



SBS & NITV submission to Inquiry into racism, hate and violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

May 2026

Executive Summary

- The Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) and National Indigenous Television (NITV) are key media and cultural institutions established to reflect Australia's multicultural society, including multicultural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In informing, educating and entertaining all Australians, SBS and NITV contribute to meeting the communications needs of Australia's multicultural society, including to reflect as well as respond to racism, hate and violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- The launch of NITV in 2007 recognised the need for more dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content across national media, and the importance of First Nations peoples controlling how their stories are told, shaping how all Australians understand their unique place in this country. It followed 25 years of campaigning to have the stories, languages, culture and aspirations of Indigenous peoples accurately reflected within the media landscape. Today, NITV is the only national broadcast media service made by, for and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1991 found that negative and inaccurate representations of First Nations people in media directly affect Indigenous peoples' self-perception, shape public opinion and impact public policy, with a number of recommendations directed to rectifying these negative impacts. A National Inquiry into Racist Violence in 1991 concluded that the perpetuation and promotion of negative and racial stereotypes and sensationalist reporting on race issues could contribute to a social climate which is tolerant of racist violence. The current Inquiry, 35 years later, is confronted with these issues in a contemporary media and communications environment which has been transformed by digital platforms.
- The relevance and mandate of SBS and NITV are arguably more significant today than when they were established, as the challenges facing the nation increase in scale and complexity. Racism is an everyday reality and the experiences of racism in all contexts remain consistently and unacceptably high. Misrepresentation and stereotyping in both traditional media and on online platforms can reinforce prejudice, normalise discrimination and contribute to the conditions in which hate, racism and violence against First Nations Australians can occur and persist. The alleged January 26 bombing incident at Perth's Invasion Day rally (later declared a terrorist incident by authorities), the proliferation of racist hate speech online (including hate speech which targets and impacts First peoples), and the rise of artificial intelligence underscore the need for SBS and NITV. SBS and NITV are uniquely positioned to increase awareness amongst all Australians of the value that a diversity of cultures brings to Australian society.
- For almost 20 years, NITV has provided reporting, storytelling and educational material that reflects First Nations perspectives and communities across Australia. NITV has evolved into a fully multiplatform media service, available across HD and SD linear channels, through a dedicated streaming destination on SBS On Demand, NITV Radio and an active social



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media presence. NITV is Australia's only national First Nations television channel that services both linear and digital platforms. It operates under editorial standards that promote fair, balanced, accurate and culturally responsible reporting and content, and has built credibility and trust within First Nations communities and the broader Australian public.

- SBS and NITV provide First Nations communities with a trusted platform to share diverse perspectives and have their lived experiences heard, including where mainstream media reporting falls short. SBS and NITV provide accurate coverage of news and current affairs, elevating First Nations voices, shining a light on racism, hate and violence, and holding power, including institutions, to account. SBS and NITV employees also have direct experience as the target of racism, hate and violence directed at First Nations people. This has resulted in the introduction of internal measures to manage escalating racism, hate and violence and its impact on employee wellbeing.
- As home to NITV, SBS plays a unique role in extending NITV's reach and impact, with a national distribution network, multilingual services and through collaborations across multicultural communities, including sharing experiences of racism and violence. The network delivers First Nations content in more than 60 languages, sharing First Nations stories and perspectives that celebrate culture and Country, acknowledge truths and provide a platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives that inspire and instill pride in all Australians. Indigenous screen content is subtitled into five languages other than English and SBS research shows that multilingual audiences have a strong interest in First Nations stories. This work is exemplified in the transformation project of SBS's Elevate Reconciliation Action Plan: *We connect our newest Australians with the Custodians of the oldest living culture on Earth.*
- Adequate funding and investment in First Nations media is critical to ensuring that First Nations perspectives and stories can be shared and are accessible to all Australians, in turn addressing the concerns identified by the Royal Commission. To encourage greater commercial investment in First Nations media, SBS and NITV have launched the Beyond 3% initiative, which has resulted in increased investment in both NITV and other First Nations media providers across the country.
- **SBS and NITV recommend that:**
 - The ongoing need for and importance of trusted, First Nations media be recognised as an essential component of an effective structural response to racism, hate and violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
 - As racism, hate and misinformation directed at First Nations people escalates, that there be sustained investment in the First Nations media sector.
 - Consideration be given to additional targeted funding that addresses key areas of need, including:
 - To support management and moderation of escalating racism on social media and digital platforms to provide a safe environment for First Nations users.
 - To produce educational content and explainers that address stereotypes and misinformation about First Nations Australians and supports media literacy.
 - To produce content that supports pride, wellbeing and cultural connection for First Nations Australians, including children's content and in-language content consistent with Outcome 14 of the National Closing the Gap Implementation Plan and the *Revive* national cultural policy.



