The Hon Simon Crean MP  
Minister for the Arts  

Senator Stephen Conroy  
Minister for Broadband, Communications, and the Digital Economy  

The Hon Jenny Macklin MP  
Minister for Indigenous Affairs  

6 April, 2011  

Release of the Indigenous Broadcasting and Media Review  


The Review was headed by Neville Stevens AO, with the assistance of Mr Laurie Patton and Ms Kerrynne Liddle.

This expert committee was asked to consider whether the Government’s investment in the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector was effective and whether that investment was being leveraged to the maximum benefit of Indigenous media producers and Australian audiences; to evaluate the impact of digital technologies and media convergence on the sector as a whole; and to make recommendations for policy options to ensure the sector can participate fully in the digital economy.

An extensive consultation process was undertaken to inform the Review. This process included consultation with industry, a series of public meetings, the release of an issues paper and detailed consideration of submissions from a wide range of stakeholders.

The Review has found that the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector is a powerful tool for the wellbeing of Indigenous people and that it can help the Australian Government realise its objective of closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The Gillard Government is committed to empowering and building the capacity of Indigenous broadcasting and media. The Government wants to ensure there are independent
outlets for the voices of Indigenous people, and places within the evolving media landscape where Indigenous stories can be told.

The Report strongly recommended that Federal Government responsibility for Indigenous broadcasting programs be located within the same Department as other broadcasting and media sectors, finding this to be a long held desire amongst Indigenous media practitioners.

In response, the Government has decided to transfer responsibility for the Indigenous broadcasting and media sector from the Arts portfolio to the Department of Broadband, Communications, and the Digital Economy. The transfer will take effect from 1 July 2011.

The Review also found that fundamental changes were needed to make the sector effective. The sector covers Indigenous broadcasting services across urban, regional and remote communities and receives over $30M a year in direct funding from the Federal Government which includes $15.2M for National Indigenous Television (NITV).

In an interim response to the Review, the Federal Government has decided that NITV will continue to receive operational funding of $15.2M for 2011-12. The funding will be allocated as part of the 2011-12 Budget on 10 May 2011.

However, the Review highlighted significant governance and structural issues in NITV’s management arrangements and recommended significant changes to restructure the organisation.

Accordingly, the 2011-12 funding will cover NITV’s operations during the upcoming transitional year, during which time the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy will negotiate with NITV a more sustainable structural model that achieves the sector’s widely held goal of providing more original Indigenous content on free-to-air television.

The Federal Government thanks Mr Stevens, Mr Patton and Ms Liddle for their work undertaking the Review, and for delivering this important and timely report.

The Government will announce a fuller response to the Review in due course.


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