



REVIEW OF THE INDIGENOUS BROADCASTING PROGRAM

APRIL 2006

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS,
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS

Submission by



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AICA
PO Box 4235
AINSLIE ACT 2602
Chief Executive Officer
Mr Patrick Malone
PHONE: (02) 62421367
MOBILE: 0400 480 121
EMAIL: patrick@aica.asn.au

INTRODUCTION:

The Australian Indigenous Communications Association (AICA) is the peak body representing Indigenous community controlled communications organisations and Indigenous individuals who are actively involved in the media, entertainment, information and communications industry in Australia.

Background to this Respose Paper

In April 2006, the Department of Communications Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) released the Discussion Paper on the Review of the Indigenous Broadcasting Program. A formal response from the Indigenous Broadcasting and Communications Sector and other Stakeholders were sought by 30 June 2006.

This paper represents the collective views of AICA members who have participated in the DCITA consultation forum held on 27 April 2006 and subsequent industry Working Group meetings convened by AICA.

General Overview and Response

AICA welcomes this review and sees it as a tool, which can help to focus upon and overcome a funding crisis being experienced in the Indigenous broadcasting sector.

AICA believes that current IBP funding is totally inadequate for the size and complexity of the Indigenous broadcasting and communication industry of this country. AICA does not accept DCITA's position that the IBP will (or should) remain at existing inadequate levels. IBP funding has continued to reduce, in real terms, having been pegged at \$13.3m since the late 1990s. Since 1981, the indigenous broadcasting sector has grown from 1 licensed radio station to 25 radio stations, 150 Remote Indigenous Broadcasters (RIBS) narrowcast licenses, one commercial television station, several information communication technology (ICT) companies and hundreds of film and television production personnel.

It is worthy to note that the Governments IBP had been implemented only in the early 1990's following the specific Recommendations from the Royal Commission Into The Deaths Of Aboriginal Deaths In Custody (RCIADIC) that acknowledged the need for the development of Indigenous controlled media service that would address the inequity of access to media services being experienced by indigenous people in having their own voice and to enable indigenous issues to be aired and understood by all Australians.

This position was also addressed in the subsequent Productivity Commission Hearings which had focussed on issues of Indigenous Disadvantage. This

matter continues to be reported upon by Governments of the day and the levels of Indigenous Disadvantage continues to be of concern for all.

Given these facts and given and the acknowledgement within the Review Discussion Paper itself of the stagnant level (no increase) of the IPB Program funding since the late 1990's, AICA contends that it is unsustainable and unfair to continuously spread existing inadequate Indigenous broadcasting funding over an ever increasing number of broadcasting services. This can only lead to a reduction in the quality of services being delivered to Indigenous communities. A similar deterioration would result if this funding policy was applied to other rapidly expanding non-Indigenous government sectors, such as the public hospital system.

The Indigenous sector notes that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) received more than \$800m in government appropriations in 2005/06 while the Special Broadcasting Services (SBS) received \$162m in government appropriations in 2005. The \$13m received by the total Indigenous broadcasting sector through the IBP is paltry in comparison, reflecting the low priority given to Australia's first peoples.

It is also prudent to point out that without the existence of many Indigenous community controlled broadcasting services infrastructure, particularly in remote parts of the country, radio and television services simply would not exist or be in reach for people living in these areas. This includes the Commercial services and those of the ABC and SBS.

Hence the Indigenous Sector, for these parts of the country, is the only means in providing essential and primary broadcasting and information services for people in these areas.

In order to maintain these services proper and adequate levels of funding and recognition must be given to deliver and maintain such services.

It must also be pointed out that the Indigenous Broadcasting and Communications Sector is also the means to develop as an industry that is contributing and improving the Social and Economic situation for indigenous people.

AICA recommends that DCITA urgently seek Australian Government support to immediately increase the Indigenous Broadcasting Program (IBP) to \$30 million per annum to meet existing needs, with annual increases over 5 years in IBP funding until 50% of SBS's annual appropriation (currently \$142m) is realised.

AICA believes that DCITA needs to initiate a whole-of-government approach with other relevant State and Commonwealth government agencies for the provision of Indigenous Broadcasting.

