

AIATSIS SUBMISSION TO THE REVIEW OF AIATSIS

The AIATSIS collection has touched the lives of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person in this country without their even knowing it.

JACKIE HUGGINS, EX-COUNCIL MEMBER



AIATSIS returned materials including these photos to Torres Strait Islander communities in March 2013

AIATSIS welcomes the opportunity provided by this review to engage with its key stakeholders on issues of how to best position AIATSIS for its next 50 years

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 FOREWORD

This submission outlines:

- AIATSIS' role and contribution
- AIATSIS' response to the review's terms of reference; and
- AIATSIS' plan for future investment.

The review of AIATSIS has been commissioned to consider how it can be strengthened, after a number of reviews, reports and policy identified opportunities for AIATSIS to make a greater contribution to higher education, research, innovation and culture.

These included the 2012 Final Report of the Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People led by Professor Larissa Behrendt; the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Report *Our Land, Our Languages – Language Learning in Indigenous Communities*; and the *Venturous Australia – Building Strength in Innovation*, the Review of the National Innovation System (the Cutler Review).

AIATSIS MOVING AHEAD

Long term resourcing shortfalls coupled with a rise in demand for services in an increasingly complex environment, prompted AIATSIS to undertake a review and health check of its own beginning in early 2013. This built on earlier work to integrate AIATSIS' capability and services. It has resulted in significant internal restructuring to promote maximum efficiency and effectiveness, strengthen capability and organizational health and secure its future. As a result AIATSIS is already:

- Embedding the outcomes of a comprehensive internal review and restructure to maximise capacity and optimise the use of resources;
- Undertaking business development analysis to identify and cultivate alternative sources of support and revenue;
- Pursuing options to invigorate and broaden the membership and support base, particularly early career researchers, postgraduate students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, such as introducing associate and honorary membership categories;
- investigating avenues for establishing the GERAIS as an Australian Standard;
- offering a fee-based ethics review service;
- seeking funding to partner with Australian education providers in order to develop a Masters degree in Indigenous policy;
- collaborating with other Canberra-based records agencies and national cultural institutions to coordinate visits by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- offering a fee-based family history research service for those who can afford it; and
- developing training and resources that could be utilised by the APS in building cultural proficiency.

AIATSIS RECOMMENDATIONS

AIATSIS further recommends as outcomes of this review that:

FUNCTIONS

1. AIATSIS integrated research and collections functions, uniquely designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, be retained in their current form.

AIATSIS' CONTRIBUTION TO GOVERNMENT POLICY INITIATIVES

2. AIATSIS' expertise in developing policy solutions, program design and evaluation be recognised and formalised in Government decision-making.

STRENGTHENING ROLE AS A NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

3. AIATSIS be funded directly for its research functions through its annual appropriation
4. AIATSIS research capacity be strengthened through additional funding to resource key research hubs across AIATSIS, based on the six Concentrations of Research Excellence and led by six professorial fellows with highly productive multidisciplinary research teams, these would partner, integrate and extend the reach and effectiveness of research from across academia, government and communities, supported by a research development team
5. AIATSIS be included in strategic planning and made eligible for the funding mechanisms and the methods to measure and reward success that have been developed and implemented in the research sector.

SERVICE TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

6. AIATSIS services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people be strengthened through the provision of greater resources for outreach programs including visiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to return materials and promoting visits to AIATSIS
7. The AIATSIS Family History Service be available to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on an ongoing basis and directly funded by increased appropriation to a level that meets demand
8. AIATSIS be resourced to service local community based initiatives by providing greater outreach and support on collections management and training as well as the curation of digital collections for return to or integration with community knowledge centres.

ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS INTO RESEARCH AND AIATSIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE GROWTH OF THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS WORKFORCE

9. Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers along the lines of the Indigenous Visiting Research Fellowship program be funded on a permanent basis through appropriated funds
10. That AIATSIS receive additions to its appropriations to support the development of AIATSIS as a Centre of Excellence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher development, providing ongoing support to NIRAKN and expanding its scope at the close of this competitive funding round
11. That AIATSIS have sufficient funds within its appropriation to continue to support traineeships and career development awards into the future.

LEADING AND SUPPORTING ETHICAL RESEARCH PRACTICE

12. The Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (GERAIS) be adopted as the standard for research across government-funded research ethics committees
13. AIATSIS be resourced to provide greater ethics services and advice to universities, government and private sector research, and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities engaging with research projects.

SUPPORTING RESEARCH THROUGH GRANTS

14. The AIATSIS Research grants Program be reinstated to a sustainable funding level, for example \$5 million with appropriate administration funds (10%).

AIATSIS' ROLE IN ENCOURAGING GREATER UNDERSTANDING IN THE GENERAL COMMUNITY OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

15. A new precinct dedicated to acknowledging, understanding and engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples be developed in Canberra, incorporating existing and new infrastructure needs of AIATSIS, conference facilities and exhibition space.
16. Aboriginal Studies Press role be expanded to support the development of AIATSIS sourced educational materials, including a new edition of the Encyclopedia and Map of Aboriginal Australia and geospatial Apps
17. AIATSIS be funded to develop packages of material to support the Australian curriculum to help raise understanding and knowledge of the Australian public generally, and to support the referendum on recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution
18. AIATSIS continue to play a leadership role in publishing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and subject matter.

AIATSIS COLLECTION

19. AIATSIS Collections be funded to:
 - Engage sufficient conservation staff to ensure that the collection is in optimum condition for long-term preservation
 - Increase funding through AIATSIS appropriation to ensure that preservation/digitisation is incorporated as core business and is funded to meet the 2025 deadline for magnetic media preservation (as determined by UNESCO)
 - Provide appropriate collection management staffing levels to ensure that the whole collection is described, catalogued and findable
 - Provide the ICT infrastructure to allow storage and management of the born and created digital collections, to support knowledge management, innovative delivery of online content and for engagement with communities in crowd-sourcing activities
 - Allow for a return to full opening hours for both the Library and AVA Access Unit, to reduce the turnaround times for requests significantly and to return materials to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in a timely manner
 - Offer collection-based research fellowships.

GOVERNANCE

20. The remuneration rate of both the Council Chair and Council members be raised to an appropriate level, commensurate with other Australian Government statutory authorities.



RESOURCES

21. AIATSIS operational base appropriation should be increased to \$46.3 million, commensurate with other Publicly Funded Research Agencies and Cultural Institutions, thus enabling AIATSIS to fulfil its functions in providing leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies.

1.2 AIATSIS' ROLE AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Under its legislation, AIATSIS' role is to:

- undertake and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies
- support the development of research capacity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- establish and maintain a cultural collection relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and
- promote understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the broader community.

To understand the importance of AIATSIS it is necessary to understand its history. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) was set up by the Australian Government in 1964 to record Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures before they 'disappeared forever'. It was the leader in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies at a time when there were less than a handful of universities undertaking research in these areas. Its establishment marked the beginning of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies as a multidisciplinary field in Australia. It has funded and established a number of Chairs in universities.

AIATSIS research grants were the main source of funding available and produced a rich source of research and recordings of culture, ceremony, language, music and dance and forms the basis of the AIATSIS collection. As a result of this, AIATSIS holds the most comprehensive collection of unpublished research and audio-visual materials relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that exists anywhere in the world.

It contains information on *every* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group and language in Australia in one place. It is *highly* valued by researchers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. AIATSIS is custodian of this wealth of knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

1.3 HOW DOES AIATSIS CONTRIBUTE TO AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY?

AIATSIS makes highly valuable contributions to Australia - across all of its legislative functions. These contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to Australia's understanding and appreciation for, the First Australians, their knowledge and cultures past and present. For example, AIATSIS makes important contributions to:

- The safekeeping of Australia's heritage
- National research by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous experts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, past and present
- Australian languages
- Production and dissemination of information in a vast variety of formats for different audiences including books, journals, discussion papers, online collections, library services and increasingly social media and Apps

- The wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including through providing unique services to research family history, to reconnect stolen generations; supporting native title research and agreement making to foster autonomy and economic development
- Hosting national and international delegations and organisations that seek out AIATSIS' collection and its expertise each year, its visiting researchers and its publications. Tourism statistics indicate that a key interest of international visitors to Australia is learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- Supporting government policy development and implementation for example in areas such as native title, economic activity, health and wellbeing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, and its expertise in managing collections relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There is an immense need within the Australian government to understand the needs of communities to inform research and policy and departments come regularly to AIATSIS for advice on working with communities and matters of research design. It facilitates processes for agencies and links people
- There is a large and growing evidence base recognising that an important component of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and well-being is a strong sense of identity, a strong grounding in their own culture and to many, an understanding of their own language (Biddle; Dockery; Lowitja Institute, among others).



School visits to AIATSIS (Sept 2009) Photo: Andrew Babington

1.4 PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF AIATSIS AND ITS FUNCTIONS.

The 2012 Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (the Behrendt Review) discussed in some detail the important role AIATSIS has played in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and fostering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies in Australia. The Review highlighted a number of ways in which the role of AIATSIS could be strengthened and expanded. Specifically, the Review recommended:

- Recommendation 28: That the Australian Government undertake a review of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to consider how best to *maintain AIATSIS' unique place in developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic and research activities* and the relationship it has with universities
- Recommendation 19: that the Australian Government continue to support AIATSIS to digitise and thus further preserve their collection for future generations
- Recommendation 24: that AIATSIS provide more formal guidance to publicly funded research agencies, universities and researchers on ethical research.

Similarly, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Affairs 2012 report into language learning in Indigenous communities, *Our Land: Our Languages – Language Learning in Indigenous Communities* examined the support that AIATSIS could provide across the language sector, reaffirming the importance of the digitisation of materials, and recommended that:

- Recommendation 28: Dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language archive – The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government include in the 2013-14 Budget increased resources for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to carry out the storage and digitisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language materials.
- Recommendation 29: AIATSIS research funding – The Committee recommends the Commonwealth Government consult with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to determine an appropriate and sustainable funding model in order for it to recommence its research grants program in the 2013-14 Budget.
- Recommendation 30: Archiving of ILS language material – The Committee recommends that the Indigenous Languages Support (ILS) program funding guidelines be amended to include a stipulation that a copy of any language materials developed by ILS funding recipients must be deposited with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies' Library or Audio-Visual Archive.

In 2008, The Cutler Review, *Venturous Australia – Building Strength in Innovation* the Review of the National Innovation System (The Cutler Review) had recognised the importance of strengthening and broadening the role of AIATSIS:

- Recommendation 7.13: The role of institutions such as the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) should be broadened and strengthened in recognition of the special importance of preserving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections and the unique

value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional knowledge and practices within Australia's innovation system.

The incoming Liberal-National party coalition government, through the Nationals pre-election policy platform further highlights the need for a stronger funding base to deliver on our functions to a level that is commensurate with the needs and demands of the various stakeholders. The policy acknowledges that an awareness of personal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture is an essential element in becoming a full participant in the Australian community, and proposes expanding the role of AIATSIS to enhance this knowledge base, including through the redirection of funds from the Land Councils and other Native Title bodies to centralise the compilation and storage of cultural information to enable better coordination of records for academic and research purpose, and the inclusion of material in curricula that highlights the positive contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have made to our society.

These testaments to AIATSIS' potential recognise that AIATSIS has and does, make important contributions to Australian society, and that the demand for that contribution has increased rather than diminished over time:

- It is the only statutory authority in Australia that is *governed by* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the focus of business. Many of its leading practices such as its highly regarded ethical research guidelines, stem in part from this leadership
- AIATSIS' functions form a coherent suite of activities that have created *pathways and support* for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics for decades. Countless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have gained skills and training through working with the collection and researchers or through receiving a research grant early in their careers. Examples of people with close links to AIATSIS of this nature include Professor Marcia Langton, Professor John Maynard, Professor Larissa Behrendt, Professor Martin Nakata, Steve Kinnane, and Professor Irabinna Rigney
- It works in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities all over Australia and provides opportunities for communities to research, learn about their family histories and publish
- It has supported thousands of research grants contributing expression and creation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge
- Its membership base is a rich network of the most eminent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-academics in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies in Australia.

These reviews together with the incoming government policy, provide further impetus for a significant investment in AIATSIS to ensure it meets the expectations of its stakeholders and allows it to carry out the enormous responsibilities entrusted to it.

2. AIATSIS RESPONSE TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

REVIEW PURPOSE AND SCOPE

THE PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

The purpose of the review is to provide advice to the Australian Government on AIATSIS' performance against its legislated functions, ways that its role as a national research institution can be strengthened, as well as its contribution to broader government policy objectives.

The review will also assist the Australian Government to respond to recommendations relating to AIATSIS from recent national inquiries.

REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

The review will gather evidence, including through community and professional consultations, to provide an assessment of AIATSIS' performance against its legislated functions to the Minister on the following matters:

1. AIATSIS' current role and functions and future strategic directions, against its legislated objectives
2. How AIATSIS meets the needs and expectations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and researchers and whether there is an unmet need
3. AIATSIS' role in supporting the Australian research sector, promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies and developing the capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers
4. The nature of its current relationships with universities and a framework for possible future roles in supporting researchers, higher degree by research students, research supervisors and career researchers in areas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies
5. The role of AIATSIS in maintaining and promoting the highest standards in ethical research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Indigenous collections management
6. The impact and cost effectiveness of the AIATSIS managed grant program (and the Research Grants) and the Indigenous Visiting Research Fellowships employment program
7. The place of AIATSIS in conducting and facilitating research in Indigenous knowledge and community based research
8. The promotional role of AIATSIS in encouraging a greater understanding in the general community of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (including through the provision of information, publications and outreach activities)
9. AIATSIS' role in preserving and disseminating information and knowledge about its cultural collection and how the collection can be best utilised and preserved including through digitisation
10. Strategies for the expansion, maintenance and management of the digitisation of the cultural resource collection in order to preserve it and make it available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals and students and researchers; and



11. Whether current circumstances and demands warrant any changes in structure, governance and/or funding to equip AIATSIS to effectively undertake its mission.



2. 1 AIATSIS CURRENT ROLES, FUNCTIONS, GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGIC DIRECTION (TERM OF REFERENCE NO 1)

This section will examine:

- Functions under the AIATSIS Act
- Role as a national publicly funded research institute
- Strategic Directions.

2.1.1 AIATSIS' FUNCTIONS AS A PUBLICLY FUNDED RESEARCH AGENCY AND KEY CULTURAL INSTITUTION

People engaged in research know that it isn't a simple, singular process. The songs can't be separated from the stories and the collection needs that strong community of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous researchers.

PROFESSOR MARCIA LANGTON

AIATSIS is one of Australia's publicly funded research agencies along with the Commonwealth Science Industry Research Organisation (CSIRO), Australian Institute of Maritime Studies (AIMS), and the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO). AIATSIS' functions are similar to those of other publicly funded research agencies and include: carrying out research, encouraging and facilitating research, training researchers and publishing.

