



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

**HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES
STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS

Reference: Needs of urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

WEDNESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2000

CANBERRA

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS

Wednesday, 1 November 2000

Members: Mr Lieberman (*Chair*), Mrs Draper, Mr Haase, Ms Hoare, Mr Katter, Mr Lloyd, Mr Melham, Mr Quick, Mr Snowdon and Mr Wakelin

Members in attendance: Mrs Draper, Mr Haase, Ms Hoare, Mr Lieberman, Mr Lloyd, Mr Melham, Mr Quick, Mr Snowdon and Mr Wakelin

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

The present and ongoing needs of country and metropolitan urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Among other matters, the Committee will consider:

1. the nature of existing programs and services available to urban dwelling indigenous Australians, including ways to more effectively deliver services considering the special needs of these people;
2. ways to extend the involvement of urban indigenous people in decision making affecting their local communities, including partnership governance arrangements;
3. the situation and needs of indigenous young people in urban areas, especially relating to health, education, employment, and homelessness (including access to services funded from the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program);
4. the maintenance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in urban areas, including, where appropriate, ways in which such maintenance can be encouraged;
5. opportunities for economic independence in urban areas; and
6. urban housing needs and the particular problems and difficulties associated with urban areas.

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Committee met at 4.15 p.m.

ATKINSON, Mr John Edward, Victorian Delegate, Governing Committee, Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages

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WHOP, Mr Patrick, Queensland Delegate, Governing Committee, Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages

CHAIR—I declare open this public hearing for the committee inquiry into urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Thank you all for coming today. As you all know, the committee is conducting this inquiry because the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, Senator John Herron, has asked us to seek people's views about the needs of urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our aim is to provide the government with a series of recommendations and better practice suggestions for dealing with the issues raised in the terms of reference. We intend to hold meetings not only in Canberra but also throughout Australia and to consult as widely as possible with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. We hope to be able to report in the second half of next year.

Welcome to the FATSIL delegates. Thank you very much for sending the policy statement and strategic plan and newsletters; they have been very helpful. Although the committee does not require you to speak under oath, you should understand that these hearings are legal proceedings of the Commonwealth parliament, and giving false or misleading evidence is a

serious matter and may be regarded as a contempt of parliament. Before we ask questions, do you have an opening statement that you would like to make?

Mr Coyne—We intend to read an address to you and then we can invite questions from you.

CHAIR—We have that in written form. We have received the submission from FATSIL, which we will authorise for publication. There being no objection, it is so ordered. Please proceed.

Mr Coyne—FATSIL, the Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages, was incorporated in 1993 with the aim to set national priorities for indigenous Australian languages. FATSIL has set its goal to progress the development of and to assist in the maintenance of indigenous languages. Language is at the very core of culture identity. It links people to their land, it protects their history through story and song and it holds the key to kinship systems and to the intricacies of tribal law. Language and culture stand together as the pillars supporting the intrinsic sense of identity and membership of any race of people. In 1992, another House of Representatives standing committee compiled the report *A matter of survival*. The recommendations from that report have played an important role in promoting and maintaining our languages. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the progress that has been made to this point and to make recommendations to this committee on the best directions to take in the future.

Our aim is to have indigenous languages recognised as a core issue to be considered in the development of all policy and legislation relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. Language relates to each of the six items in the terms of reference for this inquiry in the following ways. One, in places where indigenous language services are available, they have been found to be vital to the effective delivery of educational, health and social services for urban dwelling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and strengthening of cultural identification within communities. Two, because of the relationship and importance of language to all aspects of indigenous culture, the development of language maintenance and revival programs impacts upon people in a broad range of service delivery and community organisations. Language programs also involve the establishment of effective partnerships with local, state and Commonwealth governments, as well as their departments. Three, language education and promotion is proving vital to the establishment of positive identity for indigenous youth. This in turn relates to education and employment and impacts upon a range of social problems. Four, the maintenance of our languages needs to be encouraged through a concerted effort of promotion to the broad community, through increased support for established programs and a dramatic increase in the recognition given to its role by government policy makers. Five, lack of self-confidence is a key element in academic underachievement, inevitably contributing to reduced employment opportunities and by further extension to the broader social problems which affect many indigenous people today. Six, the provision of language interpreter services is an area of particular relevance to people moving to urban areas from more remote regions and needing assistance seeking housing.

I turn now to educated outcomes. The question is, how do students learn and reconstruct for themselves a sense of belonging and identity? We believe that in this context language is a critical tool to establish and locate individual, community and collective identities. This identity cannot be imposed by educational authorities. It has to be controlled and owned by the

community themselves. Schools can play an important role in the development and reinforcing of positive models of contemporary indigenous identity. This can be achieved through the development and promotion of indigenous language and cultural programs and the delivery of real learning outcomes. The development of total immersion in bilingual/bidialectal education experiences also needs to be explored. These programs have been shown to have great benefits in improved retention and progression of students.

Standard Australian English is a foreign language to many indigenous Australians, including urban dwellers who speak Aboriginal English. International research and experience here reveal that persons who learn literacy in their own language more easily acquire literacy in another language, in this case standard Australian English. Our aim is to see students develop positive concepts of self-identity and an appreciation of the placement of indigenous people in contemporary society. It is that strength that can be used to encourage their own involvement and desire for achievement in the areas of literacy and numeracy within the broader education system.

I turn now to the question of identity. As the basis for the development of self-identity, language provides a continuing bond built up over time between people, their families and their culture. Practical support and encouragement from all levels of government in supporting language use and development will be a major step in helping to alleviate those problems stemming from the lack of self-identity and self-confidence.

We ask this committee to consider the following recommendations: one, that the Commonwealth government work with all state and territory ministers of education through the MCEETYA framework to develop national guidelines for the delivery of Aboriginal language programs in educational institutions and schools. These should include: the funding for the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language syllabuses consistent with the Australian indigenous language framework; guidelines for the development of evaluation and assessment frameworks that are appropriate and suitable for all indigenous communities throughout Australia; that inquiry be undertaken to assess the best models for the delivery of nationally accredited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language and teacher education courses. These courses should allow for the articulation of students through all levels of higher education.

