

SUBMISSION

BY

MEDIA ENTERTAINMENT AND ARTS ALLIANCE

TO THE

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND
THE ARTS**

**A REVIEW OF THE VIABILITY OF CREATING AN INDIGENOUS TELEVISION
BROADCASTING SERVICE AND THE REGULATORY ARRANGEMENTS THAT
SHOULD APPLY TO THE DIGITAL TRANSMISSION OF SUCH A SERVICE
USING SPECTRUM IN THE BROADCASTING SERVICES BANDS**

OCTOBER 2004

The Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance

The Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (Alliance) is the industrial and professional organisation representing the people who work in Australia's media and entertainment industries. Its membership

includes journalists, artists, photographers, performers, symphony orchestra musicians and film, television and performing arts technicians.

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”
Martin Luther King, 1963

The Alliance welcomes the enquiry into the viability of creating an Indigenous Television Broadcasting Service.

The Alliance considers that the establishment of such a service is essential.

Australians are currently served by two public broadcasting networks. While both the ABC and the SBS have charters that require them to broadcast programs that, in the case of the ABC, “reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian community”, and, in the case of SBS, “contribute to meeting the communications needs of Australia’s multicultural society, including ethnic, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities”, both broadcasters are inadequately funded and consequently constrained in their ability to fully realise their obligations.

Given that Indigenous Australians comprise 2.75% of the Australian population, live in areas across the length and breadth of the country, are disproportionately located in remote areas where access to broadcasting is already limited and speak more than 90 languages, some of which are spoken by only a handful of people, it is not surprising that adequately providing for this sector of the broadcast audience has proved difficult for broadcasters with mandates as comprehensive (and appropriately so) in their expectations as those of the ABC and the SBS.

The Alliance believes that all Australians have the right to see and hear stories that reflect their own culture.

Around the world, the rights of Indigenous peoples to have access to stories that reflect their own culture and the importance of access to programs broadcast in the language of the viewers is being recognised.

In New Zealand, Maori Television went to air in March this year. S4C, the Welsh language channel, has been broadcasting since 1982. ETV, the Basque language channel, has been on air in Spain since 1983 and the Aboriginal People’s Television Channel, APTN, has been operating in Canada since 1999.

In some instances, such services were provided only after a lengthy struggle, as in the case of Wales where advocates were forced to declare hunger strikes in order to have their calls for a separate broadcaster taken seriously. In other cases, the right to such a service was guaranteed by law, as in the case of New Zealand where an indigenous broadcasting service was established in accordance with rights set out in the Treaty of Waitangi.

The rights of Indigenous Australians to services that are already available to other Australians should now be recognised and an Indigenous Broadcasting Service, distinct from the current two public service broadcasters, established, controlled by Indigenous people and broadcasting Indigenous programs produced by Indigenous program-makers for Indigenous Australians and for the benefit of the broader Australian community.

Greg Harris, appearing for ATSIC, before the Productivity Commissioners during the Broadcasting Inquiry on December 17, 1999, put the case for an Indigenous broadcasting service this way: “It’s been an extremely high priority of this board and the previous board, in part because broadcasting is recognised as being central to Aboriginal people. Housing programs are expensive and they’re important, land rights is of central importance, but a lot of the commissioners, reflecting the needs of the Aboriginal community, say broadcasting language and culture are us. If we don’t have that, we are nothing.”¹

Indigenous Communications Australia (ICA) argued the same case before the Productivity Commission: “Since most human behaviours are language embedded, language is an inevitable part of

¹ Greg Harris, ATSIC, appearing before the Productivity Commission on December 17, 1999, in Brisbane during the Review of Broadcasting, transcript page 1642.

culture. Language reaffirms and nurtures cultural identity. It is simultaneously part of its culture, an index to it and symbolic of it. Loss of language therefore leads to cultural dislocation and destruction. ... Indigenous languages, like the cultures they reinforce and support, are threatened by an undiluted diet of mainstream broadcasting, especially mainstream television. For them it is 'cultural nerve gas'. The role of the Indigenous media is not only to enable Indigenous peoples, but also to maintain the languages and cultures that are the core of their identity."²

In 2000, the Productivity Commission, following its comprehensive review of broadcasting in Australia, recommended that the Federal Government "should examine the need for, and the feasibility of, establishing an Indigenous broadcasting service, including who should provide the service, how the service should be provided, the additional government resources required, and a timetable for implementation."³

Whilst disappointing that it has taken four years for the Government to act on this recommendation, the Alliance welcomes the current review and looks forward to the result being the establishment of a third public broadcaster, an Indigenous broadcasting service controlled by Indigenous people.

Representation of Indigenous Australians in Australian Broadcasting

The most recent report on the portrayal of cultural diversity in Australian television drama, *Cultural Diversity in Australian Television Drama*, was released in May 2002. It surveyed actors appearing in main and guest roles in 13 television drama productions between May and August 2001.

The study was conducted by the Queensland University of Technology in collaboration with the Alliance, as was the case with an earlier study conducted in 1999. Written by Marion Jacka, it confirmed the trend identified in the 1999 study that the representation of actors of culturally diverse backgrounds has increased significantly since the early 1990s.

Where the 1999 report canvassed actors in sustaining roles in television drama, the most recent study looked at lead roles and guest roles.

One marked change was in representation of actors from Asian backgrounds. In the 1999 study there were no Asian actors working in main roles in any of the seven programs included, however, the latest study showed eight actors of Asian backgrounds – two in lead roles and six in guest/support roles.

However, the most alarming finding was that Indigenous actors were not well represented, and accounted for only 1.1 percent of actors – a downturn on the 1999 results. "[I]ndigenous actors are under-represented in the guest/supporting role area, with only one of 136 guest roles filled by an Indigenous actor."

Unlike the 1999 survey, which focused on commercial television, the 2002 study surveyed actors across both commercial and public broadcasting and found that there was no significant difference between the two areas of broadcasting. Of all the actors surveyed (main and guest cast) across both commercial and public broadcasting 26.5% were of various culturally diverse backgrounds – 28% of guest roles and 22% of main roles.

To date, no studies have been undertaken in any genre other than drama.

	1992	1999	2002	General Population
Non-English speaking background	2%	20%	25%	24%
Indigenous	0%	3%	1.1%	2%

² Indigenous Communications Australia (ICA): A Proposal to Meet the Broadcasting Needs of Australia's Indigenous Peoples, ATSI Submission to the Productivity Commission Review of Broadcasting, September 1999, page 11.

³ *Broadcasting Inquiry Report*, Productivity Commission, March 2000, Recommendation 8.7, page 291.

The above results demonstrate how little presence Indigenous people have in the Australian stories Australians see nightly on their screen. Most disappointingly, the improvements that occurred during the 1990s, are now disappearing.

That the 2002 study canvassed both commercial and public sector broadcasting and found no discernable difference in the representation of Indigenous performers is of concern as it indicates that neither of the public sector broadcasters have been able to find a way through their financial constraints (discussed below) to more adequately provide space for stories that emanate from and reflect the lives of Indigenous Australians.

One positive development since the 2002 survey is that SBS is producing a mini-series, *Remote Area Nurse – RAN*, which is currently filming on the Torres Strait island of Masig. Although the production includes a range of roles for Torres Strait Islanders and will be produced partly in Creole, the language of the people of Masig, the lead role is nonetheless that of the nurse, a non-Indigenous role. For many of the Islander cast members, most of whom have not worked as actors previously, the importance of the production lies in the fact that an exploration of hardship is part of the message of the mini-series. Reporting on the filming, *The Age* commented “Aaron Fa’Aoso, a health worker in his remote Cape York community of Seisia, relishes the responsibility of depicting the issues faced by Australia’s poorest and most isolated inhabitants; alcohol abuse, domestic violence and diabetes ... ‘It’s a huge privilege to be part of that, to know that these issues are going to be put out there on the television screen,” Fa’Aoso says.”⁴

Although at one level Australian television has provided little representation of Indigenous Australians, in other respects it is impossible to overstate the importance of Aboriginality in Australian culture. It can be argued that Australia’s Indigenous Aborigines have been co-opted as part of the creation of an Australian national identity. Internationally, Aboriginal art is as iconic as the Sydney Opera House, and that sense of the centrality of Indigenous Australia to the collective understanding of what this country is today cannot be overlooked.

Nonetheless, much of the portrayal of Indigenous Australians has involved a series of mainly negative portrayals – crime, drunkenness, petrol sniffing, poor health, domestic violence, hopelessness. When not intended to be viewed as negative constructions, stories dealing with Indigenous issues are often constructed as “the plight of” stories, where Indigenous Australians are more often than not cast as victims. In news and current affairs much of the representation of Indigenous Australians has been constructed in oppositions – white versus black, land rights against mining interests, and so on. The coverage of the recent Redfern riots was some of the only news coverage of Australia seen overseas this year.

There have, however, been avowedly Aboriginal programs on both the public broadcasting networks, since SBS’s *First in Line* in 1989 and the ABC’s *Blackout* the same year.

In 1994, the ABC mini-series *Heartland* offered the first television drama with an Aboriginal hero. Indeed, for many years Australian viewers could have been excused for thinking that Ernie Dingo was the only Indigenous actor in the country. As well as *Heartland*, Dingo has had a series of roles in television productions as varied as the children’s series *Clowning Around* to drama series such as *The Flying Doctors*, *GP* and *Dolphin Cove* to programs like the light entertainment show *Wheel of Fortune*. It was, however, his role in *The Great Outdoors* that has made the most impact. A long running magazine style travel program that Dingo was instrumental in devising, it is the only time an Aboriginal actor has secured a role in a long running prime time infotainment program.

