

Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research



# STRONG VOICES STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Strong Voices Stronger Communities: First Nations Media  
Employment and Skills Development Strategy

Final Report- 3 April 2019  
Commissioned by First Nations Media Australia (FNMA)





## Acknowledgements

In preparing this report, [Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research](#) engaged with First Nations media organisations in very remote, regional and urban communities across Australia. Their representatives welcomed us and trusted us to share their stories and experiences.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and sea across this country and pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

The report benefited from input by stakeholders from across the Australian First Nations Broadcasting and Media Sector (AFNBMS). We would like to acknowledge those who participated in interviews and the surveys; The Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA), Goolarri Media Enterprises (GME), Pilbara and Kimberley Aboriginal Media (PAKAM) and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (Batchelor Institute), and with particular mention going to First Nations Media Australia for the invaluable support and information provided for this report.

Further input was received from delegates at the CONVERGE First Nations Media National Conferences held in Brisbane in March 2018 and Sydney in November 2018, as well as via webinars and industry working group meetings and through feedback on the draft report. We greatly appreciate these contributions.





## Scope of this Report

1. Outline an Employment and Skills Development Strategy for Australia's First Nations Broadcasting and Media Sector (AFNBMS).
2. Respond to the Australian Government's 90% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment goal by 2020.





## Acronyms used in Report

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
AFNBMS	Australian First Nations Broadcasting and Media Sector
AFTRS	Australian Film, TV and Radio School
BIMA/4AAA	Brisbane Indigenous Media Association
CAAMA	Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association
CDP	Community Development Program
CMTO	Community Media and Training Organisation
DPMC	Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
ESD	Employment and Skills Development (Strategy)
FNMA	First Nations Media Australia
FNMOs	First Nations Media Organisations
IAS	Indigenous Advancement Strategy
IBSs	Indigenous Broadcasting Services
IBP	Indigenous Broadcasting Program
IEP	Indigenous Employment Program
Media RING	Media Reconciliation Industry Network Group
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NBN	National Broadband Network
NIRS	National Indigenous Radio Service
NINS	National Indigenous News Service
NITV	National Indigenous Television
NJP	National Jobs Program
PAKAM	Pilbara and Kimberley Aboriginal Media
PAW	Media Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri Media and Communications
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RIBS	Remote indigenous Broadcasting Services
RIMOs	Remote Indigenous Media Organisations
RTO	Register training Organisation
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service
SROI	Social Return on Investment
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TEABBA	Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association
UN Declaration	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
VET	Vocational Employment and Training



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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this research is to identify specific employment and skills development initiatives which not only build capacity within the Australian First Nations Broadcasting and Media Sector (AFNBMS), but also move the sector closer to achieving the Australian Government's 90% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment goal by 2020.

Currently in Australia, there are over 230 licensed broadcasting sites coordinated by 35 Australian Government First Nations Media Organisations (FNMOs) with a further 40 unfunded re-transmission sites. FNMOs provide the facilities, skills and tools for local self-representation by the diverse First Nations communities across remote, regional and urban Australia.

This right to creating and broadcasting our own media in our own languages is a fundamental right of Indigenous peoples. Article 16 of the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration), of which Australia is a signatory, states:

“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 preamble to the UN Declaration states that signatory parties are<sup>1</sup>:

‘Convinced that control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions, and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs.’

A recent Australian Government commissioned report into ‘Social Return on Investment analyses of Indigenous Broadcasting Services’ (IBSs), considered the forecast on investment of remote, regional and urban IBS's to understand the social, cultural and economic impact to result from investment between 2017-2020.<sup>2</sup> The SROI report demonstrates how the activities of FNMO's are achieving valuable outcomes for stakeholders;

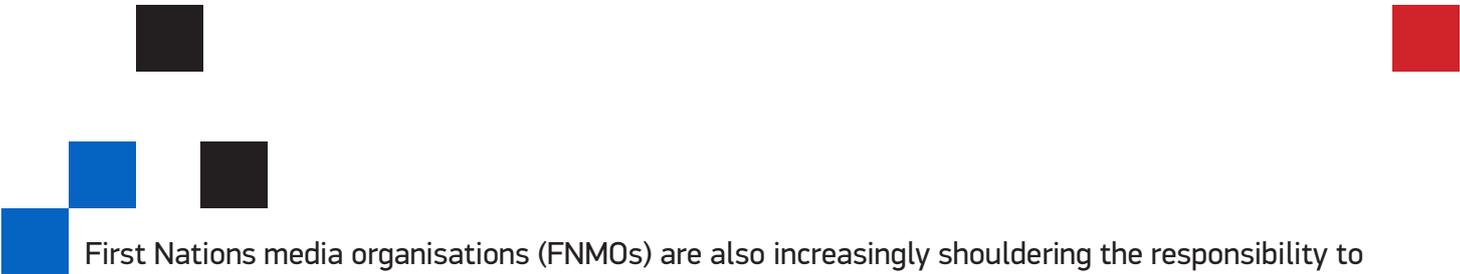
“Investments in each of the three IBS's analysed are forecast to achieve significant returns with an average across the three broadcasters of \$2.87 of social, cultural and economic value for every dollar invested.”

Key insights from this report show that “IBS's provide much more than radio – they are community assets that contribute to strengthening culture, community development and the local economy” and are “contributing towards more of the Government's priorities than is currently realised.”<sup>3</sup>

1 “A/RES/61/295 - E,” 6.

2 DPMC, 2017. “More than Radio – a Community Asset.” SROI Report by Social Ventures Australia.

3 DPMC, 6.



First Nations media organisations (FNMOs) are also increasingly shouldering the responsibility to generate local news and community information flows, providing essential broadcast and digital communication services not covered by the mainstream sector.

A significant finding of the report relates specifically to the role that the AFNBMS plays in providing:

“...meaningful employment, training and participation opportunities for Indigenous Australians... Many of the providers are located in rural and remote areas where there are limited opportunities for work, particularly for work that is culturally aligned. We heard through consultations that some employees had reduced their use of alcohol and other substances as a result of their employment with the broadcasters, which they found more meaningful than alternatives such as ‘work for the dole’.<sup>4</sup>

The AFNBMS has matured and become more professional since the 1990s, yet it is constrained by Government policies which fail to recognise that the sector is an essential and professional industry which provides opportunities for Indigenous employment and skills training at all levels. Indigenous broadcasting policy has not been updated since 1993, with the First Nations broadcasting and media sector still treated as a sub-set of the community broadcasting sector and largely dependent on work-for-the dole employment programs. Policy has not been updated to address the significant disruption in the media and communications industry as a result of convergence and multi-platform delivery, as well as the significant growth, innovation and professionalisation within the sector over the last 25 years.

