

**Office for the Arts
Indigenous Language Support funding**

*Reply to 7 June 2012 email from House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (Susan Cardell)*

1. What is the ILS program budget for 2012-2013? \$9.932 million

2. What is the assessment criteria used for the funding of the ILS program?

Applications for funding are assessed against the published 2012-13 funding guidelines for the Indigenous Culture, Languages and Visual Arts program and the assessment criteria which can be found at:

<http://www.arts.gov.au/sites/default/files/indigenous/indigenous-funding-guidelines.pdf> .

The assessment criteria for ILS applications published for the 2012-13 funding round were:

General assessment criteria (employed for applications to any of Office for the Arts' (OFTA's) three Indigenous programs)

Annual funding

All applicants seeking annual funding will be assessed against the following general assessment criteria:

1. The likely benefits of the proposed activity in the Indigenous culture, languages and visual arts areas.
2. Ability to carry out the proposed activity, including the applicant's track record in relation to planning, governance and financial management.
3. Demonstrated need for funding, including provision of a realistic and sound budget for the year of proposed funding.

Triennial funding

All applicants seeking triennial funding will be assessed against the following general assessment criteria:

1. Quality and relevance of the applicant's three-year strategic plan to the funding objectives of the relevant funding category. This includes the proposed activity's likely contribution to strengthening Indigenous culture, languages or visual arts.
2. Capacity of the applicant to fulfil the three-year strategic plan.
3. The applicant's ability to carry out the proposed activity to a high standard, including the applicant's track record in relation to planning, governance and financial management.
4. Demonstrated need for funding, including provision of a realistic and sound budget for the three years of proposed funding.

ILS additional assessment criteria

In addition to the general assessment criteria, applicants will be assessed against demonstrated performance and commitment in the area of Indigenous languages and capacity to contribute to ILS objectives. This should include one or more of the following elements:

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1. capacity to achieve outcomes for the maintenance, revival and/or development of Indigenous languages
2. capacity to support the innovative use of Indigenous languages in a new field or medium
3. ability to facilitate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' engagement with their languages
4. potential to increase public appreciation of Indigenous languages
5. engagement with other language organisations.

The objectives of the program are:

- support the maintenance, revival, and development of Indigenous languages;
- increase the use of Indigenous languages in a range of fields and media;
- support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' engagement with their languages;
- promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing by strengthening pride in identity and culture through languages; and
- promote public appreciation of Indigenous languages.

3. Are allocations distributed equally to each State and Territory?

Funding is not distributed on a State/Territory basis and the amount of funding allocated state by state fluctuates from year to year as regional priorities change.

We also support 'National' activities which include activities that: are conducted Australia-wide; contribute to broader policy initiatives for Indigenous arts, culture or languages; help support the sustainable development of Indigenous language organisations; or that could potentially establish new benchmarks or models which could have flow on effects beyond the immediate project and the communities directly involved. For example funding provided to the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to conduct the second National Indigenous Languages Survey or activities that provide support for national conferences.

	2010-11 Actual	No of Activities supported	2011-12 Actual	No. of Activities	2012-13 Forecast*	No. of Activities supported*
National	\$1,086,454	9	\$1,182,910	8	\$1,149,008	7
ACT	-	-	-	-	-	-
NSW	\$1,231,972	10	\$1,206,697	11	\$1,072,950	10
NT	\$1,933,609	16	\$1,912,430	15	\$2,077,375	20
QLD	\$1,196,049	14	\$1,225,500	12	\$1,170,929	11
SA	\$914,017	10	\$901,572	11	\$1,107,000	11
VIC	\$666,325	3	\$641,250	4	\$642,000	2
TAS	\$293,500	1	\$311,000	1	\$314,000	1
WA	\$2,106,074	16	\$2,257,641	13	\$2,036,207	10
TOTAL	\$9,428,000	79	\$9,639,000	75	\$9,569,469*	72*

* Each year an amount of funding is set aside to support activities that may arise unexpectedly throughout the year or to support projects that involve collaboration with other government agencies. As a result, funding and activity totals for 2012-13 are not final.

4. Are there any priorities given to language revival programs versus language maintenance programs?

The primary objective of the ILS program is 'to support the maintenance, revival, and development of Indigenous languages'. ILS funding provides an opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, community groups and advocacy bodies to define the importance to them of particular heritage languages, no matter where their language sits on the continuum between 'strong intergenerational transmission' and 'unspoken for generations'.

The message we get from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is that no traditional language is regarded as dead, even if it has not been spoken for one or more generations, and that the revival of community use of a language that presently has few or no speakers can be of immense importance to identity, cultural integrity, individual wellbeing and community harmony.

In practice, ILS program funding in recent years has been provided to support activities along the whole continuum of language use. The success of each activity is measured by how well it achieves the funded objectives and on the benefits it provides to the community.

5. What are the reporting requirements for funding recipients under the ILS program? (The Committee received some comments on reporting requirements from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre on 24 May 2012, see transcript from page 2.)

The reporting requirements for funding recipients are partially set by the Department of Finance and Deregulation's *Commonwealth Grant Guidelines*, which establish the grants policy and reporting framework for all departments and agencies subject to the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*.

Any additional information required under our grant agreements is aimed at strengthening OFTA's ability to assess that the funds are being spent on the agreed project and to provide information that shows the benefits and outcomes of the project. The collection of information for evaluation purposes is essential to providing a clear picture of how ILS is contributing to broader Government objectives such as Closing the Gap.

OFTA are required to report on how its Indigenous programs contribute to overall Government initiatives, including reporting against Australian Government Indigenous Expenditure and contributing to the Report on the Government's commitments to Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage. Reports provided by the ILS funding recipients are a key source of information for these whole-of-government monitoring tools.

With regard to periodic reporting required of funding recipients, requirements are kept to the minimum. Funded organisations are provided with a simple template (see attached) for performance reporting based on the agreed objectives and key outputs which are stated in the funding agreement and Project Officers are always available to discuss and/or assist with any difficulty a client may encounter with the reporting requirements or in completing

the performance report template. Financial reporting is not onerous for an organisation with sound book-keeping and accounting procedures.

For OFTA, qualitative reporting is just as important as quantitative and data collected helps OFTA evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Frequency of reporting is either quarterly or half-yearly, depending on the level of funding, degree of complexity of the funded project, the risk rating of the funded organisation and the ability of the Project Officer to visit the organisation in person and see how the activity is progressing (risk mitigation).

6. What is the Office of the Arts staffing structure of people working on the ILS program? Please describe the role of the National Network staff which support the ILS program.

ILS is one in a number of Indigenous programs run through OFTA. Therefore, most staff have multiple responsibilities and it is difficult to give an exact number of staff working on ILS at any given time. We can estimate that there is currently around 10 full time equivalent staff working on the ILS program. The staff structure consists of a team based in the national office in Canberra and National Network offices located around the country.

The ongoing role of network staff is to act as the first point of contact for stakeholders within the regions, conduct detailed assessment of funding applications against the current guidelines, undertake risk assessments, manage funding agreements with organisations (including the monitoring and progression of activities) and to assist organisations, if needed, to meet reporting requirements.

Further support for ILS is provided as needed by other team members beyond just policy development and program delivery and includes the Director of Indigenous Languages, Culture and Repatriation Section and the Assistant Secretary of the Indigenous Culture Branch.