

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

THE ISSUES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Budget request: \$2 million per annum

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CONTEXT

First Nations Broadcasting and Media Producers

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

Sector Distribution Platforms

- **Indigenous Community Television**

ICTV is a not for profit First Nations organisation that delivers cultural and community video content to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities around Australia, and to any VAST eligible location. ICTV enables the sharing of cultural stories, song and dance, language and essential information through two accessible platforms – a satellite delivered television service and an on-demand internet-based service (ICTV Play). ICTV Play can be viewed at <https://ictv.com.au/>

- **IndigiTUBE**

IndigiTUBE is managed by the Indigenous Remote Communications Association. Currently it provides streaming radio services for First Nations radio services, smartphone apps for those services, and music streaming. IndigiTUBE has no content development role or funding. IndigiTUBE is located at <https://www.indigitube.com.au/>

- **National Indigenous Television (NITV)**

NITV is delivered via free to air TV, VAST and pay TV. NITV was relocated to SBS in 2012. It has a limited content production fund that is aimed at content relevant over a number of audiences.

- **Local First Nations media producer websites, viewing rooms and other distribution modes**

First Nations media producers have a variety of distribution platforms available locally including video on demand through websites, cultural archive viewing rooms, DVD and CD distribution, USB shares, YouTube and in some limited cases through community WiFi.

- **National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS)**

NIRS is a national service provided from a hub station sited in Brisbane. It aggregates material from and for First Nations media organisations. First Nations media organisation radio shows can be scheduled on the NIRS service, allowing other First Nations radio organisations to include NIRS programming within their own scheduling. NIRS does not have any content funding for First Nations media organisation content development.

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

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

Recommendation 8 (3rd dot point p14 :

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