In more recent years, actors like Aaron Pederson (*Water Rates*, *Wildside*, *MDA*) and Deborah Mailman (*The Secret Life of Us*) have secured substantial on-going roles in television dramas. But despite these successes, and the fact that many of the roles performed, in particular by Pederson, have not been scripted as essentially Aboriginal roles (rather they have included roles as a police officer, doctor and so on, where the character was also Aboriginal), an Indigenous presence on Australian television screens remains extremely small.

⁴ *Stars, crew feel the heat in new mini-series, The Age*, 18 October 2004.

Despite the considerable success of many Aboriginal filmmakers in recent years, arising from work like the *Sand to Celluloid* and *Shifting Sands* series of short films auspiced by the Australian Film Commission and features directed by Aboriginal filmmakers like Ivan Sen's *Beneath Clouds* and Rachel Perkin's *One Night the Moon*, Indigenous Australians are yet to have an impact on the programming of mainstream broadcasting in Australia, outside dedicated slots such as the Rhoda Roberts hosted *Awaye!* on the ABC's Radio National and the Rachel Maza hosted *Message Stick* on ABC television.

In any event, and notwithstanding the serious endeavours made in particular by the public broadcasters to ensure some, albeit small, levels of Indigenous presence in the Australian broadcasting landscape, the Alliance is of the view that the diverse and complex needs of Australia's Indigenous communities will be best served by a public broadcasting service constructed specifically for the needs and desires as is the case in other countries.

As set out below, the public broadcasters are currently underfunded and struggle to provide the levels of service to Australians that they currently do. However, were the current public broadcasters funded in a manner that would allow them to program greater levels of Indigenous produced programs, the Alliance believes that editorial independence is essential and that editorial independence can best be achieved with the establishment of a discrete Indigenous broadcasting service.

The ABC

The ABC operates under a charter that requires it:

“to provide within Australia innovative and comprehensive broadcasting services of a high standard as part of the Australian broadcasting system consisting of national, commercial and public sectors and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, to provide:

- (i) broadcasting programs that contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain, and reflect the cultural diversity of, the Australian community; and
- (ii) broadcasting programs of an educational nature.”⁵

Clause 2(a) of the Charter requires the ABC to take account of “the multicultural character of the Australian community” and “to provide a balance between broadcasting programs of wide appeal and specialized broadcasting programs.”⁶

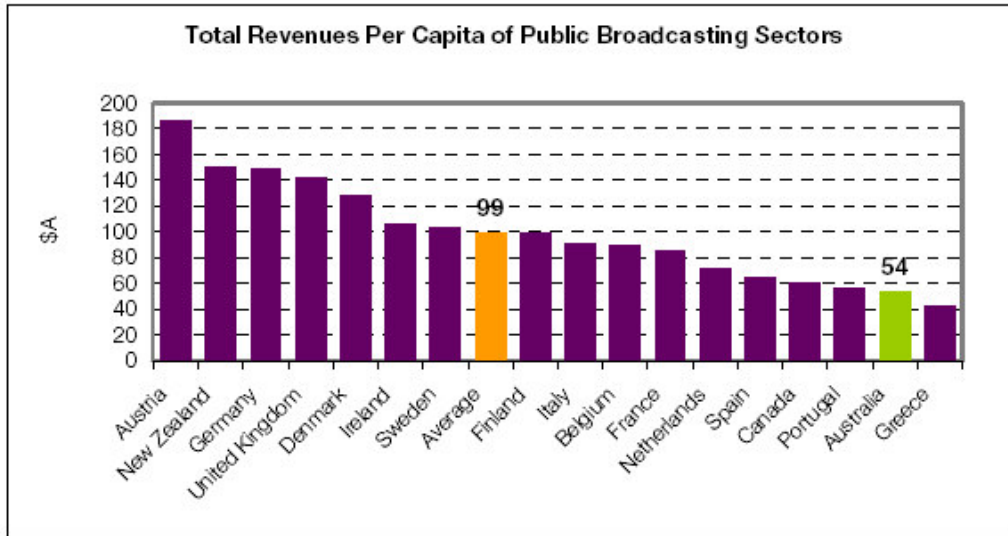
Public broadcasting in Australia is under-funded by international standards.

In 2002, the Macquarie Bank prepared a report for the ABC entitled *An Analysis of the ABC's Funding Relative to International Public Broadcasters and Domestic Peers*. The report, which was tabled in the Senate during Additional Senate Estimates Hearings in February this year, noted that “Australia's public broadcasting sector operates on a relatively small amount of income compared to its peers, with only 54% of the average per capita revenues for the public broadcasters surveyed”.⁷ Funding for the ABC and SBS was combined in the Macquarie Bank analysis.

⁵ Charter of the Corporation, Section 6, Clause 1 of the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983*, available online at www.abc.net.au.

⁶ Ibid, Clause 2.

⁷ *An Analysis of the ABC's Funding Relative to International Public Broadcasters and Domestic Peers*, Macquarie Bank, September 2002, page 22, available online at http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ecita_ctte/quest_answers/addest0304/cita/abc_q009att1.pdf.

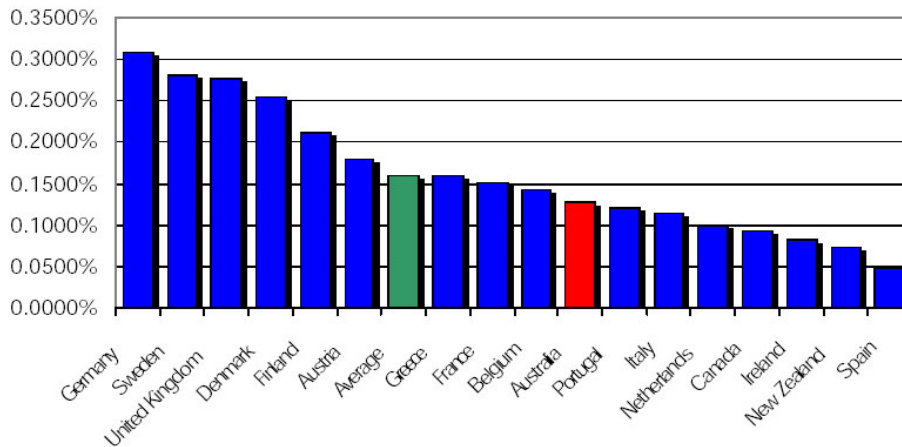


Source: *An Analysis of the ABC's Funding Relative to International Public Broadcasters and Domestic Peers*, Macquarie Bank, September 2002, page 22.

The Macquarie Bank report found that “On a per capita measure, Australia’s annual per capita government funding is 79% of the average of all surveyed broadcasters, and only 49% of the BBC’s government funding per capita”.⁸

As a range of factors, including geographic reach of broadcasters, population size and density and broadcasting in more than one language, can distort direct comparison, the Macquarie Bank also compared government funding of public broadcasters as a percentage of gross domestic product. Using this measure, Australia ranked tenth out of the seventeen countries surveyed.⁹

Government Funding as a % of GDP

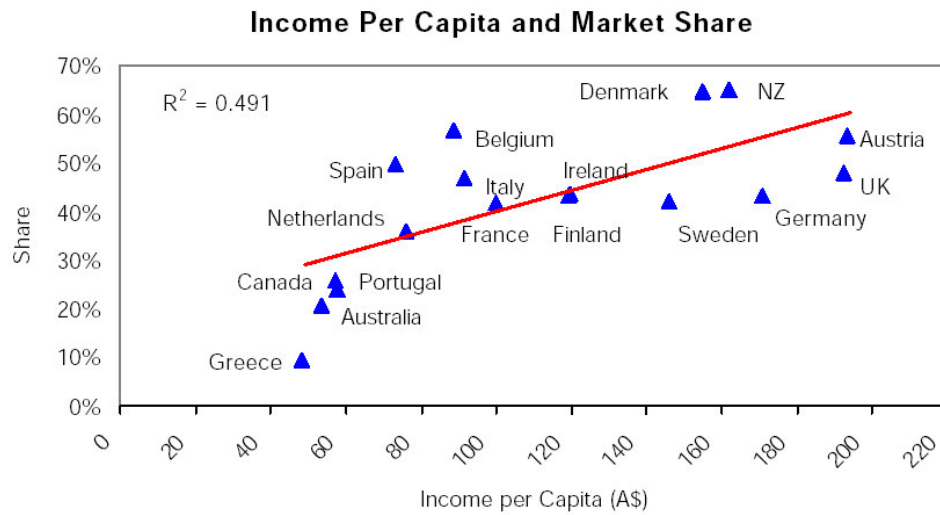


Source: *European Audiovisual Observatory Statistical Yearbook 2002*, *ABC and SBS Parliamentary Appropriation*, *CBC Annual Report 2000-2001*, *TVNZ Annual Report 2001*, *NZ ON Air Annual Report 2001*, *World Bank GDP data*.

⁸ *An Analysis of the ABC's Funding Relative to International Public Broadcasters and Domestic Peers*, Macquarie Bank, September 2002, page 23, available online at http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/ecita_ctte/quest_answers/addest0304/cita/abc_q009att1.pdf.

⁹ *Ibid*, page 24.

Interestingly, the Macquarie Bank report found that “Those countries where public broadcasting has higher income levels tend to have public broadcasters with greater market share”¹⁰ and, with a relatively small income per capita, the ABC and SBS captured 20.8% of the market.



Source: European Audiovisual Observatory Statistical Yearbook 2002, AC Nielsen data., CBC Annual Report 2000-2001, ABC and SBS Parliamentary Appropriations and Budget Papers, TVNZ Annual Report 2001, NZ ON Air Annual Report 2001.

