

STATE OF THE MEDIA KIRIBATI

RESEARCH BRIEF

ABC
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT


PACMAS
Pacific Media Assistance Scheme

 **THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE**



AT A GLANCE



- 1. Financial challenges threaten media sustainability**



- 2. Unstable internet connectivity impacts online access**



- 3. Inclusion prioritised in local media reporting**

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

This report provides a detailed, up-to-date snapshot of the state of the media in Kiribati. It is part of the State of the Media project, which comprises 12 country reports and one regional report. These reports serve as an accessible resource for media, civil society, and government organisations in support of development goals in the region.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a multi-method approach. The research team began with a desk-based review of relevant primary and secondary literature. Challenges were then faced by researchers in accessing media practitioners for interview. This was due to competing priorities in the newsroom, as most staff were involved in covering the build-up to the parliamentary elections in August 2024. This report is therefore informed by two detailed interviews with senior media practitioners in Kiribati, and input from the Kiribati media expert adviser, Akka Rimon. The adviser also cross-checked the accuracy of findings and co-authored this report. The research was approved by the University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Committee and steps were taken to mitigate risks to all research participants, including maintaining their anonymity.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Financial challenges threaten media sustainability

Kiribati's local media industry has faced diminished funding, with the state-owned Broadcasting and Publications Authority (BPA) relying on minimal government funding and advertising revenue to stay afloat. Further, BPA's Radio Kiribati has limited working equipment, which has led to periodic disruptions to transmission.

2. Unstable internet connectivity impacts online access

Internet connectivity has limited reach across Kiribati because the country's islands are so widely dispersed. Some outer islands have no internet access. Compounding this, the lack of 4G connections for non-Android phones limits the type of mobile content that can be consumed by users of other devices. Plans are afoot to improve nationwide connectivity, which is currently unreliable across most of the country, with the installation of a submarine cable system at the end of 2025.

3. Inclusion prioritised in local media reporting

There are various organisations advocating for gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) issues in Kiribati. This has, according to media practitioner respondents, led to greater inclusivity in local media coverage. The media actively prioritise topics around inclusion as part of their daily news coverage and are engaged with GEDSI-related advocacy events. For example, Boutokaan Inaomataia ao Mauriia Binabinaine Association (BIMBA), an organisation empowering the LGBTIQ+ community through education and awareness raising in Kiribati, regularly engages with the media to raise public awareness of their initiatives.

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Disclaimer: Any opinions represented in this report are those of the authors and research participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation or the University of Adelaide.