

**From:**  
**To:**  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Remote Indigenous Communities Determination consultation  
**Date:** Friday, 18 February 2022 2:21:59 PM  
**Attachments:** [Screen Shot 2019-04-15 at 12.12.48 pm.png](#)  
[ACMA Determination feedback - Nov 2021.pdf](#)

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Dear Hugh,

FNMA has highlighted the opportunity for input on the Remote Indigenous Communities Determination (8b) to its members and notes that some organisations may choose to make their own submission for the ACMA's consideration.

FNMA itself has no further comment beyond the feedback provided in our earlier discussions on the matter. Please feel free to publish the letter provided to the ACMA (dated 18th November, 2021) as our feedback to the consultation process - it is attached here for quick reference.

We note a number of remote communities have been added to the list circulated in the consultation paper on this topic and support the inclusion of all locations listed to date.

Kind regards,  
Claire Stuchbery  
Policy & Stakeholder Engagement



W| [firstnationsmedia.org.au](http://firstnationsmedia.org.au)  
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First Nations Media Australia is supported by the Australian Government through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.  
First Nations Media Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work. We pay respect to Elders past, present and future.

Australian Media & Communications Authority  
PO Box Q500  
Queen Victoria Building NSW 1230



Via email: [hugh.clapin@acma.gov.au](mailto:hugh.clapin@acma.gov.au)

Thursday 18 November, 2021

Dear Hugh,

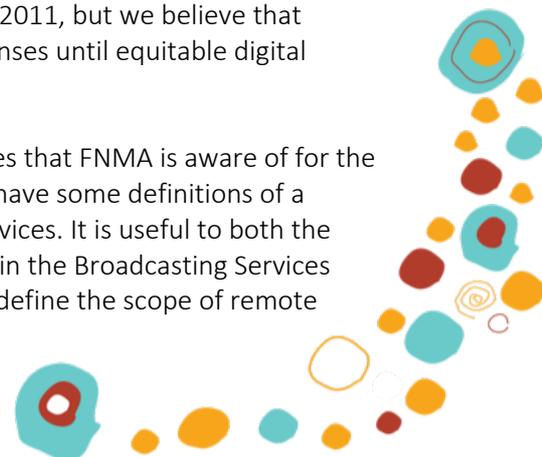
Thank-you for bringing to our attention the Broadcasting Services (Remote Indigenous Communities) Determination 2011 due to sunset on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022. It is timely to discuss the Determination and its continuing necessity. Further to your discussion with our Policy & Stakeholder Engagement Officer, Claire Stuchbery earlier this week, I want to reiterate some of First Nations Media Australia's reasoning for requesting an extension to the Determination at this time.

The 2011 iteration of the Determination was agreed in the context of incoming changes to the delivery of television broadcast in remote communities, which resulted in the introduction of VAST satellite. Some 20 years later the success of the VAST program is debatable with no maintenance program associated with its rollout and only short-term commitments of funding to support its functionality. Terrestrial television broadcast, while still important to many demographics, has declining audience appeal. But until remote communities have reliable internet connection with appropriate data and backhaul capacity to handle video streaming, it is still a vital mechanism for providing television services to regional and remote communities.

In 2022 the Commonwealth is developing its Indigenous Digital Inclusion Plan which will likely result in further technological advancements in remote communities over the coming years to meet the Closing the Gap target of equal levels of digital inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by 2025. We expect this will have a flow-on effect for broadcast services with greater access to digital technologies for both broadcasters and audiences. We have come full circle over the past 20 years and now find ourselves on the cusp of another technology transition as we're considering this Determination again. We ask that the Determination remains in place while this transition occurs (potentially another 5 years).

Similarly, the funding environment for media services has shifted in recent years. Funding allocations that were previously restricted to radio only activities can now be used to deliver any media services that meet community needs. Together with increasing interest in First Nations voices from the broader community, there is a highly likelihood of communities being able to attract resources to start a community television license than there has been over the past 20 years. The Determination makes exemptions for community television license applicants to operate in Remote Indigenous Communities which we would like to retain for the establishment of new community licenses over the coming few years. Funding has been a significant barrier to utilising this option since 2011, but we believe that situation is changing and would like to retain the option for localised licenses until equitable digital inclusion levels are attained for remote audiences.

Finally, there is no other definitive list of Remote Indigenous Communities that FNMA is aware of for the purposes of broadcast services. The Australian Bureau of Statistics does have some definitions of a remote community but their focus is largely on the delivery of health services. It is useful to both the ACMA and industry to have a listing of Remote Indigenous Communities in the Broadcasting Services Act as a reference tool for both Government and sector stakeholders to define the scope of remote





broadcasting services. However, we note that the current list is missing some communities and ask that the following locations be added to the list: Wilcannia (NSW), Kintore (NT) and Tjirkarli (WA).

While we recognise that the Determination has not been utilised to its full effect in recent years, FNMA believes the instrument remains valid and is highly likely to be effective in the new future both for the expansion of community television services to Remote Indigenous Communities and as discussions of regulatory reform relating to the licensing of Indigenous broadcast services unfold in 2022. We ask that the Determination be extended to align with targets in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, particularly outcome 17 on Access to Information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis Stokes".

Dennis Stokes  
CEO

