Kakadu Community Development

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Response: Backing Indigenous Ability discussion paper

Released by DCITA in March 2006

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Context

The purpose of this document is to provide a general response to the Department of Community, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) discussion paper, Backing Indigenous Ability (released March 2006).

The information presented here is in part the result of observations made during nearly two years of the Kakadu Community Development service in Jabiru, Northern Territory. The input of community stakeholders was sought in the compilation of this document and several stakeholders were able to specifically contribute to the discussion. Awareness of this project has been raised in the community across all community stakeholders including Gagudju Association, Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation, Jabiru Town Council, Jabiru Area School, Jabiru Training Centre, the Northern Land Council and others. Respondents include Kakadu Health Service, Djabulukgu Association Incorporated and Charles Darwin University (Jabiru Centre).

It should be noted that the information in this response does not necessarily represent the views of Kakadu Community Development funding partners or individual community stakeholders.

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About Kakadu Community Development

Kakadu Community Development is a community development service operating from the town of Jabiru in Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory. The service commenced in July 2004 following the Jabiru Region Sustainability Project. It is supported by key stakeholders in the community and the contract to deliver the Kakadu Community Development service is carried out by Social Justice Communications Pty Ltd.

Community development initiatives promoted by the service include increasing improved governance by capacity building; increasing the involvement of local people in a broader jobs market; providing support for local enterprises; and developing a youth strategy.

Key factors in the success of these projects include the outcomes set out within the Connect Australia package. This includes establishing better access to appropriate services, community engagement in telecommunications technology, development of culturally appropriate content, training and support assisted by community-based expertise, and recognition of the need to create sustainable and ongoing projects.

Responses to discussion paper questions

A number of these questions pertain to current research relevant to a range of questions in this discussion paper which will inform a range of projects on an ongoing basis. Kakadu Community Development (KCD) is in the process of consulting government and community stakeholders about a range of existing and previously implemented telecommunications initiatives.

The following questions will be examined as part of the above process.

1. What did TAPRIC and previous initiatives do well? Where did TAPRIC and previous initiatives fall short?

Current consultation with Mark Waterhouse of DCIS in the NT Government.

2. How can the design and delivery of Backing Indigenous Ability be optimised to achieve long term sustainable quality telecommunications solutions for Indigenous communities?

Paramount to the success is to ensure community consultation from a "grass roots" approach. Community members have expressed the need for reliable, durable and affordable technology in addition to skills development and training. Anecdotal evidence shows that whilst technology is readily embraced, particularly by young people, lack of infrastructure means that some systems which potentially support telecommunications, fail. This includes, for example, the use of mobile phones in remote areas of Kakadu National Park.

In some cases, once the need for this infrastructure has been addressed, BIA initiatives can be valuable additions. In other cases, where technology is in place, projects which reflect the aims of BIA are beginning to flourish. Currently Jabiru is in the process of developing the "Our Story Project" through the Jabiru Public Library. BIA could assist with the development of this project in a number of ways.

3. Should the installation of community phones into Indigenous communities be regarded as a priority under Backing Indigenous Ability?

We understand there are currently some pilot projects in place in the Northern Territory.

There have been some innovative ideas put forward by the Kakadu Health Service which would require similar services in remote communities in the Kakadu region and neighbouring West Arnhem communities. Outcomes would include improved delivery of health services.

4. Is it appropriate to use regional agents and ICCs to identify communities in need of community phones and to assist them in an application process? How else could priority communities in need of community phones be identified?

This problem has already been addressed in the Kakadu region. The local residents have expressed concern through a range of sources, including Kakadu Community Development. A needs analysis and action research project is currently underway.

It is considered appropriate for regional agents and other stakeholder organisations to identify communities in need of community phones. Communities may suffer severe technological disadvantage but other social and educational issues may create difficulty identifying or accessing the practical means to a solution. In these cases other organisations may be able to assist.

