will be by other parties: individuals and communities, and other government funded organisations with obligations to achieve CTG outcomes.

For example, a remote Indigenous broadcaster may produce a series of programming content in a local language. That content is an output, not an outcome. The target outcome in the CTG would be:

> 16. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.

Utilisation may take a number of forms. Firstly, the broadcaster which created the content may broadcast it and distribute it through social media, with accompanying promotion, and may also take steps to archive it in a publicly accessible way. The content would be utilised by individual listeners and social media users but might also be picked up by organisations such as schools or and other community organisations to support the CTG outcome. In addition, other organisations may use access to audiences generated by the content for the delivery of information (e.g., health information) to achieve other CTG outcomes.

In terms of policy and evaluation the Indigenous broadcaster has met the following obligations:

♦ produce content (an output) that has the potential to contribute to CTG 16
♦ utilise that output to contribute to an outcome specified in the policy CTG 16 through broadcasting, distribution, archiving and promotion, including encouraging other organisations to utilise the output.

This is represented in Figure 9 on the next page.

Consider now how the IBMP might contribute to the Indigenous voice process as reflected in Figure 10 on the next page.

The Indigenous voice process involves extensive community consultation and interaction, and so the sector will surely play an important supporting role. In policy and evaluation terms, the sector can deliver outputs which can be utilised by organisations tasked directly with achieving Indigenous voice outcomes. These outputs may include capabilities such as a capacity to create content established audiences and tools to build social capital and networks, and the physical infrastructure for broadcasting and distribution.

Evaluation of the contributions of sector organisations would not be on utilisation to achieve Indigenous voice outcomes, but on the fitness for purpose and availability of outputs that could be utilised to achieve those outcomes.

A more complex example of the contribution IBMP outputs can be seen in Figure 11 on the next page.
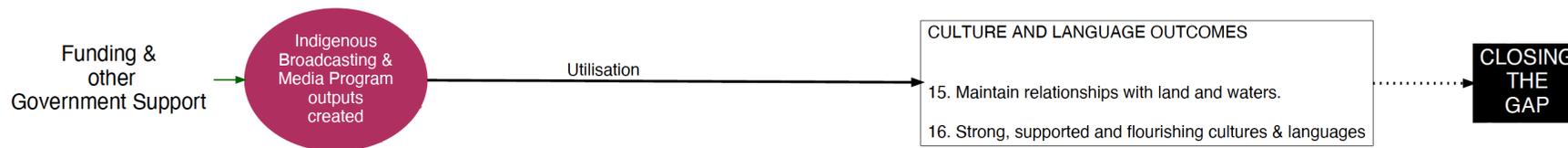
Figure 8. Culture and Language outcomes extract from logic diagram
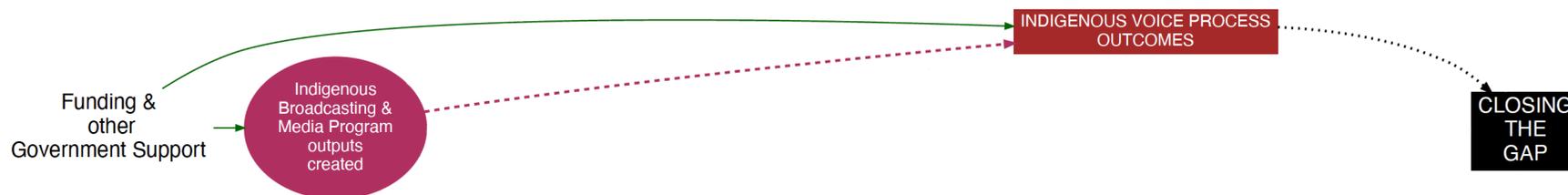
Figure 9. Indigenous voice outcomes extract from logic diagram
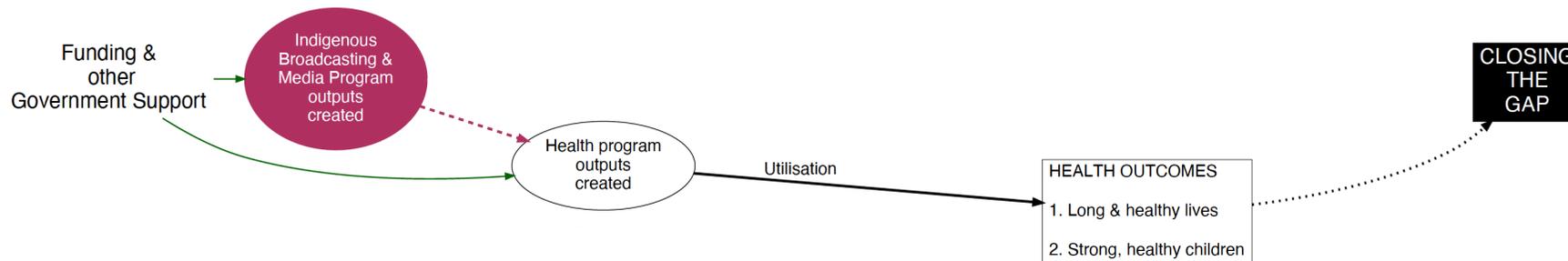
Figure 10. The utilisation of the IBMP sector to achieve health outcomes

Indigenous broadcasting and media play a significant communication and information role for Indigenous communities. They can be key contributors to the achievement of health outcomes, from the simple "shout-out" by a RIBS operator that the nurse or doctor is visiting the community, to consistent messaging about drugs and alcohol, through to a major community informational role. This has been demonstrated in the current pandemic where there were only 148 Indigenous cases nationwide because information got out to Indigenous communities and Indigenous health services worked together to inform communities.

Similarly, with hearing impairment. Otitis media is the key condition contributing to hearing loss among Indigenous children. Indigenous broadcasters make communities aware of the visiting testers. Early detection allows children to learn and become a productive community member, a benefit to the community and a saving for the health system.

The responsibility for Indigenous health policy outcomes does not lie with the IBMP, but the IBMP is responsible for making a range of outputs available for utilisation by those agencies and organisations that are responsible for achieving health outcomes.

Similarly, examples of utilising sector outputs can be found with justice, well-being, education, employment, safety and economic participation. In the current context, it is also to be expected that sector outputs will be utilised in the Indigenous voice process.

It was mentioned earlier that government funded organisations will sometimes contribute directly to outcomes that are outside their direct policy obligations. Consider the following two scenarios.

♦ An Indigenous broadcaster is contacted by the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF) to create, broadcast and distribute content promoting its scholarships. It provides funding and a range of information and materials to assist in the preparation of the content. The broadcaster follows through and as a result a number of local students obtain scholarships and are able to achieve their full learning potential (CTG outcome No. 5) by attending a large regional high school.

♦ The Indigenous broadcaster becomes aware that some students from the local area are attending a large regional high school. It makes contact with their families and during the school holidays in July interviews the families and the students, and a representative of AIEF, and prepares a short series of content which is broadcast and distributed on social media. As a result, in

the following year, more local students obtain scholarships and are able to achieve their full educational potential (CTG outcome No. 5) by attending a large regional high school.

In the first case, a government-funded organisation, the AIEF, is charged with contributing to CTG outcome No. 5:

> 5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students achieve their full learning potential.

It utilises outputs of the IBMP to contribute to achievement of the outcome. *The Indigenous broadcaster can cite this case as evidence that it has met its obligation to provide broadcasting and media outputs for use of other entities to support CTG outcomes.*

In the second case, the Indigenous broadcaster, on its own initiative, utilises its own outputs to contribute to the achievement of the same CTG outcome. *This is not a direct outcome for which it is formally responsible, but it has utilised outputs which it is required to deliver*.

The main point here is that in practice, many organisations in different sectors will, from time to time, undertake activities that contribute to outcomes for which they are not directly responsible. While such contributions should be welcomed and celebrated, they are best not incorporated into policy and evaluation frameworks. It would be unreasonable, for example, to evaluate Indigenous broadcasters directly for contributions to CTG outcome No.12:

> 12. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system.

Otherwise, policy and evaluation frameworks would become unwieldy and the task of collecting evidence for evaluations would become impractical.

6.7   Approach to preparing a policy framework

As general guidance, the outcomes for the IBMP should be clear, few in number, unlikely to be changed in the medium term, amenable to the collection of evidence, and not contentious.

Outputs and operating requirements, however, may be subject to shifts in technology and innovation within the sector, and need to be tailored to the specific circumstances of each funded organisation. As one roundtable participant explained:

> A new policy framework is needed to accurately reflect what the sector is doing. For example the FNMA is very proactive at looking at the many different ways to get stories and voices out – not just radio but including journalists, film makers, TV producers. The new policy framework needs to be a flexible model which reflects current trends – now more social media, podcasts, video (Key interview)

We recommend that the outcomes for IBMP be closely derived from the Closing the Gap outcomes, the Indigenous voice process and some of the objectives of the NIAA Culture and Capability stream.

6.7.1 Indirect outcomes

The key idea is to start with the outcomes intended to be achieved by the Program. Well defined and clear outcomes facilitate the specification of the outputs needed to achieve them. The principal IBMP outcome to support indirect outcomes is likely to be along the lines of:

> Availability of reliable, high quality broadcasting, media and content creation and distribution capability suitable for:
>
> 1. organisations outside the sector pursuing CTG, Indigenous voice and related outcomes
> 2. essential and emergency service communications in the area.

This outcome is achieved by delivering a range of outputs, which include broadcasting and internet distribution infrastructure, staff skills and social media presence, and the establishment and maintenance of audiences.

In the policy, it should include an evaluation framework that stipulates the kind of qualitative and quantitative evidence required to assess how well the outputs have been delivered or maintained, and how well they have been utilised to achieve the outcome.

6.7.2 Direct outcomes

A central set of direct outcomes would follow from this key Closing the Gap outcome and accompanying target:

> 16. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.
>
> Target: By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.

For the purposes of evaluation of an individual organisation in the sector, the question would be something like: "What evidence is there that the organisation utilised its outputs to contribute to the support and flourishing of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and languages, and in particular, what evidence is there that it contributed to the number and strength of these languages being spoken?"

Consideration should be given to the types of qualitative and quantitative evidence that would be suitable for evaluation.

The NIAA Culture and Capability Program states its objectives as:

1. support the expression, engagement and conservation of Indigenous culture
2. increase Indigenous Australians' participation in the social and economic life of Australia through healing, and strengthening the capability, governance and leadership of Indigenous Australians, organisations and communities
3. promote broader understanding and acceptance of the unique place of Indigenous cultures in Australian society

The first of these could be transformed into perhaps two or three outcomes. The wording would have to be modified to replace "support" with a similar, potentially quantifiable term such as "increase" or "enhance", that would be amenable to obtaining evidence of the level of achievement of the outcomes.

The second and third of these NIAA objectives identify domains of outcomes but are themselves mostly too broad to directly serve as such. However, they could possibly inform the development of further outcomes.

6.7.3 Outputs

While outcomes tend to be quite "high level" and durable, and debate is often centred on what will or won't count as evidence of achievement, the specification of outputs in a policy and evaluation framework often requires more detail and flexibility. This, together with blurring of the distinction between operating requirements, outputs and outcomes, lies at the heart of frustration expressed at roundtables about "one size fits all" approaches not working.

The IBMP funds over forty organisations. Most are broadcasters, a few are not; most are either RIBS or RIMOS, but not all. One is a peak organisation. Some are remote, some regional, a handful are urban. Even with all working toward the same outcomes, different types, combinations and specifications of outputs

may be optimal for different organisations. The key requirement is that, for a given organisation, the specified outputs are fit for purpose to be utilised to achieve the outcomes. For the purposes of evaluation, the concept of "fit for purpose" has to be defined for each output.

Note that there is no requirement to specify in advance every anticipated output. Some will be minor and organisations will just work them out as they go about their business. Others may be true innovations that cannot be anticipated in a policy document.

The broadcasting and media sector has been undergoing significant change in the last 25 years, largely as a result of the commercialisation of the internet, the availability of smartphone technology and the widespread adoption of social media. This has led to many kinds of innovation, including innovations in business models. It is important that policy specifications of outputs are not so restrictive that they curtail innovations that could actually improve the achievement of outcomes. A similar consideration applies to narrow specification of some operating requirements.

Some examples of outputs, for some or all organisations in the sector might be:

♦ population reach and level of engagement with it
♦ maintenance of a fully functioning FM radio broadcasting apparatus in a specified location
♦ a studio equipped and staffed with the capabilities to produce radio broadcast and internet podcasting content
♦ staff and equipment producing, or accessing, a 5-minute daily news bulletin for distribution online and through partner radio broadcasters
♦ a set of tools, standards and a facility for archiving audio-visual records of Indigenous media and broadcasting
♦ maintaining a central database and booking system for online training for staff in the sector
♦ Broadcasts and media activities in language
♦ Broadcast and media activities that reflect the interest of the local Indigenous community and are responsive to community needs for information and entertainment
♦ Broadcast of government and community public service announcements
♦ Programming covering local, regional and national Indigenous events and activities.

Anything that is not an outcome or an output, falls into the category of operating requirements.

6.7.4 Operating requirements

In addition to specification of outputs and direct outcomes, a policy and evaluation framework should specify important operating requirements in writing in the funding agreements and take them into account in evaluations.

There is often confusion between operating requirements, outputs and outcomes. An **outcome** can be considered as a desirable end result: in most cases this can be understood as an improvement in the lives or prospects of individuals, families or communities. Outcomes must be defined in a way that enables acquisition of evidence that improvements have occurred.

An **output** is something resulting from an investment of money, time or other resources, that can be put to use to achieve an outcome. A radio program in an Indigenous language is an output, a broadcast studio and transmitter with accompanying staff and expertise are outputs. Through broadcasting, distribution and consumption of content by listeners, these outputs are **utilised** to contribute to a CTG **outcome**, namely strong, flourishing and supported Indigenous language.

In some cases, a policy may specify the outputs, for example requiring production of a daily news bulletin or a minimum number of hours of language programming. In other cases, it may apply some constraints to outputs, such as requiring that the news bulletin be in a five-minute short format.

Outputs and utilisation happen because organisations receive funding, and have, or create physical and intangible assets, resources and capabilities that can be applied and transformed into outputs which are utilised to achieve outcomes. Under a policy framework they are responsible for making this happen.

The core logic of a program like IBMP is this sequence of transforming inputs to outputs and then the utilisation of outputs to achieve outcomes. Direct outcomes are those for which IBMP organisations are responsible for utilisation, as in the Indigenous language example. Indirect outcomes are those for which other agencies or organisations are primarily responsible for utilisation of outputs.

Operating requirements are important, but tangential to this core logic. Many operating requirements are universal and routine such as "funded organisations must obey the law". Some are very specific to government-funded agreements, and some are specific to the IBMP. There may be some that are tailored to individual funding recipients.

Examples of operating requirements[23] would be:

♦ maintenance of financial records
♦ data collection and reporting
♦ compliance with broadcasting licence and transmitting apparatus licence requirements
♦ operational governance requirements
♦ maintaining a bank account
♦ operating in a specified location
♦ constraints on staffing and requirements to use volunteers
♦ active participation in a centrally maintained database and booking system for staff employed in the sector.

6.7.5   Impacts of other policies

Most organisations in the sector are impacted by policies relating to broadcasting, and provision of internet and satellite services to remote and regional areas. Some of these policies impose constraints on what the sector can provide, some constrain innovation and some impose very high administrative burdens. Among the policies discussed in the roundtables were constraints on advertising imposed under the Broadcasting Act, as they affect advertising and sponsorship, and the burden of maintaining multiple licences over a region. Among possible solutions are the introduction of an Indigenous licence as an alternative to a community broadcasting licence, and the introduction of a regional-level licence category. These issues are addressed elsewhere in this report.

6.8   Policy and the defined public value of the sector

With a clearly defined policy and evaluation framework, the defined public value of the sector can be summarised in terms of policy-based value:

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[23] The majority of these are covered off already within the Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions and or Incorporation Compliance and Reporting

- the direct outcomes it achieves in the domains of Indigenous culture and language, in providing a community voice, and in meeting human rights obligations
- its contribution, through utilisation by others of its outputs, to outcomes in Closing the Gap domains such as health, justice, well-being, education, employment and economic participation and the Indigenous voice process.

There is also often some ancillary value arising from an organisation's position in the community:

- positive ancillary economic and social effects from its operations through employing people, providing transferrable training to staff, students and volunteers, purchasing goods and services and otherwise participating in local economies.

Care has to be taken to ensure that efforts to create ancillary value do not unduly divert resources from the delivery of broadcasting and media outputs needed to achieve policy mandated outcomes.

The sector is also a primary means for the NIAA to communicate with its constituency and can play a vital role in co-design processes.

6.9   Maintaining an evidence base for evaluating the program

The recently released Productivity Commission (PC) Indigenous Evaluation Strategy puts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, perspectives, priorities and knowledge at its centre. The Commission wants the Strategy to strengthen and support the capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities to engage in and use evaluation.

The PC Strategy noted that:

- Evaluations should contribute to a high-quality, useful and accessible body of evidence that government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities have confidence to use when designing, modifying and implementing policies and programs. (PC, p. 6)
- Evaluations consider impacts of policies and programs on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and how agencies are working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop and deliver policies and programs. (PC, p. 11)
- Evaluations fill knowledge gaps about what works, why, for whom and in what circumstances. (PC, p.14)

♦ Evaluations support the National Agreement on Closing the Gap by providing evidence on how policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are contributing to the National Agreement's objectives and priorities. (PC, p. 15)

We propose that the NIAA should have a long-term evaluation strategy for the program that allows for continuous (but not arduous) data gathering against agreed criteria and that will provide useful and practical guidance to both the NIAA and the sector.

The Roundtables discussed the criteria the NIAA should use to judge the effectiveness of the Indigenous broadcasting and media program and the performance of the recipients.

Roundtable participants were satisfied that the current contracted requirements could be used to judge the effectiveness of the Indigenous broadcasting and media program and the performance of the recipients.

The program contributes to two sets of outcomes:

♦ direct outcomes: for NIAA funded activities in the sector
♦ indirect outcomes: providing outputs that support the achievement of CTG targets and IAS objectives through being utilised by other agencies and organisations.

Table 4 contains a proposed set of outcomes, indicative specified outputs and indicative forms of quantitative and qualitative evidence that might be adduced to support evaluation.

Much of the evidence takes the form of surveys, which due to expense and inconvenience, would not be undertaken annually, but more likely on a rolling basis on a multi-year cycle.

The evidence includes quantitative measures but also a significant amount of qualitative evidence. This is important for this domain because for many outcomes and outputs rich qualitative evidence is more likely to "measure the right thing" than simple, convenient counts and tallies. It is also important for the credibility of the evaluation process to include cases and stories that are grounded in the lived worlds of Indigenous communities.

Table 4. Proposed set of outcomes, indicative specified outputs and indicative forms of quantitative and qualitative evidence

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	EVIDENCE
IBMP Indirect Outcome 1 **Availability of reliable, high quality broadcasting, media and content creation and distribution capability suitable for organisations outside the sector pursuing CTG, Indigenous voice and related outcomes.**	Broadcasting technology: studios and transmitters fit for purpose. Adequately trained staff. Adequate audience of suitable geographic and demographic reach.	Survey/audit of broadcasting infrastructure. (possibly) data from playout systems. Audience consumption surveys. Maintained inventory of staff skills and training. Testimonials from clients. Case studies and stories of achievement.
IBMP Indirect Outcome 2 **Availability of reliable, high quality broadcasting, media and content creation and distribution capability suitable for organisations outside the sector pursuing CTG, Indigenous voice and related outcomes essential and emergency service communications in the area.**	Broadcasting technology: studios and transmitters fit for purpose. Adequately trained staff. Adequate audience of suitable geographic and demographic reach.	Survey/audit of broadcasting infrastructure. (possibly) data from playout systems. Audience consumption surveys. Maintained inventory of staff skills and training. Testimonials from clients. Case studies and stories of achievement.
IBMP Direct Outcome 1 **Closing the Gap Outcome & Target 16 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are strong, supported and flourishing.** **Target: By 2031, there is a sustained increase in number and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages being spoken.**	Suitable content developed in appropriate languages. Content distributed through broadcast. Content distributed through internet and social media. Content distributed, where appropriate, through partners. Content includes material suitable for learners.	Reporting on duration and content, broadcast and distribution of in-language content. Reporting on the languages involved. Broadcasting and distribution records. Audience consumption surveys. Archives of content. Expert review of archives. Case studies and stories of achievement. Studies of language usage (CTG, not IBMP level evidence-gathering).
IBMP Direct Outcome 2 **Strengthen the expression of and engagement in Indigenous culture.**	Suitable content developed. Content distributed through broadcast. Content distributed through internet and social media. Content distributed, where appropriate, through partners.	Reporting on duration and content, broadcast and distribution of content. Broadcasting and distribution records. Audience consumption surveys. Archives of content. Expert review of archives. Case studies and stories of achievement.

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	EVIDENCE
IBMP Direct Outcome 3 **Increase the conservation of Indigenous culture.**	Content prepared to conserve, share and educate about Indigenous culture. Content distributed through broadcast. Content distributed through internet and social media. Content distributed, where appropriate, through partners. Archiving program for content, including content in language, and content about important community events.	Reporting on duration and content, broadcast and distribution of content. Broadcasting and distribution records. Audience consumption surveys. Archives of content. Expert review of archives. Case studies and stories of achievement.
IBMP Direct Outcome 4 **Strengthen the capability, governance and leadership of Indigenous Australians, organisations and communities.**	Provision of independent, impartial news about Indigenous communities, their leadership and governance. Content prepared to educate community about fundamentals of governance and leadership of Indigenous Australians, organisations and communities. Content distributed through broadcast. Content distributed through internet and social media. Content distributed, where appropriate, through partners.	Broadcast and distribution records of content. Expert review of content. Audience consumption surveys. Case studies and stories of achievement.
IBMP Direct Outcome 5 **Promote broader understanding and acceptance of the unique place of Indigenous cultures in Australian society.**	Suitable content prepared targeted to a broader audience about the unique place of Indigenous cultures in Australian society. Content shared through channels with access to a broader audience.	Broadcast and distribution records of content. Audience consumption surveys. Expert review of content. Case studies and stories of achievement.

The NIAA may also wish to collect compliance data for operating requirements. For example, if an organisation has specific operating requirements for Indigenous employment, or training volunteers, evidence might take the form of the KPIs discussed in Section 6.2. The organisation might also be asked, for example, to provide evidence that the training provided is aligned to local employment needs. If there are operating requirements about service or upgrades to broadcasting equipment, reports or invoices might be required as evidence of compliance.

6.10 Summary

In this chapter we have described in some detail a logical approach to developing a policy and evaluation framework. The framework draws clear distinctions between

♦ inputs
♦ outputs
♦ utilisation of outputs to achieve outcomes
♦ outcomes.

The framework draws special attention to the fact that the sector provides important inputs and support for other programs targeting Closing the Gap outcomes. A way has to be found to recognise these contributions.

