

To the Committee for the Inquiry into language learning in Indigenous communities.

Muurrbay– Many Rivers Aboriginal Language Centre supports seven languages on the central to north coast of NSW. Please see attached document for some background information.

After some staff discussion, one main point has emerged:

Language centres like Muurrbay can conduct research, publish and satisfy community interest in language, as we have done for over twenty years in Gumbaynggirr, but permanent transmission in this part of Australia, where Aboriginal Languages are no longer people's first languages, will be in the 'mainstream': schools, TAFE, Universities, and through State-encouraged inservice of Aboriginal education professionals. The creation of career pathways for Aboriginal language teachers in Education Departments will also assist. It is not enough to have a policy that states support for teaching Aboriginal languages. Schools throughout our region are largely unable to release Aboriginal staff to attend training and inservices that will enable them to learn and teach their languages. Government and Education Departments need to genuinely invest in the process otherwise languages will die.

Anna for Muurrbay–MRALC staff

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