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- Regulation of digital platforms be strengthened to address gaps in the legislative framework and address online hate speech directed at any individuals and groups, extremism and misinformation, and to promote digital and media literacy.
- Note on terminology: The terms First Nations peoples, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Indigenous Australians are used interchangeably throughout this submission.
- Note on scope: SBS and NITV recognise the complex and multifactorial nature of racism, hate and violence and have focused this submission on the role of media set against the Inquiry terms of reference. We acknowledge that racism, hate and violence are experienced by many different communities.

1. About SBS and NITV

(a) Purpose and services

- SBS and NITV are Australian public media organisations dedicated to the delivery of services that inform, educate, and entertain all Australians, with a particular remit to serve multicultural, multilingual, and First Nations communities. SBS is driven by its Charter obligations and purpose to inspire all Australians to explore, respect and celebrate our diverse world and in doing so, contribute to an inclusive and cohesive society. At the heart of this offering is NITV.
- NITV has been part of the SBS network since 2012. NITV is an essential service by, for and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the country. NITV delivers original content, news and current affairs from a First Nations lens; coverage of sport that connects communities and celebrates Blak excellence; powerful documentaries that share stories of trailblazers, increase understanding and inspire audiences; world-class drama; and award-winning children's programming that ensures younger generations see their communities, languages and cultures reflected on screen.
- NITV is an Associate member of First Nations Media Australia (FNMA) and a founding member of the World Indigenous Broadcasting Network (WIBN), launched in 2008 alongside Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) in Canada and Whakaata Māori in New Zealand. In 2026 there are eight members of this global alliance, working together to not only share original content, but to promote the stories of Australian Indigenous peoples to an international audience.

(b) NITV - A long-fought milestone and essential service

- Historically, Australian television offered a limited range of programs made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Content about Indigenous people on Australian television often portrayed negative or ethnographic images and reinforced harmful stereotypes, shaping how First Nations Australians were seen by the broader public, and how they saw themselves.
- NITV was established following sustained advocacy by First Nations communities in response to findings that media representation was a contributing factor to discrimination, racism, hate and violence directed at First Nations people. This causal relationship has been documented by successive reviews and inquiries for over more than three decades, for example:
 - The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991) recognised that negative and inaccurate representations of First Nations people in media directly affect Indigenous people's self-perception, shape public opinion and impact public policy. It recommended that Indigenous people be given meaningful control over



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how they were portrayed in media as a practical step towards improving outcomes for communities.¹

- The National Inquiry into Racist Violence (1991) concluded that there was a tendency in the Australian media for the "perpetuation and promotion of negative and racial stereotypes, a tendency towards conflictual and sensationalist reporting on race issues, and an insensitivity towards, and often ignorance of, minority cultures", which could "contribute to creating a social climate which is tolerant of racist violence".²
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission's (ATSIC) Recognition Rights and Reform report (1995) called on government to ensure an equitable distribution of resources within mainstream communication appropriations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in mainstream broadcasting media and increase production of culturally relevant programs.³
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted in 2007 and endorsed by Australia in 2009, affirming that First Nations people have the right to establish media, and that nations must take effective measures to ensure state-owned media reflect Indigenous cultural diversity.⁴
- NITV launched on 13 July 2007, during NAIDOC Week, as a subscriber-based service on the Foxtel platform, operated by a small team based in Mparntwe (Alice Springs). Initially NITV was only available via cable and satellite, and remained out of reach for many of the communities it was created to serve.
- After sustained advocacy, NITV joined the SBS Network and launched as a free-to-air (FTA) channel on 12 December 2012. The FTA launch of NITV represented a major and long-fought milestone that made NITV available in 97% of Australian homes, including city, regional and remote areas.
- SBS's commitment to elevating First Nations storytelling predates NITV's establishment and move to the SBS network, including Indigenous current affairs programs such as *Living Black* (2003) and *First In Line* (1989). When NITV joined the SBS network, it built on this foundation.
- Today NITV is a fully multiplatform media service, available across HD and SD linear channels, through a dedicated streaming destination on SBS on Demand, NITV Radio and an active social media presence.

2. The nature, prevalence and impact of racism, hate and violence towards First Nations people, including trends over time

- As Australia's national Indigenous broadcaster, NITV both reports on racism, hate and violence towards First Nations people, and experiences it directly – in the course of work and audience interaction on online platforms.