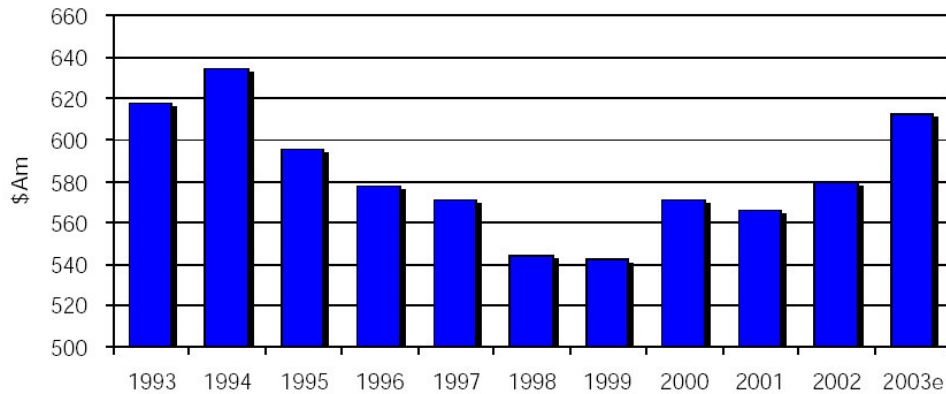
Historically, funding of the ABC has been by way of annual Government appropriation. In 1989, the Government introduced a three-year appropriation to give the ABC greater certainty. However, it is not a binding agreement and is still appropriated annually as part of the budget process. Consequently, actual funding can vary from that specified in the triennial funding agreement. For instance, in the financial year 1997, funding was reduced by \$10.8 million in the second year of a triennial period but increased by \$17.8 million in 2002.

Government funding to the ABC fell steadily from 1994 until 1999. Whilst funding increased from 1999, by 2003, funding had only been restored to the funding level of 1993.¹¹

¹⁰ *An Analysis of the ABC's Funding Relative to International Public Broadcasters and Domestic Peers*, Macquarie Bank, September 2002, page 26.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

ABC Government Funding
- In Dec 2002 Prices



Source: ABC Annual Reports; ABC; Macquarie, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

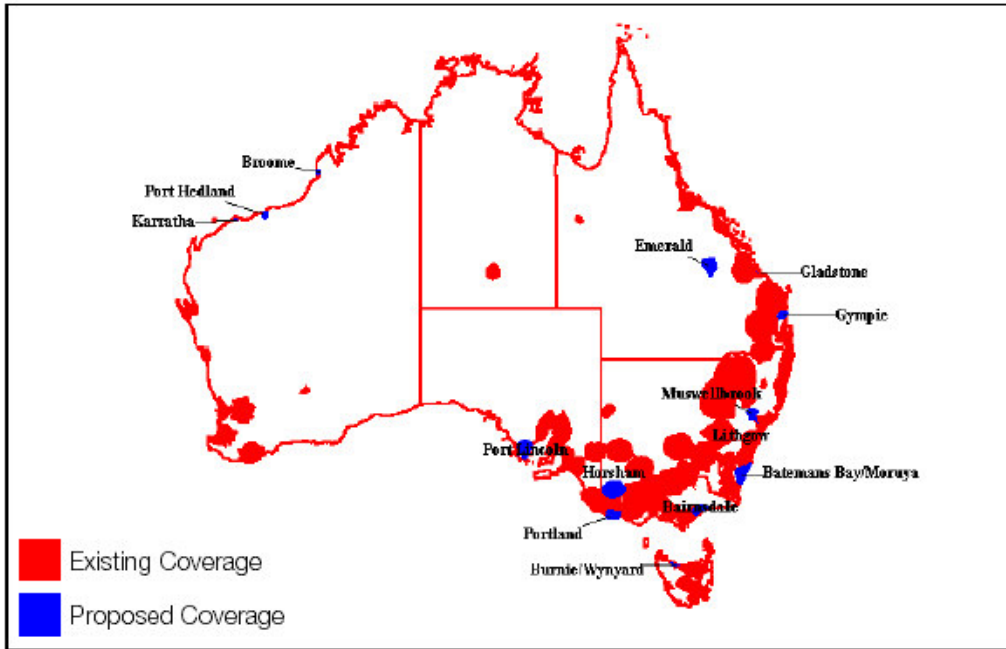
Consequently, with levels of funding being low by international standards and currently comparable to funding considered appropriate a decade ago in the analogue era, it is little wonder that the ABC is not able to deliver to Australians what Australians expect from the national broadcaster. Indeed, the ABC is unable to deliver levels of Australian content comparable with the levels required to be broadcast by the commercial free to air networks.

It is only necessary to look to the ABC's short-lived digital multichannels, *ABC Kids* and *Fly* to realise what the ABC in the digital future might look like. As they were launched and financed on a non-recurrent basis, they could not be sustained without on-going additional funds. Nonetheless the ABC remains committed to their relaunch.

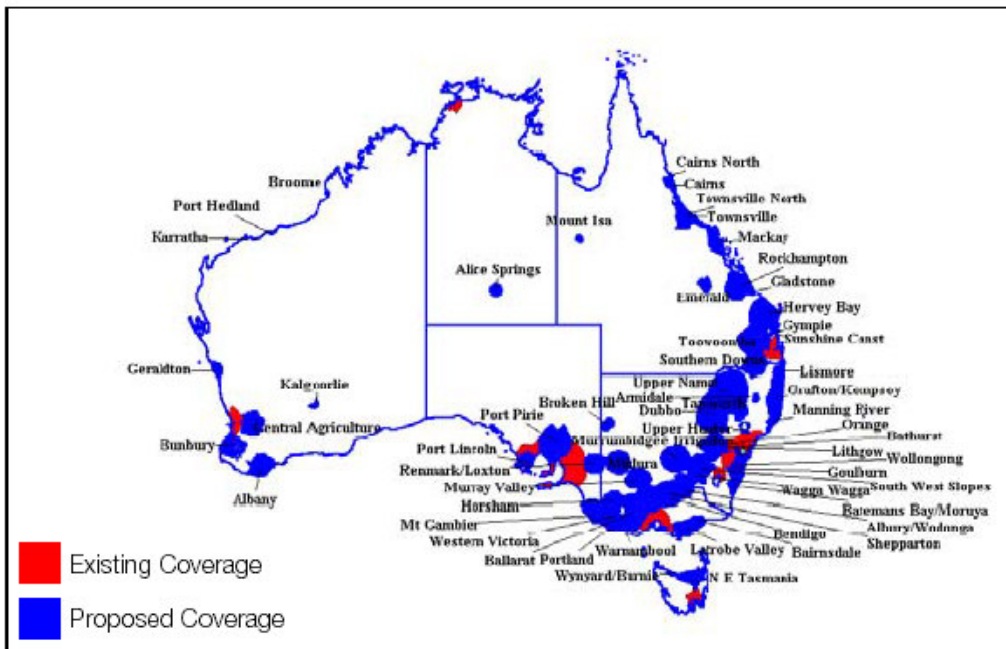
In its Triennial Funding Submission for 2003-2006, the ABC noted that "More than 1.2 million Australians do not have access to the terrestrial reception of Triple J. The Parliamentary and News Network (PNN), incorporating ABC NewsRadio, reaches only 74% of the population. There is also a small number of areas that are unable to receive the services of the other ABC Radio networks or ABC Television services."¹² The submission proposed a five-year plan to extend the reach of Triple J and NewsRadio to Australian communities with a population of 10,000 or more. To that end, the ABC unsuccessfully sought additional base funding of \$6.268 million for the financial year 2003-04, \$13.661 million for 2004-05 and \$18.823 million for 2005-06.

Given that a significant proportion of the Indigenous Australians live in communities with a population considerably less than 10,000, even had the ABC's bid referred to above been successful, extended network reach would not have been sufficient to address the needs of many Indigenous Australians.

¹² *ABC Triennial Funding Submission Summary 2003-06*, ABC, page 8, available online at www.abc.net.au.



Triple J, current and proposed coverage



ABC NewsRadio on PNN, current and proposed coverage

See Triennial Funding Submission Summary 2003-06, ABC, page 8.

The appropriation for the ABC for the financial year 2002-03 was \$807.743 million and in 2003-04 was \$742.584 million together with a \$20 million loan.¹³

In the May 2001 Budget, the ABC received an additional \$17.8 million per annum for four years to support a range of initiatives that allowed ABC Radio to expand regional content and services and

¹³ See Portfolio Budget Statements available online at www.dcita.gov.au.

produce 10,000 additional hours a year of radio programs from regional Australia. In its 2003-06 Triennial Funding Submission the ABC sought an increase in base funding to enable this National Interest Initiative (NII) to continue into the future. In the 2004-05 Budget, the Government extended support for regional and local content programming providing \$54.4 million over three years. Whilst a welcome extension, it is of concern that the Government chose to provide the funds specially earmarked and for a determined time frame rather than increase base funding, as requested by the ABC, which would have delivered certainty for regional and local content programming produced under the NII.

The NII funding referred to above enabled the ABC to employ 23 Radio Online producers across Australia to increase online, radio and television regional content but the funds were sufficient to serve only half the country and did not allow them to exploit all new media formats. A modest increase to the funding was sought, and although the funding was extended for three years it was not increased nor converted to base funding.