In the next chapter we report on key priorities and recommendations from the roundtables and consultations which should inform the process of policy and evaluation framework development.

Chapter 7. Outcomes from the roundtable process

The Roundtables created a set of priorities and recommendations that were then taken to two Consultation Sessions and a survey of the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector.

In this chapter we summarise these priorities and formulate a series of recommendations that should inform the development of a policy and evaluation framework for the IBMP.

The following outcomes for sector stability and strengthening were agreed by the roundtables and consultations sessions and affirmed in the sector survey:

♦ The IBMP program logic, description and requirements should be updated to correspond to what is being delivered by the sector (see Chapter 6 above).

♦ The criteria the NIAA should use to judge the effectiveness of the Indigenous broadcasting and media program and the performance of the recipients was agreed. (see Chapter 6 above)

♦ A First Nations media consumption survey should be undertaken.

♦ The sector wants engagement in Draft legislation that would force technology giants Facebook and Google to negotiate with media companies over payment for linking to their news stories.

♦ A First Nations' Broadcasting Licence should be pursued.

♦ Some Indigenous broadcasters wish to pursue a regional licence.

♦ Where possible, adopting common technology across the sector would greatly improve efficiency and productivity.

♦ Where possible, adopting collaborative remote training across the sector would greatly improve efficiency and productivity.

♦ Where possible, adopting remote servicing on a wider basis would greatly improve efficiency and productivity.

♦ Accessing funding from programs provided by other Commonwealth, State and Territory departments and the private sector should be investigated.

♦ A Transition Task Force for Indigenous Broadcasting and Media to assist and advise the NIAA on the recommendations from this process should be formed.

Each of these is discussed below under the headings:

♦ recognising the contemporary Indigenous broadcasting and media sector
♦ maintaining and modernising the physical infrastructure
♦ building and maintaining skills and capabilities
♦ broadening and strengthening the funding base.

7.1 Recognising the contemporary Indigenous broadcasting and media sector

7.1.1 Adopting a policy and evaluation framework

As reported in Chapter 6 above there is at present a complex set of requirements variously expressed as objectives, contractual requirements, broad policy statements and KPIs for funded organisations. There is, however, no clear policy and evaluation framework; particularly one that clearly links the program to Closing the Gap.

Recommendation 1: The NIAA should adopt a policy and evaluation framework that demonstrates the IBMP's contribution to Closing the Gap.

7.1.2 Program name and reporting requirements

The current IBMP program description and requirements do not match what is being delivered on the ground. All broadcasters are using a variety of platforms to develop and deliver content to their audiences.

Dr Daniel Featherstone argues that:

> The broadcasting focus of current policy has limited the ability of media organisations to adapt in response to the changing needs of remote community audiences in an era of digital convergence and the growth of diverse media forms (including "social media"). Therefore, there is a fundamental shift needed from an Indigenous broadcasting policy to an Indigenous communications policy to ensure the sector remains relevant to the communities it serves, as well as to government and other stakeholders. (Featherstone, D. PhD Thesis, p.173)

As noted in the Executive Summary the program is currently called the Indigenous Broadcasting Program.

Recommendation 2: The program name should be changed to the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program (IBMP).

As discussed in Chapter 6 above the current NIAA funding schedules and reporting requirements do not recognise the diversity of activities undertaken by Indigenous broadcasters, nor the variety of platforms utilised to reach their audiences. It is also important to maintain an evidence base for evaluating the program including suitable KPIs.

Recommendation 3a: The NIAA IBMP program description, funding schedules and contracted and reporting requirements for funded broadcasters should acknowledge the diversity of activities undertaken and the variety of platforms utilised to develop and deliver content to their audiences.

Recommendation 3b: A pool of KPIs be developed which validly and reliably measure operational requirements and achievement of Program outcomes. Consideration be given to a more sophisticated performance analysis methodology for RIMOs such as DEA (Data Envelopment Analysis).

7.1.3 An Indigenous Broadcasting Licence

Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services are currently licensed as community broadcasters under the provisions of the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (BSA).

Community broadcasting was established in the 1970s to provide general and special interest programming to sections of the community whose interests were not well served by mainstream national and commercial broadcasters. The Indigenous broadcasting sector has long stressed that, unlike other sectors of community broadcasting which play a supplementary role to mainstream broadcasters, they are often the only broadcasting service reaching the communities they serve. Consequently, they act as a first service provider for the dissemination of information to their communities, as well as play a crucial role in the promotion and maintenance of Indigenous languages and cultures.

This special role of Indigenous broadcasters is well recognised in many countries around the world including most English-speaking countries with regulatory frameworks similar to Australia's including New Zealand, Canada and the United States of America. Special provisions accorded to Indigenous broadcasters in other countries include special status and reserved spectrum allocations in New Zealand, support of Tribal ownership of radio services through priority allotment of licenses in the USA, and special licence conditions in Canada.

In Australia, the objectives of BSA (Section 3(1)) include a general reference to Indigenous broadcasting as follows:

> … to ensure the maintenance and, where possible, the development of diversity, including public, community and *Indigenous broadcasting*, in the Australian broadcasting service in the transition to digital broadcasting. (emphasis added)

However, in the licensing process, Indigenous broadcasters are not accorded any more favourable treatment than other community broadcasters.

The Productivity Commission's Broadcasting Inquiry devoted some special attention to the nature and role of Indigenous Broadcasting. In addition to the evidence received in submissions from the sector, the Commission obtained independent advice through specially commissioned consultancy reports. Its analysis of the issue led it to conclude that:

> The Indigenous media sector has a distinctive range of cultural and social tasks.

A significant proportion of Indigenous broadcasting services are motivated by the need to provide a basic level of service for a specific audience. As discussed above, Indigenous broadcasting is likely to offer the only available media service in remote parts of the country. By contrast, most community broadcasting aims to provide an additional service to mainstream media; that is, Indigenous broadcasters are often providing a primary service, while community broadcasters generally are providing an alternative service.

> First Nations radio stations are producing an average weekly total of 30 hours podcast content per week, 209 hours of video content and 51 hours of online only content sector-wide, in addition to providing 24-hour radio services. First Nations stations conduct at average 20 outside broadcasts per year, double that of general community broadcasters. (FNMA)

Including Indigenous broadcasting within the category of community broadcasting creates difficulties at many levels. It affects Indigenous media services' access to spectrum, their participation in the co-regulatory processes of the broadcasting industry, and their financing and staffing (Productivity Commission, 2000, p. 285ff).

Its deliberations concluded "that the needs of Indigenous broadcasters and their communities would be better served by a regulatory framework that recognises the distinctive characteristics of Indigenous media and the Australian Government's special concerns for Indigenous Australians and consequently recommended that a new licence category of Indigenous broadcasting should be introduced, with appropriate conditions for advertising. Further, in recognition of the special information and communication needs of Indigenous communities, spectrum should be reserved for Indigenous broadcasters where they provide a primary level of service to a specific audience."

The desirability of establishing a new category of licence for Indigenous broadcasting was reaffirmed in 2001 by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts in the report of its Inquiry on Regional Radio (Australian Parliament, 2001).

> The Committee recognises the importance of the role Indigenous radio can play in Indigenous communities. We also recognise the value, both current and potential, it may contribute to the social and economic development and wellbeing of Indigenous people as a whole. The developments occurring in Indigenous broadcasting, despite the budgetary and regulatory constraints, are impressive.
>
> In our view, there is considerable merit in the proposition that a separate licence category be established for Indigenous radio services. Operating within the community licence category undoubtedly restricts the capacity of Indigenous services to develop as commercially sustainable operations. On the other hand, it is unreasonable to expect Indigenous services, at this stage, to compete for the price-based allocations of full commercial licences. Accordingly, we make the following recommendation.
>
> The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts should prepare amendments to the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 to establish an additional category of broadcasting service relating to Indigenous broadcasting services.

The Stevens Review (2010) similarly recommended a separate Indigenous licence.

> The Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (Cth) (BSA) be amended to include an additional section for Indigenous broadcasting. This new section (should) include licences for both radio and television. Indigenous broadcasting licences should be issued for a five-year renewable period, without reliance on temporary licences. A code of practice for Indigenous broadcasting (should) be developed by the national peak body in collaboration with Indigenous broadcasting and media organisations and registered with the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).
>
> In amending the BSA to create an Indigenous broadcasting section, the Australian Government should require conditions specifying:
>
> – a high minimum percentage of Australian Indigenous content to be broadcast each day
> – a high minimum percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees across all organisational levels

- that licensees are not-for-profit organisations with open membership, and appropriate board governance protocols.

Existing community radio licence holders with an Indigenous community interest (should) be given the option to transfer to the new Indigenous radio licence, subject to an appropriate review of their current and proposed services by the ACMA.

The ACMA (should) take into account in-principle IBMP funding when considering an application for a new Indigenous broadcasting licence or renewing a licence and the IBMP be permitted to provide "in-principle" indications of the availability of funding to existing and aspirant Indigenous broadcasters.[24]

In a paper provided to the roundtable process FNMA said:

We argue that First Nations media is not a sub-set of community broadcasting, but rather a key source of information and education for all Australians, alongside public broadcasters, commercial broadcasters and community broadcasters. This aligns with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People to own their own media, as specified in Article 16:

Indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages and to have access to all forms of non-indigenous media without discrimination.

The inclusion of First Nations radio 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 due to the limitations on sponsorship (maximum 5 minutes per hour).

At the roundtables the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications' (DITRDC) representative said that an Indigenous Broadcasting Licence could be considered, however the Department would want to see the evidence supporting the request. The evidence or argument for such a licence has been presented in two substantial previous reviews.

There was a strongly held view by roundtable members that an Indigenous Broadcasting Licence was a priority. This was not only because of the distinctive nature of the sector as acknowledged by the Productivity Commission and Stevens, but also because it might allow greater self-

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[24] The ACMA could include consultation with the NIAA in their assessment process.

sufficiency if the restriction on the number of minutes allowed for advertising was relaxed.

It was understood that legislative change can take time, however the roundtables urged the NIAA to move forward with this.[25]

Recommendation 4: The NIAA should begin discussions with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications to develop an Indigenous Broadcasting licence.

7.1.4 A First Nations media consumption survey

The Indigenous broadcasting and media sector is continually being asked to demonstrate its reach and impact. There was agreement at the roundtable that a more comprehensive method of collecting audience listening, viewing and digital transaction data was needed.

Traditionally, radio audiences have been measured in Australia by commercial surveys, such as those undertaken by companies such as GfK or Neilsen. Survey participants use a diary (hard copy or online) that has provision for a respondent to tick quarter-hour by quarter-hour and day-by-day the radio stations that he/she listens to over a seven-day period. It is not possible for the diary to list all of the radio stations that are in each market, therefore, the diary lists only the commercial and ABC stations that are in the market. By and large, these stations are the ones that subscribe to the results.

If a respondent listens to a non-listed station, he/she has to tick the quarter-hour(s) under either of two headings – "other AM" or "other FM". It can be fairly said that because community radio stations are not listed in the diary, listening to community radio is under-reported in the GfK/Nielsen surveys (CBAA, 2020).

There have been surveys that include or focus on Indigenous broadcasting. Three are described below.

Orima Research Survey 2014. Orima Research conducted quantitative research for the Department of Finance on Media consumption and communication preferences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences (Department of Finance, 2014).

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[25] If a new licence category was introduced and Indigenous broadcasters were no longer within the Community Broadcasting category, it might be possible for the approximate $1.4m in CBF grants to Indigenous broadcasters to be transferred to NIAA for sector wide projects - see Recommendation 13 below.

Data collection involved face-to-face interviewing conducted by ORIMA's network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interviewers in all Australian states and territories, excluding the ACT. A stratified random sampling design was adopted, targeting a total sample size of 1,000 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents aged 15 years and over, across metropolitan, and inner and outer regional areas. The total response size achieved was 1,018 valid interviews.

Their findings included:

- Consumption of radio among respondents was found to be high: the majority (73%) of respondents indicated that they had listened to the radio in the previous four weeks.
- Consumption of radio was dominated by commercial radio stations, with nearly nine in ten (89%) of those who listened to the radio reporting that they listened to commercial radio stations.
- Two-fifths (40%) of respondents who listened to the radio mentioned (unprompted) that they listened to Indigenous and other community radio stations.
- Upon prompting, almost a third (31%) of all respondents indicated that they had listened to at least one of the Indigenous radio stations/programs (including local and national stations/programs such as 8 KIN, Koori Radio, Speaking Out, and Awaye) listed in the questionnaire in the previous four weeks.
- Consumption of Indigenous radio was more prevalent among respondents aged 25 years and over, with a significant proportion of those aged 15–24 reporting no consumption of Indigenous radio (82%, compared with 69% of those aged 25–34, 65% of 35–54 year olds and 68% of those aged 55 and over).
- Internet usage among respondents was found to be relatively high: the majority (70%) of respondents indicated that they had used the Internet in the previous four weeks.
- The Internet was mainly used for communicating through email (81% of those who used the Internet), participating in online communities or social networking (79%), and for research or obtaining information (78%).
- The Internet was mainly accessed from home (74% of Internet-users) and work (38%), and respondents mostly reported using a mobile phone/smartphone (62%) or desktop/personal computer (60%) to access the Internet.
- Not surprisingly, typical weekly Internet usage was higher among younger respondents (with those aged 15–34 more likely to report heavy

consumption) and lower among older respondents (with respondents aged over 55 years and over more likely to report no Internet usage). The level of Internet usage was also higher among females, better-educated respondents, and those with higher household income.

♦ Participation in social media was more prevalent among females and younger respondents, particularly among those aged 15–24 (81%) and 25–34 (72%). Social media usage was also more prevalent among respondents in metropolitan and inner regional areas, those with higher household income and high levels of educational attainment.

♦ Facebook was by far the most popular social media site with just over half (56%) of all respondents indicating that they are on Facebook. Among these Facebook users, the majority (61%) indicated that they had "liked" or "friend-ed" the sites of Indigenous community organisations. Just over a quarter (28%) indicated that they had "liked" or "friend-ed" government sites.

Figure 12: shows the Orima report snapshot of media consumption.
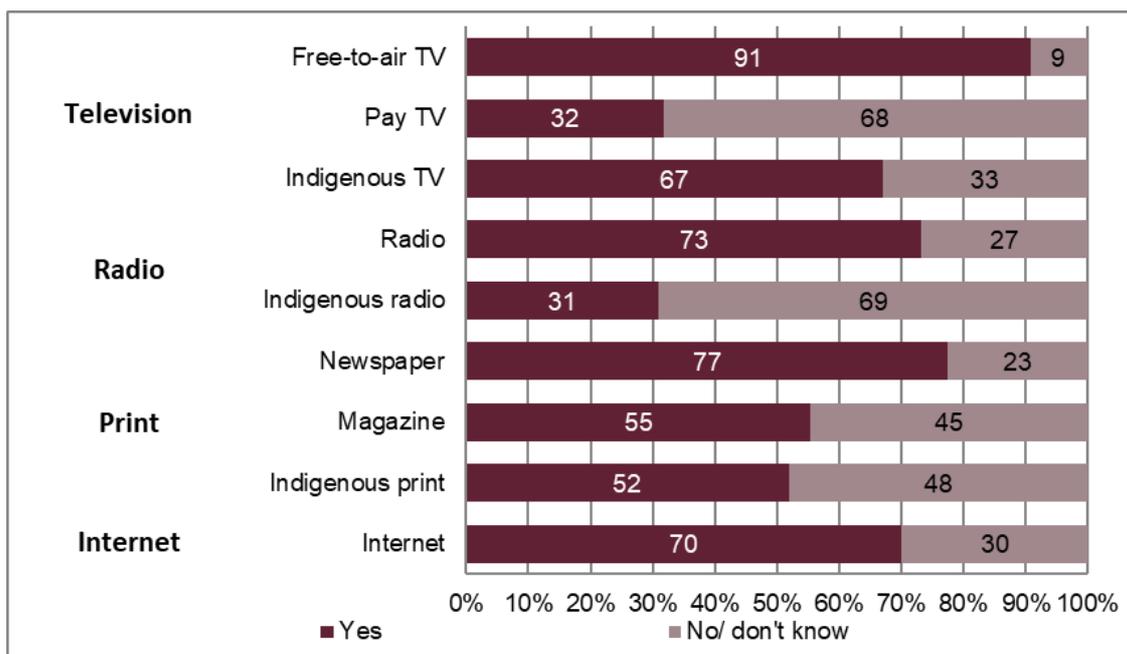
Figure 11. Media consumption - last 4 weeks all respondents (Department of Finance 2014)

McNair Ingenuity Research 2016.

McNair's *Remote Indigenous Communications and Media Survey* was conducted for IRCA in 2016 and comprised 218 face to face interviews in 10 communities in the Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia. The interviewers were recruited by IRCA and trained by McNair – either in person or by teleconference. The interviewers were provided with tablet computers by McNair for conducting the interviews.

Training included the process for selecting a balance of male and female respondents and a representative cross-section of age groups. All respondents were provided an incentive for participating. The average length of the face-to-face interviews was 11 minutes. Validations calls were made to all face-to-face respondents who provided phone numbers – comprising 84% of respondents. Their findings are summarised in Figure 13 below.
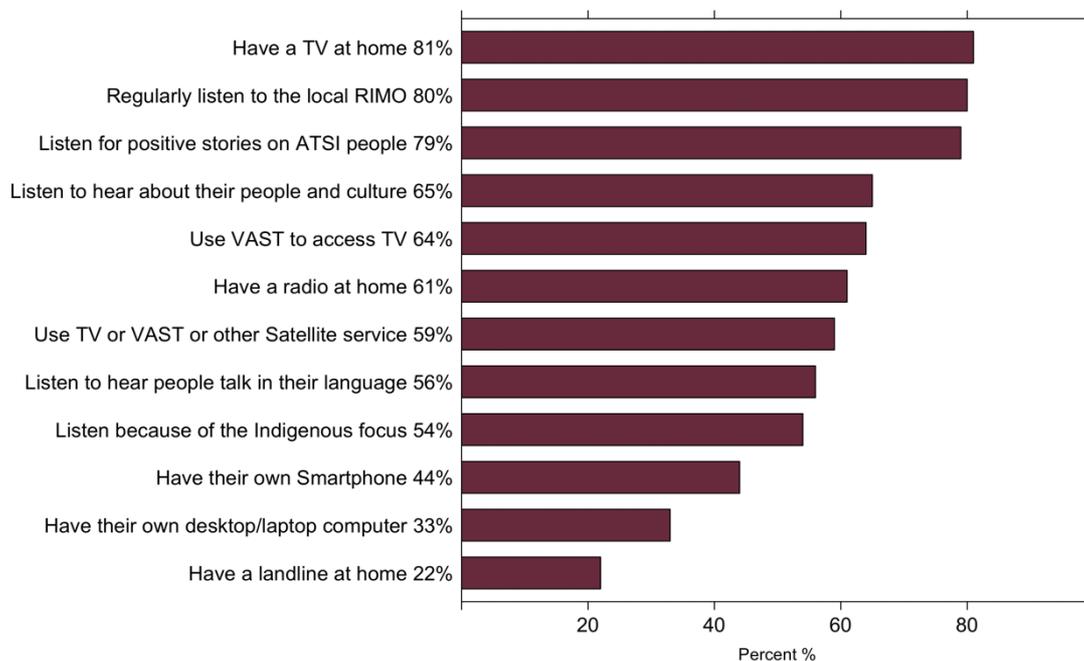
Figure 12. Summary of McNair survey findings

The National Listener Survey. The National Listener Survey is a survey of the community radio listening habits of Australians (CBAA, 2020). The Community Radio National Listener Survey is commissioned by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA), with funding support from the CBF.

It is a hybrid telephone and online survey of a representative sample of 15,000 Australians over the age of 15, across all Australian states and territories. The research was conducted by means of a mixed-mode method survey, including

online, computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), and face-to-face intercept interviews using tablet computers (or computer assisted personal interviews, CAPI). These methods are used in tandem to ensure that there is a representative sample that matches the population profile in each metropolitan and regional area of Australia.

As such it is not an Indigenous-specific broadcasting and media survey or have a focus on remote audiences, however the sector is included in it.

Its findings included:

♦ The level of community radio listening varies by state, with the Northern Territory having the highest proportion of listeners relative to the population – in fact 40% of Territorians listen to community radio in an average week. This is associated with the fact that remote Indigenous community radio stations are the only terrestrially broadcast radio services in many remote areas.

♦ Four out of ten of people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (43%) listen to community radio during a typical week.

♦ As a proportion of the population, Darwin is the capital city with the highest level of community radio listening, with 43% of its residents aged 15 years and over having listened to community radio in the last week. This is more than the average for the non-metropolitan area of the NT, which has a community radio listening audience of 35%.

♦ Overall, the main way people listen to community radio is by AM/FM radio with almost 67% of community radio listeners using this method to access community radio programmes. This equates to about 9.8 hours per week.

♦ While the survey results indicated that 26% of community radio listeners access community stations using a Digital DAB+ radio, 5% have adopted DAB+ as their main way of listening to community radio. Consideration of these results should bear in mind that there are indications that some people may be confusing other forms of radio receivers with Digital Radio (despite the clear explanation given in the survey).

♦ People listening at home (61%) and in the car (80%) are more likely to listen via AM/FM signal. This accounts for 2.7 hours and 5.9 hours of listening respectively in a typical week. In contrast, around 48% of people that listened to community radio at work, listen via AM/FM (0.7 hours), and 21% listening to community radio at work are streaming live radio (0.3 hours) of total time spent listening in a typical week.

7.1.5 The future: an annual survey of media consumption and communication preferences

Each of these surveys has relevant information to help answer the questions.

♦ What is the value of the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector to Indigenous communities?
♦ In what areas does it add value?
♦ What means does it use to reach its audiences where they are?
♦ What is the reach of sector?
♦ Who listens/watches/interacts?
♦ How do they listen/watch/interact?
♦ How do different groups within Indigenous communities prefer to receive and interact with news, information and entertainment?

Given the inherent difficulties in conducting annual surveys across many remote, regional and urban communities, it might be advisable to have an annual survey that targets different regions each year. There would then be data collected from every region approximately every four years. The methodology could utilise the techniques described above.

As the FNMA (then IRCA) has already commissioned such surveys (McNair, 2014) it would be sensible to provide funding for this survey and stipulate it as one of the deliverables in their funding contract.

Recommendation 5: Government should provide funding to support the development and administration of an annual survey of media consumption and communication preferences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences.

7.2   Maintaining and modernising the physical infrastructure

7.2.1 Infrastructure upgrades

The roundtables discussed the ageing and failing technology across the sector. Discussion at the roundtables included:

♦ a looming infrastructure problem with the older technicians who are able to repair the ageing infrastructure, retiring, and not being replaced and the younger technicians not having the necessary knowledge and experience
♦ the need to retain AM in remote areas; it is expensive and difficult to maintain, but remains an important essential service

- continuing problems with receivers and transmitters on VAST
- the difficulty of converting to FM in urban areas with limited spectrum available. FM replacement could easily be found in remote areas but coverage would be reduced
- the issue of booking satellite space. It was suggested that both NIRS and CAAMA have the satellite capacity to help. One suggestion was a complete satellite service given over to Indigenous language broadcasts.