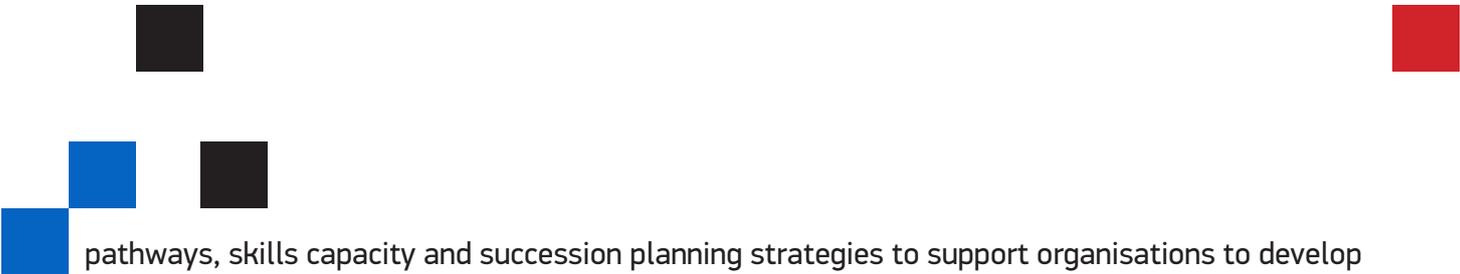
In comparison, in 1993 the Federal Government established the Australian Film Commission’s Indigenous Unit which has provided funding and significant support for a range of Indigenous content creation including Australian and international award-winning features, which has seen the sector mature into a robust and professional industry.

The peak body for First Nations not-for-profit broadcasting, media and communication, First Nations Media Australia (FNMA) recognises that a similar shift in Government policy and funding is needed to support development of the AFNBMS through;

- Increased jobs and skills
- Increased capacity & sustainability
- Enhanced social inclusion
- Maintenance of culture and language

In 2017, the Australian Government introduced a 90% Indigenous employment target by 2020 for all organizations funded under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS). First Nations media organisations funded under IAS are already well progressed towards this objective, with a current national average of 79% Indigenous employment through IAS-funded programs. This Employment and Skills Development (ESD) Strategy seeks to set out a range of actions to build employment

<sup>4</sup> Cabinet, 34.



pathways, skills capacity and succession planning strategies to support organisations to develop plans towards achieving this objective.

However, we note that this will require a whole-of-system approach and external resourcing and policy support for this change to be sustainable. Further, the timeframe of 2020 is not realistic for some parts of the sector, particularly in remote areas where there are higher levels of non-Indigenous employment in management, training and technical roles due to limited current workforce capacity and experience in these areas and low levels of secondary and tertiary qualifications. This Strategy calls for investment in training and targeted employment programs such as traineeships and pathways roles in areas such as management, training, project management, production, technical and IT services.

The AFNBMS has great potential to expand on its current role to provide training and employment hubs in their communities, enabling them to do much more than just provide training for broadcasters and media workers. They provide digital communication skills which are transferrable to other sectors such as journalism, leadership, public speaking, management, training, communications, marketing and technical areas. The AFNBMS has created training hubs within communities by building capacity, which in turn creates opportunities for workers within the sector to mobilise skills they have learned, to move into different roles outside of the sector. Therefore, increasing employment in this sector can have an incremental effect across diverse sectors, through this increased mobility of Indigenous workers. FNMA aspires to double the number of Indigenous people working in the sector, which is currently estimated at between 500-600.

The Strategy suggested here is the result of desktop research, as well as interviews and surveys conducted with various FNMO's across the sector - including major contributions from CAAMA, Goolarri Media Enterprises, PAKAM, Batchelor Institute and First Nations Media Australia - as well as at FNMA events and online forums. This is an important first step in achieving these goals. Talking with the FNMOs reveals recurring issues that need to be addressed to achieve both the Australian Government's 90% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment by 2020 objective, and increased workforce capacity within a crucially important sector.



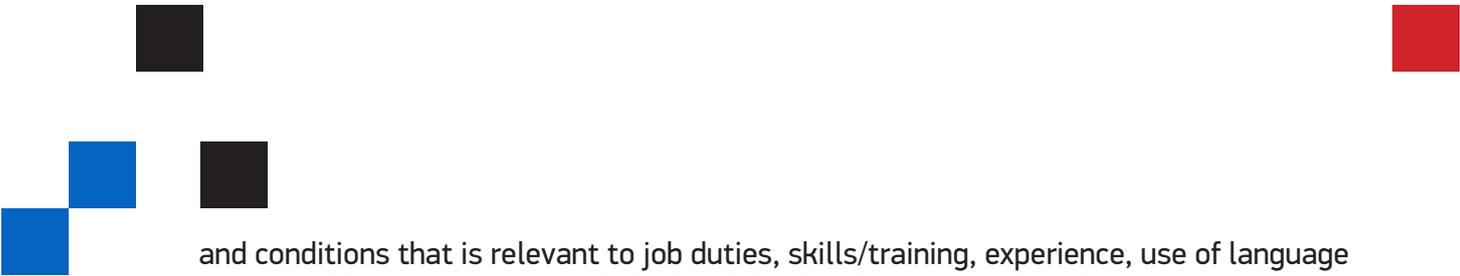
## Key Recommendations

Based on the research and consultations, and findings from previous reviews, the key recommendations from this Strategy are as follows:

### Sector Administration & Funding:

Move program funding to Department of Communications and the Arts. The majority of investment in Indigenous broadcasting is currently provided by the Culture and Capability Programme under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) which is currently administered by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC). Consider moving the responsibilities of Indigenous media from the DPMC into the Department of Communications and the Arts, therefore bringing the budget decision making back in line with the relevant policy and decision-making area. This was a key recommendation of the 2010 Stevens Review.