Two, that the Commonwealth government, through DETYA, work with the Aboriginal community preschool sector in the development of early childhood language programs. These programs, which should be seen to articulate into school based language programs, must be part of an integrated approach to the teaching of language to Aboriginal students. Three, that the Commonwealth government undertake a review of all laws which impact on the copyright and community ownership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and resource material. This review should work towards legislative changes that will ensure the delivery of legal security for communities in relation to their control and ownership of languages.

Four, that the Commonwealth government explore the most effective means to assist in the delivery of programs and services to Aboriginal communities. This must include: the provision of bilingual health, welfare, education and paralegal workers; the development of cross-cultural awareness programs to all staff who deliver such programs to Aboriginal communities; and,

finally, support for the training and testing of indigenous people and provide interpreting and translating services in all languages, including Aboriginal English.

CHAIR—Thank you. I will perhaps open the batting. Firstly, could you give me some advice as to how the corporation funds its activities?

Mr Coyne—FATSIL is funded through ATSIC. We receive our funding for the operations of the business of FATSIL. We meet quarterly, predominantly in Canberra because we have access to ATSIC officers and commissioners, AIATSIS and various facilities around here that can help us. We elect two people from each state, but Queensland have three. They have the Torres Strait Islander people represented by Patrick. Queensland has two Aboriginal people and one Torres Strait Islander person. All the other states have two Aboriginal people. That is the make-up.

CHAIR—You have made available your annual reports, which members will be able to access to get details of funding. Obviously members are not constrained if they wish to ask for particular details of funding. This is just a snapshot today to give us an insight of how you fund your program. You have been in this position for some time?

Mr Coyne—Yes, I have.

CHAIR—From your expertise, how much money is provided other than through ATSIC to achieve some or all of the goals that you wish us to give our attention to from other agencies, state, federal and otherwise?

Mr Coyne—I am not sure of the exact amount of money that comes in from other sources, but the Aboriginal language program money is \$3.4 million and has been consistent for as long as I have been involved with FATSIL.

CHAIR—From your answer, there is other funding directly or indirectly to achieve some of the objectives coming out of state education budgets?

Mr Coyne—It would be detailed, I would imagine, through the LOTE program in my state of Western Australia.

CHAIR—And Commonwealth funding, so Commonwealth and state have some involvement. Your recommendations involve funding particular strategies. The question would arise, of course, as to whether the collective funding now from your agency, plus directly and indirectly from other agencies, should be partly redirected. Is there any surplus there that might be directed as a matter of prioritisation? They are the questions that I would seek some guidance from you on. Or are you saying that from your knowledge there are no spare funds available in your programs and, from your knowledge in the states, other programs?

Mr Coyne—We on occasion may be lucky enough that, if communities do not use their allocation funding, there may be some spare moneys left over there that would come to our notice, and at a certain time of the year that could be made available to others. On the question of funding, we could get a lot more done if we had more funding available. The \$3.4 million has been a consistent figure for a number of years now. The committee and I have debated this this afternoon in regard to having an increase in funding, and we needed to come to an arrangement

or an agreement as to what that funding would be. We would be looking for an increase similar to what we get now, so make it \$6.8 million over a set period of 10 years or something. FATSIL is the peak body. We are not responsible for going out and providing a language, although Denise, for instance, from South Australia is a project worker with a language centre in South Australia, so her role would be to go out and provide language and assist in the communities.

CHAIR—Would that be under a state funded program or out of your budget?

Miss Karpany—The \$3.4 million is a national program, ATSLIP, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Initiative Program, and that is to share all over Australia, between all the delegates here, between the language centres and the regional language management committees across the country. In South Australia, we do not get any extra funds from the state government or anywhere else. What we get is our share, the 2.5 shares out of that national allocation, to run the language centre, to employ the staff and conduct community based language projects right across South Australia. It is the same in Western Australia and the same in Queensland. That is how it is. In Western Australia in the Kalgoorlie region they get a little bit of extra funding through private enterprise. We have tried that, at this stage with no success, but we are not going to give up; we will keep going.

Mr Coyne—As an example, there was the language initiative program that was related to the stolen generation—I think it was about \$9 million over a three-year period. Denise and I sat on that reference committee that disbursed that funding. We had ads put in the paper and an open invitation to people to make submissions. We received in the first instance, in 1999, submissions totalling \$27 million for a \$3 million program. In the second year, we received submissions totalling \$22 million. So there are a lot of people out there that want extra funding to achieve their goals, and the \$3.4 million at this point in time is insufficient. There is an indication from the public out there that there are a lot of programs. Quite rightly, we would have to go through and determine which ones are priority issues, and that is what we did as a reference group.

CHAIR—I am not going to tie you down, but give me your gut feeling: of those vast numbers of submissions requiring a vast sum of money, what percentage of them related to efforts to get funding for language programs within primary and secondary schools across Australia, as opposed to the general community?

Mr Coyne—A number of the submissions came from education institutions. We had Commonwealth and state departments making submissions, because the advertisement in the paper was open to anyone. Anyone could make applications for it, and consequently they did.

CHAIR—Yes, I appreciate that. I am trying to get a snapshot of how much funding is being sought by communities for use within their state provided school systems.

Mr Lowe—I work at the Board of Studies in New South Wales and we have the responsibility for the development of all syllabuses in New South Wales. I can give you some sense of what happens in New South Wales, at least as an example. At the present moment for the year 2000 I think the total amount of money spent in New South Wales schools for language programs comes to \$250,000, and that money was disbursed to schools to support, I think, about 10 schools in the development of school programs. The need is much larger than that, but that

was the limited budget that was allocated by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. The Catholic Education Commission put in a small amount of money, but most of its resources came through application through ATSIC. So we are finding school systems trying to, in a sense, get money or resources from ATSIC to run school based language programs.

CHAIR—I guess from those two comments members, getting a snapshot today, not to make a final conclusion, can reasonably assume that most of the demand that you would see in your vision for the future would help deliver school based programs. Am I correct in diagnosing that?—or tell me where I am wrong.

Mr QUICK—Can I interrupt? I have spent some time in New Zealand looking at what the New Zealanders do, and they focus on schools rather than communities. As a former teacher, I see that if you lay the foundation and you also involve the community members in the learning, you achieve success. I have been over to New Zealand two or three times—I was over there in July this year and visited some total immersion schools in New Zealand, and they go all the way through up to university and parents have that option of opting in or opting out. You mentioned \$9 million: where did that \$9 million go?