¹ Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, (1991), *National Report Volume 2* <https://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/rciadic/> Chapter 12.6

² Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, (1991), *Report of the National Inquiry into Racist Violence in Australia* https://humanrights.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0016/50542/NIRV.pdf

³ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, (1995), *Recognition, Rights and Reform: A Report to Government on Native Title Social Justice Measures* <https://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/1995/2.pdf>

⁴ United Nations General Assembly, (2007), *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf



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- The escalation of racism directed at First Nations people is confirmed by independent research. In 2025, Reconciliation Australia's Australian Reconciliation Barometer (ARB) found that the First Nations peoples experiences of racism has significantly increased over the last decade with 54% of respondents having experienced racism in 2024 compared to 39% in 2014.⁵ Younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience racism at higher levels than all other age groups with 63% of 18-24 year olds and 68% of 25-34 year olds reporting that they have experienced at least one form of racial prejudice in the last six months.⁶ For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the ARB found, racism is an everyday reality.⁷
 - The evidence from our own operations makes clear that racism, hate and violence directed at First Nations people is not declining. It is escalating, particularly on online platforms, with the Voice to Parliament referendum making a significant turning point.
- (a) SBS and NITV provide comprehensive coverage of racism, hate and violence towards First Nations people**
- Since its inception in 2007, NITV has provided coverage of issues impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, from the Northern Territory Intervention in 2007, to the January 26 bombing incident at Perth's Invasion Day rally in 2026. SBS and NITV report extensively on racism, hate and violence directed at First Nations people. The evidence encountered through this journalism makes clear that these instances are increasing.
 - In the environment of intensified racism, hate and violence, NITV has made an editorial commitment to cover the escalating impact of racism in Australia and the impact it is having on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, ensuring these stories are told accurately to a national audience. NITV's dedicated Racism & Justice page has published more than 20 stories in 2026 to mid-April alone.⁸ Some recent examples of the comprehensive coverage from NITV news and current affairs are set out at Appendix A.
 - In addition to news and current affairs, NITV and SBS commission, acquire and broadcast First Nations-authored content that examines racism, hate and violence in depth, including the role of institutions and systems. Key examples include:
 - The upcoming the landmark documentary series *2.6 Seconds*, examining the death of Kumanjayi Walker, a 19-year-old Warlpiri teenager shot by police in Yuendumu, NT, and the trial and inquest that followed. Produced by BlackFella Films, *2.6 Seconds* is currently in post-production for broadcast in late 2026.⁹
 - *Incarceration Nation*, which examines racism and violence against Indigenous people across the Australian justice system and premiered on NITV.¹⁰

⁵ Reconciliation Australia, (18 June 2025), *2024 Australian Reconciliation Barometer: Racism and First Nations Peoples* <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/publication/2024-australian-reconciliation-barometer-racism-and-first-nations-peoples/>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ NITV, *Racism & Justice page*, <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/tag/section/racism>

⁹ SBS About, (30 October 2024), *SBS and NITV present landmark documentary series 2.6 Seconds* <https://www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/2024/10/30/sbs-and-nitv-present-landmark-documentary-series-2-6-seconds/>

¹⁰ Incarceration Nation, The Film, <https://incarcerationnation.com.au/the-film/>



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- *First Contact* on SBS, a documentary series that took a group of six non-Indigenous people, from different walks of life and with strong and varied opinions, and immersed them into Aboriginal Australia for the first time.
- *True Colours* an SBS/NITV co-commissioned bilingual drama exploring themes of racism, art fraud, and cultural identity in remote Central Australia.

(b) Our First Nations staff experience racism, hate and violence first-hand

- First Nations staff experience racism directly while doing their jobs and SBS and NITV have systems and processes in place to support the safety, health and wellbeing of staff. For example, since 2023, NITV has increased the presence of security to support journalists covering January 26 events around the country.
- First Nations staff covering the Voice to Referendum were exposed to racism ideology, signage and commentary in the field, particularly when covering events and perspectives against the Voice. This is one example of a broader pattern in which First Nations journalists are exposed to hostility in the course of their work.
- The volume and toxicity of racist commentary directed at NITV platforms became so severe that in 2023, NITV took the decision to cease using the X (formerly Twitter) platform, due to the level of racist abuse being directed at our staff and audiences. This decision is addressed further at Section 3(a).
- The cumulative toll of this exposure has an impact on the First Nations media sector. NITV and the broader First Nations media industry have lost significant contributors, people of considerable talent and experience, who have left not only NITV but the industry entirely as a result of racism encountered through their work. This is a serious and ongoing loss to the sector and to the audiences these contributors served.