The ABC has for years sought to broadcast Australian content on television comparable to the overall transmission quota required of the free-to-air commercial networks, namely 55% between the hours of 6am and midnight. As the ABC itself noted in 2003, continuing budget constraints have meant that in recent years, "Whilst ABC Television has achieved significant reductions in the cost of broadcast programming since 1995-96, it has done so by reducing levels of Australian drama and comedy production in favour of less expensive genres."¹⁴

In its Triennial Funding Submission for 2003-06, the ABC sought additional funding to establish a new production trust fund to underpin an additional 180 hours of high quality first run Australian content over the course of the triennium – \$12.5 million in the first year, \$25.750 million in the second and \$26.523 million in the third. The outcome in the 2004-05 Budget was an allocation of \$4.2 million a year to enable the ABC "to purchase high quality domestic and overseas television programming".¹⁵

Making the announcement, the Minister for Communications Information Technology and the Arts, the Hon Daryl Williams, acknowledged that "In recent years, the ABC has been required to adjust its program purchasing in response to significant increases in the cost of a range of television programming. Greater competition, particularly from the pay television sector, has seen the cost of some types of programming increase by up to 10 per cent per annum. Other factors affecting the cost of programming include changes in production and supply of programs internationally and rising production costs in Australia."¹⁶

It is clear, however, that the additional funding falls far short of what the ABC considers necessary to address its increasing difficulty in broadcasting first release Australian drama and comedy programs. Indeed, its request would not have driven sufficient increase in first release drama programs to satisfy the sub-quota drama requirements to which the free-to-air commercial broadcasters must comply.

The Macquarie Bank report referred to above concluded, "On a comparison of Government funding per capita, the ABC funding levels are below its peers and it would need approximately an additional \$200m pa of funding to be on par with the average of the surveyed countries. When compared against the total revenues per capita of public broadcasters, the ABC would approximately require an additional \$700m pa in revenues to have a level of revenue equivalent to the average level of total revenues per capita in our survey group. Finally, when measured against government funding as a proportion of GDP, the ABC would approximately require an addition \$200m in funding to equal the average proportion of funding of the public broadcasters surveyed."¹⁷

In short, depending on the measure used, the Macquarie Bank considers additional government funding of between \$200 million and \$700 million per annum is required to increase ABC funding to a level

¹⁴ *ABC Triennial Funding Submission Summary 2003-06*, ABC, page 9, available online at www.abc.net.au.

¹⁵ *More TV Programming Choice for ABC*, The Hon Daryl Williams MP, 11 May 2004 available online at http://www.dcita.gov.au/Article/0,,0_1-2_1-3_143-4_118732,00.html.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *An Analysis of the ABC's Funding Relative to International Public Broadcasters and Domestic Peers*, Macquarie Bank, September 2002, page 33.

comparable with its international peers, let alone to be funded at a level that might enable the ABC to become a world's best public broadcaster.

The report notes that, "The ABC maintains a high level of distinctiveness relative to its international peers. However ... additional funding would put the ABC more on par with its overseas counterparts, and help drive market share and in turn relevance in the face of an increasingly competitive media landscape."¹⁸

While it is high time that the ABC is funded in a manner that enables it to deliver the services required of it under its charter, it is also clear that the ABC is not in a financial position to deliver programs and services that adequately address the needs of Indigenous Australians. That being said, the establishment of a national Indigenous broadcasting service would not obviate the need for the ABC to continue to broadcast programs that reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian community, including Indigenous Australians.

Special Broadcasting Service (SBS)

SBS was established as an independent statutory authority on 1 January 1978 under the Broadcasting Act 1942. The Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991 (C'wlth) which came into effect on 23 December 1991, established SBS as a Corporation. This Act gives SBS a clear charter setting out what the Australian people through the Parliament require of SBS as a national broadcaster.

The functions which Parliament has prescribed for SBS are set out in the Charter of the Corporation (section 6 of the Special Broadcasting Service Act 1991) and are:

The principal function of SBS is to provide multilingual and multicultural radio and television services that inform, educate and entertain all Australians, and, in doing so, reflect Australia's multicultural society.

SBS, in performing its principal function, must:

- (a) contribute to meeting the communications needs of Australia's multicultural society, including ethnic, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; and
- (b) increase awareness of the contribution of a diversity of cultures to the continuing development of Australian society; and
- (c) promote understanding and acceptance of the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity of the Australian people; and
- (d) contribute to the retention and continuing development of language and other cultural skills; and
- (e) as far as practicable, inform, educate and entertain Australians in their preferred languages; and
- (f) make use of Australia's diverse creative resources; and
- (g) contribute to the overall diversity of Australian television and radio services, particularly taking into account the contribution of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the public broadcasting sector; and
- (h) contribute to extending the range of Australian television and radio services, and reflect the changing nature of Australian society, by presenting many points of view and using innovative forms of expression.

Source: SBS, www.sbs.com.au.

¹⁸ *An Analysis of the ABC's Funding Relative to International Public Broadcasters and Domestic Peers*, Macquarie Bank, September 2002, page 34.

As noted above in respect of the ABC, the Macquarie Bank report on public broadcasting concluded that public broadcasting in Australia is underfunded by comparison with public broadcasting overseas. The Macquarie Bank report, commissioned by the ABC, did not specify the extent to which funding to SBS would need to be increased in order that it reach funding levels at least comparable with its international peers.

However, the SBS Triennial Funding Submission for 2003-06 sought an increase of funding for the financial year 2003-04 of \$25.607 million, \$35.429 million for the following year and \$50.789 million for 2005-06. Like the ABC, its overall bid was unsuccessful. As the ABC funding submission did not approach a request for increased funding that the Macquarie Bank report noted as being necessary to bring the broadcasting in line with overseas peers, it is likely that SBS's submission was the most modest that broadcaster thought possible to request.

Part of the SBS submission addressed regional radio transmission progression and requested an additional \$0.102 million in the first year, \$3.313 million in the second and \$10.009 in the third.

In arguing the need for the provision of frequencies and transmitters in regional Australia for their national radio network, the SBS submission said:

“This proposal would enable almost all Australians to receive SBS Radio services. Eighteen sites are targeted for Regional SBS Radio services, which would:

- deliver current SBS Radio services to listeners in most Australian urban centres with large LOTE [language other than English] populations;
- provide SBS Radio to many of the estimated 400,000 Australians not currently served;
- add infrastructure outside the major capitals, making settlement more attractive to new migrants; and
- assist State Governments and other bodies to communicate services provided outside the major cities, assisting and encouraging settlement in these areas.”¹⁹

The arguments regarding adequate funding for SBS are no different to those outlined in respect of the ABC and consequently are not reiterated here.

Suffice to say that without adequate funding this national broadcaster is also constrained in its ability to deliver the service that Australian audiences, including Indigenous Australians, expect of a national public broadcaster.

SBS faces a considerable challenge in catering for the needs of a society as culturally and linguistically diverse as Australia's. SBS currently broadcasts in 68 languages. To put the challenge of adequately serving Indigenous Australian, there are currently estimated to be approximately 90 living Indigenous languages spoken in Australia today.

Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme (BRACS)

BRACS was introduced by the Federal Government in 1987 in response to the concerns of Indigenous Australians about the impact the launching of the Australian satellite, Aussat, might have. Indigenous Australians sought resources that would enable them to broadcast locally produced radio and video programs, receive free-to-air commercial and public broadcasting and control what was broadcast in their communities. By 1991, Telstra had installed 80 BRACS units across Australia. Some broadcast both television and radio, some only radio. For instance, PY Media (formerly EVTV), now based at Umuwa, initially produced thousands of hours of local video content but these days, whilst still producing video programs, focuses more on radio. The same is true of many other indigenous media organisations established under BRACS.

In 1992, the BRACS networks were incorporated into the community broadcasting category when the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992* came into effect.

¹⁹ *Summary SBS' Triennial Funding Submission for the period 2003-2006*, available online at www.sbs.com.au.

All the BRACS networks have struggled on slender budgets but with the recently announced abolition of ATSIIC that struggle has been exacerbated. Those in South Australia, for instance, are understood to be losing approximately \$100,000 in funding per annum.

Community broadcasting in rural and remote areas plays a crucial role in Indigenous communities. It is a role that could and should have been enhanced with greater funding before now.

However, the former BRACS is insufficient, whether funding is increased or not, to service the diverse needs of Indigenous Australians across the continent.

It is appropriate that Indigenous Australians are able to access properly funded public broadcasting services offering culturally and linguistically relevant programming together with having access to community broadcasting services.

What difference would a national Indigenous broadcasting service make?

“Language is the most efficient means of transmitting a culture, and it is the owners of that culture that lose the most when a language dies. Every culture has adapted to unique circumstances, and the language expresses those circumstances. While a community may not lose its sense of identity when it loses its language, identity is closely associated with language. When Yugoslavia broke up, it was very important that the Serbo-Croatian language spoken in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro be called ‘Croatian’ by the Croats, ‘Bosnian’ by the Bosnians, and so on. All peoples identify their culture as closely with their languages as with their religion. What we talk about, think, and believe is closely bound up with the words we have, so the history of a culture can be mapped in its language. The Russian word ‘mir’ for example has three discrete meanings today: commune, world, peace. There was a point in Russian history when most of the population lived in communes all their lives so that a commune was a Russian’s world so long as they were at peace. (They tended to flee into the forests when invaded.) Millions of cultural stories like this are at risk.

“People from other cultures are also impoverished when any language dies. The history tied up in a language will go unrecorded; the poetry and rhythm of a singular tongue will be silenced forever. The scientific search for Universal Grammar, the common starting point for all grammars that human children seem to be born with, depends on our knowing what all human languages have in common. The wholesale loss of languages that we face today will greatly restrict how much we can learn about human cognition, language, and language acquisition at a time when the achievements in these arenas have been greater than ever before.”