Mr Coyne—To the programs. There were criteria that were attached to the \$9 million. Quite obviously, we were looking at Aboriginal communities making community based initiatives. If they made a submission for a community based language program, retrieval, maintenance, archiving, because they needed a safe place to store their material, are the sorts of things that we looked at as being fundamental to a grant being approved for a particular community.

Taking on your point with regard to New Zealand, I do not dismiss schools as being an area where language and learning of any kind can be imposed, but community based language for Aboriginal people is important. That is one of the reasons why we have such a breakdown now, because home based learning of anything is not practised in Aboriginal communities anymore, not to the extent that it used to be. So we are looking at turning the home into a very happy learning place for anything. Currently we have models of inconsistency where we are looking at television. Having come back from the Central Desert area, travelling around for four or five weeks out there just recently, I was seeing our kids wandering around in hats turned backwards, looking more like Americans than Aboriginal people. The message and the learning for it should be done within the homes and within the people. That is why we are looking at community based people providing the language.

Mr QUICK—Some of us have been on other committees dealing with indigenous health and you have got the problems of health and the cultural sensitivities about roles of men and women. Can I, as a teacher, ask some pertinent questions about the role of elders and parents in this? My wife is a Lithuanian and she did not learn anything but Lithuanian until she went to a white school at age six, and we still speak it at home. We do not speak English, we speak Lithuanian. What are the roles of elders and parents and the mums and the dads in the community? Whose responsibility is it to do this?

Miss Karpany—I just want to touch on what you said in regard to schooling and education. I work at Yaitya Warra Wodli Language Centre in South Australia. I am the project officer field worker link-up with the language projects that we have there. We have just started to build on and work with the education department in South Australia. We have got an informal

partnership arrangement with them and we are looking at developing that formally. We have two representatives—one is our manager and the other is our board of management representative—who sit on the standing committee looking at indigenous language programs within kindergartens and schools across South Australia. Currently, I think there are about 15 schools—it could be more than that; I am trying to remember off the top of my head—that have Aboriginal language programs throughout the school.

You have got the school based programs here. We are community based programs and we are getting a lot of people from both sides looking to increase the funding and to increase the programs to spread it out more. They need to come together and work hand in hand in trying to see whether we can increase the funding and share the resources in working together so that the language programs start off in the preschools and continue on in the primary schools into the high schools as well as in the communities. Parents and elders play an important and significant role in that. In some of the language programs that we have got in some of the schools there, the language centre goes with the staff from the education department wherever they are having their meetings, whether it be in Adelaide, Port Augusta, Ceduna, whichever school it is, and we all meet and work together with the community people who are actually running the language programs within the schools. We try to come to a negotiated agreement in regard to the development of resources and materials that they use in them and what those people are going to be paid.

Mr QUICK—I went to Port Augusta Primary School as a kid. What would you like to see at the Port Augusta Primary School for Aboriginal children coming into the South Australian education system from when they first enter kindergarten? What would you like to see in an ideal world—that Aboriginal kids are taken away and totally immersed in something? You are the experts: what would you like to see in Port Augusta Primary School with indigenous kids coming into the South Australian system first up?

Miss Karpany—We would like to see them totally immersed in languages, but we would not like to see non-Aboriginal children miss out, because we see that as a good educational opportunity for them to learn as well.

Mr QUICK—So everybody gets an awareness of what is going on.

Miss Karpany—Yes, and not just an awareness, much more of a learning and understanding thing, knowing more about the people they are from. In Port Augusta there are some schools that are currently having language programs, and the ideal way we would like to see it happen is that whatever land the school is on should be ideally the language that should be taught. Port Augusta has got a mixture of communities, so there are Arabana and Andnyamathanha language programs going on within a few schools within Port Augusta. And it is the same within Ceduna—you have got a mixture of communities there.

Mr QUICK—So ideally you would like all kids, as soon as they enter kindergarten, to have some sort of immersion in Aboriginal languages?

Miss Karpany—Yes.

CHAIR—That is to complement the home based, it is not a substitution.

Miss Karpany—No. We do not want to see them isolated on their own—that is how we feel, and a lot of people have said the same.

Mr QUICK—One of the problems facing indigenous children is relevance of education to them, and the concept of school as Anglo-Saxons know it is totally foreign to indigenous people. How do we ensure that if this is put in place there is going to be greater long-term participation in an Anglo-Saxon form of education so that indigenous people will get the benefits? That is the problem at the moment. Some of us have been wandering around every Aboriginal community in Australia over the last five years and, for example, in Katherine no indigenous person has ever graduated from year 10. So how do we ensure that this is going to have an effect?

Mr SNOWDON—We had a year 12 graduate this year.

Mr QUICK—That is good. Can I ask Dr Fesl to comment?

Dr Fesl—I am an indigenous person. I dropped out of primary school. I now have a PhD in Linguistics and honours in Anthropology, so it is possible for Aboriginal people to get there with encouragement.

Mr QUICK—Oh yes, I am not denying that.

Dr Fesl—I would like to make a couple of points. First of all, if we are going to have language programs, they must commence in the community. They must be developed in the community, and this is due to our historical past, the suppression of language and language speakers, punishment and so on—we all know those stories. You all know, as politicians, that the power of language is very important. It is very important to be able to get up in the House and be able to speak and say what you want.

Children and parents who have had their language suppressed lack that confidence. The building of confidence and self-identity is crucial for us in succeeding in the white community. I managed to succeed because I was good at sport, but up until then I was very shy; I would not speak out. The language programs need to develop in the community because we need the community elders and the speakers to come forward and feel comfortable about talking to us and developing them. My mother is a senior, 91 years old. I trained in linguistics. She has assisted me to develop language teaching programs for the Gubbi Gubbi people of the Sunshine Coast of Queensland. We have got to the stage where I have got it ready to go on computers for teaching. I had to go back to my elders, and they would not speak to white people. They had been suppressed and were frightened. So they spoke to me.

