



## National Congress to discuss Indigenous languages during National Reconciliation Week

The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples will meet with the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs during National Reconciliation Week as part of the Committee's inquiry into language learning in Indigenous communities.

The Chair of the Committee, Mr Shayne Neumann MP, said 'we are looking forward to meeting with representatives of the National Congress to discuss how to improve language learning outcomes for Indigenous Australians.' Mr Neumann added that 'being the peak representative body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, it is fitting that the Committee is meeting with the National Congress during National Reconciliation Week'.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Committee recognises the importance of National Reconciliation Week for all Australians. The theme this year is "Let's talk recognition". The Committee encourages everyone to have a conversation this week about how all Australians can walk proudly together with a greater understanding of Australia's cultural history. This includes recognising that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages have been spoken in Australia for over 40 000 years.

The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples' submission discussed the importance of Aboriginal languages for reconciliation. The submission commented that 'the adoption of First Peoples languages by the wider Australian community as everyday vernacular, including place and street names, national parks and landmarks plays an important role in reconciliation, awareness raising, as well as being a matter of deep pride for First Peoples. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages identify things about this country in a way that is uniquely Australian.'

The Committee expects to report on its findings in the second part of the year. Mr Neumann said that 'the Committee will be reviewing the tremendous evidence it has received during the inquiry, and will be focussing its efforts on coming up with strong recommendations for government action'.

The hearing will be broadcast live from Committee Room 1R2, Parliament House, Canberra from approximately 12:30pm on Thursday 31 May via:  
<http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

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

National Reconciliation Week runs from Sunday 27 May to Sunday 3 June.

**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)