AIATSIS however is also a key cultural institution with the critical function 'to establish and maintain a collection'. Institutions in this group include the National Library of Australia, National Film and Sound Archive, National Gallery of Australia and National Museum of Australia.¹ Some, though not all, key cultural institutions expand on their collecting function to include express reference to additional aspects, such as preserving and providing access to the collection.² In AIATSIS view, these activities are implied and do not need express reference.

While AIATSIS is unique in integrating research and collection functions, AIATSIS represents a coherent combination of functions that creates critical pathways to ensure the creation of new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, access to existing knowledge and increased respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge.

¹ Other PFRA's have a less onerous function to collect and disseminate information (see for example, *Australian Institute of Marine Science Act 1972* (Cth), s.9(1)(f)). The wording 'establish and maintain a collection', is specific to the collecting institutions (see for example *National Gallery Act 1975* (Cth), s.6(1)(a)). The legislative mandate to establish and maintain a collection classes AIATSIS a key cultural institution for the purposes of *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) ss.51B, 110BA and 112AA.

² See for example, *National Film and Sound Archive Act 2008* (Cth), s.6(1)(a). contrast *National Gallery Act 1975* (Cth), s.6(1)(a).

Recommendation 1: AIATSIS integrated research and collections functions, uniquely designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, be retained in their current form.

2.1.2 AIATSIS' CONTRIBUTION TO GOVERNMENT POLICY INITIATIVES (REVIEW PURPOSE IN TERMS OF REFERENCE)

AIATSIS is an independent statutory authority and as such is not driven directly by the policies of the government of the day. However, AIATSIS values its contribution to policy development and evaluation as a measure of research impact:

- This role is important in ensuring AIATSIS research has a constructive and positive impact on the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and contributes to greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and societies. AIATSIS makes submissions to inquiries in areas related to our research, for instance, AIATSIS is regularly asked to give evidence before parliamentary committees in our areas of expertise
- AIATSIS makes a significant contribution to government policy priorities concerned with improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our strategic priority setting, which seeks to contribute to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across all of AIATSIS' activities. Our research programs also collect data that adds substantial depth to policy discussion and decision-making.

AIATSIS informs government policy through research that establishes much needed evidence for policy development, program design, implementation and evaluation. AIATSIS is regularly sought after to provide advice on policy direction and design, through consultancy contracts, evidence to inquiries, reference and advisory groups, and informal advice.

There is a large need across the Australian Government for high quality, evidence-based research on issues associated with *Closing the Gap* activities and targets to which AIATSIS makes a direct contribution, including the fundamental building blocks of early childhood and schooling, healthy lives safe communities, economic participation and governance and leadership (see Research Achievements, **Attachment 2**)

AIATSIS provides significant policy advice to the Australian Government. Key examples include in the areas of:

- Advice on native title practice and policy reform, working with native title agencies (the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), the Attorney-General's Department, Federal Court and National Native Title Tribunal) and other agencies approaching native title for the first time (such as National Ocean's Office, Treasury, Climate Change and Energy efficiency)
- Working in partnership with the Office of the Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations and Indigenous Business Australia to support the governance of native title organisations and businesses
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages education and teaching, through the development of the Framework and curriculum for Australian languages for the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
- Advice to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) on early literacy development programs, such as *read with me everyday*

- Provision of advice to funding agencies such as the ARC and the NHMRC regarding funding policies relating to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers
- Advice relating to the management of collections relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including in relation cultural protocols
- design of the National Framework for Translation and Interpreting in Indigenous Languages, working with FaHCSIA
- Advice to DEEWR and FaHCSIA on the transition of communities from the Community Development Employment Projects Programs in remote Australia.

AIATSIS has been successful in accessing government funding agreements to support the delivery of government programs, including from FaHCSIA for native title research support activities; funding from the Department of Health and Ageing to run the Family History Unit and funding from the Office of the Arts for languages support to communities and other projects.

Finally, AIATSIS can support the Australian Public Service (APS) to develop its cultural competency and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all areas of public policy. AIATSIS is a training ground for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander public servants, with over 30 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff compared to an average of 1-2 per cent in other agencies, with separation rates on the rise. AIATSIS is currently developing training and resources that could be utilised by the APS in building cultural proficiency. The implementation of the AIATSIS cultural proficiency framework will require an investment of funds beyond our existing corporate infrastructure funding. However, we consider the ongoing development of cultural proficiency of our systems, processes and people to be core business for AIATSIS that can also have a broader benefit and take up within both the public and private sectors.

AIATSIS requires a secure establishment of research capacity across its Concentration of Research Excellence (CORE) areas of research to be able to continue to undertake independent research and provide evidence and advice to government based on sound, long term research expertise.

In further recognition of the unique knowledge and experience held by AIATSIS as a public service agency and the legacy of research on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy and engagement undertaken by AIATSIS, AIATSIS is seeking funding to partner with Australian education providers in order to develop a Masters degree in Indigenous Policy. We believe that a higher degree which brings together policy content and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expertise will be welcomed by both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous scholars.

Recommendation 2: That AIATSIS' expertise in developing policy solutions, program design and evaluation be recognised and formalised in Government decision-making

2.1.3 STRENGTHENING AIATSIS ROLE AS A NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE (REVIEW PURPOSE STATEMENT)

It's more than just the people who have interacted with AIATSIS; it's the security of Indigenous communities that have the knowledge that if they want to find out something they could go to AIATSIS. AIATSIS was always there for them to be able to do their research and find out more about their mob – AIATSIS is the body, the knowledge. If it's out there AIATSIS would probably have it. Indigenous people confidently know that they can go to AIATSIS to advance their own research about their cultural revival



The Australian research system has changed dramatically since the AIATSIS Act was last revised in 1989. AIATSIS is no longer the primary funder of research in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies although it remains a central part of research networks and infrastructure. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research capability is increasing in the university sector, with many universities having established schools or areas of expertise in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. Recognising that there is still much to be done, some universities have created a number of senior leadership positions (Deputy and Pro-Vice Chancellors) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In 1996, the Australian Research Council established a targeted grants program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, the Discovery Indigenous Researchers Development Program (current version of which is *Discovery Indigenous*). The National Health and Medical Research Council has also built support across its program and has implemented its second Strategic Roadmap in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research which includes a large emphasis on capacity building Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers.

Over 2009-2013, universities received an additional \$5.4 billion in funding to increase funding for higher education and research. The Australian Government is seeking to accelerate and strengthen universities' focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies and developing the research capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers in response to recommendations from the Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People that will increase the gap in capability between universities and AIATSIS.

Yet, a clear rationale for a respected publicly funded research agency focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, uniquely combined with the cultural collection, remains. A review of publicly funded research in Australia described the role of Australian publicly funded research agencies as being to undertake:

*long term basic, strategic and applied research across priority areas for government and the economy. This research is often in areas of public good, where investment by the private sector is low due to uncertain or insufficient commercial outcomes, commercially unacceptable risks or long time-frames.*³

In 2008, the Cutler review of Australia's National Innovation System acknowledged the important role played by publicly funded research agencies and the need for urgent funding (Cutler 2008). In particular, the review highlighted the need to strengthen and expand the role of AIATSIS in recognition of the importance of Indigenous knowledge to Australia's innovation system (Recommendation 7.13).

The Behrendt review illustrates the immense need and value of research in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people take lead roles and, similarly, signalled a strong rationale for a strengthened and expanded role for AIATSIS. A publicly funded research agency dedicated to this task is a greater imperative than ever, both in overcoming continued disparities in outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in higher education and research, contributing understanding of extant and new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and addressing the vexing problems confronting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

³ Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, 2011, *Focusing Australia's Publicly Funded Research Review: Maximising the Innovation Dividend - Review Key Findings and Future Directions*, p.14.

Strengthening and expanding the role of AIATSIS requires access to greater resources that can raise the prestige of AIATSIS and enable it to take a leadership role in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies across government and in academic settings. There are two bases on which this can be secured. The first option to increase resources is through an increase in the direct appropriation to AIATSIS, which is explored in some detail later. The second avenue is to increase AIATSIS' appropriation and access to other research funding mechanisms. The Cutler review recommended action on both of these fronts.

CONDUCTING AND FACILITATING RESEARCH IN INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

AIATSIS provides an environment with many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and other colleagues who have staunch support for Indigenous issues and values.

DAVE JOHNSTON, IVRF

AIATSIS has made an enormous contribution to the development of research in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, including the development of community based research partnerships and the articulation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander methodologies and Indigenous knowledge led research.

The review of research achievements at Attachment 1 provides a snapshot of AIATSIS research over 50 years. That review reveals some of the hallmarks:

- The Native Title Research Unit provides a model around which AIATSIS aspires to build all of its centres, centrally located within a network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community stakeholders, researchers and policy makers, conducting authoritative basic and applied research with significant positive impact
- AIATSIS' language work is an exemplar of the importance of collections based research with which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and educators can engage
- AIATSIS' education work illustrates the importance of research that is embedded in communities through long term engagement
- AIATSIS' health research illustrates the role AIATSIS has played, and can continue to play, in sponsoring and launching new initiatives
- AIATSIS' land and water research is an example of the ability of AIATSIS to build on traditional strengths to adapt to new and emerging issues, such as land management.

AIATSIS has supported the development and articulation of Indigenous knowledges and research methods. Three examples, among many, include the publication of Professor Martin Nakata's seminal work, *Disciplining the savages; saving the disciplines*; Professor Kerry Arabena devised and completed her award winning thesis on 'universal citizenship' as an Indigenous Visiting Research Fellow at AIATSIS; and the book emerging from the community based research of Dr Lawrence Bamblett, *Our stories are our survival* was published by Aboriginal Studies Press this year. Seminars and workshops over the last few years have also been held that explore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on research, writing and identity.

AIATSIS STRATEGIC RESEARCH PRIORITIES

As outlined in the AIATSIS Act, the AIATSIS Council sets long term strategic direction for AIATSIS' research, having regard to emerging issues and government priorities and in consultation with its base. It takes advice from the Research Advisory Committee. The Research Advisory Committee also is responsible for advice to Council on particular research proposals and progress of research. The Committee is elected from the AIATSIS membership and is comprised of some of Australia's leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-

Indigenous researchers across the range of fields of research in contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies.

The AIATSIS Strategic Research Plan 2013-16, which will be released later in 2013, focusses on research that contributes to the well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It restates AIATSIS' commitment to rigorous, ethical community based research. AIATSIS identifies six Concentrations of Research Excellence (COREs), which build on AIATSIS traditional strengths and address contemporary research priorities:

- Language and cultural expression
- Education and cultural transmission
- Health and wellbeing
- Governance, public policy and public administration
- Land and water
- Native title and traditional ownership.

It is noteworthy that AIATSIS' research priorities strongly correlate to the survey undertaken in 2011 by AIATSIS for the National Congress of the Australia's First Peoples which identifies the top 10 most important issues to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The survey highlighted health, sovereignty, education and native title as the most important areas of policy. Within health, mental health and emotional wellbeing (42 per cent) and access to health care (21 per cent) were highlighted. Within education, early childhood education (31 per cent) and school and transition to work (31 per cent) were the areas of most concern. Sovereignty was seen as a top priority (88 per cent), including constitutional recognition and agreement and treaty-making. Native title was also among the top ten (17 per cent). AIATSIS has current projects in all of these areas and long research records on which to draw to inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' decision-making and action in these priority areas.⁴

THE STRUCTURE OF THE AIATSIS RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Building on the long-term success of the Native Title Research Unit model (see case study, **Attachment 2**), AIATSIS has established two additional centres and will be establishing a further three centres this year to confirm a long term commitment to these research priorities. The centres are able to provide greater visibility to our research program and provide a hub for networks of researchers, community partners and government/industry partners.

Currently AIATSIS has appropriation sufficient to fund only eight research fellowships ranging in level from associate fellow through to senior fellow. This small cohort of researchers limits the capacity of AIATSIS to build a strategic program of research and to leverage competitive research dollars. Increasingly it limits AIATSIS' capacity to attract the most senior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and academics in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies.

A long term commitment of funding for Centres in CORE areas is required. With a professorial fellowship in each area, supported by a number of fellowships across the associate/postdoctoral, fellowship and senior fellowship levels, project officer and program seed funding.

⁴ Available at <http://nationalcongress.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/ReportPart1.pdf>.

AIATSIS provides seed funding of up to \$10,000 per researcher to support their research activities. Staff must source their own external funds to support their research if seed funding is insufficient. In contrast, the funding rules for Australian Research Council *Discovery Early Career Research Awards* allow for \$40,000 per annum for project costs and up to \$50,000 per annum for Future Fellows.

AIATSIS requires investment in its capacity to support strategic research initiatives, including short term priorities (e.g. housing, justice reinvestment); contributions to ARC grants, internal research grants, and external commissioned research.

AIATSIS retains its capacity to engage in opportunistic research. This includes brokering relationships between funding bodies, policy agencies and researchers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. For example, the Rural Industries Research Development Corporation were administering a research program on weeds management and approached AIATSIS to develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused project to include in the program. Similarly, AIATSIS provides advice or assistance to government, industry and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. For example, AIATSIS was commissioned by the Attorney General's Department to advise on policy options for native title.

ACCESSING FUNDS THROUGH THE AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL AND COMPETITIVE GRANTS SCHEMES

The major source of competitive research grant funding, particularly for the social sciences, is the Australian Research Council (ARC). Over 2009-2011 research funding awarded from the ARC has increased by 6.5 per cent.

AIATSIS was made eligible for ARC grants in 2007. Since this time, AIATSIS has been in the absurd situation where it has not been competitive for ARC grants because of its small number of researchers (though it has partnered in many). According to the ARC, there have been no grants administered by AIATSIS under the *Discovery Indigenous* program or its previous iterations over the period 2001-2011. AIATSIS is currently not eligible to apply for NHMRC grants in its own right (though it is able to be listed as a partner). AIATSIS has had some success with HERDC category 1 grants outside of the major funding schemes.

A lack of success in this area reflects AIATSIS' inability over that period, due to insufficient funding for positions and competitive rates of pay, to attract senior noted academics with a strong track record and a lack of support for staff in applying for and managing grants. This structural problem with the number and range of fellowships available at AIATSIS is addressed later. AIATSIS has taken steps within existing resources to increase the number of senior academics and appointed a support staff person. With funding, AIATSIS would strengthen its research capacity through its annual appropriation to enable it to employ academic Chairs in its chosen areas of expertise, an appropriate number of academics at lower levels and commensurate research support staff to provide high quality pre and post award management support.

RESEARCH FUNDS UNDER THE HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORT ACT

Funding for research in Australia is provided through the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Cth) (HESA). HESA includes provision for research block grants and access to Australian Postgraduate Awards to support higher degrees by research.