Cost was also an issue.

"A big issue is the cost of this to licensees… site fees, electricity costs… we can't afford it… The cost is huge, especially in the capital cities… this must be addressed in this review."

"I want an emergency broadcasting fund for cyclone areas."

Infrastructure was also No. 6 on the FNMA's Calls for Action: 'Upgrade Infrastructure. Upgrade broadcasting and digital infrastructure to meet current industry standards and work health and safety requirements.' The FNMA document included the following points:

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 $3.3m Indigenous Remote Radio Replacement Program 2008–2010. 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.

The Remote Indigenous Communications and Media Survey conducted for IRCA (IRCA, 2016) reported on the VAST DTH Installation Status Remote Indigenous Communities:

♦ 64% were working and in use
♦ 34% do not work, were not in use or respondents did not have VAST DTH

IRCA did a full review of the infrastructure for all RIBS and retransmission sites, (for which they are not funded), in 2014. Those databases were maintained for a few years but the data is now out of date. IRCA did costings for equipment upgrades as part of a number of submissions to IBMP in 2015 and 2016. However, the budgets at the time could only cover a fraction of the need, not large items such as transmitters, towers, generators, facility upgrades, etc. Many RIBS facilities are still in sub-standard condition as a workplace.

Dr Daniel Featherstone has written a report, commissioned by ACCAN (Featherstone 2020), which reviews programs that support telecommunications and internet access in remote Indigenous communities, and records any gaps or outstanding needs identified by community stakeholders.

Dr Featherstone (2020, p. 1-2) found that:

> There have been significant improvements in telecommunications coverage and digital connectivity in Remote Indigenous Communities (RICs) over the last decade, due largely to the introduction of the NBN Sky Muster satellite, the Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP), State/Territory government co-investment programs, the Community Phones Program, and a range of initiatives to provide shared WiFi services and access facilities.
>
> There has been approximately $155 million of investment in communications infrastructure for RICs since 2015, excluding co-investment by telcos and the cost of the NBN Sky Muster satellites. There have also been positive initiatives put in place by NBN Co, Telstra and other agencies to support community access and reduce affordability issues during the COVID-19 pandemic travel restriction period.
>
> Despite the increased availability of infrastructure to remote communities, there are still significant gaps in access and usage of communications technologies due to issues of affordability, lack of last mile delivery or community access facilities, issues with service reliability and congestion, and barriers to engagement with online services. Some communities are also choosing to not accept infrastructure due to concerns around cyber-safety, potential impacts on cultural and social cohesion, and ongoing costs of services and equipment maintenance.

Further, the issues identified are not consistent but impacted by local variables of community size, remoteness from regional centres or large industry, existing infrastructure, existing communications ecology, regional coordination or agency support, and efforts by local champions.

This points to the need for more targeted and place-based solutions, in partnership with local community organisations, to address the next level of obstacles to digital inclusion, including:

– affordability of services
– last mile access, such as WiFi services, and community access facilities
– improved quality and reliability of services
– free access to government and online services
– increased broadband speeds and data limits to meet demand for shared WiFi services
– growing use of videoconferencing and high-bandwidth applications
– timely technical support
– effective delivery of telehealth, online education, court hearing etc
– digital skills and cyber-security issues
– accessibility of online services for people with limited English, text literacy or disabilities
– cultural and contextual awareness of service providers working with remote communities.

Featherstone makes the point that the key issue for RICs with existing funding programs is market failure due to low population bases, long distances between communities and from regional centres, a lack of backhaul infrastructure and high costs of installing and maintaining equipment in remote areas.

Infrastructure is key to digital inclusion. As noted in Chapter 3, for Indigenous Australians the need for appropriate infrastructure to provide access, the need for that access to be affordable and the need for them to have the skills to enhance their access should be priorities for not only the NIAA but also other government agencies responsible for infrastructure, affordability and skills development.

Recommendation 6: The NIAA, in collaboration with ACMA and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, undertake an infrastructure needs survey and cost analysis for an infrastructure upgrade program.

7.3　New technologies

The roundtables discussed the need for technological enhancements including the adoption of common technology where possible across the sector. Several examples of technology that could provide greater efficiency and cost-savings were discussed.

7.3.1　The Black Star WAN

At the roundtables Gerry Pyne from QRAM provided a comprehensive overview of the Black Star WAN. The network was developed by QRAM in 2006 to meet changed circumstances in satellite delivery that affected service delivery and prevented QRAM from meeting its grant funding requirements to remote communities.

It started with five councils, five different communities and five different radio stations which were amalgamated.

The Technology behind Black Star was developed by Gerry Pyne and can be adapted to other network applications. The objective was to develop a better way to provide programming support for remote broadcasters.

QRAM felt that RIBS broadcasters, like their counterparts on regional and capital city stations, need "Digital Exchange Systems" and content that is relevant for their local audience. The elements of the model are:

♦ modern play out software systems
♦ high performance computers and servers
♦ modern accounting, traffic & industry scheduling software packages
♦ individual call signs
♦ individual spot placement
♦ seven days a week news
♦ individual regional weather
♦ drop box technology
♦ integrated satellite switching
♦ scalable and replicable.

For listeners, Black Star offered a new format with:

♦ music for the whole community, news and local weather on the hour and information relevant to the local community, rather than re-transmitted satellite programs designed for audiences in other cities
♦ tailored information for each community – for example cyclone information, road conditions, health service visits – rather than blanket satellite information for all communities.

For local radio stations, Black Star provides:

♦ a two-way highway that offers an up to date station monitoring and program support service
♦ a convergent media environment, that is cloud based and uses broadband, with satellite back up.

For sponsorship and promotions, Black Star offers a step-up from satellite-only distribution with placement of spots across the whole network, or just to a specific community, or any combination of audiences across the network. They also offer improved feedback with specific broadcast logs for each station available.

Further information on the Black Star Model and costing is contained in Appendix 3.

7.3.2 The FNMA Remote Monitoring Project

In 2019 several members asked FNMA to submit a collective application for funding to install remote monitoring systems at remote studio and transmitter sites to reduce operational expenses involved in maintenance and technical callouts. FNMA's Technical Coordinator, Ben Pridmore developed a submission on behalf of 6 member organisations (PAW Media, PAKAM, Radio MAMA, PY Media, TSIMA and initially CAAMA although they have since withdrawn from the project) for the hardware and installation of equipment.

The project shares expertise developed by NG Media and QRAM across the sector and gains efficiencies through the bulk purchase of some transmission equipment. This project aligns with the sector's Call for Action No. 6: "Upgrade Infrastructure".

The remote monitoring project received some funding from the CBF and currently includes 36 locations at 5 media organisations. They have bulk-ordered transmitters which are on their way to Alice Springs. They were due to receive a payment instalment from the CBF for the remainder of the grant funds for this first group of stations in late January 2021.

Once they receive the next funding release, they will order the UPS and other equipment required to complete installation of the new/replacement equipment at each site. They expect installation will begin in early March 2021. They were hoping to include video monitoring for the sites too, for security and remote problem solving/support reasons, but did not receive enough funding to cover that equipment for this project.

7.3.3   The Wakul App

Participants showed interest in the Wakul App mentioned by Professor Kerrie McCallum, which is currently being developed. The Wakul App gathers the stories from traditional and new media Indigenous news sources and centralises them in one place, connecting diverse communities through the new technology they are using. It will allow real time stories from all over the country to be shared more broadly. This innovative project, conducted in partnership with The Guardian in Australia and IndigenousX, arose out of The Civic Impact of Journalism Project and its key insight that new media adds to growth in Indigenous media.

7.3.4   First Nations Broadcasting

Since 2006 First Nations Broadcasting (FNB, formerly Aboriginal Broadcasting Australia) have built a new digital radio Indigenous facility that aligns with the national commercial radio industry. FNB has:

♦ implemented a modern high-capacity network connecting its studio and broadcasting infrastructure
♦ developed its own software enabling the use of low-cost Pine64 smartphones for mobile broadcasting
♦ developed and implemented a digital television playout system
♦ developed and installed a suite of hardware and software for archiving radio and television content.

7.3.5   Roundtable discussion with ACMA

In the discussion with ACMA at the roundtables ACMA set out its top broadcast spectrum planning priorities:

- converting commercial, community and national services from AM to FM in areas where FM spectrum is readily available
- improving coverage of national, commercial and community broadcasting services where spectrum is readily available
- making digital radio channel plans for regional DAB+ where a commercial licensee or national broadcaster has committed to a rollout
- supporting trials of new broadcasting technology.

ACMA made the following points:

- The maintenance of AM infrastructure and transmitters lies with the broadcasters – their maintenance is not ACMA's responsibility.
- Future technology involves the internet and online delivery … AM and FM are very old.
- DAB+ is mature technology and is used globally and in Australia, especially in metropolitan areas. It requires special radio receivers which are somewhat more expensive than AM/FM receivers. It has the advantage of very efficient use of radio bandwidth and has been encouraged in areas of frequency congestion.[26]
- DRM+ can be thought of as a long-range version of DAB+. It is a digital format utilising computing power in transmitters and specialised receivers to reduce bandwidth requirements. It is very promising in theory but has not achieved commercial traction. A key factor in its adoption will be the default inclusion of DRM radio receivers in automobiles.
- ACMA is committed to helping the decent provision of internet to remote communities through the new Universal Service Guarantee.
- ACMA acknowledged that the current technology is broadband internet streaming. However affordable high-speed broadband (WAN) internet is not available in many Indigenous communities: "the sooner we move to WAN the better as the satellites are failing." For further details refer to Appendix 7.

Comments from roundtable participants included:

"What about funding spectrum in Melbourne and Sydney – this is an urgent need as there are frequent outages in Sydney."

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[26] In response to the roundtable process, FNMA pointed out that DAB+ delivery has been expensive for metropolitan stations, that there is no available research on the impact of DAB+ services on audience figures overall as distinct from analogue radio services and that listener trends relating to DAB+ delivery are strongly linked to the installation of DAB+ receivers in cars.

> "The Indigenous radio community didn't get a fair go with DAB frequencies in Cairns, Darwin and Adelaide. Could we get more band width through legislation or change of government policy?"
>
> "AM is over 100 years old and the satellites are becoming increasingly unreliable."

There are cogent reasons for implementing remote monitoring systems and other new technologies to improve efficiency and reduce costs:

♦ need to comply with broadcasting licence to be on air;
♦ meet community needs;
♦ remote monitoring shows great promise.

Recommendation 7: The NIAA should work with the sector to investigate and where possible implement remote monitoring systems and other new technologies to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

7.3.6 Emergency Management (Department of Home Affairs)

Emergency Management Australia (EMA) delivers programs, policies and services that strengthen Australia's national security and emergency management capability. EMA coordinates the Australian Government physical and financial support for disasters and emergencies.

State and territory governments manage emergency responses in their jurisdictions. They issue emergency warnings to the community with the Emergency Alert system. EMA supports the system, and this is how emergency services send warning messages to landlines and mobile phones in defined areas during emergencies.

The Australian Government has developed the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework in partnership with government and non-government stakeholders. The National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework sets out the foundational work required nationally, across all sectors, to reduce disaster risk, minimise new disaster risk, and deliver better climate and disaster risk information.

In material provided to the roundtable process FNMA made the point that:

> Contingency funding for equipment failure, including weather events, has not been available (from the NIAA) since 2015-16. Transmission equipment is particularly exposed to damage from extreme weather events (cyclone, lightning,

fires). Increased occurrences of extreme weather conditions not only intensify wear and tear on broadcast equipment, but also produces greater reliance on First Nations broadcasters for localised, emergency information, particularly in the many regions where First Nations broadcasting organisations are the only local media servicing the area.

The Indigenous broadcasting sector is an important part of Australia's emergency management system. At the roundtables examples were provided of how broadcasters had been the sole source of advice for some communities during bushfires and cyclones, including the comment:

I want an emergency broadcasting fund for cyclone areas.

Recommendation 8: NIAA should undertake discussions with Emergency Management Australia (EMA) to collaborate on the infrastructure maintenance, replacement and upgrades needs of the sector for emergency management purposes.

7.3.7 A regional licence broadcasting licence
The question of a regional licence was raised at the roundtables including with the DITRDC and ACMA.

The proposition was put that one regional licence to cover a whole area would really help remote RIMOs and would also help reduce the administrative burden for ACMA. There was a specific example from one RIMO which manages 12 remote radio stations and 35 retransmission sites. One licence would be a great solution to minimise the administrative burden.

Remote RIMOS are often responsible for many smaller RIBS. Each station has its own licence, often held by the local Aboriginal council. If the councils are happy to transfer their licence to a RIMO hub, the amalgamation of multiple smaller licences into one big licence would alleviate work for both the RIMO and ACMA.

ACMA agreed that in-principle regional licences are a possibility, both legally and in terms of spectrum, as long as they are not introduced in congested areas which do not have enough spectrum.

Roundtable members suggested that the remote sector is not asking for more spectrum now; they are hoping to streamline and amalgamate licences rather than expand delivery footprints. ACMA agreed that consolidating licences rather than issuing new licences is possible.

Some participants were concerned about councils giving licences away to the RIMO. Assurances would need to be given that this would not happen without wide consultation with all stakeholders, including the radio station.

As this was not an issue for the whole sector, it was suggested that individual broadcasters could pursue the possibility of a regional licence with ACMA. It might also be appropriate for the FNMA to pursue the concept on behalf of regional and remote broadcasters. The roundtables were seeking NIAA support for these actions.

Recommendation 9: The NIAA should support the proposal for individual broadcasters from the sector to seek regional licences from the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA).

7.4   Building and maintaining skills and capabilities

7.4.1 Remote servicing

The issue of repairs and maintenance received considerable comment at the roundtables. With COVID, a number of broadcasters had utilised remote training for staff who had to undertake training and repairs.

> "I learnt to adapt during COVID. I managed to train staff located in Sydney and NZ using Zoom."
>
> "Yes, it's time we collaborated… let's get together as a sector for equipment, training and repairs… Let's all adopt an agreed standard…"
>
> "This is entirely possible… with internet connectivity every site could be monitored remotely."
>
> "A data base of technicians would be great too."
>
> "We desperately need Indigenous companies leading this to build up Indigenous skills… otherwise we will continue to be subjected to "snake oil salesmen" for repairs."

FNMA noted that:

> The remote monitoring project is an example of the work overseen by our in-house Technical Coordinator who works each day to support our members to manage and navigate technical issues. This includes but is not limited to establishing streaming services, resolving issues when software updates occur,

> upgrading email server systems, providing advice on operational online security, building and refreshing websites, supporting the establishment of apps and IP broadcast technologies, providing hands-on support for outside broadcasts and other queries.
>
> This is delivered by one part-time employee and support could definitely be improved with First Nations Media Australia receiving further resourcing.

These comments echo similar comments and findings in previous reviews. Stevens (2010) commented:

> Service provider/s be required to develop training programs for Indigenous technicians for installation and ongoing maintenance. Any new or renegotiated contracts should require the employment and training of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Stevens, 2010).

Watson (2014) made a specific recommendation to address the issue:

> One option would be a dedicated funding stream established for maintaining broadcast services in communities, including technical maintenance, power and water, building maintenance, apparatus licenses, etc. quite separate from the RIMO funding for training, employment, production, regional radio network management and other media services. This would clarify the responsibility of the RIBS/ Shire and the RIMO and overcome the confusion on what the funding is used for.

At the same time a three-stage process could be established.

Stage 1: A RIBS operator could undertake simple maintenance not requiring formal qualifications, for example testing of VAST reception and making simple adjustments.

Stage 2: A telephone help desk jointly funded by RIMOs could address more complex problems.

Stage 3: Site visits by qualified technicians to address most serious problems.

A variation of the above recommendation could be the establishment of an online help desk to provide technical assistance and advice on repairs and maintenance. As FNMA already provides this service on a part-time basis this might be used as the basis for a more robust service.

Recommendation 10: The NIAA should work with the sector to investigate the feasibility of an online help desk for repairs and maintenance.

7.4.2 Recruitment, employment, training and development

A continuing issue for the sector is their capacity to recruit, retain and train staff for both on-air and technical positions. There is also a need for enhanced succession planning because of the ageing workforce.

As noted in Section 4.4, COVID-19 has reinforced that training can be effectively delivered remotely. The roundtable discussed what training could be developed and delivered cooperatively or centrally and delivered remotely. It was felt that both media training and technical training could be delivered remotely.

The roundtables requested NIAA to work with the sector to investigate the possibility for collaborative remote training and also to pressure State and Territory governments to provide more funding for foundation training.

As noted above, the FNMA has a number of training initiatives underway and in a paper provided to this process demonstrated how they could expand these activities in a more strategic manner with resourcing. There is a range of collaborative learning opportunities in areas of business development, operational and financial management that would be of great benefit to their members. Training opportunities could be organised to provide a clearer career pathway to aid with the recruitment and retention of staff.

Two options were discussed including:

♦ NIAA could set aside funding from the current IBMP to establish a central database (at FNMA) which would advertise all remote training programs being offered across the sector enabling broadcasters to access training as needed.

and/or

♦ NIAA could let a tender for provision of remote training as long as there were sufficient broadcasters willing to commit, or NIAA could set aside a percentage of the overall IBMP budget for remote training and broadcasters could bid for it. The funds would have to come from the current very limited budget.

The discussion brought a variety of responses including:

> "One of our guys did a RIBS training course on the Zedda technology… he was able to do it remotely due to COVID… it was great and cost effective… he was a seasoned broadcaster but after just 3 days he is an expert on the technology."
> "We need short, snappy, simple training of radio managers – simple editing, zoom etc… RTO training is all well and good but it is often too long."
>
> "Fabulous idea but I wouldn't want to be totally committed to a national approach though."
>
> "We had a real problem training our volunteers through Covid – I would love to have access to a central training data base."
>
> "A central data base of templates on governance and compliance would be great too."
>
> "On the question of centralised marketing/support/training, I agree that savings will be made on scale and being centralised would help but the question remains, how do we help organisations collectively do things that they can't do on their own?
>
> "I like the idea of tendering… CAAMA, TEABBA and QRAM have this capacity for training in place as we are already running workshops and putting out booklets."

On balance, the option considered most implementable is the first. There are a number of broadcasters running training programs for their volunteers and staff. Others could benefit from attending those courses remotely. At the same time the provider could charge a small amount per registration to supplement their course development.

In Stage 1, FNMA would be funded to develop a database of all courses being run by all providers. In Stage 2, the database would be further developed to allow online registrations and payments to course providers.[27]

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[27] In a personal communication the Digital Transformation Agency suggested that existing databases be explored before developing a new one.

Recommendation 11: The NIAA should set aside an amount for the development of a central database for broadcast and media course registration and development.

7.4.3 Working with SBS/NITV

The Stevens Review (2010) made the following recommendation:

> The Australian Government work with the ABC and SBS to ensure that training and employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples meet a target of no less than 2.7 per cent for Indigenous employees each financial year with progress against each measure (training and employment) to be reported separately in the national broadcasters' annual reports. (Recommendation 31)

This important recommendation has been adopted and the target achieved. In 2019 the SBS reports that 3.4% of its workforce (excluding casual employees) are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.[28] In its 2019 *Annual Report* the ABC reports that it has achieved 2.7% Indigenous employment, and in its 2020 *Annual Report*, it reports that it has set a target of 3.6% Indigenous employees by 2022.[29] The total number of full-time equivalent Indigenous employees in 2019 was about 101 in the ABC and 40 in the SBS. 3.4% of SBS employees identified as Indigenous in 2020.

The ABC's Indigenous department was established almost 30 years ago and has contributed significantly to the production of Indigenous Australian television and the development of Indigenous filmmakers in Australia. Since 2010, it has aimed to create quality primetime Indigenous drama and documentaries content which advocate for Aboriginal self-representation and increased participation of Indigenous creatives in the media industry.

In 2013, its first commissioned drama series "Redfern Now", written, directed and produced by Indigenous filmmakers, was critically acclaimed and won several industry awards. Since then ABC Indigenous has continued to produce outstanding comedy and drama. According to the ABC's annual report for 2019:

> ABC Indigenous is the proud home of vibrant Indigenous voices and stories told from an Indigenous perspective, with content across comedy, drama, factual, social media, digital drama and radio.

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[28] https://www.transparency.gov.au/annual-reports/special-broadcasting-service-corporation/reporting-year/2018-2019-62
[29] Page 108 of the 2019 report and page 66 of the 2020 report.

Also in 2018 -19, the ABC appointed a total of 12 Indigenous interns through programs such as the ABC News Cadetship, the Caroline Jones Scholarship, the Indigenous Cadetship Scheme and the Entertainment and Specialist Internship.

In a key interview with NITV for this roundtable process the following points were made:

♦ NITV has a strategic focus to work with the sector to accelerate industry growth. They try to work locally to share and exchange news and believe they have been successful in the Pilbara, WA and in Brisbane with BIMA and NIRS. NITV has producers co-located there to help them grow like CAAMA. NITV does not want to be capital cities centric.

♦ NITV is trying to establish a stable sector with all RIMOS in particular working together, but "one size doesn't fit all … some love news, some love sport … all players are at different spots."

♦ NITV needs a thriving sector as it is their pipeline — NITV wants the content from RIBS (footy, concerts, stories, news etc.) which has been quality approved by the RIMO. It wants to provide regular payment for content and then licensing and that revenue to go back to communities for more content creation.

♦ NITV has an audience of 2 million.

As SBS/NITV is interested in getting good content, they could be approached to contribute to strengthening that capacity by assisting training across the sector.

Recommendation 12: NIAA in concert with FNMA should approach SBS/NITV and the ABC regarding assistance for sector-wide training.

7.5   Broadening and strengthening the funding base

7.5.1 The Community Broadcasting Fund
The DITRDC currently provides funding to the CBF to distribute to community broadcasters to support content (including specialist programming), development and operations and major projects (sector investment). Each year the CBF grants more than $19.7 million to help around 216 community media organisations.

In 2018 the grants to Indigenous broadcasters totalled $1.3m and in 2019 $1.4m. The grants were for a range of activities including:

- ♦ content production
- ♦ development and operations – salary subsidy
- ♦ development and operations – studio and outside broadcast equipment and transmission site expenses
- ♦ IT upgrade.

Grants ranged in value from $10,000 to $189,000.

> The CBF holds black money… money which is there for Indigenous broadcasting… we hate begging to the CBF grants committee. (Sector member at Consultation Session)

The NIAA should be in a better position to judge the needs of the sector both on an individual broadcaster basis or across the sector as a whole. Indeed, if the $1.4m were directed to sector wide needs some real progress might be made.[30]

Recommendation 13: The NIAA should enter discussions with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications regarding the transfer of the Indigenous grants element of the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) to the NIAA for use on sector-wide projects.

