

CONVERGE
Apurte irreye-ke iwerre anyente-le
MEETING TOGETHER, MOVING IN ONE DIRECTION

Communique

CONVERGE MAY 2017

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Media Summit
22-24 May 2017
Mbantua | Alice Springs
Northern Territory



CONVERGE Opening Ceremony

OUR MEDIA

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasting and media workers from across Australia met up at **CONVERGE**, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Media Summit, in Alice Springs on Monday 22 May - Wednesday 24 May 2017.

Delegates met to discuss the key strategies needed to ensure ongoing sustainability and development of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media sector. High priority themes at CONVERGE were the meeting of community media needs and the reaching of new and existing audiences via multiple platforms. Connections were forged between remote, regional and urban media organisations, creating a strong and united voice for bringing their concerns to government.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasters provide a primary and essential service to their communities. With over 230 broadcasting sites, they reach nearly 50% of the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, but are constrained by limited funding from delivering relevant services to the whole population. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasters and media producers also connect non-Indigenous communities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and culture, developing greater understanding and building stronger relationships.

"It was great to see so many of our media organisations from across the country represented at CONVERGE. Everyone worked together constructively towards building a new policy agenda and direction for our industry – showing how we can achieve unity through diversity." *Forum Facilitator and industry pioneer Dot West.*



Outgoing IRCA Chairperson John 'Tadam' Lockyer, MC Patrick Ah Kit, IRCA Secretary/MC Sylvia Tabua, IRCA Director/CAAMA CEO Karl Hampton, IRCA Director/CONVERGE Facilitator Dot West and MC Lola Forester

OUR KEY MESSAGE

The key message from CONVERGE is that at its core Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasting and media **connects**. It connects:

- Our communities with relevant and culturally appropriate media content;
 - Our people with meaningful jobs, skills and career pathways;
 - Our young people with traditional cultural knowledge and language content;
 - Our histories with our unique media archives;
 - Our families and friends through our local, regional and national networks;
 - Non-Indigenous people to a better understanding of our lives, stories and cultures;
 - Government messaging with our audiences in the most effective way.
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“Our media is very important to our communities – it keeps our languages and culture strong, connects our communities and families and provides meaningful jobs and skills. Our media creates and shares the stories, news and music we want to hear and provides a training ground for our young leaders.” *IRCA Secretary Sylvia Tabua.*



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OUR CALL ON THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasters and media producers have been working in a policy environment that dates back to 1993. Despite numerous reviews the Australian Government has yet to work effectively with the sector to produce a policy that takes into account the many changes in technologies, platforms and community needs that have occurred over the last two decades. Stagnated funding over 20 years has failed to recognise increased demand due to sector growth, rising costs of wages, program delivery, infrastructure and technology upgrades. This has limited the industry's potential to achieve significantly greater impact.

CONVERGE delegates now call on the Australian Government to work collaboratively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasters and media producers to:

- Urgently address the critical underfunding of the sector by allocating an additional \$10 million per annum;
- Expand services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities without a radio service;
- Urgently conduct an audit of broadcasting facilities to assess them against modern industry, regulatory and workplace safety standards and identify a funding pathway for required refurbishments;
- Develop an employment and training program to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment and career pathways in the sector;
- Develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasting and media policy that incorporates the elements above and:
 - Recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media as providing an essential service;
 - Affirms the Australian Government's commitment to the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to their own media¹;
 - Recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasting and media as a professional industry, not based on volunteerism;
 - Incorporates current convergent production technologies and distribution platforms;
 - Recognises the sector's scope of delivering broadcasting and production across radio, TV/video, music, multimedia and interactive media delivered on traditional and new distribution platforms;
 - Enables a pathway for providing relevant broadcasting services to unserved areas with significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.
- Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasters as a preferred supplier for production and distribution of government information campaigns;
- Identify and implement opportunities for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media sector to support Closing the Gap initiatives.

¹ Ref: Article 16 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, signed by Australia on 3rd April 2009.

OUR FUTURE

The Indigenous Remote Communications Association will be working with its members to bring these matters to the Australian Government and identify the way forward to ensure that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander broadcasting and media sector continues to meet the needs of its many audiences as well as meet the challenges of technology changes and convergence.



Pam Riley from CAAMA (Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association)

“We are the new custodians, we are walking in the footsteps of the pioneers to ensure our industry keeps growing and evolving to achieve its full potential.” *Outgoing IRCA Chairperson John ‘Tadam’ Lockyer.*