In 2013, \$1.67 billion is being provided to eligible Australian higher education providers as block grants for research and research training. A further \$60 million in funding is also available in 2013-14 under the National

Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy, which is available to Australian higher education providers and Learned Academies.

To access these funds AIATSIS, would need to fit the criteria of a higher education provider. In simple terms, this means an institution that confers degrees or accreditation. While the AIATSIS Council does not wish to rule out the possibility of becoming a conferring institution for higher degrees, AIATSIS' capacity for teaching, supervision and research would have to be strengthened. Considerable changes to functions and infrastructure would be required, which may detract from AIATSIS' role as a publicly funded research agency, providing leadership and coordination.

In particular, for AIATSIS to focus on the usual drivers of university performance measurement could lead to the same systemic problems that disadvantage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research participation in universities. For example, the *Excellence for Research in Australia (ERA) Initiative* currently sets the research quality benchmarks for universities, which in turn determines the quantum of block grants. ERA increasingly influences both Australian Government funding to universities and universities own allocations amongst faculties .

The Australian Government recognises that ERA may not fully capture the quality and value of research to users through its ranking system. DIICCSRTE is currently undertaking major work including stakeholder consultations to explore further mechanisms to more fully account for the impact of research (DIICCSRTE, 2013). AIATSIS has participated in roundtable discussions with other publicly funded research agencies to further refine measures of impact. Further, AIATSIS is partnering with the Charles Darwin University and the National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network to provide advice to DIICCSRTE on appropriate measures of impact for research in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies.

The Behrendt Review recognised that it is desirable to find alternative ways to adequately determine the value of research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly where research deals with Indigenous knowledges (DIICCSRTE, 2012). The review noted that forms of research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges or methodologies relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge are measured more by their value to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities than by international collaborations and citations (DIICSRTE, 2012). In line with recommendation 26 of the review, the ARC is working with AIATSIS and the Australian Bureau of Statistics to explore development of appropriate research codes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander subject matter and to create a panel of peers to assess quality.

As a result, while AIATSIS is actively involved in the sector to determine measures of utility and impact of research concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, at this time, it is unlikely that access to HESA funding would provide the scale of funding increase required by AIATSIS. In particular, the shortfalls of the ERA framework for measuring research quality for research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, obviates the importance of direct appropriation for a publicly funded research agency for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, that is able to measure quality and impact from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective.

Recommendation 3: AIATSIS be funded directly for its research functions through its annual appropriation

Recommendation 4: AIATSIS research capacity be strengthened through additional funding to resource key research hubs across AIATSIS, based on the six Concentrations of Research Excellence and led

by six professorial fellows with highly productive multidisciplinary research teams, these would partner, integrate and extend the reach and effectiveness of research from across academia, government and communities, supported by a research development team

Recommendation 5: AIATSIS be included in strategic planning and made eligible for the funding mechanisms and the methods to measure and reward success that have been developed and implemented in the research sector.

2.1.3 AIATSIS' FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Historically, AIATSIS supported and collected research primarily involving documentation and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, language and society. Priorities have shifted over time to encompass the changing nature and scope of the notion of 'Indigenous studies' and government policy. Former AIATSIS Council member, Professor Martin Nakata explains that Indigenous studies is no longer an 'enclave' of traditional disciplines, but rather, for Indigenous researchers in particular, it involves understanding particular Indigenous experiences 'upon a terrain intersected by the pathways, both of other Indigenous experiences, and of the non-Indigenous academic disciplines' (Nakata 2006). Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies is interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and intercultural. Setting strategic priorities in this context requires an anchoring point. For AIATSIS this anchor is conducting research and collecting materials and delivering services of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and that will have a positive impact on their economic and social wellbeing.

AIATSIS STATEMENT OF STRATEGIC INTENT 2013-16

AIATSIS' most recent strategic planning document indicates a clear change of direction. AIATSIS has changed its purpose statement from merely promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to actively creating pathways for the knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be shared and valued.

Our priorities in achieving this purpose are to promote Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their heritage and culture; focus outwardly and engage collaboratively with its stakeholders and clients, wherever they are; provide the foundation for research excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies; ensure the AIATSIS collection is safe, accessible and growing; and celebrate its achievements over almost 50 years of providing leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies.

Specific directions in relation to research and collections are contained throughout this submission.

2.2 AIATSIS SERVICE TO THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITY (TERM OF REFERENCE NO 2)

We understand ourselves through places like AIATSIS. Through places like AIATSIS, we can wake up the people with knowledge. I am researching to help people 'wake up'. There might be precious mysteries to help us understand ourselves again. We can look to the past to find our way.



AIATSIS considers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, government, researchers and universities and cultural collecting institutions as its key stakeholder groups. AIATSIS is a caretaker of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge and heritage through its collection, research and publishing functions.

The AIATSIS collections are in many cases the only location of a language recording, an historic photograph, and manuscripts detailing community stories or descriptions of traditional knowledge. The information and many stories concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and practices exist only in the AIATSIS collection. They are thus of incalculable value to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and to the Australian nation.

Activities AIATSIS undertakes that relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities include:

- Acting as a custodian of materials belonging to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the collection
- Preserving and conserving materials on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owners
- Supporting access to the collection contributing to better understanding of culture and heritage
- Supporting family history research for service providers under the Link Up program funded by the Department of Health and Ageing which provides support to the Stolen Generations
- Providing pathways to learning and research through our access to our collections, research fellowships and training programs
- Entering into partnerships to conduct research of interest to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Undertaking outreach visits to communities in which archival audio and visual material and photos regarding a particular community are taken to show to community members
- Providing assistance to the many community groups who visit AIATSIS each year to research and gain information relating to their communities
- Repatriating materials to communities enabling any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person to obtain copies of up to 20 audio-visual items relating to their family or community each calendar year free of charge
- Publishing of books through Aboriginal Studies Press, which prioritises telling stories by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These promote understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and societies.

When funding permitted, AIATSIS also provided the following services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities:

- Research grants which provide opportunities to researchers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to undertake their research, eg research into family histories
- Family history research services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people generally
- In-house assistance with research in the area of language research support
- Large scale documentation projects.

AIATSIS has developed rich relationships with many communities – see the case study at **Attachment 3**.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

AIATSIS holds material of relevance to every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in Australia. It is therefore vital that AIATSIS build relationships with communities to inform them of holdings of relevance to them and facilitate the return of materials. As a Canberra based central repository, AIATSIS is often far from its clients. AIATSIS has developed the highest possible standards for remote client support. In this way, AIATSIS activities have a strong regional focus providing services and return of materials to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals in rural and remote areas through dissemination of digital collection copies. However, it is also important to have programs that connect with clients on more personal level.

Within severe funding constraints, AIATSIS is only able to visit a small number of communities each year to show people relevant material that is held in our audio-visual collections. Communities greatly value these visits – a single photograph or recording can have a large impact. Feedback from a recent visit to the Torres Strait is illustrative:

A picture tells a thousand words - it's stirred my heart to see families that I worked with, all the uncles and aunties and it gives me a time of reflection. It's part of our cultural revitalisation – sadly our children are influenced by so many different cultures that sometimes they forget the depth of their own culture. AIATSIS has helped our people to walk down the corridors of time and our culture says you really can't go ahead without knowing where you've come from.

AIATSIS is able to reach many more community members if staff visit the community and, in the planning and follow-up AIATSIS builds strong and enduring relationships with the community. AIATSIS is currently investigating the use of reserve funds to undertake an expanded schedule of visits during the 50th anniversary year.

In the past, AIATSIS has had capacity to bring small groups to AIATSIS (up to 10 people) to explore our collections and request materials for return to communities. As these visits are months in the making, staff are able to prepare a large range of material from the collections that are relevant to the visitors. Providing copies of material that we hold in our archive is a way for AIATSIS to say we acknowledge ownership of materials in circumstances where communities sometimes feel they have lost control of material that morally belongs to their communities, or to individual families therein. Unlike many other collections, holding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander materials carries an obligation to facilitate its return. This should be considered a core component of AIATSIS' collecting function.

Recommendation 6: That AIATSIS services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples be strengthened through the provision of greater resources for outreach programs – visiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to return materials and facilitating visits to AIATSIS.

FAMILY HISTORY SUPPORT SERVICES

The AIATSIS family history service is essential support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seeking information about their family and cultural history and has been running for several decades in one form or other.

The Family History Unit currently has a funding agreement with the Department of Health and Ageing, through the Link-Up Research Resource Unit. The main activity under the agreement involves working with Link-Up offices across Australia to:

- Assist with family tracing for the Stolen Generation
- Deliver Statement of Assessment in Family Tracing - training new Link-Up caseworkers and research officers – this training is only available to Link-Up staff
- Case file review and support visits for Link-Up offices to support the caseworkers with managing case files and with any additional training needs
- Respond to 1800 help desk enquires from link up staff
- Research family tracing requests that have reached a block (unable to find any further information and may have a lead to another state) in their State or Territory Record Agencies. This is done by the Family History Unit researching the Collections located in the AIATSIS collections
- Negotiate new Individual Partnership Agreements with Link-Up Offices across Australia to tailor the service that the FHU provide to suit the needs of Link-Up; and
- Develop a Certificate IV in Family Tracing with the Canberra Institute of Technology.

While acknowledging the importance of this partnership, this represents a significant narrowing of AIATSIS family history services. Previously, the service included helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to trace their family members and cultural heritage. This included the Stolen Generations but was not exclusive to this group. Other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who had been separated from their families also used the unit for many years.

The Family History Unit provided a unique and specialised service for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as the people who work in the unit have been touched in some way by the effects of The Stolen Generation. The service was and still is delivered with a high level of cultural respect, sensitivity and awareness of how to handle such sensitive information.

The uniqueness of this service was the ability for groups and individual clients to attend AIATSIS Family History Unit and receive assistance with searching for family in an environment that was culturally safe. This service has been particularly important to people who had barriers to accessing the information.

Before the new exclusive arrangements commenced the annual requests from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members was around the 500 - 600 per year. It also conducted community training on family tracing to further assist in family re-connection.



To try to address the gap in service, in May 2013 the AIATSIS Family History Unit launched the *Findin Your Mob* user pays service for people trying to find out information about their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage.

AIATSIS is seeking new resources to reinstate and expand the services of the Family History Unit so that they can also provide support for people who are not Link Up clients and who cannot afford fee for service assistance.

Recommendation 7: That the AIATSIS family history services be available to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and directly funded by increased appropriation to a level that meets demand.



National Native Title Conference (June 2013) Photos: Matt O'Rourke

SUPPORTING LOCAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER KNOWLEDGE CENTRES

We strongly view AIATSIS as an education reference point. AIATSIS plays a critical role in the transition of cultural and traditional knowledge as it is a place where we trust as a safe place to store this knowledge forever.

ABM ELGORING AMBUNG RNTBC

Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge centres and keeping places take many forms. While some communities have a dedicated museum, such as the Kanamkek-Yile Ngala Museum in Wadeye (NT), others have virtual archives, such as Ara Iritja in South Australia, that are accessible at the local school or other central hub. Others, such as the Queensland and Northern Territory knowledge centres are part of a coordinated state/territory wide network. Many native title bodies hold significant collections of materials. Many communities have aspirations for the return of their cultural materials so they are readily accessible to the community.

Whatever their nature, there is an acknowledged need for a nationally coordinated effort to support local knowledge centres and keeping places to repatriate and manage their own cultural heritage collection. There are many local organisations holding cultural materials, including those collected through research activities, ranger programs and native title processes. Some of these have trusted relationships with state government organisations, such as the State Library of Queensland.

There is currently no nationally coordinated effort for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to access safe and secure back-up, thus ensuring that materials gathered today will be preserved for future generations. The 2020 Summit proposed a national Indigenous knowledge centre network to fill this role. A study, led by Jackie Huggins, reported to Minister Macklin but no public response to the study was made. AIATSIS has 50 years of experience in organising and managing such collections and could be an invaluable resource for community based centres. AIATSIS could also provide support to a network of centres to share information and experiences and to pool expertise and infrastructure. AIATSIS can fill the role of trusted repository to provide essential backup for local collections (see section 2.9). AIATSIS is experienced at training Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in technical aspects of collection management and preservation and could provide such training in communities and in Canberra.

Recommendation 8: AIATSIS be resourced to service local community based initiatives by providing greater outreach and support on collections management and training as well as the curation of digital collections for return to or integration with community knowledge centres

2.3 AIATSIS SUPPORT FOR THE RESEARCH SECTOR, PROMOTING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES AND DEVELOPING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER RESEARCHERS (TERM OF REFERENCE NO 3)

I think AIATSIS has, in its hands, one of the most significant initiatives in the nation for addressing the challenge of increasing Indigenous engagement and attainment in postgraduate research - and for hosting Indigenous participation in Australian and international research culture and communities.

GREG LEHMAN, IVRF PROGRAM

The Australian Government's Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People sought to find ways to address the large gap between the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and academics in universities and non-Indigenous students and academics. It was also asked to address the lack of recognition, teaching and research in Australian universities, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems - one of the world's oldest systems of knowledge and culture. A number of reviews have now made recommendations to support the contribution of Indigenous knowledge to innovation.⁵ AIATSIS is well placed to support progress on this, subject to addressing resourcing constraints.

AIATSIS supports the research sector across all of its activities:

- AIATSIS awards at least eight three-year research only fellowships and at least three Indigenous Visiting Research Fellowships (up to 12months). AIATSIS has also begun to formalise its visiting and adjunct programs (AIATSIS in-house research capacity is discussed further at section 2.7)
- AIATSIS holds public programs – seminars and conferences – that encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people to participate in research activities. AIATSIS also publishes research that would otherwise not be commercially viable (see section 2.8)
- AIATSIS provide specialist research infrastructure support through its collections (discussed at section 2.9 and 2.10)
- The AIATSIS Research grants program (discussed at section 2.6 below), which has been suspended since 2011 was critical in supporting and promoting ethical research in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies.

In this section, discussion is focussed on AIATSIS role in developing and supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research workforce the Indigenous Visiting Researchers forum.

⁵ The Review of Higher Education in Australia by Professor Denise Bradley; *Venturous Australia*, the 2008 review of Australia's national innovation system by Professor Cutler and the Australian Government's Research Workforce Strategy have all called for greater recognition of Indigenous knowledge and its contributions to the National Innovation System.

THE INDIGENOUS VISITING RESEARCHERS PROGRAM

Since 2008, AIATSIS has supported the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people into research careers through its Indigenous Visiting Researcher Fellowships program (IVRF). This program achieved success in transitioning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders people into research careers and securing completions of higher degrees. This contribution to growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research workforce, and the potential for this to be increased, was highlighted in the Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. As a result, it is one of the key issues to be examined in this review.

The IVRF program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers to undertake a period of residency in Canberra to conduct their research full time, access national collections of research materials (AIATSIS, National Library and National Archives), and engage with policy-making organisations and their representatives. Program participants are mentored by senior AIATSIS staff and are given opportunities to collaborate on Institute research projects and publish their work.