It has to commence in the community. Whilst we think about language maintenance, we cannot depend on the schools to do it. It must come into the community. I will give you the example of Gaelic in Ireland. It was at the verge of extinction and the community got together and developed the programs and got the children speaking it. Then they handed it over to the schools. The community sat back and said, 'It's okay. It is in the schools. We are right.' But the problem was that the children saw it only as another school subject, and a very few years down the track Irish Gaelic was back to the verge of extinction. They have had to commence community programs again. So I am saying that we cannot rely on schools to keep our

languages going—we must involve the communities. FATSIL has up to now approximately 190 programs which it is supporting in various ways, not necessarily always monetary, to get going and encouraging people. That has been a very big success for FATSIL, to get 190 up on the board and maybe more. But there are still more sitting out there, as you can gather from the applications, that need assistance and encouragement.

CHAIR—Thank you. Members can come in as they wish.

Mr SNOWDON—Just as background, I am a teacher too and I have got views about bilingual and indigenous education which I think probably accord with yours. I hope that is the case. I want to ask about interpreter services. In my communities, as my friend Mr Nayda will attest, we have large numbers of people coming in from the bush who have no education, for whom English is the second or third language. They come to use community services. They might be in the judicial or legal system, they might be in the hospital or in all sorts of places, yet they have very great difficulty in conversing and being understood. There has been a particular instance recently where I had a medical officer from the Royal Darwin Hospital come to see me and explain about people who have been given the wrong treatment because they did not understand the language.

I notice here in point 6 of the submission you mention people from the remote regions needing assistance to seek housing. I would have thought that they would seek the full range of government services, not just housing, though clearly housing is an issue. What priority do you put on interpreter services and interpreter training? Who should provide those resources, given that in the case of the Northern Territory the only resources currently being provided are being provided by ATSIC, or as a result of the mandatory sentencing episode, money from that pot? What is happening in other states and territories? What can be done to improve interpreter training and to ensure that interpreters are accessible for all indigenous language speakers who need to deal with government agencies?

CHAIR—That is a whole range of questions.

Ms McGillivray—I am from Kalgoorlie. I might speak on the interpreting and translating course we had in Kalgoorlie for this year. To be able to undertake the interpreting and translating course, the people themselves will actually have to be fluent and speak the language themselves before they can actually go back to learn how to do the interpreting and translating correctly. They also have to have good literacy skills for the interpreting. When they do the course, the one that we have conducted in Kalgoorlie through the Metro TAFE in Perth, they learn about the legal terminology, medical terminology, all that kind of jargon, and the correct way to put it.

The program that we had in Kalgoorlie was very successful. We had nine people. Our oldest person was 72 years old and our youngest was 32. We had five graduates, which is very good for us. One person in particular graduated in the Ngaanyatjarra language and also the Wangkatha language and speaks it very fluently and is able to write it. The program was so successful that we are meeting with the Perth Metro TAFE people again, and it has been approved for us to do another course with the Kalgoorlie and with the Warburton Ngaanyatjarra people as well.

The other thing that is really needed for the interpreting and translating course is funds. There are very limited funds to do the course. The support and encouragement from government agencies—I am tending to look more towards Harold because they are doing the project in NT with the AID on interpreting and translating. I am not sure how they do theirs; theirs could be different. Ours is actually a national accredited course as well. People come out of this with accreditation and get paid \$50 or \$60 an hour to do a job. They have come out with a piece of paper, so they do not just go in and get paid a pittance, which is what has happened for years.

Mr SNOWDON—I make the observation that you can walk into most hospitals and most public centres in Australia and you will be offered interpreter services in any foreign language but not in the indigenous language. I just wonder how we can actually get to the position where indigenous languages are treated the same as foreign languages for the purpose of making sure that they are all accessible.

Mr Coyne—I would like to see the CDEP involved in this more, having travelled in the communities. My background is Aboriginal employment. I spent 13 years with DEET doing the old TAP programs and I had a couple of years with apprenticeship schemes, and I believe that the CDEP programs are not utilised properly in these areas. Why couldn't people on CDEP be used in any capacity: health, education and interpreting? There are people receiving CDEP funds now who could be asked to do their 15 hours a week or whatever it is to utilise their skills in that particular area. This program is underutilised.

CHAIR—Have you suggested that to ATSIC?

Mr Coyne—I have not at this point in time, but I have travelled around and I will do. I believe that something needs to be done.

Mr SNOWDON—There are some places where it is being used. It is at the language centre in Katherine, and the language centre in Tennant Creek has got a big CDEP program. Not only are they collecting languages using CDEP but they are using interpreters using CDEP, so it is happening.

Mr Lowe—Going to the heart of the question you asked before about why we cannot go round and see Aboriginal language translating services being offered, one of the things that is critical around this issue is the fact that the Commonwealth government, for instance, funds the development of Asian language syllabuses, yet there is no money—certainly not in New South Wales—available for the development of Aboriginal language syllabuses. So in fact we are thrown back to having to utilise scant resources from other sources of funds to try to do what other languages are able to access through Commonwealth funds. I find that interesting. I do not understand why we cannot access those funds.

Mr SNOWDON—Neither do I.

Mr QUICK—If ATSIC value it so much, why don't they, when they set their priorities and agenda, have that as a cornerstone? As you have rightly said, if you cannot get this right, there is going to be a dilution. I come from Tasmania, and there is a sorry story there on the time the reclamation has taken. It has taken years to get a Tasmanian Aboriginal identity and to

redevelop the languages, which is happening through some of the ASPA groups throughout Tasmania.

Mr SNOWDON—You would have to get an extension of the ATSIIC budget.

Mr QUICK—I know, but surely language is the key to a civilisation. ATSIIC has got a plethora of services. You were raising CDEP, the role of land councils in the communities. Could you say community X has got it down to a fine art, that the Tiwis are a prime example of cultural language development in their schools and their community, or someone in Queensland? Who is doing it best?

Dr Fesl—New Zealand does not have the large number of languages that we have.

Mr QUICK—I understand that.

Dr Fesl—One of the areas that we could address in terms of interpreter services is using some of the types of things that are held at Box Hill Hospital, where you can go and you can ring from the hospital to the translator services. They are at a central place. Maybe we need to think about having in each state a telephone connection, a computer connection to places.

CHAIR—A call centre?

Mr QUICK—An Aboriginal call centre?

Dr Fesl—Yes. It is a life and death issue at hospitals.

CHAIR—As long as it is not located in India!

Ms McGillivray—Bearing in mind the diversity of Aboriginal languages as well.

Mr QUICK—Realistically we cannot have all those languages. Someone has to draw the line somewhere, so who misses out, and how difficult is that going to be? The linguistic expert is here. Realistically, is it going to be 150 languages, 200 languages?