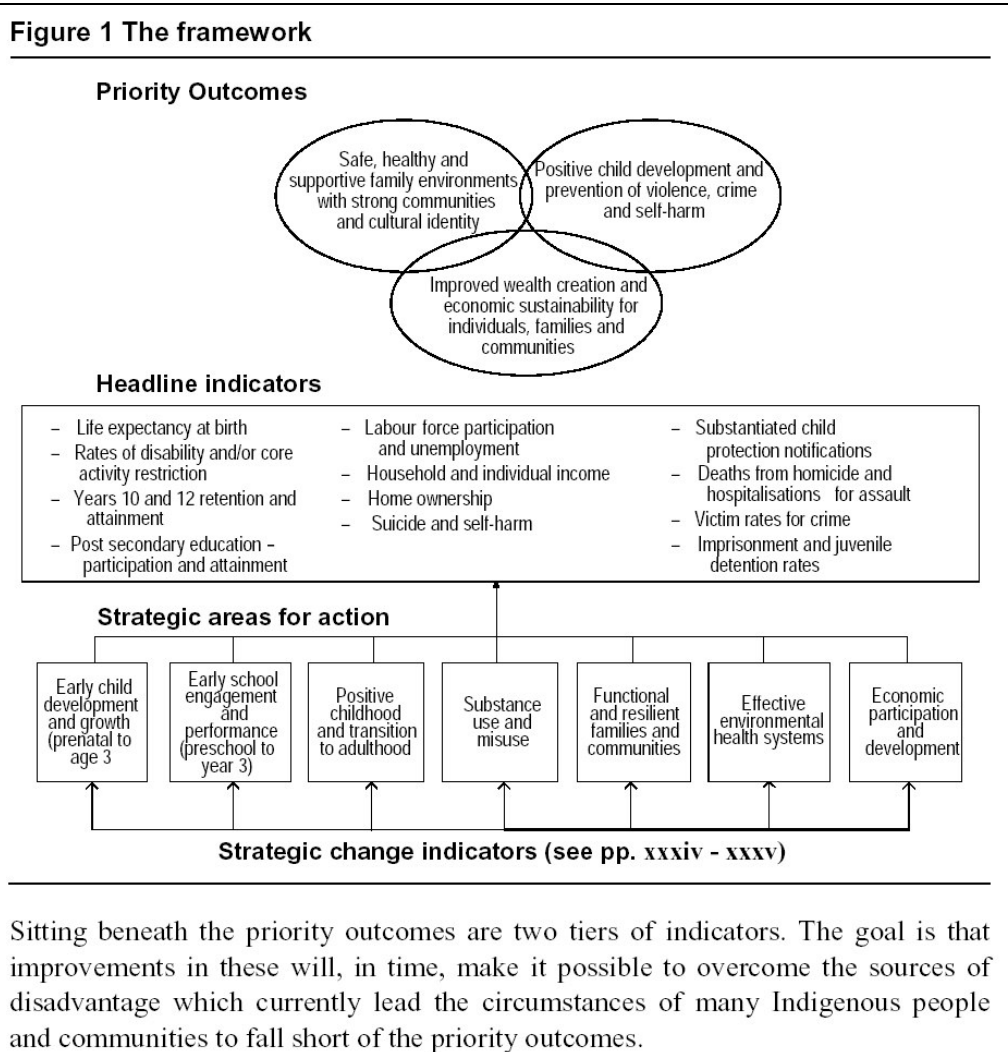
Endangered Language Initiative²⁰

In 1788, there were about 250 separate Aboriginal languages spoken in Australia, not including dialects. Today, only 90 survive and it is considered that possibly only 20 are sufficiently strong to survive through this century.

In 2003, the Productivity Commission identified “safe, healthy and supportive environments with strong communities and cultural identity” as a priority outcome in addressing Indigenous disadvantage together with “positive child development” and “improved wealth creation and economic sustainability for individuals, families and communities”.²¹

²⁰ Endangered Language Initiative, see www.yourdictionary.com/elr.whatis.html.

²¹ *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage*, Productivity Commission, 2003, page XX1.



Source: *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage*, Productivity Commission, 2003, page XXI.

The Alliance considers that central to building strong communities and cultural identity is access to language and access to representations of one's own cultural identity in the media. It has been the underpinning of successive federal government social and cultural policy for a century. What is considered essential for the wider Australian community must also be essential for Indigenous Australians.

An Indigenous national broadcasting service, if established, would be able to play a crucial and central role in addressing all the strategic areas for action identified by the Productivity Commission, not because it would be a mechanism through which problems might be addressed, rather because it will afford Indigenous Australians the same fundamental right to access to culturally and linguistically relevant broadcasting services enjoyed by Australians in the wider community.

The Alliance is aware of the National Indigenous Television (NITV) submission made to this inquiry and supports its call for the establishment of a third national broadcaster, namely an Indigenous broadcasting service under Indigenous control funded by the Federal Government. Most importantly, the Alliance believes that it is the views of the Australia's Indigenous communities that must be paramount in the current review and in the establishment of an Indigenous broadcasting service.

It is time for Indigenous Australians to be afforded the same rights as indigenous communities and linguistically diverse communities in other countries. The Alliance has outlined brief histories of such services in other countries which can be found at the end of this submission. These histories demonstrate that a third public national broadcasting service is achievable as the challenges faced by

other countries are not dissimilar to the challenges that will be faced in Australia. For example, like Canada Australia's Indigenous population is spread across a huge land mass. As in Eire, New Zealand and Spain, the target primary audience is comparatively small for a broadcaster. The benefits for the Indigenous communities and the wider population are, however, considerable.

Conclusion

The Alliance supports the establishment of a third national public broadcaster, an Indigenous broadcasting service and such a service should be complemented by Indigenous community broadcasting services.

The Alliance considers that the establishment of such a national Indigenous broadcasting service should be undertaken in consultation with the Indigenous community and be a direct response to the issues raised by Indigenous Australians.

It is important that an Indigenous broadcasting service be established under direct Indigenous control.

The Alliance considers that access to stories that reflect one's culture is a basic human right. That right has been acknowledged by successive Australian governments in respect of the Australian community as a whole and it is now appropriate that this right be meaningfully afforded to Indigenous Australians.

UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity

Adopted Paris, 2 November 2001

Article 2

In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Thus defined, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. Indissociable from a democratic framework, cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of cultural capacities that sustain public life.

Article 3

Cultural diversity widens the range of options open to everyone, it is one of the roots of development, understood not simply in terms of economic growth, but also as a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence.

Article 4

The defence of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect of human dignity. It implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the rights of persons belonging to minorities and those of indigenous peoples ...

Article 5

Cultural rights are an integral part of human rights, which are universal, indivisible and interdependent...

Article 6

While ensuring the free flow of ideas by word and image care should be exercised that all cultures can express themselves and make themselves known. Freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, equal access to art and to scientific and technological knowledge, including in digital form, and the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination are the guarantees of cultural diversity.

Article 9

While ensuring the free circulation of ideas and works, cultural policies must create conditions conducive to the production and dissemination of diversified cultural goods and services through cultural industries that have the means to assert themselves at the local and global level...

Adopted in 2001 in the wake of the events of 11 September 2001, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity recognises that cultural diversity and the expression of cultural diversity is “as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature”²² and “lays down not instructions but general guidelines to be turned into ground-breaking policies by Member States in their specific contexts”.²³

The Alliance considers that the establishment of a national Indigenous broadcasting service would fulfil many of the objectives set out in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and supports the National Indigenous Television submission made to this Inquiry.

²² *The cultural wealth of the world is its diversity in dialogue*, Introduction to the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO.

²³ *Ibid.*

New Zealand²⁴

It is ironic that the first country to ever legislate for state control of airwaves should now have the most open broadcast market in the world, being one of only four countries to cede the right for the state to mandate minimum levels of local content with commitments made in the GATS in 1994.

The New Zealand government inquiry to investigate the prospects for television was announced in 1940s but did not report until 1957. It recommended a public monopoly and a service was launched in 1960. With a small population base, it was clear licence fees would be insufficient to finance the service and consequently advertising was allowed from the outset.

The goal of fostering national culture and identity was constrained from the outset by costs. Infrastructure costs were significant and funds for programming tightly constrained. Consequently, the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation (NZBC) relied heavily on imported programs, particularly from Britain. By the late sixties, the NZBC was the largest purchaser of BBC produced programs in the world. By the mid eighties, local content on New Zealand television – including sports, game shows, news and current affairs and repeats – amounted to only 25%, compared with 50% on Australian television and 85% in the United Kingdom.

Resisting the entry of the private sector into broadcasting, in 1974, the NZBC's two channels became separate companies introducing competition for advertising and audiences. Spiralling costs incurred by the transfer from black and white to colour and the launch of the second public channel, led to the National Government bringing the two channels under unified control providing complementary services in 1976.

Despite pressure to establish commercial broadcasters, it was not until 1989 that TV3 went to air and promptly went into receivership six months later.

Throughout the eighties, opposing attitudes to broadcasting prevailed – on the one hand, a concern that the two channels operate as a public service system with the introduction of local content quotas being sought competed with a philosophy that favoured the two channels operating commercially with the potential of financial dividends that might accrue to the government's benefit.

By 1988 broadcasting, following in the wake of many other state owned operations, was converted to a state owned enterprise, Television New Zealand, with a remit to operate commercially. The following year, TVNZ lost its control over licence fee income with the introduction of the 1989 Broadcasting Act and the establishment of the Broadcasting Commission, now responsible for collecting and disbursing the licence fees and mandated to fund local production. It later became New Zealand on Air (NZOA).

With introduction of the Radio Communications Act in 1989, access to national and regional UHF frequencies could be acquired at auction. The first subscription television service, Sky Network, was launched in 1990. Despite the increase in television services that followed, debate about whether the range of program options available to audiences also increased continued through the nineties. What is clear is that local content levels continue to be woefully low by international standards.