(c) Racism has increased since the Voice Referendum

- The Voice to Parliament referendum marked a significant turning point. As the campaign began, many First Nations people and advocates warned that the public debate would fuel a rise in racism, Speaking on *The Point* in 2023, Bunjalung woman, social justice lawyer and human rights advocate Vanessa Turnbull Roberts captured what many were observing, "We are seeing three very distinct campaigns – the yes, the no and the racist no campaign".¹¹
- During and following the referendum there has been a rise in racism, hate and violence directed at First Nations people. Misinformation about First Nations people and communities were widespread during this period, and the consequences have not abated since the referendum's conclusion. Findings in the lead up to the Victorian Government's Anti-Racism Strategy 2024-2029 highlighted that First Peoples face online hate speech at more than twice the national average.
- There have also been growing audiences on all NITV television, social and digital platforms as Indigenous affairs became a household discussion point. NITV provided unparalleled multiplatform news and information across its network as Australians prepared to vote in the referendum. The rise in audiences saw a striking trend upward in the amount of racism directed at First Nations people online and in everyday life, a trend identified across all of NITV social and digital platforms.
- From January 2024 to April 2026, NITV recorded an almost 300% increase in negative comments on its Facebook and Instagram platforms. Not all comments categorised as

¹¹ *The Point*, (2023). *Episode 1: The Referendum Road Trip Begins*



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negative are racist, they include disagreement and criticism. Notwithstanding this, the marked increase in negative comments demonstrates the elevated levels of hostility on NITV's social media pages. Further the increase in negative comments over time does not appear to be a temporary spike, reflecting a shift in the volume and normalisation of racism directed at First Nations people in online spaces.

- The scale of this abuse has required NITV to take direct action at its own cost to protect its staff and audiences. Since 2023, NITV has engaged external moderation services to reduce the exposure of its predominantly First Nations team to harmful and racist commentary.
- Specific incidents illustrate the severity and speed with which racist commentary can escalate. In March 2026, NITV's coverage of the fuel crisis and the impact to remote First Nations communities attracted more than 500 comments on Facebook page between 11pm to 3am AEST, much of it reinforcing racist stereotypes about Aboriginal people.¹² In the same month, racist commentary on an article about cultural load in Australian workplaces was so severe comments had to be closed entirely.¹³
- These incidents are not exceptions. They are representative of conditions that NITV and SBS managed on an ongoing basis – conditions that have worsened since the referendum.

(d) January 26 attack

- SBS and NITV delivered extensive coverage of the terror attack at the Boorloo/Perth Invasion Day rally across all news platforms, including NITV, SBS News and 50 language services, via television, digital news, radio, podcasts and social platforms. Coverage began on the day of the event and continued to capture the debate and declaration regarding the classification of the event.
- One of SBS's World News reporters was also present at the event and was evacuated as part of the terror attack.
- This incident illustrates that racism directed at First Nations people is not confined to online platforms or verbal abuse. It has escalated to physical violence at a peaceful public gathering. Journalists are on the front line of covering these events.

3. The effect of online platforms on the reach, prominence and harm caused by racism and hate directed at First Nations people

- NITV manages racism and hate directed at First Nations people on its platforms. Analysis of NITV social platforms demonstrates a high volume of negative interaction on NITV profiles. Managing this represents a direct cost: both financial terms and in terms of NITV's ability to engage with its audiences.

(a) SBS and NITV manage racism and hate directed at First Nations people on its own platforms

- NITV and SBS operate online social media pages where racism and hate directed at First Nations people is an escalating presence. From January 2024 to April 2026, NITV recorded an almost 300% increase in negative comments on its Facebook and Instagram platforms.

¹² NITV, (17 March 2026), *National fuel crisis: How will remote Indigenous communities bear the brunt* <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/national-fuel-crisis-how-will-remote-indigenous-communities-bear-the-brunt/ih2xmsun2>

¹³ NITV, (12 March 2026), *Half of full-time Indigenous employees are working an extra year on unpaid 'cultural load'* <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/the-cultural-safety-gap-in-australian-workplaces/czlzqw8mn>