Response to Specific Discussion Paper Questions

AICA feels that there are strong arguments to justify funding for broadcasting under the IBP on a multi-year basis. Funding provided to broadcasting organisations should be on a triennial basis to allow medium term strategic planning to be developed and implemented. Currently funding is provided on an annual basis with no guarantee of funding in subsequent years. This stifles development and medium term strategic planning.

Discussion question B1.2.2 refers

AICA recommends that new capital funding of \$5m per year be allocated to the IBP to overcome the lack of IBP capital funding provided to organisations over the past 10 years and to ensure that infrastructure, buildings and equipment comply with current industry standards. The fund proposed by DCITA in the discussion paper is inadequate for these purposes and needs to be increased. **Discussion question B1.2.3 refers.**

AICA feels that the definition of “Broadcasting” in the DCITA discussion paper is illogical and poorly conceived. The broadcasting and communications Industries are rapidly moving towards convergence of radio, video, online, multimedia, and communications on a multi-platform basis. DCITA’s proposal to separate radio from audio visual flies in the face of industry trends towards convergence, is retrograde and fails to recognise how media and communications services are delivered to our communities. **Discussion question B4.1 (d) refers.**

AICA supports the establishment of an Indigenous Broadcasting Foundation (IBF) to manage and administer all government funding to the Indigenous sector. This has been a goal of the Indigenous Broadcasting and communications sector for many years and represents the only mechanism to receive the recognition and funding support that the sector deserves.

AICA recommends that DCITA and the Australian Government support the establishment of an Indigenous Broadcasting Foundation (IBF) to fund, manage and administer the Indigenous Broadcasting and Communications industry. The IBP should be transferred from DCITA to the new IBF to administer, upon its establishment. **Discussion question B.3.1 refers**

AICA is strongly opposed to the proposed funding model based on population on the grounds that it is a fundamentally flawed and unworkable formula. This model does not provide for a more equitable distribution of funds nor does it adequately recognise the variety of services provided by Indigenous broadcasting or the differing expectations of community audiences receiving these services. AICA believes that it would be far more equitable if funding

decisions were nationally focussed, based on the actual services that broadcasters provide to Indigenous people in their respective licence area, and on measurable outcomes as detailed in the main body of this response.

Discussion questions B1.2.1 and B4.1 (a) & (c) refers.

All organisations funded should run on sound financial principles and appropriate governance, which should be encapsulated in the IBF funding conditions. **Discussion question B4.1 (b) refers.**

Activities such as training and recording festivals stories, customs and traditions are core activities and are essential services delivered by Indigenous Organisations. Training and recording traditional stories and festivals are essential programs for Indigenous Broadcasters to produce and broadcast to their footprint area. These activities should be funded as key activities through IBP. This should be accommodated within the increased funding levels proposed above. **Discussion questions B1.2.4 and B1.2.5 refer.**

AICA does not support the proposed defunding of audio-visual content within the IBP. AICA calls upon DCITA to reverse their proposed policy decision and audio-visual content to be funded through the IBP.

*AICA recommends that DCITA approve an allocation of funds within the IBP for local radio and television content production for RIBS separate from NITV funding. **Discussion question B2.3.3 refers.***

AICA also believes that news services should be funded on a state or regional basis. **Discussion question 4.1(g) refers.**

AICA believes that RIMO's should manage RIBS funding at a regional level. The RIMO concept has very strong merits in ensuring that our RIBS services are provided a focussed and consistent level of financial, operational and technical support. It will enable better training co-ordination and outcomes. AICA recommends that such an arrangement should only be initiated with the approval of each RIBS community, which is then formalised in a MOU between each RIBS community and RIMOs. This model therefore cannot be applied universally and needs to be flexible on a regional basis. The operation and maintenance of radio/television transmitters on communities should be managed by RIMOs who should be properly funded through the IBP to manage this task. **Discussion questions B2.1.1, B2.3.1 and B2.3.2 refers.**

AICA is extremely concerned with the recently announced changes to CDEP, which will see all workers who have been employed on CDEP for twelve months being removed from CDEP. This will result in virtually all Indigenous broadcasters in remote and regional communities becoming unemployed, unless DCITA and the Australian Government provide non-CDEP funding to maintain their employment. DCITA needs to urgently address this issue with DEWR and other relevant government agencies, if this disaster is to be averted. **Discussion questions C1.1.2, C1.2.1, C1.2.2, C1.2.3 refers.**

Training in the media and communications industries has proved beneficial to building Indigenous capacity and employment. Winding back such opportunities will be detrimental to Indigenous economic growth of many communities and will decimate Indigenous broadcasting in these regions.

