



Indigenous languages recognised during National Close the Gap Day

The Chair of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs takes the opportunity during National Close the Gap Day to acknowledge the contributions that Indigenous languages make to strengthening connection to country and place for many Indigenous communities throughout Australia.

The Committee Chair, Mr Shayne Neumann commented that 'We have received a groundswell of interest to our inquiry into language learning in Indigenous communities. Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians understand the rich cultural heritage we have in Australia and the importance of language in strengthening culture and identity and its links to health, social, educational and vocational outcomes for our Indigenous Australians.'

'The Committee recognises the effective and dedicated local Indigenous community organisations and individuals who are working to maintain and revive Indigenous languages – the first Australian languages.'

Mr Neumann stated 'At the Committee's upcoming meetings in Adelaide, Alice Springs, Utopia Homelands, Broome, Halls Creek, Darwin and Nhulunbuy we will be discussing the importance of Indigenous languages and the effect of language projects in Closing the Gap. We will be hearing from language centres, schools, training institutions, linguists, and community representatives from urban, regional and remote areas.'

Information about the inquiry including programs can be found at the inquiry's website: www.aph.gov.au/languages. The Committee expects to table its report into language learning in Indigenous communities during the second half of the year.

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