



Shaping Our DIGITAL FUTURES



Indigenous Digital Leadership Forum 2021

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MC, Welcome to Country and Welcome



*MC and Facilitator
Dr Heron Loban
Griffith University*



*Welcome Address
Naomi Moran
CEO Koori Mail
FNMA Deputy Chair*



*Welcome to Country
Tracey King*

Snapshot of the Day

- 7th forum, held in Lismore NSW
- 56 participants present + 15 via Zoom
- 15 presentations + 3 keynotes
- 3 workshop sessions on:
 - Communicating through the Lockdown
 - Indigenous Digital Engagement
 - Action Plan



Some key themes

- COVID had major impact on First Nations people and communities limiting access to jobs, education and essential services; highlighted the need for effective and affordable connectivity
- Digital Inclusion is now embedded as a Closing the Gap target, with a target of equity by 2026; need effective programs to address the gap now and data to measure and track progress.
- But the digital gap is increasing !
- The Australian Government's Indigenous Digital Inclusion Plan needs co-design/co-delivery, needs to be funded programs
- This is a critical moment for action !



Minister Address

Ken Wyatt, Minister for Indigenous Australians



- Australian Government investing to provide connectivity and digital infrastructure in First Nations communities
- First Nations media sector plays critical role in sharing information, especially during COVID pandemic
- First Languages are also important, now part of the new Closing the Gap targets
- First Nations news and journalism is also important

Keynote Address

Pat Turner, NACCHO CEO/ Coalition of Peaks convener



- Over 50 peak bodies, including FNMA, part of the Coalition of Peaks working on the new Closing the Gap framework
- National Partnership Agreement signed by COP with COAG in 2020 to co-design the Closing the Gap refresh
- Key reforms- shared decision-making; community-controlled service delivery; representative voice; locally relevant programs
- Access to Information now a Closing the Gap target - covers digital inclusion and access to relevant media service
- See coalitionofpeaks.org.au

Remote learning with inDigiMOB

Angelina Joshua (AJ) | Ngukurr Learning Centre



- inDigiMOB project is training and supporting language centre workers in Ngukurr to use Zoom and develop digital skills
- Takes months to learn digital skills
- I've learnt to save documents, make videos, use Instagram and share posts about the language centre
- AJ now a mentor, teaching others in language how to use Zoom and digital tools

Connecting Wilcannia during COVID

Brendon Adams | Wilcannia River Radio



- COVID was dangerous for our community, left many people without access to schooling, food and services
- Wilcannia River Radio helped keep people connected and informed with local voices
- Started Wilcannia Storytime to deliver school lessons over radio
- Helped deliver food and basic services

Keynote Address 2: Christy Ditchburn | Telstra



- Telstra working to address improper selling practices, rebuild relationship with Indigenous customers
- Set up First Nations Connect call centre in Darwin
- Cultural awareness training for staff
- Mobile My Way resources about plans, services
- Supporting digital inclusion projects -Deadly Digital Communities, inDigiMOB - plus targeted workshops

Shouting out to the Torres Strait Islands Diat Alferink | TSIMA



- TSIMA 4MW is the voice of the Torres Strait, providing essential information service over radio and social media
- Now getting 5 RIBS communities across TSI online with trained broadcasters
- With improved connectivity, can broadcast from anywhere and put building rent money into jobs
- Expanding to include TSIMA Film and Music

Aboriginal art workers keeping culture with digital skills Marlene Chisolm, Penny Watson, Bronwyn Taylor | Desart



- Desart's Artworker program is providing skills for local jobs in art centres including digital skills - photography, video, using SAM database
- Desart supports over 8000 artists and 120 artworkers
- Shared video by Gloria Mocketarinja about being an artworker
- SAM database is the online platform for all art records and sales, supports thriving local businesses, but requires good connectivity in all communities

Connecting stories, language and culture across the Country

Jaja Dare | Manager, indigiTUBE



- indigiTUBE is the go-to online platform for First Nations produced media, music and radio, access via app or web
- Contributors can upload content directly
- New functions - play offline, embed items, broadcaster dashboard
- First Sounds project - 4 volumes of new music plus a Mentor program starting

Language classes at a distance

Annalee Pope | First Languages Australia



- First Languages Australia is peak body for language centres
- Have developed digital dictionaries, apps, games, music
- During COVID delivered training, meeting and workshops via Zoom and online tools - built new skills
- New program to develop young language champions

Are telecommunications providers meeting your needs?

Teresa Corbin |

Australian Communications Consumer Action Network



- ACCAN is peak body for telecommunications consumers
- Have an Indigenous Advisory Forum to advocate for needs of First Nations people
- Did 'Remote Indigenous Communications Review' report in 2020 with Daniel Featherstone
- Outlined historic issues of Telstra mis-selling mobile plans and other issues

Mobile Media - Training in the Bush

Rebecca McLean | Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education



- Delivering media training for Aboriginal rangers
- Allan Collins cinematographer ran 4-week video production workshop using iPads to film and edit
- Inspired participants to record interviews with old people and make more films

How to be a Software Engineer at Google

Tamina Pitt | Google



- Trained to become a software engineer after growing up creating digital projects
- Now works in the Google Maps team, loves the job
- Had challenges along the way- need 'technical inclusion' to get more First Nations people into tech roles
- Google has a RAP to increase employment opportunities

Common Ground

Rona Glynn-McDonald | Common Ground



- ACARA - national curriculum must now include First Nations histories
- Common Ground develops online First Nations content for schools with teacher resources
- Created First Nations Bedtime Stories, watched by 87,000 students in 2020
- What is the role of First Nations media to support place based knowledge and histories in remote and regional schools?

