

# OUR MEDIA MATTERS

## 9 CALLS FOR ACTION

RENEWING AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY  
FOR FIRST NATIONS BROADCASTING AND MEDIA

### OVERVIEW



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

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## THE 9 CALLS FOR ACTION

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## Article 16 United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

1. 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.



## Dot West

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

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

Our Media returns on average \$2.87 of social, cultural and economic value for every dollar invested.

From: More than radio – a community asset: Social Return on Investment analyses of Indigenous Broadcasting Services. November 2017, p5

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

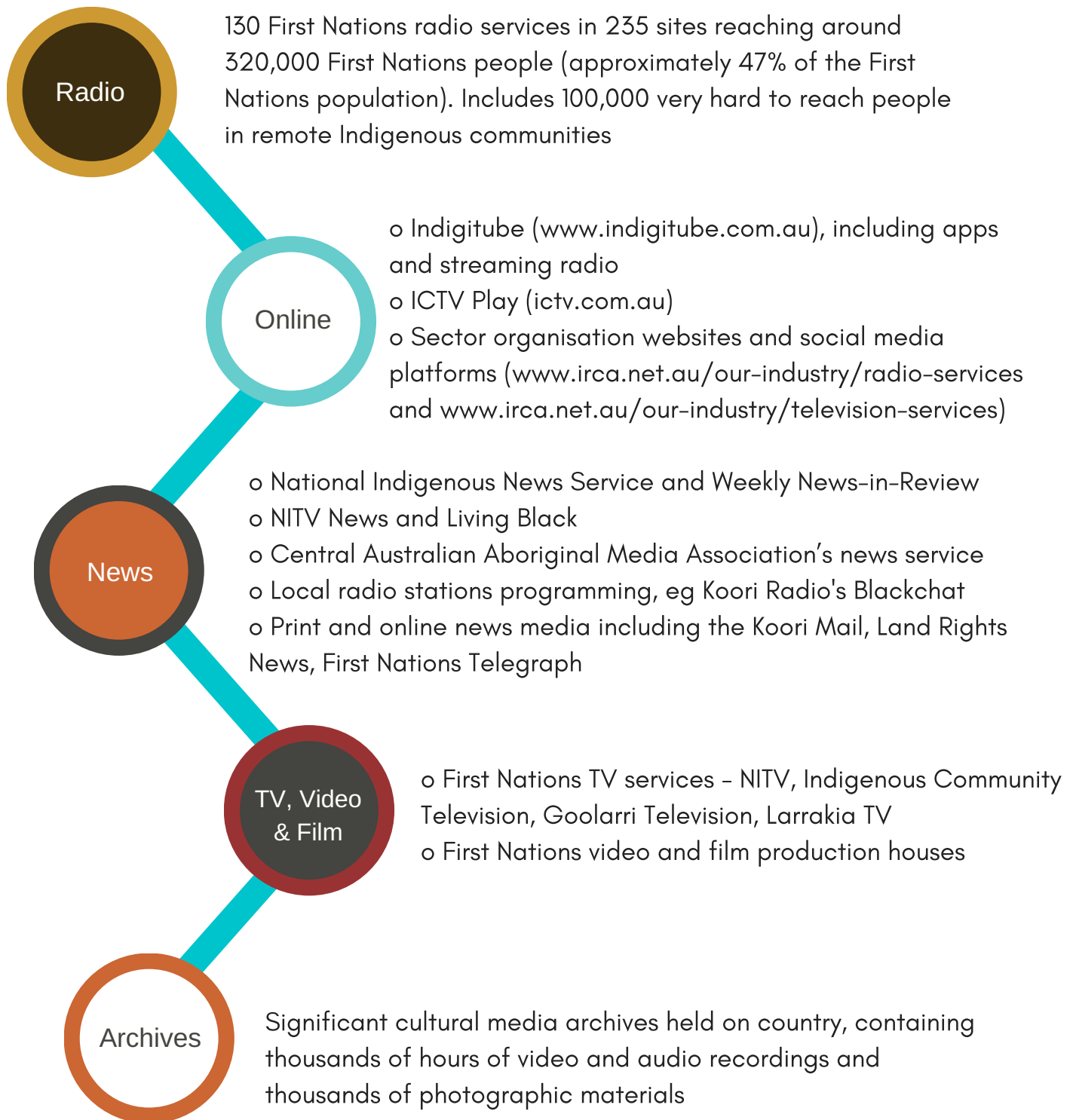
The 2017 Social Return on Investment study of our sector demonstrated our creativity and resilience in meeting these challenges. But we cannot keep on making do without increased government support.