The latest player in the audiovisual market in New Zealand is Maori Television. Established under the Maori Television Service Act 2003 (Te Aratuku Whakaata Irirangi Maori), charged with playing "a major role in revitalising language and culture that is the birthright of every Maori and the heritage of every New Zealander."²⁵

Maori Television receives funding from Te Mangai Paho Maori Broadcasting Funding Agency which provides annual, direct funding for in-house program production, acquisition of indigenous programs from overseas and subtitling and reversioning costs. NZ\$14.5 million was provided for the 12 month

²⁴ Sources: The Museum of Broadcasting Communications, www.museum.tv, Maori Television, www.maoritelevision.com, Te Mangai Paho Maori Broadcasting Funding Agency, <http://www.tmp.govt.nz>.

²⁵ Maori Television, see online at <http://www.maoritelevision.com>.

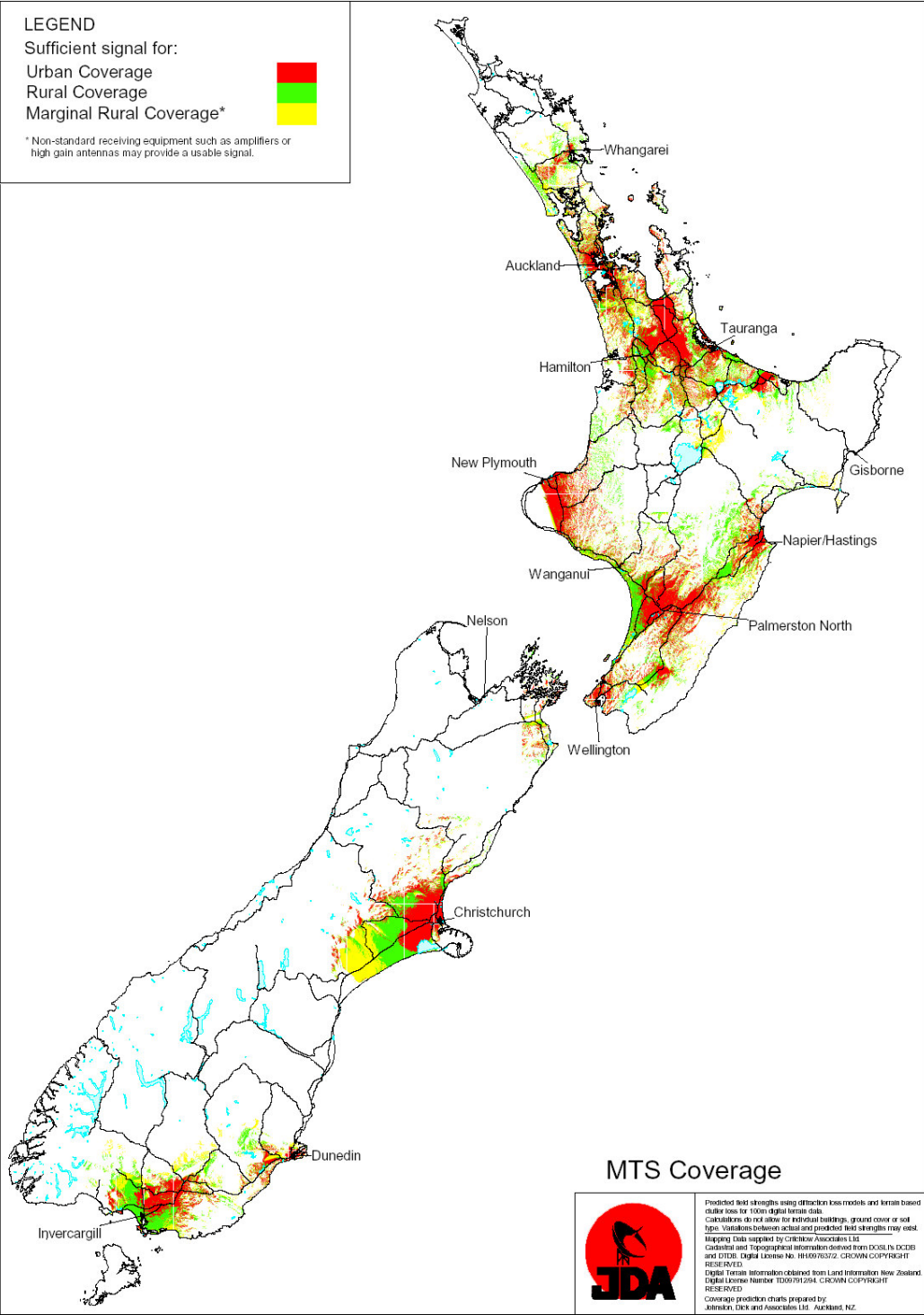
period to 30 June 2004. The Government also committed NZ\$11.53 in annual funding to cover the operating and capital costs for the year to 30 June 2004.²⁶

Maori Television broadcasts seven days a week between 2.30pm and 10pm, Monday to Thursday, and between 2.30pm and 11pm on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

The establishment of Maori Television was a long time coming and its introduction was guaranteed by the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi.

²⁶ Sources: Maori Television, www.maoritelevision.com and Te Mangai Paho Maori Broadcasting Funding Agency, <http://www.tmp.govt.nz>.

Signal Coverage – Maori Television



Source: Maori Television

Canada – APTN²⁷

Launched on 1 September 1999, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) represented a milestone for Aboriginal Canada, allowing First Nations, Inuit and Métis people to tell their stories through a national television network dedicated to Aboriginal programming, made by, for and about Aboriginal Canadians and available to nine million Canadian households. Programming includes documentaries, news, dramas, entertainment specials, children's series, cooking shows and educational programs.

60% of programs are broadcast in English, 15% in French and 25% in a variety of Aboriginal languages including Inuktitut, Cree, Inuinaqtun, Ojibway, Inuvialuktun, Mohawk, Dene, Gwich'in, Miqma'aq, Slavey, Dogrib, Chipweyan and Tlingit. Broadcasting 70% Canadian content, APTN exceeds Canadian content levels on CBC by 10%, and at times is as high as 80%. The balance of the schedule is filled with programming sourced from overseas, including from Australia, New Zealand, Central and South America and the United States.

Other than news and current affairs, most programs are produced by independent Aboriginal producers.

APTN evolved from Television Northern Canada (TVNC), an Aboriginal television network that broadcast northern and Aboriginal programming from the Yukon to northern Labrador from 1991.

In 1980, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) established the Therrien Committee to investigate extending broadcasting services to Northern and Remote Communities. The Committee's report supported the development of broadcast initiatives that would assist Aboriginal people to preserve their languages and foster their culture. Shortly after the report was released, the CRTC licensed CANCOM to deliver a range of southern programming into northern and remote communities and provide development assistance to northern Aboriginal broadcasters.

In 1983, the Canadian Government announced the Northern Broadcasting Policy and the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program. Public funds were allocated for the production of radio and television programs by 13 native communications societies. While evident that northern communities would benefit from a co-operative broadcasting system, it was not possible without the necessary technical infrastructure. In 1985, the CRTC Northern Native Broadcasting policy statement acknowledged the need for a dedicated northern transponder to distribute television programming across the north and a northern satellite television broadcast system was developed in subsequent years. In 1991, the CRTC licensed TVNC. The success of TVNC convinced the network that a national indigenous broadcasting network would be a positive addition to Canadian broadcasting.

In February 1998, the CRTC announced that, whilst it could see no need for an additional English, French or bilingual television broadcast service, there was a place for a national Aboriginal broadcasting service, saying TVNC "is a unique and significant undertaking serving the public interest and the objectives of the *Broadcasting Act*, especially those objectives that relate to the special place of Aboriginal peoples within Canadian society. Such a service should be widely available throughout Canada in order to serve the diverse needs of the various Aboriginal communities, as well as other Canadians."²⁸

With the support of Aboriginal Canada, and public recognition of the importance of a national Aboriginal channel, TVNC submitted an application to the CRTC for a broadcast licence for the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, an application that received overwhelming public support.

Approved in February 1999, financed principally by subscription fees and advertising, APTN is now available to more than nine million homes in Canada via cable and free to air television.

²⁷ Sources: The Museum of Broadcasting Communications, www.museum.tv, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, www.aptn.ca.

²⁸ CRTC Public Notice 1988-8 available online at <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/archive/ENG/Notices/1998/PB98-8.HTM>.

Éire – Republic of Ireland²⁹

With a population of four million, the Republic of Ireland is a very small television market with relatively high levels of imported programming. There are two national public broadcasters, namely the national broadcaster, RTÉ (Radió Telefís Éireann), which operates two channels, RTÉ1 and RTÉ2, the latter generally referred to as Network 2 and TG4. TV3, the only commercial terrestrial channel went to air in 1998.

There are three distinct television sectors in Ireland. The first is in the west and, for geographical reasons, receives only RTÉ1, Network 2, TV3 and TG4, whereas in the east viewers are close enough to the United Kingdom to also receive British terrestrial channels. Finally, those with cable can access all the terrestrial channels as well as satellite channels from Europe.

There has always been a small amount of Irish-language programming on Network 2, generally taking the form of a daily half hour news and current affairs program.

TG4 (Teilifís na Gaeilge) was established under the statutory and corporate aegis of RTÉ and commenced broadcasting in October 1996. The Broadcasting Act 2001 allows for the establishment of TG4 as an independent statutory body. A Government initiative for public service broadcasting, it is funded by the Exchequer. In 2003 annual funding from the Exchequer was €21.065 million. The program provision it receives from RTÉ – 365 hours annually – has been valued at €7.5 million by RTÉ.

