PYMEDIA
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Alala Radio Wangka Kulintjaku

Turn on your radio and listen to our voice

Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Media

Aboriginal Corporation's

submission to the

Australian Government Minister

for Communications, Information Technology

and the Arts Inquiry into

community broadcasting

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Authorization

This submission has been authorised by the Donald Fraser, Director and Owen Burton, Chairperson of PY Media.

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Confidentiality

PY Media's submission is not confidential.

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Summary

Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Media Aboriginal Corporation (PY Media) is an Indigenous owned and managed media association. PY Media operates numerous community broadcast technologies for Anangu (Aboriginal people) including community radio, community television, a web portal, and the UHF network. PY Media believes that these community broadcasting systems guarantee empowerment and democratic governance for the Indigenous people of remote Australia.

PY Media urges government and its agencies as well as non-government organizations to utilise its broadcast technologies to communicate effectively with and to disseminate information to Anangu.

Community broadcasting does not generate sufficient income to survive without dedicated ongoing funding. It is imperative that government support these important services in the bush.

Terms of Reference

This paper's content addresses broadly the following two terms of reference:

- The scope and role of Australian community broadcasting across radio, television, the internet and other broadcasting technologies;
- Content and programming requirements that reflect the character of Australia and its cultural diversity.

A specific response is provided for 'Opportunities and threats to achieving a diverse and robust network of community broadcasters.'

Why community broadcasting?

> The real worth of the communication systems on the APY Lands comes when people approach me and say, "You have to put that meeting on the radio. This is the first time we have heard what the government is saying about us in a long time."
>
> Will Rogers, PY Media General Manager

This paper discusses PY Media's community broadcasting technologies. The systems installed and the success of communications on the APY Lands[1] are the culmination of the work of a group of committed people working both within and outside of PY Media. Without the dedication of both the Indigenous and non Indigenous people involved it would not have been possible to allow people to hear and talk again. People are now able to hear what is going on. They can participate in their futures and the futures of their families.

The systems that PY Media have installed are no different to the technologies that are used in rural regions or capital cities throughout

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[1] 1 APY Lands refers to the Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara Lands and communities of Anangu people in the remote cross border regions of northern South Australia and southern Northern Territory.

Australia. The difference is that we have had to fight constantly to justify our right to communicate. If a small percentage of the money that has gone into telecommunication service providers and mainstream Australia was put into remote Australia, the issues that are facing Indigenous Australians would be more understood and consequently dealt with. It is not a question of is it worthwhile to support remote communications and broadcasting but a question of whether the Australian government wants the Indigenous people of this country to have such a strong voice. It is essential that the government continue to support remote Australia in technologies that empower people and allow affordable communication to all remote users.

What PY Media has proven by the use of these technologies is that Anangu have something to say, that they do own and manage their country, and they do have a long-term plan. This is community communication on a grass roots level. This is the way people communicate across vast distances in remote Australia.

Talking is a part of Anangu and Indigenous culture throughout Australia. All we need to do is to give people a platform to be heard. They have been waiting for many years for someone to listen. Don't take this away. It is not only necessary but also a need to guarantee empowerment and democratic governance for the people of remote Australia.

Background to Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Media (PY Media)

PY Media started as Ernabella Video and Television (EVTV) in the early 1980s in Ernabella community (Pukatja), north-western South Australia. EVTV was initiated as a way to curb the saturation of commercial TV services with the launch of AUSAT. EVTV became the place to go to document or record culture or anything that was of interest to the individual.

In 1987 members of the APY Lands decided that it was necessary to develop the same services provided by EVTV in all communities across the APY Lands. PY Media incorporated as the regional body to assist communities to develop their own community media centres. In the mid 1990s PY Media moved out of Ernabella to the regional service centre of Umuwa to set up a regional office to enable fair representation for all communities on the APY Lands.

PY Media's management structure includes:

- A governing body that consists of one representative from each major community on the APY Lands with an elected chair and vice chairperson.
- A designated Anangu Director.
- A General Manager and an Anangu Organizational Manager.

PY Media is tasked with introducing modern technology in a way that will truly benefit Anangu and be embraced as an enhancement to the Anangu way of life. In addition to designing resourceful uses for technology to assist communications for remote Indigenous communities, PY Media has achieved a solid track record demonstrating both experience and success in delivering innovative technological solutions, support systems and training for Indigenous people living in remote Australia. Consistent with the recommendations

of the Telecommunications Service Enquiry Report, PY Media aims to ensure that consumers in remote Australia are represented adequately and have access to appropriate technology. PY Media is constitutionally bound to manage the communications needs of its APY Lands-based membership comprising 18 central desert communities in the NT and SA with a population of over 3,000 people.