Ms McGillivray—How it happens at the moment with languages, is that whatever language is spoken in that local area is taught in that local area. But some languages like the Wangkatha and Ngaanyatjarra languages are understood right across the Western Australia-South Australia-Northern Territory border. When you go to other states in Australia, there are a lot of languages that are very similar. There are a lot of words that are similar.

Mr QUICK—I am ignorant: how many working languages would there be, for example, in Victoria?

Mrs Smith—There is about 40 languages and dialects. At the moment we are not sure because most of it is in the archives. It is similar to Tasmania.

Mr QUICK—So in Victoria and Tasmania it would be a case of reintroducing rather than—

Mrs Smith—Some have been reintroduced. The five Ganai languages have been put into one, and that is being taught in preschools mainly by people not paid to do the work, doing it out of their own expense.

Mr QUICK—So you virtually have two things. You have got Victoria and Tasmania reintroducing and slabs of New South Wales the same, but the rest of isolated Australia, rural and remote—

Mr Lowe—What you have, though, is a lack of planning and coordination. FATSIL's area of expertise is in the area of community language programs and the support services that support that. Where we go to school systems and ask school systems, they are fundamentally breaking down because of the scant resources that are put to it, the fact that there are no syllabuses to be taught in schools and the fact that there is no coordination around the issues central to this issue of, for instance, the employment of Aboriginal teachers and tutors in schools to actually assist in the teaching of programs. That then begs the question, of course, in terms of the role of higher education and TAFE in the training of these teachers, the need to articulate people through a whole range of systems to get people into schools. There is the longevity of funding, so that school education systems quite often fund only on a year-by-year basis. The frame of reference is so small that, if they cannot see whatever is the outcome that they have set themselves within a 12-month time frame, they scrap the program. Yet we are talking about programs where we know, from South Australia, that we are looking a minimum of 20 years before we can see substantial changes and substantial language improvement where whole communities can start to engage in community dialogue and talking.

These sorts of things need to be understood from the ground up and then start to build programs where we actually have some long-term commitment by all governments. It is not all a government process; somebody needs to provide that assistance to bring people together. You cannot expect people on the ground, community people, to go to powerful institutions and ask them to come to a meeting to assist in the development of long-term plans. It does not work that way. But the people in governments do not seem to see that language is important. They deal with issues on a day-by-day basis. They are in crisis mode. Certainly in Aboriginal education we know this is the reality. They do not see the fact that we need to have a long-term commitment to language development and revitalisation in schools. They put it on the backburner. In New South Wales, as I said, they give it \$200,000 out of a budget of \$15 million, because it does not have the immediate need set by all the parameters and all the outcomes set by governments. This is the problem that we face.

CHAIR—Time is getting away. I think we have had a valuable discussion and touched on some points, though I am not suggesting we have exhausted those points. Can I direct your attention to another aspect. I would like to get some idea of your approach to the need to ensure that Aboriginal people, wherever they live in Australia, have a high standard of skill in English as a language.

Mr Lowe—In Aboriginal English or in standard English?

CHAIR—Standard English. To be able to live and work in the community that they belong to in the nation.

Ms McGillivray—Could I just say one thing—I will keep it brief—in relation to ATSIC giving language priority. ATSIC does not prioritise, and this is our problem. We might prioritise language as number one, but within the ATSIC regions they do not prioritise it as number one. To us it is really important, and that is one of the problems we have.

CHAIR—What do they put ahead of language, for example?

Ms McGillivray—Economic development, I suppose.

Mr Coyne—Health—

CHAIR—Housing?

Ms McGillivray—Health, housing and maybe native title. I do not know. Those types of things are put first before they even consider education and language. It is always down the bottom, and we want it prioritised higher.

CHAIR—Is that your experience with the local ATSIC representatives?

Ms McGillivray—Yes, in the local region.

Mr QUICK—We as legislators cannot solve that. That is the dilemma we faced as we went around with one of the other committees to look at indigenous health. We spent 2½ years wandering around just about every Aboriginal community in Australia, and we were just as frustrated as indigenous people on the ground. But someone has to prioritise, and as a former teacher I see language as the key to your survival.

Ms McGillivray—Identity, yes.

CHAIR—That is the point I am now wanting to develop. I want your advice on what your approach is to the priority that ought to be given to making sure that Aboriginal people are skilled in being able to communicate in English.

Dr Fesl—Every person who learns literacy in their first language—and this comes back to bidialectalism, which has not been attempted in this country, and it comes to bilingualism—has the ability to learn literacy in another language, whether it be English or anything else. Going from Aboriginal English to standard Australian English may seem simple but it is not, and there need to be special programs. They need to be addressed from an educational point of view and the bilingual programs need to be extended into true bilingual programs, not transition to English as it is at the moment. You need to do several subjects in your own language, not just language. Maths, science and the rest of them need to be taught to you in your own language, and then you learn English and you are able to transliterate that knowledge into the other language because you have learnt in the language which you can understand best. We need to try those things. It gets a bit frustrating—

CHAIR—I think John Atkinson has been missing the call. I apologise, John—I do not see down that far.

Mr Atkinson—I was going to say, Mr Chairman, that I think understanding this whole thing just keeps getting lost. Mr Quick talked about the Maoris. We are not like them at all; we are different. That is only one language in New Zealand. We have a much more complicated system here with nearly 200 languages.

Mr QUICK—Yes, but at least they set a priority—

Mr Atkinson—If you cannot understand what we are talking about, we are goosed, we will get nowhere. That is the point. I do not think it is helpful to compare us with other people.

Mr QUICK—I am not comparing. Lester said he was worried about the kids with their American baseball caps and their Michael Jordan T-shirts and losing their indigenous identity, and we worry about our white kids. But in New Zealand, to their credit, the Maoris said, ‘We are going to end up as a non-race, so we need to do something,’ and they went and did it.

Mr Atkinson—I do not think it is relevant. Our chairman is saying, and most of us who have been in this organisation since it started, that it is pretty frustrating when you are trying to keep the oldest languages on the planet going. Somebody touched on the Asian people, whose sources of language are very strong, thank you very much. They are not dying languages. Our government puts a lot of money into the maintenance of other languages from other countries, whose speakers could go back to their old country and back to the source they came from and learn theirs. In our case, when we lose a language, it is gone forever. That is my point about the understanding of this whole thing. I think that is really worth thinking about, that every time we lose a language it is the oldest communication on the planet gone.