1. **Increase Employment and Skills Funding.** This ESD Strategy report endorses FNMA's call on the government to increase funding for employment and skills development and targeted areas of development (news, archiving, content development) within its 9 Key Calls for Action. This will help to build the capacity of FNMOs as employment and training hubs in their communities and formalise much of the work already occurring within the sector. Funding new positions as well as formal and informal training programs will build much needed capacity within the sector, enable succession and career pathways, and help close the gap on Indigenous employment.
2. **An expanded National Jobs Package type program:** The current CDP program is too restrictive and inflexible to support pathways to employment in the AFNMBS. An entry program similar to the former National Jobs Package, enabling a direct employment model, is needed to increase youth engagement and employment throughout the remote, regional and urban sector.
3. **Review the feasibility of the 90% employment target by 2020.** 19 out of 40 FNMO's already meet or exceed the Australian Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 90% employment goal for 2020. A further 20 are already at 75% and approaching this target, with only 9 organisations falling below 75%. Non-Indigenous workers have contributed to the sector's development and tend to be in training roles and positions which require specialist skills and experience. Currently, these roles cannot be easily filled from the pool of Indigenous workers available, especially in remote and regional areas. To develop the workforce required to achieve this, a whole-of-sector and government approach is needed for skills development, succession planning, and employment funding. This sector development will require resources, planning and a suitable timeframe.
4. **Raise funding levels for wages to Industry awards.** A review of employment funding levels is needed to bring salaries in line with Industry award rates. A relevant award is needed for non-broadcaster or production roles. A tiered system is needed for wages

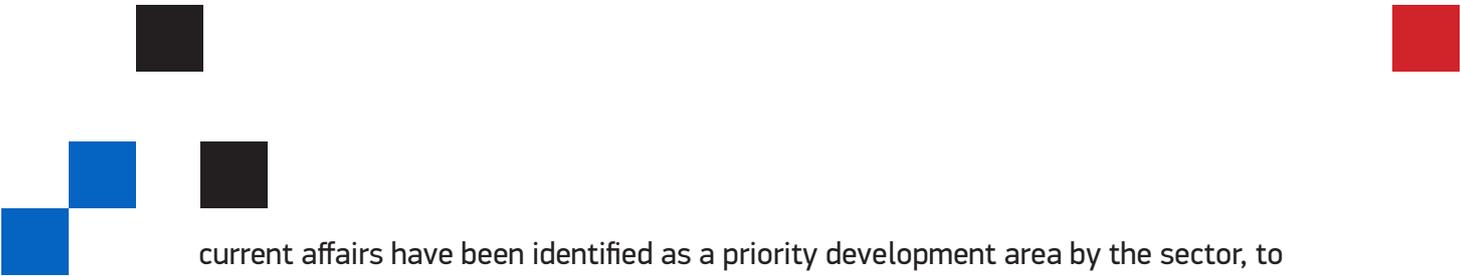


and conditions that is relevant to job duties, skills/training, experience, use of language or cultural knowledge. Currently highly skilled and experienced media practitioners are working on sub-award salary levels or having to leave the sector to seek better paid jobs in other sectors. Many FNMOs rely on volunteers, trainees, part-time and casual staff who are at the lower end of the pay scale, with many on work for the dole type programs. These offer little incentive for career advancement within the sector. To increase retention, FNMOs needs to build capacity to ensure that key roles are being done by people in award-wage level employment positions.

- 5. Increase media content production opportunities.** Establishing ongoing opportunities for hands-on media production and broadcasting is the best way to build skills and create jobs, while creating a repository of significant multi-media content. Increased funding for content production in the areas of radio documentaries/podcasts, news and current affairs, language and cultural content, dramas, music and so on will build capacity of First Nations media organisations to employ and training local media practitioners to produce, broadcast and archive locally significant stories for the community and where relevant to national and even international audiences.
- 6. Upgrade infrastructure and equipment.** Extensive facility and equipment upgrades are needed in remote community RIBS facilities and many FNMOs, including in regard to internet connectivity via the NBN. RIBS upgrades are needed to ensure industry-standard equipment and safe, comfortable workplaces. Internet connectivity is inconsistent across the sector, impacting on communications, delivery of services and remote support options. Poor or no internet connections restricts ability for broadcasters to do network programs via codecs, share content and stories, use social media, and access online training via webinars, online workshops and remote training support. With high costs of technical contractors to travel to remote sites and undertake equipment and facility maintenance, there is a need for increased training of local staff to undertake first-in technical and preventative maintenance.

## Employment And Career Pathways

- 1. Develop Management Mentorship and Shadowing Programs.** These will 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 fulfill 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.
- 2. Develop New Roles in Emerging Fields.** The sector needs to build capacity and training options in new areas that have opened up as a result of convergence and changes in the media landscape. These include areas such as journalism, multimedia and online production, marketing, social media communications, archiving, technical and IT roles, app development and so on.
- 3. Increase Journalism Staffing and Training.** Increased capacity within news and



current affairs have been identified as a priority development area by the sector, to increase diversity of stories and build capacity for local people reporting on local issues. FNMOs are well placed to fill the gap left by reduced regional coverage by ABC and other mainstream media. The courses need to be designed with the needs of remote communities in mind. Building the capacity for communities to produce their own news aligns with building safer, stronger, informed communities. We need to establish pathways, secondment opportunities, and skills exchanges between the smaller FNMO's and the larger organisations such as NITV, NIRS, CAAMA, Koori Mail and mainstream media. The sector may consider setting up its own accreditation scheme to ensure quality and reliability of news contributed to its shared platforms.

4. **Support Archiving Roles and Skills.** Create and provide training and support for a new roles of Community Archive Worker within the FNMOs who will be responsible for cataloguing etc. as broadcasters increasingly rely on libraries of digitised audio-visual media. FNMOs have ever-growing and ageing media collections which urgently require dedicated people and infrastructure to support digital cataloguing and archiving to preserve them using best-practice procedures. FNMA is establishing a digital archiving platform and training resources to support the on-site management of these important community collections, however a Community Archive Worker is needed to coordinate the extensive and time-consuming work of digitising, cataloguing and managing community access and sharing protocols.
5. **Identify Suitable Indigenous Recruitment Agency/ies.** In order to increase targeted employment of Indigenous staff for roles in the sector, a suitable recruitment agency/ies could be established or identified as a preferred supplier for the AFNBMS. The use of such an agency/ies could be included in Human Resources policies and Indigenous employment plans.
6. **Cultural Safety in Workplaces.** In order to provide pathways and retain employees in larger media organisations outside of the AFNBMS, there is a need for increased cultural awareness and cultural safety standards. Although some larger organisations like ABC have RAP plans and Indigenous representatives, there is a need to provide cross-cultural training for all staff and ensure that new workers from remote or regional coming into these larger organisations are adequately supported with appropriate support structures and employment pathways.

## Skills Development and Training

1. **Develop a Training Working Group.** FNMA to convene a working group of sector organisations and RTOs/providers to identify current course availability, emerging training and skills development needs, and regionally and culturally appropriate means of delivery (formal and informal) and funding opportunities. This working group to include the key RTOs in the sector, including the Indigenous RTOs (Goolarri Media, BIMA's AAA Training, Batchelor Institute), CMTO, AFTRS and other mainstream providers. The group should consider current and emerging workforce needs within the sector and avenues for formal, informal and on-the-job training.

