

**Senate Committee: Education and Employment**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017**

**Outcome: Agency: AIATSIS**

**Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-000990**

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing

***AIATSIS - Renewed mandate pursuant to the AIATSIS Amendment Act 2016***

**Question**

What work is being done to implement the focusing of the Institute's functions as newly re-defined?

**Answer**

*The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) has provided the following answer:*

With the increase in appropriation for AIATSIS in the 2016–17 Federal Budget, the internal budget allocations were formulated against the newly defined functions as set out in AIATSIS' amended legislation, and defined and prioritised in the AIATSIS Corporate Plan. This long-term funding commitment has enabled AIATSIS to meet its amended legislative obligations and the strategic priorities as laid out in the AIATSIS Corporate Plan.

In addition to budget allocations, AIATSIS also reallocated other resources internally in accordance, including increasing staff numbers in the Collections program from 51 to 107.

Efforts to improve the accessibility of the collection have already resulted in an improvement in client satisfaction with finding materials.

Additional outreach activities have also led to an increase in the numbers of visits and requests for material. Our new catalogue interface has also made the collection easier to search and navigate remotely.

A Digital Access Management System is being rolled out, setting AIATSIS up for more efficient, reliable and sustainable collection management. New studio space has also been constructed.

Previously, the family history unit was only available to Link-Up organisations, which provide family history and family reunion services to members of the Stolen Generations.

In 2015–16, we reopened our family history research service to qualifying members of the public to research their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. We also finalised and uploaded family history research resources to our website to support independent researchers and those who do not qualify for support from our research service. This has assisted the many Indigenous Australians affected by past policies that led to displacement, relocations, institutional care and other actions that have affected identity and make family history research complex.

A Sustainability Paper is also under development for Government to outline the options being explored and the actions underway to ensure that AIATSIS is on a sustainable footing long-term and able to deliver against its refined functions.