



Australian Government

---

Department of Broadband,  
Communications and the Digital Economy

## Indigenous Communications Program

### Community Telephones Overview

#### Background

The objective of the Indigenous Communications Program (ICP) is to improve access to essential telecommunications services, basic public internet access facilities and computer training for remote Indigenous communities. Through these objectives the ICP will increase the take-up and productive use of telephones, computers and the internet in these communities. Overall the ICP will enhance safety, law and order, social well-being and economic development by targeting small, remote Indigenous communities that are the most disadvantaged in Australia.

The ICP has two elements: Community Telephones and Internet and Computers. The latter will be administered jointly with state and territory governments.

#### Community Telephones element

The Community Telephones element will enable up to 320 remote Indigenous communities to more readily access assistance through increased availability of communications infrastructure, particularly for public safety and health needs. This will also improve access to government agencies and business, as well as friends and families.

Remote Indigenous communities with a population below 50 and without reasonable access to a public payphone may be eligible to receive a community phone under the ICP. Depending on their size and permanence, eligible communities may receive a fixed-line, robust public phone or a mobile satellite handset.

#### Number of Phones

Each approved nominated community will only be provided with one fixed community phone.

#### Shared telephone service

The community phone must be available for use by all community members.

#### Telephone Equipment

##### *Fixed-line public phone*

The fixed-line public phone should be installed at a site that offers 24-hour access to community members and has adequate lighting (if possible). The equipment to be installed includes robust phones designed to withstand environmental extremes and damage. The equipment will include either standard Telstra handsets inside a robust phone casing or

stand-alone facilities provided by Australian Private Networks (APN) that may include solar and satellite equipment attached. Communities will not have to pay for ongoing line rental charges for these phones.

#### *Mobile satellite phone*

The mobile satellite phone provided to the smaller communities is an Iridium/Motorola 9505a handset plus associated equipment, including a solar charger, a protective case and user manual. Communities will not be required to pay line rental charges for the first three years. At the time of issue of the handset, each community will receive 10 pre-paid calling cards (or 300 minutes talk time). This may be followed by a further issue of 10 cards for each of the next two six-month periods. Communities can purchase additional pre-paid calling cards from the handset provider-Applied Satellite Technology Australia (ASTA), ph: 1300 660 084.

### **What calls can be made from the community phone?**

The community phones and mobile satellite handsets enable a customer to access:

- 000 Emergency services (free, without using a pre-paid card), and
- Pre-paid calling card platforms (for calls to the normal phone network).

The APN phone will allow free untimed calls to all Australian fixed-line phones and 1800 numbers (calls to mobile phones, international numbers and 1300 numbers will require access via a prepaid card).

### **What calls can be received?**

Both the fixed-line public community phones and mobile satellite handsets are available to any community member to accept incoming calls without charge. Calls that result in a charge being made to the phone service are barred, for example reverse charge calls.

### **Location**

The fixed-line community phone should be installed at an appropriate site that has been identified and given clearance by the community, has received relevant approvals and has 24 hour access. The mobile satellite handset should be held securely in an agreed community location, where it can be accessed readily by all community members.

### **Repairs and maintenance**

If there are operational difficulties with any of the fixed-line community phones, communities should contact the Department's phone maintenance service provider using the number listed on the information panel next to the phone, or they can ring the Department on 1800 355 014.

If community members have problems using the pre-paid calling card service, they should contact the card service provider.

A three year extended warranty is provided with the mobile satellite handsets and if the handset is not working, the provider (ASTA) should be contacted on 1300 660 084.

**How to Nominate**

Nominations can be made by any person with an interest. A good avenue for communities to use is their closest Indigenous Coordination Centre or Government Business Manager. A nomination form can also be obtained by calling 1800 355 014.

**Further information**

Further information is available by contacting the Program staff on freecall 1800 355 014; email: [icp@dbcde.gov.au](mailto:icp@dbcde.gov.au) or by visiting [www.dbcde.gov.au](http://www.dbcde.gov.au)