5. Is it appropriate to use an application process to identify a need for a community phone? If so, what should be the key elements of the application process? What are the alternatives to using an application process?

See above. If an application process is implemented it should be done so with an awareness that inherent to the process is the requirement for the needy community or even a regional agent to be aware of both the need for a community phone and the funding program, and to have the time and skills to enter the application process. These factors may contribute to the exclusion of some communities from the process. Some form of telecommunications audit may provide an alternative.

6. Once priority communities requiring a community phone are identified, what is the best way to facilitate provision of the phone? For example, should there be a tender process or some other approach?

In remote communities where technological services and skills are limited there is often only one local or regional service provider, if any. If a

community has an established familiarity or relationship with such a provider it may be beneficial to use the relationship to promote the success of the community phone implementation. This could mean a tender process carried out many times on a small scale rather than few times on a large scale, giving local providers a chance for involvement. While this may result in a somewhat piecemeal approach, it may contribute to a more socially sustainable and robust implementation of the community phone project than might otherwise be the case.

7. Are hub communities the appropriate location for implementing public access Internet facilities? If so, how best can hub communities be prioritised as appropriate locations for new Internet access?

Consultation with members of Indigenous communities can help resolve questions of implementation. Concentrating Internet facilities in hub communities could contribute indirectly to social problems if people are drawn away from their home communities and outstations to use the facilities or kept away from their homes for longer than normal. At the same time, offering public access Internet close to or within people's home communities may reduce the need for them to travel to hub communities to access other services there, if they can access such services online or using other telecommunications. This could result in several other social and community benefits, including reduced expenditure on travel for community members, and reduction in exposure to drugs and alcohol and social harms often seen in hub communities.

An alternative to having a group of public internet access PCs in a hub community, for example, which here in Kakadu means the Jabiru township, may be to implement public access PCs in groups of two or three in other accessible locations around the park. Appropriate locations may include tourist resorts such as Cooinda, which is operated by an Aboriginal association, at larger outstations, or even at the Kakadu National Park visitor centres at Bowali and Mary River. Consultation with members of the Indigenous community would assist in determining a preferred implementation.

8. Should ICCs, regional agents or other assistance be used to identify communities with a need for Internet facilities and assist them in an application process? How else could priority sites for Internet facilities be identified?

Given the extensive promotion and rapid uptake of Internet facilities across most Australian communities, an argument could be made that any community that doesn't have any form of Internet access should be considered a priority site to get it. As metropolitan and regional communities embrace online technology and services, those without access to the technology may be 'left behind' in terms of access to services, building their skillsets and general community capacity building. The benefits of internet access as a means of service delivery can be much more keenly appreciated in remote communities where services may otherwise be difficult, time-consuming and expensive to access. At the same time, consideration needs to be given to the tenancy of the community. Those communities which are not inhabited for periods of the year due to seasonal conditions (ie the Wet) or cultural obligations can, if necessary, be given a lower priority than those that are populated all year round.

9. Is it appropriate to use an application process for communities to identify a need for Internet facilities? If so, what should be the key elements of the application process? What alternative process could be used?

As for question 4, this problem is being addressed in the Kakadu region and a needs analysis and action research project is currently underway. This project uses a community audit methodology conducted through personal interviews in communities across Kakadu to identify community members' needs, aspirations and expectations.

10. Once implemented in a community, how best can the use of the facilities be encouraged? What arrangements such as Shared Responsibility Agreements or other local or regional agreements should be used for communities to support the installation and maintenance of Internet services?

Anecdotal evidence using computers with internet made accessible to local indigenous youth has shown that use of facilities does not need to be encouraged on an ongoing basis. In the Kakadu Employment Centre, two computers were made available for young people to use, and a 'snowball'

effect was observed whereby a couple of people were shown basic online activities such as finding information about music artists and playing or downloading online games. These people then passed those skills on to other people, and more and more people began to visit the employment centre to access the computers and the internet. As those people became empowered to use the internet they began to expand their use of it into other areas, seeking assistance from those working within the Employment Centre as needed. This internet use had some spin-offs for literacy and numeracy development.

