

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

THE ISSUE

Reporting on First Nations matters by mainstream media is often problematic, focusing on the “problems of First Nations people” and taking a deficit approach. The representation of First Nations peoples in mainstream media negatively impacts on the development and implementation of government Indigenous policy¹.

Effective policy and funding is needed to:

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



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

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

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

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

IRCA calls for the funding of:

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

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Budget request: \$1 million per annum

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CONTEXT

First Nations News and Current Affairs Services

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

First Nations News Preferences: Very Remote Communities

McNair Ingenuity Research in partnership with IRCA conducted a survey in 2016¹ in very remote Indigenous communities about their media behaviours and preferences. That survey showed that remote First Nations community radio was highly valued for its culture and language role. It showed that remote First Nations media organisations play an important role in the provision of locally relevant and accessible news and information.

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

First Nations Audience Preferences

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

¹ 2016 Remote Indigenous Communications and Media Survey. www.irca.net.au/projects/indigenous-communications-and-media-survey-2016