7.5.2 Engagement in the ACCC's draft legislation on Facebook and Google

The roundtable wants engagement in the legislation currently before Parliament (December 2020) that would force technology giants Facebook and Google to negotiate with media companies over payment for linking to their news stories.

The Federal Government ordered the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to develop a mandatory code of conduct to govern commercial dealings between tech giants and news media companies.

The ACCC had initially been tasked with developing a voluntary code to address the bargaining power imbalance between digital giants and traditional media outlets. However, the ACCC advised the Government that reaching a voluntary agreement over the crucial issue of payment for content would be "unlikely".

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[30] This was not discussed with the CBF during the consultants' key interview with them. The idea only arose when the consultants considered other sources of funding for the program.

The government released draft legislation to compel Google and Facebook to negotiate with Australian media companies. The mandatory code will cover issues including the sharing of data, ranking of news content online and the sharing of revenue generated from news. It will be enforced through penalties and sanctions and will include a binding dispute resolution process.

It is understood that news media businesses wishing to participate in the code would apply to the ACMA. News media businesses would nominate which of their "news sources" they would like included in the code. These can include news websites, newspapers and other print publications, television programs, radio programs, and other audio or video content made available online.

Based on the news sources they nominate, news media businesses can participate in the code if:

♦ they predominantly produce "core news" and publish this online
♦ they adhere to appropriate professional editorial standards
♦ they maintain editorial independence from the subjects of their news coverage
♦ they operate primarily in Australia for the purpose of serving Australian audiences.[31]

The roundtable also felt that the content from the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector was being used without attribution or payment and wished to be considered in any legislative consideration.

It was noted that the FNMA and CBAA have provided a joint response to the ACCC Exposure Draft: News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code and have continued to engage with those drafting the bill.

Recommendation 14: The NIAA should support the FNMA to ensure that the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector is considered when the legislation to compel Google and Facebook to negotiate with Australian media companies is passed.

7.5.3   Philanthropic organisations

The FNMA and many in the sector are aware of philanthropic organisations that wish to assist Indigenous communities and individuals to further develop educational opportunities, employment, economic development and social participation and healthy and safe homes and communities.

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[31]The ACCC Exposure Draft can be accessed at https://tinyurl.com/y7uc9q4w

In a submission MAMA suggested the Minderoo Foundation, Healthways, McCusker Foundation, BHP, RIO could be approached as well as Lottery West.

A search for "Indigenous" at: https://philanthropy.org.au produces over 100 results.

It was suggested during consultations with NIAA that a joint approach to major philanthropic organisations by the NIAA and FNMA for sector-wide projects might achieve some positive results.

For example, given their interaction with Indigenous communities, it was suggested a joint approach to Rio Tinto or Fortescue Metals Group (FMG) to assist with sector-wide projects might get a favourable response, although not all in the sector would agree to approaching mining companies.

Philanthropic organisations are discussed in more detail in section 9.3 below.

Recommendation 15: The NIAA should consult with FNMA regarding a joint approach to philanthropic organisations to assist with sector-wide initiatives.

Chapter 9 of this report provides an overview of government programs that might be accessed by the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector and makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 16: The FNMA should be funded to identify grant opportunities and programs that could be accessed by the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector and assist the sector to access that funding.

7.6   Summary

In summary, the Roundtables considered a broad range of issues confronting the sector. A survey of the sector, several submissions from sector organisations and key interviews provided further information. The recommendations above arose from those discussions and information provided.

Chapter 8. Recommendations from previous reviews

Many of the suggestions and recommendations proffered throughout the roundtable process had already been recommended in previous reviews. While they are not necessarily outcomes from the roundtable process, it would be prudent to reconsider them as part of any new policy framework.

In this chapter we draw out those with most relevance in order to achieve the most efficient, effective and appropriate use of Government's Indigenous Advancement Strategy investment in Indigenous broadcasting and media.

The Review of Operational Partnerships in the Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Sector (Watson, 2014) recommended a RIMO-based funding model. Several recommendations were adopted or partly adopted (see Appendix 2), however for the remote sector the remaining ones are still relevant.

The benefits of a RIMO-directed funding model were stated as:

♦ necessary administrative and governance arrangements can be implemented in a cost-effective way that still preserves local autonomy;
♦ robust RIMOs can operate in each region with RIBS
♦ the RIMOs should have the scale to provide technical, operational and programming expertise amongst smaller stations and should provide better, more efficient and more effective training, repairs and maintenance services, and the capacity to provide improved regional programming to RIBS
♦ the possibility of increased shared services between RIMOs
♦ all RIBS with similar broadcasting outputs should receive similar funding and support services, including, structured training and certainty of support for repairs and maintenance and high-quality regional programming when desired
♦ RIBS can concentrate on community involvement and local programming;
♦ for councils and shires it provides the opportunity to divest themselves of certain responsibilities which they don't see as core business
♦ for the Department there will be six or seven organisations to fund and monitor rather than more than 90.

To this we could add from the Roundtables:

♦ The large-scale transfer of magnetic tape recordings will cease around 2025. The message is clear – digitise your archive before this date or risk it being lost forever. The RIMOs have the potential to assist RIBS with

archiving of sensitive audio video material prior to this date if funding were available to support the work.

The Review made recommendation to establish criteria for an effective RIMO and for strengthening the RIBS. These can be seen in Appendix 2.

Two further recommendations from the Stevens Review (2010) are also still relevant.

As part of future funding rounds, RIMOs be required to execute a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with each of their RIBS, which would include a requirement that RIBS and RIMOs exchange letters annually outlining the support to be provided by the RIMO and confirming the satisfaction of the RIBS with past services provided by the RIMO.

This was required but not necessarily applied.

Requirements for all media organisations that receive IBMP funds (except RIBS) to include the board chair, deputy chair, treasurer and secretary participating in an approved governance training course within six months of receiving funding - regardless of previous experience on boards or committees.

This was encouraged but not required.

The current process provides the opportunity to again review these recommendations. They could be considered again as part of implementation from the roundtable process (discussed in Chapter 10 below).

Further information on previous reviews can be found in Appendix 2.

Chapter 9. Accessing other government programs

9.1 Introduction

In this chapter we address the question whether there are other significant sources of funding, from government or other sources, that might be available to the sector. There are indeed many sources, but they are typically for small amounts of money, with significant application and, if successful, administrative costs. In many cases costs of the process of applying for and managing small grants and subsidies may outweigh the benefits and distract from the core activities of the sector.

9.2 The budget context

Despite the Closing the Gap targets doubling in size and tackling areas such as Indigenous education, health, languages and justice, the federal government has included no new funding in the 2020-21 budget. Funding of $46.5 million over four years, will be resourced from existing IAS funds to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations build their capacity and business models. Other programs that could possibly assist the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector include:

♦ a general scheme, $62.8 million for the Local Jobs Program, which will focus on reskilling, upskilling and employment pathways in 25 Employment Regions across Australia to assist people back into the workforce

♦ an additional $30.3 million in funding for the Regional Connectivity Program to improve connectivity in regional and remote Australia

♦ the Regional Connectivity Program will target investment in telecommunications infrastructure projects which respond to local priorities and maximise economic opportunities and social benefits for regional, rural and remote Australians

♦ funding until 30 June 2024 to continue to deliver commercial free-to-air broadcasts through the Viewer Access Satellite Television service to viewers unable to access terrestrial services.

In summary, no specific new funding was provided.

9.3 Other government programs

The roundtables reinforced the contribution the sector is making beyond meeting the objectives of the Cultural and Heritage stream of the AIS. We have also drawn attention to this above in demonstrating how the IBMP assists other government programs to reach achieve their outcomes. Yet that contribution is

not generally matched with financial assistance from other government agencies.

The consultants were asked as part of the Roundtable process to undertake a brief assessment of other possible sources of Federal Government funding that might be accessed by broadcasters.

In most cases the broadcasters do not have the resources to be combing Government websites to see whether they might access additional funds. The time broadcasters spend searching for and (often futilely) applying for small amounts of funding from other areas, is essentially time not spent delivering on IAS funding requirements. The FNMA does keep members informed of possible programs; however, limited staffing again prevents the members from having the capability to access them.

A better approach might be for be for the NIAA and/or FNMA to negotiate more effectively with other agencies to directly fund the sector as a whole, enabling the broadcasters to focus on core business. Consideration should be given to providing funding to FNMA to undertake this work more rigorously.

Below we briefly describe some of those programs.

9.3.1 The Office of the Arts

The Office of the Arts within the DITRDC offers a number of programs that could be accessed by Indigenous broadcasters; particularly as a number of them are engaged in live broadcasts. Brief descriptions are provided in Appendix 6. They include:

- Live Music Australia
- Show Starter Loan Scheme
- Arts Sustainability Fund
- Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund
- Visions of Australia
- Indigenous Languages and Arts program
- National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program
- Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support program
- Community Heritage Grants
- Regional Arts Fund.

It should be noted that Arts funding has also suffered from static/reduced funding levels and is also highly sought after, extremely competitive and difficult to secure.

9.3.2 Department of Health

The Department of Health announced a *Health Protection – COVID-19 National Communication Campaign.* It involves a national communication plan to ensure timely, factual and consistent information is provided to encourage the public, and the health and aged care sectors, to adopt behaviours that will prevent and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

It was said to benefit all Australians, particularly those in high risk groups including older Australians, those with chronic health conditions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people living with disability. The aged care and health care sector and support industries will require ongoing communication to support their response. This measure will cost $30 million over 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Funding of $234,500 (GST excl) was provided to First Nations Media Australia (FNMA) to support Indigenous broadcasters to respond to the COVID-10 pandemic. FNMA provided 29 organisations with funding of $172,608, comprising $91,608 to support small equipment purchases and $81,000 for content production.

FNMA retained funding of $61,892 to provide business support to the sector, producing four webinars that provided business and governance advice, developing a Pandemic policy and maintaining a dedicated website with messaging information for the First Nations Media sector:

https://covid19.firstnationsmedia.org.au/

Additionally, partnerships, (for example with the Australian Indigenous Doctor's Association) have provided broadcast and video content in language for inclusion on various websites.

FNMA collected over 500 content posts that were delivered in a variety of formats and medium and include examples in eight language groups. Examples include PAW Media's interactive Facebook Q&A page in English and Warlpiri, CAAMA's 37 content posts from local community influencers, PAKAM's story-like animations and Ngaarda Media's "Corona Bubble song".

The project was efficiently administered by FNMA and well supported by the First Nations Broadcasting and media sector. The outcome of this joint effort ensured complex messages about the pandemic were received, understood and followed in targeted populations. The project contributed to the national messaging about COVID-19.

For a small amount of funding, a great deal was achieved.

Undoubtedly there are many other health promotion and communication programs that Indigenous broadcasters could assist with and these should be investigated.

9.3.3   Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

We have already recommended above that:

♦ The NIAA should begin discussions with the DITRDC to develop an Indigenous Broadcasting licence.
♦ The NIAA, in collaboration with ACMA and the FNMA, should undertake an infrastructure needs survey and cost analysis for an infrastructure upgrade program.
♦ The NIAA should enter discussions with the DITRDC regarding the transfer of the Indigenous grants element of the CBF to the NIAA for use on sector-wide projects.

9.3.4   Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources

The Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources has a number of programs that could assist Indigenous broadcasters and make applicants aware of State/Territory grants as well. Some examples are listed below.[32]

Business Development and Assistance Program. The Business Development and Assistance Program provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and businesses with access to finance products, advice, training and workshops to start or grow a small to medium business.

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[32] The website to research available grants is at https://www.business.gov.au/grants-and-programs and includes a search category for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business proprietors.

Aboriginal Business Development Program. The Aboriginal Business Development Program provides funding for Aboriginal people to help start or expand their business.

Australian Heritage Grants 2020-21 Grant Opportunity. The Australian Heritage Grants Program aims to improve recognition, conservation, preservation and access to the heritage values of National Heritage Listed places. The program also aims to increase community engagement and raise awareness of listed sites.

Cyber Security Business Connect and Protect. The Cyber Security Business Connect and Protect Program provides trusted organisations that advise small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with funding to raise awareness of cyber security risks and promote action to address these risks.

Caring for State Heritage Grants (NSW). Caring for State Heritage Grants provide matched funding (up to $150,000) to help conserve, manage, maintain and activate assets on the State Heritage Register.

Grants for Individuals, Groups, Organisations (SA). Arts SA funding is available for artists, organisations and the community to support initiatives that demonstrate bold exploration, innovation, and lead to a vibrant ecology of new relationships and networks so that everyone can engage with arts.

Small Business Grants Round 2 (SA). Small Business Grants Round 2 provide small businesses (both employing and non-employing) and not-for-profits significantly affected by COVID-19 with funding to help them survive.

Small Business Disaster Recovery Grants (QLD). Small Business Disaster Recovery Grants provide small businesses impacted by the North and Far North QLD monsoon trough 2019 with funding to help them recover and rebuild business confidence.

Aboriginal Workforce Grants (NT). Aboriginal Workforce Grants provide funding for Northern Territory businesses or organisations for projects that support employment of Aboriginal people.

Regional Economic Development Fund (NT). The Regional Development Fund provides funding to businesses to promote economic development in all regions of the Northern Territory.

Priority Sector Collaborative Grants (NT). The Priority Sector Collaborative Grants provide funding to Northern Territory business groups to help them build common-use infrastructure, services or data.

9.3.5 Other government agencies

Many other government agencies have programs, which may be of interest or give some special considerations to Indigenous people and communities. Depending on their nature, the programs are directed to individuals or to organisations. Again, as indicated above, the broadcasters do not have the time and resources to discover and apply for these possible sources of funding.

The following are some such agencies. There are many more. A more comprehensive list of agencies with an assessment of the programs offered would be a useful resource for the Indigenous Broadcasting Sector and to their communities.

- Australia Council for the Arts
- Australian Film, Television and Radio School
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- Department of Education, Skills and Employment
- Department of Social Services
- Emergency Management Australia
- Indigenous Business Australia
- Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation
- National Film and Sound Archive of Australia
- Services Australia

In the consultants' meeting with the Digital Transformation Taskforce the benefits of joining up and mapping networks and existing services already in place was discussed in relation to opportunities for employment and training. It was agreed that this would be helpful for young Indigenous youth, especially in remote areas. A mapping of available grants updated each year would be similarly helpful.

The FNMA already does keep members informed of possible grants. Perhaps they could provide this to the NIAA Regional Network.

We have recommended in Chapter 7 above: Recommendation 16: The FNMA should be funded to identify grant opportunities and programs that could be accessed by the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector and assist the sector to access that funding.

9.4 Philanthropic organisations

Philanthropy Australia (the peak body for the philanthropic sector) in partnership with Ninti One (a not-for-profit company that builds opportunities for people in remote Australia) have been presenting an annual award for philanthropic and social investment that supports and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. Recent winners of the award are:

♦ the Balnaves Foundation and Guardian Australia for working together to deliver independent investigative reporting into Indigenous affairs (2020)
♦ the Klein Family Foundation and Karrkad Kanjdji Trust for the Warddeken Daluk Ranger Program (2019)
♦ the Australian Communities Foundation and Woor-Dungin for the Criminal Record Discrimination Project.

Notwithstanding the annual award, philanthropy support for Indigenous causes in Australia is not extensive.

Crikey recently published details of several other charitable organisations dedicated to supporting the wellbeing of Indigenous communities.[33]

♦ The Ninti One Foundation is an organisation that seeks to create economic opportunity to improve the livelihoods of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia.[34]
♦ The Healing Foundation, a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation that partners with communities to address the ongoing trauma caused by actions including the forced removal of children from their families.
♦ The Indigenous Literacy Foundation strives to make a difference to the lives of Indigenous families by gifting thousands of new culturally appropriate books – with a focus on early literacy and first language – and by running programs to inspire the communities to tell and publish their own stories.
♦ The Northern Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency works with Aboriginal communities, and key government and non-government stakeholders, to deliver services in a professional, culturally proficient and community sensitive manner in the Northern Territory.
♦ ANTaR an independent, is a national network of organisations and individuals working to support justice, rights and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia.

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[33] https://www.crikey.com.au/2020/06/15/indigenous-charities-you-should-be-supporting/
[34] See https://www.nintione.com.au/what-we-do/ninti-one-foundation/

♦ Yalari identifies children who are doing well at primary school and gives them the opportunity to be educated at some of the best boarding schools throughout Australia.

The FNMA and many in the sector are aware of philanthropic organisations that wish to assist Indigenous communities and individuals to further develop educational opportunities, employment, economic development and social participation and healthy and safe homes and communities.[35] Details can be found by searching for "Indigenous" at: https://philanthropy.org.au

As discussed at 7.5.3 above it was suggested during consultations with NIAA that a joint approach to major philanthropic organisations by the NIAA and FNMA for sector-wide projects might achieve some positive results.

We have recommended the following above in Chapter 7: Recommendation 15: The NIAA should consult with FNMA regarding a joint approach to philanthropic organisations to assist with sector-wide initiatives.

9.5   Summary

In summary there are other sources of funding that might be accessed by the sector; however, the sector is constrained in its capacity to access such funding. Recommendations 15 and 16 are intended to help address this:

♦ The NIAA should consult with First Nations Media Australia regarding a joint approach to philanthropic organisations to assist with sector-wide initiatives
♦ The FNMA should be funded to identify grant opportunities and programs that could be accessed by the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector and assist the sector to access that funding.

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[35] At the Consultation sessions a suggestion was also made to approach Lottery West which provides funding for the arts, cultural and community activities in WA.

Chapter 10. Taking the report forward

10.1 Background

> Evaluations that do not provide useful results or are not used to improve policies and programs affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are a missed opportunity and a waste of resources. When Australian Government agencies plan, commission or conduct evaluations, the intention should always be to use the evaluation findings to inform policy and program decisions (Productivity Commission 2020 p. 14).

The sector has been reviewed, evaluated and studied for the last two decades. As noted above, during that time the Indigenous Broadcasting Program has moved from one agency to another following changes of Government or Prime Minister. That has certainly contributed to a loss of corporate memory and limited follow-through. Most previous recommendations have not been implemented (See Appendix 2).

This renewal process recognises this, and there is understandable scepticism in the sector. However, there is now one agency responsible for Indigenous policy and programs: The National Indigenous Australians Agency.

10.2 Collaboration with the sector

A number of the recommendations pertaining to legislative and administrative changes can be undertaken by the NIAA in consultation with the sector. The recommendations that require collaboration across the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media sector will require leadership from the sector itself.

The Productivity Commission Indigenous Evaluation Strategy (2020, p. 11) recommends that:

> Evaluations consider impacts of policies and programs on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and how agencies are working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop and deliver policies and programs.

To continue the consultation from this roundtable stage to implementation it would be advisable to establish an ongoing dialogue with the sector. For example, some recommendations require specific experience, knowledge and expertise: e.g. infrastructure upgrades, technology transitioning, remote training and repairs and maintenance.

The FNMA is the recognised peak body for the sector. While there may be several Indigenous broadcasting organisations that either do not wish to recognise that role or are not members, they are in a minority. Nevertheless, their views should be heard. However, if sector-wide initiatives are to be taken, the NIAA should take every opportunity to work with and strengthen FNMA's capacity and role.

Several options could be considered for taking the report forward.

Option 1: Utilise the existing relationship with FNMA to leverage sector resources.

The FNMA currently conduct industry discussions such as the Roundtable regularly (every 6 weeks) and send invitations to each online meeting to all media organisations operating in the sector. These sessions usually include a guest speaker on a particular topic, as well as opportunity for the stations to network and share ideas.

As noted above the FNMA also has a number of sector-wide initiatives underway that are directly relevant to the recommendations from this roundtable process.

The NIAA currently meets with the FNMA on a regular basis and this meeting and the industry discussions might be used as forums to progress the recommendations.

Option 2: Establish a working group with specific expertise (including the FNMA) to directly address each recommendation with the NIAA.

The purpose of an Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Working Group would be to coordinate the collaborative initiatives recommended and to provide advice to the NIAA on all recommendations. A small Working Group with the requisite knowledge and experience would be needed assisted by a small secretariat from the FNMA. An independent chair might assist the process, particularly as there have historically been tensions within the sector.

The Working Group could come into operation following the NIAA's consideration of the report from this renewal process. It could operate for two years with the option for an extension on the advice of the Minister.

Meetings could generally be conducted online. Sitting fees would have to be considered.[36]

The Working Group should comprise Indigenous members including:

♦ an independent chair
♦ a member with knowledge and experience of new technologies in broadcasting and media
♦ a member with knowledge and experience of current online training and development programs in the broadcasting and media sector
♦ a member with knowledge and experience of infrastructure needs and repairs, maintenance and upgrades in the broadcasting and media sector
♦ a member from the FNMA with knowledge of all the initiatives being undertaken across the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector.

Whichever option is chosen the NIAA will have to work closely with the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector to follow through on these recommendations:

Recommendation 14: The NIAA should support the FNMA to ensure that the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector is considered when the legislation to compel Google and Facebook to negotiate with Australian media companies is passed.

Recommendation 9: The NIAA support the proposal for individual broadcasters from the sector to seek regional licences from ACMA.

Recommendation 7: The NIAA should work with the sector to investigate and where possible implement remote monitoring systems and other new technologies to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

Recommendation 10: The NIAA should work with the sector to investigate the feasibility of an online help desk for repairs and maintenance.

Recommendation 16: The NIAA should work with the FNMA to identify grant opportunities and programs that could be accessed by the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector.

Recommendation 15: The NIAA should consult with FNMA regarding a joint approach to philanthropic organisations to assist with sector-wide initiatives.

Discussion on other issues that arose during the roundtables is also needed, including:

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[36] The Queensland Government has a category: Consultation, advisory and liaison activities Policy/operational advice with influence on a specific aspect of Government policy or a particular region for which they pay $300 per day.

♦ More support for the digitisation of archives prior to 2025 cut-off (NFSA 2018, p. 2).

♦ The issue of booking satellite space.

♦ Funding more urban spectrum – Gadigal in Sydney and 3KND in Melbourne raised this.

♦ Convening a technical/ engineers round table session – IMPARJA, ACMA, FNMA & representatives of sector technologists regarding technology, equipment and platforms to discuss the Future of Indigenous Broadcasting.

10.3 NIAA-specific recommendations

The major recommendation requiring action from the NIAA is:

Recommendation 1: The NIAA should adopt a policy and evaluation framework that demonstrates the IBMP's contribution to Closing the Gap.

Recommendation 3a: The NIAA IBMP program description, funding schedules and contracted requirements for funded broadcasters should acknowledge the diversity of activities undertaken and the variety of platforms utilised to develop and deliver content to their audiences.