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- As noted above, NITV took the decision to cease using X (formerly Twitter) entirely due to the volume of racism and hate directed at NITV's profile and staff.¹⁴ This permanent withdrawal from a major online platform was significant and driven by the lack of a safe environment for First Nations content and communities.
- SBS and NITV active social media pages are moderated by an external service provider. However, the volume and speed of racist commentary, particularly on posts gaining traction during evenings, weekends and key First Nations news moments, regularly exceeds the capacity of standard moderation services to respond in time. This creates periods of real risk, where harmful content is visible to First Nations audiences before it can be removed.
- Weekly reports from NITV's external moderation provider have consistently ranked racism directed at First Nations Australians in the top three challenges they face across the SBS portfolio over the last 2 years. This is particularly acute for the NITV platforms which post exclusively First Nations content and stories.
- During key moments, such as January 26 and the Voice to Parliament referendum period, NITV has been required to increase external moderation hours significantly and to close comments sections earlier and more frequently than would otherwise be the case.
- This represents a direct cost: both financial, and in terms of NITV's ability to engage with its audiences. When we are forced to turn comments off it impacts our ability to reach our audiences. Closing comments reduces algorithmic reach, meaning First Nations content is seen by fewer Australians at the key moments where it matters most.
- Further, the volume of negative comments can cause harm to audiences, particularly First Nations audiences, evidenced by complaints to SBS audience relations team regarding racist commentary on NITV's social media platforms. The overwhelming majority of these complaints are from First Nations audiences distressed by the content they were encountering on NITV's pages and calling for stronger moderation. For example, one audience member asked SBS to remove racist comments on a NAIDOC Week post, describing them as "very upsetting for our communities." Another described comments on NITV Facebook posts as "abhorrently racist," asserting that First Nations people have the right to have their stories told "without being subjected to a constant stream of racism".
- The harm caused by online hate speech is well documented beyond NITV's own experience. Findings in the lead up to the Victorian Government's Anti-Racism Strategy 2024-2029 found that First Peoples encounter online hate speech at more than twice the national average. Of people who reported online hate speech, 58% said it causes negative impacts. These include mental or emotional stress, relationship problems and damage to their reputation.
- The existing legislative and regulatory framework has not kept pace with the evolution of online spaces, creating a gap in which harmful content that would not be tolerated in other public contexts can proliferate with limited consequence. Without addressing regulatory shortcoming, organisations that must maintain a presence on these platforms to reach their audiences are left to bear the cost and consequences, through external moderation services, restricted engagement or, as was the case for NITV, withdrawal from certain digital platforms entirely.

(b) The nature and pattern of online racism and hate directed at First Nations Australians

¹⁴ NITV takes a stand against racism and hate on Twitter: <https://www.news.com.au/entertainment/tv/nitv-takes-a-stand-against-racism-and-hate-on-twitter/news-story/29c0b4acbc3cb10ffe5404c06153d526>



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- Analysis of NITV's Facebook platform between March 2024 and September 2025 reveals clear and repeating patterns in how audiences respond to First Nations content.
 - Quantitatively, 39% during this period were negative, and the volume of negative comments grew faster than overall comment volume, indicating the problem is worsening. In considering this statistic, please note that not all negative comments are racist and include disagreement and criticism.
 - The most significant negative engagement occurs on content relating to Indigenous recognition, Treaty, Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country, Indigenous politics and policing and justice issues.
 - The most common recurring themes in negative commentary include assertions that Indigenous recognition "divides the country", calls for "one nation", "one people" or "one flag", assertions that non-Indigenous Australians bear no responsibility towards First Nations Australians and challenges to Indigenous identity based on appearance alone.
 - While not all negative commentary uses explicitly racist language, the targeting of First Nations identity and rights causes harm to communities. There are also clear examples of racist comments that question Indigenous identity or reinforce harmful stereotypes about First Nations people and communities.
- The practical consequences are significant. High volumes of negative comments means more time and investment in moderation, greater risk of harmful content remaining visible, more comments needing review and pressure on team resources.

4. Initiatives that are effective in combating racism targeted at First Nations people and reduce individual and collective harm.

- First Nations media is a powerful tool in combating racism and hate targeting First Nations people. By making First Nations perspectives accessible to wider audiences, First Nations media bridges cultural gaps, builds understanding across cultures, challenges entrenched stereotypes and reduces prejudice. Through balanced, impartial, accurate and culturally responsible reporting, it contributes to a more nuanced public understanding of First Nations peoples and cultures - an understanding that is foundational to the reduction of racism, hate and violence.
- The Australian Government can actively leverage NITV's national reach, its trusted relationships with First Nations communities, and, through SBS, its ability to connect Australians in more than 60 languages with First Nations cultures, stories and perspectives. No other broadcaster in Australia has this capacity. This unique role should be recognised and supported accordingly.