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- 2. Establish Skills Development Pathways for Management and Staff Roles at FNMOs.** Design and implement courses and targeted programs for building skills in management, project management, governance, training and technical roles, to support succession planning and supplement in-house training by FNMOs.
  - 3. Establish training opportunities for new and emerging fields:** The First Nations media industry is changing from being a broadcast only sector, creating the need for training and skills development in a range of new fields including: journalism, multi-media and on-line production, archiving, web development, digital graphics and desktop publishing, communications and social media, photography, animation, drone cinematography, virtual reality, IT and technical support.
  - 4. Increase in-house Training Capacity.** Develop and initiate sector wide courses to ‘train the trainer’ (Cert 4 Training and Assessment and targeted up-skilling workshops) to enable more in-house training. In-house and on-the-job training is the preferred training delivery model for many organisations, and reduces the costs of off-site training, utilises existing relationships, integrates training into daily work practice and projects, and builds skills using locally applicable facilities and software. Flexible funding and resources are needed to facilitate this and build local training capacity, as existing organisational funding barely covers operations. RTO partnership arrangements can enable in-house delivery of accredited training with RTOs managing the assessment and administration.
  - 5. Promote skills development through regular traineeships, fellowships, exchanges:** Encourage mainstream media organizations and other stakeholders to provide traineeships, fellowships, exchanges within sector and with national media or stakeholder organizations. Promote these opportunities to the sector.

## Other Recommendations to FNMA:

- 1. Implement Industry Workforce Development Action Plan.** FNMA should seek the resources to develop and implement the Workforce Development Action Plan based on the recommendations of this Strategy project. Once developed, it is recommended that funding be sought for a dedicated full-time Employment and Skills Development Coordinator role to implement the Action Plan.
- 2. Identify and/or develop a suite of workshops and resources focused on building skills and capacity within the sector:** These could include management skills workshops, webinars, forums at industry events, and online resources. Update Indigenous Broadcasters Toolkit and RIBS Training Manual as online resources.
- 3. Promotion of Training and Employment Opportunities:** Via FNMA newsletter, social media, website and targeted mail outs.
- 4. Data Collection to track sector employment and skills:** This should be built into a regular survey of the capacity of member organizations. An audit of current and emerging staff roles will help to inform planning for future training needs.



## Background on government policy and programs

The IBP, established in 1987, is the primary government support for Indigenous radio broadcasting (now under IAS Culture and Capability program). The objectives of the IBP are to:

- a. Support the operations of Indigenous owned and controlled community radio broadcasting services, including RIBS,
- b. Support the development and broadcast of programming that focuses on the promotion of local Indigenous culture and languages,
- c. Enhance Indigenous broadcasting services by supporting national representation that serves and develops the sector's capacity,
- d. Support broadcasting services that are able to inform and educate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on accessing the range of health, legal, education and housing services available to them,
- e. Assist in developing an Indigenous broadcasting sector that meets all governance and regulatory requirements, and,

Provide opportunities for broadcasting workers to develop professional skills and experience.

Previous governments reports about the Indigenous Broadcasting Program (1999, 2000, 2006, 2010) have identified the potential of a well-resourced and skilled Indigenous broadcasting and media sector playing a powerful role in reinforcing Australian Government objectives in helping to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and supporting reconciliation outcomes.

However, the 2010 'Review of Australian Government Investment in the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Sector' (Stevens et al) found that the sector is "under-resourced, lacks critical capacity and skills" to provide needed pathways for Indigenous peoples and opportunities at all levels within the sector<sup>5</sup>. The Stevens Review recommended an additional \$8million annual operational funding allocation to the sector to build this extra capacity and employment pathways, as well as \$5million pa for an Indigenous content and project fund<sup>6</sup>. Despite these key recommendations, there has been no increase in funding since that time with an effective reduction in overall investment due to freezing of CPI increases since 2014.

According to the Stevens Review (2010),<sup>7</sup> such commitments are based on principles of:

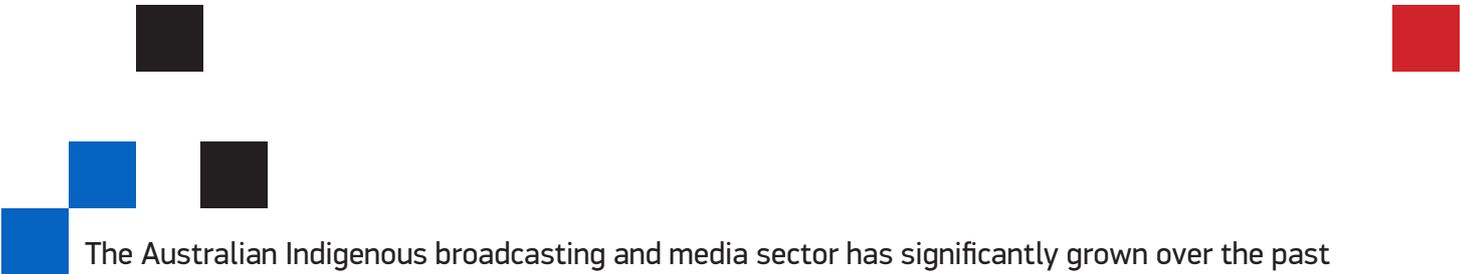
- Self-determination – Indigenous peoples making their own decisions; driving local and regional initiatives that are supported by appropriate government resourcing and investment;
- Genuine engagement with Indigenous peoples in the broadcasting and media sector;

Proper funding and investment to enhance training and employment opportunities including ensuring appropriate language and cultural practices.

<sup>5</sup> "Review of Australian Government Investment in the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Sector." Australian Government, 2010:1.

<sup>6</sup> Includes \$1million existing allocations to Imparja and CBF.

<sup>7</sup> ibid



The Australian Indigenous broadcasting and media sector has significantly grown over the past 25 years as Indigenous media organisations have grown and realised their potential to inform communities, to provide relevant training and jobs, to showcase and develop the creativity of Indigenous peoples and to help maintain traditional cultures and practices.<sup>8</sup>

The Indigenous broadcasting and media sector provides primary and essential services for many Indigenous peoples and has great potential to improve Indigenous people's self-esteem and well-being. Recognition of the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector as a professional sector in its own right, is essential, and an important part of the broader media landscape and to enable new media technologies.

On assessment of the criticisms of prior programs designed to progress Employment and Skills Development in the Indigenous media industry a recurring pattern is observed of under resourcing, over regulation and lack of industry recognition. The Indigenous media sector is still seen as a subset of community broadcasting, which is reliant on volunteerism, instead of its own pillar in the Broadcasting Services Act, which needs to be addressed.

While there is some volunteerism in the sector, this is not a realistic expectation for the human resourcing of the First Nations media sector where there are limited people with alternate income streams to provide their time voluntarily, and the majority of workers see broadcasting and media as their primary job and are seeking a career pathway.

