



## Questionnaire targeting Indigenous language projects as part of Parliamentary Inquiry

The activities of Indigenous language projects, including the maintenance, revitalisation and teaching of languages is the subject of a questionnaire by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. The Committee is inviting people and organisations who are involved in Indigenous language projects to respond to the questionnaire as part of its inquiry into language learning in Indigenous communities.

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of Indigenous language projects, which engage in a broad range of activities. These activities include the maintenance and documentation of languages which are still spoken regularly, and the revitalisation of endangered or lost languages. The questionnaire aims to find out about specific language projects in communities across Australia, both large and small, and this information will inform the broader inquiry into language learning in Indigenous communities.

The Chair of the Committee Mr Shayne Neumann MP said, “There seems to be a groundswell of activity in the area of language maintenance and revitalisation right across Australia at the moment. We’re hearing about all these grassroots programs and projects, and the good work they are doing often with very limited resources. We want to hear more about what these groups are doing, why they are so passionate about what they do, what difficulties they are facing and how their activities are benefiting their communities. We want to find out about how the use of Indigenous languages, particularly in early education, can assist in improving education outcomes where English is a second language.”

Mr Neumann added, “We hope that people will pass the questionnaire on to other people they know who are involved in language projects, and look forward to hearing any further comments they’d like to make as part of the ongoing discussion we are having around this inquiry.”

The questionnaire can be downloaded from the inquiry’s website [www.aph.gov.au/languages](http://www.aph.gov.au/languages). Hardcopies can be obtained by contacting the Committee Secretariat on **(02) 6277 4559**.

The inquiry is interested in the links between Indigenous languages and improving education, community wellbeing, interpreting services and strategies to close the gap in Indigenous disadvantage. The Committee wants to find out about how the use of languages, including Indigenous languages, can assist in improving education and vocational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Indigenous languages policies of Australian governments, and the benefits and effectiveness of Indigenous language maintenance and revitalisation programs are being investigated.

In addition to the questionnaire, the Committee invites submissions addressing any or all of the inquiry’s terms of reference. For the full terms of reference and advice on making submissions see the Committee’s website at [www.aph.gov.au/atsia](http://www.aph.gov.au/atsia) or contact the Committee Secretariat. Completed questionnaires and submissions should be returned by **19 August 2011** by email [atsia.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:atsia.reps@aph.gov.au), fax **(02) 6277 4427** or post. People who require more time to complete the questionnaire or prepare a submission should contact the Committee Secretariat.

**For media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair Mr Shayne Neumann on (07) 3201 5300. **For background information**, contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 62774559 or [atsia.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:atsia.reps@aph.gov.au)