It is expected that a similar process would naturally occur when encouraging the use of online services and perhaps more readily in parts of the Kakadu community where there is already a group of people who are relatively internet aware and comfortable exploring its use.

It should be noted that public internet access is available at a number of locations in Jabiru and Kakadu but as this is fee based, it discourages use by unskilled members of the local community (example fee, $3 for 20 minutes).

11. Are there more innovative models of delivering Internet access to Indigenous communities?

Rather than delivering fixed internet access points, mobile computing could be explored as an alternative in a regional community such as Kakadu. Fixed installations, even in a hub community, only reach a certain proportion of the members of the extended regional community. Installations either in a hub community or at selected regional sites would require supervision and maintenance, for at least an initial period of time.

The concept of traveling internet access could be explored on a similar model to the remote delivery of numeracy and literacy programs, traveling libraries, or remote health service visits, except perhaps more often as a designated itinerant service. Jabiru is visited once a week by a traveling fruit and vegetable truck, the vendor of which uses the mobile phone network to offer both EFTPOS and online orders through his website, which he checks using a wireless mobile modem. Consider if, instead of a truck lined with racks of fruit and vegetables, the truck contained bolted in desks and laptops. Instead of powering the refrigeration, it would power the

computers. Instead of just coming to Jabiru, it could spend every day at a different outstation.

There are a number of ways such a vision could be implemented in Kakadu – one or two people traveling around in a truck or normal vehicle on a regular schedule of outstation visits, taking several laptops either with high speed wireless mobile broadband modems if mobile phone coverage is available, or using shared ISDN or dialup internet access on fixed community phone lines elsewhere. A traveling internet service could liaise with other traveling services to take advantage of higher availability of community members. For example, people waiting to see a health worker could get a quick introduction to internet banking or look up historical photos of Kakadu on the NT Library website. Eventually perhaps the traveling internet facilities would be replaced by fixed facilities, and the traveling health worker replaced by videoconferencing.

In areas where neither mobile nor fixed phone technology is available for an internet service, delivery of these technologies could be explored through other Connect Australia programs.

12. Are PC-based webcam videoconferencing facilities appropriate for Indigenous community needs? What parameters should be set for deciding when dedicated videoconferencing facilities need to be implemented into sites? What size of community is appropriate to receive videoconferencing facilities in the context of sustainability?

PC based webcam videoconferencing facilities can contribute to the successful operation of indigenous businesses, particularly to facilitating partnerships those businesses have with other businesses based elsewhere in Australia, including tour companies and art galleries. The type and scope of the indigenous business can help to determine which communities may be appropriate locations for video-conferencing, and the needs and aspirations of indigenous business operators should contribute to a dialogue about location of video-conferencing sites.

13. What factors are contributing to the low use of videoconferencing facilities in many communities?

Factors that contribute to the low use of videoconferencing facilities are similar to those that contribute to the low use of other forms of technology and telecommunications – financial constraints, lack of knowledge or understanding of technology, lack of knowledge of the benefits or advantages, lack of availability, perceived complexity, and concerns about robustness in remote communities where equipment often has to stand up to dusty conditions and climatic extremes.

14. Should ICCs, regional agents or other assistance be used to identify communities with a need for videoconferencing facilities? How else could priority locations for videoconferencing facilities be identified?

The presence of indigenous businesses should be considered an important factor in identifying communities that may require videoconferencing. This should be considered in conjunction with equally critical factors like the potential for use of the technology by existing services such as health and education.

15. What can be done to ensure that videoconferencing facilities introduced into a community are widely used? For example, how should the appropriate location of videoconferencing sites be decided?