Community broadcasting technologies managed by PY Media include:

- 5NPY community radio station based in Umuwa on the APY Lands and broadcast over 350,000 sq km. Radio 5NPY is broadcast on a FM frequency through the Imparja satellite based in Alice Springs.
- Indigenous Community Television (ICTV), which broadcasts 100 per cent meaningful and appropriate Indigenous content, and has a national footprint covering 80 communities in remote and regional Australia.
- UHF radio network, which is based on UHF CB 'communicator' coverage within all APY communities and beyond, and includes 'mobile' coverage along main thoroughfares.
- Internet waru.org web portal, which is a promotional and information web site offering resources to Anangu as well as government organizations and researchers.

PY Media is a pioneering Indigenous organization with a range of landmark achievements in the area of media production, broadcasting, remote communications, and community consultation and service delivery. PY Media is known nationally as a leader in remote communications. Its achievements demonstrate innovative and appropriate technological solutions for Indigenous people living in remote Australia.

Models of community broadcasting

THE BUSH RADIO

HF and beyond

In the 1970s and 1980s the 'Pitjantjatjara bush radio' (referred to as the 'radio') was an incredible community broadcasting system. It featured a dedicated 24-hour license and frequency for a network of two-way HF radios located over a vast distance from Yalata to Indulkana to Warburton. Conversations on the network were public and in many languages with speakers able to decipher their own discussions from the layers of other conversations.

> *Even before the homelands and land rights movements, people had their own two way radios allowing them to communicate between their home and the communities, where there were stores, clinics and other support services. Every morning everyone would get up and turn on the HF radio before they did anything else. They would tune in to any number of the conversations taking place. If someone were sick they would listen and then pass on the information to the doctor or nurse.*

> *When discussions about land rights began in 1977, radio[2] was already there. We started using the radio to send out messages to everybody. It was like sending out faxes to every community or homeland about the meeting to be held somewhere. The radio had even started broadcasting the Pitjantjatjara Council meeting at Ernabella, from next to where EVTV was born, in the old clinic. Donald Fraser started using the radio to broadcast news when he was chairperson of Anangu Pitjantjatjara Council. Later, Yami Lester, a Yankunytjatjara elder, became the chairperson of the Council and took over the radio responsibilities. He delivered the "Pitjantjatjara News" every morning.*

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[2]The speaker is referring to the 2 way HF system as 'radio'.

Radio gave out news across the land. People across the Lands were listening to the news, and public discussions about Freehold Land.

Owen Burton, Pukatja community

By 1981 after the 'news' field staff reported in on HF to the Pitjantjatjara Council office in Alice Springs to the Chairperson and lawyer or anthropologist about any work issues or received message for their work. This broadcast made their work public. Everyone knew what the workers on the Lands were involved with. This allowed all community members to be informed of the decisions being made about services.

Various HF radio systems were available for Anangu use. Some were mobile, housed in a little box, operated by 12-volt battery with a wire aerial that tied around a stone and was thrown over a tree branch. All work vehicles had a fixed mobile HF that plugged in to the car battery and aerial on front bumper bar. Homelands had a solar radio tower with a radio built into a box on a pole with a solar panel. Community offices and clinics had fixed sets with a radio mast. The HF systems were cheap to run and maintain as break downs were rare. Weather conditions were the major factor affecting the quality of broadcasting.

During the late eighties, the bush radio fell away, primarily with the introduction of a microwave linked telephone system and the coming of satellite communications (broadcast TV and radio).

During the mid eighties telephones and HF technologies existed concurrently. Then HF started coming down, and the telephone up. The telephone was the major cause of the HF demise. In addition, Anangu had begun to drift back from homelands to major communities where a telephone, telex and then fax were available. People embraced modern technologies. Phones allowed you to do a lot more. The problems associated with these new technologies were that

conversations became one on one and the empowerment previously owned by A̲nangu was now lost.

