



New Developments To Narrow Digital Gap For First Nations Australians

Description

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The Albanese Government is narrowing the digital divide for First Nations Australians through its \$68 million investment to boost digital inclusion and literacy for communities across the country.

Better digital access means better access to learning, health care and other essential services, especially for people in remote communities.

As part of this, up to 52 remote communities in the Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania will benefit from free publicly accessible Wi-Fi through the \$20 million First Nations Community Wi-Fi Program.

This builds on the success of the previous Community Wi-Fi Program which has already delivered free Wi-Fi to 23 remote communities.

Today the Government also launched a new national data collection [report](#) and [public dashboard](#) from the Measuring Digital Inclusion for First Nations Australians project.

Led by Melbourne's RMIT University and Swinburne University of Technology, the 3-year project is improving national data collection on First Nations digital inclusion.

Data collected through more than 2,800 surveys from major cities, regional towns and remote communities across the country in partnership with First Nations organisations shows that while First Nations Australians are highly digitally engaged, this engagement is not evenly spread across the First Nations population.

Today's announcements complement other initiatives in the Government's \$68 million package for First Nations Digital inclusion.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Communications, Anika Wells:

"Digital connectivity is vital for all Australians to access essential services, run their businesses and stay in touch with loved ones, which is why we're working towards Closing the Gap Target 17."



“We’ve seen fantastic benefits for remote communities under our previous community Wi-Fi program, and I’m excited up to 52 additional First Nations communities will benefit as part of the Government’s \$68 million package for First Nations Digital inclusion.”

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy:

“Digital inclusion is an important part of Closing the Gap.

“Most Australians take for granted their ability to access online services for essentials like healthcare, education and banking.

“Our investment will ensure more remote First Nations communities can access these same supports.”

Quotes attributable to First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group co-chair, Dr Dot West OAM:

“The release of today’s report provides us with new insights into First Nations digital inclusion and how it impacts on communities across Australia.

“It shows the digital divide is still significant, particularly in remote and very remote areas, and that affordability is a challenge for First Nations Australians regardless of where they live.”

Quotes attributable to First Nations Digital Inclusion Advisory Group co-chair, Professor Lyndon Ormond-Parker:

“Digital exclusion continues to impact the ability of First Nations Australians to enjoy the social, economic and cultural benefits of being online.

“We call on governments and industry to consider this data to inform next steps on closing the digital divide, guided by the recommendations in the First Nations Digital Inclusion Roadmap.”

Quotes attributable to RMIT University Associate Professor Daniel Featherstone:

“Guided by First Nations leadership and partnerships, the measuring data study involved more than 3,000 First Nations participants nationwide.

“Their experience with the changing digital landscape provides a deep understanding of the complex, place-based nature of digital inclusion and how Closing the Gap Outcome 17 connects with other outcomes around education, health, employment, housing and language.

“The result is robust evidence to support practical, community-led solutions and national policy and programs to help close the digital gap.”



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