



## Summary of stakeholder discussion—Darwin

This document provides a high-level, deidentified summary of the discussion at the workshop held in Darwin on 21 June 2024, and does not reflect all views given.

September 2024

### Issues affecting broadcasting and media services in the NT

- Unequal funding distribution between broadcasters.
- Difficult for First Nations broadcasters to secure funding.
- High reporting requirements for small grants.
- Limited government advertising.
- Low sponsorship opportunities due to restrictions.
- Regulations do not the digital media landscape.
- Overly complex licensing processes.
- Difficulty competing with commercial radio for resources and audience share, and seen as encroaching on community content.
- Community broadcasting is important for preserving Indigenous languages and culture, providing vital local news and information, especially in emergencies; and supporting community development and economic empowerment.

#### Calls for reform

- Separate First Nations license type.
- Funding models that are more equitable and consider the specific needs of broadcasters.
- Streamlined regulations/reporting requirements.
- Increased government advertising and sponsorship opportunities for community radio.
- Funding that considers the broader impact of community broadcasting beyond traditional metrics.

### Leadership, workforce development and training

- Lack of remuneration, particularly those participating in government programs.
- First Nations communities must be able to offer paid employment as a means of closing the gap.
- Need for training programs to address skill gaps and language preservation.
- High cost of accredited training programs.
- Training budgets are insufficient.
- Difficulty finding funding due to grant limitations.
- Providers experience challenges in travelling to remote communities for on-site training.

- High staff turnover makes it difficult to justify investment in training, however staff and volunteers may not be able to make a meaningful contribution to the broadcaster without it.
- Lack of training hinders broadcasters' ability to produce quality programming.
- Difficulty attracting and retaining skilled staff due to limited training opportunities and the transient nature of Darwin's population.
- Training is important for upskilling staff in new technologies and media production techniques, developing skills for the digital media landscape, and preserving First Nations languages and culture.

### **Calls for reform**

- Funding models that specifically allocate resources for workforce development and training programs.
- Development of more affordable and accessible training options for remote broadcasters.
- Partnerships between broadcasters, training institutions, and local councils to deliver training and assist with grants.
- Recognition of training as a core operational cost for community broadcasters.

### **First Nations funding**

- High costs of equipment maintenance and upgrades, particularly in remote areas.
- Lack of indexation for core Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Program (IBMP) funding over many years, has led to a funding shortfall.
- Difficulty for First Nations broadcasters to understand and access funding opportunities – government must simplify its messaging.
- The Community Broadcasting Program (CBP) have competitive grant with high requirements.
- Many stations are not financially viable, are operating at unsustainable levels and risk closure.
- Delays in receiving IBMP grant payments create cash flow problems.
- Limited cash flow makes it difficult to cover operational costs like bills and staff salaries.
- Need for increased core funding with ongoing indexation to keep pace with inflation.
- Funding for equipment upgrades and infrastructure improvements, especially for remote broadcasters.
- Streamlined grant application processes and more accessible First Nations funding opportunities.
- Addressing funding issues is important to ensure the long-term sustainability of community broadcasting in the NT, improve the quality of broadcasting services provided to communities, and provide First Nations broadcasters with the resources they need to operate effectively.

### **Calls for reform**

- Increase IBMP core funding with ongoing indexation to address funding shortfalls caused by inflation over many years.
- Increase CBP funding.
- Prioritise funding for First Nations broadcasters as per First Nations Media Australia's 10 Calls to Action.
- Simplify grant application processes and make them more accessible for First Nations broadcasters.
- Review funding timeframes to ensure timely payments and avoid cash flow problems for stations.
- Provide capital funding for equipment upgrades and infrastructure improvements.
- Streamline regulations to reduce unnecessary costs for broadcasters.