(a) Trusted First Nations media is part of the solution

- NITV is Australia's only national First Nations television channel that services both linear and digital platforms, providing content by, for and about First Nations Australians. It brings unique perspectives, including positive stories, addresses gaps and biases in mainstream coverage and ensures Australian media reflects modern Australia. It counters misinformation at scale, every day and across platforms. It operates under editorial standards that ensure fair, balanced and accurate reporting, and it builds credibility and trust, both within First Nations communities and in the broader Australian public.
- NITV is a success story of what sustained advocacy and investment in First Nations media can achieve. It has raised awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples among the general public and decision-makers, contributed to First Nations self-determination and



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delivered direct and indirect economic benefits to community through employment and commercial activity.

- NITV reaches 4.1m Australians on average every month across TV and SBS On Demand,¹⁵ and is bucking industry trends, with its prime-time TV audience growing 8% YoY over the last three years.¹⁶ And it continues to grow, delivering unique and First Nations-curated programs that inspire, instill pride and lead to a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture, including:
 - Extensive daily news coverage with a First Nations lens and by First Nations journalists through its *Nula* regular bulletins, as well as current affairs programs *Living Black* and *The Point*.
 - Children's television that ensures younger generations see their communities, languages and cultures reflected on screen, including award winning *Little J & Big Cuz* which was delivered in 17 First Nations languages in season 4.
 - NITV Radio's *Guardians of Language and Country* podcast which explores language preservation through First Nations storytelling on Country, as well as a daily news podcast voiced by Executive Producer Lowanna Grant in partnership with NITV News to highlight Indigenous perspectives on the events of the day.
 - First Nations premium dramas such as *True Colours*, documentaries such as *The Colleano Heart*, sports such as *Over the Black Dot* and quiz show *Big Backyard Quiz*, accessible through a dedicated streaming destination on SBS on Demand.
- In the past year alone NITV has delivered unique First Nations content partnerships and sector-building activity, including:
 - Official media partner for the Winds of Zenadth Torres Strait Islander Cultural Festival, the 2025 Koori Knockout, and the 2025 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sports Awards, NAIDOC Week and Garma Festival (in progress with Yothu Yindi Foundation).
 - A multi-year broadcast partnership with Cricket Australia for the National Indigenous Cricket Championships.
 - A NITV x ABC Strategic Partnering Agreement covering content sharing, career pathways and industry support through to 2028.
 - Expanding partnerships with First Nations media organisations including Ngaarda Media, National Indigenous Radio Service (NIRS), Koori Mail and Torres Strait Islander Media Association (TSIMA).
 - Associate member of FNMA and a founding member of WIBN,
 - The *Beyond 3%* initiative, launched by NITV and SBS to raise awareness of the benefits of greater investment by agencies and brands in Australia's Indigenous media platforms, including NITV which has seen a significant shift in investment in the channel.
- However, the evidence from our own operations makes clear that racism is not declining. Particularly on online platforms it is escalating, inflicting harm to First Nations individuals,

¹⁵ OzTAM VOZ data, Total People, NITV, July24 – Jun25, When Watched, Total TV Average Monthly Reach (TV 1 min, BVOD 15 secs)

¹⁶ OzTAM VOZ data, Total People, Broadcast TV, NITV 1800-2359 (Prime Time) Average Monthly Audience 1/7/24-30/6/25 vs 1/7/23 – 30/6/24 vs 1/7/22 – 1/7/21 Consolidated



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communities and to the sector itself. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are one of Australia's fastest-growing demographics, the digital landscape has expanded dramatically, and the demand for trusted First Nations content has never been greater.

(b) SBS and NITV connect all Australians to First Nations stories

- As home to NITV, SBS connects Australians, including multicultural and multilingual communities, with First Nations cultures, stories and perspectives. Through NITV's First Nations expertise and SBS's more than 60 language services, we are uniquely placed to build understanding between the world's oldest continuing cultures and Australia's newest communities.
- This connecting role is expressed across SBS and NITV's full range of platforms and initiatives including:
 - The National Indigenous Cricket Championships, produced by NITV's First Nations team with commentary delivered in Dari, Hindi and Punjabi in both 2025 and 2026.
 - *Australia Explained*, an essential service for new migrants and refugees, delivering practical, easy-to-understand information in up to 60 languages through radio, podcasts, articles, videos and social platforms. Every month, *Australia Explained* shares stories and perspectives from Indigenous Australians, offering new arrivals a meaningful connection to First Nations cultures and stories.
 - *SBS Learn English*, which includes resources specifically designed for Australians of low English language proficiency, including the *Aboriginal English: Learn English Minipods* series which introduces Aboriginal English and First Nations perspectives to some of Australia's most recently arrived communities.
 - *SBS Audio* produces First-Nations focused content in collaboration with NITV, particularly during key cultural moments including January 26, NAIDOC Week, National Reconciliation Week, Koori Knock Out and the Garma Festival. Journalists from SBS Arabic and SBS Chinese also attend the Garma Festival in remote North East Arnhem Land, producing on the ground stories for Australia's two largest non-English language communities.
 - Embedding Indigenous perspectives and amplifying First Nations stories across commissioned programs outside of NITV, including in *Australia: An Unofficial History*, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, *Alone Australia* and *Eurovision*.
 - *SBS Learn*, the educational initiative of SBS offering free, high-quality classroom resources for teachers that align with the Australian Curriculum, including resource pack '*Celebrate NAIDOC 2024: Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud*' which was accessed almost 14,000 times in FY25.¹⁷
 - Embedding Indigenous language across SBS, including through the *First Nations Place Names Project* with First Nations place names used in the *SBS World News* nightly national weather forecast and in the *NITV News* weather segment supported in FY26 by NRMA Insurance.
 - *SBS Reconciliation Film Club*, is a national program that supports organisations to host screenings of compelling Indigenous documentaries and Indigenous news and current affairs from a curated catalogue from NITV's content. The program helps drive discussions and awareness in the workplace, school and community and bring