Recommendation 3b: A pool of KPIs be developed which validly and reliably measure operational requirements and achievement of Program outcomes. Consideration be given to a more sophisticated performance analysis methodology for RIMOs such as DEA (Data Envelopment Analysis).

The rationale and recommended approach for this recommendation are explained in Chapter 6.

Several recommendations require the NIAA to make minor administrative changes or provide additional support:

Recommendation 2: The program name should be changed to the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program.

Recommendation 15: The NIAA should consult with FNMA regarding a joint approach to philanthropic organisations to assist with sector-wide initiatives.

Recommendation 16: The NIAA should work with the FNMA to identify grant opportunities and programs that could be accessed by broadcasters.

10.4 NIAA consultation with other agencies

A number of the recommendations require the NIAA to undertake consultations and negotiations with other government agencies:

Recommendation 4: The NIAA should begin discussions with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications to develop an Indigenous Broadcasting licence.

Recommendation 6: The NIAA in collaboration with ACMA and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, undertake an infrastructure needs survey and cost analysis for an infrastructure upgrade program.

Recommendation 8: NIAA should undertake discussions with Emergency Management Australia (EMA) to collaborate on the infrastructure maintenance, replacement and upgrades needs of the sector for emergency management purposes.

Recommendation 13: The NIAA should enter discussions with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications regarding the transfer of the Indigenous grants element of the CBF to the NIAA for use on sector-wide projects.

Recommendation 12: NIAA in concert with FNMA approach SBS/NITV and the ABC regarding assistance for sector-wide training.

Appendix 1: The Roundtable Process

The consultancy was conducted in seven stages:

1. Project Preparation and Inception
2. Research
3. Key interviews
4. Roundtable discussions
5. Consultation sessions
6. Survey of Stakeholders
7. Reporting.

In **Stage 1**, Project Preparation and Inception, the consultants met with NIAA to discuss the questions and issues to be addressed. They confirmed the methodology, agreed the scope of consultation, the timeline, reporting requirements during the project, and agreed how the consultants and the Branch would work together.

The consultants developed strategies for research, engagement, roundtable planning and administration and sector communication including the audience for the proposed survey in Stage 3. They agreed the roundtable parameters, research methods, topics for discussion and key lines of questioning. A project plan was presented to, and agreed by, the NIAA.

The consultants were asked to conduct and report on six video conferencing roundtables with 12 remote, regional and urban broadcasters chosen by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). After further discussion between the consultants and the NIAA on extending the consultation, two further Consultation Sessions and a survey of the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector were added.

In **Stage 2**, Research, the consultants summarised the findings of previous reviews of the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector and drew out recommendations that were relevant to the current work.

In **Stage 3** key interviews were undertaken with First Nations' broadcasting and media organisations, relevant Australian Government departments and non-IAS funded organisations. A full list can be seen in Appendix 5. Another consultation session was held with NIAA Regional Managers before the sector roundtables commenced.

In **Stage 4** the six video conferencing roundtables were conducted. At the first session a presentation by Dr Kerry McCallum, Professor of Communication and

Media Studies at the University of Canberra provided particularly useful information on the state of the media sector and the challenges facing it. The transformation in the media landscape included:

♦ the shift to digital
♦ the rise of digital platforms
♦ embrace of social media
♦ a networked public sphere
♦ breaking the news business model
♦ loss of traditional journalism
♦ closing down of regional television, newspaper and radio
♦ pressures on public broadcasting.

Representatives from the Australian Communications Media Authority (ACMA) and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications attended one roundtable to answer broadcasters' questions. Two roundtable participants also gave very helpful presentations: Gerry Pyne from Queensland Remote Indigenous Media (QRAM) on the Black Star model (see Appendix 3) and Catherine Liddle from First Nations Media Association (FNMA) on sector-wide initiatives.

The engagement from participants was high and a number took the opportunity to follow up with the facilitator by email and phone between sessions. The participants can be seen in Appendix 5.

In **Stage 5** the two further video conferencing consultation sessions were opened to the Indigenous broadcasting sector to consider and discuss the outcomes from the roundtable process and a further 21 broadcasters attended. The participants can be seen in Appendix 5.

In **Stage 6** a survey of the sector was developed and disseminated using the mailing lists from the NIAA and FNMA. The survey sought information on how the sector members communicate with their communities, how they expect to communicate with communities in five years, the media and social media they currently use, the importance of different sources of funding and support for their current operations, their agreement with the recommendations from the roundtable process, and what the priorities should be for the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector going forward.

Three follow-up reminders for the survey were sent and 39 responses were received.

In **Stage 7**, Reporting, the consultants met with the Executive of the NIAA to present and get feedback on the outcomes from the roundtables and likely direction of the report. The consultants also had numerous meetings consultations and communication with the Culture and Heritage Branch of the NIAA to discuss progress and issues during the roundtable process.

A draft report was written taking information from the roundtables and consultation sessions, the key interviews, previous reviews, the sector survey and additional materials and information sent to the consultants. The draft report was presented the NIAA and following feedback this final report was presented.

Appendix 2: Previous reviews

Introduction

Indigenous broadcasting has been the subject of several reviews over the past 20 years. Over that period, because of Machinery of Government (MOG) changes, administrative and policy responsibility for the Indigenous Broadcasting Program was shifted from one agency to another on at least four occasions with consequential loss of corporate memory, changed policy focus and reduced opportunity to implement recommendations.

Over the last 20 years the impact of several reviews of Indigenous broadcasting has been minimal in comparison to two key influences:

♦ Program outcomes that have abruptly changed with Machinery of Government reassignment to different portfolios.
♦ Prolonged funding freezes during which broadcasters have had to invest in response to significant market, technology and policy changes.

When the program was located in the Arts portfolio, the focus was on culture. In the Department of Communications Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA), outcomes had to be rewritten to support communication objectives, in the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport (DRALGAS), outcomes had to support employment in regional and remote Australia, while in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) and NIAA the focus is on Closing the Gap.

Many of the recommendations of the reviews of the program are still relevant and could be taken up in a new policy framework for sector investment and renewal.

In this Appendix we summarise key recommendations from the most relevant previous reviews and present a table showing where action has, or has not, been taken as a result of the reviews.

Productivity Commission Broadcasting Inquiry Report, No. 11. (2000)

As part of the Australian Government's Legislation Review Schedule, the Productivity Commission was asked to undertake a wide-ranging review of broadcasting services legislation and to advise on practical courses of action to improve competition, efficiency and the interests of consumers in broadcasting

services (Productivity Commission, 2000). In doing so, the Commission was asked to focus particular attention on balancing the social, cultural and economic dimensions of the public interest and have due regard to the phenomenon of technological convergence to the extent that it may impact upon broadcasting markets.

Section 8.4 of the report covered Indigenous broadcasters. The report noted that:

> The primary objective of the Indigenous media sector is to provide a "first level of service" for Indigenous people – that is, a media service for Indigenous communities specifically, often in the absence of any other broadcasting.
>
> Indigenous media seek to provide information and locally made programs which are in Indigenous languages and relevant to Indigenous communities. Such programs include news, children's programming, documentaries and sports coverage. Indigenous media aim to disseminate public service information to Indigenous communities on subjects such as law, health, housing and education. (Productivity Commission 2008, p. 283)

Taking account of the "distinctive range of cultural and social tasks" performed by Indigenous broadcasters, the report concluded their inclusion within the category of community broadcasting creates difficulties at many levels. It affects Indigenous media services' access to spectrum, their participation in the co-regulatory processes of the broadcasting industry, and their financing and staffing. (Productivity Commission 2008, p. 285)

In their consideration of a new licence category for Indigenous broadcasters, the Commission considered that the needs of Indigenous broadcasters and their communities would be better served by a regulatory framework that recognises the distinctive characteristics of Indigenous media and the Australian Government's special concerns for Indigenous Australians. The Commission's general proposals to give effect to these principles in the draft report were favourably received in subsequent submissions and hearings.

The Commission recommended that a new licence category of Indigenous broadcasting should be introduced, with appropriate conditions for advertising. Further, in recognition of the special information and communication needs of Indigenous communities, spectrum should be reserved for Indigenous broadcasters where they provide a primary level of service to a specific audience. (Productivity Commission, 2008, p. 287)

These recommendations were not implemented.

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts, (HRSCCTA, 2001)

The appropriateness of including Indigenous broadcasters in the community broadcasters' category of radio services was also addressed by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Transport and the Arts in its 2001 report "Local Voices an Inquiry into Regional Radio" (Australian Parliament, 2001).

Taking account of submissions by Indigenous broadcasting stakeholders and the Productivity Commission's recommendations the Committee made the following observations (Australian Parliament, 2001, pp. 36-37):

> The Committee recognises the importance of the role Indigenous radio can play in Indigenous communities. We also recognise the value, both current and potential, it may contribute to the social and economic development and wellbeing of Indigenous people as a whole. The developments occurring in Indigenous broadcasting, despite the budgetary and regulatory constraints, are impressive.
>
> In our view, there is considerable merit in the proposition that a separate licence category be established for Indigenous radio services. Operating within the community licence category undoubtedly restricts the capacity of indigenous services to develop as commercially sustainable operations. On the other hand, it is unreasonable to expect Indigenous services, at this stage, to compete for the price-based allocations of full commercial licences.
>
> Accordingly, the Committee recommended that: "The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts should prepare amendments to the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 to establish an additional category of broadcasting service relating to Indigenous broadcasting services."

In its response to the Committee's report, the Government stated it "recognises the desire of Indigenous Australians to have access to a relevant broadcasting service. Under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*, a review of the concept of an Indigenous television service is due before 2005. That review is the appropriate vehicle for consideration of this issue." (Australian Government, 2003, p. 6)

The subsequent review by the then Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts in 2005, does not appear to have given any further consideration to the Committee's recommendation.

Review of Australian Government Investment in the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Sector (Stevens 2010)

The Stevens Review was an initiative of the Australian Government announced as part of the 2010–11 Budget. Its primary purpose was to "consider the specific policy and cultural outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to be realised through the government's investment in Indigenous broadcasting and media… and make recommendations on the most efficient, effective and appropriate form of the government's investment."

The review's overriding conclusion was that "Indigenous broadcasting and media is a powerful tool that needs to be more effectively harnessed to assist the Australian Government to realise its broad Indigenous affairs policy objectives, such as Closing the Gap. It also provides essential services for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and has great potential to improve their self-esteem and well-being" (Letter of transmittal).

The report noted that:

> despite the large number of reports and reviews into the sector over the past decade, the Australian Government's investment in *the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector still lacks a well-articulated forward-looking strategy that takes into account both the potential of the sector and the rapid changes in technology*. The sector is not appropriately recognised as a professional component of the broader broadcasting and media sector that provides an essential service to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whether they live in urban, regional or remote locations. It is under-resourced, lacks critical capacity and skills and suffers from being administered across a range of portfolios" (p.1, emphasis added).

The Stevens Review (2010) stressed that the "government's investment in and strategy for the sector must be flexible" and that "the overriding objective must be building the capacity of the sector and giving it the tools to enable it to adapt and take advantage of rapidly converging broadcasting and communications technologies…" (p.2). To realise that purpose it provided a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve cohesiveness and unity among the sector, enable it to move confidently into a multi-media world and engage younger people, and develop improved training and governance capacity within Indigenous broadcasting and media organisations.

According to its report, the Review's recommendations were founded on three key principles:

- that Indigenous broadcasting and media is a powerful tool that needs to be harnessed more effectively to assist the Australian Government to realise its broad Indigenous policy objectives
- to maximise the effectiveness of the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector, fundamental changes need to be made to the mechanisms whereby the sector is funded, administered and regulated
- success is ultimately dependent on empowering and building the capacity of the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector.

The review made many recommendations in the following areas:

- improving the administration of the sector
- new Indigenous broadcasting licences
- building on the Indigenous Broadcasting Program (IBMP)
- the future of Indigenous television
- more effective government communications
- better governance
- integrating the reporting and performance framework
- building individual capacity and sector capability through employment and training
- enhancing Indigenous content on mainstream media
- preparing for future technology.

While the review's recommendations were conceived as elements of an overall strategic approach, many were not adopted by the Government and thus the lamented lack of a "well-articulated forward-looking strategy" for IBMP sector remains to be rectified.

A subsequent appraisal of the Stevens Review's recommendations by the NIAA's Culture and Heritage Branch several years later found that few had been acted upon. Those that had been are listed in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Stevens Review recommendations acted upon

Recommendation	Response
The Australian Government fund a single national peak body that represents the interests of metropolitan, regional and remote Indigenous broadcasters and media sector stakeholders.	First Nations' Media Australia (formerly Indigenous Remote Communications Association) is funded to provide peak body representation.
Provide triennial operational funding tied to the issuing or renewal of an Indigenous broadcasting licence and be no longer part	It is triennial in principle.

Recommendation	Response
of the competitive, whole-of-government, Indigenous grants funding process.	
The RIMOs be recognised and appropriately funded as the key provider of support for Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services (RIBS) and as a cost-effective multi-media hub.	RIMOs are recognised as key providers for RIBS – but not necessarily as cost-effective multi-media hubs.
As part of future funding rounds, RIMOs be required to execute a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with each of their RIBS, which would include a requirement that RIBS and RIMOs exchange letters annually outlining the support to be provided by the RIMO and confirming the satisfaction of the RIBS with past services provided by the RIMO.	Required but not necessarily applied.
The Australian Government negotiate with the Board of National Indigenous Television (NITV) as soon as possible to restructure NITV into a government owned company within the next triennial funding period.	Launched as part of SBS in 2012, the channel continues to grow on free-to-air television Channel 34. The channel now reaches over two million unique viewers a month. It is available in 95% of Australian homes via free-to-air and a number of additional platforms, including Foxtel and Austar (Channel 144), TransACT, FreeView and VAST (Viewer Access Satellite Television).
The IBMP funding currently provided to Imparja Television for satellite services and engineering support for NITV be transferred to NITV to enable it to contract its own satellite and engineering with the Australian Government continuing to contract directly with Imparja Television to provide services to the RIBS and RIMOs currently receiving satellite transmission and engineering support.	The first part of the recommendation is not applicable. The second part regarding the Australian Government contracting directly with Imparja was done.
Existing IBMP funding to Indigenous Community Television (ICTV) and/or to another appropriate Indigenous broadcasting and media organisation be continued in order to support an online portal for sharing and accessing content made by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, especially in remote Australia, and to act as an aggregator for this content.	This was continued.
Requirements for all media organisations that receive IBMP funds (except RIBS) to include the board chair, deputy chair, treasurer and secretary participating in an	This was encouraged but not required.

Recommendation	Response
approved governance training course within six months of receiving funding - regardless of previous experience on boards or committees	
The Australian Government, working in conjunction with the peak Indigenous media body develop a performance framework that contains relevant and measurable program performance indicators that include social, cultural and economic indicators and are linked to organisations' strategic plans.	Some work done but more needed.
The Australian Government, working in conjunction with the peak Indigenous media body develop a performance framework that ensures the role of media and broadcasting is integrated into the Closing the Gap reporting framework by linking Indigenous culture program's strategic direction and the individual projects operational objectives to the Closing the Gap targets.	FNMA is on the coalition of peaks and has some influence on CTG refresh and the new target to be developed on access to information.
Reporting requirements be reduced to either twice yearly or annually depending on the amount of funding involved (i.e. twice yearly for grants over $350,000 and annually for those under this figure) and taking into account other risk factors (such as the history of the organisation's performance and compliance).	Now aligned with IAS principles and funding arrangements.
Funding agreements with Indigenous media organisations be comprehensive and self-contained and take into account the principles outlined in the December 2010 Report by the Commonwealth Ombudsman on the administration of funding agreements with regional and remote Indigenous organisations.	Now aligned with IAS principles and funding arrangements.
The ABC and the SBS increase their commitment to Indigenous programming, especially programs made by Indigenous producers and set reasonable and achievable goals as part of the 2012-15 triennium funding review. The ABC Open project strengthen partnerships with Indigenous broadcasting organisations and work with Indigenous broadcasters to access, use and contribute to the material.	The ABC has an Indigenous Portal which aggregates Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander stories from around the ABC & around Australia giving access to the latest Indigenous stories and features from ABC Radio, News & Current Affairs, TV and iView. NITV or acquires content primarily from the Indigenous production sector. NITV hosts the only daily national news service covering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island stories across the country.

Review of Operational Partnerships in the Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Sector (Watson, 2014)

The consultants were commissioned to undertake an analysis of the working relationships between Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services (RIBS), Remote Indigenous Media Organisations (RIMOs) and local shires in order to understand the operational partnerships existing in the remote Indigenous broadcasting sector and determine the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of the current operational models in use.

The task included an assessment of the sector's ability to achieve the objectives of the Indigenous Broadcasting Programme (IBMP) and adhere to broadcast licence conditions and Community Radio Code of Practice obligations and to identify successful relationships that have been developed between non-broadcasting agencies and the remote Indigenous broadcasting sector. The consultants were also asked to determine ways in which the IBMP can promote equity across the remote Indigenous broadcasting sector and assist it to streamline the delivery of remote Indigenous broadcasting services and develop template service agreements for RIBS, RIMOs and shires.

In their report, the consultants recommended that a RIMO-directed funding model would be an improvement on the then prevailing funding arrangements. Other recommendations were related to issues such as criteria for effective RIBS and RIMOs, re-transmission sites, triennial funding, the National Jobs Packages Programme, the allocation of RIBS to RIMOs and the development of new guidelines for RIMOs and RIBS. Several new policy programs were also proposed including funding for a Community Journalist Training Program, a medium-term capital program for RIBS upgrading; and a repairs and maintenance program for broadcasting services in remote communities.

A review of the recommendations of the Watson Review (2014) by the NIAA's Culture and Heritage Branch found that few had been acted upon.
Error! Reference source not found. table below outlines the most relevant recommendations from the Watson Review (2014) and indicates whether the recommendation was adopted.

Table 7. Relevant recommendations from the Watson Review (2014)

Recommendations	Adopted
Criteria for an effective RIMO	
It is recommended that criteria be agreed regarding an effective RIMO so that the Department has an accountability framework, so that RIMOs understand what their performance metrics should be and aspiring RIMOs understand what is needed to become a RIMO. The framework should cover: ♦ Technical support ♦ Training and Employment ♦ Community Liaison ♦ Accountability	No
It is recommended that a service agreement or an MoU, on the basis of an approved template, should be made a condition of IBMP funding. The Service Agreement will acknowledge the partnering approach between the RIMO and Shire/Council and set out the services that each will provide to the RIBS. It should also include: ♦ the quality of service delivery and continuity of service requirements; ♦ the use of funding, including the circumstances in which funding can be recalled and/or services renegotiated; ♦ reporting and financial accountability requirements; ♦ dispute resolution processes; ♦ processes for variation of the new service agreement; and ♦ insurance covers.	Required but not necessarily applied.
It is recommended that a higher degree of specificity in the definition of the purposes of the funding to RIMOs combined with a more disciplined measurement of performance against key performance indicators be introduced. These could be developed under the three principal performance measures: ♦ Providing services ♦ Appropriate governance ♦ Financial viability	No
To help reduce red tape, it is recommended that that the Department consider triennial funding for the IBMP, including the Jobs Packages element, to provide stability to the sector.	The Program moved to this.
It is recommended that for the first service agreements in 2016-17, the current allocation of RIBS to RIMOs be retained unless a RIBS can provide a submission to the Department as to why they should be aligned with another RIMO.	This was implemented.
Strengthening RIBS	
It is recommended that, if additional funding cannot be found for unfunded RIBS, a system of "promotion and relegation" based on performance of RIBS be investigated.	No

Recommendations	Adopted
It is recommended that separate funding be sought to ensure the ongoing viability of re-transmission sites.	No
It is recommended that criteria be agreed regarding an effective RIBS so that the Department has an accountability framework, so that RIBS understand what their performance metrics should be and aspiring RIBS understand what is needed to become a RIBS. The following could be used as a starting point: ♦ An effective RIBS should have Community/Council/Shire support. ♦ There should be supervision for the broadcasters and, where desired, a pathway to mainstream media. ♦ It should have a training programme – provided by the RIMO. ♦ It should have the capacity to produce and contribute content to the RIMO and more broadly. ♦ It should broadcast community service announcements (visiting doctor or dentist, weather, meetings, visitors to the community, birthdays). ♦ It should have knowledge of the community including their musical tastes, and demonstrate this by playing music the community likes. ♦ It should have people who turn up for work every day. ♦ It should have the capacity to choose which outside content it wishes to broadcast.	No
It is recommended that the Department consider providing additional funding for a Community Journalist Programme; a training not an employment programme. A programme that provided Certificate 2 assistance at RIBS level and Certificate 4, Diploma and Degree assistance at RIMO level could allow a cadre of Indigenous community journalists to develop; collecting audio and video stories from the community, archiving material, broadcasting and undertaking minor technical tasks.	No
A modest capital works programme could offer assistance to communities wishing to move their RIBS to accessible community facilities; in a more communal setting. Communities could bid for funds offered on an annual basis, as long as they could provide evidence of an effective functioning RIBS and agreement for its new placement in the community.	No
Another alternative developed by TEABBA in 2013 was for a shipping container to be converted into a mobile or permanent studio. They have developed a model with windows, sliding glass doors, insulation and secure storage.	No
It is recommended that the IBMP consult with the relevant Government bodies to establish a joint program for repairs and maintenance for RIBS and VAST.	No
One option would be a dedicated funding stream established for maintaining broadcast services in communities, including technical maintenance, power and water, building maintenance, apparatus licenses, etc. quite separate from the RIMO funding for training, employment, production, regional radio network management and other media services. This would clarify the	No

Recommendations	Adopted
responsibility of the RIBS/ Shire and the RIMO and overcome the confusion of what the funding is used for.	
At the same time a three-stage process could be established. **Stage 1:** A RIBS operator could undertake simple maintenance not requiring formal qualifications, e.g. testing of VAST reception and making simple adjustments. **Stage 2:** A telephone help desk jointly funded by RIMOs could address more complex problems. **Stage 3:** Site visits by qualified technicians to address most serious problems.	No

More than radio – a community asset: Social Return on Investment analyses of Indigenous Broadcasting Services (SVA Consulting, 2017)

The purpose of this project was to forecast the return on investment over three years of a very remote, a regional and an urban Indigenous broadcasting services by understanding, estimating and valuing their impact on stakeholders. As such it was a research project not leading to recommendations. The analysis was verified through broader sector consultation to inform the Australian Government about the breadth and depth of impact likely to occur as a result of their continued investment in Indigenous broadcasting services.

Overall the study found that for every dollar invested in First Nations broadcasting and media, $2.87 of cultural, social and economic value is returned. The study considered case studies in urban (Koori Radio), regional (Umeewarra Aboriginal Media) and remote (PAW Media) areas.

There were six key insights from the analyses:

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

♦ The outcomes achieved by IBSs appear consistent but the activities they undertake are varied.

♦ 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 are achieving a range of social returns on investment, heavily informed by their context, and value flows to a variety of stakeholder groups.

