

Definitions

- **Day to Day Communications** are those related to IRCA policies, projects, programs, events and other relevant activities that have prior approval from the IRCA Board and/or fall within the day to day management delegation of the General Manager.
- **Urgent Communications** are those developments, policy shifts and matters relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and communications for which no existing IRCA policy or position statement is in place and which require an urgent communications response prior to the next scheduled Board meeting.
- **Other Related Communications** are those relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and communications developments and needs arising from IRCA's formal partnerships or agreements with other organisations, as well as those associated with key organisations and programs contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and communications resourcing and service provision.

1. PURPOSE OF POLICY

In order to ensure that IRCA can communicate with the media effectively, the IRCA Communications Policy sets out:

- The principles that guide IRCA communications with the media.
- IRCA staff and Board responsibilities and accountabilities for communicating with the media.
- Protocols for:
 - Day to day communications.
 - Urgent communications.
 - Other related communications.

2. POLICY PRINCIPLES

2.1 Communication Purpose

IRCA works with the media in order to:

- **Advocate** for the needs of, and **defend** the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and communications not-for-profit sector, to the media, the public and government.
- **Represent** the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and communications not-for-profit sector on relevant matters.

- **Promote** the work of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and communications not-for-profit sector to the media, the public and government, as agreed between IRCA and relevant IRCA members.
- **Promote** the work of IRCA in its peak body roles and activities.
- **Support** the work of organisations that are approved partners with IRCA or important complementary contributors to the development of media and communications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

IRCA staff and Board members will not make public comment on member organisations or individual members.

2.2 Communications Values

IRCA operates on the values of

- **Transparency:** IRCA will promote openness and accessibility in its dealings with the media, whilst complying with the law and maintaining confidentiality when appropriate.
- **Balance:** Information provided to the media by IRCA will as far as possible be objective, balanced, accurate, informative and timely.
- **Industry and Community Benefit:** IRCA will always act in the best interests of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media industry and identified community needs.
- **Cultural Respect:** IRCA will always acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional owners and respect the local customs and culture; IRCA will promote the maintenance of languages, culture and customs wherever possible.
- **Ethical practice:** IRCA will act ethically in all its communications and dealings with the media.

2.3 Communications Decision-Making

In making a decision to communicate with the media, the IRCA General Manager and IRCA Board will be guided by:

- The relevance and importance of the matter to:
 - The IRCA Communications Aims.
 - Board approved IRCA media and communications policies as may be in place from time to time.
 - The IRCA Strategic Plan and Operational Plan.
 - The development and resourcing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and communications programs and services.
- Requests to IRCA by IRCA members.
- Relevant IRCA Membership policies.
- Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding with partner organisations.

3. PROTOCOLS

3.1 General responsibilities

- IRCA staff and Board members should be aware that they may be seen as representatives of IRCA and should therefore:
 - Avoid making comments in the public domain or participating in photo opportunities that may damage the reputation of IRCA and/or its members.
 - Be aware of probity and/or conflict of interest matters.
- The IRCA General Manager, IRCA Board members and IRCA Communications Officer are to:
 - Ensure that effective media relations are maintained consistent with the role of IRCA.

3.2 IRCA Spokesperson

The IRCA Spokesperson is the General Manager and/or the Chairperson. The General Manager may delegate the Spokesperson role to a staff member or Board member as appropriate to the issue.

In the case of “*Urgent Communications*”, the General Manager and the Chairperson may nominate the IRCA Chairperson or another relevant IRCA Board member as the IRCA Spokesperson, with support provided by the IRCA General Manager.

3.3 Management of urgent communications issues

IRCA staff and IRCA Board members should inform the IRCA General Manager as soon as practicable of an urgent issue that may require media communications.

No IRCA staff member or IRCA Board member should engage with the media prior to a decision on media communication being made by the IRCA Chairperson and IRCA General Manager. Any media enquiries during the decision-making process should be referred to the IRCA General Manager.

3.4 Specific accountabilities and responsibilities

Role and accountability	Responsibilities
IRCA Board Chairperson <i>Accountable to IRCA Board</i>	In the case of “<i>Urgent Communications</i>” and “<i>Other Related Communications</i>”: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works with the General Manager on evaluating the need for, consultation requirements, and content of a media release.

Role and accountability	Responsibilities
IRCA Board members <i>Accountable to IRCA Board</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise the IRCA Board Chairperson and General Manager on any opportunities or need to communicate messages about relevant and/or urgent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media and communications matters.
IRCA General Manager <i>Accountable to IRCA Board</i>	<p>In the case of “Day to Day Communications”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops media releases on behalf of IRCA in line with policies, strategies, projects, programs, events and activities as approved by the Board. See Schedule 1 for a list of current policies, programs/projects, events and activities. Provides media releases to the IRCA Board and staff members at the time of release. Tables communications activities at the next scheduled Board meeting. <p>In the case of “Urgent Communications” and “Other Related Communications”:</p> <p>Prior to the development of an IRCA media release:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses the issue with the IRCA Board Chairperson. (Note: If the Chairperson is not available, the GM will seek advice from all Directors with a clear timeframe for response). Takes direction from the IRCA Chairperson on further consultation needs with other Board members and/or the sector. Takes direction from the IRCA Chairperson on proceeding or not with a media release. Prior to public release of a media release, distributes an embargoed copy to all Directors. Carries out other relevant responsibilities as for “Day to Day Communications”.
IRCA Communications Officer <i>Accountable to IRCA General Manager</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains a communications contacts database. Issues approved media releases to agreed media and other stakeholders. Liaises with the media on interview opportunities, as directed by the IRCA General Manager.
IRCA Staff members <i>Accountable to IRCA General Manager</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer any media enquiries to the General Manager or nominated contact person in a media release.

Version	Date adopted/revised	Endorsement/Description of change
1.	1 March 2017	General Manager Daniel Featherstone
1.	1 March 2017	Endorsed by IRCA Board

SCHEDULE 1

CURRENT IRCA POLICIES, PROJECTS, PROGRAMS/STRATEGIES, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES AS AT FEBRUARY 2017

Projects

- Indigitube
- Remote Audience Survey
- InDigiMOB
- Stereo Radio Channels Project

Policies

- Communic8
- Election 2016 policies
- IRCA membership policies
- Remote Telecommunications Access and Digital Inclusion Strategy (with B4BA)
- Broadcasting Services Act amendments
- Digital Radio Services expansion

Programs/Strategies

- Remote Archiving Strategy
- Remote Screen Content Strategy
- WiFi Community Content Sharing

Events

- National Remote Indigenous Media Festival
- National Media Summit
- National Industry Conference
- Broadband for the Bush Forum/ Indigenous Focus Day

Activities

- National Peak Body implementation
- RIMO website and app support
- IRCA website
- Remote connectivity mapping
- ACMA broadcast licensing monitoring

Collaborations

- Broadband for the Bush Alliance
- Remote Archiving Strategy working group
- National Film and Sound Archive
- AIATSIS Steering Committee
- National and State Library Association/ NT Library
- ACCAN