



— **NGAANYATJARRA** *media* (Aboriginal Corporation) —

Submission to
Department of Communication, Information
Technology and the Arts (DCITA)

Review of the Indigenous Broadcasting Program

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Ngaanyatjarra Media

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Ngaanyatjarra Media Submission to the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) Review of the Indigenous Broadcasting Program

Introduction

1. Ngaanyatjarra Media is pleased to present this submission to the Review of the Indigenous Broadcasting Program, released April 2006. This submission provides an overview of the Ngaanyatjarra region, Media program and activities, and general responses to questions in the discussion paper.
2. Ngaanyatjarra Media fully supports the submission to this review by Australian Indigenous Communications Association, to which we actively contributed. Without repeating the points made, this submission seeks to build on the AICA submission by providing specific issues and impacts of the Review for Ngaanyatjarra Media.

Background

3. Ngaanyatjarra Media is a pioneering indigenous media organisation in the very remote Western Desert region of Western Australia, serving over 2500 Yarnangu (Ngaanyatjarra people) in 14 communities across an area of nearly 400,000 square kilometres. We aim to improve the lives of Yarnangu through the provision of appropriate media and communications services. We promote strength and unity on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands through the creation of media to express the cultural, social and political interests and concerns of the Ngaanyatjarra people. We use modern technologies to tell our own stories in our own language.
4. Ngaanyatjarra Media was established as Irrunytju Media in 1992, and was incorporated in 2002. It is managed by a Media Committee made up of representatives from the 14 communities it represents, the Chairperson of Ngaanyatjarra Council, and a Male and Female Chairperson. Ngaanyatjarra Media has a reputation for providing quality media and telecommunications services with a high degree of Yarnangu involvement and ownership. The 14 communities are Warburton, Warakurna, Tjukurla, Wanarn, Papulankutja (Blackstone), Mantamaru (Jameson), Irrunytju (Wingellina), Kiwirrkurra, Tjirrkarli, Cosmo Newberry, Patjarr, Pira-Kata (Kanpa), Tjuntjuntjara and Coonana.
5. Our activities include daily regional radio programs; video production and broadcasting - local as well as national via Indigenous Community Television; media and IT training; technical support for the region- broadcast, IT & communications; music recording and festival coordination; website development; archiving; production and distribution of cultural, educational and training programs in Ngaanyatjarra language.
6. Ngaanyatjarra Media is the primary service provider for media and communications for the Ngaanyatjarra region, with an increasing demand from the communities to

provide a broad range of services. While our primary aim is to promote Ngaanyatjarra language, culture, stories and music through video, radio and multi-media production and broadcast, Ngaanyatjarra Media also carries out the following activities:

- Training & Support- Media & IT
- Repair and Maintenance of Transmission & ICT Equipment
- Improving Access to Communications for Yarnangu
- Management of Irrunytju Telecentre
- Management of the Ngaanyatjarra regional website
- Other Projects- Archiving, Music Development, Print & IT projects

Many of these projects are funded through other State and Federal funding programs.

7. Ngaanyatjarra Media developed a Strategic Plan in 2003, outlining key infrastructure and programs that would be established to better serve the media and communications needs of the region. This has been the blueprint for our activities and development over the last 3 years. A key part of that plan was to establish a media and communications centre at Irrunytju, providing a regional hub for a Lands wide communications network, including a planned network of telecentres across the Lands. This \$1.5 million facility is currently at design stage with a planned completion date of March 2007.
8. Ngaanyatjarra Media has also played a key role in lobbying for and representing the region on the Ngaanyatjarra Lands Telecommunications Project, funded under DCITA's CCIF program and WA State and local government funding. As a result, by February 2008, six of the twelve Ngaanyatjarra communities will have broadband infrastructure comparable to metropolitan areas. This was another key project identified in the Strategic Plan, and will build capacity for a greater range of on-line and communications services and help ensure community access and ongoing viability of communities in the region.

RESPONSES TO REVIEW

Overview

1. We support the need for a Review of the Indigenous Broadcasting Program funding, and would urge that DCITA recognise the growth in the Indigenous Media Industry and seek additional funding (to the \$13.3million which has not changed since late 1990s) to enable the IBP to continue to support the development of the Industry.
2. The Review is seeking to reduce and prescribe the scope of what media organisations deliver, despite the Industry wide convergence of media and communications and cross-platform delivery of services. Ngaanyatjarra Media provides a range of services (radio & video production/ broadcast/ training/ support, telecommunications advocacy, print media, digital photography, music festival and recording, IT training and technical support and facility management, R&M etc). In most cases, we are the only organisation delivering or able to deliver these services. We recommend that DCITA take a whole of government / department approach in this Review to recognise the changing roles of the Remote Indigenous Media Organisations and fund them according the range of services they actually deliver.
3. We propose that the IBP fund needs to be split to recognise the different needs of the sectors, to have a radio stream (under the Indigenous Broadcasting Foundation model proposed by AICA) and a RIMO/RIBS stream, which includes video training, production and equipment, Technical Services, and other communications programs. This helps to clarify the differences in the activities being carried out as well as the cost of delivery of services between regional and remote areas.

