



## **British Columbian First Nations educator to appear at public hearing for languages inquiry**

**Canberra Public Hearing 12:15pm 15 September**

An indigenous educator from British Columbia will share her experience at a public hearing in Canberra as part of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs inquiry into language learning in Indigenous communities. Professor Lorna Williams will speak to the Committee about her knowledge as an educator with many years of experience in Aboriginal education, curriculum and teacher development, and Indigenous language revitalisation.

Professor Williams is Lil'wat from the St'at'yem'c First Nation in the Canadian province of British Columbia. She is currently Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Knowledge and Learning in the Faculty of Education and Department of Linguistics at the University of Victoria, and Chair of First Peoples Heritage, Language and Culture Council in British Columbia. Professor Williams was invested into the Order of British Columbia in 1993 for her outstanding contributions to education.

The Chair of the Committee Mr Shayne Neumann MP said, "First Peoples in other parts of the world, and in particular North America, share a similar history of dispossession and language decline as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. The Committee looks forward to hearing about Professor Williams' extensive experience in British Columbia, and about the parallels and possible lessons we can learn from people working with Indigenous languages outside of Australia."

The Committee's inquiry is interested in the links between Indigenous languages and improving education, community wellbeing, interpreting services and strategies to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage. The Committee aims to find out about how the use of languages, including Indigenous languages, can assist in improving education and vocational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Indigenous languages policies of Australian governments, and the benefits and effectiveness of Indigenous language maintenance and revitalisation programs are being investigated.

The hearing will be broadcast live from Committee Room 1R2, Parliament House, Canberra from approximately 12:15pm via: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

Information about the inquiry can be found at the inquiry's website:  
[www.aph.gov.au/languages](http://www.aph.gov.au/languages)

**For media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair Mr Shayne Neumann on (07) 3201 5300.

**For background information**, contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 62774559 or [atsia.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:atsia.reps@aph.gov.au)