



## Parliamentary Committee inquiring into Indigenous languages to visit Newcastle

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs will be holding a public hearing in Newcastle on Friday, 9 September 2011 in relation to its inquiry into Indigenous languages. The Committee will be hearing from local Aboriginal community members about the benefits of strengthening and giving attention and recognition to their local languages and culture, and what work is being done to revitalise the languages of the Hunter region.

In addition to hearing from a number of local Aboriginal community representatives, the Committee will be hearing from representatives of the Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre, which has been at the forefront in developing support for language preservation and reclamation through technology. The award-winning Miromaa software developed by the Centre is an easy to use database that enables people working with languages to gather, organise, analyse and produce materials to aid in language education and training. The software was initially developed to support local languages, including the Awabakal language, but it is now supporting a large number of language projects around Australia, while licenses are being distributed internationally to support language projects overseas.

The Committee will also be hearing from representatives of the Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council, who have been working with the Many Rivers and Muurrbay Language resources centres to reintroduce and invigorate the language of the Worimi People. The Land Council has produced a number of resources and has been making strong attempts to enable the language to be frequently spoken and utilised throughout the Port Stephens region.

The Chair of the Committee Mr Shayne Neumann MP said, "The Committee has heard that Aboriginal people in the Hunter region have been developing cutting-edge technology to support language maintenance, revitalisation and training. There seems to be a number of people in and around Newcastle who are really passionate about keeping the local culture and languages strong, and the Committee is looking forward to hearing about the good work they are doing", he said.

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. Information about the inquiry can be found at the inquiry's website: [www.aph.gov.au/languages](http://www.aph.gov.au/languages)

### Public Hearing Program:

**Friday, 9th September 2011, 12 noon to 2.45 pm, Newcastle City Council, Newcastle Room, 2nd Floor, 290 King Street**

**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)