Financial Impacts of the Review

4. Ngaanyatjarra Media stands to lose \$130K per year under the proposed changes in the IBP Review, made up as follows:

	<u>Loss</u>
RIMO Cap funding of \$250K (currently receiving \$312K)	\$62K
CBF funding ineligibility- currently \$47K prog + \$6-8K devt	\$54K
<u>Batchelor IMU de-funding- training delivery payment</u>	<u>\$14K</u>
<u>TOTAL LOSS FUNDING PER ANNUM</u>	<u>\$130K</u>

The current IBP funding of \$312K for 2006-7 (\$303K for 2005-6) is already not enough to meet the high costs of running a RIMO in such a remote area. There has been no CPI increase or capital funding for four years, and yet the program has expanded considerably and the costs have escalated. For 2006-7, Ngaanyatjarra Media has to generate \$66,500 just to cover the basic expenditure. Already we have had increases over the last 1-2 years in diesel costs (up by 50%),

vehicle R&M (up by over 100%), wages (up by 15%), electricity costs (new cost of over \$12K pa under a regional SRA) as well as insurance and accounting costs (up by 70%). Income generation is difficult in a region with a very low socio-economic status, no mining or pastoral industry, and limited sponsorship opportunities.

5. Additionally, Ngaanyatjarra Media has had to set up a Technical Services Unit, as proposed by IBP to provide repair and maintenance of RIBS transmission facilities and provide upgrade to these services. This Unit will cost Ngaanyatjarra Media over \$140K for 2006-7, with only \$40K of that coming from DCITA funding, the remainder from generated income. Prior to 2005, the R&M budget was a separate budget under ATSIC funding, but is now incorporated into the Operational Funding. This means that comparisons with other media organisations that do not have to supply these services are not equitable.
6. Under the proposed IBP funding, the following items are not covered under in the suggested budget breakdown:
 - Top-up wages for media workers (currently \$32K)- Meanwhile DEWR are saying that CDEP participants should be moving to full-time waged positions after one year.
 - Insurance (over \$13K), accounting (now over \$14K), rent (\$15K), and electricity (now being charged \$15K/year under Ng region SRA),
 - Capital equipment (already there has been no capital funding for over 4 years, very difficult in a new technology sector)
 - Technical equipment & supplies
 - Broadcast technician rate too low
 - No allowance for office upgrades, staff housing, replacement vehicles, equipment upgrades etc

If this Review is implemented as proposed, Ngaanyatjarra Media will have to drastically cut its programs and staffing, leaving the region with reduced access to media and communications services.

Proposal to Fund Radio Only

7. Ngaanyatjarra Media is very concerned about the proposal to change the RIMO/RIBS funding to being only for radio production & training, and no longer being responsible for video production, equipment or training. In our region, it is certainly not the case that radio production is our primary activity. Video has always been the main focus for Ngaanyatjarra Media, with the filming of Inma and Tjukurrpa a primary part of Ng Media's work in maintaining language and culture, as well as the recording of meetings, regional events & festivals, bush trips and stories. We reject this proposal outright, and suggest that splitting the IBP funding into a radio fund and a RIMO/RIBS fund would be a preferred model to recognise the difference in the activities.

8. The assumption that the video component should be taken up by the NITV funding is severely flawed. As the NITV funding is only a 4-year project, the IBP funding is effectively the only recurrent funding beyond that period and the only reliable source of funding for us. Also, without any guarantee of production funding for ICTV (cf NITV), the RIMOs may end up with no video production funding at all. Ngaanyatjarra Media is currently a key contributor to ICTV and this service will be the primary television service watched by Ngaanyatjarra people (once the ICTV transmission equipment rollout is completed), just as radio 5NPY is the primary radio service for Yarnangu.
9. The NITV funding does not cover training or equipment funding for communities, which are needed to support the development of skills and experience for remote producers. Video training is integral to video production for RIMOs. Each RIMO should have funding for both a radio and video trainer (or men and women's). Video equipment is also crucial- Ngaanyatjarra Media has had no capital funding for 4 years and has only 5 digital video cameras for 14 communities. An equipment fund for digital cameras and editing computers in each active RIBS community is desperately needed to encourage production for ICTV and NITV, as well as local broadcast.
10. NITV will provide only production funding, with a commissioning editor determining what will be funded- this may well result in remote community productions not being considered of appropriate quality or broad audience appeal to receive funding. Ngaanyatjarra Media's productions are primarily made in Ngaanyatjarra language for a local or regional audience, some with cultural content specifically for men or women's business. Our extensive collection of Inma (traditional dance) recordings is a significant part of the cultural heritage of the region, but would not have been produced if it had to be shown to a national audience. While about 50% of Ngaanyatjarra Media's productions are played on ICTV, they are often not sub-titled or suitable for viewing by a non-Indigenous audience.
11. Currently Ngaanyatjarra Media gets no specific funding for ICTV production to produce up to twelve 3-hour programs. We suggest that RIMOs receive dedicated production funding (either under IBP or the NITV production funding) to pay community media workers/producers and provide production and editing support.
12. One suggestion is that some of the NITV money could be set aside for a production budget for each RIMO for ICTV production (eg- 12mths x 6-8hrs/mth x \$2000/hr). We support the Canadian model proposed by Michael Meadows where NITV follow a commissioning model with production dollars equally distributed among all of the media organisations providing content. If we don't receive dedicated production funding, we need some guarantee of production for ICTV under the NITV funding.

