

# **“The Indigenous Communications Sector”**

## **An Essential Service Provider**

The Indigenous Communications Sector is the single essential service provider in the whole Australian communications environment that provides information about services that are essential to Indigenous Australians in a linguistically and culturally appropriate manner.

The Indigenous Communications Sector provides essential services in the form of gathering and distributing relevant and timely information in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout Australia.

The Indigenous owned and operated radio, television, film, video, multimedia and print outlets provide information regarding education, employment, health, government information awareness strategies for Indigenous peoples, training, personal and public safety awareness messages, and many other essential services.

The Indigenous Communications Sector is extensive. It comprises:

- ◆ Over 100 permanently licensed community radio stations. Eighty-two of these outlets (the Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme – BRACS) are the only permanently licensed community television stations in Australia.
- ◆ A further 40 broadcasting groups seeking permanent community radio licenses.
- ◆ One commercial television station – Imparja Television, Alice Springs and commercial radio station, Yamitji Media, Carnarvon, WA.
- ◆ Over 50 film, video and multimedia producers, and
- ◆ One national and a large number of regional and local newspapers.

Collectively, the Indigenous Communications Sector is the largest single linguistically and culturally specific sector within the whole Australian communications sector. There are no other broadcasting, media or communications groups that can cost-effectively or appropriately deliver the comprehensive range of essential services the Indigenous Communications Sector delivers daily to Indigenous Australians.

The National Indigenous Media Association of Australia – the peak body of the Indigenous Communications Sector – argues that the Indigenous Communications Sector:

1. Is the only distinct broadcasting group that cost-effectively, culturally and linguistically provides essential service information to Indigenous Australians.
2. Usage of broadcasting spectrum ensures diversity of control of broadcasting services.
3. Ensures that broadcast programming content reflects the whole diversity of community values, interests and cultures and which fosters an Australian identity and character.
4. Maintains access and equity for Indigenous Australians to community-licensed broadcasting services in urban, regional and remote Australia.
5. Maintains the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, cultures and heritages.
6. Requires Government funding to help with the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting, and
7. Fosters and enhances reconciliation between all Australians.