A̲nangu culture is an oral culture. HF radio broadcasting suits an oral culture. The biggest thing about the HF radio was that it was public. There were not misunderstandings. Information was not kept privately. It was disseminated out there—whether it was public or private information. Historically, A̲nangu did not write memos. With the radio, there was no need to write things down and make notes because so many people were listening. A̲nangu are used to being public and the radio facilitated being more public in a formal sense. The telephone stopped that totally. Community governance was gone!

If you're the elected leader who's receiving phone call after phone call, there's no real capacity to make notes of the information received. And everyone became a lot more private and held on to information usually for reasons of power. Radio is democratic; the telephone and fax are autocratic. People could gain power by holding information back, information that was only learnt if you were holding the telephone receiver.

Ushma Scales, Anthropologist & 1980s Pitjantjatjara Council Field Staff

Some people grieved the death of HF:

Because, the radio news service broke down, things were getting out of control. Community governance was suffering. Because there was no news, people were not happy with their representatives. We would go to meetings and end up talking about communication because people didn't know what we were doing.

P. Kunmanara, Pukatja Community

UHF: BUSH RADIO IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Following instruction from its executive and on request of many of its members, in 2002 PY Media began to redesign the bush radio using a UHF system. The resurrected bush radio was launched in 2004. As an unique form of community broadcasting, the current UHF system is successful because it:

- rekindles the bush radio era allowing Anangu to communicate at low cost over hundreds of kilometres;

- uses a robust, low cost to user radio network based on UHF CB 'communicator' coverage within communities and 'mobile' coverage along main thoroughfares;

- UHF handsets are widely available and at low cost (approximately $50);

- promotes economic development and social opportunity by linking repeater sites and providing strong signal zones that allow individuals, business, and support organizations to communicate and move freely across the APY Lands;

- reduces the isolation and danger of remoteness by strategically locating low cost Blue Pole access points for emergency roadside assistance;

- aggregates the new facilities with existing broadcasting services to create a valuable community asset and reduced cost of ownership;

- removes the 'call centre' experience from fault reporting by using Remote Area Diagnostic Information Collection And Logging (RADICAL) to supervise UHF CB repeater network and Blue Pole integrity;

- chooses site locations and dimension infrastructure to leverage redundancy and possibility for future services e.g. diversity coverage, CDMA cell extension, private data, and essential services telemetry;

- turns remoteness into advantage through the use of unconventional antennae techniques that double 'communicator' coverage and reduce infrastructure cost i.e. the Australian Communications Authority limit transmitter 'reach' of repeater through the maximum EIRP allowed, but receiver 'reach' of repeater can be effectively doubled for low power communicator radios by using a Yagi antenna.

The UHF network has 16 repeater sites and antenna masts and equipment shelters installed on four mountaintops. Blue Pole access points provide emergency plus social access to the UHF CB radio network from strategic locations along local main roads. They are vandal resistance plus suitable for permanent exposure to the environment; their location, function, and operation is obvious by design and signage; and field maintainable by non-technical personnel.[3]

Converging new and old technologies

In 2003 the national average for home phone service for Indigenous Australians was less than five per cent.[4] In the remote Western desert area, PY Media's research confirmed that this figure as exaggerated. In addition, STD charges are significant among a population existing well below the poverty line. The revived bush radio concept is affordable, reaches widely across hundreds of kilometres, and appropriate to a culture that is incredibly mobile and comfortable with the format of discussing issues publicly. Now days it is usual for the 'leader

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[3] For further information on the technical components on the UHF network, see www.waru.org

[4] PY Media (2004), *AP Phone Home: The Forgotten Percentage, Review of USO and CSG*, p. 7.

generation'[5] to carry a UHF handset the majority of the time. Many young people also have a handset or car unit.

Interactive community broadcasting

While PY Media's 5NPY Radio is the 'official' broadcaster of local news, current affairs and talk back as well as live feeds of some organization's meetings, the UHF bush radio is the unofficial community broadcaster. During 5NPY broadcasts concerning critical local issues, the bush radio crackles heatedly in discussion. When important topics are explained on 5NPY Radio, the bush radio turns silent. The next minute the bush radio erupts in debate.

> *Compared with the last 20 years since the demise of the HF radio, the switch has been turned back on. People are now in the know and are participating in their own futures.*

> *Anangu are constantly badgered by federal and state governments to take governance workshops. If they listened to the UHF they would be able to learn something about how to govern a vast area like the APY Lands. The governance of the Lands is alive and well and people are again taking hold of their destinies.*

> Will Rogers, General Manager, PY Media

PY Media has supported both community radio and UHF technologies to satisfy local needs for interactive community broadcasting. To those individuals and organizations who utilise the Radio 5NPY as a broadcast medium, PY Media is confident that their messages extend out to the broader population exponentially through the UHF network.