Mr Coyne—I started work at 14 and I am 53 now, and one of my old bosses said to me, ‘I don’t pay you for the questions, I pay you for the answers,’ and that is what we are after here. I understand that this committee, and you, would be after the answers to some of these things. We know what the problems are. There are a multitude of problems there, but we are looking for people with leadership, people with skills and abilities, and I fortunately have a committee that has an enormous amount of skills and abilities here. You can call upon us at any point in time, and we will be submitting other material to you. We are a peak body, we do have a grasp on languages throughout the country and people and organisations that run them, but we have an enormous amount of problems there, and we bump into a brick wall every now and again. ATSI is just one of them, the regional councils—a whole host of different things. But we are still empowered, we still hold office on the basis of providing the answers to these particular problems, and it comes from gathering information and taking on board different models.

Mr Quick’s comments with regard to New Zealand do not worry me in the slightest. That is another example that we can maybe pluck something out as positive that we can use in here. We will all feed upon negatives, but we need to come up with the answers to these things, because time is marching on for this meeting and for all eternity.

Miss Karpany—Just in response to the chair’s comments about what priorities or emphasis people place in communities on our children learning English, I will give you an example. I am going back to South Australia because that is where I am from. With our informal partnership, and we are working to that formal partnership, with the education department in going around to the various communities, again it comes back to those people from those communities, the

language centre and the education department working together and looking at what is best suited to the needs of the community.

I am not sure if people know where Yalata is—it is a few hours down the road from Ceduna. For most of the children there, English is their second or sometimes their third language. Pitjantjatjara is their first language. The people in the community there have made a concerted decision for their children, because they are already fluent in their language, to learn English in the school. So that is what they are doing in Yalata school. But when you go into other communities and other areas around different parts of the state, especially the closer you get to Adelaide, the parents and the community members are placing a higher priority on their children learning their own language, their indigenous language, first because they already speak English. So it depends on where you are and where you are situated and on the needs of the communities. What works well in one area will not necessarily work well in another. So that is where I think all of us here need to come together to start changing our ways of thinking. Instead of looking at this one big generalised model, we need to be looking at the needs of the various communities and places across the country.

Mr QUICK—Do you have textbooks, Denise, in your language so that if the kids move from Yalata to, say, Port Pirie they can take the textbooks with them?

Miss Karpany—Pitjantjatjara is a well documented language within South Australia, and other languages are starting to be documented now, and that is where the language centre is helping some of those communities with their community based projects into documenting Arabana, Ngarrindjeri, Narangga and Kurna language and all the other languages. People in the city can go to the University of South Australia and to other places and get a copy of the Pitjantjatjara language kits.

Ms HOARE—Following on from that, what percentage of Aboriginal children in South Australia have access to the program that you are talking about? What you are doing seems to be working.

Miss Karpany—It is starting to work, but it has taken a long time and many years. When I was still at school, I remember my aunts and other people, other elders in the community, trying to get these things to happen. It has been a very long, hard process and things are slowly starting to move, but I cannot give you the percentage. I will say one thing on how it works in South Australian schools: whatever language is taught in that school, the ultimate decision on what language is taught is up to the principal. If the principal decides it is going to be an indigenous language, they have to work out which indigenous language they are going to use. Most indigenous people will advise them that the land it is on should be the language that is taught. But, as I said, not every school, child-care centre or kindergarten has indigenous language, but it is slowly progressing. When I used to work in early child-care education, we attended kindergartens and child-parent centres which had an Aboriginal language program. Slowly, over the years, the number is starting to increase. Off the top of my head, I cannot give you a percentage, but when I go back I will get the information and give it to you: the schools, the language and the types of programs they have got.

Dr Fesl—I would like to say something about ATSIC. In fairness to ATSIC, they have a whole range of things. If you go into a community and there are people very sick because of

lack of housing, bad water and all the rest of it, and there are funds needed, it is very hard to say, 'No, we're going to put those funds into language,' when you have got the evidence of these other things right there. Perhaps a special grant, a tied grant, should be made available for language so that ATSIC people do not have to—

Mr MELHAM—A special purpose grant.

Dr Fesi—That is right. It is very hard: you can see a sick child, but you cannot see a sick language. I think that is the problem about getting through. Self-identity is very important but it is a long-term thing and it is not visible. I will give you an example. I had a young offender ring me from jail in New South Wales on a trunk line call. He was allowed one call a week. I happened to know his language, which is Bundjalung. He used to ring me every week and I sent him materials. I do not know how long he was in for or what his offence was but he used to ring me once a week on his one phone call. Near to the time he was to leave jail, I had persuaded him to go back to school and to go into one of the funded Aboriginal courses—Abstudy—and to start learning again because he had become interested in words and language. He started to get his confidence back. I do not know what happened in the end, but at least he had promised me that he would go back to school.

Mr Lowe—One of the things we need to make clear though—and I know your terms of reference were concerning urban Aboriginal communities—is that, in a sense, people can go away from it and think that we are essentially talking about educational programs for rural communities—people who are not necessarily located in large cities. Where I come from in Sydney we have the largest indigenous population in Australia concentrated in one place. We have great difficulty in terms of language revival and so forth. It is a critical issue—an issue which is beginning to raise its head. There are individuals and small groups who are trying to work around this issue. Looking at the experience of South Australia and so on and what has happened with the Ganai language there, we see that there needs to be a long lead-in time before we could even begin to think that we could go back to schools and put in language programs. We have to start from absolute scratch with a written language that was written 200 years ago by non-linguists—they wrote down lists of words; basically that is all that is there—and try to reconstruct the language. The interest is there but the reconstruction of language—as Eve can tell you much better than I can—is a huge task. It is something that people want to do. They see it as being central to the sense of Aboriginality—they want to hold on to and reconstruct new identities that they want to find for themselves in urban environments. I think that is the critical issue for us.

Mr Whop—Language is most important for you, for us and for this country as well. It is our identification. We need the government to pour more money into ATSIC so that ATSIC can distribute the money to every cost centre so the organisation can apply for it. There is a skill to capture English meanings in the language. For instance, if I asked you to spell the word 'bourgeois', you would not know where to start. You need to have the skill; you need to have the right tool to break the ice, to capture the meaning of the word in your mind. The indigenous people have these sorts of skills.

