



Report tabled - Language learning in Indigenous communities

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs tabled its report ***Our Land Our Languages: Language Learning in Indigenous Communities*** this morning at 10.10am in Parliament.

The Committee conducted an extensive inquiry lasting over 12 months and received a total of 154 submissions. In travelling to a variety of locations, the Committee heard Indigenous languages in daily use and learned that language is inseparable from culture, kinship, land and family and is the foundation upon which the capacity to learn, interact and to shape identity is built.

The Committee's report makes a total of 30 recommendations. Some of the key recommendations include:

- incorporating an acknowledgement of Indigenous languages in the Closing the Gap framework
- expanding the Indigenous Languages Support (ILS) program
- establishing a national Indigenous interpreting service and putting in place immediate measures to ensure competent interpreting services in the health and justice sectors
- supporting Constitutional changes to include the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
- resourcing bilingual school education programs for Indigenous communities where the child's first language is an Indigenous language (traditional or contact)
- first language assessments of Indigenous children entering early childhood education, and alternative NAPLAN methods and reporting for students whose first language is not English
- developing strategies for training Indigenous language teachers to ensure greater access to career and accreditation pathways, and
- compulsory English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) training for teachers.

The media conference will be broadcast live from Committee Room 2S2, Parliament House, Canberra from 12:30pm -1pm on **Monday 17 September** via:

<http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

Video footage of a ATSIA committee hearing in the Utopia Homelands, NT, and also of some Indigenous people reading their language-learning books in a bush setting can be made available to the media upon request by contacting Andrew Dawson at the House of Representatives 02-6277 2063

Information about the inquiry and the report can be found at the inquiry's website:

www.aph.gov.au/languages A video of the committee hearings to Utopia Homelands and Alice Springs is also available at www.aph.gov.au/ath

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