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[5] This generation could also be classified, in mainstream terms, as the middle-aged generation. This classification is misleading in terms of Aboriginal mortality. Therefore we have used the term 'leader generation' to refer to those persons who hold authority within their communities.

RADIO

Radio 5NPY is allowing the people of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands to have their say. The radio allows other indigenous and non-indigenous groups to hear our voice. This is bringing the communities together and keeping one of the world's oldest cultures alive and strong. In the future, the whole of Australia will be listening to us. We'll be able to talk with the government through our radio. We'll have a voice to reach the people on the outside.

While people have been told that Anangu people have received enormous advantages, in fact people are still waiting for recognition of their rights, for respect, for the basic amenities afforded to other Australians. New forms of communication will help Anangu people transmit the truth about their culture, about their lives, and shape their own self-representation. The tribal people here in the centre maintain their very strong culture. We have a dream that people on the outside will learn about that culture, about a way of life that has been sustained for thousands of years.

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Donald Fraser, Director, PY Media

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In May 1998 5NPY Anangu Winkiku Radio (people's radio or 5NPY) was born. Anangu say that it is a rebirth of the bush radio network as it retains the interconnected features of the HF system. Radio 5NPY has broadcast on-air studios at Umuwa and at a series of mini-studios installed at every community throughout the region. These mini-studios are linked to the central on-air studio via telephone lines using scoop reporters that effectively double the bandwidth of the connection.

The route of transmission is from Umuwa to Imparja TV in Alice Springs via a dedicated 10 kHz telephone connection where the signal is encoded and up-linked to the satellite. The BMAC signal is then narrowcast throughout the APY Lands utilising downlink dishes and

BMAC decoders at which point the signal is rebroadcast to a localised area in FM (utilising existing low powered FM transmitters).

Programming centres on local language broadcasting with an emphasis on local news and information, talkback programs, and music. 5NPY provides a 24-hour service utilising the satellite feeds of the NIRS system and CAAMA radio (Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association). It is unique in that it is the first radio programming that is produced entirely within remote Aboriginal communities. It is also unique in that the target audience has every opportunity to participate in broadcasts via the satellite network of small radio booths located throughout the region. Radio 5NPY satellite network consists of 11 communities with their own BRACS (Broadcasting in Remote Aboriginal Scheme) radio stations that are hooked up to a central hub.

Innovative broadcasting

PY Media encourages all regional organizations and service providers (including government agencies) to broadcast meetings, events and program information on 5NPY Radio. Using radio to disseminate information across the APY Lands has proved itself time and time again as a reliable medium. When used in conjunction with other information campaigns, those agencies that have used 5NPY Radio as a tool access a wide reaching audience.

In 2005 talkback radio on 5NPY reached a new height. Local presenter and PY Media Chairperson Owen Burton maintained the talkback chair for eight hours straight. The topic under heated discussion was the review of the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act and the operations of the APY Land Council. Owen Burton switched effortlessly between Pitjantjatjara and English depending on the first language of his talk back guest.

Owen Burton interviewed the Opposition Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. It was unfortunate that the South Australian Minister involved with the changes to the Act had declined numerous invitations to participate in the radio show. We suspect that if he had utilised this forum that the government's information dissemination campaign held only in a few major communities on the Lands would have reached further. The talk back session discussed above is an example of the effectiveness of community broadcasting on community radio by community people.

Below we have listed other short examples of effective community radio. Their effect was that people could hear what was happening and what decisions were being made about their futures:

- One of very first meeting's broadcast was the annual general meeting of the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation (NPY Women's Council). During voting for a new chair and executive, a member of NPY Women's Council rang up to the APY office and asked if she could do a phone vote for the new chairperson.

- The APY Lands Council Chairperson refused to talk on the radio about a significant local issue. PY Media Interim Director followed him around with a microphone, linked live on air, encouraging him to talk.

- A Community Council Chairperson pulled the plug on a radio broadcast of an information meeting about changes to the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act citing that PY Media was breaking the law by broadcasting in the Chairperson's community.