Broad-based consultation is critical in contributing to the success of new facilities. Consultation across the life of the project will contribute to empowerment and community ownership of the facilities, and capacity building within the community. It should be noted that wide use of videoconferencing facilities is not necessarily the only hallmark of successful uptake of the technology. If the technology is not widely used but is effectively used it may be still successful – for example, if it helps an indigenous business secure a new partnership or enables a health worker to deliver important information about a disease to an at-risk group of people, it should still be considered successful.

16. Is it appropriate to use an application process for communities to identify a need for videoconferencing facilities? If so, what should be the key elements of the application process? Should communities need to establish a certain level of demand for the facilities as part of the application process?

An application process may be appropriate if it takes into account and delivers appropriate weighting towards the needs of indigenous businesses as compared against other community needs. This should also be taken into account when considering the level of demand, which may be difficult to quantify. Where indigenous businesses are concerned, the benefits of ready access to such technology may have more far-reaching impacts than merely contributing to the success of the business, as a successful business will also contribute to economic and social benefits for the surrounding community.

17. What arrangements such as Shared Responsibility Agreements or other local or regional agreements should be used for communities to support the installation and maintenance of videoconferencing facilities? What form should these take?

If videoconferencing facilities are installed to support indigenous businesses, it would not be inappropriate for the businesses to take on a measure of responsibility for the installation and maintenance of the facilities. This would also contribute to building the skill set and technological capacity of indigenous businesses. Shared Responsibility Agreements may be considered appropriate where facilities are used for local services delivery.

18. How best can skill gaps be identified? Is it appropriate to use the ICCs, community champions and regional agents to identify priority areas for training and skills development in the area of telecommunications? How else could training and skills development needs of communities be identified?

A significant number of indigenous people in the Kakadu region have literacy and numeracy challenges. This in turn impacts on the job and training choices available to those people, which can tend to limit their exposure to telecommunications technology because they may, for example, work in manual labour rather than administrative roles. Priority areas for training and skills development should be those which compliment service delivery in other areas (including literacy and numeracy programs), and build job-ready or indigenous entrepreneur skills.

19. What types of training and skills development sessions on telecommunications are appropriate and how should these be implemented? Are different approaches required for different age groups? What flexible or innovative approaches could be undertaken to identify and deliver training and development sessions?

Skills development should complement other economic independence initiatives building small business management skills within communities. Skills development and training initiatives can be reinforced by elements of BIA including phone and internet access, culturally appropriate content, and recording and archiving culturally significant material. The discussion paper suggestion for flexible training that may include training in local languages or tailored approaches is considered highly appropriate. Training should differentiate between age and gender groups, particularly when dealing with elements such as culturally appropriate content.

20. Is a grants program an appropriate way to fund communities to deliver training and skills development sessions within accountability guidelines?

Grants programs can be effective in empowering communities to deliver outcomes to initiatives, but in the case of training and skills delivery in remote areas there can be issues finding or attracting appropriately skilled people or organisations to deliver the training. This has been seen for example with some youth programs in Jabiru, where delivery of funded programs has struggled to find people to run training either locally or coming in from Darwin. If these challenges exist it may be more appropriate to fund training providers directly rather than individual communities. Such a training providers could then, for example, offer remote area specialists to deliver training to communities across Kakadu and West Arnhem.

21. How could communities support appropriate training and skills development programs?

At a basic level, communities can support training and skills programs through on-the-ground engagement and participation. Communities need to ensure a high level of interest and attendance in training and skills development programs, and participants should be strongly encouraged to see the programs through to the end. Communities should also contribute to consultation and dialogue about technology to promote full engagement in

training and skills development, to better ultimately manage their own telecommunications implementations.

22. What obstacles exist for the successful delivery of training and skills development?

Low participation and attendance is often an obstacle to the successful delivery of training and skills development. Many factors can influence low attendance. Participants need to feel comfortable in the training environment, which may mean using a training space that participants are familiar with and comfortable in, or taking the time to familiarise participants with the environment. Larger groups tend to be more successful as participants have more peers for support, while small groups tend to get smaller and eventually only one or two people may complete the training.