Since the introduction of the program, AIATSIS has engaged 24 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers for varying periods to lead and participate in research into education, childhood literacy, entrepreneurship, housing, chronic disease, prisoner health, mental health and wellbeing, artistic and cultural expression and Australian Government and State government relations.

The IVRF was not fully funded through direct appropriation. It was largely funded via contributions from Australian government departments (DIISR, DEEWR and FaHCSIA) through one off grants sought by AIATSIS.

The IVRF program has proved to be an effective mechanism to assist postgraduate students to complete their higher degree by research qualification, develop research skills and gain research experience.

The program has attracted a variety of people and four key catchments have emerged:

- People eligible and wishing to undertake higher degrees by research who have financial and family responsibilities that would prohibit them from full time study without adequate financial assistance
- Late term, part-time PhD candidates who have struggled to complete
- Individuals working in support roles within universities who were interested in exploring a research/academic career; and
- Public service or community sector managers interested in ‘trying out’ research.

Part of the attraction of the IVRF program is the opportunity to undertake research in a culturally proficient environment, with a cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers who are currently completing or have completed a higher degree. The majority of recipients disseminated their results in research papers, seminars, and conference and government reports. These skills and outputs are fundamental to a successful career in academia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars who have participated in the program have gone on to be some of Australia’s most well-known and respected academics. IVRF program participants have included Professor Kerry Arabena, Professor Megan Davis, Dr Jeanine Leanne and Dr Valerie Cooms. The program has resulted in a number of participants transitioning into ongoing research careers, including within AIATSIS.

The Coalition policy on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment supports training that is linked to lasting jobs and the development of careers. The IVRF program is a successful model of this approach, and could be a nationally significant fellowship program, building partnerships with universities and increasing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research workforce with long term investment. This expansion could be initiated as a part of the \$45 million funding commitment to the Generation One employment model.

Recommendation 9: That support along the lines of the Indigenous Visiting Research Fellowship program be funded on a permanent basis through appropriated funds.

2.4 AIATSIS RELATIONSHIP WITH UNIVERSITIES (TERM OF REFERENCE 4)

It is well recognised that research collaboration is vital to high quality research. The interface of disciplines and bringing together of ideas results in new knowledge. In working together, eminent researchers, early career academics and students build research teams that drive research effort and capacity building for upcoming scholars. From its inception, AIATSIS was modelled as a collaborative network of researchers, most evident in our membership structure.

AIATSIS collaborates closely with many universities including as partners on ARC and other grants and collaborative ventures. At the moment, as an example, AIATSIS researchers are partnering on the following research grants and collaborations.

- Advisory Board member and Essential participant in the CRC for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Health (hosted by the Lowitja Institute)
- Project participant in the CRC for Remote Economic Participation (hosted by Ninti One)
- Chief investigator and partner organisation in the multi university ARC Linkage project, *Poverty in the Midst of Plenty: Economic Empowerment, Wealth Creation and Institutional Reform for Sustainable Indigenous and Local Communities* (part of the Agreements Treaties and Negotiated Settlements partnership)
- Chief investigator and partner organisation with Australian National University ARC Discovery Indigenous project, *Reducing Indigenous incarceration using Justice Reinvestment*
- Chief investigator (cultural custodian) and partner organisation in the Linkage Infrastructure and Equipment Facility project, *AustLit (BlackWords)*
- Project Partner in the *Humanities Networked Infrastructure* project
- Node leader and network partner organisation in the ARC Special Research *Initiative project, the National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network*
- Partner organisation with the Batchelor Institute for Indigenous tertiary education, in the Collaborative Research Network project, *Indigenous Research Collaborations: Education, Language and Creative Arts*

- Chief investigator and partner organisation in the multi university ARC linkage project, *Return, Reconcile, Renew: understanding the history, effects and opportunities of repatriation and building an evidence base for the future*
- Partner organisation in the multi university ARC linkage project, *Serving Our Country Project: a history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the defence of Australia*
- Research agreement with Notre Dame University on the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility project, *Changes to Country and Culture, Changes to Climate: strengthening institutions for Indigenous resilience and adaptation.*

A number of AIATSIS research fellows also have adjunct positions with a range of universities and informal research partnerships, collaborations and publication activities.

The Behrendt review concluded that collaborations are particularly important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars. They provide important academic and social support to higher degree by research students, including to allow dialogue around emerging research methodologies and research practice in working with communities. (DIICCSRTE, 2012, page 94). The review highlighted the potential for AIATSIS to have an expanded role in providing advice and support universities in relation to:

- Supporting networks of researchers and HDR students
- providing services to universities, particularly in relation to supervision
- developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research capacity, particularly early career Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and HDR students
- research on Indigenous knowledge and community-based research such as language collection and revival, family history, native title and other cultural information
- maintaining a digital collection.

The Behrendt Review recommended universities focus more on growing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics and researchers as one of the most effective ways to provide the environment, the advice to the university and support to drive better student outcomes.

SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER RESEARCHERS, HIGHER DEGREE BY RESEARCH STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

AIATSIS is a strong and supportive member of the National Indigenous Research and Knowledge Network (NIRAKN), which was funded by the ARC Special Research Initiative in recognition of the importance of establishing a research community network and to foster the development Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and knowledge in new ways. AIATSIS hosted the first NIRAKN symposium in July this year.

NIRAKN is a first step toward developing the kind of infrastructure to support the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and the place of Indigenous knowledge in Australian research. However, the ARC Special Research Initiative scheme is not necessarily the most appropriate long term response to the need. It is a competitive grant scheme, offering limited resources for a fixed period of time.

NIRAKN draws heavily, though not entirely, on the work of the 4th Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) to build high quality research capability and foster and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



researchers (IHEAC, 2009). AIATSIS' Principal Russell Taylor was a member of IHEAC and is an observer on the current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Advisory Council. IHEAC identified three models for this, a network (along the lines of NIRAKN), a Research hub and spokes model and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Centre of Excellence. In addition, IHEAC proposed an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learned academy. The IHEAC proposals provide a more permanent and predictable structural response than the competitive grants program. At the time the proposals were put forward it was noted that AIATSIS did not have the capacity to support these structures. However, with an increase in resources AIATSIS could, and we would argue should, provide the infrastructure to support these initiatives, given its statutory functions.

INVIGORATING THE AIATSIS MEMBERSHIP NETWORK

AIATSIS has more than 530 members throughout Australia and overseas involved in all aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, including research and teaching. Approximately 130 of these members identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

AIATSIS membership is prescribed in the *AIATSIS Act 1989* (the Act) and the Institute Rules (the Rules). It forms the voter base from which four AIATSIS Council members and eight Research Advisory Committee members are elected. Members must be able to qualify under one of five categories:

- evidence of sound research in an area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies
- achievements (including knowledge and qualifications) in an area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies
- substantial and/or long-term involvement with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation which concerns itself with issues relating to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultures
- evidence of substantial involvement in the teaching of an area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies
- meritorious service and commitment to furthering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies.

Membership of AIATSIS is an academic esteem measure and considered a prestigious appointment. The membership is comprised of many of the most esteemed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous scholars in Australia. The perception of the membership as being focussed on already established senior academics can make it daunting for even some eligible people to apply.

AIATSIS is currently reviewing a range of options to invigorate and broaden the membership and support base.

Some of the people who would be engaged further, but who do not meet current criteria are:

- people with an established career in curatorial work or management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members
- early career researchers and postgraduate students in relevant areas of study; and
- prominent people (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous) who could raise the profile of AIATSIS and could act as ambassadors for our work.

AIATSIS is therefore exploring options that maintain the academic esteem of formal membership of AIATSIS but may be augmented by associate and honorary membership categories to overcome the gap.

AIATSIS AND LEARNED ACADEMIES

Given our membership structure, AIATSIS has been recognised alongside the ‘learned academies’, such as the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian Academy of the Humanities as a measure of esteem within the research sector, although we do not have access to related funding streams for learned academies.⁶

IHEAC put forward a proposal in 2009 for the establishment of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learned academy but this has not been realised (IHEAC, 2009). Creation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander chapter within the membership and an early career researcher and postgraduate student network could lessen this gap. A recent drive to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics who are members of AIATSIS has proved highly successful.

Although the competitive funding available to learned academies is limited, it would be useful way for AIATSIS members to engage with the network of members and collaborate on research initiatives.

AIATSIS and NIRAKN could explore the potential for an Indigenous chapter to support the ongoing development of the Indigenous researcher network.

AIATSIS AS A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR RESEARCHER DEVELOPMENT

Of the three options identified by IHEAC to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and research, the preferred option was for a Centre of Excellence. The model broadly seek to replicate New Zealand’s success through its *Nga Pae o te Maramatanga*, the National Institute for Research Excellence in Maori Development and Advancement, in supporting Maori researchers, higher degree by research students and research (IHEAC, 2009, page 17). This endeavour has been highly successful and has achieved its aim of supporting the completion of 500 Maori higher degree completions within 5 years (IHEAC, 2009, p19).

This proposed model was to build a networked Centre with its core objectives to build Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher capacity and leadership, facilitate collaboration between Indigenous centres within universities, the broader research community and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research entities, such as AIATSIS. The proposed networked centre for excellence would provide leadership and strategic direction and deliver and provide infrastructure and deliver programs necessary to build and maintain a viable, innovative cohort of researchers (IHEAC, 2009, page 43).

AIATSIS, in partnership with NIRAKN has the bones of the research Centre model, and such a Centre could be established if the investment model proposed in this submission were adopted. AIATSIS has the facilities and infrastructure, although secretariat support to the network and the funds to support the ongoing activities and governance of NIRAKN would be required as an ongoing commitment. AIATSIS’ own concentrations of research excellence also reflect a number of the critical areas of study identified in the Behrendt review, including society and culture, education and teaching, health and law (DIICCSRTE, 2011).

Collaborations across the university sector would be augmented by fellowships scholarships and grants awarded by AIATSIS to increase the amount of research being conducted (see IVRF program section 2.3 above, grants program section 2.6 and AIATSIS research capacity at section 2.7 below).

⁶ Australian Research Council. 2011. Excellence in Research for Australia 2010 National Report p.208.



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER TRAINEESHIPS AND ACCELERATED CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Drawing on the experience of the IVRF program and previous traineeship programs run through AIATSIS collections, AIATSIS recently signed an agreement with DIICSRTE to provide a training and accelerated career development program under the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000* (ITAA). The program is designed to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to undertake further study where they may otherwise be unable due to personal and family commitments. AIATSIS has over 30 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, many of whom have undertaken technical, tertiary and higher degree studies. AIATSIS also attracts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff at entry level positions who are attracted to working in an Indigenous organisation or to the stability of working in the Australian public service, including from regional areas. This has a significant impact on those staff who work at AIATSIS who have not had the same opportunities for study. AIATSIS has had great success in supporting staff to undertake further study. AIATSIS is currently developing Memoranda of Understanding with Indigenous student support centres in Canberra to partner in the delivery of the program. The program with DIICSRTE, costing \$6.4million over 3 years is currently a fixed term agreement. However, AIATSIS sees traineeships and Indigenous staff scholarships as an important way that AIATSIS can contribute to the educational attainment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who come in contact with AIATSIS.

Recommendation 10: That AIATSIS receive additions to its appropriations to support the development of AIATSIS as a Centre of Excellence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher development, providing ongoing support to NIRAKN and expanding its scope at the close of this competitive funding round;

Recommendation 11: That AIATSIS have sufficient funds within its appropriation to continue to support traineeships and career development awards into the future.

2.5 LEADING AND SUPPORTING ETHICAL RESEARCH PRACTICE (TERM OF REFERENCE NO 5)

As the ethics committee, we ensure cultural safety, we are the voice of those communities and advocate that the ethical side of the research is really adhered to, that our mob is respected and valued and co-researchers promote best practice. We have some control over what is discovered and shared and that's cultural safety.

CHRISSY GRANT, CHAIR OF AIATSIS' RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

AIATSIS' *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies* (GERAIS) are the leading standard for research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The latest version of GERAIS was released in 2013 and reflects recent advances in practice, particularly in health and the social sciences, the impact of the digital era, and significant legislative changes affecting the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

The Behrendt review recommended that AIATSIS provide more formal guidance to publicly funded research agencies, universities and researchers on ethical research practice recognising AIATSIS' expertise in this area.⁷ It noted that, while universities have ethics processes as required for all research involving human beings, very few universities have separate processes to assess proposals specifically in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There is no established form of handling this across the sector.

AIATSIS supports the Behrendt Review recommendations regarding the management of ethics in universities by specialist ethics committees drawing on expertise from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Behrendt review also indicated there was a need for support for supervisors as they are pivotal in supporting completion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher degree by research students (DIICCSRTE, 2012, page 94).

Subsequent to a recent review of AIATSIS' Research Ethics Committee (REC), the REC is trialling assessment of applications for ethics approval from external parties on a fee for service basis, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, government agencies, the private sector as well as university and independent researchers. The trial will be assessed in December 2013. The REC is also developing online resources and training to support communities, researchers, supervisors and ethics committees in applying the GERAIS and to assist other Institutional ethics committees in assessing ethics applications against the GERAIS.

With a small investment AIATSIS can provide greater ethics services and advice to universities, government and private sector research, and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities engaging with research projects. In particular, AIATSIS can provide independent institutional ethics clearance, training or advice to other ethics committees.

We note, for example, that ethics assessment is rarely considered in relation to government engagement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Ethical engagement should be seen as helpful and can be an indicator of success. The incoming Coalition government has noted the continuing failure in bureaucratic engagement, and AIATSIS has the experience, skills and knowledge to inform, educate and support government administrators and program managers in effective and ethical community engagement.

AIATSIS is currently investigating avenues for establishing the GERAIS as an Australian Standard. Regardless of the outcome of this inquiry, GERAIS should be adopted as the standard for research across Research ethics committees. AIATSIS is currently working to inform universities of the GERAIS and options for their adoption.

Recommendation 12: GERAIS be adopted as the standard for research across Research ethics committees.

Recommendation 13: AIATSIS be resourced to provide greater ethics services and advice to universities, government and private sector research, and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities engaging with research projects.

⁷ Behrendt review, recommendation 24

2.6 FACILITATING RESEARCH THROUGH GRANTS (TERM OF REFERENCE NO 6)

There are lots of researchers, like me, who would not have gone on to do what they are doing today without the grants program from AIATSIS.

