



Australian Government

**Department of Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts**

TALKING WITH THE WHOLE MOB

Review of the Indigenous Broadcasting Program



April 2006

The Australian Government is reviewing the operation of the Indigenous Broadcasting Program (IBP) to ensure that it benefits as many communities as possible.

You can help shape the future of the Program by making a submission on the issues outlined in this pamphlet. Please note that submissions close on 30 June 2006.

About the IBP

The IBP began in 1987 as BRACS (Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme). Over the years the program has widened its scope and today there are 85 organisations funded under the IBP. These include RIBS (Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services) and their associated coordinating/hub organisations and urban and capital city broadcasters.

In many areas, organisations use IBP grants together with funds provided for broadcasting under the CDEP (Community Development Employment Program) and other sources.

Since the Australian Government changed the arrangements for the administration of Indigenous affairs in July 2004, the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) has managed the IBP.

Why a review?

The level of funding for Indigenous broadcasting has remained relatively unchanged since the late 1990s. However, the demand for support under the IBP has recently reached more than twice the level of the available funding. Over the years, some broadcasters have succeeded in gaining significantly more funding than others that serve equal or larger populations.

In addition, a number of differences have developed in the priorities of broadcasting organisations and the types of activities supported with IBP funding.

This review is separate from the Indigenous Television Review of August 2005.

The discussion paper

DCITA has produced a discussion paper—*Review of the Australian Government Indigenous Broadcasting Program*—that outlines a number of proposed changes to the IBP. It includes discussion on the current disparities in funding for different organisations.

The discussion paper is available from Indigenous Coordination Centres or online at www.dcita.gov.au/indig/indigenous_broadcasting/ibp_review



What will change?

The main purpose of the IBP is to increase the number of Indigenous-specific radio and television broadcasts available to Indigenous audiences. To achieve this, the discussion paper proposes some changes to funding for Indigenous broadcasters.

These changes will:

- establish a pattern of funding that reflects the size of the populations served by each broadcaster, taking into account the different needs of capital cities and regional and remote areas;
- provide further transparency to the funding process; and
- increase the opportunities for new Indigenous broadcasting services.

A new funding model

The new model proposes to group together broadcasting services of a similar kind that reach similar population sizes.

Over time, the IBP would seek to find a common operational funding level in each group—perhaps leading to increases for some services and decreases for others.

However, the fundamental aim of the IBP—to support broadcasting services in remote areas—must continue to be met.

The discussion paper also raises questions about:

- providing funds for capital expenditure on a competitive basis;
- providing a pool of funds, offered on a competitive basis, for activities such as video and radio archiving, digitisation, music production, recording festivals and stories, customs and traditions;
- multi-year funding, which is currently not available to recipients of IBP funding;
- the role of Shared Responsibility Agreements;
- the role of peak bodies such as the Australian Indigenous Communications Association and the Indigenous Remote Communications Association; and
- the role of the National Indigenous Radio Service.



Remote Indigenous Media Organisations

Part of the new funding arrangements include a new model for Remote Indigenous Media Organisations (RIMOs) that would make them regional hubs for broadcasters. A RIMO might itself provide broadcasting services, but would also:

- process funding for the local RIBS;
- monitor the operations of RIBS units;
- employ a technician and radio trainer for local services;
- provide training in broadcast and technical skills for RIBS;
- provide regular operational and maintenance visits to RIBS units;
- manage payments to local RIBS for the production of local content;
- manage the payment of electricity bills and CDEP top-up wages for RIBS;
- distribute radio content and coordinate the broadcasting and promotion of local festivals and community events; and
- act as the marketing co-ordinator for advertising, including government messages.

Proposed governing principles for the IBP

The following governing principles are proposed to guide the future administration of the Program:

- funds are to be allocated fairly, having regard to a national focus, and the IBP should fund only organisations that are run on sound financial principles with appropriate governance practices in place;
- the IBP should promote the provision of broadcasting services that meet the needs of all Indigenous people in the transmission area;
- the IBP should support basic broadcasting activities;
- funded projects should not expect that all requests for funding be met;
- where changes to the program result in significantly reduced funding to an organisation, transitional arrangements should be made; and
- new services should be supported on a needs basis where funds are available.



Consultation

In late April 2006, DCITA will host a consultation forum in Canberra on the proposed changes to the IBP. This will allow a broad range of representatives from Indigenous radio broadcasting organisations to receive more information about, and respond to, the issues raised in the Discussion Paper.

Make a submission

You can also help shape the future of the IBP by making a submission on the issues outlined in this pamphlet. Please note that submissions close on 30 June 2006.

Submissions may be a short letter outlining your views on a particular topic or a substantial document covering a range of issues. Where possible, please provide evidence—such as relevant data and documentation—to support your views.

NB: the closing date for submissions is 30 June 2006.

Postal address

The Manager
Indigenous Broadcasting Section
Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
GPO Box 2154
Canberra ACT 2601

Fax

Please mark all faxes 'For the attention of the Indigenous Broadcasting Section' and send to 02 6271 1143

Email

IBPReview@dcita.gov.au

Image credits

Photos on cover and top of this page:

Andrea Fraser at CAAMA 8KIN-FM, Alice Springs

Photos inside, from left to right:

Belinda Miller at 4AAA (now 98.9FM), Brisbane

Kim Hodder at Imparja TV, Alice Springs

Alby Reuben at 4K1G, Townsville

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS
www.dcita.gov.au