Training and skills development programs seem to be most successful when they offer an environment in which participants can bring family members with them. As young children can be distracting in a training environment, it may be a good idea to offer some form of entertainment or activity to keep them occupied. Provision of food and drink during training often contributes to overall success, because participants concentrate better if they aren't hungry. In remote communities there can be transport challenges in attending training and skills development. Provision of some transport to and from outstations, or even short term accommodation near the training venue, may be required. It should be noted that any other services offered to facilitate training, including food, drink and transport, will also need to accommodate family members of all ages who accompany training participants.

Ongoing skills development may require following up training at intervals of perhaps two months, then six months, to reiterate and build on initial training.

23. Are community champions an appropriate way to engage the community and assist them in using telecommunications technology? For what size of community would a community champion be appropriate? Would every Indigenous community with a phone, Internet or videoconferencing facility need access to a local champion?

Community champions are described as local or regional opinion leaders or trainers. Such people often have many demands on them and if they were to be used in this context it would be important to provide adequate support. There should be more than one community champion for each community, particularly in indigenous communities where people may move around the region a lot during the year.

Another way to engage the community, also a 'bottom up' approach, is to engage young people. Anecdotal evidence shows that young people are keen to try new technology and as they adopt it, other members of their family, including older members of the community, learn about technology and start to take it up. For example, low end mp3 players have become very popular in the Kakadu region. Initially young people were the only ones with mp3 players but over time older people have started to use them, seeking advice and expertise from the youth as needed.

24. What roles could community champions play within communities?

Community champions should play a promotional role, encouraging and supporting the community in consultation, participation and adoption of technology. Community champions can not be all things to all people and should not be placed in situations where there may be too much pressure on them to achieve targets, for example.

25. How could community champions be identified within regions and communities?

Service, education, and community organisations which operate within regions and communities usually have a very good idea which are community champions and could identify people to become telecommunications champions.

26. What would be the best way to engage and compensate community champions for their role and how could their performance be monitored and assessed?

The key point is to identify a person to whom the need for telecommunications is crucial. This person will then own the process of continued improvement in performance, which in turn will ensure their own success. A business for example, which relies on telecommunications will be most likely to provide a champion, or to engage in the training and development of a relevant champion. Currently, KCD is collaborating with an accountancy firm to identify and train suitable persons to undertake basic administration skills. The same is entirely possible and sustainable in the area of telecommunications.

27. What models of delivering increased culturally appropriate content to the Internet could be introduced under Backing Indigenous Ability?

Many indigenous recipient of welfare benefits require ongoing consultation with various organisations. Improved training on the use of telecommunications to engage via the internet would improve and speed up processes. A simple course and training scheme in both technical and literacy based components under BIA would be a very helpful first step towards achieving this.

28. How could a grant or funding model to encourage development of culturally appropriate content be structured? What are the benefits and risks of the models?

Broad consultation encourages broad participation, and this is important in sustainable community development. A funding model to deliver culturally appropriate content could be linked to other elements of BIA and the Connect Australia package, including the provision of internet access. This could provide an added incentive in the development of cultural content.

29. Will the ability to digitally record and archive culturally significant material encourage usage of Internet services?

Yes. Photos of youth programs and activities on the wall of the Kakadu Employment Centre have proved an overwhelmingly popular attraction on their own. The bulk of these photos were taken with digital camera by indigenous youth involved in employment programs. Digital cameras and

video cameras are magnets for young people in both social and training environments, and the best images and video are those they take themselves of their peers. Young people have also keenly embraced use of PCs to seek out stored photos and video of themselves and their peers. It is considered that this would translate well to recording more culturally significant material, given the appropriate training.

30. What funding approaches could be adopted to encourage the recording and archiving of culturally significant material under Backing Indigenous Ability?

Projects which promote, protect and enhance appropriate access to digital storage of culturally significant material should be funding priorities.