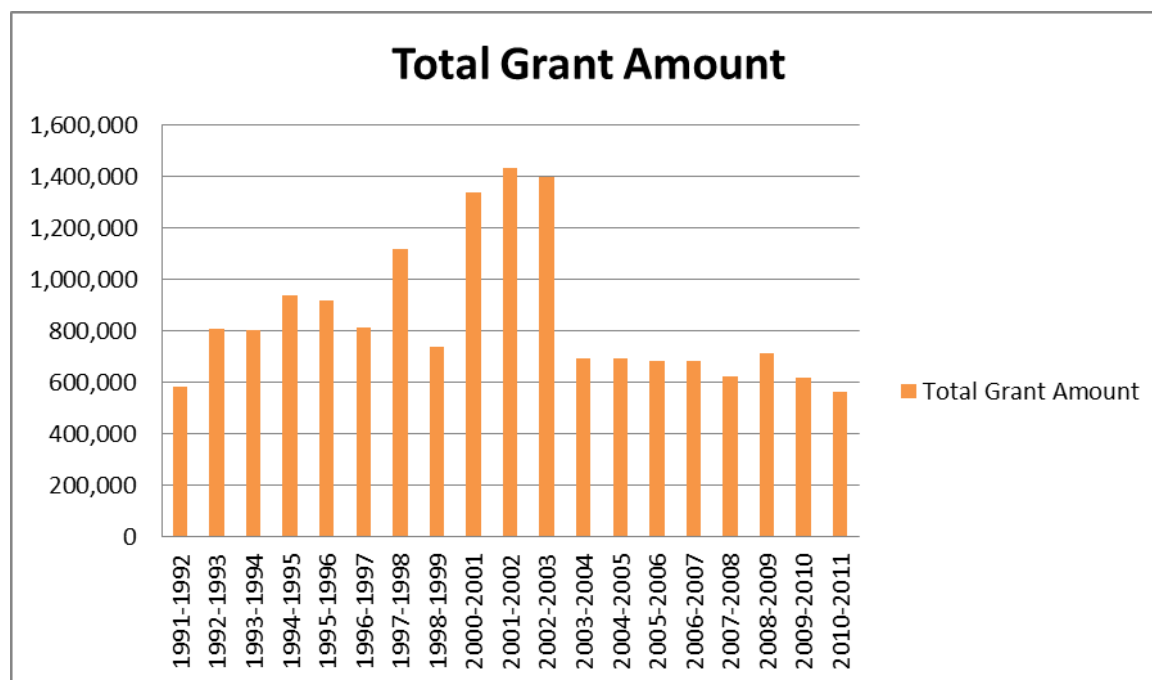
COUNCIL MEMBER, PROFESSOR JOHN MAYNARD

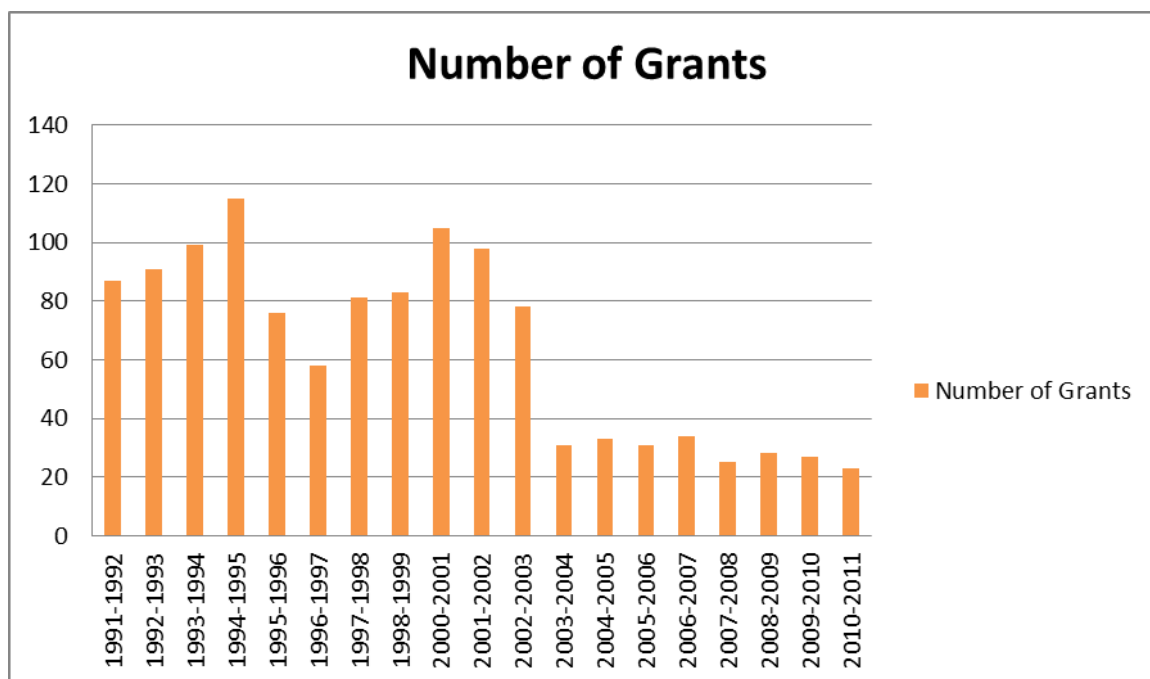
The grants program was central to the establishment of AIATSIS and to its original purpose, which was to record and preserve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Since its establishment in 1964, the grants program has generated an enormous volume of original research materials, photos, videos, sound recordings, field notes and manuscripts which form the basis for the AIATSIS collections.

The grants program has been widely used by all scholars in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies and have been particularly beneficial to early career researchers (both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous).

For example, Koiki Mabo's original research to map out traditional boundaries in the Torres Strait was undertaken with a small AIATSIS research grant in 1984. Barrister for the *Mabo* case, Greg McIntyre, was also supported through the research grants to research the legal concept of traditional aboriginal title.

The following charts show the value and number of grants awarded from 1991-92, until the suspension of the grants program in 2010-11.





The grants program was also an important source of funds for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to undertake research that is important to them. A distinguishing and important feature of AIATSIS' grants program was that eligibility for the grants did not require academic qualifications or an association with a university, making the grants widely accessible, including by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. While still highly competitive, the differences in eligibility criteria proved invaluable. ANU researcher, Aaron Qorn, reflected on the program:

The research grants program enables people in communities and grass roots researchers to access information about their communities. The research grants provide research opportunities for research that wouldn't otherwise be able to be undertaken. Other forms of research grants have requirements that couldn't be met.

Over time, research grants had become increasingly community-based in nature and they continued to be used widely by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations until the discontinuation of the program. Between 2008 and 2011, 20-33 per cent of applications were received from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community based organisations. Forty six to 66 per cent of applications were from universities (many of which are likely to represent partnerships with communities).

In addition to the open eligibility criteria, there are two other critical features that make the grants uniquely community-focused:

- Applications are assessed in terms of the ethical research practices outlined in AIATSIS' *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies*, which require community consent and reciprocal benefits
- Funding is provided on the basis of the full cost of ethical research. Costs can be higher to accommodate longer periods of time spent in communities and co-payments to community organisations and individuals participating in the research.

Many efforts were made to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applications which have included grants workshops, often held in conjunction with national conferences, and visiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student support centres within universities, providing advice in the development of the research grant application and linking community researchers with research mentors or collaborators.

THE DISCONTINUATION OF THE GRANTS PROGRAM

The AIATSIS Council's decision to suspend the Grants Program in 2012 was due to a series of substantive and complex issues regarding the program including high overheads, budget constraints and a drop in the quality of applications submitted.

One of the contributing factors was the rising research costs while the overall pool of grant money was decreasing. Annual expenditure decreased considerably over time owing to funding pressures throughout AIATSIS such that total grants issued in 2011 totalled only \$564,571. Excellent grants of high cost or major research collaborations could not be supported and the costs of managing the program relative to the amounts offered were higher than other audited programs.

Another contributing factor was the need to internally fund digitisation of the fragile collections, in the absence of sufficient appropriation to meet all of AIATSIS' statutory obligations.

The AIATSIS Grants program was removed from the Australian Competitive Grants Register once expenditure fell below \$1 million, which both decreased the visibility of the grants and also meant research undertaken received a lower ranking for the purposes of the *Excellence for Research in Australia* initiative.

The grant management process was streamlined to reduce the cost to AIATSIS of administering the Grants program in 2011 to \$162,000, which was equivalent to 26 per cent of grant funding. The Australian National Audit Office considers that 10 per cent of the total grant funding allocation is a reasonable target for administrative costs.

REINSTATING THE GRANTS PROGRAM

There is so much work yet to be done in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, those grants are essential to allow that work to continue.

NANCY WILLIAMS, AIATSIS MEMBER

Many communities, professional associations, researchers and other stakeholders raised strong objections to the discontinuation of the program. The 2012 Report of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs on its Inquiry into language learning in Indigenous communities *Our Land; Our Languages* recommended the program be reintroduced.

The program cannot be reintroduced without new funding. AIATSIS recommends an investment in a revitalised AIATSIS Grant program. It is proposed that total expenditure on the grants be increased as a way of maximising efficiency in terms of administrative costs to, for example, \$5,000,000 annually with a commensurate increase to the administrative support component of \$500,000.

It will be important to ensure that AIATSIS' grants are correctly targeted to ensure they complement and not compete with other sources of research funding.

A revised Grants program could consider the possibility of a higher quantum of funds per grant or multi-year funding to be able to cater for larger research projects. This may increase the number of approved applications to encourage longitudinal research projects in communities. The program could require rather than merely encourage community partnerships and offer support to applied research projects.

The research grants program remains highly valuable in the context of issues facing the higher education sector, in particular the strengthening of pathways into research and higher education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Recommendation 14: The AIATSIS Research grants Program be reinstated to a sustainable funding level, for example \$5 million with appropriate administration funds (10%).

2.8 AIATSIS ROLE IN ENCOURAGING GREATER UNDERSTANDING IN THE GENERAL COMMUNITY OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE (TERM OF REFERENCE NO 8)

AIATSIS has always played a role in providing public information to a variety of audiences and does so through a number of means, including publishing, seminars, publications, events and public programs, and online materials.

AIATSIS fulfils the need for a national symbol representing the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the national research system and the national cultural institutions while also standing as a symbol of Australia's maturing nationhood and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first peoples of the land.

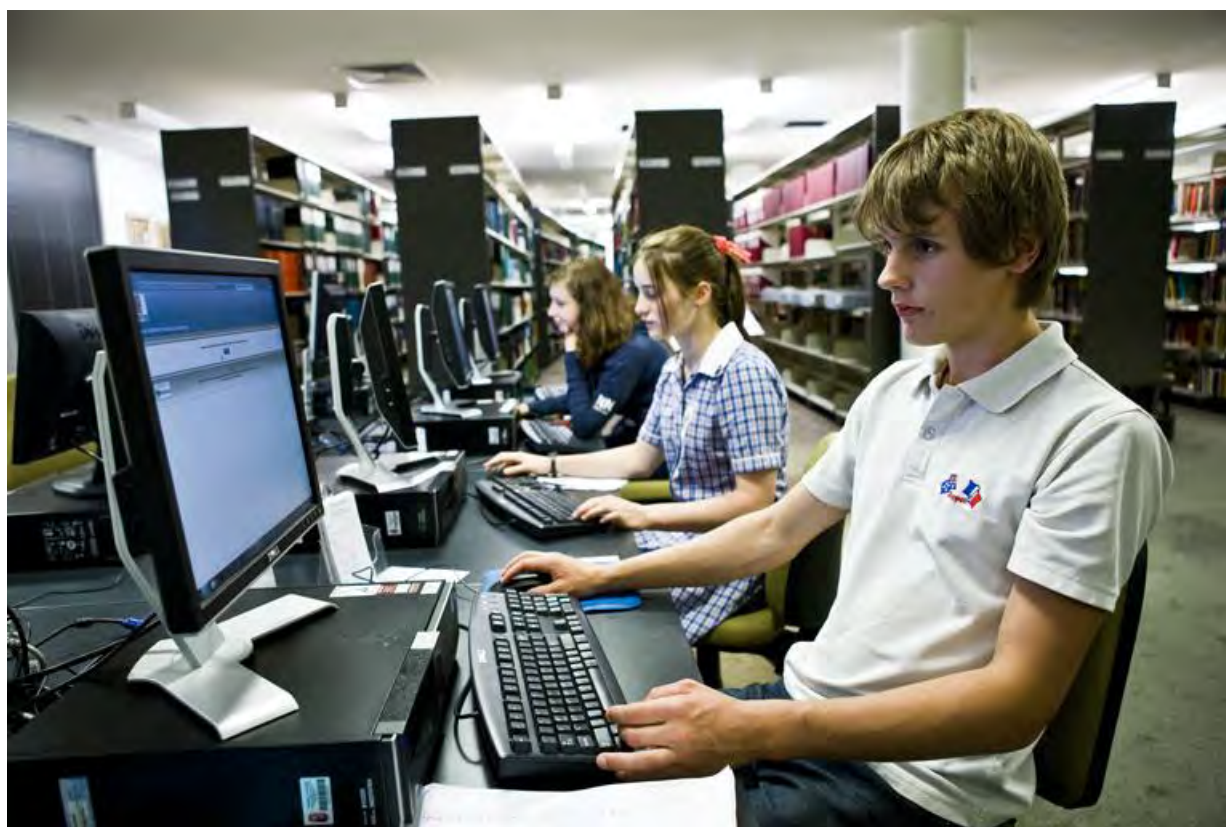
This role could be strengthened with new building works to create a First Peoples precinct for the celebration and promotion of understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies. This would include an exhibition space and meetings space for ongoing dialogue and learning; and additional office and collections space for AIATSIS to fulfil its current aims and to continue to grow. At minimum AIATSIS requires building works to establish a new public space and conference areas and new office and collections space. However, a significant new complex could be developed to coincide with the referendum to include recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Australian Constitution.

AIATSIS is the only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander national institution in the national capital, presenting Australia's 40,000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, heritage and culture to the world through the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. AIATSIS is in a modern building, located with good public visibility due to proximity to the National Museum of Australia. However, the building was not designed with room for growth (of the collection or of staff) and has limited public access space.

A visible presence for AIATSIS, commensurate with the significance and status of the organisation, is important. Suitable premises can support AIATSIS' statutory function of increasing understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture across the general community, our role as a leader, facilitator and partner with stakeholders in research, collections and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and

increase the attraction of Canberra to Australian and international visitors, who seek an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural experience.

This would be complemented by funding for outreach, enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other communities and populations outside Canberra to experience AIATSIS and engage with and benefit from its knowledge and resources.



School visits to AIATSIS (Sept 2009) Photo: Andrew Babington

The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution recently wrote that ‘Digital technology should first and foremost enhance and reinforce the in-person visitor experience’. AIATSIS is working hard to make more of its collection available nationally and internationally online, and at present its modest digital presence far exceeds its in-person experience for visitors. Tens of thousands of members of the public pass by the door every year, a tremendous lost opportunity. Demand by international delegations to tour and view the collection has been steadily increasing in recent years, with AIATSIS viewed on the diplomatic stage as an important Australian institution.

