

# Media Release

Monday 3 October 2016

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## **18<sup>th</sup> National Remote Indigenous Media Festival wraps up in Yirrkala**

Our Stories from the Home of Land Rights



Last week 160 remote media workers and industry partners from across Australia gathered in the community of Yirrkala on Yolngu Country for the action packed 18th National Remote Indigenous Media Festival.

Indigenous Remote Communications Association (IRCA) headed north, 1800km from Alice Springs to Yirrkala, to partner with Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasting Association (TEABBA) to co-host this year's event. Everyone was treated to the generous hospitality and cultural richness of the Yolngu people and the beautiful tropics of East Arnhem Land.

The Festival is the annual meeting ground for remote media workers, organisations and stakeholders to network, learn, celebrate achievements and build the capacity of the remote Indigenous media industry. It provides an opportunity for delegates to work together toward innovative solutions for the challenges faced by the remote sector. The Festival plays an important professional development role for media workers from very remote communities; connecting people, places and stories across the country to strengthen culture, identity and well-being. Some media organisations travelled for 3 days to attend the Festival, demonstrating how significant the National Remote Indigenous Media Festival is to its delegates.

Sylvia Tabua, IRCA Board member, said “This year’s Festival has been the biggest and best to date. Thank you to the community of Yirkala and the traditional owners for welcoming us to your country, and to all of the delegates who travelled far and wide to be a part of this amazing event. This Festival is really important for bringing the remote media family together and inspiring people to keep doing great media work back in their communities.”

The festival also marked an important milestone for IRCA, which is currently in the process of expanding its role to become the national peak body for the broadcasting, media and communications industry. A new Constitution was passed at the Annual General Meeting which will enable IRCA to now invite membership applications from remote, regional and urban media organisations. IRCA also launched its draft Strategic Plan 2016-19. This will be used as a starting point for consultation on the type of services and support it will offer to best meet the needs of its membership.

This year’s Festival was themed ‘Our Stories from the Home of Land Rights’, acknowledging the Yirkala bark petitions in 1963 that led to the Aboriginal Land Rights Act forty years ago in 1976. This recognises the importance of Country and Culture to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media sector. Everyone was welcomed to saltwater country by the Rirratjingu clan of Yirkala with a Bunggul (ceremony) featuring songmen and dancers from across the Arnhem Land region. A warming speech from IRCA Chairperson, John Tadam Lockyer, officially opened the event.

Industry forums and skills workshops led by inspiring trainers from across the nation featured throughout the week. ABC Sports Broadcaster and Indigenous Leader, Charlie King, and CEO of the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence, Kirstie Parker, delivered keynote addresses to the delegates describing the positive impact of broadcasting in breaking down barriers, addressing social issues, building career pathways and empowering people to tell their stories. Skills workshops included virtual reality film-making, radio news, music recording, mobile device video production, radio sports commentary, iPad animation and digital archiving. The workshop productions were presented at the end of the week, demonstrating the technical skills, creativity and positive storytelling that are hallmarks of the sector.

The evenings were alive with local culture and talent, movies, music and the remote media and video awards. Indigenous Community Television (ICTV) managed the Festival screenings of community produced media from across remote Australia. There was an opening night screening of Arnhem Land stories by local media organisations ARDS and Mulka project, and a showcase night of remote productions made for national broadcast on NITV. The remote media industry awards were presented throughout the week, recognising the significant talent and commitment in the sector. The Festival concluded with an epic night of cultural richness, performance and music, including Yirmal, East Journey, Gawurra, Shelley Morris, Bara Band and Yothu Yindi.

IRCA acknowledges the significant support and contribution from the Yirkkala community, local organisations and our community partners; Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation, East Arnhem Regional Council, Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre and Mulka Project, Indigenous Community Television and Aboriginal Resource and Development Service (ARDS), as well as our as our funding partners and sponsors; Community Broadcasting Foundation, Northern Territory Government, Australian Government, NITV, Screen Territory, Screen Australia, FRRR and AFTRS.

Those unable to attend tuned into the outside broadcast across TEABBA's radio network from their new 4WD OB truck 'Ms Jedda'. Highlights of the event are on the IRCA Festival Event page on Facebook and on Twitter #rimf.

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**For more information about the 18th National Remote Indigenous Media Festival visit**

<http://www.irca.net.au/festival>

**Photo credit (attached): 18<sup>th</sup> National Remote Indigenous Media Festival delegates**

**2015 Festival highlights:** <https://vimeo.com/172503950>

#### **TESTIMONIALS FROM THE FESTIVAL**

“The Festival is significant for our people, enabling us to move forward using the tool of media, bringing our cultures together. It is very important for people from different areas and cultures to get together and talk about the future; what is in store for us and how we can make it better for the younger generations coming through”

**Patrick Ah Kit, CAAMA News**

“The media festival is important because it gives us the chance to upskill in radio, print, film, television and technology. It’s a time where we can come together to network and reflect on the past year. Thank you to all the supporters who enable us to come together for this week of celebration”

**Bernard Namok, TEABBA**

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**Indigenous Remote Communications Association (IRCA)** was established in 2001 as the peak body for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and communications. Until mid 2016, it represented 150 Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services (RIBS) across Australia, supported by eight Remote Indigenous Media Organisations (RIMOs), plus other non-RIBS and aspirant remote media groups. IRCA is currently transitioning to become the national peak body representing the remote, regional and urban broadcasting, media and communications industry.

