

Christine Williams  
Assistant Secretary  
Funding Reform and Single Budget Branch  
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Yours sincerely

I look forward to being able to discuss these and other issues that may arise in the process of developing collaborative and comprehensive ways to address communications deficiencies in regional, rural and remote Indigenous communities.

The OIPC plays a lead role in engaging directly with communities through Regional Partnerships and Shared Responsibility Agreements. The potential for communication arrangements to be facilitated through these agreements is something that will require discussion and investigation as proposals are developed.

Addressing the high-priority need for basic telephone services to Indigenous communities shares similar challenges to the task of providing other essential services to remote communities. I believe that both departments would benefit from consultation in this area, particularly in relation to the establishment of any criteria when assessing funding priorities.

As the organisation responsible for coordinating a whole-of-government approach to services and programs for Indigenous Australians, the OIPC would be happy to advise DCITA on the design of initiatives arising from BIA drawing on experiences to date in remote service delivery.

I am writing to provide some comments in response to the *Delivering a comprehensive telecommunications package in Indigenous communities* discussion paper that outlines proposals to improve Indigenous telecommunications services under the Backing Indigenous Ability (BIA) program.

Dear Ms Howard

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