Public space in AIATSIS’ building is presently limited to the Library reading room, which is open for restricted hours and functionally suited to a limited range of purposes, principally quiet reading and research. The foyer and the Mabo Room, a meeting room with capacity of 80-100 people (theatre-style), are also used for functions and available for external booking, however there are inadequate kitchen and bathroom facilities. Facilities for viewing audio-visual materials are accessed through technical and functional areas of the organisation – while appropriate private viewing areas are required, these should be situated as part of AIATSIS’ public access facilities.

Given the cross-media composition of the AIATSIS’ collection, exhibition facilities need to be designed and fitted to be suitable for display of documents, books, film, video and sound recordings and art and artefacts.

The Smithsonian Institution, and specifically its National Museum of the American Indian, offers one model of an integrated collection, research, education and exhibition facility.

To achieve a similar presence, AIATSIS would need to invest in its physical and digital infrastructure and in the research value-add to the collection. Optimally, this would involve a new and unique national building and surrounding precinct to house AIATSIS, its collections, staff and visitors. It would be of sufficient character to constitute a national symbol and landmark for Australia’s cultural identity. It would include public exhibition space, seminar and conference facilities, lecture theatre and facilities for formal and informal educational programs. This would boldly demonstrate the importance of Australia’s First Peoples to our past, present and future.

This precinct could also house the national keeping place memorial for unprovenanced ancestral remains.

Such a development could reinforce the symbolism and commitment of the Constitutional recognition of Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and be the national and international centrepiece of our commitment to understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage through ongoing dialogue and learning.

A fall back option could involve the design and construction of a new wing on the existing AIATSIS building to provide public space for visitors, along with enhanced research, access and engagement facilities.

Recommendation 15: A new First Peoples’ precinct should be developed, incorporating existing and new infrastructure needs of AIATSIS, conference facilities and exhibition space, and could include the proposed national keeping place.

ABORIGINAL STUDIES PRESS

Aboriginal Studies Press (ASP) is a commercial publisher with a strong focus on bringing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories and research to a broad audience. At times, the equivalent of fifty per cent of ASP’s annual output has been shortlisted for a range of national and state-based literary awards. ASP titles win awards in part because they meet high standards of innovation and publishing excellence. Demand from potential authors is growing and ASP is turning down manuscripts with high merit.

ASP has adapted to ongoing challenges. For example, a successful publication created by AIATSIS, *Aboriginal Sydney*, has been released by ASP as a phone app allowing users to explore sites of significance to Aboriginal people. With enhanced base funding, more could be done to deliver innovative new products and respond to rapid changes in the publishing environment.

The dynamic digital publishing environment also provides opportunities to revisit previous products in new ways. There has long been demand for AIATSIS to revisit the Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia, which was developed in-house and published by ASP in 2004. The research conducted at the time to produce the Encyclopedia was extensive and the product remains the only such effort to systematically describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies histories and cultures for the general readership. The Map of Aboriginal

Australia produced at the same time remains the most popular selling ASP product. There is a strong argument for a revised edition of the Encyclopedia and map to be created using the latest in digital technologies. A revision of the Encyclopedia and the Map would require significant upfront investment by AIATSIS but their popularity results in significant elevation of the AIATSIS brand.

FOSTERING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AUTHORS

AIATSIS has long supported the publishing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies material and, in particular, the fostering of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors. For example, the AIATSIS Stanner Award 2011 is now the only award in the country for an academic work by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholar, carrying with it a \$5000 prize, up to 50 hours mentoring and editorial support to convert a thesis into a publishable manuscript. In addition, the work is published by ASP. Having a first book published can enhance the chances of securing a university research or teaching position for emerging academics.

PUBLISHING FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR

The Little Red Yellow Black Book is an introduction to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia. It has sold more than 35,000 copies and is in its third edition. A companion website contains a range of ancillary resources, including content created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The book and website reach schools, adults and people undertaking cross-cultural training courses. It also hosts a 40-page set of teachers' notes which is a free resource. *The Little Red Yellow Black Book* serves as a model for further 'scaffolding' of materials around teaching resources across a range of subjects.

With appropriate investment, AIATSIS could harness a great deal more of its intellectual property to contribute to the education sector.

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

Aboriginal Studies Press has proactively sought to share its experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and subject matter with the publishing industry as a whole. AIATSIS developed a training course for editors working in this area, which has now been adopted by the industry. Aboriginal Author and editor, Bruce Pascoe, commented that the workshop was 'thought provoking' and 'a valuable cross cultural tool'. Building on this success, ASP is committed to developing a regular forum to exchange ideas and experience among publishers and editors.

PUBLISHING THAT LEADS RESEARCH, COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND EDUCATION

ASP's publishing success can be measured beyond book sales. The research for *Cleared Out*, the story of the removal of a group of 20 Aboriginal women and children in the Western Desert from the Woomera Rocket Range in 1964, their first contact with European Australians, exists because of an AIATSIS grant, through the use of AIATSIS archival resources and the dedication of Aboriginal Studies Press staff.

Told in a non-conventional style (three narratives, language definitions, photographs and maps) *Cleared Out* required high production costs and a commitment to close collaborative work between the authors and publishing staff.

The book won the West Australian Premier's Literary Prize and History Prize, 2005 and the Stanner Award 2006. 'Contact', a film made from the book won the Prime Minister's Prize for History, 2009.

Inspired by the work in the community on the book and the film, senior men then took younger men out on country to take part in ceremonies not undertaken for decades. In addition, senior Martu men have visited AIATSIS and deposited more materials in the archives.

The book continues to sell, being used in tertiary teaching courses, thus returning an income stream to the community. The film, from which the community earned money, has won many awards.

Recommendation 16: That Aboriginal Studies Press role be expanded to support the development of AIATSIS sourced educational materials, including a new edition of the Encyclopedia and Map of Aboriginal Australia

Recommendation 17: That AIATSIS be funded to develop packages of material to support the Australian curriculum.

Recommendation 18: That AIATSIS continue to play a leadership role in publishing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and subject matter.

2.9 AIATSIS COLLECTION (TERMS OF REFERENCE NOS 9 AND 10)

The Institute is critical because it has recorded the immense wealth of knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's 40,000 years of civilisation.

AARON QORN, AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

The AIATSIS Collections of audio, visual and print material comprise the world's largest and most comprehensive body of material pertaining to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, peoples, history, contemporary issues and studies. The AIATSIS Collection, in some areas, equals that of other cultural institutions. For example, the AIATSIS pictorial collection is commensurate with that of the National Library of Australia.

The value of the collections to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is palpable in the feedback from clients at **Attachment 4**.

AIATSIS collections are critical research infrastructure not only for universities and academic researchers, but importantly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples conducting their own research and discovering information about their own cultural heritage and family history. Its value does not decrease over time but rather increases almost exponentially as time passes. The feedback from clients is often very moving:

Thank you very much, I have received [the sound recording] and it is going to be treasured by my family as I have heard my great Grandfathers voice for the first time



AIATSIS return of materials to Torres Strait Islander communities in March 2013

The three AIATSIS-developed thesauri (Pathways) contain the standardised terms used to describe the items in the AIATSIS Collection catalogue and include the thesaurus for: 1) subjects relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies; 2) language groups and people; and 3) place names. The nature of the coding and documentation of materials is of enormous value to researchers:

...the annotated Mura catalogue and finding aids for collections are so good and staff are so helpful that I can do research remotely. But it is really inspiring to be here accessing original materials for a few days and such a smooth and efficient research experience.

What is most valuable to me: expert assistance from your fabulous staff; the high quality and relevant materials held here; and annotated catalogue, comprehensive finding aids.

The value of this work has been recognised by the world's peak library body, the Library of Congress, which approved AIATSIS thesauri for use in bibliographic records internationally. AIATSIS documentation standards are unique and are directed to maximising the discoverability of information. This is critical to ensure that clients can navigate the vast holdings. Unfortunately, within funding constraints the capacity of AIATSIS to maintain this level of documentation has diminished over time. So too has our capacity to curate collections to provide interpretive materials and increase the accessibility of information, particularly online.

The Parliamentary inquiry into Language Learning in Indigenous Communities recommended that the AIATSIS budget be increased and urged the Commonwealth Government to support AIATSIS as the central repository responsible for preserving Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

DIGITAL PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

The AIATSIS Act requires the maintenance of a cultural resource collection, which carries with it an imperative to preserve the collection and to ensure the resource is permanently discoverable and appropriately accessible to current and future Australians.

As previously noted, the AIATSIS collections are extensive and diverse; across audio, photographic, moving image and print media. Their span ranges from many historic formats of well over a hundred years old, to the most recent 'digital born' items.

However, the ongoing preservation of and access to these fragile collections is vulnerable due to a number of related factors. The nature of the original items and their handling prior to arriving at AIATSIS means that they are in a continuing state of decay. Over time, much of the information held on these items will become inaccessible. To delay this process the collections are housed in temperature and humidity controlled storage vaults to ensure their longevity as much as is possible.

In addition to the decline of the objects themselves, in many cases the playback machinery required to view or hear the content is no longer readily available or in good working order, having been surpassed by recent digital capture and playback devices. Technical staff with the requisite skills to repair, maintain and operate such vintage equipment are an ageing workforce and in many cases the required skillsets are no longer part of the course offerings at Australian Technical Colleges.

These factors combine to put the AIATSIS collections and their priceless cultural content at risk of irretrievable loss unless steps are not taken to avoid this. Dr Koïchiro Matsuura, then Director-General of UNESCO, spoke of the preservation of the world's audiovisual heritage in the following terms in 2008:

there is an urgent need not only for greater awareness, but also for the allocation of the human and financial resources for preservation [of audiovisual materials] so that future generations may benefit from the legacies of the past.

Without concerted action, this heritage is doomed, and with it, the existence of some indigenous communities whose voices now live on only through audiovisual recordings made before their world vanished.

Peer institutions around the world estimate that audio and visual material not digitised by 2020-2025 will be lost, and have set their programs accordingly. AIATSIS has established a digitisation strategy across all of the currently held collection formats and has enabled the development of staffing and technical infrastructure to digitise these collections so that they may be preserved by 2025 and made appropriately available into the future.

Through the thoughtful selection of skilled staff and the acquisition of a broad array of both vintage analogue and digital format equipment AIATSIS has been able to ensure the preservation of and access to many items from its heritage collections.

Of particular note are the following significant achievements:

- Development of a quality controlled Multiple Ingest Digitisation of Audio Tape
- Development of a system to Digitise obsolete J Format Video Tape
- Development of a best practice colour managed Still Image digitisation facility
- The provision of Online Access to digitised Library materials – 22 curated websites now including over 85,000 pages of collection content available online.

While these achievements are noteworthy and in many cases have matched or been emulated by many of Australia's larger national collecting bodies, there is still much work to be done to avert potential loss to deteriorating collections and to provide access in the new formats required by today's technology. Without an injection to the funding base, AIATSIS will not be able to meet the UNESCO digitisation imperative.

The AIATSIS collections are large and continue to develop and grow in volume and complexity. Non-digital and fragile items will continue to be deposited for years to come. Maintaining obsolete technology to support digitisation will also be necessary for years to come. At the same time, the demand for access to collection content by new generations of communities and individuals, academic, cultural and family history researchers is a constant and growing pressure on the AIATSIS Preservation Digitisation program.



AIATSIS return of materials including these photos to Torres Strait Islander communities in March 2013

TRUSTED DIGITAL REPOSITORY'

A 'Trusted Digital Repository' is categorised by the National Library of Australia and the Australian Partnership for Sustainable Repositories as comprising 'organisation and curatorial expertise, accessible information and data content, long term storage of objects without significant loss or degradation and viable, manageable technology'.

Progress towards achieving digital repository certification and the establishment of a suitable access platform has been constrained to date by the lack of recurrent funding and appropriate resources to facilitate the continued efficient migration to a digital based collection structure.

- AIATSIS is a leader in culturally appropriate description and classification (metadata) of materials with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. It is a respected key cultural institution and recognised trusted icon for the provision of culturally appropriate information for all Australians.
- The AIATSIS Pathways thesaurus has been adopted by the US Library of Congress and recommended for worldwide use in bibliographic records.
- The ATSLIRN (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Information Resource Network) protocols have been endorsed and applied by AIATSIS.
- Mura is not yet a repository, although most records can be harvested by Libraries Australia and made searchable through Trove. The work currently being undertaken with SirsiDynix and Libraries Australia in OAI-PMH, when completed, will enable staff to harvest records in Dublin core as well as MARCXML, so that many other systems can harvest our data.

- AIATSIS already embodies aspects required of sustainable digital repositories. For example, our collections have been instrumental in restoring materials and information lost in natural disasters such as the Northern Territory floods in 1998 where AIATSIS were able to provide copies of the lost language resources to the Katherine Language Centre.

Utilising successive short term funding packages AIATSIS has rapidly progressed towards creating digital collections and fulfilling the requirements of digital repository certification. This funding has enabled infrastructure and expertise to be developed that enable and support a robust and certified digital repository and access platform. Completing the process will require recurrent funding and resources to be provided.

This repository will also allow the deposit of research publications (from our own researchers as well as others) which are required to be deposited in open access repositories. For example, ARC grants now have a condition that publications resulting from the grant are made available in an institutional repository within 12 months of their publication. The ARC has identified the need to ensure the protection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage values. AIATSIS can provide the necessary cultural governance and protocols for researchers working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and knowledge.

Increased recurrent funding – both to establish the access platform and the provision of additional on-going staff resources – is required to progress to a complete digital collection, a fully compliant digital repository, to make the collections readily discoverable and available in a culturally appropriate fashion.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO AIATSIS COLLECTIONS

The AIATSIS Collections continue to grow at a rapid rate as do the number of requests for access. The number of requests received by the Audiovisual Archive increased by 52 per cent between 2007/2008 and 2012/13, while the number of advanced reference requests received by the Library increased by 82 per cent. While every attempt is made to make the AIATSIS Collections as discoverable and accessible as possible, negative feedback is occasionally heard concerning the accessibility of materials. For example, several submissions were made to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs' Inquiry into Language Learning in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in 2012, which raised concerns including:

- Access protocols at AIATSIS are excessively onerous
- Centralisation of resources at AIATSIS makes it difficult for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to find and access materials
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients are sometimes unable to gain access to material directly relevant to their family or community.

There are several reasons why access to material may be delayed or unavailable, including complex legal and cultural obligations, prioritisation of digitising material at risk of being lost due to deterioration and obsolescence, and resource constraints. While demand for access has increased, the number of permanent staff has decreased. If temporary digitisation funding were to cease, this would leave, as a typical example, two staff members managing a photographic collection of over 650,000 images (approximately the same size as the National Library's pictorial collection) and to provide access to the *entire* collection including interlibrary loans and reference enquiries.