The majority of broadcaster and media producer roles in the remote sector are funded through work-for-the-dole programs (including the former National Jobs Package or NJP, which has now been rolled into operational funding to RIMOs). These programs are mostly paid below award wage levels and, while superannuation is paid under NJP, there is very limited capacity to pay tiered wage levels to reflect skills and experience, job duties/complexity, additional hours worked, language and cultural knowledge/skills.

There is a section of the Stevens Review devoted to "building Individual capacity and sector capability through employment and training (section 3.9; 69-72), including analysis of government employment programs (including NJP and IEP), cadetship and employment opportunities with ABC and SBS, and RAP activities through other mainstream media organisations.

There has been significant effort put in by Media RING to increase Indigenous employment at ABC, SBS and other organisations, and at creating pathways for Indigenous employees within the sector, into mainstream media organisations. However, the not-for-profit First Nations media organisations which are the training ground for these recruits have had no additional resourcing to retain experienced staff and capacity due to relatively low wages and conditions, leading to skills drain on an already under-resourced sector. This hinders the development of pathways to progression between trainer, coordinator and management roles within these organisations.

Together these barriers factor into the current gap between policy intention and policy execution. Overcoming these barriers are key to achieving the mandate of closing the gap on Indigenous economic and employment disadvantage.

<sup>8</sup> Jolly, "Media of the People: Broadcasting Community Media in Australia."



## 90% Indigenous Employment Goal by 2020

While the aim to attain 90% Indigenous employment in the sector is commendable, this cannot be achieved without targeted strategies and investment in training, succession pathway programs, traineeships and additional roles to achieve this outcome. The goal is also set alongside broader economic development, employment and education targets for Federal, State and Territory governments in the 2018 **Closing the Gap Refresh**.<sup>9</sup> Namely, that by 2028:

- 65% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (15-24 years) are in employment, education or training;
- 60% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 years are employed;
- 47% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (aged 20-64 years) have completed Certificate III or above, including higher education.

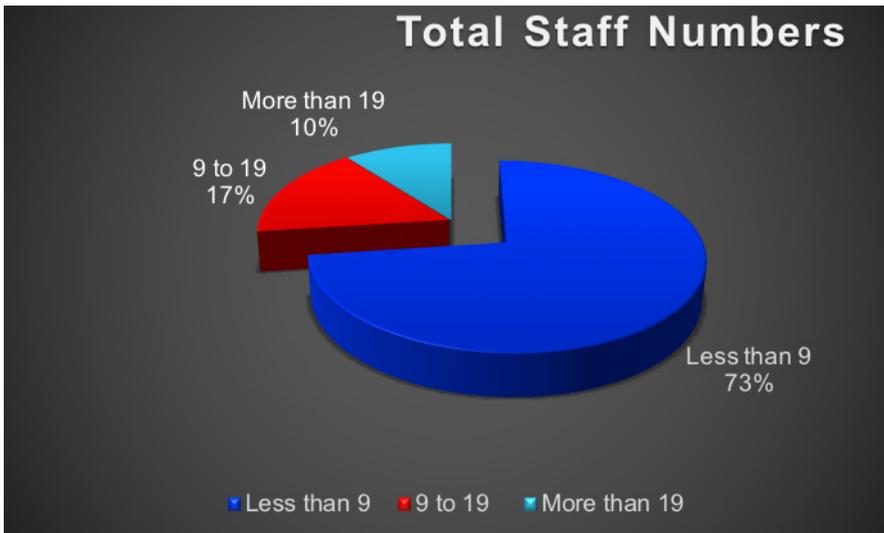
A holistic approach which facilitates the development of best practice models for overcoming unemployment in Indigenous communities is key to reaching the target set for 2020. Good leadership and partnerships between media organisations, stakeholders and government are factors that will significantly contribute to job readiness and the skill capacity of Indigenous peoples in the media sector.

- A major challenge in improving Indigenous employment outcomes is recognising and addressing the intergenerational factors which act as barriers to Indigenous long-term employment in all sectors. The need to close the gap in all sectors and to reach 90% employment targets for Indigenous peoples in the media sector requires overcoming multiple barriers such as:
  - limited access to secondary and tertiary education (especially in remote communities)
  - lack of appropriate media specific training
  - lack of opportunities in high management positions
  - Lack of leadership models
  - Support for partnerships between FNMO's and external organisations
  - Low levels of governance and business acumen capacity

Other barriers to overcome for sustainable longer-term employment outcomes include; short-term funding, fragmentation of initiatives, lack of pathways to longer term employment and further training and the need to develop better partnerships with key Indigenous organisations and leaders outside the media sector.

There are currently about 46 FNMOs or other organisations which are funded by DPMC for delivery

of broadcasting activities, of which 22 have a non-Indigenous manager. Due to the risk associated with changing the Manager role in a small organisation, this becomes an issue for small organisations where total staff are often below 9 employees. For these small organisations which make up 73% of the sector, having just one non-Indigenous person on staff automatically blows their potential of reaching 90%. The staff figures for the 46 funded organisations are illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Total staff numbers within the 46 DPMC funded organisations

It is worth mentioning here that the majority of managers are being paid either under the Community, Social Service, Homecare and Disability Award, or the Broadcasting and Recorded Entertainment Award 2010. This salary may also contain some over award conditions, but these non-Indigenous managers are paid well below what is being offered outside of the sector.

In many cases managers and staff are contracted at reasonable rates but are paid significantly lower rates due to budget constraints. For example, the Manager position at PAW Media in Yuendumu is a Level 8 classification, but due to funding constraints is paid at Level 5. PAKAM's Manager received a small pay increase in 2017, the first in over ten years, but the new rate is still significantly lower than the applicable award level.

## Collaboration with Indigenous peoples and local communities

Genuine consultation and engagement with Indigenous people and communities on policy including media and programming initiatives during employment program lifecycles are essential for success. The involvement of Indigenous peoples in decision-making positions and in management, contributes to building stronger, more connected and resilient communities. This also allows for greater engagement and transparency when implementing programs in relation to employment strategies for Indigenous peoples in the media sector.





## Key Insights from the Social Return on Investment Report

The 2017 Social Return on Investment study found that FNMOs<sup>9</sup>:

- Contribute to strengthening culture, community development and the local economy;
- Deliver outcomes consistent with the four themes above across a broad cross section of the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector and tailored to the specific needs of the community;
- Help to build trust amongst the community;
- Achieve a range of social returns on investment which is provided to a range of stakeholders;
- Contribute to more Government priorities than realised;
- Require sufficient resourcing and investment to generate additional revenue.