PY Media aspires for government and local agencies to utilise 5NPY Radio as a site for publicising information and participating in healthy debates. Regional organizations have broadcast their general

meetings on Radio 5NPY. With the addition of UHF, messages spread like wildfire. The interaction between community radio and UHF has been the most effective means to broadcast to a wide audience. As PY Media has found, it's not all about new technologies but the convergence of effective old with innovative new technology.

TELEVISION

When I watch ICTV I see all them old inma. The same one that I bin doing but different. The inma has all the old way of doing that dance so I can bring that back into my one.

Rodger Kaipipi, Fregon Community

Indigenous Community Television (ICTV) provides an Indigenous community presence on the vast Australian broadcast landscape. ICTV supports Indigenous language and culture. Currently 70 to 80 per cent of program content is broadcast in Indigenous languages from across Australia. ICTV operates split channel from Imparja on Channel 31, and is broadcast through the NIRS. Programming is managed by PY Media with content input from other remote indigenous media organizations that are members of IRCA. [6] ICTV can be defined as the programming supplied by the IRCA members.

Innovative opportunities

Towards the end of the 1990s, the Remote Indigenous Broadcast Service—RIBS facilities (formerly known as Bracs and renamed in 2004–5) installed the new digital satellite broadcasting (DVB) technology. For APY communities, the complicated operation of this new equipment ushered in the final end to local editorial control of their RIBS television channel that had operated with some success previously. However, with the DVB technology, came an opportunity for Imparja television to broadcast a second television channel (Channel 31) as a digital service on the new satellite.

PY Media immediately recognised the potential of Channel 31 to be the vehicle for a modern RIBS. Its success lay in:

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[6] IRCA: Indigenous Remote Communications Alliance. Members include PY Media, Walpiri Media, Pakam and Ngaanyatjarra Media.

- removing the enormous ongoing cost of the 1990s era television equipment;
- providing access to locally produced television content from other RIBS communities; and
- putting editorial control of the RIBS television channel back in the hands of the local community.

PY Media had been trying to find a way that communities could easily access and broadcast on Channel 31. The BRACS licence had allowed communities to legally broadcast the programs, but changing over to the Channel 31 service and changing back to the normal service required a very complicated manual process. Attempting the manual process often ended in 'no television at all' for the community.

In December 2000 PY Media's technical arm, Waru Remote Communications (WRC), developed an in-house technical solution. It consists of a specially configured telephone modem plus a diode fitted to an RS232 data cable. The unit allows PY Media to 'dial up' the satellite decoder in a RIBS community, remotely changing between the normal and Channel 31 services. This allowed for a whole range of opportunities.

PY Media's experience of creating programming began in 2001. With the full support of Imparja, PY Media and Warlpiri media first used the channel 31 in 1998 and broadcast Bush Mechanics to 4 different states across the country. was first to use the network to produce a live broadcast. This was made possible by the remote dial up unit. PY Media arranged for Imparja to play out a pre-recorded match of Aboriginal football on the Channel 31 service and Fregon, on the APY Lands, was the community to trial the experiment. PY Media remotely changed over Fregon's Bracs television channel and the inaugural

broadcast was a great success. Thus began a new era for the Aboriginal Central Australian Football Competition (CAFL) in Australia. PY Media began using the Channel 31 service to telecast live footy coverage to Aboriginal communities who were unable to support their local team because of the tyranny of distance. The CAFL was broadcast every weekend from Alice Springs back to the APY Lands during the 2001–2002 seasons. The technology and broadcast skills developed during this period were then utilized to expand and revitalize the flagging BRACS network across the APY Lands.
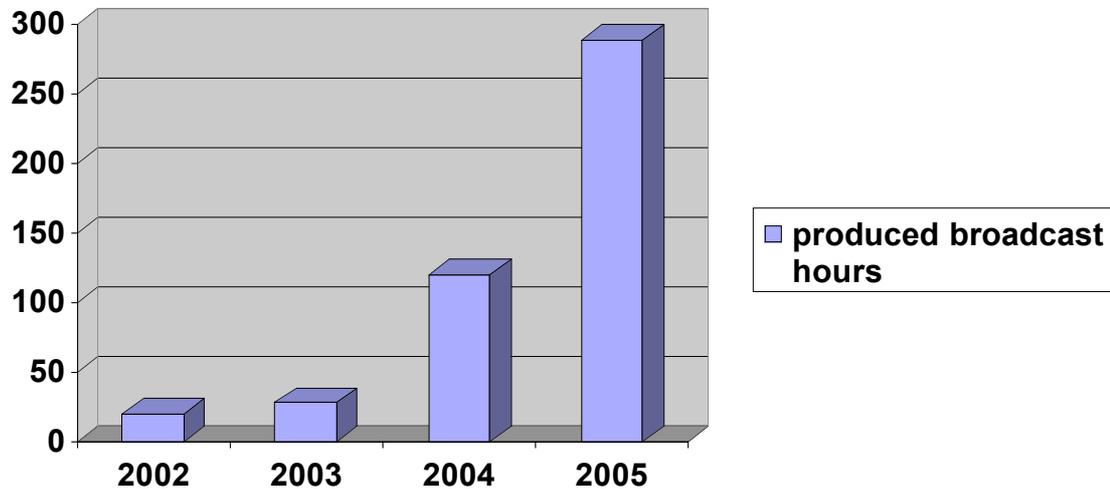
ICTV programming