The AIATSIS Collections are made accessible in accordance with relevant laws and protocols. No other collecting organisation faces the exact same issues or is as well placed to manage them. We are experts in understanding and managing the cultural sensitivities involved in making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

cultural materials accessible, in particular research materials. AIATSIS has the highest percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff of any national collecting institution.

In the last 12 months AIATSIS has undertaken a number of steps to address the access issues. However, without increased resources we cannot make AIATSIS Collections more accessible.

- More reference and access staff would reduce waiting times considerably, as well as increasing our capacity to undertake proactive access initiatives, such as community access visits. Increased staff would also allow the library and audiovisual archive to extend their opening hours, a key issue frequently raised in client feedback
- A permanent rights management officer position would contribute substantially to progress on renegotiating existing conditions of access, and solving difficult issues relating to access and use, which have a significant impact on time taken to process requests
- Purchase and implementation of a comprehensive Digital Asset Management System (DAMS) to control digital materials (and analogue material in the case of the audiovisual archive) would considerably improve staff access to material, and hence client access, particularly if the system was interoperable with Mura. A DAMS would also put AIATSIS in a better position to develop new ways of making selected material available online, as well as new ways of describing material via crowd-sourcing and other means
- More staff acquiring, describing, cataloguing, conserving, preserving, digitising and quality checking collection material would result in more material being discoverable and accessible, now and into the future.

ENHANCING THE COLLECTION: COLLECTIONS BASED FELLOWSHIPS

There is an enormous amount of material in the collections that is raw and unstudied. It includes detailed field notes, genealogies and sound recordings dating back over 100 years. AIATSIS has had some success attracting summer scholars from local universities to conduct projects on the collection. However, most cultural institutions are funded to provide short term collections based research fellowships, to unlock the information contained in the collections (for example, on an annual basis the National Library offers four to seven fellowships, and the NFSA offers an average of 10 fellowships). AIATSIS seeks an investment in collections based research fellowships to undertake much needed work on raw materials contained in the collection.

COLLABORATIONS WITH CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

AIATSIS regularly coordinates with other Canberra based institutions to support community visits to Canberra. More recently, AIATSIS has taken a more proactive approach to develop Memoranda of Understanding with Canberra based records agencies and national cultural institutions, including the National Library of Australia National Archives of Australia, the National Film and Sound Archive, the National Museum of Australia, the Australian War Memorial, the Noel Butlin Archives, Australian National University, ACT Territory records and ACT Heritage Library (though Libraries ACT). This provides an important new coordination point, led by AIATSIS, and could develop into a strategic forum for discussion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections. AIATSIS Researchers are also supporting libraries, such as the Mitchell Library, to unearth materials related to Australian languages.

AIATSIS has partnered in exhibitions with other institutions. For example, AIATSIS was involved in the set-up of the National Museum of Australia's First Australians Gallery and has contributed to Drill Hall Gallery exhibitions of artworks. However, AIATSIS' capacity to curate exhibitions is virtually non-existent.

Recommendation 19: AIATSIS funding be supplemented to:

Engage sufficient conservation staff to ensure that the collection is in optimum condition for long-term preservation

Ensure that preservation/digitisation is incorporated as core business and is funded to meet the 2025 deadline for magnetic media preservation (as determined by UNESCO)

Provide appropriate collection management staffing levels to ensure that the whole collection is described, catalogued and findable

Provide the ICT infrastructure to allow storage and management of the born and created digital collections, for innovative delivery of online content and for engagement with communities in crowd-sourcing activities

Allow for a return to full opening hours for both the Library and AVA Access Unit, to reduce the turnaround times for requests significantly and to return materials to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in a timely manner

Offer collections based fellowships.

2.10 GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES

2.10.1 GOVERNANCE

The terms of reference seek examination of whether AIATSIS' governance structures are appropriate. Consideration is given to whether there are sufficient (and transparent) checks and balances to support the good and honest decision-making to support the effective governing of an institution. Issues considered include Council responsibilities and remuneration, potential conflicts of interest and timeframes for serving on Council.

CONSTITUTION OF THE AIATSIS COUNCIL

The AIATSIS Act, section 12, prescribes the constitution of the Council as comprised of nine members – four members elected by the membership and five members appointed by the Minister, of which (at least) one must be Torres Strait Islander.

The AIATSIS Act, specifies that a Council member may be appointed for no more than four years, but can be re-elected. Currently the AIATSIS rules specify that elected Council members serve for a period of three years. The most recent Ministerial appointments were made for a period of only twelve months, although this was somewhat unusual (due to impending elections). All appointments are made on a part-time basis.

The Chair and Deputy Chair are appointed by the Minister. In providing advice to the Minister regarding the appointment of Chair and Deputy Chair, by convention, the department seeks advice from AIATSIS. The convention used by AIATSIS is that the Indigenous elected member with the most votes will be appointed Chairperson and the elected member with the next most votes will be appointed Deputy Chair. While the current Council chair has been re-appointed a number of times ultimately this is based on the election by members rather than decision by the Minister.

The election of the members to the governing Council maintains a direct engagement between AIATSIS and its membership. As the membership is based on achievement in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, the members election delivers expertise to the Council on the core business of AIATSIS. Ministerial appointments provide an opportunity to introduce other expertise to the Council that meets the overall needs of the organisation. Moreover, the requirement that the Minister appoint Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons to the Council ensures a majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council. This is an important factor in establishing the authority and legitimacy of AIATSIS in leading practice in research and collections of importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

AIATSIS is satisfied that the current provisions for the constitution of the Council are adapted and appropriate to the organisation's business. This is supported by the findings of the Uhrig review in 2003, which recommended no change to the constitution of the Council, but introduced a statement of expectations and intent between the Minister and the Council.

COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES AND PERFORMANCE

The AIATSIS Council's responsibilities under the Act are "to ensure the proper and efficient performance of the functions of the Institute and to determine the policy of the Institute with respect to any matter" (Part 5, section 13). As a statutory authority the Council is legally and financially responsible under the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*.

The AIATSIS Council has a charter and performance framework and recently conducted an evaluation of performance against the framework. Council members have assessed their training and development needs and have undergone induction and training programs to support their role on Council.

Council convenes an Audit and Risk Committee, chaired by the Deputy Chair with the majority (3) of members independent.

Council also convenes and participations in a number of other committees to assist in its governance and related decision making, eg the Finance Committee.

COUNCIL REMUNERATION

All members of the AIATSIS Council hold office on a part-time basis and the Council is required to meet four times a year. Most Council members also have additional committee responsibilities. Council members receive sitting fees for council meetings and for some, but not all, committee meetings.

AIATSIS has reviewed the responsibilities and levels of engagement of AIATSIS Council compared to other relevant statutory authorities as shown in **Attachment 5**. This review shows that most similar institutions share the same wide-ranging decision-making powers under their Acts and similar levels of engagement. This includes other publicly funded research agencies and key cultural institutions.

However, the AIATSIS Chair and Council members receive considerably lower remuneration for the same responsibilities and legal and financial obligations. As can be seen from the table at **Attachment 5**, the AIATSIS Council chair receives a per diem rate of payment of \$698 and members receive \$621 per diem.⁸ In 20012-13, the AIATSIS chair received \$6,462 in sitting fees. In contrast, Chairs of similar statutory authorities listed in the determination receive an annual salary of between \$41,490 and \$93,210 to carry out the same legislated responsibilities.

Aside from issues of equity and appropriateness, greater remuneration would also mean more could be expected in terms of engagement of Council outside of meetings. AIATSIS Council are currently exploring opportunities to contribute more in their role, for example engaging with government, seeking external funding opportunities or consulting with stakeholders.

The AIATSIS Council's rates of remuneration are closer to those of bodies that have non-statutory advisory roles, such as the Chair of the Indigenous Advisory Committee to the Minister of the Environment, but even they receive a higher daily rate of \$888.

Recommendation 20: The remuneration of both the Council Chair and Council members be raised to an appropriate level commensurate with other Australian Government statutory authorities.

2.10.2 RESOURCES REQUIRED TO CARRY OUT AIATSIS FUNCTIONS

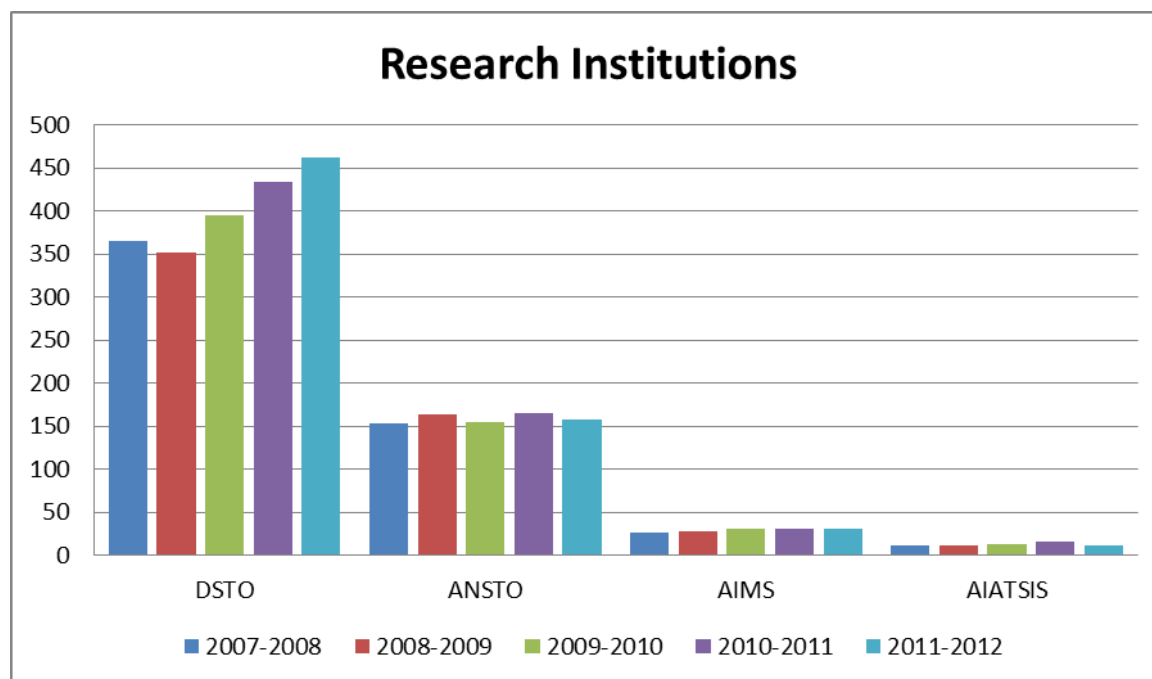
While some of the functions of AIATSIS are similar to functions undertaken in part by others, this submission, supported by a number of previous reviews, has revealed the continued need for a national research and cultural institution, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the focus of business, and can set standards, provide support and identify and fill gaps in understanding and practice.

AIATSIS has been regularly overlooked in investment decisions by government over decades such that we are now by far the worst funded publicly funded research agency or collecting Institution in the country. While overall investment has increased in research, cultural policy and Indigenous affairs over the last ten years AIATSIS has received no increase in its base appropriation resulting in a constant struggle to maintain critical additional funding for digitisation of materials in the collection. In 2011 AIATSIS was forced to access reserves to cover a lapse in funding that would have put vital cultural material at risk of being lost forever. AIATSIS has become dangerously reliant on external short term funding for core activities including language and native title research, family history support services and digitisation of materials. Such difficult circumstances have also placed collection access at risk.

AIATSIS is the only statutory research agency engaged in social science research and is vastly overshadowed by its larger science-focussed relatives. By contrast, for example, the CSIRO annual appropriation is 85 times

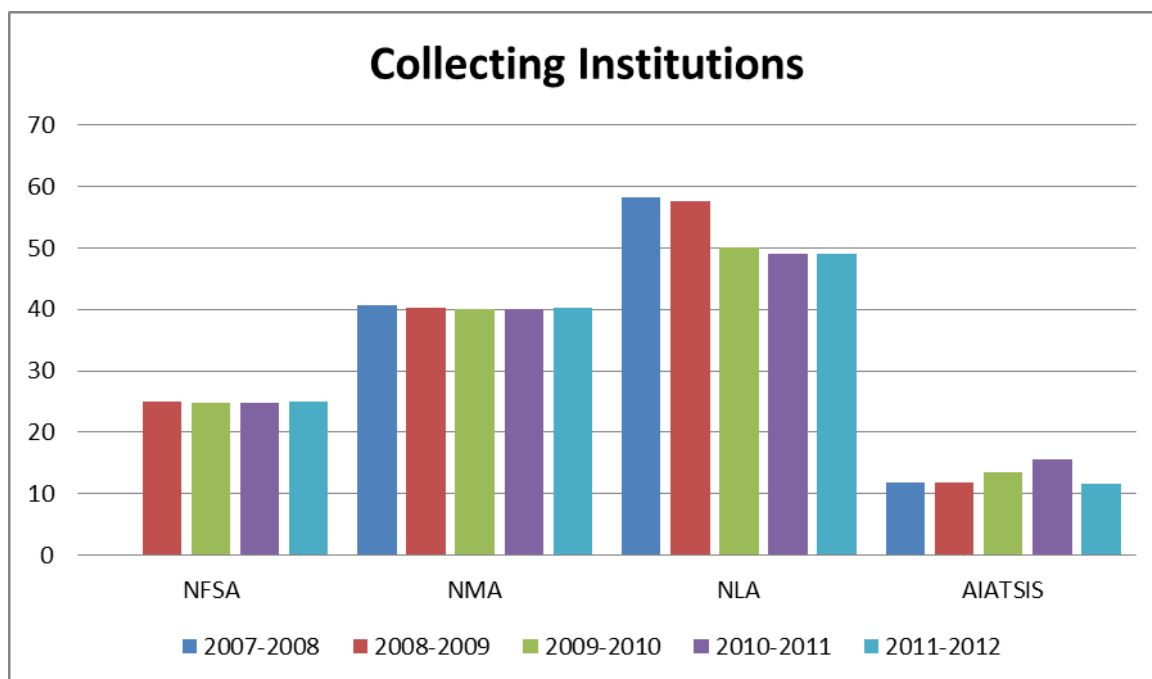
⁸ Fees and allowances for all statutory authorities are stipulated in Determination 2013/11: Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-Time Public Office in accordance with the *Remuneration Tribunal Act 1973*.

that of AIATSIS, while our nearest in size, AIMS, receives an appropriation almost three times as large.⁹ The 2011 review of PFRA and the Cutler review of the Innovation sector both recommended further investment in the PFRA system, and the Cutler Review particularly recommended the broadening and strengthening of the role of AIATSIS.¹⁰ Notably, AIATSIS was the only agency not to receive a funding boost in subsequent years. Similarly, in the cultural institutions context, our closest comparative organisation is the National Film and Sound Archive, who receive more than twice the total AIATSIS appropriation. This represents a vast disparity in investment in AIATSIS over a long period. This analysis also highlights that a failure to fully fund AIATSIS diminished its potential to fulfil its statutory functions.