AICA recommends that the DCITA in conjunction with DEWR and other relevant government agencies develop a whole-of-government training and employment plan for the Indigenous broadcasting and communications industry to address potential problems arising from changes to CDEP and to ensure training and full time employment (in place of CDEP) for Indigenous broadcasters and RIBS trainees. This plan should also be an Indigenous technicians training strategy implemented and funded under IBP. **Discussion questions C1.1, C1.1.2, C1.2.1, C1.2.3, C1.3.1 and C1.4.1 refers.**

AICA recognises that planning for the new digital environment is proceeding and recommends that DCITA involve AICA in consultations leading to the drafting of plans for digital radio and television services.

In terms of the proposed changes to the funding arrangements between the IBP and CBF aimed at 'clarifying roles and eliminating overlap and the possibility of double dipping of funds', AICA and its members feel completely insulted by this proposition and completely reject it. **Discussion question B3.1 refers.**

IBP has not provided capital funding to most established Indigenous organisations for the past 10 years. The CBF is the only alternative of funds available to Indigenous broadcasters for capital equipment and payment for radio programming produced by independent and RIBS operators.

AICA recommends that DCITA discard its policy proposal to prevent Indigenous broadcasters accessing CBF funds for capital and content production until IBP funds are increased to \$30m per year, as recommended by AICA in this paper.

AICA notes that DCITA envisages SRAs being an important means of Indigenous broadcasting organisations receiving support from state and commonwealth governments. To date, AICA members have found the process of preparing SRAs and getting them considered and approved, both frustrating and cumbersome. SRAs have promised much and delivered little. The whole process needs to be streamlined and AICA calls upon DCITA to initiate a whole-of-government solution to fixing the SRA process. **Discussion question C.1.2.4 and C.2.3.1 refers.**

In terms of the reviews question regarding NIRS' membership AICA believes that this is outside the scope of this review as NIRS does not receive IBP funds for its general operations. Also the issue of NIRS membership is a matter for the Indigenous media sector alone.

Discussion question C2.2.1 refers.

It is recommended that DCITA recognise and appreciate the importance of AICA and provide triennial funding commensurate with that received by other national representative bodies in the media industry. This will allow AICA to best serve the interests of its members. **Discussion question C2.1.1 refers.**

Detailed Responses to the IBP Review:

1. IBP funding is historically inadequate:

AICA believes that Indigenous Australians should have equal right of access to the full range of communications available to all Australians. In meeting this objective, Government must be prepared to adequately fund the Indigenous broadcasting and communications industry..

These rights are encapsulated in The Broadcasting Services Act 1992 (Cth) which includes as one of its unaltered Objects in Section 3 (1) (n):

“To ensure the maintenance and, where possible, the development of diversity, including public, community and Indigenous broadcasting, in the Australian broadcasting service in the transition to digital broadcasting.”

The Department of Communications Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) now has the responsibility to administer and fund Indigenous broadcasting. AICA believes that the Department is failing to adequately address Indigenous needs by not providing required funding to the sector.

This is highlighted by the fact that there has been no increase in the ATSI/ATSIS/DCITA Indigenous Broadcasting Program (IBP) budget, which has been pegged at \$13.3 million since late 1990's. This crisis is also compounded by the fact that there has not been any CPI increase, resulting in a real reduction in funding to the Indigenous sector.

The Indigenous broadcasting industry has grown from one licensed community radio station in 1981 to 25 licensed stations in 2006. Some 155 Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services (RIBS) (mainly operating under narrowcast licences), compliment these regional and urban Indigenous community radio stations. AICA is concerned that this extraordinary growth has not been complimented by a corresponding growth in funding. AICA contends that it is unsustainable and unfair to continuously spread existing inadequate Indigenous broadcasting funding over an ever increasing number of broadcasting services. This can only lead to a reduction in the quality of services being delivered to Indigenous communities. A similar deterioration would result if this funding policy was applied to other rapidly expanding non-Indigenous government sectors, such as the public hospital system.