- Indigenous Broadcasting Services are contributing towards more of the Government's priorities than is currently realised.
- IBSs can leverage government funds to generate additional revenue – and greater impact – but only if they have sufficient resourcing available.

Review of the Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) service – final report (DCA, 2018)

Viewer Access Satellite Television (VAST) provides free-to-air television (FTA TV) to Australians unable to receive a reliable terrestrial transmission. The service provides television access to channels, which are broadly comparable to metropolitan services, and to a range of radio channels. Approximately 200,000 households and an additional 30,000 travellers rely on VAST for access to FTA television.

Government funding for the VAST commercial channels was due to end by 30 June 2020. The Department of Communications and the Arts was asked to evaluate the performance of VAST and consider options for future delivery. Specifically, the Department's Terms of Reference sought the provision of advice on:

- the effectiveness and efficiency of the current FTA TV services via VAST, and
- options relating to the delivery of FTA TV services in areas that do not receive a reliable local terrestrial FTA transmission.

The Review concluded satellite remains the most effective option to deliver FTA TV to viewers unable to receive a terrestrial transmission. Other delivery technologies were unable to provide Australia-wide coverage, reliable and uncongested reception, and access to a broadly metropolitan-comparable FTA TV service. Other delivery options considered included the National Broadband Network, alternative satellite technologies, mobile networks, and an expansion of the terrestrial transmission network, and other internet protocol-based (IP-based) delivery models.

The Review determined that while VAST was generally efficient, there were opportunities to optimise end user experience and administrative aspects of the program. These include conditional access, the relevance of local content, a lack of complete equivalency to terrestrial services, and VAST set top box costs and functionality.

Accordingly, it made five recommendations of which the following have particular relevance to the IBMP:

Recommendation 1. To promote consumer and industry certainty, the current satellite delivery model should be continued, for the next 5 years, as it currently provides the only available cost effective and fit- for- purpose service delivery model for free-to-air television in areas not served by a terrestrial transmission service.

Recommendation 2. In negotiating the next phase of the program, the Government should explore what scope there is to adjust the satellite delivery model to include:

♦ expanded channel selection, including high-definition channels
♦ enhanced news and radio services
♦ improved local content and advertising
♦ access to a broader and more competitive set-top box market.

Recommendation 4. The Government should explore opportunities to support users in remote communities by leveraging existing Indigenous employment programmes to train local job seekers to undertake repair and maintenance of user equipment and develop job opportunities in these areas.

ACMA: The Future of Radio

In May 2019, the ACMA released an issues paper on the future delivery of radio services in Australia (ACMA, 2020). The paper presented several propositions about the current state of radio and proposed three scenarios to elicit views about how radio delivery might look in the future:

♦ scenario one: radio makes greater use of FM technology
♦ scenario two: AM and FM radio progressively migrates to DAB+ digital radio
♦ scenario three: free-to-air terrestrial radio progressively migrates to IP streaming.

The issues paper made a number of observations:

♦ Radio listening remains strong, but audience preferences are changing as technology evolves.
♦ The ecosystem of free-to-air terrestrial radio networks is diverse (with commercial, national, community and narrowcasting services) and the interests of the entire sector need to be considered.

- Alternative platforms for audio content are proliferating and it is not clear what might be a "steady state" environment in the future.
- AM radio remains vital – particularly in regional and remote Australia – but is under pressure.
- No single replacement technology for AM or FM radio has emerged.
- Demand for spectrum generally is increasing, but radio spectrum is mainly valued for its current use for radio delivery.
- There is no single clear model emerging internationally for the evolution of radio delivery.

ACMA set out its top broadcast spectrum planning priorities:

- converting commercial, community and national services from AM to FM in areas where FM spectrum is readily available
- improving coverage of national, commercial and community broadcasting services where spectrum is readily available
- making digital radio channel plans for regional DAB+ where a commercial licensee or national broadcaster has committed to a rollout
- supporting trials of new broadcasting technology.

Remote Indigenous Communications Review conducted by Dr Daniel Featherstone for ACCAN, November 2020

The objective of the report, commissioned by ACCAN in June 2020, was to review existing programs in support of telecommunications and internet access in remote Indigenous communities (RICs), appraise their performance and list gaps or outstanding needs in the programs identified by-community stakeholders (Featherstone, 2020).

The report concludes that significant improvements in telecommunications coverage and digital-connectivity in RICs had occurred in the preceding decade largely due to the commissioning of the NBN Sky Muster-satellite, the Mobile Black Spot Program (MBSP), and to State/Territory government co-investment programs, including the Community Phones Program and WiFi initiatives.

It maintains that further expansion of coverage and services by programs such as the MBSP are constrained by factors such as remoteness, sparse-populations and lack of terrestrial backhaul infrastructure, and consequently argues that "a safety net approach is now needed to ensure a next-level digital divide is not set up between larger and smaller communities, or between service providers and Indigenous households within communities".

The report encourages a shift of focus towards digital inclusion in the post-rollout phase. It also notes that the establishment of a Digital-Inclusion Working Group by the Australian Data and Digital Council might help improve-coordination of Federal and State initiatives.

Critically, the report concludes that "despite the increased availability of infrastructure to remote communities, there are still significant gaps in access and usage of communications technologies due to issues of-affordability, lack of last mile delivery or community access facilities, issues with service reliability and-congestion, and barriers to engagement with online services."
The report then suggests there is a need for more targeted solutions, in partnership with local-community organisations, to address related obstacles to digital inclusion, such as:

♦ affordability of services
♦ last mile access, such as wifi services, and community access facilities
♦ improved quality and reliability of services
♦ free access to government and online services
♦ increased broadband speeds and data limits to meet demand for shared WiFi services and growing use of videoconferencing and high-bandwidth applications
♦ timely technical support
♦ effective delivery of telehealth, online education, court hearing etc.
♦ digital skills and cyber-security issues
♦ accessibility of online services for people with limited English, text literacy or disabilities
♦ cultural and contextual awareness of service providers working with remote communities.

In this context the report draws attention to the 2018 Regional Telecommunications Review recommendation for "a targeted Indigenous Digital-Inclusion program with a focus on access, affordability and digital ability be developed in partnership with Indigenous communities": there has been little progress on this despite the Australian Government's commitment to develop an Indigenous Digital Inclusion Plan.

Implications for development of a new policy framework for Indigenous Broadcasting sector investment and renewal.

The Featherstone/ACCAN report will have some minor implications for the review. The report's focus is on telecommunications infrastructure and access to, and use of, consumer telecommunications services and internet in remote

Indigenous communities. For the broadcasting sector, which is dependent on its own separate infrastructure for the transmission of its services, the report's findings on obstacles to digital inclusion imply some consequential impairment to adequate access to telecommunications services needed by remote Indigenous broadcasters.

In addition, the identified ongoing obstacles to digital inclusions, particularly low affordability of internet and mobile telephony services and the prevalence of low data speeds in remote areas, are likely to impede/diminish the effectiveness of digital platforms for alternative or supplementary distribution of broadcasting programs. On the other hand, they underscore the important role of broadcasting for the distribution of information during emergencies.

Other Reviews

A **National Review of Indigenous Media and Communications** in 1999 aimed to identify factors affecting the provision of effective media and communications services to Indigenous people (ATSIC, 1999).

A Report on the **Review of the Indigenous Broadcasting Program** in 2006 followed the release of a discussion paper on the program. The review sought to canvass a national perspective of the program, although no specific, agreed funding model emerged from this review (DCITA, 2006).

Review of National Indigenous Television (NITV) (Watson, 2009). The review reported on NITV's degree of compliance with terms and conditions of funding, audience reach, content acquisition inventory, operational capacity, financial management processes and financial viability, administrative systems and governance structures, employment situation and relationships with Indigenous broadcasters, remote producers, the sector stakeholders, sector peak bodies, national broadcasters, mainstream media, pay television providers and government departments and authorities.

Review of Imparja Television, (Watson, 2010). This review reported on the service delivery and degree of compliance with agreed terms and conditions of funding under the Indigenous Broadcasting Program (IBMP) of Imparja, including a review of financial management, services and structural arrangements within Imparja as it relates to IBMP funding.

A capacity building review of the Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Media Association Limited for the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Watson, 2014a)

A Review of the National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS) delivery of the National Indigenous News Service (NINS) for the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Watson, 2010a)

First Nations' Media, and its predecessor AICA, have made numerous submissions to Government, including the 2018 *9 Calls for action by government* (FNMA, 2018) and the 2019 *Communique from the Indigenous Focus Day* (FNMA, 2019). The latter sought practical solutions to the key obstacles to digital inclusion, including availability of broadband and mobile services, local access, affordability, awareness (skills, services and cyber-safety) and appropriateness of technology and programs.

Summary

The above summary of assessments of Indigenous broadcasting contained in previous significant reviews and studies highlights a persistent commonality of conclusions and recommendations on unmet needs and desirable improvements in policies and in the delivery of services to Indigenous communities. Many of the proposals to the recurring problems have not attracted sufficient favour among policymakers over the years and several of the needs they were meant to address were still evident in the course of this study. The following are some of the matters that continue to merit attention by policymakers:

♦ The Indigenous broadcasting and media sector provides much more than radio – they are community assets that contribute to strengthening culture, community development and the local economy.

♦ The sector is not appropriately recognised as a professional component of the broader broadcasting and media sector that provides an essential service to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples whether they live in urban, regional or remote locations.

♦ The categorisation of Indigenous broadcasting services as community broadcasters has serious implications to their access to spectrum, their participation in the broadcasting industry co-regulatory processes, and in their financing and staffing. They would be better served by the creation of a separate category of licensing exclusively for Indigenous broadcasters

♦ The Indigenous broadcasting and media sector would be better served by a forward-looking strategy that takes into account rapid changes in technology and is aimed at optimising the sector's contribution to the cultural, social and economic development of indigenous communities.

♦ Infrastructure is ageing and the sector needs to take advantage of new developments in technology.

- Training and career pathways programs and support for ongoing employment in the sector are limited.
- There is inadequate support for maintaining broadcast services in communities, including technical maintenance, power and water and building maintenance.

Appendix 3: The Black Star Model – Further Information and Costing

The following information was provided by Gerry Pyne from QRAM at the request of the consultants. Gerry is highly qualified industry expert and has a long history of accomplishment in audio engineering, FM and AM transmitter experience, and at the cutting edge of DAB broadcasting systems.

The following is the contribution, kindly provided by Gerry Pyne.

The Black Star Central Exchange is a solution to share content between broadcasters and for RIMOS to share with the RIBS network. It allows programs, for example news and local information created by other partners (RIMO or RIBS), allowing a flow of content across a network, as well as content delivery across multiple sites with automatic media format transformations and integration with third parties systems. It is an effective way of sharing media content between more than two partners and any RIBS or RIMO can share and access content through the exchange platform.

Importantly Black Star uses Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA), a system of software and hardware elements that allows organisations to monitor, gather, and process real-time data. Hence, the hub can monitor what is happening at remote sites and intervene for minor repairs if needed.

There was considerable interest from roundtable participants in the potential offered by the Black Star model. At the request of the consultants, Gerry Pyne provided a breakdown of costs for the system. The fuller explanation can be found at Appendix 3. The summary is as follows.

There are two major parts to the system:

♦ The Central Hub, usually located at the RIMO – in QRAM's case, called QRAM Central. This is where the WAN Server connects all sites into the WAN, where the monitoring aids are centralised and where alarms and control system are directed. The SCADA server is also located here.
♦ The Remote Sites – each needing a "reliable" Internet connection with a security gateway that makes the connection back to the Hub through which file-based programming elements are sent and received along with monitoring and supervision control signals etc.

Gerry Pyne points out that this is the very basic overview; you could go further and include the cost of a Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) compatible Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS) for instance, or a compatible Satellite Receiver.

The cost can vary considerably because it depends upon the extent to which the system is being adopted. For instance, we consider the Zetta Playout system as part of our system because it is ideally suited for Network style deployment and it meets all of our needs and beyond. As I said in the presentation though, there are other systems that are cheaper or priced around the same price tag, but beyond any doubt, Zetta has become the industry standard in many countries including Australia. This makes it very attractive because it is strongly supported by the industry, it is under constant development for additional functionality and improvements and there is industry standard training and job opportunities for people using this product.

Other components that make up the system include Transmitters, Site Monitors, Satellite Receivers, Networking infrastructure, matrix switches etc. Most of these are in use already as they are integral to operating a radio service. The trick though is to ensure the chosen brands and models are such that they have inbuilt communication capabilities. Luckily, most of today's equipment now comes with this functionality. This is important because we need to have equipment in the field that is capable of sending current status and able to be controlled remotely. There are many different brands on the market that will do this now and the pricing varies greatly so I can give you an average estimate but please understand that this can vary greatly depending on the chosen manufacturers and models etc…

I think that having a standard makes an incredible amount of common sense, but how this is achieved is difficult to say especially in this sector because there are many varied opinions and preferences, but the reality is that most of this will be Government funded so it seems reasonable to think that they would expect that the money be spent wisely. Stating the obvious I guess….
There are two major parts to the system:

1. The Central Hub usually located at the RIMO – In our case we call this QRAM Central. This is where the WAN Server connects all sites into the WAN, Where the monitoring aids are centralised and where alarms and control system are directed. The SCADA server is also located here.
2. The Remote Sites – each needing a "reliable" Internet connection with a security gateway that makes the connection back to the Hub through which

file based Programming elements are sent and received along with monitoring and supervision control signals etc.

Here is a breakdown with approximate costs per item:

Hub
 SCADA System Hardware and Software $18000
 Zetta Servers and Studio Playout $9000

Remote Sites per site…

 Networking Interface and connection $2000
 Site monitoring $1700
 SNMP Capable Transmitter $3000 - $5000
 Zetta Playout Hardware and Software $6000

This is the very basic overview – you could go further and include the cost of a SNMP compatible UPS for instance, or a compatible Satellite Receiver. There is also the development and installation consideration as well as the ongoing costs of annual software licensing and support services. These costs are reasonable and must be taken into account. This system proves itself again and again. It brings highly resilient and quality services to remote communities and it reduces the ongoing maintenance costs greatly, especially as it allows maintenance visits to be targeted. It eliminates the need for expensive travel to sites for trivial maintenance needs, as these can all be done remotely from a central point with great efficiency.

The transition again will vary depending on the availability of reliable Internet travel ability, supply lines and funding. QRAM undertook this task with the support of the Department but it was fully funded through QRAM's Community Benefits funding objectives all through self-generated funding. QRAM did this in stages as funds became available and it took 18 months to complete the initial base sites. Since then we have added an additional 9 sites beyond the Department contract and these are fully funded by QRAM outside of the program.

The SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition), is a control system based on Computers, networked data comms and graphic user interface (GUI), that allows for a high level of process supervision and management of remote systems from a central location. There are many examples of SCADA systems in use including factory control systems, water reticulation system (used by councils for waste water management etc) and communications systems.

QRAM has adopted the Schneider Electric Clear SCADA System for use in its Radio deployment.

Here are some screen shots of the QRAM SCADA:

This screen shows the real time picture of what each site is currently playing and its current source state.
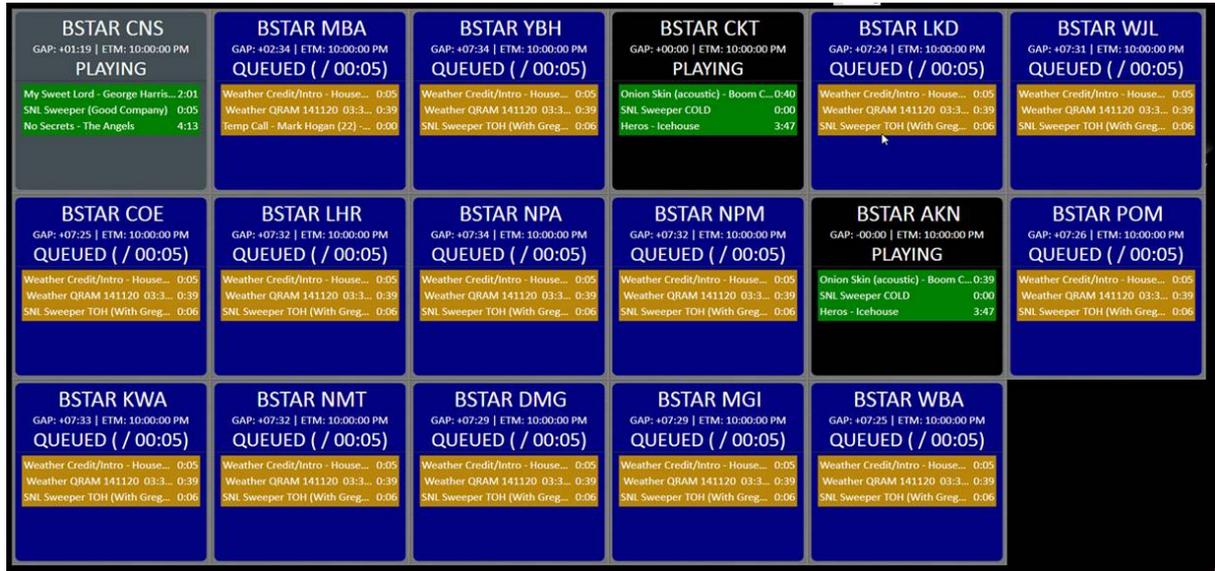

This screen shows the current state of the Transmission equipment at each site in real time.

♦ CR indicates Transmitter Carrier is OK
♦ AU Indicates that there is Audio going to air
♦ SAT Indicated that the local Satellite Receiver is receiving signal
♦ TX Shows the current health of the Transmitter including power output, Operating Temperature etc.

A failure at any site results in a Red indication and an alarm along with a SMS TXT message to management. If any of QRAM's sites is off air for more than 30 seconds an alarm is raised.
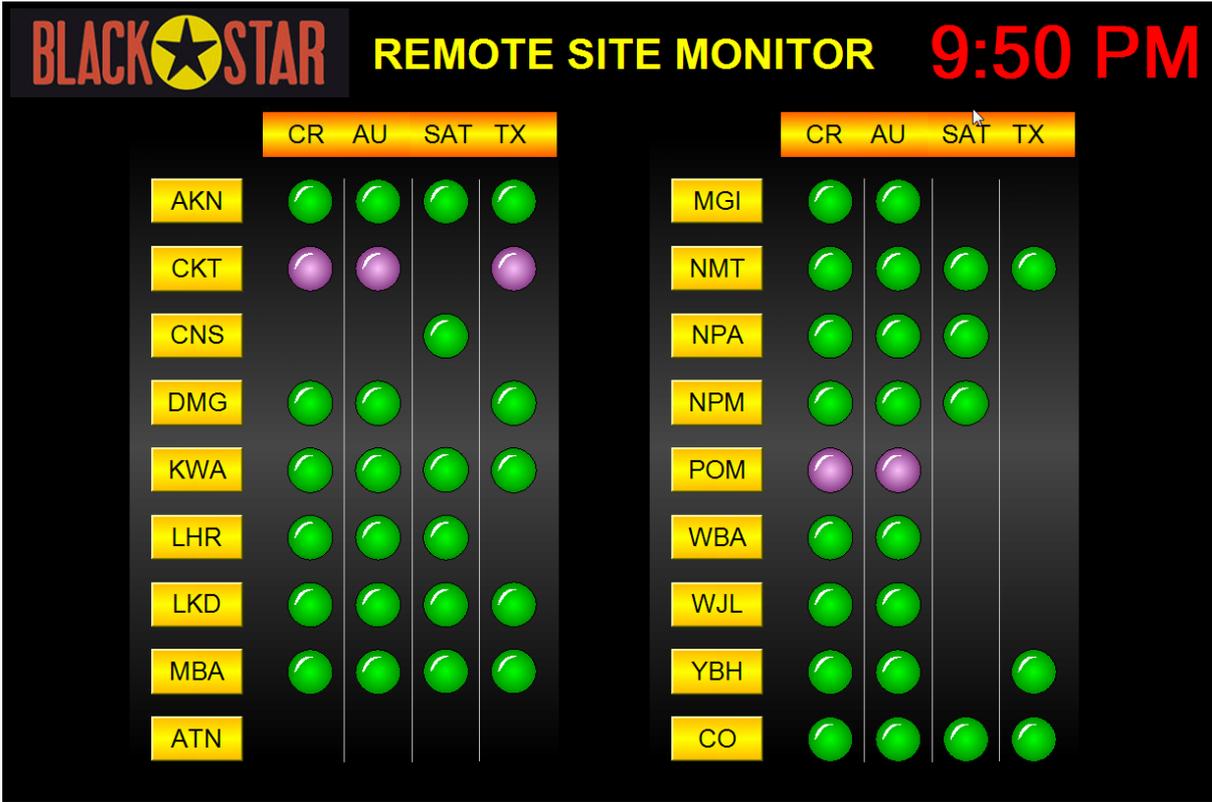
This Screen shows details of a particular site in real time – in this case its Atherton Tablelands. This also gives trend graphs for data collected for the past 18 months so we can go back and track problems etc.
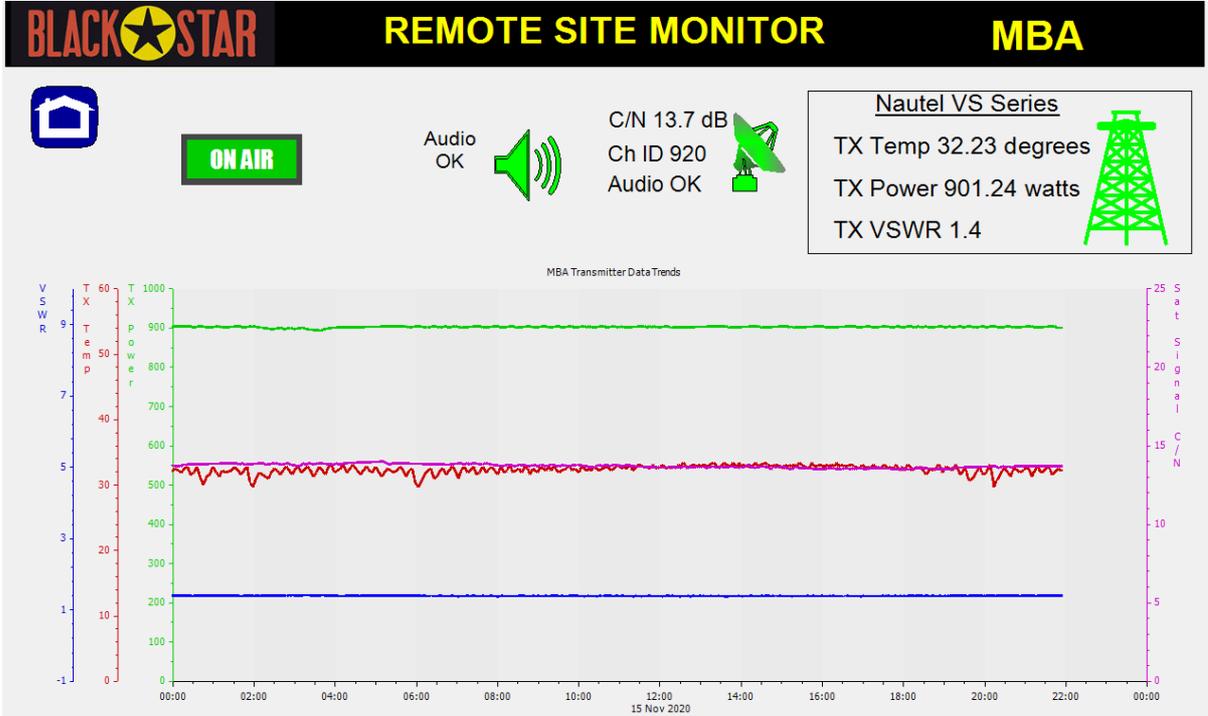
This is really only a sample of what the system does at QRAM. I have not touched upon the programming advantages at all but it is difficult to understand how we once operated completely in the dark without knowing what was happening at our sites.