TG4 invests approximately €15 million annually in original programming from the independent production sector in Ireland.

The channel's signal covers Ireland and is receivable directly by aerial, on cable and via sky satellite (in the Republic). The 1998 Good Friday Agreement undertakes to try to extend the TG4 signal throughout Northern Ireland. While more than 730,000 viewers tune in daily, its core audience is considered to be in the order of 100,000.

The daily Irish language programme schedule is its core service – approximately seven hours of programming in Irish including daily programming for children and young people, such as rock and pop shows, travel shows and dating programs and the controversial award-winning drama series *Ros na Rún* – the soap chronicling the comings and goings in a small Gaeltacht village in the west of Ireland (controversial for tackling issues such as gay parenting). Irish language programming is augmented by a range of material in other languages. It also broadcasts public service programmes in English and provides live coverage of Dáil Éireann, the national parliament.

TG4 also offers a subscription based web TV service offering two and a half hours of programming weekly on demand for €8 a month, including the soap series *Ros na Rún*.

The Irish language was the most widely spoken language on the island of Ireland until the 19th century. However, from the middle of the 18th century, as the Penal Laws were relaxed and greater social and economic mobility became possible for the native Irish, the more prosperous members of the Irish-speaking community began to adopt English and Irish began to be associated with poverty and economic deprivation. The drift to English increased after the Act of Union in 1800, and was exacerbated by the effects of the Great Famine (1846–48) and the ensuing mass emigration. The decline in the use of Irish was further assisted by the introduction of a primary school education system – the National Schools – in which, by order of the British Government in Ireland, only English was taught. By 1891, the number of Irish speakers had dropped to 680,000 and, according to that year's census, only 3.5% of those aged under ten spoke Irish.

While many were unconcerned about the looming demise of the language, seeing English as the language of the future, others thought differently.

²⁹ Source: TG4 website – www.tg4.ie, Australian Television and International Mediascape, Stuart Cunningham and Elizabeth Jacka, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pages 142-143.

Academic interest in Irish language and literature began as early as the late eighteenth century. Literary interest later combined with a concern for the survival of spoken Irish as its use declined during the nineteenth century. Thomas Davis was an eloquent advocate for Irish and, in 1843, was the first to publicly declare it “the national language,” a description continued in the Irish constitutions of 1922 and 1937. The Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language, founded in 1876, succeeded in gaining recognition for Irish at all levels of the educational system, from primary school to university. The Gaelic League, *Conradh na Gaeilge*, established in 1893, successfully turned support for Irish into a mass movement. The revival of interest in language coincided with other cultural revivals including the foundation of the Gaelic Athletic Associations and the establishment of the Irish National Theatre in 1903 and the Abbey Theatre in 1904.

A Church of Ireland campaign to promote worship and religion in Irish was started in 1914 with the founding of the Irish Guild of the Church and the Roman Catholic Church replaced its liturgies in Latin with Irish and English following the Second Vatican Council.

The Irish Free State, founded in 1922 (Éire from 1937 and, since 1949, also known as the Republic of Ireland) launched a major push to promote the Irish language with mixed success, with some of its leaders hoping that the state would become predominantly Irish-speaking within a generation. However, many of the government’s initiatives, notably compulsory Irish at school and Irish being made a prerequisite for employment in the civil service, proved counter-productive with generations of school-children alienated by what was often heavy-handed attempts at indoctrination, many refusing to use the language at all once they left school.

The Irish Free State also resumed control of broadcasting in its 26 counties to head off any attempt by British Marconi to establish itself in Ireland and, importantly, to help in the forging of a national identity and in 1926 established Radio Éireann as a comprehensive public broadcasting radio service.

Until 1960 Radio Éireann provided a broadcast service through a single radio network, financed by a combination of licence fees and advertising. As was subsequently the case with television, those living in the east were also able to receive British radio stations. It was the proximity to British broadcasting that partly forced the government’s hand and in 1960 the Broadcasting Act provided for the establishment of a television service which commenced in 1962. Like radio, it was financed by licence fees and advertising and was placed under the control of Radio Telefis Éireann (RTÉ), a revamped version of the radio provider and made an independent public authority.

In 1978, the Irish government considered allowing the BBC to relay to those parts of Ireland not already received its signals. However, the general public thought differently and the idea was abandoned in favour of establishing a second Irish channel. However, prevented from increasing licence fees or increasing advertising rates, its capacity to produce local programs was significantly compromised.

From 1970, RTÉ also operated its own cable network, RTÉ Relay, renamed Cablelink in 1988. It provides two-thirds of Irish television households with initially British television and subsequently the European services Superchannel and Sky. By the 1990s, Cablelink was allowed to carry advertising. In 1988 the Broadcast and Wireless Telegraphy Act was introduced followed by the establishment of the Independent Radio and Television Commission, established to oversee the introduction of commercial radio and television broadcasting services. TV3, a commercial free to air service was announced in 1990 but did not go to air until 1998.

Thus although charged by government with an obligation to provide a comprehensive universal service that fosters Irish cultural identity, and provides a diversity of programming, serving both mainstream and minority audiences, diminished revenue and competition from British ITV, Cablelink and, increasingly, from TV3 have impinged on RTE’s ability to deliver meaningful levels of local content. Irish produced programming filled approximately 60% of broadcast hours during the 1960s but had fallen to 36% by the early 1990s.

TV3 finally went to air in September 1998 and is the only commercial free to air terrestrial channel in Ireland. Jointly owned by ITV and CanWest, and now 45% owned by Granada, unlike the public broadcasters the government does impose some local content requirement on the service – initially a transmission quota of 15% increasing in 2002 to 25%. However, other than news and a morning show,

its schedules are dominated by live relays of Granada Television programs. According to its submission to the Irish Forum on Broadcasting in May 2002, it was broadcasting 1,400 hours annually of Irish produced programming – a little under four hours a day.³⁰

By 2002, RTE1 and Network 2 were averaging 1,600 hours of locally produced content each with TG4 producing 1,500 hours, or approximately 30% of broadcast hours.

³⁰ TV# Submission to Forum on Broadcasting, May 2002, available online at <http://www.tv3.ie/submission.htm>.

Wales³¹

As a small but culturally and linguistically distinct nation within the United Kingdom, Wales offers an interesting case study of the role broadcasting can play in constructing cultural identity. Indeed, it has played an important role in the survival of the Welsh language, one of the oldest languages in daily use in Europe.

On 6 March 2001, Jonathan Shier, at the time the General Manager of the ABC, addressed the National Press Club. In that address, he argued the importance of the role public broadcasters play in ensuring communities are able to tell, hear and see reflected their own stories. He used the case of Wales.

“Look at the impact of the Welsh TV Channel S4C that launched in 1982 as the first Welsh language channel in the world. Not without a struggle. There was a vigorous community protest movement. Only when the Welsh nationalist Gwynfor Evans announced he would undergo a hunger strike to the death did the British Government agree to the new channel.

“S4C spurred the creation of a new urban class in Cardiff for whom it became fashionable to speak that ancient language. For the first time, film directors, translators, editors and writers used Welsh. They have since achieved both commercial and critical success.

“S4C has been pivotal to the revitalisation of a Welsh cultural and political identity ...”³²

Welsh television airs to a population of 2,900,000 and comprises BBC-1 Wales and BBC-2 Wales, the independent commercial free to air broadcaster, Harlech Television (HTV Wales) and Sianel Pedwar Cymru ([S4C] Channel 4 Wales), the hard won Welsh language channel. BBC-1 Wales, BBC-2 Wales and HTV broadcast in English while S4C broadcasts a range of locally produced Welsh-language and English-language programs from Britain’s Channel Four UK.

Some Welsh language programs have been broadcast on Welsh television since 1953 when Alun Oldfield-Davies (subsequently the senior regional BBC controller between 1957 and 1967), persuaded the BBC to transmit Welsh language programs from the Welsh transmitter outside network hours. The first program broadcast entirely in Welsh was a religious service at Cardiff’s Tabernacle Baptist Chapel on St David’s Day on 1 March 1953. However, despite some significant breakthroughs, the amount of material produced for both bilingual and English speaking Welsh audiences remained woefully low. In 1954, only 2 hours 40 minutes of English programming and 1 hour 25 minutes of Welsh language programming were broadcast weekly. The first regular Welsh-language program, Cefndir, was a light entertainment topical magazine format program that when to air in February 1957.

Somewhat surprisingly, when Television Wales West (TWW) was awarded an ITV franchise in 1958, Granada launched a series of twice weekly hour long Welsh language programs – well and truly outstripping the BBC’s weekly provision of half an hour of Welsh language programs.

The lobbying for Welsh television began in earnest when Gwynfor Evans joined the Broadcast Council for Wales. Supported by Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Nationalist Party, Evans’ efforts bore fruit with the 1960 Pilkington Committee finding that “the language and culture of Wales would suffer irreparable harm” if Welsh language programming was not increased”.

A second ITV franchise, Television Wales West and North (TWWN), began a short-lived foray into broadcasting in 1962, transmitting 11 hours of Welsh language and Welsh interest programs weekly, half sourced from TWW. Lasting only a year it was taken over by TWW.

By 1963, the BBC was broadcasting three hours of programming for Welsh viewers weekly and had reached agreement with ITV to ensure that Welsh language programs were not scheduled against each other. However, most Welsh language programs remained relegated to non prime time hours.

³¹ Sources: The Museum of Broadcasting Communications, www.museum.tv, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, www.aptn.ca.

³² *An ABC for All Australia*, delivered by Jonathan Shier at the National Press Club on 6 March 2001 and available online at www.abc.net.au.