¹⁷ Adobe Analytics, SBS Learn dashboard (1/5/24 – 30/6/25) report retrieved 20/6/25



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people together to develop a deeper understanding of Indigenous peoples' perspectives, languages, communities and histories.

5. The threat posed by ideologically motivated extremism towards First Nations people and the role of intelligence and law enforcement agencies in protecting the community from that threat

- Ideologically motivated extremism directed at First Nations people is a real and growing threat in Australia and must be monitored, named and responded to by intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The January 26 terror attack at a Boorloo/Perth Invasion Day rally is a recent example but it does not exist in isolation. It reflects an environment in which racism and hate have intensified, particularly following the Voice to Parliament referendum.

(a) Ideologically motivated extremism must be named

- SBS and NITV rely on expert agencies for factual reporting on ideologically motivated extremism. Strong and appropriate responses to extremism directed at First Nations people are essential and race-based hate and violence must be publicly and clearly named.
- As part of the fourth estate, SBS and NITV play a critical role in holding power to account, including intelligence and law enforcement agencies, the justice system and governments, for example:
 - Reporting on the accusations that the Boorloo/Perth Invasion Day rally terror attack was downplayed initially as a terror attack and that government did not act decisively enough;¹⁸
 - The landmark documentary series 2.6 Seconds examining the police shooting of Kumanjayi Walker in Yuendumu NT and the accountability failures that followed. Produced by BlackFella Films, 2.6 Seconds will broadcast in late 2026;
 - Extensive and ongoing reporting on deaths in custody; and
 - Reporting on failures across health, housing, education and other Closing the Gap outcome areas.

6. The effectiveness of avenues for reporting and responding to racism against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including the consistency, timeliness and appropriateness of outcomes across jurisdictions and institutions.

- Australia's legal framework provides some protection against racism, but law alone cannot shift culture. SBS and NITV play a critical role in reporting on racism, hate and violence, holding power to account and contributing to an understanding of the unique place of First Nations Australians and ongoing connection to Country.

(a) Media as an avenue for reporting

- SBS and NITV provide a powerful national platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access accurate, balanced and impartial information about instances of racism, hate and violence, including incidents that do not escalate to the justice system.
- NITV has made a deliberate editorial commitment to reporting on racism directed at First Nations people accurately, responsibly and consistently. This work supports public accountability by ensuring incidents, institutional responses and systemic failures are

¹⁸ NITV, (30 January 2026), *Indigenous communities are questioning the government's response to the Perth Invasion Day attack* <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/perth-could-have-been-as-deadly-as-bondi-some-are-questioning-why-the-responses-are-so-different/esnxicixp>



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documented and brought to national attention, particularly where formal reporting or complaints mechanisms fall short.

(b) SBS and NITV provide accountability mechanisms

- It is essential that media organisations report on First Nations matters accurately, fairly and with cultural responsibility. Inaccurate, unbalanced or stereotyping coverage causes direct harm, affecting First Nations people's self-perception, hindering public understanding and contributing to the normalisation of racism.
- The SBS Code of Practice (Code) ensures accountability for meeting robust editorial standards for impartiality, balance and accuracy in our news and current affairs programming. We are proud to be one of Australia's most trusted news providers, reflective of our commitment to our editorial standards. The Code also contains extensive provisions in relation to racism, prejudice and discrimination, and consideration of Indigenous Cultures, including culturally responsible production protocols.
- NITV also plays a role in building the capacity of other media organisations to report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters accurately, fairly and responsibly. Through industry training programs NITV contributes to a broader ecosystem of First Nations media cultural competency.

