



Media Release

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Indigenous Focus Day explored obstacles to digital inclusion

Last week the Indigenous Remote Communications Association ([IRCA](#)) and the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network ([ACCAN](#)) hosted an Indigenous Focus Day in Darwin, Northern Territory. The event took place alongside the [Broadband for the Bush Forum IV](#). It attracted 75 participants and focused on identifying the obstacles to digital inclusion and the opportunities that arise from being connected. Participants were representatives from the Indigenous community, as well as delegates from community organisations from across Australia.

The Focus Day consisted of an opening address from Joe Morrison, CEO of Northern Land Council, some shorter presentations and facilitated breakout sessions. Key themes explored were affordability, accessibility, awareness and appropriateness of telecommunications services. The breakout sessions featured speakers covering topics such as costs of phone plans, satellite internet services, broadband for schools and how technology is improving the lives of remote Indigenous communities.

“Remote Indigenous people are the most digitally excluded group in Australia, yet where connectivity is available, they are quick adopters,” said IRCA General Manager Daniel Featherstone. “The Indigenous Focus Day presentations demonstrate the innovative ways that remote people and communities are seeking to reduce the divide and use broadband and mobile devices for locally relevant storytelling, enterprise, employment, and cultural and language continuity.”

“We’d like to thank everyone involved and those who helped with the Indigenous Focus Day. It was great to hear from the Indigenous community about experiences with communications services,” said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin. “Many relevant issues were explored and we were able to provide invaluable consumer information to the community. We hope the Focus Day will help to inform and empower consumers to use technology and telecommunications to overcome obstacles to digital inclusion.”

At the close of the event key outcomes were identified to help address obstacles to digital inclusion. These included developing a dedicated community-driven strategy to ensure inclusion of Indigenous communities, ensuring community and cultural ownership of local engagement and the importance of skills development, relevant content and applications for greater inclusion. The opportunities that digital inclusion provides, including employment, enterprise and cultural development opportunities were also highlighted.

Special thanks goes to the event supporters: Charles Darwin University, Telstra Indigenous Directorate, Ethos Global Foundation and the Northern Territory Government.

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The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) is Australia’s peak communications consumer organisation. The operation of ACCAN is made possible by funding provided by the Commonwealth of Australia under section 593 of the Telecommunications Act 1997. This funding is recovered from charges on telecommunications carriers.

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