Let me also remind you that the three largest languages of this continent are Warlpiri, which is spoken in the central area of the Northern Territory; the second largest, Yolngumath, which is spoken in Eastern Arnhem Land; and Kala Lagaw Ya, which is the third largest language of this

continent and it is spoken in western and central Torres Strait. In the dialect that I speak, one word which is kayiyadhpoeydhamizinga has got 22 letters. You need an indigenous linguistics teacher to teach these things.

Ms McGillivray—I am not sure if we actually told you how much in funds FATSIL is in receipt of. We are not actually in receipt of \$3.4 million; we only get something over \$100,000 per year of those funds. We do not get the \$3.4 million. That has been concerning me.

Mr Coyne—That is spread around all the states, and we get a share of that. The government only gives \$550,000 for six language centres in the biggest state in the country.

Mr LLOYD—I am very interested in what Denise had to say. This issue is just so broad and so diverse that I do not think there can be any one central direction. You take it from the large cities, where the language has been lost and you are trying to rebuild it, to the other extreme—which the chairman asked about and I was particularly interested in—communities where they virtually do not speak English at all. There are adult males working in that community that do not speak English at all. That is the whole spectrum in Australia.

Each of those communities has a need. We have travelled around a lot and there are communities who have made the decision. We talk to some communities and they say, 'Leave us to teach language in the homes. We don't want it taught in the schools,' and there are other communities who say, 'We desperately want it taught in the schools.' So there is no easy answer, and I think all of you are doing a great job trying to bring about some sort of continuity.

There was a comment about wanting government to put more money into ATSIC. It is just as difficult for government as it is for ATSIC. You say that ATSIC sees immediate needs such as housing and health and directs money there. The federal government is exactly the same, except in a bigger picture. There are people in the community who say, 'There are the immediate demands of health, education, housing or whatever. Putting money into things like research into language is something that we might do some other time'. I think ATSIC needs to show some direction in prioritising for us to be able to go back to the government to say, 'Look, they think this is a priority'. If ATSIC does not see it as a priority, it makes the argument weaker when you go back to government to say it is a priority. So I think it needs to be a team effort.

Ms McGillivray—Health, education, housing. You have not got language?

CHAIR—Employment too.

Ms McGillivray—A very important component. The most important components are your language and your identity. If you have those, you know how to manage a house, feed the brain and be healthy. Do you know what I mean? That is what is most important—language.

Mr LLOYD—I am not disputing that. I agree with—

Ms McGillivray—I am not saying that, but they come together. If you have got a health program, maybe there is some way in that health bucket of funds for language. It may be that money for language comes out of that health bucket or out of education or out of whatever other sources. Where there is a will there is a way.

Miss Karpany—I support what Barbara was saying. In South Australia we have a lot of Aboriginal health workers and liaison workers ringing us up at the language centre from hospitals or from the correctional services for help in providing those interpreting, translating and language programs. A lot of them are looking for it for free. We do not have the resources to do all of that. At the moment there are only two staff at the language centre. We are hoping to get two more staff. All of those areas tie in and link in. That is all.

CHAIR—I agree with what you are saying; the message you give us is very good. But what is equally important is that people are seeking help and agencies are contacting you on their behalf in frustration and desperation because there is not an adequate knowledge of English. The question that I am trying to get a lead from you on, as a lead agency of experts in this country, is: to what extent should extra efforts be made to skill people in English? The nation that we all live in today is a mixture of people from all backgrounds, and we have to get on and preserve the things that should be preserved. That is great, but at the same time we have to be cohesive; we have to be in a society that works. To what extent should extra efforts be made to skill people in English?

Mr Coyne—I can agree with your comment ‘to get on’. We need to get to first base. That is where Aboriginal people are. They are not even at that stage yet. English has been bandied around the table here; it is third, fourth, sometimes—as in the Northern Territory—of six or seven languages. Isn’t it?

Mr Nayda—Yes.

Mr Coyne—It is big. So Aboriginal people are looking at getting their identity back before they can make the next progressive step. It cannot take us from here straight into school, straight into the English language, straight into economic independence and a whole host of different things. People want to get their identity back. There is a lot of hurt and healing out there to be sorted out yet. There is a stage we are going through. We are not saying we do not want to go there, because it is imperative that we do. Those of us who have been fortunate enough to get an education and have employment realise the benefits of it; that is why we are in a position to be able to do this. There are a lot of people who want to get to another stage, which is down the track, and we are trying to help them to get there too.

Dr Fesl—It comes back to that self-identity thing—feeling comfortable about moving from this world into another.

CHAIR—Yes, I understand that.

Dr Fesl—I was going to talk about literacy in your own language. Aboriginal English is spoken by people in the urban areas, and it is different to standard Australian English. In fact, we had great difficulties in the courts in Queensland. People were being sentenced because they answered yes, which was thought to be yes when it was meant to be no, and they were being put in jail. So even Aboriginal English, which may appear on the outside to be the same as standard Australian English, is not the same.

Those issues are very important. And that part comes down to the schools. Instead of putting down languages and the way people speak, teachers need to be able to recognise that ‘Here is

one dialect and that is another dialect.' The program is made so that you can speak and write in this language, but then you move to another one; that it is okay to do it this way instead of putting kids into remedial English classes. That is a big problem: most of our kids get put into remedial English classes because they speak slightly differently to standard Australian English and they cannot write it. Teachers have not been taught enough about bidialectalism between those two particular dialects.

Mr LLOYD—Are you advocating that, if somebody is speaking Aboriginal English, you would prefer that they be taught their heritage dialect rather than Australian English?

Dr Fesl—No. I am saying that it should be recognised that the child is speaking a different dialect and that they should not be put in a remedial English class. You lose all your confidence. The teachers need to know that 'This is a different dialect; this is the way you speak it at home and in the community, but when you are going to speak posh English, this is how we use it.'

Mr LLOYD—So it should not be seen as being inferior or not up to standard.

Dr Fesl—That is right, because that is where you knock the kids' confidence down.

Mr LLOYD—You are actually speaking a different dialect of English, for want of a better word.

Dr Fesl—That is right; it is a different dialect.