31. Who should facilitate demand aggregation within communities regions? Is it appropriate that ICCs, regional agents and community champions assist with demand aggregation or should alternative implemented (for example using a demand aggregation broker)?

Demand aggregation is not considered appropriate for the community of Jabiru township, which is big enough for its organisations to fully utilise ISP services. As Jabiru Town Council has done in the Kakadu Employment Centre, organisations may choose to make PCs with internet access available to target groups within the community (in this case, young disengaged indigenous youth) as part of their IT capacity.

32. What other initiatives could assist in demand aggregation?

33. What innovative and/or flexible approaches are being used elsewhere that could be used to deliver elements of Backing Indigenous Ability?

The Jabiru "Our Story" project run by the Jabiru Public Library is an innovative approach to the delivery of culturally appropriate content on an easy to access PC format that requires minimal computer literacy. Another project being run by Jabiru Town Council and Kakadu Community Development is the development of a small computer network at the Kakadu Youth Centre. Local youth have been involved in the setup of the network from the start, rebuilding some PCs that were donated by Council. Most of the infrastructure has been donated and only the internet has needed to be

funded, and as the network has taken shape and broadband internet has been connected, the young people involved have learnt valuable skills and are now enjoying the rewards (for example, network gaming.)

34. What technologies offer greater flexibility and why?

Mobile phone technology offers a good deal of flexibility (voice, camera, etc) and being portable is popular with members of the community, who often move around within the region.

35. What are some innovative means of service delivery to provide telecommunications improvements to Indigenous communities?

Service delivery to provide telecommunications improvements should complement existing service delivery such as health and education. Improved regional communications will result in improved service delivery of literacy and numeracy, which will result in more uptake of regional communications.

36. What are some innovative approaches that could be used to fund communities in need under the Backing Indigenous Ability program?

Partnership approaches to funding have proved successful in Kakadu by sharing obligations, promoting broader participation and resulting in greater community empowerment and engagement.

37. How should funding be provided under Backing Indigenous Ability?

A combination of funding approaches should be used. Direct funding for established service providers is likely to result in successful outcomes for the community.

38. What type(s) of funding provision best suit each program element?

39. Should a mix of funding approaches be used?

Yes.

40. How can communities be assisted to develop grants applications so as to compete on a more equal basis for funding?

A partnership approach to funding which includes service providers, Aboriginal organisations, different levels of government and other organisations will assist communities to compete on a more equal basis.

41. In delivering Backing Indigenous Ability in a culturally appropriate manner, what should be done to enable acceptance and ownership of telecommunications technology to aid sustainability within Indigenous communities?

Ongoing dialogue or consultation is a key factor in contributing to participation and ownership of telecommunications and capacity building and empowerment within communities. Delivery of technology needs to be flexible enough to respond to input from communities and adapt implementations accordingly.

42. What are some best practices in engaging communities in the planning, development and implementation stages of introducing or improving telecommunications technology?

When communities are consulted from the ground up and involved in the whole process from planning to implementation, greater engagement, ownership and empowerment results.

43. How can telecommunications services delivered to Indigenous communities become operationally and financially sustainable and remain sustainable beyond the life of the package?

Prepaid mobile phones are very popular in Jabiru. Other telecommunications services could be prepaid to become financially sustainable. Aboriginal organisations may be able to assist in managing telecommunications services which will also contribute to operational and financial sustainability. It is important that services are linked to indigenous businesses and service providers for ongoing operational and financial sustainability.

44. What innovative and flexible approaches could be used by communities to aid in the sustainability of telecommunications technology?

Communities should be exposed to the potential for business and other economic opportunities that flow from telecommunications. When this potential is realised, the telecommunications will be more sustainable. In

Kakadu, telecommunications are essential to the success of tourism and hospitality businesses, which ensures the technology will be sustainable.

45. How could telecommunications industry participants be encouraged to form partnerships with Indigenous communities? What form might these arrangements take?