The SROI report further details national and international findings regarding community broadcasting audience preferences, and potential areas of impact, including<sup>10</sup>:

- Broadcasting is a vital communications channel for remote areas not easily reached through other mediums;
- Shows potential for improving social and economic outcomes (such as education, health and employment);
- Can be effective in delivering public interest messages, when messaging is tailored to the local audience;
- Face barriers to sustainability, and that sustainability can be considered to comprise of three interdependent elements:
- Social sustainability: when stations are responsive to audiences and engage actively in communities,
  - Institutional sustainability: when stations have good governance and management, and
  - Financial sustainability. The first two are preconditions for the third.
  - Importance of community control;
- Indigenous owned and operated broadcasting services that are properly resourced and empowered.

9 Cabinet, "More than Radio – a Community Asset."

10 Ibid. p, 11



It is important to acknowledge that FNMO's provide positive intergenerational outcomes through ongoing workforce engagement, which both strengthens community cohesion, and contributes to community and social development through ongoing maintenance of Indigenous languages and cultures.





## The Need for a Community-controlled Approach

Studies indicate the benefits of supporting and building capacity within existing Indigenous community-controlled services, including <sup>11</sup>:

- a. Maintaining unique social, linguistic and cultural identities of their local communities
- b. Accruing of local knowledge and understanding the needs and aspirations of their local communities. This knowledge is more likely to be accessed by community members as local broadcast and media services impart a sense of ownership
- c. Providing a more comprehensive and responsive service, as they have a greater understanding and appreciation of the causal issues behind the symptoms
- d. Promoting leadership, advocacy and support extending beyond services delivered.

Supporting a community-controlled approach assists Indigenous communities and Indigenous community-controlled services including FNMO's to identify key issues and develop and implement local approaches tailored to the actual needs of the community. This approach is essential for building stronger communities, and creating social and economic change in Indigenous communities, as well as providing employment and participation outcomes. Effective engagement and meaningful consultation needs to be sought throughout all stages of employment and training lifecycles.

There is no one size fits all solution making it difficult to describe best practice within the sector, as each community is different. In very remote areas for example, it is hard to allocate scarce resources to management and succession training, given that media workers are often also the Traditional Owner, the translator, the radio announcer, the administration officer, and have other responsibilities to their family and community.

Temporary managers are needed to allow time for managers to engage in training and professional development. There is clear evidence that the objectives of Indigenous community-controlled organisations and services extend beyond addressing employment outcomes, to improving the health and well-being of the individuals and communities they service. Provisions should be made for Indigenous communities to self-determine what programs are needed and for Indigenous peoples to respond to their own needs and aspirations.

In line with international standards and best practice models, options for reform should emphasise an expansion of the Indigenous community-controlled sector and ensure that organisations are appropriately funded to allow for training, mentoring and professional development. This has the potential to contribute to the number of skilled Indigenous workers and their increased confidence to work in mainstream industries.

### Resourcing and Investment

FNMO's have demonstrated their capacity to generate their own revenue but there is a minimum resourcing threshold that must be maintained to enable FNMO's and their staff to diversify their activities and funding. For example, FNMO's cannot spend time writing grant applications and training new staff unless they have sufficient resourcing, nor can they produce videos that generate revenue without video production facilities and crew.

# First Nations Media Organisations Employment Snapshot

The chart in Figure 2 suggest that there is a compelling argument to be made to the Government, in support of FNMA’s nine-point action plan detailed in this report, as a positive way of assisting organisations in their efforts to address this issue.



Figure 2: Indigenous employment % rates vs size of organisation

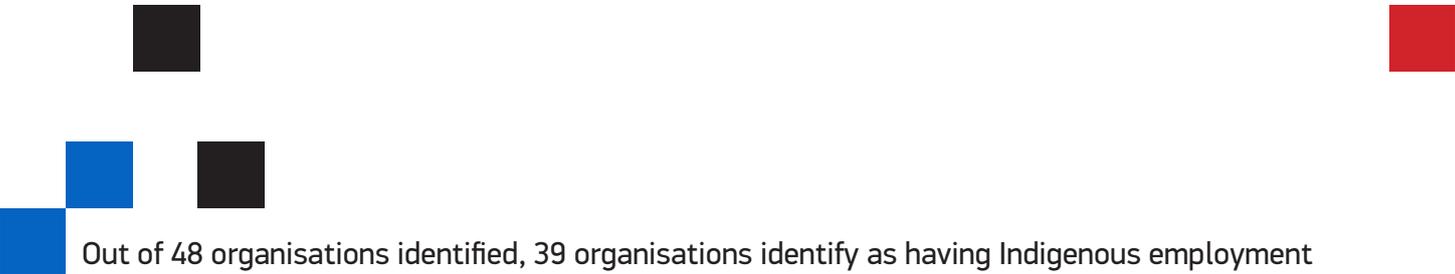
Funding to FNMOs from the DPMC reflects that employment numbers for other Indigenous organisations are significantly lower in comparison to FNMOs. For example, two Regional Councils in the NT listed their overall Indigenous employment levels at  $169/288 = 59\%$  and  $119/ 208 = 57\%$ .

Often the main function of regional councils is to provide a range of municipal services. Given the fact that they are located within remote communities, they should have a significantly Indigenous workforce, yet this is often not the case. The AFNBMS focus on media or broadcasting services, which include technical and specialised production and training skills, yet these are required to have higher Indigenous employment rates than regional councils. This means FNMOs need a workforce with a wide range of skills which are not easy to fill from the current pool of skilled Indigenous workers within the sector.

The initial findings reflect that FNMO’s show strong numbers in terms of Indigenous employment in the sector (79% average), particularly when set against other Indigenous service delivery organisations in the regions. This result can be seen as unique and in FNMO’s favour in terms of Indigenous employment data in the sector.

The current data is however skewed by the fact that organisations have been asked to identify all employees at their organisations, not just those involved in the broadcasting and media sector or those roles funded under the Indigenous Broadcasting Program within by DPMC. This should be addressed in future data collection.





Out of 48 organisations identified, 39 organisations identify as having Indigenous employment rates of 75% or higher, which are impressive figures. An anomaly is Imparja Television, which is one of the largest employers and has the highest funding contribution from DPMC, but has only 11% Indigenous employment.

The survey also reveals that out of the 29 Organisation with Indigenous employment levels below 89%, 19 have 9 or less staff, which means they cannot have a single non-Indigenous staff member, or they will fail the test.

Access to broader data - not just those organisations that DPMC identifies as FNMOs, would provide a greater overall perspective of how FNMOs perform in terms of Indigenous employment percentages in the sector. As a result, this could explain the general lack of interest from Governments regarding investment in the industry - for example a reluctance to invest in and make major changes with such small numbers to employment.

