



Indigenous Languages Support

The Office for the Arts will appear before the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs' to discuss the work it is doing as the lead agency responsible for the implementation of the *National Indigenous Languages Policy*.

The Office for the Arts has recently shifted from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet into the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport. The Office for the Arts is responsible for administering the Indigenous Languages Support (ILS) program, which underpins the *National Indigenous Languages Policy*.

The Indigenous Languages Support (ILS) program, formally called the Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records (MILR), received \$9.6 million in the 2011-2012 budget and funded 67 language activities around Australia. In addition, the Office for the Arts administers the Indigenous Culture Support program and the Indigenous Employment Initiatives in the arts and culture sector.

During the inquiry the Committee has spoken to a range of Indigenous language experts and is now keen to hear from the Commonwealth agency responsible for administering funding for language programs throughout Australia. The Committee will be travelling in the first week of April and the first week in May to major cities, regional and remote areas of Australia to speak to people who are receiving Commonwealth funding for language programs.

The Chair of the Committee Mr Shayne Neumann MP said "The Committee looks forward to hearing about the broad range of language programs currently being funded by the Commonwealth. It will be interesting to find out what benefits giving recognition and attention to Indigenous languages has on strengthening Indigenous identity and culture as well as educational and vocational benefits.

The Committee is aware that the funding for the Indigenous Languages Support program is highly sort after with only 67 of the 90 applications receiving funding. The Committee will be looking closely at how effectively the Commonwealth is delivering its objectives for the National Indigenous Languages Policy."

The hearing will be broadcast live (audio only) from Committee Room 1R2, Parliament House, Canberra from 12:15pm on Thursday 22 March via:

http://www.aph.gov.au/News_and_Events/Watch_Parliament

Information about the inquiry including the program can be found at the inquiry's website: www.aph.gov.au/languages

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair Mr Shayne Neumann on (02) 6277 4755.

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