PY Media coordinates 14 hours a day of Indigenous community broadcasting on ICTV. Every month the 14-hour block is refreshed with new content supplied by IRCA members and played out from the premises of PY Media for broadcast on the AUSAT satellite through Imparja Television. This resulted in 288 hours of new content being broadcast during 2005. This has all been achieved with minimal dedicated funding. In addition to this, it is important to note that currently an estimated 70 to 80 per cent of program content is broadcast in Indigenous languages from across Australia. As program providers, IRCA members steer the content within the hours that they have been allotted by Imparja.

A typical monthly plan for *ICTV* consists of:

* 8 hours of PAKAM with *WaterWheel*;
* 8 hours of Walpiri Media (note Ngaanyatjarra Media's and Walpiri alternate each month);
* 8 hours PY Media's programs including the *Rikina Show*, *Tjina Irititja Inma Show (Old Tracks) and Greedy For Country*.

In addition PY Media schedules and plays out community service announcements (CSAs) supplied by Imparja, IRCA members and Indigenous and government organizations. Furthermore PY Media

receives programs from other Indigenous organizations outside IRCA such as The Gap Youth Centre in Alice Springs.

The reasons for the dramatic increase in broadcast hours in 2005 are:

• United IRCA program content contribution;

• Increased technical and programming support from Imparja;

• PY Media's increased contribution from video production staff and video trainers; and

• 14 hours of programming, 7 days a week.

PY Media's broadcast profile reflects local diversity

In developing the idea of ICTV, PY Media aimed to establish a presence, or broadcast profile, in the hearts and minds of Anangu, and with an expectation that the service would extend nationally to all IRCA regions. This meant competing against all the major networks as well as a new entrant in the bush, Austar. To achieve a broadcast profile meant not only directing programs to certain segments of the Anangu community but also including these groups in the video-making process. Hence the development of The Rikina Video Show made by the youth of the APY Lands for the youth of the APY Lands. Now in its second series, The Rikina

Video Show has become an institution on ICTV. A further example is *Old Tracks*, made by elders for elders with traditional song, dance and story telling, running in three-hour episodes. ICTV's presence across remote Indigenous Australia grew with the entry of other IRCA members contributing local content.

Broadcasting local content

To strengthen its community broadcasting role, PY Media has established itself as a leading Indigenous video producer by establishing PY Media Video Productions. Titles include *Tjala (Honey Ant), Tjukula and Marlu (Rockhole and Kangaroo), Inma Maku (Witchetty Grub Ceremony), Ngangkari (Traditional Healers*) and *Tilun Tilun ta* and have aired nationally and internationally. Through the support of Imparja Television and ability to air program content on ICTV, PY Media has been able to establish a strong programming presence as a community broadcaster.

Its broadcasting profile strategy success can be measured by a survey sent out in May 2004 by PY Media to all 12 APY community councils. The survey provided the councils the option to switch off ICTV (and turn on ABC) if desired. Not one community took up the offer. From June 2006, 150 communities will receive ICTV from the AUSAT satellite on dedicated community transmitters through the RIBS transmitter rollout project.

Community content provide publicity opportunities

PY Media has a proven track record of delivering highly effective awareness and information video productions. Clients include:

- South Australian Department of Human Services
- South Australian Department of Commerce
- DOSSA

- TAFE SA

- Nganampa Health Council

- NPY Women's Council

- APY Land Management

- Irintata Homelands

- AnTEP

- CAAPU

- Kaltjiti Arts Centre

CSAs offer huge potential for organizations and government working in areas accessing ICTV programming to disseminate information about service delivery, or publicise amendments and reviews of parliamentary Acts, announce meetings etc.