Going Online: Closing the Digital Divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the age of COVID-19

Dr Scott Winch | World Vision Australia



- Wrote 'Connecting on Country' report in 2021 showing impact of COVID, many First Nations students offline
- 21% First Nations students had no access to education, only 5% non-Indigenous
- 1 in 4 Indigenous households not connected; of those, 1 in 3 are via a mobile device only
- Key issues - hardware and affordability, cost of mobile data up 50% since 2018
- Digital gap is widening

Deadly Digital Communities

Lyn Thompson | State Library of Queensland



- SLQ supports 31 Indigenous Knowledge Centres and public libraries to deliver Deadly Digital Communities
- 5000 people trained through IKCs
- Have Public Libraries Connect for online resources
- Video by Cherbourg IKC Coordinator Wawida Collins

NBN Co - Addressing the Digital Inclusion Gap

Sam Dimarco | NBN Co



- Now that NBN network built, NBN focused on getting network being used
- Set up 54 'Communities in Isolation', free WiFi in remote communities sites during COVID
- Keen to upgrade ICP phones to SkyMuster Plus
- Have targeted programs to address Digital Inclusion gap
- Developed a Digital Capability Test as self-assessment tool to identify obstacles to DI

Talking big issues in many languages

Kumanjayi S Hodder-Watt | PAW Media



- PAW Media produced and broadcast health messages and information in language during COVID
- Showed video about the challenges - translation of health messages, fake news, lack of phone and internet services
- Only local media organisations can tailor the messages to the local audience

Securing and planning systems for our future
First Nations Technology Council
Leigh Harris | ingeous Studios



- Proposed the establishment of a First Nations Technology Council Australia to coordinate First Nations digital industry, codes and programs
- Functions- Coordination, Education, Research, Engagement, Advocacy, Advice
- See firstnationstechnology.com.au
- We need to be create a First Nations digital economy, and set up corporate and philanthropic partnerships

Mapping Digital Inclusion in Remote Indigenous Communities

Dr Daniel Featherstone, Prof Julian Thomas, Dr Indigo Holcombe James | RMIT University



- 4 year digital inclusion research project by RMIT, funded by Telstra
- 8-10 remote communities as case studies
- Working with local partners to develop and support community digital inclusion plans
- First Nations digital gap is widening, much worse in remote communities

Breakout 1- Communicating through the lockdown

- COVID highlighted the digital gap with many people left offline, without access to education, employment, health and basic services
- Lack of home internet and devices, many couldn't work/study remotely
- Remote/ urban divide increased significantly
- Where connectivity allowed, people became digitally savvy - big uptake in videoconferencing, online learning, use of online services and tools
- Lots of innovation- classes over radio and ICTV
- Radio still main way of getting messages to community
- Use of apps- Zoom, Tiktok, Facebook, COVID apps, MyGov, email, dropbox
- Access and Affordability the critical issues; plus last mile access, lack of devices, repair of devices, more skills programs needed



Breakout 2 - Indigenous digital engagement

- Obstacles to digital jobs include lack of access and devices, role models, education/ training pathways, low expectations, institutional racism
- Need funding support for local digital mentors and training programs on country using local facilities
- Need local digital inclusion plans
- Need indigenous-run digital businesses, platform and ISPs
- Need targeted messaging/language online content and services
- Build skills to develop apps, websites and coding
- Free WiFi / unmetered services needed to ensure affordable access
- Government online services need to be more user friendly, have online help guides to assist people to use services



Action Plan: Digital Inclusion Program

The proposed six part digital inclusion program is still needed:

1. **Data collection** to measure access, availability, affordability and digital literacy.
2. **Improve availability**- Prioritised roll-out of broadband and mobile coverage to communities with limited access.
3. **Last-mile access**- Public Internet access through community-wide WiFi; community access computers.
4. **Affordable access**- Unmetered access to all key online services; affordable pre-paid mobile options.
5. **Digital Literacy**- Culturally and language appropriate skills program in remote communities, locally tailored to needs.
6. **Digital Mentors program** to provide local jobs and a peer-supported learning model.



Digital Inclusion as Closing the Gap Target

Outcome 17: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to information and services enabling participation in informed decision-making regarding their own lives

Target 17: By 2026, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equal levels of digital inclusion

Indicators:

- Gap in digital inclusion by access, affordability and digital ability
- Frequency of internet access at home and use of online services
- Access to First Nations media and news services
- Number of First Nations people employed in media

Key Questions: How are these Indicators being measured and tracked?
What programs are being resourced to close the gap?



Other Key Actions

- Work with Coalition of Peaks and ACCAN to establish a First Nations taskforce to co-design the Indigenous Digital Inclusion Plan with Government
- Establish First Nations digital inclusion taskforce to drive planning and program coordination
- Establish First Nations Technology Council - engage with govt and industry to develop and support First Nations digital industry, codes and programs; Develop own systems, ISPs, satellite systems, etc
- State, regional and remote community gatherings to develop place-based approaches
- Digital Inclusion Programs run locally with coordinated approach and monitoring



Other Key Actions

- Need recurrent training and programs created and delivered by First Nations community-controlled orgs
- Build jobs and business opportunities to drive digital skills, via funded local roles and industry RAPS
- Connectivity is needed for government service delivery
- Coordinated social media and radio messages through First Nations media to build engagement
- Learn from international digital initiatives (US, Canada, Hawaii) and knowledge sharing
- Not only decolonise the digital space but also Indigenise the space (Jenny Fraser)



Thank You



Thank you to all
who attended and
shared their
experience and
knowledge