Telecommunications industry participants form partnerships with clients in the private and government sectors and this should extend to indigenous communities. It is important for telecommunications industry participants to provide appropriate support to indigenous businesses in the same way, so that, for example, a business can source its phone, internet and videoconferencing technologies through one representative of the telecommunications company (such as a business manager). This will make it easier for indigenous businesses to navigate the complexities and requirements of new technologies and their impacts on business operations.

46. In what ways can local Indigenous Australians assist in service delivery of telecommunications in Indigenous communities?

Indigenous organisations can contribute to the on-ground implementation of telecommunications. Indigenous people can be trained to become telecommunications trainers in their communities or regions. Indigenous people can become identified community champions. There are many ways in which indigenous people can assist in telecommunications delivery.

47. How should Backing Indigenous Ability use arrangements such as Shared Responsibility Agreements to facilitate arrangements with communities?

48. What elements of Backing Indigenous Ability should or should not be formalised through agreements with communities to share responsibilities and ensure appropriate service delivery?

Training and skills development should be formalised through agreements with communities. Any hardware provided should be formalised to share responsibilities.

49. Would the use of Regional Partnership Agreements work within the Backing Indigenous Ability program and the wider *Connect Australia* package? If so, what form should these agreements take?

50. How can existing infrastructure and services in communities be used to provide access to a wider range of uses and users from the community?

Projects like "Our Story", which aims to offer culturally appropriate content in a very simple to use computer format, assist in providing access to a wider range of users in the community, as does a small computer network project at the Kakadu Youth Centre.

51. Are there any other key stakeholders that should be consulted (other than through this discussion paper and the consultation sessions planned for March and April identified at Section 8 below) in the design and implementation of Backing Indigenous Ability?

Indigenous community members are being consulted through a current IT audit project in Kakadu.

52. How best can Backing Indigenous Ability link in with the other elements of *Connect Australia* to ensure an efficient and effective delivery of telecommunications into Indigenous communities?

Common infrastructure may support a variety of services – for example, Jabiru's mobile phone tower supports mobile telephony, wireless mobile internet access, and mobile EFTPOS. Telecommunications infrastructure supports voice and internet services. Broadband infrastructure in remote communities could form the basis of delivery of a variety of services.

53. How best can the progress of Backing Indigenous Ability be monitored and assessed? How often should a formal assessment of Backing Indigenous Ability be undertaken?

BIA should be monitored for achieving stated outcomes and improved delivery of services. The progress of BIA should be assessed from both a community perspective and an indigenous business perspective.

ADDITION TO KCD RESPONSE TO BIA DISCUSSION PAPER:
Jabiru Public Library "Our Story Project"

The Our Story project aims to record the history of Jabiru and the Kakadu region in digitised form. Public libraries aim to provide a relevant information service to all community members. Internet access is now a vital part of information provision. The Our Story project directly supports the aims of Backing Indigenous Abilities by acting as a positive step in supporting the access to information including the internet.

Short term desired outcomes of the project that will directly benefit the local indigenous community include:

1. Preservation of local aboriginal history and culture for future generations.
2. Participation in the preservation process by contributing photographs, stories and information to the database.
3. A means of “bringing home”, in digital form, items of historical and cultural significance that are currently stored elsewhere.
4. Increased use of public library services. The database can be viewed in the library or on a laptop taken to outstations as part of a mobile library service.
5. Increased literacy and numeracy skills through interaction with the database.

Longer term desired outcomes of the project that will directly benefit the local indigenous community include:

1. The fostering of positive relationships between library staff and local indigenous people.
2. The provision of a relevant library and information service through increased understanding of information needs.
3. The development of a mobile library service to outstations, increasing the accessibility to library services, including internet access and facilitating the delivery of literacy and numeracy services.
4. The development of family history services.

The development of a mobile library service represents a significant change to the delivery of library services in the region and requires appropriate capital outlay. There are many potential benefits in establishing such a project, including increased internet access, and increased computer, numeracy and literacy skills.