

House of Representatives Standing
 Committee on Communications,
 Transport and the Arts
 Submission No: 196.01
 Date Received: 12/3/01


starting small ocsat assisting territorians to anticipate, communicate, participate and innovate

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NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

Submission for the Inquiry into the Adequacy of Radio Services in Non-metropolitan Australia

Jo Bryson
 A/CEO



Office of Communications,
 Science and Advanced Technology
 NORTHERN TERRITORY



Northern Territory Government



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NORTHERN TERRITORY DEMOGRAPHICS

- Over 16% of Australia's Landmass
- 1% of Australia's Population
- Population Distribution:
 - 53% Darwin
 - 14% Alice
 - 9% other populated Centres
 - **24% Very Remote Areas**

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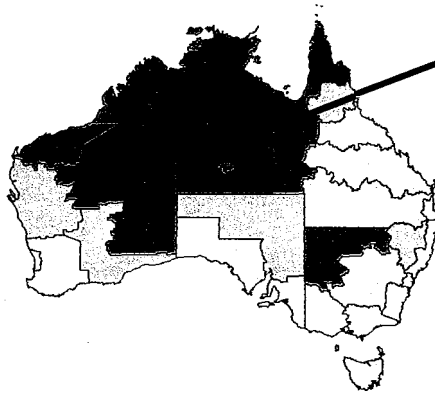


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INDIGENOUS PROPORTION OF THE REGION POPULATION



Northern Territory has the highest proportion of Australia's Indigenous population (27%) compared to other States and Territories (3%).

Source: ABS The Health and Welfare of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 1999.



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NORTHERN TERRITORY REMOTENESS

- **Highly Accessible** - no area of the NT
- **Accessible** - CBD and suburbs of Darwin
- **Moderately Accessible** - greater Darwin
- **Remote** - Alice Springs
- **Very Remote** - remaining areas

Source: University of Adelaide. *Measuring Remoteness: Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia*



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IMPORTANCE OF ACCESS TO QUALITY RADIO BROADCASTING

- Indigenous education and development;
- Regional and community development;
- Tourism marketing, e.g.: local information about events and road conditions;
- Delivery of education;
- Information on health and allied health services; and
- Provision of emergency services.



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IMPORTANCE OF ACCESS TO QUALITY RADIO BROADCASTING

- Radio services contribute to lessening the social, cultural and economic disadvantages in remote and very remote areas.
- Radio is a timely and responsive media outlet for remote areas.
- For very remote locations it is a significant source of information and entertainment.



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ADVANTAGES OF RADIO OVER OTHER MEDIA

- Portable and cheaper to run;
- More reliable source of information;
- Can be tailored to target specific geographic or cultural groups;
- Broadcasts in Aboriginal and other ethnic languages contribute to the preservation of culture and assists in building self esteem for listeners;



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ADVANTAGES OF RADIO OVER OTHER MEDIA

- Non-political and factual;
- Easier to re-establish following cyclones and other disasters;
- Timely print media is not distributed daily to remote areas; and
- Radio broadcasting has an advantage over print media in the NT in areas where there is a low literacy rate and high incidents of chronic eye disease.



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**COVERAGE OF RADIO BROADCASTING
IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

- The value of radio broadcasting is increased during long distance travel, in particular off-road travel;
- Length of highway coverage is not sufficient;
- Border to border coverage is essential.



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FUTURE TRENDS

- Commercial channels syndicate most of their programming from the Eastern states.
- Syndicated programs provide a connection between metropolitan and non-metropolitan Australia and provide remote areas access to National and International programs.



Troppe Shots



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FUTURE TRENDS

- Community Radio stations may start to provide training and employment opportunities if funding is available.
- No certified training courses available in the NT, however community radio offers on-the-job training to volunteer and ethnic broadcasters.



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REGARDLESS OF GEOGRAPHIC ISOLATION, TERRITORIANS ARE ENTITLED TO THE SAME QUALITY AND VARIETY OF SERVICE AS ANY OTHER AUSTRALIAN, INCLUDING DIGITAL RADIO.



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THINKING BIG**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Funding required to determine the full extent of signal propagation, and radio black spots across the NT.
- Implement border to border radio coverage in recognition of remote communities and outback travellers in the NT.
- Federal Government support for the ABC in the NT should be maintained. The ABC is an important provider of high quality local news and current affairs programs in the NT.

**THINKING BIG****RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Increased access to Federal funding to assist broadcasters, in particular Community radio. People from non-English speaking backgrounds and indigenous groups should receive news and local content in their native language.
- Federal Government funding for indigenous local radio should be increased to provide expertise and training in new technologies and financial management, and to ensure access to technology for Community radio is affordable.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

- The competitive television environment has successfully provided choice for consumers.
- Explore opportunities to encourage a competitive environment for commercial radio broadcasting.