When taking into consideration current and past trends, findings suggest that there is a discrepancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous workers, that the majority of Indigenous employees are generally not paid equally to non-Indigenous counterparts. This can be partially explained by the fact that many Indigenous positions within the sector are being funded by Work for the Dole programs such as CDP, or the National Jobs Package, and that most organizations only have two or three funded positions.

A comprehensive assessment of the data, including a breakdown of funding provided to each organisation is key to gaining an insight into what works for Indigenous media organisations.

Best practice evaluation methods are needed that address the challenges of low numbers, remoteness and lack of capacity to engage in surveys. Strategies are needed to identify and overcome systemic road blocks to Indigenous employment.

Systemic issues exist for Indigenous peoples due to inflexible one size fits all policies coordinated by mainstream institutions. Approaches to employment within the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector, that focus on capacity building and meaningful collaboration between communities and Government agencies, have been found to be far more effective in improving outcomes for Indigenous peoples. The development of meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities will increase the success of Indigenous policy. In line with principles of self-determination and community control, there is a need for Government to support Indigenous peoples in the media sector through increased funding and investment through proper education and specific media training to reach the 90% employment target by 2020.



## Socio-economic Determinants

Research indicates that the disadvantaged socio-economic status and low levels of employment of Indigenous peoples compared with the wider population is a key social indicator of health and well-being of Indigenous communities. Improvements in employment outcomes for Indigenous peoples in the media sector needs to occur within a framework of appropriate social and cultural structures for Indigenous peoples and communities. This is particularly pertinent for transition to longer term employment. Research and evidence-based strategies require resourcing, partnerships with Indigenous communities and highly skilled people to achieve success working with such groups.

A range of social and cultural determinants impact on Indigenous people access to both education and employment, which are intermittently intertwined. Existing strategies relating to closing the gap employment and education are also dependent on reducing Indigenous people representation in the criminal justice system. As noted above, and by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report, there are important differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of being, and the delivery of Indigenous community-controlled services and programs is a direct response to the desire of Indigenous peoples to take control of their issues and find local solutions which fit their specific needs. Many Indigenous peoples and their families continue to be marginalised or excluded from education and employment programs and opportunities due to difficulties in access to justice services or continued engagement with the criminal justice, juvenile justice or children's care and protection systems.



## Case Studies

### Case Study 1 - National Indigenous Television (NITV) service

NITV became a division of SBS in 2012. This meant that the process of building better relationships with content makers in the sector became contingent on the needs of the audience.

In 2013 NITV announced a new documentary series titled “Our Stories, Our Way, Everyday” (OSOWE) created and commissioned by Pauline Clague. The initiative targeted regional, remote and emerging filmmakers by offering annual pre-sale and production funding for 120 new 15-minute documentary programs to all producers within the AFNBMS. The series was created around a daily thematic and look completed by the channel.

The initiative ran for three years and was seen by many small and community-based producers as a pathway into the broadcasting industry, and as a way to gain valuable TV production skills necessary to produce content for other broadcasters. It also allowed some of the RIMO’s to obtain valuable broadcast credits, making them eligible for funding schemes offered by state film bodies and Screen Australia. RIMO’s gained real world experience while making content for national broadcaster NITV, such as meeting deadline and delivery requirements and handling stakeholder expectations. This experience gave some RIMO’s the skills and confidence needed to tackle film making funding schemes offered by Screen Australia such as the “Songlines on Screen” documentary and “Short Blacks” short film initiatives.

NITV made a modest investment of one million dollars for the initial three years of the series, which produced 90 hours of new content that screened nationally seven nights a week. This investment paid dividends by giving 60 remote and regional producers the capacity to make content from their own communities, and in their own language.

OSOWE also had an effect within NITV, encouraging the News, Current Affairs and Production teams to consider new strategies for working with organisations to produce news stories within their region. For example, NITV hired crew from CAAMA to cover the Mbantua festival in 2013, and TEABBA to cover the NAIDOC awards in Darwin, saving production costs for the broadcaster, and also giving the RIMO crews valuable opportunities to work on large productions.

This approach could easily be adopted more widely by organisations such as NITV, ABC and SBS, when they are making programs in remote and regional communities. These big broadcasters could utilise workers from the AFNBMS to work alongside, or even substitute for their own crew members. These types of opportunities help to build connections between sectors and provide opportunities for on-the-job training and assistance.

This “stringer” approach to news and current affairs could enhance sustainability of the AFNBMS by allowing communities to increase their journalism skills, and by creating a pool of national stories which can be utilised by other broadcasters. This will require a level of support from Government broadcasters to ensure that community-based organisations have the skills to identify and produce news to feed into the news pool that is nationally worthy.



## Case Study 2- National Indigenous News Service (NINS)

National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS) operates from Brisbane and are funded under IAS to deliver the NINS news feeds for stations across the sector. They also feed stories from NITV online and current affairs show “The Point”, as well as linking to Indigenous Journalists that work in print media, and online for organisations such as the ABC, The Guardian, National Indigenous Times and Koori Mail etc.

National and commercial broadcasters such as the ABC and regional TV stations have reduced coverage in many remote and regional areas due to budgets cuts and media reform changes, leaving a gap in services. The AFNBMS is well suited to fill this gap, but most FNMO’s lack the level of journalism capacity required to produce the content needed by the national broadcasters. First Nations Media Association has been working on strategies to increase this area, along with CMTO and sector RTOs.

Remote and regional weather broadcasts could also be produced by the sector, which would feed into the Bureau of Meteorology who are interested in increasing the accuracy and appropriateness of their information from remote regions.



## Creating new Indigenous Specific Jobs

Mainstream media remains a crucial partner to the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector and integral to the Government's Indigenous media initiatives. Organisations such as Fairfax, Foxtel, BBC Australia, Channel 9 and public broadcasters have created internships or Indigenous identified positions as part of Media RING and Reconciliation Action Plans. The problem with these ad-hoc initiatives is that they are often short term, and dependant on connections to and commitment from Media RING.

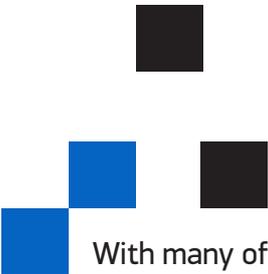
In creating new roles that are Indigenous identified to have a longevity in the industry and in the workplace, most of these organisations also need to do work to make sure the organisation is a culturally safe place for the new worker, and also that there is a cross over of cross cultural training to be integrated into the organisation. These pathways are important aspects in growing the retention rate into these areas.