Appendix 4: Roundtable suggestions, queries and requests

This Appendix contains comments made by members of the roundtables (R), sector members who attended the consultation sessions (C) or at key interviews (K).

Program logic, description and requirements

The IBMP program logic, description and requirements should be updated to correspond to what is happening in the sector.

- "Social media is through the roof" – general agreement by most participants that the SM platform results in prolific engagement – the community wants to be involved and like hearing the mob's voice as a trusted source of information – this was especially true during COVID. (R1)
- During COVID stations produced messages in language (Indigenous and other) and ramped up discussions and focus groups focussing on mental health issues during the pandemic. (R1)
- COVID case studies were produced collaboration with Melbourne University. (R3)
- One participant described how working with local groups (council, health services, schools) has helped engagement by inviting them to be part of the radio station training – trying to build skills from the ground up, not a "top down" approach. (R1, R2)
- One participant described a wildly successful online NAIDOC event in partnership with the government and arts sector in Victoria – 170,000 views on line from all over Australia and the world. (R2)
- "We are funded from the 'cultural bucket' but we do so much in health, education and employment with our communities and we are not funded for this." (C2)
- "FNMA has got the sector in the best position it has been in for the last few years… the funding formula is archaic… we are not funded to grow when we are needed to do so much more… During COVID 35 groups met several times a week to get messages out… We need people to be digitally trained…" (C2)
- "The world has changed, community stations do a lot more… used to be just FM dial but they now do everything… and their biggest problem is lack of revenue". (K)
- "The current funding model needs review as the digital rollout has brought about huge change… this roundtable will hopefully recognise what is happening in indigenous broadcasting." (K)

- "Apart from our COVID work which included an Easter church service which had 40,000 hits on youtube and was even picked up by 3KND in Melbourne, we have broadcast 640,000 community service announcements and we have digitized 40 boxes of tape from the Land Council… this involved over 550 hours of editing, all at our own expense." (K)

NIAA Effectiveness and performance criteria

The criteria the NIAA should use to judge the effectiveness of the Indigenous broadcasting and media program and the performance of the recipients (Roundtable 3).

Flexibility

- A more flexible set of qualitative and quantitative performance measures which more accurately reflect what the sector does would be welcomed. (R2)
- "We will all change how we broadcast and the NIAA also needs to change… standard measures are fine but also need to be flexible… one size does not fit all… we are similar but different… We as a sector need change and you as an agency needs to listen." (R2)
- "We need to get back to basics… our core business is radio… get that right and it will open up opportunities for employment and training." (R2)
- "Yes, equipment is important but quality content is essential to empowering communities." (R2)
- "We do our data collection at outdoor broadcasting events – the number of invites we receive from schools, festivals, concerts etc reflect how well we are doing at engaging with our community." (R2)

Broadcast and media activities

- Discussion agreed that "local community" covered urban, regional and remote and that "platform" was broad enough to cover all they do. (R3)

Training and employment for Indigenous people

- "This needs clarification and context – we are primarily funded for radio broadcasting and of course we do more but we are not funded to do training and not everyone has a RTO status".
- "I worry about not being able to mentor trainees properly… some are sitting by themselves in a remote radio station without support – of course they don't succeed … this rotating door is hard to watch."
- "The NIAA has unrealistic expectations … We are broadcasters doing training for free – relies heavily on the goodwill of the staff to conduct in house training."

- "We have a problem with training – our volunteers want money or the promise of a job."
- "We recruit our trainees through the school-based traineeships – this cadet core is now running the station. An enormous amount of time is put into mentoring/mothering our trainees… we are not always successful but we try really hard to keep them engaged."

Servicing, repairing and updating broadcasting and related equipment

- "This is a big problem … there used to be rich traineeships for technicians but no longer … this is an important issue for the whole industry … we need a plan to differentiate between repairs and upgrades… we need a bucket of money (capital expenditure bucket) for repairs and upgrades, separate from our operational costs."

Broadcast of government/community messages

- "We need a definition as we don't want to lose our paid 'Spots and Space' advertising"
- "The government needs to pay us for our messaging."

Programming covering local and regional events and activities

- Issue of competition was discussed – "we should be careful about what we say we do … if we say we cover x,y and z but in reality we only cover x and y, this is not good for the sector as a whole … Some stations say they are covering remote when in fact they don't."

Programming covering local and regional events and activities, including NAIDOC, Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week and other Indigenous festivals, cultural and economic events

- "This is very important for our mob."
- "We need to have more discussion about this next week – there are arguments both for and against."
- "Health and wellbeing need to added to this list – we all get health experts in to talk on a variety of subjects so let's recognise what we do."

Other community-specific activities identified by the Agency and/or representative community structures

- "I have a real problem with this without extra funding … For example we were asked to broadcast COVID messages regarding funeral – I said no." Others agreed.

What is missing from these contracted requirements? Where should the investment focus be?

♦ "Health and wellbeing should be added to number 6 – it was so important to have a trusted indigenous voice during COVID but medical experts are always invited to address many other health and wellbeing issues as well."

A First Nations media consumption survey should be undertaken

♦ "Independent surveys are worth their weight in gold" (R1)
♦ "A specifically targeted survey is needed to get a better view of the viewership and needs of indigenous communities." (R1)
♦ Participants like the idea of a survey to find out about consumption and use of media… it would give a deeper dive into indigenous listeners… and it was felt the data would strengthen the case for an increase in funding in the future. (R6)
♦ Reference to 2016 Social Return on Investment Report. (C2)
♦ "It is impossible for us to get numbers of listeners in remote areas… it is easier in urban area." (K)

The sector wants engagement in Draft legislation that would force technology giants Facebook and Google to negotiate with media companies over payment for linking to their news stories

♦ Wants a clause in the legislation recognising the broad sweep of indigenous media. (R1)
♦ "Our sector has concerns about the lack of recognition by Google… We request NIAA at government level to push on this as it backs up what the FNMA and the CBA are pushing for too." (R6)

A First Nations' Broadcasting Licence should be pursued

♦ Wants the indigenous broadcasting sector to be recognised as something very different from the community broadcasting sector. (R1)
♦ Discussion with ACMA and the Department of Communications (R4)
  – This has been on the table for some time.
  – "We are interested in this forum and the report – we are interested in evidence"
  – "20 years ago in 1999 we gave evidence to the PC arguing that the Indigenous broadcasting sector has different objectives to community broadcasters – we need a different code of practice – those issues are still here and we need to keep them on the table."

- "We want to be independent … we are NOT community broadcasters… we feel like we are a square peg in a round hole …." (R5)
- "Being part of the CBAA holds us back … There is no cultural reference… it is so frustrating as our own licence is so important for our identity and recognition … Ken Wyatt needs to listen to the truth, to the collective voice of this round table." (R5)
- FNMA is trying to distinguish the Indigenous broadcasting sector as different and believes that the CBAA will support them on this. (R5)
- "In many remote communities we are the ONLY service so the station is duty bound to provide a broad general service, not just playing jazz music … in regional and urban areas people have more options for getting information." (R6)
- "I am worried about the community radio sector pushing the Indigenous barrow and then getting funding which reduces what is available for our sector." (R6)
- "Yes, but maybe we need to look at it again to update it with the present day situation (e.g. digital spectrum) … We need to re-workshop it a bit." (R6)
- "We are restricted by the 5 minutes of advertising rule – often we are the only radio station and in many cases we are an essential service especially with the loss of so many regional newspapers … so potentially we could have many more sponsors and advertisers from Aboriginal medical services to Harvey Norman and Beaurepaires but we are restricted by ACMA legislation." (C1)
- "What do we get from the CBF – it is a grey area … we need to be careful and look closely at the risks and benefits." (C1)
- "We definitely need to relook at the 1999 PC report … the CBF holds 'black money', money which is there for indigenous broadcasting… we hate begging to the CBF grants committee…" (C1)
- "We are different and we need more spectrum for aboriginal communities (e.g. Adelaide) …." (C1)
- "Aboriginal people want to hear about specials at Harvey Norman and KFC like everyone else … we are sick of the pessimistic and negative messaging (e.g. domestic violence, glaucoma) … WE should be part of the creation of government messaging …. We are not all poor, unhealthy victims … we want to break free from these shackles." (C1)
- "ACMA licence … there was an idea by ACMA to make all licences narrowcast … It didn't get much support but maybe loosening up now … brainchild buried … ACMA could maybe rethink the whole model?" (C1)
- "Great idea … there are too many restrictions under the CBF." (C2)
- "We need our licence to be fit for purpose." (C2)

Some Indigenous broadcasters wish to pursue a regional licence

♦ One regional licence to cover a whole area would really help remote RIMOS and would also help reduce administrative burden for ACMA (R1)

♦ Specific example from one RIMO who manages 12 remote radio stations and 35 retransmission sites – one licence would be a great solution. (R1)

♦ Discussion with ACMA (R4)

  – Clarified definition of a regional licence – remote RIMOS are often responsible for many smaller RIBS. Each station has their own licence, often held by the local aboriginal council. If the councils are happy to transfer their licence to a RIMO hub, the amalgamation of multiple smaller licences into one big licence would alleviate work for both the RIMO and ACMA.

  – ACMA agreed that in principle regional licences are a possibility both legally and in terms of spectrum as long as it is not in congested areas which don't have enough spectrum.

  – The remote sector is not asking for more spectrum now – streamlining and amalgamating rather than expanding.

  – ACMA agreed that consolidating licences rather than issuing new licences is possible.

  – More spectrum needed in big metropolitan areas – could be addressed by having a First nations Licence?

  – Some participants concerned about councils giving licences away to the RIMO – assurances given that this would not happen without wide consultation with all stakeholders, including the radio station.

♦ "Yes, there is a lot of administration renewing annual licences but I'd be curious to see how this would work … in our 5 big towns each community has control and I see this as important that each licence has their own self-determination." (C1)

♦ "I'm suspicious of other networks coming in to our area … I'm not keen for this … and I'm concerned." (C1)

♦ "We pulled away from that network… they offered no training and we were not allowed to play our own music." (C1)

♦ "Let's talk about that … more services for our mob is empowering … it offers more choice …." (C1)

♦ "I have no interest in encroaching on someone else's turf but it would help to have a bureaucratic umbrella." (C2)

♦ "Footprint licencing for bureaucratic convenience would make it easier to get a licence." (C2)

Technology

Technology was a recurring theme and concern in the Roundtables and associated consultations. On the one hand there was considerable pride in innovations, in using new technology to enrich audience experience and to reach new audiences. There were many examples of "innovation on a shoestring budget" and these were discussed with great enthusiasm.

On the other hand, however, there was angst and frustration about the cost of maintaining broadcasting infrastructure, about technological skills shortages, and about the cost of adopting new technologies and innovating with them.

Discussions revealed a lack of clarity about technological priorities: in particular how resources should be allocated to radio and television broadcasting compared to internet-based media such as streaming, podcasting and social media.

Some examples:

♦ Participants showed interest in the Wakul App mentioned by Professor Kerrie McCallum which is currently being developed – this app will allow real time stories from all over the country to be shared more broadly. (R1)
♦ Need to retain AM in remote areas – expensive and difficult to maintain but an essential service. (R1)
♦ Looming infrastructure problem with the older technicians able to repair the ageing infrastructure not being replaced. (R2)
♦ Need to look at the VAST platform – a bone of contention and problems with receivers and transmitters. (R2)
♦ An example of frustration with infrastructure compatibility, regulatory compliance and maintenance challenges: "Inclusive of the National Digital VAST platforms with no radio broadcast equipment to link it to a real ACMA frequency at a registered ACMA site, responsible to following strict guidelines and conditions, not to mention a ton of paperwork, with renewal costs annually… as without this equipment in their name, installation and costs incurred (antenna, transmitters, receivers, etc) the service can only be picked up through the television i.e. grey nomads or remote direct to home tv. Which is not available on real radio like we are used to whilst listening, in the car, truck, desk radio, art centres, Council building, creche, mechanic shop, CDP office, Local Aboriginal Corp etc." (C)
♦ Black Star presentation – WAN replaced the satellite approach in FNQ – this Site Replication Technology is very different from the traditional model. All technology is organised from the hub using Zetta technology (used by most

commercial stations, ABC and SBS). This technology is fully supported and accesses sites remotely. (R5)

♦ Other stations use different technologies quite happily (Zara, Wide Orbit, RCS, Semion) – impressed with Zetta but set up costs expensive. (R5)

♦ "I'd be unwilling to go with Black Star – I like what we are trying to do." (C2)

♦ "A major failure of the program is that after all this time there is no technical repair infrastructure… You can fix digital desks remotely but not hardware." (K)

Discussion of technology: both innovations and maintenance of existing technology, were closely connected with discussions about needs for training and the difficulties associated with providing it.

Adopting collaborative remote training across the sector where possible would greatly improve efficiency and productivity

♦ "One of our guys did a RIBS training course on the Zetta technology … he was able to do it remotely due to COVID … it was great and cost effective … he was a seasoned broadcaster but after just 3 days he is an expert on the technology." (R5)

♦ "I learnt to adapt during COVID. I managed to train staff located in Sydney and NZ using Zoom." (R5)

♦ "Yes, it's time we collaborated … let's get together as a sector for equipment, training and repairs … Let's all adopt an agreed standard …" (R5)

♦ "I like the idea of tendering … CAAMA, TEABBA and QRAM have this capacity for training in place as we are already running workshops and putting out booklets." (R6)

♦ "We need short, snappy, simple training of radio managers – simple editing, zoom etc …. RTO training is all well and good but it is often too long." (C1)

♦ "Fabulous idea but I wouldn't want to be totally committed to a national approach though." (C2)

♦ "We had a real problem training our volunteers through Covid – I would love to have access to a central training data base." (C2)

♦ "A central data base of templates on governance and compliance would be great too." (C2)

♦ "On the question of centralised marketing/support/training, I agree that savings will be made on scale and being centralised would help but the question remains, how do we help organisations collectively do things that they can't do on their own? (K)

Adopting remote servicing on a wider basis where possible would greatly improve efficiency and productivity

♦ "Again using Zoom and messenger our repairs were conducted from NZ." (R5)

♦ "This is entirely possible… with internet connectivity every site could be monitored remotely." (R6)

♦ "A data base of technicians would be great too." (C1)

♦ "I want an emergency broadcasting fund for cyclone areas." (C1)

♦ "We desperately need Indigenous companies leading this to build up Indigenous skills … otherwise we will continue to be subjected to 'snake oil salesmen' for repairs." (C2)

♦ "The VAST network has problems with transmitters, and we don't have the staff to help … it takes 6 months to get funding from VAST … can funding be redirected to the RIMOs to help with this?" (C2)

Accessing funding from programs provided by other Commonwealth, State and Territory departments and the private sector should be investigated

♦ The Black Star model is commercially very successful in FNQ – whilst centrally controlled from the hub, each radio station has its own "hyperlocal" service with advertising easily made and accounted for using Spots and Space. "People are listening across the top end so people want to advertise so the money rolls in …" (R5)

♦ Would the CBF be prepared for the Department of Communications to take their 1.3million for Indigenous radio and give it to the NIAA to go into a central fund for technological repairs. Does this need legislative change or could it be given over now? (C2)

♦ "We need help from FNMA and NIAA to help us get funds from other sources … it's hard for an individual broadcaster but representational approaches will work … we need to capture the momentum of the CTG refresh … Melissa Price has lots of Indigenous broadcasters in her electorate." (C2)

♦ "On the question of advertising, Christian Broadcasting earns $2,000 per week from advertising but they have been well established in the marketplace for about 20 years … the government can't expect Indigenous stations to do this if they don't help with repairs, staffing and training… paying someone $20 per hour to attract advertising and media experts is not going to cut it …. How do you break out of this cycle?" (K)

♦ NITV as a possible source for funding a grant for content creation.

♦ "Our business model is now established … people see the value of high quality indigenous broadcasting … we need a thriving sector as it is our pipeline … we want material from the RIBS which has been quality approved by the RIMO … we want regular payment of content and then licencing… and then in turn we want that money to go back to communities for more content creation." (K)

A Transition Working Group for Indigenous Broadcasting and Media to assist and advise the NIAA on the recommendations from this process should be formed.

♦ "Doesn't our peak body FNMA do this?" (R6)
♦ "This taskforce should be by ministerial appointment … FNMA could be on the taskforce but not just the taskforce … we need the right people to be able to take it forward … we really need the technology expertise." (R6)
♦ "This taskforce … we need knowledgeable people from the sector and we need succession training and a new generation to step up." (C1)
♦ "I'd like some clarification on how the selection of the task force membership will be made … will the report include some criteria for the makeup of the taskforce?" (C1)
♦ The idea of a taskforce was widely supported by the participants of C2.
♦ "More broadly it would be good to have an advisory group that genuinely represents and understands the sector and who have an overarching authority to make organisations share and work ethically." (K)
♦ Taskforce will need to address the lack of cohesion, ill will and suspicion within the sector as per the following (edited) quote:

So it's very frustrating when RIMO's have to: drive countless kms with non-sealed roads, (consider) extra vehicle service and repair costs and overpriced light air travel; climb roofs/masts to install and maintain equipment, with antenna's, dishes, cabling; lobby to Government for funds for equipment, technology changes and upgrades to the RIBS units; (deal with) ACMA guidelines and paperwork, maintain on-going working relationships with Regional Councils and providers of the folio (Council, Aboriginal Corp, Sports & Rec, or CDP): (all of) which is in the RIMO's PFA with current signed Service Level Agreements. (Other activities include) working participation in cultural festivals, outside broadcasts including National ones (which are offered to all Stations/Orgs both Indigenous and (Non-Indigenous), Regional RIBS workshops, to name a few of the things extra that RIMO's do that other identities do not have to do, other than maintain daily broadcasting or layout overhead costs related to the above.

Basically, the above needs to be brought to the attention of NIAA top level, as with this under handed behaviour, the objective of the Nation currently with a push on "Closing the Gap" is not going to work, if important messages are not getting out to remote Indigenous communities, the cycle continues and btw who is signing off on Proof of broadcast. In fact these over revenue chasing Orgs/Station identities, need to be pulled up, and exposed for being obstacles to Closing the Gap" for revenue gain, which really should be raised to the communication ombudsman as a neglect towards humanitarian concerns for the most disadvantage people in Australia. (C)

♦ Working with the NIAA to make sure the Indigenous Broadcasting Licence has a defined code of practice and to make sure the restrictions of the current regional licences are avoided.

Appendix 5: Consultation

Roundtable members

Don Baylis, Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association (TEABBA) (Aboriginal Corporation)

Jodie Bell, Broome Aboriginal Media Association Aboriginal Corporation (BAMA) (Goolarri)

Su Gingles, Ngaanyatjarra Media (NG Media)

Ken Jennings, Kuditj Pty Ltd (Formerly PEEDAC) - Noongar Media Enterprises Pty Ltd

Tim Leha, Gadigal Information Service (Koori Radio)

Catherine Liddle, First Nations Media Australia (FNMA) (peak body)

Gerry Terati Lyons (GMan), First Australians Media Enterprises (FAME) (3KND) Aboriginal Corporation

Dot Martin and Denis Holyoake, Muda Aboriginal Corporation (2cuz FM)

Michael Monk, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council

Gerry Pyne, Queensland Remote Aboriginal Media (QRAM) (Aboriginal Corporation)

Jim Remedio, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (Aboriginal Corporation) (CAAMA)

Mrs Jackie Tim, Bumma Bipera Media Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island Corporation

Sector members attending consultation sessions

Organisations: Sector members attending consultation sessions
Bijara Media
BIMA (Brisbane Indigenous Media Association)
Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) Aboriginal Corporation
First Nations' Media Association
Gadigal Information Service (GIS) Aboriginal Corporation (Koori Radio)
Hopevale Aboriginal Shire Council
Indigenous Community Television
Koori Radio
Mackay and District Aboriginal and Islander Media Association
Midwest Aboriginal Media Association Inc.
Ngaarda Media
NITV (SBS)
Nunga Wangga Media Aboriginal Corporation, Adelaide
PAW Media (Pintubi Anmatjere Waripiri Media & Communications)
Pilbara and Kimberley Aboriginal Media
Pitjantjatjara Yakunytjatjara Media Inc. (PY Media)

Organisations: Sector members attending consultation sessions
Queensland Police Citizens Youth Club (Palm Island) (QPCYC)
Radio Larrakia Aboriginal Corporation (aka First Nations Radio)
Torres Strait Island Media Association
Umeewarra Aboriginal Media Association Inc
Wangkiyupurnanupurru Aboriginal Corporation

Another consultation session was held with NIAA Regional Managers before the roundtables.

Key interviews

♦ Ray Griggs, CEO, NIAA

♦ Catherine Liddle, CEO, First Nations Media Australia (FNMA)

♦ Professor Kerry McCallum, Communication & Media Studies, University of Canberra

♦ Tanya Denning-Orman, Director of Indigenous content, National Indigenous Television (NITV)

♦ Dr Lyndon Ormond-Parker, Senior Research Fellow (Discovery Indigenous) in the Centre for Health Equity, Melbourne School Population and Global Health

♦ Luke Pearson, Founder and CEO, IndigenousX

♦ Rita Cattoni, General Manager, Indigenous Community Television (ICTV)

♦ Dr Donna Odegaard AM, Chief Executive, Aboriginal Broadcasting Australia (ABA):

♦ Ian Hamm, President, Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF)

♦ Jon Bisset, CEO, Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA)

♦ Hugh Clapin, Manager, Community Broadcasting and Safeguards Section, Content Safeguards Branch, Australian Communications and Media Authority

♦ Ben Utting, Manager, Media Incentives, News and Media Industry Branch, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

♦ Jim Remedio, Manager, The Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA)

♦ Fox McLachlan, General Manager, Indigenous Broadcast Training Program, First Nations Broadcasting

♦ Karen Paterson, Manager, National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS)

♦ Romlie Mokak, Commissioner, Productivity Commission

♦ Dr Daniel Featherstone, Archiving Projects Manager, First Nations Media Australia

♦ Andrew Plate, Compliance Section, NIAA

♦ Digital Transition Taskforce, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Appendix 6: Arts Programs

Live Music Australia

Supporting venues to host live Australian music.