The Indigenous sector notes that the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) received more than \$800m in government appropriations in 2005/06 while the Special Broadcasting Services (SBS) received \$162m in 2005. The \$13m received by the total Indigenous broadcasting sector through the IBP is paltry in comparison, reflecting the low priority given to Australia's first peoples.

Australia seriously lags behind Canada, New Zealand, Wales and Spain in promoting and supporting the growth of Indigenous broadcasting and communications.

While we accept that the Indigenous sector is unlikely to achieve the same level of funding granted to SBS, AICA anticipates that the results of this review will demonstrate the massive funding deficiencies and encourage DCITA to proactively seek increased funding levels to achieve a degree of relativity with the funding of Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), that is sufficient to meet the real demands of the Indigenous-broadcasting sector.

The discussion paper presented by DCITA does not adequately acknowledge the policy and social framework on which Indigenous broadcasting was established in this country. Important objectives underpinning Indigenous broadcasting include the promotion and protection of culture, the maintenance and protection of languages and the ability to inform and entertain our communities. Information provided to our communities by Indigenous broadcasters performs an essential service and in many ways Indigenous radio and television are the only ways that communities access information.

The discussion paper neglects to mention the important milestones in the policy framework on which the IBP was framed. First of all, there is no mention of the 1984 Review and its report "**Out of the Silent Land**" that established the original Government framework for funding Indigenous broadcasting. There is no mention of the recommendations of the "**Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Report**" that recognised the important role Indigenous broadcasting plays in the daily lives of Indigenous communities and individuals. DCITA needs to recognise that there have been a number of reviews and reports that has established the current policy and funding framework. These reports clearly articulate the important contribution of Indigenous media to the fabric of Indigenous and Australian culture.

DCITA should develop a whole of government approach with other relevant State and Commonwealth government agencies for the provision of Indigenous Broadcasting. Indigenous broadcasting services are diverse in the issues they cover and in the services they deliver. Services are delivered on behalf of many Commonwealth and State Government agencies. At this time DCITA is the only body charged with funding Indigenous broadcasting. DCITA should examine what are the expectations of other agencies (including education, health and customs) of Indigenous broadcasters to identify other funding sources, which are or may be available to support the sector.

AICA believes that Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRA's) be developed in a way that engages a focus that involves a broader set of players who will benefit from such a service.

Recommendation 1: That DCITA and the Australian Government recognise that the existing funding levels in the IBP are totally inadequate for a vibrant and strong Indigenous Broadcasting and Communications Industry and should be increased to accommodate the exponential growth in the industry

Recommendation 2: That DCITA and the Australian Government recognise that Indigenous Media and communications are a right and a primary service for Indigenous communities.

Recommendation 3: That DCITA and the Australian government support the Indigenous Broadcasting Program (IBP) being immediately increased to \$30 million per annum to meet existing needs, with annual increases in IBP funding until 50% of SBS's annual appropriation (currently \$142m) is realised.

Recommendation 4: That DCITA develop a whole of government approach with other relevant State and Commonwealth government agencies for the provision of Indigenous Broadcasting.

2. Establishment of an Indigenous Broadcasting Foundation:

AICA supports the establishment of an Indigenous Broadcasting Foundation (IBF) to manage and administer all government funding to the Indigenous sector. This has been a goal of the Indigenous Broadcasting and communications sectors for many years and represents the only mechanism that will deliver the recognition and funding support it deserves.

Recommendation 5: That DCITA and the Australian Government support the establishment of an Indigenous Broadcasting Foundation (IBF) to fund, manage and administer the Indigenous Broadcasting and Communications industry.