Recommendations:

- The ongoing need for and importance of trusted, First Nations media be recognised as an essential component of an effective structural response to racism, hate and violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- As racism, hate and misinformation directed at First Nations people escalates, that there be sustained investment in the First Nations media sector.
- Consideration be given to additional targeted funding that addresses key areas of need, including:
 - To support management and moderation of escalating racism on social media and digital platforms to provide a safe environment for First Nations users.
 - To produce educational content and explainers that address stereotypes and misinformation about First Nations Australians and supports media literacy.
 - To produce content that supports pride, wellbeing and cultural connection for First Nations Australians, including children's content and in-language content consistent with Outcome 14 of the National Closing the Gap Implementation Plan and the *Revive* national cultural policy.
- Regulation of digital platforms be strengthened to address gaps in the legislative framework and address online hate speech directed at any individuals and groups, extremism and misinformation, and to promote digital and media literacy.



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Appendix A - Recent relevant examples of NITV news and current affairs

- A *Living Black* investigation documenting racism and alleged violent abuse against children in the NT youth justice system, including denial of basic necessities.¹⁹
- Ongoing coverage of missing and murdered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men, and the inadequacy of institutional responses from police, health and support services, including through the program *Cold Justice*.
- Extensive coverage in April 2026 marking the 35th anniversary of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, including a half-hour *Living Black* conversation with Uncle Richard Frankland, a Field Officer who collected testimony from First Nations families who lost loved ones in police custody or detention.²⁰
- Episodes of *The Point* in 2026 interrogated rising racial tensions – asking why racism is resurging and what it means for Australia's future. *Racism Is the New Black*, examined systemic racism experienced by First Nations people in Victoria, featuring interviews people working in creative industries and coverage of the 2025 attack on Camp Sovereignty.
- An exclusive by NITV on a leaked Anti-Discrimination Commission report revealing high to extreme levels of institutional racism in Queensland's public health system.²¹
- *Our Medicine*, a documentary series examining everyday racism experienced by First Nations Australians in the health system, and the work of First Nations professionals striving to achieve better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and communities.²²
- Coverage of a group of Gamilaroi families escorted from a public swimming pool by police, who subsequently lodged a complaint with the Australian Human Rights Commission.²³
- Sustained coverage of the violent death of Cassius Turvey in Perth, a case that brought national attention to racially motivated violence against First Nations young people.²⁴
- Coverage of the defacing on a Wiradjuri memorial site in Narrandera with racist slogans and Nazi insignia²⁵ and coverage of the ANZAC Day 2026 Dawn Service.²⁶

¹⁹ NITV, (3 June 2025) *Cyrus was told to drink from his cell toilet. His experiences in the NT youth justice system aren't isolated* <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/living-black/article/cyrus-says-he-was-denied-fresh-drinking-water-in-youth-detention-where-he-says-violent-abuse-and-racism-against-children-go-unchecked/3ivxwnfgo>

²⁰ NITV, (24 April 2026), *From a military career to the royal commission, Uncle Richard Frankland reflects on life of service* <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/living-black/article/uncle-richard-frank/ibxez8qhv>

²¹ NITV, (23 October 2017), *EXCLUSIVE: Leaked report reveals 'extreme' levels of racism in Queensland public health system* <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/exclusive-leaked-report-reveals-extreme-levels-of-racism-in-queensland-public-health-system/rnj6qntmf>

²² SBS About (14 April 2025), *Groundbreaking NITV documentary series Our Medicine takes viewers behind the frontline of Australia's strained medical services and shines a light on First Nations professionals and communities taking back control of Indigenous health*

²³ NITV, (21 March 2026), *Aboriginal families were escorted out of a local pool by police. They're lodging a human rights complaint* <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/police-were-called-to-escort-theyre-lodging-a-human-rights-complaint/tezh6n0g>

²⁴ NITV, (27 June 2025), *Life sentence: court hands Cassius' killers their penalties*

<https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/life-sentence-court-hands-cassius-killers-their-penalties/xc2qmiocw>

²⁵ NITV, (23 September 2025), *Wiradjuri Honour Wall in Narrandera defaced with white supremacist graffiti, Nazi symbols* <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/wiradjuri-honour-wall-in-narrandera-defaced-with-white-supremacist-graffiti/jz0wjybia>

²⁶ NITV, (27 April 2026), *OPINION: Booing at the Dawn Service wounds us all, and forgets the price paid by our fallen soldiers* <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/opinion-booing-at-the-dawn-service-wounds-us-all-and-forgets-the-price-paid-by-our-fallen-soldiers/jam4v83h5>