The Live Music Australia program is a competitive grants opportunity for small to medium sized venues that support quality original Australian live music. The first year of funding in 2020–21 includes support for activities that assist live music venues to become operational following the impacts of COVID-19 on the industry.

Show Starter Loan Scheme

The Show Starter Loan Scheme is supporting up to $90 million of lending to eligible existing arts and entertainment entities that have been adversely affected by COVID-19. Under the Scheme, the Government is guaranteeing 100 per cent of new loans taken out by eligible arts and entertainment businesses to deliver new productions or events for a live audience. Loans are provided by participating lenders.

Arts Sustainability Fund

The Arts Sustainability Fund supports the arts and entertainment sector to continue its activities by providing necessary finance to plan a pathway for recovery from the effects of COVID-19. Funding will support employment and contribute to rebuilding Australia's economy, as well as enhancing community wellbeing and access to cultural experiences across Australia.

Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund

The RISE Fund is supporting the arts and entertainment sector to reactivate. The program is targeting funding towards the arts and entertainment sector organisations who are seeking to restart, re-imagine or create new activities. The program is intended to assist by providing finance to assist the presentation of new or re-shaped cultural and creative activities and events.

Visions of Australia

The Visions of Australia regional exhibition touring program supports audience access to Australian arts and cultural material, with a particular focus on tours to regional and remote Australia.

Indigenous Languages and Arts program

The Indigenous Languages and Arts (ILA) program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to express, preserve and maintain their cultures through languages and arts activities around Australia.

National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program

The National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach program aims to bring Australian and overseas cultural material to all Australians through national tours and help tour Australian works overseas.

Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support program

The Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support program helps fund the operations of around 80 Indigenous-owned art centres, and a number of art fairs, regional hubs and industry service organisations that are at the heart of Australia's world-famous Indigenous visual art movement.

Community Heritage Grants

The Community Heritage Grants program aims to preserve and provide access to locally held, nationally significant cultural heritage collections across Australia.

Regional Arts Fund

The Regional Arts Fund is an Australian Government program that supports sustainable cultural development in regional and remote communities in Australia. The program is managed by Regional Arts Australia and organisations in each state and territory.

Appendix 7: Digital Inclusion

The consultants met with the Digital Transformation Agency to gain an appreciation of their remit and in particular to explore the significance of the Indigenous broadcasting sector for digital inclusion.

The interaction between the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector and Indigenous digital inclusion, a key focus for the Government at present, is significant also.

The Agency relies on the Australian Digital Inclusion Index (ADII) for tracking digital inclusion (Barraket et. al. 2020). The ADII is prepared annually from a stratified survey. It has three dimensions:

Digital Ability: based on measurements of attitudes, basic skills and digital activities.
Access: based on measurements of internet access, internet data allowances and access to internet technology.
Affordability: based on measurements of relative expenditure and the value of expenditure.

Figure 14 *Digital Inclusion Index 2014 to 2020* shows trends in the full index and its three dimensions from 2014 to 2020, broken down for all Australians, and Indigenous Australians. Note that "all Australians" includes Indigenous Australians, and that remote Indigenous Australians were not surveyed.

The obvious gap between Indigenous Australians and all Australians is likely to be a statistically significant one. Similarly, the apparent slight upward trend is likely to be real for all Australians. However, because the sample size for Indigenous Australians is rather small, caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions about trends, or changes in the gap, for the Indigenous data.
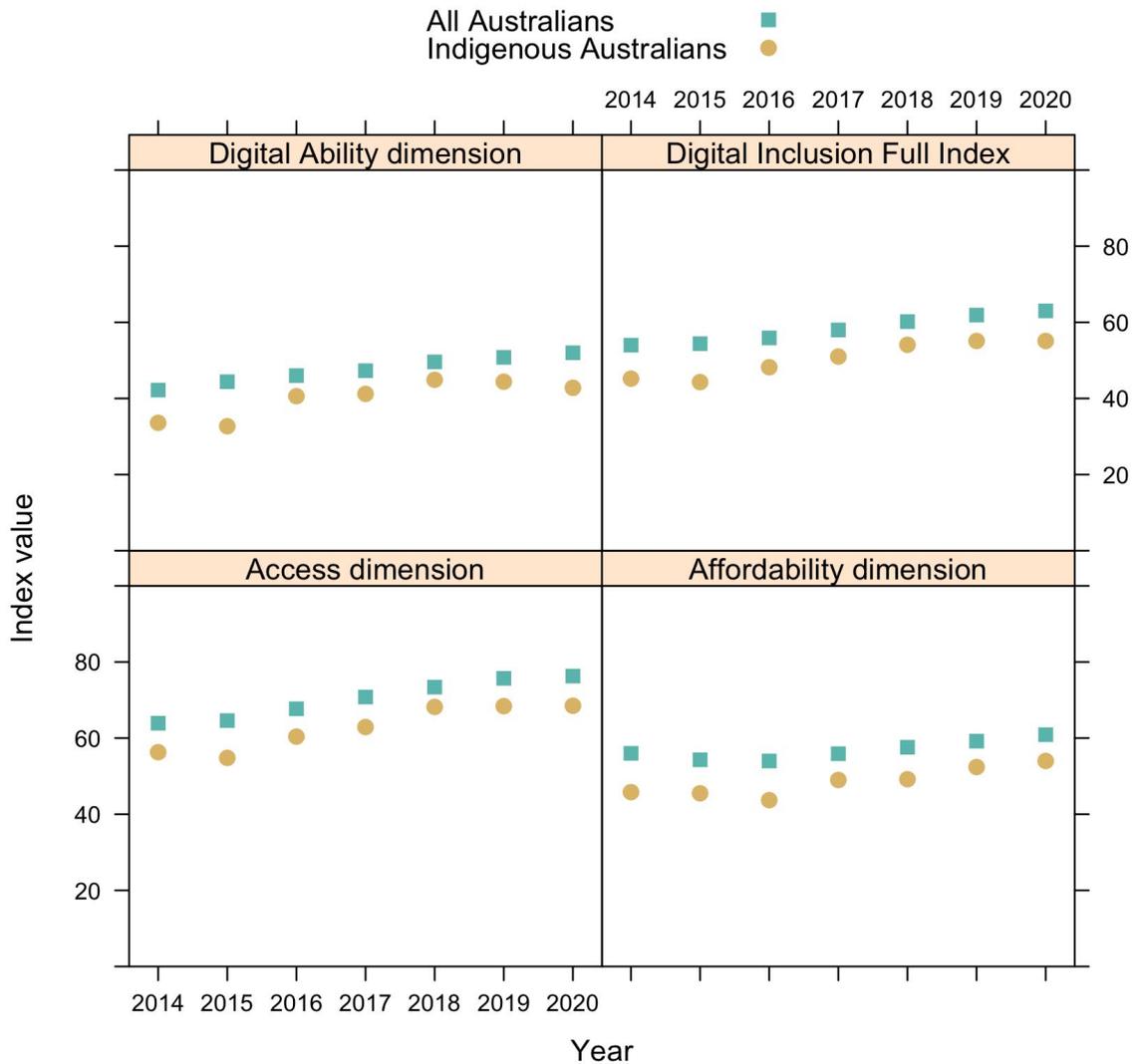
Figure 13. Digital Inclusion Index 2014 to 2020: all Australians and Indigenous Australians: Full index and index dimensions

The 2020 Index report notes that the rapid acceleration of the digital economy and society is emerging at a time when some members of the community still face real barriers to online participation.

Indigenous Australians living in urban and regional areas have a relatively low level of digital inclusion, with a 2020 ADII score of 55.1 (7.9 points below the national score). In the past year the ADII score for Indigenous Australians remained unchanged.

The digital inclusion gap between Indigenous Australians and other Australians is evident across all three dimensions.

Indigenous Australians record an Affordability score of 54.0, 6.9 points below the national average (60.9). Indigenous Australians receive less data for each dollar of expenditure, as indicated by their Value of Expenditure component score

(54.3), which is a notable 12.7 points lower than the national average (67.0). In part, this reflects the prevalence of mobile-only and prepaid service use amongst the Indigenous Australians population (35.0% compared to the national average of 19.9%). Mobile data costs substantially more per gigabyte than fixed broadband. The 2020 data show that Indigenous Australians spent a similar proportion of their household income on internet connectivity as other Australians, as indicated by their Relative Expenditure component score of 53.6 (1.1 points below the national average of 54.7). This large change from 2019, when the disparity in Relative Expenditure was 4.9 points, relates to a rise in household income reported by Indigenous Australians between 2019 and 2020.

In 2020, Indigenous Australians record an Access score of 68.5, some 7.8 points below the national average (76.3). In part, the greater prevalence of mobile-only connectivity depresses Access scores for Indigenous Australians. Fixed broadband carries a direct advantage within the Index and an indirect advantage of larger data allowances than mobile broadband subscriptions. Being mobile-only also locks people out of the Access advantages that accrue to NBN subscribers as a better type of fixed broadband technology. Given the increasing transition of fixed broadband users onto the NBN network it is not surprising that the Access gap between Indigenous Australians and the national average is also widening (from 5.2 points in 2018 to 7.3 points in 2019 and 7.8 points in 2020).

The Digital Ability score recorded by Indigenous Australians in 2019 is 42.8. This is 9.2 points lower than the national average (52.0).

Since 2014, the digital inclusion gap between Indigenous Australians and the national average has fluctuated. The gap peaked in 2015 at 10.1 points and was at its lowest in 2018 at 6.1 points. In the past year the gap has widened from 6.8 points to 7.9 points. Overall, the 2020 digital inclusion gap between Indigenous Australians and the national average (7.9 points) is narrower than it was in 2014 (8.8 points).

The ADII data collection does not extend to remote Indigenous communities, where high levels of geographic isolation and socioeconomic disadvantage pose distinct challenges for digital inclusion. In 2018 and 2019, ADII case studies were conducted in the remote indigenous communities of Ali Curung in the NT and Pormpuraaw in far north Queensland. Findings from these studies suggest that digital inclusion for Indigenous Australians further diminishes with remoteness, particularly in terms of Access and Affordability.

More research is needed to better understand the level and nature of digital inequality experienced by Indigenous Australians. The recent announcement by the federal government that digital inclusion will become part of an Access to Information target outcome of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is welcome news (Barraket et al., 2020).

It points out that given their remoteness and socio-economic situations, many consumers of First Nation media would be at risk of low digital inclusion, exacerbated by limited and costly internet access.

The 2018 and 2019 ADII case studies referred to above were conducted in Ali Curung where 112 people were surveyed in 2018 and Pormpuraaw where 145 people were surveyed in 2019. Ali Curung has a population of 494 and is located 170km south of Tennant Creek, and 378km north of Alice Springs. Pormpuraaw is on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula, about 650 kilometres Cairns. The Indigenous population is about 620.

Figure 15 shows the ADII dimensions and full index for the following population breakdowns:

♦ 2019 ADII National data
♦ 2019 Indigenous data
♦ 2019 National ADII data for mobile-only internet users
♦ Averaged 2018/2019 data for Ali Curing and Pormpuraaw.
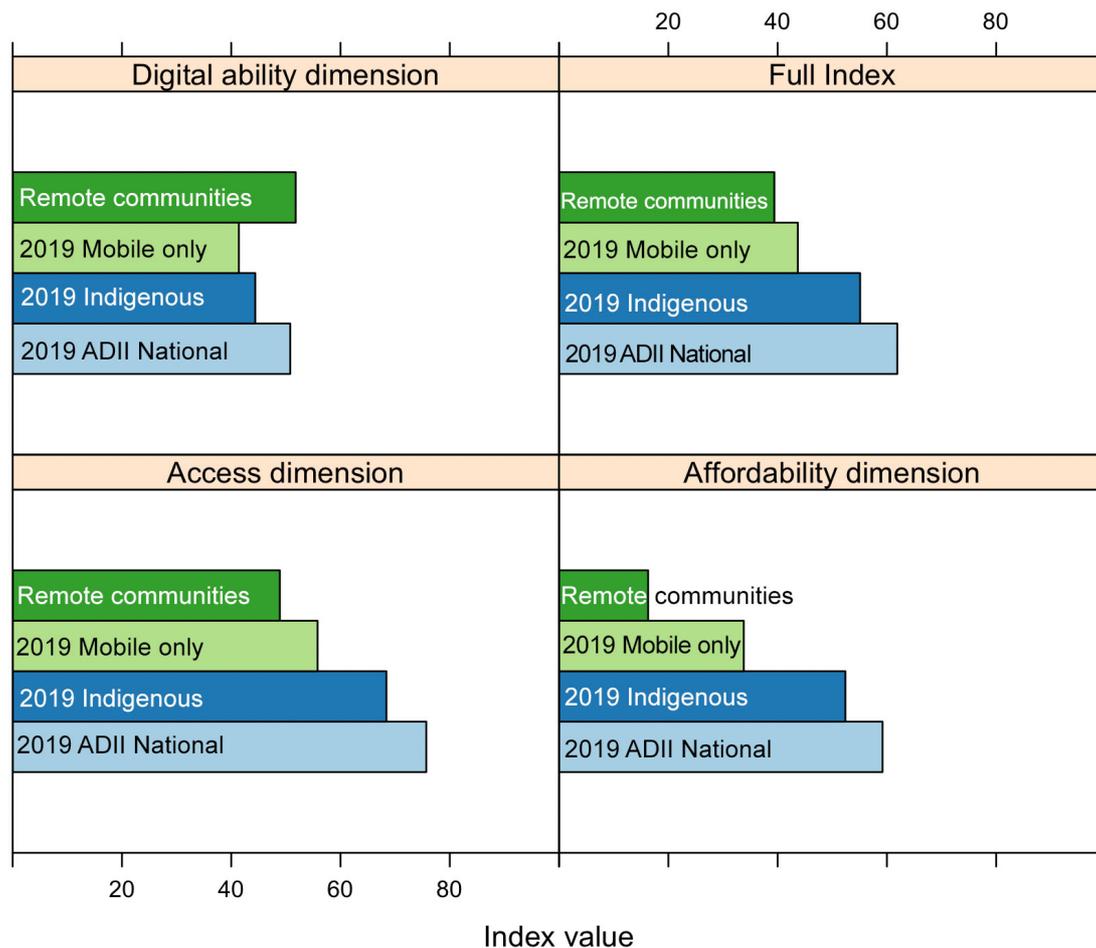
Figure 14. ADII by dimension and full index, 2019 data for National, Indigenous and Mobile only, and weighted average for Remote communities. The latter is based on a case study surveying 112 people in Ali Curung in 2018 and 145 people in Pormpuraaw in 2019.

Some caution should be exercised when interpreting this chart because the sample size for the remote communities is relatively small, and there is no guarantee the results are representative of all remote Indigenous communities.

The first striking observation is that on the Digital Ability dimension, the remote Indigenous communities are about equal to the national value and noticeably higher than the national Indigenous and national mobile-only values.

The second striking observation is that the remote Indigenous communities are severely disadvantaged on the affordability dimension, even compared to the national mobile-only group. This reflects almost complete reliance on mobile pre-paid internet, which is very expensive.

Comparing the remote Indigenous communities to the national mobile-only cohort we see a large and unfavourable gap in affordability and a small gap in in access. Compared to the national data, or even the national Indigenous data, however, the remote Indigenous communities are substantially disadvantaged.

The overall picture, then, is that there is a significant and ongoing gap between digital inclusion of urban and regional Indigenous people, and the urban and regional populations generally. Indigenous digital inclusion tends to follow the general population trend, but that gap is sustained. There are insufficient data to reach a firm conclusion about remote Indigenous digital inclusion. However, available data based on two communities, suggest the substantial disadvantage in remote communities reflects a much bigger gap is reliance on expensive pre-paid mobile digital access.

Figure 16 is based on the survey of the sector conducted for this study. It shows rankings of social media by current perceptions of effectiveness, and rankings of expected effectiveness by 2025. All of the traditional broadcast media are demoted in the rankings, although FM radio only moves from first to second position. All of the digital media in the list are promoted, with social media predicted to become the most effective by 2025. There is no doubt that digital inclusion is a vitally important consideration for the future of the IBMP.
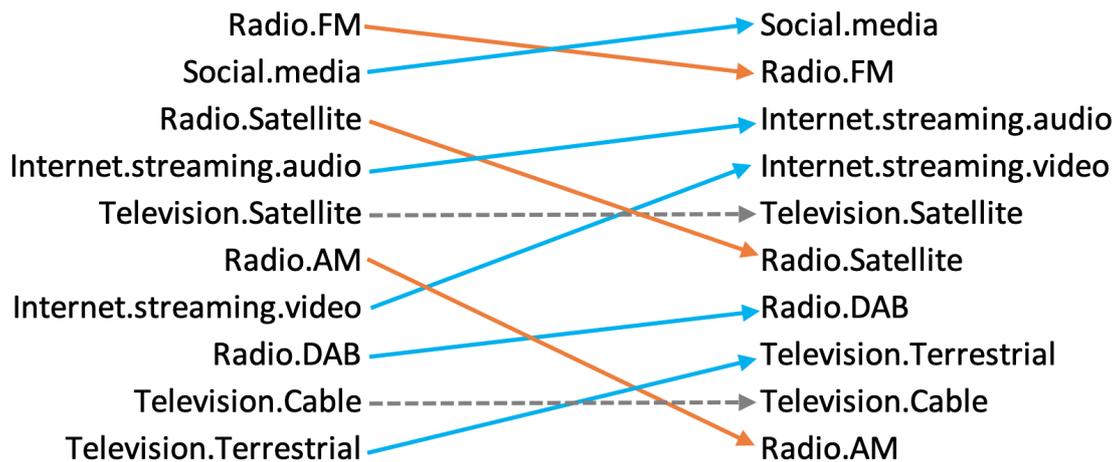
Figure 15. Aggregated rankings by IBMP funded organisations of effectiveness of media types for engagement and communication with communities. The left-hand column is the current ranking and the right-hand column is the predicted ranking in 2025. Data from survey conducted for this consultancy.

From one perspective, a gap in digital inclusion reduces access to a growing dimension of activity and innovation under the IBMP. It means the value created by the investment in the IBMP Indigenous voice is not as widely distributed and effective as it should be. A digital inclusion deficit restricts the ability of Indigenous broadcasters to communicate and engage with communities as well as the capacity of communities to interact with each other. It also constrains the effectiveness of the sector in facilitating the activities of other programs targeting Closing the Gap outcomes.

For example, IBMP broadcasters might contribute to reducing the digital inclusion gap by:

♦ educating consumers of broadband and other digital services about costs and benefits, and value of expenditure
♦ creating stronger demand, including a larger customer base for broadband and digital services by providing attractive content: the hope is that this may lead to more affordable internet access and data
♦ motivating individuals to improving their digital ability by shaping attitudes, using the links between broadcast and digitally delivered content to motivate basic skill acquisition, and providing a wider range of accessible digital activities.

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Appendix 9: Figure Descriptions

Figure 16. Distribution of community broadcast licenced transmitters supported by the IBMP

Region	Number of transmitters
Kimberly, WA	17
Pilbara, WA	13
Gascoyne, WA	1
Mid-West, WA	3
Perth-Peel, WA	1
Goldfields-Esperance, WA	15
Outback and Flinders Ranges, SA	4
Eyre Peninsula, SA	1
Victoria	1
Far West, NSW	1
Orana, NSW	5
Central Coast, NSW	1
Blue Mountains, NSW	1
ACT, NSW	1
Far North, QLD	22
North West, QLD	4
Northern, QLD	2
Mackay, QLD	1
Fitzroy, QLD	1
South West, QLD	1
Brisbane and Moreton, QLD	2
Alice Springs – Uluru, NT	21
Katherine, NT	4
Kakadu – Arnhem Land, NT	56
Darwin, NT	33

Figure 7: IBMP objectives and outcomes

IAS Culture and Capability – Objectives
- Support the expression, engagement and conservation of Indigenous culture.
- Increase Indigenous Australians' participation in the social and economic life of Australia through healing, and strengthening the capability, governance and leadership of Indigenous Australians, organisations and communities
- Promote broader understanding and acceptance of the unique place of Indigenous cultures in Australian society

Closing the Gap objectives support IAS Culture and Capability objectives
- Build and strengthen structures to empower Indigenous people to share decision-making with governments
- Build Indigenous community-controlled sectors to deliver services to support closing the gap
- Transform mainstream government organisations to improve accountability and better respond to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's needs
- Improve and share access to data and information to enable Indigenous communities to make informed decisions.

IAS Culture and Capability objectives and Closing the Gap objectives lead to Contracted requirements in current contracts

Contracted requirements in current contracts
1. Broadcast and media activities, including broadcasting in language(s) where appropriate that reflect the interest of the local Indigenous community, and that identify and are responsive to community needs for information and entertainment;
2. Training and employment for Indigenous people;
3. Servicing, repairing and updating broadcasting and related equipment;
4. Broadcast of government/community messages;
5. Programming covering local and regional events and activities;
6. Programming covering information and national Indigenous events and activities, including NAIDOC activities, Sorry day, Reconciliation Week and other Indigenous festivals, cultural and economic events; and
7. Other community-specific activities identified by the Agency and/or representative community structures

Closing the Gap Priority reforms support Contracted requirements in current contracts
1. Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making
2. Building the Community-Controlled Sector
3. Transforming Government
4. Shared Access to Data and information at a regional level

Closing the Gap priority reforms and Contracted requirements in current contracts lead to Priority outcomes in current contracts.

Priority outcomes in current contracts
1. Systemic monitoring of and response to community communication needs
2. Contribution to cultural expression and maintenance
3. Contribution to community economic and social development
4. Cooperative engagement on communication of community and government priorities

Figure 8: Diagram of inputs, outputs and outcomes

Funding and other Government Support is an input that create outputs:
- Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program outputs

Funding and other Government Support combined with Indigenous Broadcasting and Media program outputs lead to:
- Justice and well-being program outputs
- Health program outputs
- Education, employment and economic participation program outputs

Utilisation of outputs create outcomes:
Health Outcomes
1. Long and Healthy lives
2. Strong, healthy children

Education, Employment and economic participation outcomes
3. Quality early childhood education engagement
4. Young children thrive
5. Students achieve full potential
6. Students fully achieve in further education
7. Youth employed or studying
8. Strong economic participation and development

Justice and Well-being outcomes

9. Appropriate, affordable housing
10. Not over-represented in criminal justice system
11. Young people not over-represented in criminal justice system
12. Not over-represented in the child protection system
13. Safe families and households
14. High levels of social and emotional wellbeing

Culture and Language outcomes

15. Maintain relationships with land and waters
16. Strong, supported and flourishing cultures and languages

And;

Indigenous Voice process outcomes.

The combined outcomes contribute to Closing the Gap