3. Equalisation of funding with similar population band sizes

AICA is strongly opposed to the proposed funding model based on population on the grounds that it is fundamentally flawed and an unworkable formula. This model does not provide for a more equitable distribution of funds nor does it adequately recognise the variety of services provided by Indigenous broadcasting or the differing expectations of community audiences receiving these services. AICA believes that it would be far more equitable if funding decisions were nationally focussed, based on the actual services that

broadcasters provide to Indigenous people in their respective licence area, and on measurable outcomes.

The population-based model fails to consider the types of services provided or the geographical landscape the sector works in. The model fails to recognise that the costs of running the same broadcasting service are fundamentally the same regardless of population. There are still the same staffing structure and costs and although there may be variances in transmission costs (particularly satellite transmission into large licence areas) and outgoings (particularly for remote locations), the base staffing structure and operational costs are similar.

The population-based model equally does not recognise that there are also large numbers of non-Indigenous listeners of Indigenous radio services throughout Australia. AICA and Indigenous broadcasters see this as a way of removing barriers, bringing communities together and as an effective tool for reconciliation. The model also does not recognise that many people, outside of licensed footprint areas, listen to Indigenous radio services, due to fortuitous reception.

The funding should reflect the services provided with actual and potential measurable outcomes including:

- Number of hours of live broadcast
- Number of Indigenous language and culturally appropriate radio programs
- Number of language programs produced
- Number of Languages broadcast
- Number of programs produced educating Indigenous Australians about a range of health, legal, family, violence, education and housing services available to them
- Number of Indigenous employees
- Number of Indigenous trainees
- Number of volunteers
- Number of news and current affair programs
- Number of radio programs distributed to other Indigenous radio stations
- Number of Sponsors
- Number of Listeners – both Indigenous and Non Indigenous
- The number of youth programs
- The number of children's programs
- The number of Indigenous people employed by the service

Recommendation 6:

That DCITA discard the funding model, which is based on population in favour of an outcome based model as detailed above.

4. Defunding of Audio-Visual Projects:

AICA does not support the proposed defunding of audio-visual content within the IBP.

The stakeholders note that DCITA only anticipates responses from “Indigenous radio broadcasting organisations” and further note that none of the direct questions posed by DCITA within the paper relate to the proposed closing down of support to audio-visual programs.

The principal philosophical change to the IBP causes considerable concern to our members as summarised on page 10 of the discussion paper.

“A focus on funding radio broadcasting and excluding audio visual components previously funded (underpinning this proposal is the limited funding to meet present demand within the IBP as it is expected that support for audio-visual content will now be addressed through the new ITV program)”

The definition of “Broadcasting” in the DCITA paper is illogical and poorly conceived. Industry trends are moving towards convergence of radio, video, online, multimedia, and communications on a multi-platform basis. Any move to separate radio from audio visual flies in the face of industry trends towards convergence, is retrograde and fails to recognise how media and communications services are delivered to our communities.

Video needs to be included in IBP and its value needs to be recognised as a tool for recording and maintaining cultural heritage, language and provide multi skilling in Indigenous media for both video and radio. Multiskilling in a multiplatform environment are standard practices in mainstream media.

The DCITA discussion paper has assumed that the ITV (now known as the National Indigenous Television Service (NITV)) will take over responsibility for Indigenous audio-visual product even though its funding is only guaranteed for the next 4 years. The DCITA paper does not address the issue that no funding will exist for the production of audio-visual products should NITV funding cease after 4 years.

Importantly, this policy shift away from the audio-visual industry was not identified when the government supported the NITV service. Furthermore, the proposed changes to the IBP come some light months after the announcement of NITV and subsequently have not been incorporated into NITV planning.

To equate the proposed changes in the discussion paper to a situation where the FFC or Film Australia received an additional injection of funding in the last federal budget, and the Film Finance Corporation and the Australian Film

Television and Radio School funds were reduced accordingly. To do this would be to the detriment of the services they provide. This is similarly the case with the Indigenous Media sector.

Whilst NITV will clearly increase video production funds nationally, it may not be able to meet capital, operational and training shortfalls identified in the policy shift and the shortage of IBP funding.

It seems that DCITA through the IBP is taking advantage of the introduction of NITV to free up further funds for radio without considering the detrimental effects on the audio-visual industry which the IBP should equally support.

