



MEDIA RELEASE

THURSDAY 4 MAY 2017
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUNITY RADIO GETS FUNDING FOR DIGITAL SERVICES

The Indigenous Remote Communications Association (IRCA) welcomes the commitment of \$6.1million funding by the Australia Government, for targeted funding of community digital radio and costs associated with ACMA's changes to the 803-960 MHz frequency. IRCA also congratulates the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia for its role in putting the funding case to the Australian Government.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander radio stations in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth have been a vital part of the digital radio roll out in Australia. Funding to maintain these services is vital for their continuation as well as for the expansion of digital Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services into the new digital spectrum areas for Darwin, Canberra and Hobart. Hobart and Canberra are without a full time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander radio service of any kind.

A number of not-for-profit community based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander FM radio services in NSW, Queensland and Western Australia are affected by the changes to the licensed spectrum used for components of their broadcast signal. IRCA welcomes the funding available to those stations to address costs associated with changing frequencies.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander radio is highly valued by its audiences for its positive perspective and focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories and news as well as for its strong local focus and local presenters.

61% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander listeners listen in for news from their own community and about their own people. 48% of listeners listen in for the Indigenous focus on news and current affairs.

However, funding for not-for-profit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander radio services has not increased in real terms for the last 20 years. Costs arising from regulatory and technological changes create significant challenges for the radio services to cover within a declining funding base.

The Australian Government's recognition that these costs cannot be managed within current funding levels is welcome.

IRCA General Manager, Daniel Featherstone, says "Technological change in our sector has real costs. IRCA thanks the CBAA for their advocacy efforts and the Australian Government for this funding commitment to address some of these costs. IRCA is keen to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander radio services are available all across Australia, including on the digital spectrum. There is more work to be done to achieve this."

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IRCA General Manager Daniel Featherstone is available for interviews