Training

13. Ngaanyatjarra Media currently delivers the Certificate 3 in Broadcasting (Remote Area Operations) to up to 20 students per year in conjunction with BIITE IMU as the RTO. With the proposal of BIITE being de-funded for Lands-based delivery (approx \$40K/yr), will this funding be distributed to RIMOs to carry out delivery of accredited training? In this situation, Who will the RTO be and how will the demand for Lands-based delivery of training be supported? How will costs of student travel, TA, training staff costs, Abstudy etc be met?
14. Again we must emphasise that production in video and other communications media are a key part of the training. We do not support the training being delivered through CBF funding or CBAA where the emphasis is on radio training and the real costs of training delivery in remote areas are not recognised.

Population Band Model

15. The Population band model does not consider the differences between regional and remote sites, and the additional costs of service delivery in remote areas (travel, staffing, communication costs, meetings etc). Ngaanyatjarra Media has 14 communities covering an area of 400,000 square km, yet has a smaller regional population than many small towns that have a single radio station. Using the population band model, we would get less funding, which is ridiculous. RIMOs should have their own band and not be compared with regional radio stations. The model is also based on potential audience, not participation levels. Ngaanyatjarra Media has a very high participation rate with 30 active media workers (the highest single CDEP employer in the region) out of a population of 2000 and over 300 people receiving training or participating in media projects. All people in the region access and benefit from Ngaanyatjarra Media's range of services.
16. Several Ngaanyatjarra communities have less than 100 people yet are active media producers, and often produce some of the strongest cultural heritage material. It is not government policy to not deliver services to communities with less than 100 people (raised for discussion by Senator Vanstone only) and should not have been included in this document.

RIMO access to Community Broadcasting Fund grants

17. Applying for and receiving CBF funding for radio production and equipment is not double-dipping, as we do not get any funding specifically for radio production. This money is the only funded source of top-up wages for radio broadcasters, and has been the primary incentive to get people actively working in radio and media generally. Without top-up wages, it is very difficult to attract and keep good workers.

Share Responsibility Agreements

18. SRAs are useful for specific projects that are not covered under operational funding (such as an infrastructure project, archival or music project). This money should come from non-IBP funds.
19. Ngaanyatjarra Media already has a shared responsibility approach to its work, with good governance and management practices, income generation to meet shortfalls in funding, and significant training, employment and media production outcomes. We work in line with a Strategic Plan and the Ngaanyatjarra Community Plans developed in 2005. We would, however, encourage more flexible guidelines for funding that recognise the range of activities actually being delivered, in line with regional planning and needs assessment, rather than being overly prescriptive.

Employment

20. Ngaanyatjarra Media supports AICA's promotion of Indigenous staffing. However, this requires a commitment by DCITA to ensure appropriate training and support is put into place to enable this to occur, as well as building flexibility into employment conditions to allow for cultural and social commitments for Yarnangu. It is not good enough to expect Yarnangu to work in the same way as non- Yarnangu, nor to have the same level of education & training, Industry experience or understanding of government systems for funding and policy. The tools of media and communications require training & experience in order to become proficient and able to pass these skills on to others, the skills of cross-cultural management require even more experience. It is important to recognise the cultural knowledge, language skills and appropriate ways of making media. A more appropriate model to reach this point is the "malpa" system, which has a co-worker alongside each non-Indigenous staff member.
21. Ngaanyatjarra Media is wanting to establish a full-time position in each community for a media and communications worker, as per our Strategic Plan. This requires funding to be sourced for wages for up to 14 positions. In conjunction with IRCA and the other RIMOs, we are developing job descriptions for 3 levels of media worker positions. We recommend a Remote Indigenous Media employment strategy, funded by DCITA.
22. With the CDEP changes being made by DEWR, there is a requirement for the other Government departments to provide employment opportunities for Indigenous people, particularly in remote communities where opportunities for employment are very limited. DCITA can play an active role as part of this review to provide stepping stones for RIBS media workers to manage their own facilities, provide other communications services, and develop skills to move into full-time staff roles in their communities.