The stakeholders acknowledge new NITV funds will result in an increase in video production nationwide. However the demands of the broader NITV program schedule cannot replace the needs for communities to produce local video programs for their distinct and unique communities in terms of ceremonial, oral history and other cultural maintenance programs.

The stakeholders welcome the suggestion in the discussion paper that the IBP might continue to support community-based production for local community and ICTV consumption. Previous funding for production has been inconsistent or non-existent for the RIMO's and RIBS operators and this needs to be significantly increased. The stakeholders support the proposal for an ongoing community production fund to be supported and maintained through the IBP. This fund should be available to communities nationwide.

Recommendation 7: That DCITA reverse their proposed policy decision and audio-visual content to be funded through the IBP.

Recommendation 8: That training and recording festivals stories, customs and traditions are core activities and are essential services delivered by Indigenous Broadcast Organisations... These activities should be funded as key activities through IBP.

5. Proposal to administer RIBS funding through RIMOs:

AICA believes that RIMO's should manage RIBS funding at a regional level. The RIMO concept has very strong merits in ensuring that our RIBS services are provided a focussed and consistent level of financial, operational and technical support. It will enable better training co-ordination and outcomes.

AICA believes that such an arrangement should only be initiated with the approval of each RIBS community and formalised in a MOU between each RIBS community and RIMOs. This model therefore cannot be applied universally and needs to be flexible on a regional basis.

However, RIMOs need to be properly resourced to enable them to deliver a professional level of technical and other support. To enable the RIBS to fully realise their potential there should be a full operational and technical

assessment carried out on each RIBS community. This will inform RIMOs and DCITA of technical, operational, maintenance, training and infrastructure requirements needed to enable each RIBS to reach its potential. Funding from DCITA and the IBP is the only funding source available for this.

It is felt that every RIBS needs categorisation as to whether they are:

- An aspirant
- Retransmission Facility
- Producer and Broadcaster of local content

The allocation of funds to each RIBS can then be determined dependent on the broadcasting activities they perform, rather than on a blanket pro rata basis.

Recommendation 9: That DCITA adopt as policy, the administration of RIBS funding through RIMO's, subject to an MOU between each RIMO and RIBS community.

Recommendation 10: That DCITA fund a full operational, technical and infrastructure assessment for each RIBS.

Recommendation 11: That DCITA consult with each RIMO's as to how they will take responsibility for RIBS that are not functioning at full capacity and clearly define and fund the infrastructure and capital needs of the each RIBS community and the added administrative requirements that will be placed on RIMOs.

6. Production of RIBS Content:

Local content in RIBS communities is not necessarily intended for a wider audience and should be made available for both radio and television content.

Provisions for such an allocation of funds in the IBP would ensure that each RIB service are able to access funds to cover costs for producing content for either radio or television broadcasts.

Recommendation 12: That DCITA approve an allocation of funds within the IBP for local radio and television content production for RIBS separate from NITV funding.

7. Employment through the CDEP program:

DCITA needs to recognise that there are vast differences between the general community broadcasting sector and the Indigenous-broadcasting sector. The general community-broadcasting sector is based on volunteerism where as

for Indigenous workers in Indigenous radio stations this is their main income-producing job and often the only employment opportunity..

There appears to be a perception that Indigenous people do not need permanently funded positions and that the Indigenous broadcasting industry will be held together by CDEP. Many Indigenous media employees are employed under CDEP alone or CDEP is being used as a subsidy to support full-time positions within organisations.

One statistic that is overwhelmingly apparent is that the Indigenous broadcasting sector has been held together by CDEP wages and there are instances where some Indigenous broadcasting workers have been on CDEP for the last 15 years. The situation exists where Indigenous broadcasting trainees have gained tertiary qualifications only to return to their communities to work for the dole (CDEP). The commitment to the development of the Indigenous broadcasting industry and their local communities has to be both recognised and applauded.

On the other hand due to the inadequate funding of organisations the Indigenous Media sector has had to utilise CDEP funds to subsidise the wages component of their budget. The changes to CDEP will impact on these organisations as early as October 2006 where every existing CDEP participant will be required to register for the Job Network. Therefore, as a consequence of registering, if employment is found through the Job Network, the participant will be required to take the offered position irrespective of already being employed through their media organisation. Many experienced Indigenous media employees could be forced to make a career change irrespective of their desire to work in the Indigenous media industry.