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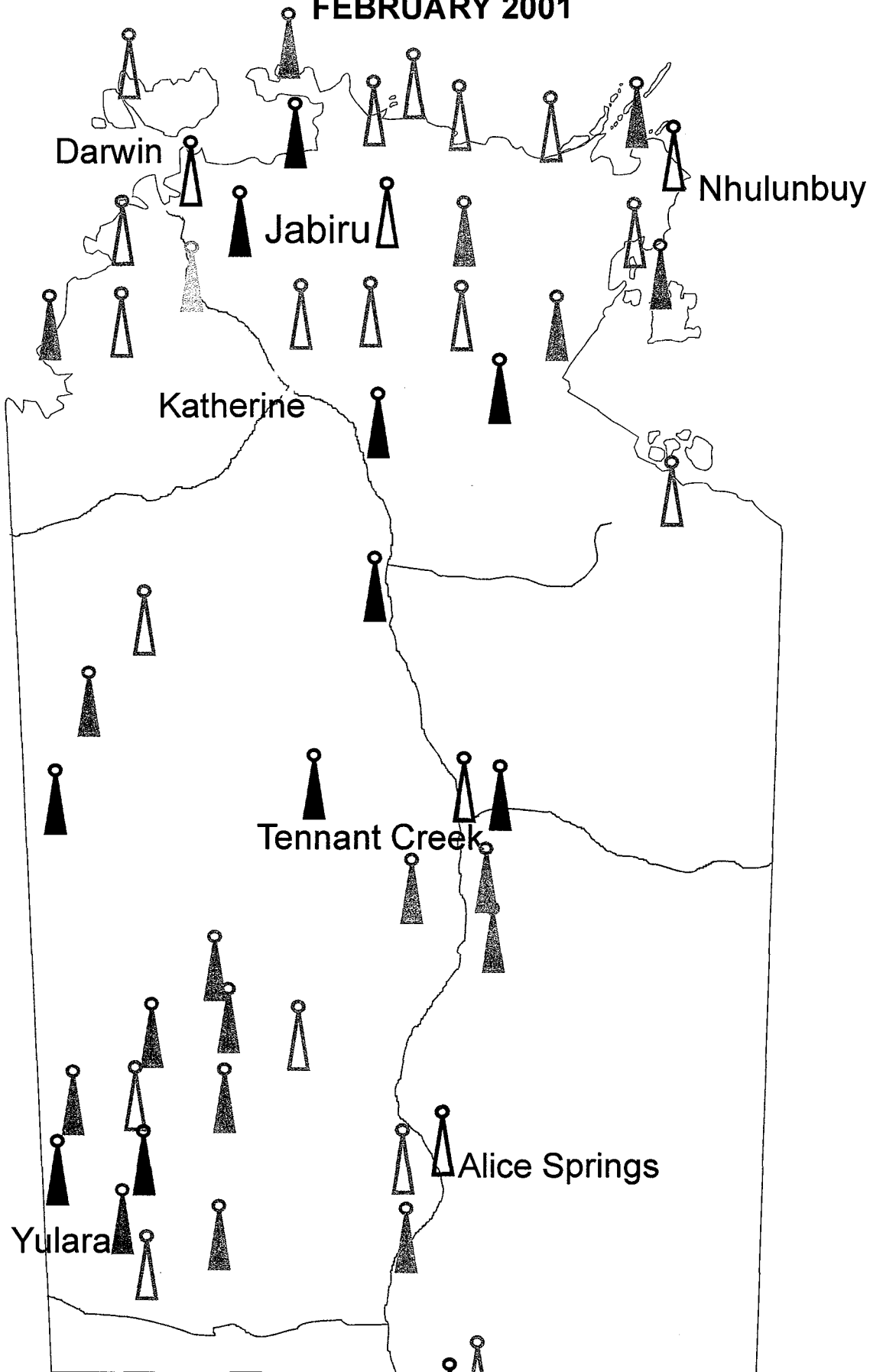
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NORTHERN TERRITORY AM/FM RADIO BROADCASTING SERVICES FEBRUARY 2001



Legend:

- FM National, FM Community
- AM/FM National, FM Commercial, FM Community
- AM/FM National, AM/FM Commercial/FM Community
- FM National Only
- FM Community Only
- FM Commercial, FM Community
- AM/FM National, AM Commercial, FM Community
- FM National, FM Commercial, FM Community

MAP NOT TO SCALE