CHAIR—Denise would like to speak but, for my own benefit, I am trying to get to a focus for action.

Dr Fesl—There has to be a tied grant to improve language.

CHAIR—How many times have you raised this issue with the state education authorities across Australia?

Dr Fesl—I have written papers on it, and there has been a lot of research by other people.

CHAIR—I should have said 'your organisation'. Have you done that?

Mr Coyne—We and our language centres within different states have on many occasions written to and had relationships with state bodies and education departments. In Western Australia now we are teaching language speakers over there so we can go back out and train our own people. It is actually starting to work, but we are at a crossroads right now with the changes to ATSIC and so forth. We do not want to lose any ground on this, we want to keep the dialogue open and we want to get things in place so that we can move things along a lot quicker.

CHAIR—You would have read the report on Northern Territory education by former Senator Bob Collins for the Northern Territory?

Mr Coyne—I have, and I attended the conference.

CHAIR—Okay. Denise, I am sorry. Over to you.

Miss Karpany—I would like to reinforce one more thing. Last week something came up on television about languages. It was in a remote area in Queensland—I cannot remember where it was or what school it was. I want to reinforce that it comes down to consultation between the school, the community and the departments—coming together to look at what is needed there.

CHAIR—I think you have made your point well, and I do not think anyone here would disagree with you on that.

Miss Karpany—This school, with the skill of the teacher, had realised the difference between the children speaking their own traditional language, Aboriginal English and standard English. That school and that community had come together to work it out, so that at different times during the day, when they were working on different things, the staff of that school, the children and the parents all knew that they were doing work in all three of those languages. It has worked out and it has helped the children themselves with their confidence and self-esteem. They are more willing to participate in and continue with the work within the school in all three languages. They all know the difference—the staff, the families of the school, the children and everybody associated with that school.

CHAIR—Which school was that, Denise?

Miss Karpany—I cannot remember the name of it.

CHAIR—Can you find out and let us know?

Miss Karpany—I will see if I can. I remember it is in Queensland where they have worked out the difference between—

CHAIR—We might see if we can visit them.

Miss Karpany—They know that this is Aboriginal English and now this is time for standard English, and at home they are using their language. I just wanted to highlight that.

CHAIR—See if you can come up with that name.

Miss Karpany—Things take a long time, but it is slowly starting to move where they can all come together.

Mr LLOYD—That sounds like a very good model and is probably something that could be progressed.

CHAIR—We would like to visit it.

Miss Karpany—I cannot remember the community.

Mr LLOYD—The amount of resources it would take to come to that level, mainly in the training of the teachers, having the teachers who are skilled in the different languages as well, would be tremendous.

Miss Karpany—It was just a positive news story that was on the TV that caught my ear.

Mr LLOYD—That is probably where you are heading.

Miss Karpany—It is where I would like to be heading, but it is a matter of everyone coming together.

Mr Lowe—There are the resources to allow many higher education institutions to teach language speakers in French, German, Italian and everything else. We spend an inordinate amount of money in higher education institutions across Australia to teach language speakers in every other language except—and I stand to be corrected—an Aboriginal language. I do not know of any higher education institution that actually teaches an Aboriginal language in an undergraduate degree course. I have been told South Australia, so I stand corrected—but certainly not New South Wales.

Dr Fesl—The other thing I would like to mention is the disparity between the amount of money that was made available—\$60 million—for the teaching of five Asian languages compared to the amount of money that we received for nearly 200 languages.

CHAIR—Don't forget, in the context of what you are saying, that the Commonwealth government currently spends \$2.3 billion on indigenous programs in Australia.

Dr Fesl—I was speaking about language; that is all.

CHAIR—I am also talking about the total commitment that is presently there. It has to be seen in that context. On top of that, each of the states is spending huge sums of money on—picking up Kevin's point—education and training. Somewhere in all of that, in our search for sound policies and privatisation in the future, is the question: how come all of that has been expended and yet your people are the most disadvantaged in this country and your kids are not able to speak English and get jobs? I remember clearly the elders telling us in Arnhem Land how much despair they felt at their kids going to school and then coming out and not being able to speak English to be able to get work. They wanted them to work, and they wanted them to have their traditional language too. I remember the despair they felt about that.

Dr Fesl—That is a problem with the bilingual program. They only taught language subjects and culture subjects in the language. So you would learn about bush tucker in your language and you would learn about science in English. You should have been learning about science in your language and then be able to transcribe it into English. The programs were wrong: they were transition programs; they were not true bilingual programs.

CHAIR—I must say the elders chewed my ear very severely in Arnhem Land and told me in no uncertain terms—and some of my colleagues were present—that they would attend to the teaching of their traditional language in the home and that they wanted the schools that their

kids had to go to—because of the way we are in this nation—to put more emphasis on teaching their kids English. That is what they told me.

Mr Coyne—I do not think anyone from our committee would disagree with that.

Dr Fesl—I do not disagree with it; I am just saying the subjects have to be parallel in a bilingual program so that the children understand them.

CHAIR—Through the community involvement you were talking about.

Miss Karpany—That's what I am saying: that local consultation to the various—

CHAIR—The best education systems I have ever seen are the ones that are truly owned by the local community. You have your professionals, your department and your broad policies; but the school councils, the involvement in the school, the selection of teachers and principals—for a successful school community—is being developed more and more through the community—and they work. Sometimes they fail, but they mostly work, and they are getting better at it. We have a lot of sympathy for that. I wish we had more time, but we have got to go to other things and I am sure you have to as well. I would like to thank you all for what has been a valuable and learning exchange for all of us and for another insight. Denise, we will look forward to hearing from you; there is a place that we might be able to go to, as Mr Lloyd said.

Mr Coyne—On behalf of the FATSIL committee, I thank you for the opportunity to come and speak with you. It has been a great honour for us and a great opportunity.

Ms McGillivray—If you know you are going to be visiting different communities, how about keeping a communication line open with FATSIL? Ysola can send out messages to us and say, 'These people are visiting your community—Kalgoorlie, Boulder or wherever.'

Miss Karpany—Come and visit the language centres.

Ms McGillivray—'Here's a contact number. Get in touch with the secretary.'

CHAIR—That is a good thought. Thank you.

Resolved (on motion by **Mr Haase**):

That this committee authorises publication of the proof transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

Committee adjourned at 5.33 p.m.