Lobbying for more Welsh language programs continued unabated and in 1968 a successful challenge was mounted against TWW, resulting in a commitment to more appropriately address the needs of its Welsh audience. Although not mounted against the BBC, its silence in response to calls for enhanced Welsh content prompted a campaign of civil disobedience.

In 1970, the Welsh Language Society made submission to the Welsh Broadcasting Authority arguing for a fourth Welsh channel. Soon after, they were joined by ITV who recommended that a fourth channel should be used as a second ITV service broadcasting all HTV's Welsh programming and allowing HTV to become an all English channel.

Throughout the 1970s, political lobbying for a Welsh language channel intensified as did civil disobedience. BBC television licences were burned in public. In 1975, the Government released the Siberry Report which recommended that the fourth channel should broadcast 25 hours of Welsh programming weekly, with the BBC and HTV responsible for jointly providing the programming. In the lead-up to the 1979 general election, both the Labor and Conservative parties committed to a fourth channel. However, Conservative Party Home Secretary William Whitelaw reneged during a speech given at Cambridge University, prompting public demonstrations that led to a large number of noted Welsh politicians and academics being arrested for civil disobedience. Finally, long standing campaigner Cymru MP Gwynfor Evans announced he would go on a hunger strike commencing on 5 October 1980 if the decision were not reversed and the election promise delivered. On 17 September the government relented and the House of Lords passed an amendment to the broadcasting legislation allowing for the introduction of a fourth channel. The BBC were to provide ten hours of programming a week and HTV and independent companies a further eight.

Since its launch in 1982, S4C transmits all Welsh language programs. From the 18 hours originally mandated, S4C now broadcasts an average of 32 hours a week in Welsh, ten hours being provided by the BBC, with the balance being commissioned from independent producers, including HTV. The schedule is completed with programming from the UK's Channel 4.

S4C Digital was launched in November 1998 and now carries over 80 hours of Welsh language programming weekly, including a simulcast of the programming broadcast on analog S4C. Unlike analog S4C, S4C Digital carries no UK Channel 4 programs. It is broadcast terrestrially in Wales and is available on cable in Wales and transmitted on Sky Digital throughout Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Spain³³

With a population of 40 million, Spain is served by five national television networks. TVE-1 and TVE-2 are national public broadcasters, financed by subsidy and advertising. Antena-3 and Telecinco are commercial free to air broadcasters financed by advertising and Canal+ is financed by subscriptions.

There are a further eight regional channels all financed by advertising and government subsidy:

- TV-3 and Canal 33 – subsidised by the Catalan government;
- Canal Sur – subsidised by the Andalusian government;
- Telemadrid – owned by the Madrid regional government and financed by bank loans;
- Canal 9 – subsidised by the Valencian government;
- TVG – subsidised by the Galician government;
- ETB-1 and ETB-2 – subsidised by the Basque government.

The Spanish government moved early to ensure control over broadcasting. In 1908, it enacted legislation giving the government the right to establish and exploit “all systems and apparatuses related to the so-called ‘Hertzian telegraph’, ‘ethereal telegraph’, ‘radiotelegraph’, and other similar procedures already invented or that might be invented in the future”.³⁴ In 1924, the first licence for radio was granted and the experimental stations in operation at the time were required to seek state authorisation. The first legal broadcast began in Barcelona and, like other radio stations that preceded the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, it was a private enterprise established to make a profit. Broadcasting law was amended in 1934 to define radio as “an essential and exclusive function of the state” and Francisco Franco nationalised all radio stations into the state controlled network, Radio Nacional de Espana. Use of Basque, Catalan and Galician was banned.

The first public demonstration of television occurred in Barcelona in 1948. The first official broadcast occurred in October 1956 – a mass conducted by Franco’s chaplain, a speech by the Minister of Information commemorating 20 years of the Franco regime and a French documentary. Much early programming came from the United States Embassy but from the outset there live broadcasts of variety and children’s programs. A news program followed in 1957. From the outset, Television Espanola (TVE) was funded by advertising augmented by a luxury tax imposed on television receivers, the latter being abolished in 1965, leaving advertising as the primary form of income for TVE.

Television spread to the regions during following years but programming was principally produced, controlled and supplied from Madrid.

Following the death of General Franco in 1975, television, along with much else, changed dramatically. The Statute of RTVE in 1980 stipulated that television was an essential public service with a responsibility to foster and defend freedom of expression. The constitution of 1978 was part of the reorganisation of Spain as a “State of the Autonomies” that allowed the creation of autonomous governments in the Basque Country and Catalonia. In order to resolve contradictions between legislation that required the central government to control all technologies utilising spectrum on the one hand and legislation that gave autonomy to regional governments on the other, The Third Channel Law was passed in 1984 to enable the regulation of networks in the regions and the decentralisation of the industry. Based on the principle of recognition of the cultures, languages and communities within the Spanish territory, the expression of which was suppressed through the years of the Franco regime, the Third Channel Law paved the way for indigenous broadcasting in Spain. Regional networks were controlled by the states but within the oversight of Radio Television Espanola (RTVE).

In 1989, the Federation of Autonomous Radio and Television Organisations (FORTA) was formed and by 1995 eleven autonomous broadcast companies had been established, six of which were broadcasting regularly.

Thus between 1995 and 1990, television evolved from centralised state controlled system to one in which private and publicly owned channels compete for advertising and audiences within national and regional markets.

³³ Sources: The Museum of Broadcasting Communications, www.museum.tv, EiTb, www.eitb.com

³⁴ Cited in <http://www.museum.tv>.

In May 1982, the Basque parliament unanimously passed legislation establishing Euskal Irrati Televista (EiTB) which commenced broadcasting at midnight on 31 December 1982. Broadcasting exclusively in Basque, it was followed in 1986 by ETB-2 which broadcasts in Spanish. Today ETB-1 broadcasts in Basque 24 hours a day with programs that range from news and current affairs to sport, magazine style programs, drama series and films produced in Basque. Programs for children and young people in Basque together with regional sport and news are of particular importance in its schedule.

Although throughout Spain, Spanish language broadcasting attracts the largest audiences, language channels, despite the constraints of financial restrictions created by producing programming for what are effectively niche markets, nonetheless maintain stable audiences.

It appears that whilst Spanish language programs are consistently the most popular, Spanish audiences prefer a system that enables access to programs made in the national language alongside programs made in their regional language.

While 99% of Galicians understand Gallego, only 14% prefer Gallego programs over Spanish programs, a scenario mirrored by Valencians. On the other hand, 95% of Catalonians understand Catalan, with one third watching only programs produced in Catalan. In the Basque Country, approximately half the population understand Euskera with a fifth of the population preferring programs produced in Euskera.

Extinct and Engangered Indigenous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages

Adynyamathanha, Aghu Tharnggalu, Agwamin, Alawa, Alngith, Amarag, Andegerebinha, Arabana, Areba, Arrarnta, Atampaya, Awabakal, Ayabadhu, Baadi, Bandjigali, Banggarla, Barrow Point, Bayali, Bayungu, Bidyara, Biladaba, Biri, Burarra, Burduna, Darling, Dayi, Dhargari, Dhurga, Dieri, Dirari, Djangun, Djawi, Djinba, Djingili, Djiwarli, Dyaabugay, Dyaberdyaber, Dyangadi, Dyirbal, Dyugun, Erre, Flinders Island, Gadjerawang, Gagadu, Gambera, Ganggalida, Gangulu, Giyug, Gooniyandi, Gugadj, Gugu Badhun, Gugu Warra, Gungabula, Gunya, Gurdjar, Gureng Gureng, Guwamu, Jarnango, Kalarko, Kalkutung, Kamilaroi, Jamu Kanju, Karadjeri, Kariyarra, Kokata, Kuku-Mu'inh, Kuku-Ugbanh, Kumbainggar, Kungarakany, Kunggara, Kunggari, Kuthant, Kuwama, Lamu-Lamu, Laragia, Lardil, Leningitij, Limilngan, Madngele, Magadige, Malgana, Mandandanyi, Mangala, Mangerr, Mara, Maranunggu, Margany, Margu, Maridan, Marimanindji, Marithiel, Mariyedi, Martu Wangka, Martuyhunira, Mayaguduna, Maykulan, Mbara, Mbariman-Gudhinma, Miriwung, Miwa, Mullukmulluk, Muluridyi, Murrinh-Patha, Muruwari, Narrinyeri, Narungga, Ngadjunmaya, Ngalakan, Ngamini, Ngandi, Nganyaywana, Ngarla Ngarndji, Ngawun, Ngura, Ngurmbur, Nhuwala, Nijadali, Minanbur, Nhuwala, Nijadali, Minanbur, Nugunu, Nungali, Nyangga, Nyangga, Nyawaygi, Nyulnyul, Nyunga, Pakanha, Panytyima, Pini, Pinigura, Pitta Pitta, Thayore, Thaypan, Thurawal, Tjurruru, Tyaraity, Umbindhamu, Umbugarla, Umbuygamu, Uradhi, Urningangg, Wadjigny, Wadjigu, Wagaya, Wakawaka, Wambaya, Wamin, Wandarang, Wangaaybuwan-Ngiyambaa, Wanggamala, Wangganguru, Waray, Wariyanga, Warluwara, Warrgamay, Warungu, Watjari, Wik-Epa, Wik-Keyangan, Wik-Me'anha, Wikngenchera, Wilawila, Wiradhuri, Wirangu, Worimi, Wuliwuli, Wulna, Wunambal, Yalarnnga, Yandruwandha, Yangman, Yawarawarga, Yawuru, Yidiny, Yinggarda, Yir Yoront, Yugambal.

Source: Ethnologue, available online at www.yourdictionary.com/elr/nextinct.html.