However, CDEP was never meant to be a permanent form of employment – it was developed as a stop gap measure, which would exist until real jobs were funded. Departments need to develop innovative strategies to facilitate full time employment. A very good example of this can be seen in the 2006 budget papers where an initiative of the Department of Health with the assistance of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) converted over 100 Indigenous Health Workers CDEP positions into fully funded positions. DCITA should institute a similar initiative.

Another major concern to AICA are the recently publicised changes to CDEP, which will see all workers who have been employed on CDEP for twelve months being removed from CDEP. This will result in virtually all Indigenous broadcasters in remote communities becoming unemployed unless DCITA and the Australian Government is able to provide non-CDEP funding to maintain their employment. DCITA needs to urgently address this issue with DEWR and other relevant government agencies if this disaster is to be averted.

Training in the media and communications industries has proved beneficial to building Indigenous capacity and employment. Winding back such

opportunities will be detrimental to Indigenous economic growth of many communities and will decimate indigenous broadcasting in these regions.

Recommendation 13: That DCITA seeks to ensure that it has adequate funding to ensure that a similar conversion can be made in the Indigenous-broadcasting sector as was done in Indigenous health.

RECOMMENDATION 14: That DCITA in consultation with AICA convene meetings with DEWR and other government to develop a whole-of-government solution to address the adverse impacts of the recent changes to the CDEP program.

Recommendation 15: That the IBP budget includes \$5 million for the conversion of CDEP places to fulltime wages and \$2 million for training initiatives.

8. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Employment and Training within the Indigenous Media industry has certainly grown and developed tremendously with both individuals and organisations being nationally and internationally recognised for their achievements and dedication to the media industry as a whole. However, this growth and development has occurred despite the ad hoc approach by government agencies and the ever changing policies. A national employment and training plan is required to ensure the Indigenous Media industry is sustainable and is able to meet the needs of the Indigenous communities and Australia as a whole.

However, the IBP review does not take into consideration the following:

1. Career and training pathways
2. No recognition for the training needs of Indigenous media practitioners.
3. The Indigenous Media Organisations Award has not been reviewed for a number of years and the salary levels are extremely low in comparison to the rest of the Australian media industry.
4. The IBP review document disregards the need for both radio and video trainers for RIBS. The review document only allows 1 training officer per RIMO who would only provide training in radio. There is no recognition that Indigenous people need to be multi skilled on the pure basis that their workplace requires this skill level. Also culturally there needs to be recognition that in many instances separate trainers for men and women is required.

Whilst the rest of the world looks for opportunities for multi skilling in an environment of media conversion, the IBP proposes a wind back of the current environment where Indigenous media has a long history of building capacity in both radio and video.

Page 23 of the discussion paper indicated that the trainer who previously provided radio and video training will now be restricted to providing radio training alone. This suggests a reduction of Indigenous capacity across the industry.

It fails to recognise that existing certificate courses in broadcasting (remote operations) skill students in all areas of media production and provide a Vocational Employment and Training (VET) qualification.

Without video training available in a culturally appropriate manner in remote communities, there will be a reduction in the skilled personnel available. This will impact upon the production needs of both the NITV and ICTV schedule, which is against the interest of both services the government has pledged to support.

Recommendation 16: That the IBP consider thoroughly the broader implications of training in media production to meet the multi skilling needs of RIBS operators.

Recommendation 17: That the DCITA develop a strategy for the IBP that provides solutions and ensures that there is full time employment provided for Indigenous broadcasters and RIBS trainees.

The whole of government approach needs to support an employment, training and career structure within the Indigenous media industry. One area of particular need to be addressed is in relation to the provision of technical services to Indigenous communities and organisations. A scheme should be implemented to establish traineeships for Indigenous technicians.

In early 2005 the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs initiated an Inquiry into Indigenous employment.

The terms of reference required recommendations as to ways that the government inform future policy development and assess what significant factors have contributed to those positive outcomes identified including what contribution practical reconciliation has made.