The federal government plays a significant role through various programs, schemes and initiatives which indirectly help to build capacity within the AFNBMS. In 2015, a government scheme to increase procurement from Indigenous organisations meant that many organisations within the AFNBMS, were commissioned to produce TV and radio advertisements and community service messages. On the other hand, the setting up of Supply Nation helped organisations outside of the sector but has largely excluded organisations within the sector which operate as not-for-profit organisations (Note: Not-for-profits are now eligible to be listed with Supply Nation but most FNMOs are yet to engage due to limited capacity and the limited scope of activities under Indigenous procurement policies).

The government's CDP program is an important employment strand for most organisations within the sector, but this does not create real jobs, especially the type of jobs required within the sector. Government agencies have at times introduced various short term and ad hoc schemes aimed at creating job opportunities within the sector, such as Indigenous employment programs managed by Screen Australia and internships initiatives. The problem with these ad hoc schemes is that they are often project-based and require people to move away from their own communities to take up the position. These types of jobs are short-term and do not provide sustainable jobs within the sector. These schemes and initiatives often come with strict rules and guidelines for compliance, which means that only large media organisations within the sector can qualify.

Philanthropic support within Australia for schemes and projects which create Indigenous employment opportunities are fairly limited.

A new position titled Digital Liaison needs to be established across the sector as Digital Convergence is bringing media training, production, radio and television broadcasting, and print into an online space. Most FNMO's operate with a Station Manager, Radio Producer and other jobs that pertain to the running of the radio station, but no position specifically responsible for digital compliance. The position would be responsible for social media pathways, and teaching staff how to use the digital space, maintaining a digital archive, and interacting with community through this online digital media space.



With many of the communities upgrading to digital in the coming year, the real need is to create an interactive space with the community, which will allow for stronger news and events coverage, that could be managed within the Station.

The sector has needed to fill the gap in News and Weather services for many remote and regional communities, as the ABC has scaled back its local news and weather coverage for these less populous areas over the past five years. FNMO's who are able to provide these services should be paid for the content they create, which would increase sustainability and add value to the wider services needed in those regions.

New positions, training and support would be required to produce the content for news, weather, and local current affairs coverage. This content would feed into the wider national pool of news and current affairs in the regions, where the need is paramount to help build this part of the sector.



## Strategies to Achieving Growth in Sector

The evidence presented in this report tends to suggest that much of the training and skills requirements within the sector cannot be met by existing structures within the Indigenous and mainstream sectors. Interviews and feedback received from within the sector strongly suggests that the on-the-job training and skills acquired through making content are a most effective method of delivering these outcomes.<sup>1 1</sup>

Training and courses including VET provide accredited training in job related and technical skills which are often transferable both within the sectors and across sectors. However, much employment within the sector requires workers to have knowledge of specific workplace systems, job related activities and technical skills which are culturally specific to a particular community. This means that some of the skills these workers need are locally specific, operating within local cultural, language and/or workplace contexts, making it difficult for most communities to recruit from outside of their local resource pool.

### Create a ‘Strong Voices’ audio initiative

The proposed initiative of a ‘Strong Voices’ audio content production fund (similar to CBAA’s National Feature and Documentary Series) would be designed to showcase Indigenous voices and stories, produced by Indigenous people. Appropriate FNMO staff will need to complete specially designed training and skills workshops in order to qualify for the production funding. ‘Making as learning’ is a powerful tool for building job skills, technical competencies and confidence within FNMO’s and also within individual workers.

Establishing this production fund will effectively address two of the FNMA’s Nine Calls for Action in an initiative aimed at creating career pathways for existing workers within the sector, through training and content creation:

Expand training & career pathways program	\$5M/annum
Annual content production fund	\$2M/annum

The methodology and pedagogy for the initiative will need to be developed and implemented but would broadly speaking, it will provide the capacity for the sector to produce hundreds of hours of community-based radio content and associated training and skills competencies. The bilingual content could be built around themes and be community focused.

This type of initiative is consistent with the aims of the FNMA, as it; builds capacity in employment, training and production, creates sustainability for the sector, enhances social inclusion within communities and helps in preserving and maintaining culture and language.



## Capacity-building: The need for targeted and integrated training for FNMO's

Statistics demonstrate that many Indigenous communities have limited marketable skills and lower levels of formal education than their non-Indigenous counterparts. This poses particular challenges in seeking and maintaining longer term employment. It is important to acknowledge that to reduce the current employment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the media sector, substantial investment in education, training and skills development is necessary, particularly at the managerial levels. Options for reform should identify new strategies through thorough analysis and review of current education and pathways programs and a commitment of new resources and further investment through industry including universities, in targeted and integrated training for Indigenous peoples in the media sector.

Increased funding support is needed for media specific up-skilling for Indigenous peoples with an emphasis on professional development, management skills and job-readiness training. Strategic partnerships should be developed with Indigenous RTOs, university and TAFE to develop and implement an appropriate training framework targeted at increasing skills and pathways for Indigenous people in the media sector, in response to sector needs. Cadetship programs that are award level, provide ongoing employment after completion of the cadetships are an example of targeted and integrated training which leads to longer term employment.

### Pathways and partnerships via education and media specific training

Initiatives which increase the opportunities of Indigenous peoples to transition to longer term employment positions. Currently, pathway plans being provided to Indigenous people in TAFE with little or no employment history reflect a clear link between training and the need for specific media and communication skills.

Streamlining of pathways and partnerships with education and training organisations which recognise the distinct cultural and social experiences of Indigenous peoples in the media and communication sector.

Strategies are needed to enhance longer term employment within the media sector, which aim to build on media and community specific training and programs applicable to specific media and digital platforms, and that support pathways to longer employment are required. Such programs would contribute significantly to the achievement the 90% employment targets and in meeting the closing the gap target.



## FNMA Nine Calls for Action

To address these issues, FNMA has developed the nine Calls for Action in conjunction with the AFNBMS.

These are:

Broadcast Act reform	Budget neutral
Operational & employment funding	\$9M total additional
Live and local expansion program	\$3M/annum
Strengthen news services	\$1M/annum
Expand training & career pathways program	\$5M/annum
Upgrade infrastructure	\$2M/annum
Primary channel for government messaging	Budget neutral
Preserve archives & digital cataloguing	\$2M/annum for 5 years
Annual content production fund	\$2M/annum

These calls for action align closely with the recommendations developed within this strategy report, and will have positive outcomes for the AFNBMS by:

- Building capacity in employment, training and production (2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9)
- Improving sustainability for the sector (1, 2, 6 and 7)
- Enhancing social inclusion within communities (3, 4 and 7)
- Preserving and maintain culture and language (8 and 9)

More details on these nine calls for action can be found here at [firstnationsmedia.org.au](http://firstnationsmedia.org.au).



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