



# ARDS

Aboriginal Resource and Development Services (Aboriginal Corporation)

ABN 24 609 472 742  
ICN 8109

05/02/2016

Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts  
Online Submission

**Re: Inquiry into broadcasting, online content and live production to rural and regional Australia.**

## **Organisational Context**

ARDS Aboriginal Corporation has been operating in north-east Arnhem Land for more than 40 years providing services in community development, adult education and cultural maintenance primarily working with the Yolngu Clan Nations. Since 2007 ARDS has successfully been operating Yolngu Radio as a cost effective means to ensure that Yolngu people can access news, information and education in primary languages as well as a variety of traditional and contemporary Indigenous Music. Yolngu Radio broadcasts in Indigenous languages across Darwin, Palmerston, the major communities of NE Arnhem Land (Nhulunbuy, Yirrkala, Gapuwiyak, Galiwinku, Milingimbi and Ramingining) and also 15 very remote homelands, most of which cannot freely access any other media service, have no mobile phone reception and either insufficient or nil internet access. With studios in Nhulunbuy and Darwin, ARDS also produces a range of multimedia content and films and records contemporary and traditional Indigenous music. ARDS' media and arts production is distributed on a variety of platforms and sees the training and employment of many Indigenous people.

ARDS wishes to raise the following points regarding this inquiry based on the experience of providing a remote media service across more than 40,000 square kilometres of the remote top end of the Northern Territory plus Darwin. ARDS' organisational observations frame the submission points below, in the hope they may contribute to the Inquiry at hand:

## **Submission Points**

1. As stated under the UN declaration of the rights of Indigenous People, Article 16.1 "*Indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages and to have access to all forms of non-indigenous media without discrimination*". ARDS feels strongly that regional and remote Indigenous broadcasting, arts, online content and live production are vital to the wellbeing of the Nation.
2. That Indigenous language-based content must be well supported across a wide variety of contemporary platforms and media types to ensure that Indigenous culture, heritage and knowledge can achieve effective inter-generational transfer. Media platform preferences differ greatly across

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generations and geographical locations and therefore to achieve effective inter-generational transfer of knowledge a wide and dynamic variety of media types must be supported.

3. The need to ensure that all Australians have the opportunity to gain access to information and education in their primary languages, regardless of geographical location, considering:

a) That through such provision there is a strengthened capacity to achieve greater social, health and economic outcomes including an enhanced level of understanding and participation in wider Australian Society.

b) to ensure that those Australians who hold an Indigenous language as a primary language can access and understand information necessary for the purpose of free, prior and informed consent in matters affecting land and livelihood (as supported in Article 19 UN declaration of the rights of Indigenous People)

c) For the benefit of community safety and wellbeing; For instance even as simply as effective distribution of cyclone information in Indigenous languages to residents in remote communities and homelands, a service to which Yolngu Radio is incredibly committed.

4. That broadcasting, online content, live production and the arts are a highly effective and valuable means of employment for many remote Indigenous community members, as this sector values culture and language as assets in an employee. Feeling valued for ones existing skills and knowledge (such as language and culture) empowers people to participate and develop a wide skill basis to express their culture and aspirations through community media and arts in their own language. The benefits of this contribute greatly to social and economic development in regional and remote areas.

5. That supporting Indigenous media and arts in regional and remote areas contributes greatly to the rich diversity of wider Australia and provides improved opportunities for non-Indigenous Australians to learn about Indigenous culture and worldview which in turn will help to achieve greater understanding and equality between all Australians.

6. That the operational costs of successfully maintaining and supporting a remote and region wide media service are much higher than that of urban locations, when faced with vast geographical distances, limited and costly transportation methods and extreme climatic conditions. However, in terms of the outcomes for the individuals, families and communities involved, the value far exceeds the cost.

ARDS sincerely hopes that through this Inquiry the senate finds reason to ensure that the Commonwealth Government sufficiently supports broadcasting, arts, online content and live production to regional and remote Australia.

If we can be of any assistance in the provision of more information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely



**Gaia Osborne**  
Yolngu Radio Manager  
**ARDS Aboriginal Corporation**