We are now calling on the Australian Government to support and partner with us to help fully realise the potential of our sector through the targeted programs and actions set out in this document. We ask you to be part of growing and sustaining our sector for the benefit of First Nations peoples as well as growing greater understanding of our cultures for the benefit of non-Indigenous Australia.

IRCA acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work and those of the lands of our members. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

IRCA is supported by the Australian Government through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

# The First Nations broadcasting & media sector: scope & organisations



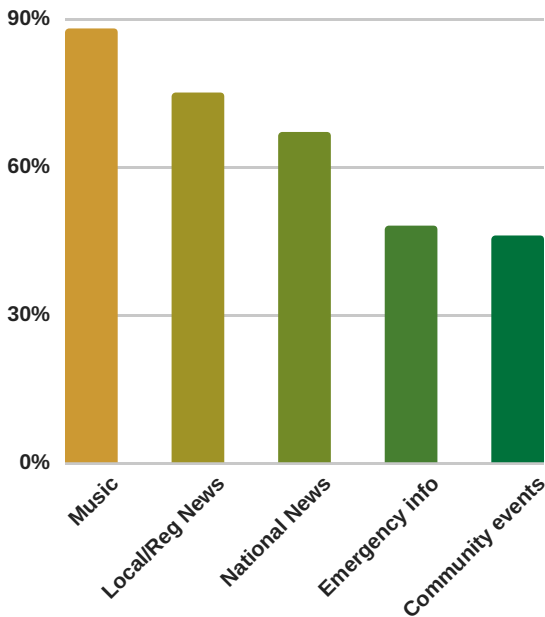
Find First Nations radio services through our online map  
[www.irca.net.au/our-industry/radio-services](http://www.irca.net.au/our-industry/radio-services)



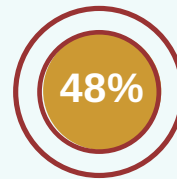
# The First Nations broadcasting & media sector: audience engagement



## What First Nations audiences listen in for: the top 5



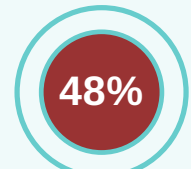
## Why First Nations peoples listen to Indigenous radio: the top 3



For positive First Nations content

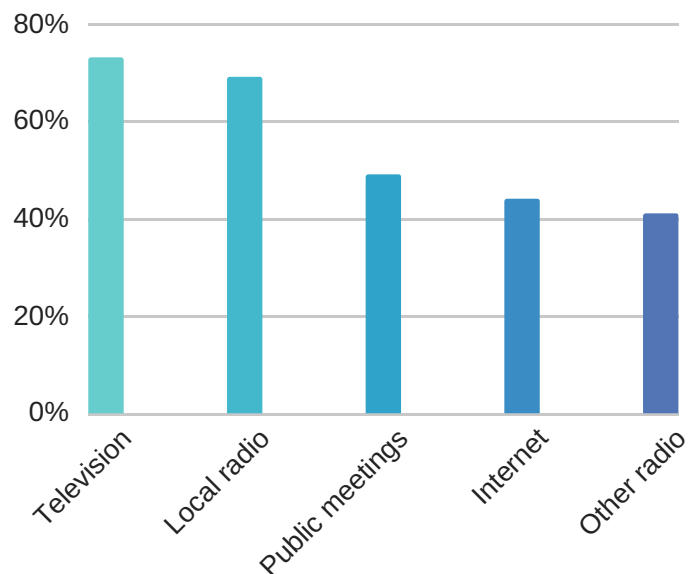


To hear about my own people & own community



For First Nations focus in news & current affairs

## Preferred channels for government information in remote Indigenous communities



## Culture | Language | Identity



Data from 2016 Indigenous Communications and Media Survey. McNair Ingenuity and the Indigenous Remote Communications Association.  
[www.irca.net.au/projects/indigenous-communications-and-media-survey-2016](http://www.irca.net.au/projects/indigenous-communications-and-media-survey-2016)