In line with the proposal submitted to the Standing Committee by CAAMA, AICA believes that the leaders of Australia need to commit to meeting its primary objective of improving Indigenous employment prospects of Indigenous Australians particularly those in remote and regional Australia by:

Consolidating all current Indigenous employment and training programs into one department for easy access by organisations and companies.

Develop a National Indigenous employment strategy, which would include:

- Three year on the job Indigenous training
- Three year accredited training

- Funding for trainees to obtain specialised accredited training
- Allowance for Indigenous mentors for the Indigenous trainees
- Flexible programs as long as milestones and outcomes are achieved
- Outcomes from the strategy are to move participants from CDEP into open meaningful training and full time employment.
- Increase CDEP allowance.
- Increase in traineeship/apprenticeship wages.

The programme needs to overcome the significant barriers faced by Indigenous people including:

- Promoting innovation and proactive forms of support that help retain Indigenous people in jobs
- Improving recruitment into project and high quality mentoring programs which improve take up and retention and assist employers
- Encouraging new employers to participate in the strategy
- Educate employees of the social economic and cultural issues faced by Indigenous people and offer support to these employees

Recommendation 18: We recommend DCITA follow up with the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs to see what stage the Inquiry into Indigenous employment is at and to implement the new policy.

9. Community Broadcasting Foundation Funding:

In terms of the proposed changes to the funding arrangements between the IBP and CBF aimed at 'clarifying roles and eliminating overlap and the possibility of double dipping of funds', AICA and its members feel completely insulted by this proposition and completely reject it.

DCITA through the IBP has not provided capital funding to many established Indigenous organisations for the past 10 years. The CBF is the only alternative funding source Indigenous broadcasters can go for payment of broadcasters, capital and operation dollar for radio programming in RIBS.

Recommendation 19: That DCITA discard its policy proposal to prevent Indigenous broadcasters accessing CBF funds for capital and content production.

10. TRIENNIAL IBP FUNDING:

IBP should commit to triennial funding.

ABC, SBS, Australia Council and Film Finance Corporation receive triennial funding which provides them with long term planning.

The tri annual funding goes a long way to partner a more confident level of service delivery.

It will also enable better planning and even reduce operational costs i.e. lease of equipment could be reduced where you can negotiate better processes over a longer than one year basis.

11. ESTABLISHMENT OF AN IBP CAPITAL FUND:

AICA believes that a capital fund be established within IBP and recommends that \$5m/year be set aside for that purpose.

This capital fund should be managed by the proposed Indigenous Broadcasting Foundation and should become an integral part of the IBP until the IBF is established. .

Recommendation 20: That DCITA approve a capital fund of \$5m per year within IBP to provide for the capital requirement of the Indigenous broadcasting industry.

12. Funding of AICA:

For AICA to reach its full potential and have greater effectiveness as a national representative and sector lobby group there must firstly be recognition by DCITA of the important role AICA provides.

It needs to be fully recognised that the position AICA has within the Indigenous-broadcasting sector enables AICA to effectively carry out its roles and responsibilities while still serving the interests and equitable resourcing of the sector.

AICA should be provided funding commensurate with that received by other national representative bodies in the media industry.

Recommendation 21: It is recommended that DCITA recognise and appreciate the importance of AICA and provide triennial funding commensurate with that received by other national representative bodies in the media industry. This will allow AICA to best serve the interests of its members.

13 SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AGREEMENTS (SRAs):

AICA notes that DCITA envisages SRAs being an important means for Indigenous broadcasting organisations receiving support from state and commonwealth governments.

To date all AICA members have found the process of preparing SRAs and getting them considered and approved quite frustrating and cumbersome. SRAs have promised much and delivered little.

The whole process needs to be streamlined and AICA calls upon DCITA to initiate a whole-of-government solution to fixing the SRA process.

Recommendation 22: that DCITA initiate a whole-of-government solution to streamline and overcome the problems associated with SRA's and RPA's.

14. National Indigenous Radio Service:

In terms of the reviews question regarding NIRS' membership AICA believes that this is outside the scope of this review as NIRS does not receive IBP funds for its general operations. Also the issue of NIRS membership is a matter for the Indigenous media sector alone.