WORLD WIDE WEB

PY Media officially moved into cyberspace in 1997 with a simple, five page website, waru.org. The website contained a PY Media homepage with a brief description of the organization; a PY Media equipment rental and rate page; an EVTV history page with no text and a series of photographs; a links page to other indigenous organizations; and a map of the APY Lands.

By 1998, the stats folder showed that every single day of each month since the website was launched that someone somewhere in the world had looked at it including England, America, India, Japan, Russia and Lithuania. This was so impressive that members of APY communities started taking an interest in presenting their culture to the rest of the world.

Today the waru site is a portal for Anangu culture and a communication tool for Anangu. Pages includes a home page, organisational information, PY Media departments including 5NPY radio, video, telecommunications, training, service support, etc, links to the Indigenous organizations that work on the APY lands, recruitment, internet banking links and many more. For further information visit www.waru.org

The web portal is used as a community broadcaster through the Tjukurpa or waru.news page. Until the availability of computers with internet access improves (both within community areas and at homes), the potential of the internet as a medium for community broadcasting is greatly reduced. Broadcasting community radio on the internet to reach a broader audience remains a futuristic concept.

Opportunities and threats to achieving a diverse and robust network of community broadcasters

Central Australian Indigenous communities are located in an isolated tri-state region of remote Australia. Anangu struggle to keep informed about what services are offered by different organizations or about the reviews of pertinent policy or laws. Getting the information across such a huge area can be a challenge for non-government and government organizations. Meetings are held constantly, yet events such as conflicting meetings, ceremonial business, funerals, weather, football or the sheer effort of driving hundreds of kilometres to attend can jeopardise good turnouts and fruitful outcomes. Utilising community broadcasting can overcome some of these obstacles and is recognised as an effective way to communicate with remote Australia. However, organizations need to know that these broadcast services exist, be willing to use them accordingly.

Opportunities for using community broadcasts

- Broadcast public meetings live on 5NPY Radio.
- Hold information seminars live on radio.
- Develop information seminars content into ICTV and 5NPY Radio programs.
- Utilise talkback on Radio 5NPY offering organizations, regional bodies, or government agencies an opportunity to interact with Anangu to canvass ideas and opinions.
- Make a community service announcement for radio or TV.
- Post a web page on waru.org

What other medium offers access to such a large number of people across hundreds of square kilometres?

Remote communications in a desert economy

Community broadcasting does not generate sufficient income to survive without dedicated ongoing funding. It is imperative that government take responsibility for the operations and maintenance of these important services in the bush.

Possible areas to recruit funding and expand:

- Ongoing recurrent support by funding bodies.

- Use of broadcast mediums by government.

- User pay costs for government and NGOs using TV or radio to broadcast their meetings or messages.

- Funding to ensure that tech maintenance fees are covered. Not much good to anyone to have a system that doesn't work.

- Employ a full time radio journalist to coordinate interviews etc.

- Increase local training to create a broader skill base of community broadcasters.

- Increase training to produce local content for radio and ICTV programming.

In conclusion

PY Media has set several benchmarks for the design, installation and maintenance of broadcast communication facilities in remote Indigenous communities. This technology could be duplicated by other Indigenous organizations throughout remote Australia.

PY Media's community broadcasting technology has brought about change. It has enabled information to be available to Anangu so that Anangu are empowered to make informed decisions. PY Media recommends that the charter of all Indigenous organizations maintain that 5NPY Radio is utilised to broadcast meetings and to disseminate information about project delivery.

This paper shows what has been effective in community broadcasting in our region. To date these technologies have been under-valued. Government agencies in particular have under-utilised this opportunity in their attempt to communicate with Anangu in a structured way.

Broadcast technologies have been around for numerous years and have always served the bush to allow people to communicate over long distances. If government were to take a lead from Anangu and utilise these technologies in remote Australia, it would allow them to understand and be accountable to the citizens of Australia that live in this region. The Australian government has pressured Anangu to be accountable for their actions since the beginning of the Land Rights in 1981, and has never thought to be accountable back to them by utilising communication systems set up by Anangu. There is no reason for government not to inform Anangu of its intentions at the moment they are being decided. Broadcast technologies are the answer to governance and accountability at all levels of the decision making process.