# Our aims for the First Nations broadcasting and media sector



**OUR MEDIA  
PROVIDES  
MEANINGFUL JOBS  
AND SKILLS**

Increase jobs  
& skills



**OUR MEDIA  
CREATES,  
CONNECTS AND  
EMPOWERS**

Improve capacity &  
sustainability



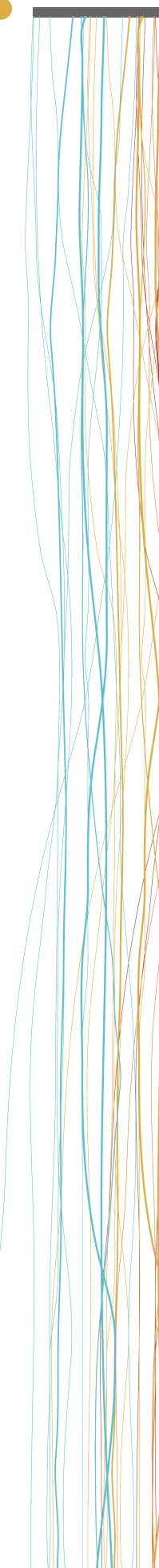
**OUR MEDIA  
BUILDS BRIDGES  
WITH THE WIDER  
COMMUNITY**

Enhance social  
inclusion



**OUR MEDIA  
IS PRESERVING  
OUR  
LANGUAGES**

Preserve culture &  
language





# The 9 Calls for Action: Building on strength

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The 9 Calls for Action build on sector strengths and our values.  
Our Media is:

- Essential
- Professional
- Local & connected
- Culturally appropriate



**OUR MEDIA  
IS OUR  
IDENTITY**

"Just hearing Aboriginal voices on the radio... seeing the Outside Broadcasting van around town... It strengthens our stance as Aboriginal people. It gives us pride."

*Umeewarra Radio listener (Port Augusta)*

# Calls for action 1 to 4



1

## Broadcasting Act Reform

Recognise First Nations broadcasting as a separate licence category under the Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (BSA) to increase professionalism & income generation potential.

**Budget neutral**

**Capacity & Sustainability**

2

## Operational & Employment Funding

Provide adequate operational & employment funding for First Nations broadcasting & media services to build capacity and sustain employment.

**\$9 million per annum additional to current \$21 million per annum**

**Jobs & Skills; Capacity & Sustainability**

3

## Live & Local Expansion Program

Create an innovative program (Live and Local) to enable unserved areas with significant numbers of First Nations people to be reached.

**\$3 million per annum**

**Social Inclusion**

4

## Strengthen News Services

Increase the news & current affairs capacity of First Nations broadcasters across the country and build jobs and new employment opportunities.

**\$1 million per annum**

**Jobs & Skills; Social Inclusion**

## Our Media is an ESSENTIAL SERVICE

First Nations media organisations provide First Nations peoples with a voice through ownership of their own media and economic opportunities through provision of local jobs. It is a primary and essential service carrying relevant news, music and informational content in language and in culturally appropriate forms.



## Calls for action 5 & 6



5

### Expand Training & Career Pathways Programs

Expand training & employment programs for the First Nations broadcasting & media sector to build professionalism & career pathways.

**\$5 million per annum**

**Jobs & Skills**

6

### Upgrade Infrastructure

Upgrade broadcasting infrastructure to meet current industry standards & workplace health & safety requirements.

**\$2 million per annum**

**Jobs & Skills; Capacity & Sustainability**



## Our Media is a PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

First Nations broadcasters are professionally licensed through the ACMA with important broadcasting infrastructure sited in local communities. First Nations media organisations provide culturally meaningful and appropriate jobs and training for First Nations people.

# Call for action 7



7

## Primary Channel for Government Messaging to First Nations audiences

Recognise the sector as the preferred channel for government First Nations information campaigns, given the effectiveness of its strong audience engagement and capacity for appropriate local customisation, including language delivery.

**Budget neutral**

**Social inclusion; Jobs & Skills**

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

From: More than radio – a community asset:  
Social Return on Investment analyses of  
Indigenous Broadcasting Services.  
November 2017.



## Our Media is LOCAL & CONNECTED

First Nations broadcasters and media organisations are based in the communities they serve. They work with and employ local people to ensure content is relevant, appropriate, engaging and meaningful. They use a wide range of broadcast, Internet and print platforms to distribute their content.

# Calls for action 8 & 9



8

## Preserve Archives

Preserve First Nations media archives to sustain culture & language, and create meaningful employment.

**\$2 million per annum for 5 years; \$10 million total**

**Culture & Language; Jobs & Skills**



9

## Annual Content Production Fund

Establish an annual and competitive content development fund for First Nations broadcasters and media producers to support cultural maintenance and meaningful jobs.

**\$2 million per annum**

**Culture & Language; Jobs & Skills**



## Our Media is CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE

First Nations broadcasters and media producers create media that adheres to local cultural protocols and provides employment for First Nations people. First Nations media organisations maintain media archives according to cultural access, viewing and listening protocols, enabling cross generational sharing of culture and language.



# The 9 Calls for Action: The Challenges



## Renewing government policy

The sector is in need of a renewed government policy that recognises the expanded scope of current media activities and the need for a separate First Nations broadcasting licence under the Broadcasting Services Act.

## Supporting the Government's 90% First Nations employment target

The government target of 90% First Nations employment means a greater emphasis on career pathway programs into management roles, especially in regional and remote areas. The challenge is resourcing the training and development programs that will support career pathways into management.

## Supporting infrastructure equipment upgrades

Technical maintenance & production efficiencies can be realised in the sector. A coordinated equipment and infrastructure upgrade program will support that realisation.

## Adequately funding operations

The sector is already generating a positive return on government funding. However, that funding has diminished due to lack of CPI increases, compounded by no increase in the operational funding base, despite the sector's expansion. The challenge is to fund the sector adequately so as to maintain the positive contributions it is making to community well being.

## Realising the potential of the sector for government messaging

The sector's strong local and community position makes it an ideal channel for government fee-for-service messaging. The challenge is for government to recognise it as the preferred channel for program and social messaging.



"IBSs [Indigenous Broadcasting Services] have demonstrated their capacity to generate their own revenue but there is a minimum resourcing threshold that must be maintained to enable IBSs and their staff to diversify their activities and funding."

*More than radio - a community asset : Social Return on Investment analyses of Indigenous Broadcasting Services. Social Ventures Australia for the Dept of Prime Minister and Cabinet. 2017. p.6*



# The 9 Calls for Action: Specific Challenges



## Creating an Indigenous broadcast licence in the BSA

An Indigenous broadcast licence will:

- Support inclusion of First Nations broadcasters directly in broadcasting policy and legislative consultations.
- Remove unnecessary “competition” for broadcasting spectrum with community broadcasters.
- Open up discussions on the restrictions on sponsorship and advertising that flow from categorisation as community broadcasters.
- Recognise the sector as the professional employment sector it is, rather than a volunteer based sector.



## Preserving significant cultural archives

The magnetic tape on which much of the cultural media archives is recorded will be virtually unusable by 2025 due to player obsolescence and chemical breakdown. An urgent digitisation program is needed to ensure that significant cultural and language media is not lost.

## Growing First Nations media employment

There is significant potential to increase First Nations employment in broadcasting, archiving, news, media production and technical support. IRCA is developing an employment and training strategy that will set directions for increasing and strengthening employment at all levels of the sector's operation. IRCA is looking to work with government on resourcing the implementation of the strategy.



IBSs [Indigenous Broadcasting Services] ... play a crucial role increasing community cohesion, building community resilience and supporting people into meaningful employment."

*More than radio - a community asset : Social Return on Investment analyses of Indigenous Broadcasting Services. Social Ventures Australia for the Dept of Prime Minister and Cabinet. 2017. p.5*

# The 9 Calls for Action: Funding requests summary

1	Broadcasting Act Reform	Budget neutral
2	Operational & Employment Funding	\$9 million additional to current \$21 million
3	Live & Local Expansion Program	\$3 million per annum
4	Strengthen News Services	\$1 million per annum
5	Expand Training & Career Pathways Programs	\$5 million per annum
6	Upgrade Infrastructure	\$2 million per annum
7	Primary Channel for Government Messaging to First Nations Audiences	Budget neutral
8	Preserve Archives	\$2 million per annum for 5 years; \$10 million total
9	Annual Content Production Fund	\$2 million per annum

## Addressing our aims



Article 16 United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
1. 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.



## About the Indigenous Remote Communications Association

The Indigenous Remote Communications Association (IRCA) is the peak body for First Nations not-for-profit broadcasting, media and communications.

Founded in 2001 as the peak body for remote First Nations media and communications, it expanded its role, through the invitation of the Australian Government, to become the national peak body in 2016/2017. IRCA has over 190 organisational and individual members from across Australia.



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