⁹ Australian Government, Budget 2013-14, Portfolio Budget Statements: Innovation Industry Science Climate Change, Research and Tertiary Education: AIATSIS 13m (incl lapsing program); AIMS 33m; ANSTO 162m; CSIRO 757m. Available at <http://innovation.gov.au/AboutUs/Budget/Documents/PortfolioBudgetStatementsDIICCSRTE2013-14.pdf>

¹⁰ Department of Innovation industry science and Research, 2011, Focusing Australia's Publicly Funded Research Review: Maximising the Innovation Dividend - Review Key Findings and Future Directions, p.14; Terry Cutler. 2008. *Venturous Australia – Building Strength in Innovation: Review of the national innovation system (The Cutler Review)*. Rec. 7.13 (re the role of Publicly Funded Research Agencies and expanding the role of AIATSIS in particular). Available at <http://www.innovation.gov.au/Innovation/Policy/Pages/ReviewoftheNationalInnovationSystem.aspx> (accessed January 23, 2013).



AIA

AIATSIS has made every possible effort to restructure its internal structures, policies and processes in order to deliver its services more efficiently and effectively within our current resources and to diversify our funding base. While these efforts have been successful to some extent, AIATSIS is currently reliant on external ad hoc and short term funding for core research and collections services, including native title research and resources, language research and resources, family history services.

Owing to resource constraints, we cannot always meet the expectations of the university or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community sector. On the other hand, our potential to contribute to the nation's scholarship and to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples could be significantly enhanced if properly resourced.

The following investment plan outlines our planned expanded role and the estimated funds required. The result is a justifiable investment in AIATSIS that would treble our current total appropriation (and quadruple our base appropriation). AIATSIS would continue to leverage off these funds to gain external revenues through competitive grants programs, productive partnerships with government and industry and the development of innovative products that further our purpose.

Funding

AIATSIS' submission in its entirety is framed by serious resourcing issues. Insufficient resources over many years have impacted on AIATSIS' capacity to serve stakeholders. Services such as the family history unit have been limited to the Stolen Generations, and not the broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as it once was. Access to the collection has been hampered by sustained resourcing while the demands for materials from communities has continued to increase dramatically to the extent that it draws comment and criticism from communities.

AIATSIS has received departmental funding from a number of departments for specific activities, like the Indigenous Visiting Research Fellowships in recognition of its funding situation and the importance of its work to their own policy agenda.

It has received allocations through Federal Budgets in 2005-6 (\$12 million over four years) and 2011-12 (\$6.4 million over 3 years) to continue as a priority digitisation of the priceless audio-visual and print materials in its collection that face short timeframes before they disintegrate (eg analogue tapes, reel tapes and film and fragile print materials). Importantly, this work is needed to meet burgeoning demand for digital access, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and researchers. There is no budget for digitisation beyond June 2014.

It has not received increases to its appropriations, commensurate with other research agencies or cultural institutions. This is while there is ever increasing demands for services relating to the collection and research. This has needed to be a priority within AIATSIS because of its time-critical nature, which has further impacts across AIATSIS' activities.

It has not however, benefited from major funding packages. This includes the significant Australian Government expenditure provided for Closing the Gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage, even though the importance of culture and language to identity is clearly mentioned associated documents (cite web reference from COAG site). It did not benefit from funding associated with the Australian Government response, *Creative Australia*, though the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture's contribution to cultural life was central. Neither has it benefited from funding through the considerable expenditure to the higher education sector associated with the Review of the Higher Education Sector or the Innovation packages including the Australian Government response to *Venturous Australia – Building Strength in Innovation: Review of the national innovation system* (the Cutler Review) though both of these reviews made recommendations of the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge. Neither has it ever received direct funding through the National Collaborative Infrastructure Strategy.

AIATSIS' proposed investment plan is outlined in detail at **Attachment 1**.

Recommendation 21: AIATSIS operational base appropriation should be increased to \$46.3 million, commensurate with other Publicly Funded Research Agencies and Cultural Institutions, thus enabling AIATSIS to fulfil its functions in providing leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies.



Key Role	Requirement	Estimated cost
<p>Cultural precinct</p> <p>Reflective spaces</p> <p>A meeting place</p>	<p>A new First Peoples precinct in Canberra that is the symbol of Australia’s maturing nationhood and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It incorporates existing and new AIATSIS facilities. It includes exhibition space as well as comfortable, safe and reflective spaces, supported by high-tech knowledge management systems to explore Australia’s national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection. The building is able to accommodate large groups of visiting researchers, students, teachers and schoolchildren and host and impress frequent international dignitaries.</p> <p>A place in the nation’s capital for Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to meet and discuss matters of importance to them. International standard facilities for discussion, dialogue, and conferencing and Ceremonial space</p>	<p><i>Equity injection: building and infrastructure \$110 - \$120m.</i></p> <p><i>Maintenance, depreciation, suppliers \$8.2m</i></p>
<p>Archival capacity and infrastructure</p>	<p>AIATSIS collections are safe, accessible, valued, growing and sustainable. Additional space safely houses current collections with space for growth. AIATSIS has sufficient funds to digitise current and future at risk analogue collections. It has ongoing staff capacity for digital preservation and conservation, management and description, access and curation, with full opening hours and significantly reduced request times. ICT infrastructure supports the storage of digital collections, innovative delivery of online content and engagement of communities in crowdsourcing initiatives, establishing AIATSIS as a trusted repository</p> <p>A family history research service is available to all those seeking to explore their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage</p>	<p><i>Costs: \$11m</i></p>
<p>Incubator for Indigenous research workforce</p>	<p>AIATSIS remains an integral part of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers’ career, through grants, fellowships and visitors programs and through support for the emerging network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers. AIATSIS contributes significantly to the growth and productivity of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research workforce through employment and training programs.</p> <p>A revitalised AIATSIS Research Grants Program supports research by and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities</p>	<p><i>Cost: \$4.5m plus \$5m administered grants program</i></p>

<p>Research Centres and Network Hubs</p>	<p>Key research hubs across AIATSIS six Concentrations of Research Excellence partner, integrate and extend the reach and effectiveness of research from across academia, government and communities. Highly productive multidisciplinary research teams are led by six professorial fellowships and supported by a research development team, leveraging competitive research funds. AIATSIS has vibrant visitors programs and funds to invest in strategic research initiatives as they arise.</p> <p>AIATSIS continues to provide leadership and training on ethical Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research practice</p>	<p><i>Cost \$14m.</i></p>
<p>Raising the awareness of Australians to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures.</p> <p>Education</p>	<p>AIATSIS services are highly visible to all Australians no matter where they live, but especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through: community involvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language programs, regular return community outreach involving visits to return material, online delivery of world class materials in accessible curated formats, engaged members and volunteers supported by social media, a cutting edge publishing arm publishing the best in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research in multiple formats, products and resources for schools, and a calendar of cultural events, International and national conferences, and Public Lectures</p>	<p><i>Costs \$3.5m</i></p>
	<p>Equity Injection (approx. \$120m)</p> <p>Ongoing Appropriation (approx. \$46.3m)</p>	



RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

AIATSIS has re-energised its research program over the last five years to reinvest funds from the grants program into areas of research strength.

NATIVE TITLE AND TRADITIONAL OWNERSHIP

The Native Title Research Unit (NTRU) at AIATSIS was established in 1993 following the successful High Court decision in *Mabo v Queensland [No.2]* (1992) which recognised native title rights for the first time in Australian law.

The NTRU has been the leader in the field of native title research and publication for over twenty years and has continued to provide resources to the native title sector. AIATSIS is relied on to provide accurate and timely legal analysis of native title law to the native title sector, and provides advice directly to government on proposed reforms. The ongoing program is now worth over \$850,000 per annum and is testament to the value placed on AIATSIS contribution. AIATSIS actively engages its stakeholder network in setting priorities for a three year research plan and is overseen by a Native Title Advisory Committee established by the AIATSIS Council. AIATSIS also provided seed funding and has maintained a ten year partnership with University of Melbourne, through successive ARC grants, for the *Agreements, Treaties and Negotiated Settlements* Project, led by Professor Marcia Langton.

Over twenty years, critical themes have emerged around the legal requirements to prove native title, agreement making, decision-making and dispute resolution, governance, corporate design and taxation. Most recently, the NTRU has provided significant research and support to the emerging post-determination native title issues, including land and water management and climate change. Recent achievements include advice commissioned by the Treasury to explore native title taxation issues and support engagement with the sector, which led to the passing of beneficial legislation in June this year.

The annual National Native Title Conference is convened by AIATSIS in conjunction with a Native Title Representative Body and traditional owners of the land on which it is held. The Conference remains the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy conference in the country and is attended by native title holders and claimants, native title representative bodies, the Federal Court, National Native Title Tribunal, Commonwealth and State Government agencies, academics, consultants and industry representatives. The Conference attracts 700 delegates and over \$200,000 in sponsorship.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL EXPRESSION

AIATSIS has played the leading role in documenting and developing understanding of Australian Languages. Early work was largely descriptive and technical which has acted to preserve records of language speakers that may have otherwise been lost. Over the last decade, work has focused on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in language maintenance and revitalisation.

As a result AIATSIS has built the world's largest and most comprehensive body of material pertaining these uniquely Australian languages; holding over 40,000 hours of unique audio recordings and over 3,800 written

works documenting more than 200 languages. The collection was accepted into the Australian Memory of the World register in 2009, which is a register of significant documentary heritage maintained by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

AIATSIS has made a critical contribution in assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities preserve and revitalise their languages. Including through the development of dictionaries and conducting language workshops. The Austlang database for the discovery of language materials is an essential research tool and the two national surveys of Australian languages have been critical to policy development.

As the authors of the National Curriculum on Australian Languages, AIATSIS researchers are making important contributions to the teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in schools. AIATSIS has also contributed to the design of the National Framework for Translation and Interpreting in Indigenous Languages, working with the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

EDUCATION AND CULTURAL TRANSMISSION

AIATSIS education research over the past 10 years has focused on early year childhood and school transitions. Early work examining the transition of Aboriginal children from kindergarten through preschool and into year 1 identified risks and strategies to mitigate disassociation from school in later primary years. More recent work has focused on a strength based approach to building literacy. The Read with Me Every Day project received \$175,000 funding from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to engage members of Cowra's Koori community in order to build community capacity to support development of English literacy. The project exceeded the DEEWR target of engaging Cowra's Koori community members. Up to June 2012, 607 people had accessed the program.

AIATSIS researchers have also provided input to the national curriculum on physical education and have conducted significant work and published on bilingual education and language acquisition for non-English speaking students.

In the 1990s AIATSIS conducted a study of Indigenous leadership in education and devised an accredited Indigenous leadership course, which eventually became the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre (AILC). The AILC remains Australia's only national provider of accredited Indigenous leadership education programs and has transformed the lives of more than 1000 graduates, through culturally tailored education and training, since it was established in 2001. Since this time, leadership training and development has become a foundational building block for government priorities for closing the gap.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

While AIATSIS had, since its inception, supported research grants in the health and biological sciences, the social health research that AIATSIS currently undertakes in house began in the early 1980s with the establishment of the health research fellowship to enable the collection, synthesis and dissemination of information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. At that time AIATSIS was also commissioned by government to undertake a seminal study on the social and health impacts of uranium mining. During this period AIATSIS developed the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Clearinghouse, through the work of Dr David Thompson which went on to become the *Health infonet*, which is now the key web-based resource for health research.

AIATSIS also supported the establishment of the Lowitja Institute, providing accommodation and secretariat support in its formative years. AIATSIS remains an active partner, undertaking funded projects and securing joint research tenders and continues to provide secretariat services to the Chair.

AIATSIS has developed interventions and resources to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and health service providers to address high risk behaviours. The Grog Book, first published in 1998, a practical tool for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with ideas and strategies for managing alcohol, was written as an AIATSIS project. This focus on practical research continues with current work on screening tools for identifying risky drug and alcohol use. AIATSIS also has a strong background in justice health, sexual and reproductive health and mental health and wellbeing, including social and mental health impacts of the practices of child removal on the 'stolen generations'.

LAND AND WATER

AIATSIS has had a long tradition of developing understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' relationship with landscapes. Anthropological and archaeological work was central to the establishment of research priorities and opened new frontiers of academic knowledge. For example AIATSIS support of radiocarbon dating from the 1960s saw thousands of years added to Australia's human past.

In recent years, the research involving relationships with landscapes has developed to understand new challenges. AIATSIS has had a ten-year relationship with the peoples of the Murray and Lower Darling Rivers, beginning first with the exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights in relation to water management to include partnerships with the Murray Darling Basin Commission and various studies of Aboriginal values in water and experiences of ecological change and loss in the Murray River Basin and the Kimberley. Building on this and related native title research, AIATSIS provided advice and sector engagement with the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency to determine the treatment of native title in Carbon Farming legislation, which resulted in beneficial legislative provisions being incorporated into the Act. This was followed by a long term competitive research grant examining the role of native title holders in planning for climate change adaptation.

HALLMARKS OF AIATSIS RESEARCH:

- The NTRU provides a model around which AIATSIS aspires to build all of its centres, centrally located within a network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community stakeholders researchers and policy makers, conducting authoritative basic and applied research with significant positive impact.
- AIATSIS language work is an exemplar of the importance of collections based research across that can be actively engaged with by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and policy makers.
- AIATSIS education work illustrates the importance of research that is embedded in communities through long term engagement.
- AIATSIS health research illustrates the role AIATSIS has played, and can continue to play in sponsoring and launching new initiatives.
- AIATSIS land and water research is an example of the ability for AIATSIS to build on strengths to adapt to new and emerging issues, such as climate change.



CASE STUDY: LOOKING AT AIATSIS RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITIES AS A WHOLE

THE KIMBERLEY

AIATSIS has a strong and extended relationship with the traditional owners of the Kimberley, enabling the organisation to build relationships with communities and traditional owners who have supported our work. For example, the Native Title Research Unit has worked in the West Kimberley to support organisations established to manage native title lands under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth), Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs). The work of the NTRU has been focussed on building relationships between these native title organisations and state and federal governments. AIATSIS has entered in to two research partnerships with the Karajarri traditional owners over a period of nearly 10 years based on shared interest in understanding the institutional blockages to the protection and enjoyment of traditional owners' rights and interests. The second project was able to be approached as a joint application for competitive research funds available for climate change research. This project also included funding for a Karajarri researcher to work on the project. Another Karajarri researcher was also awarded a 4-month Indigenous Visiting Research Fellowship and published the resulting Discussion Paper through AIATSIS. These projects have also involved formal and informal relationships with University of Notre Dame and the Kimberley Land Council.

Further projects have also been developed from strong community relationships in the area including doctoral research on water management in the Canning Basin with the Karajarri, Nyikina and Mangala, Tjurabalan and Ngurrara traditional owners, a project undertaken with Yawuru traditional owners to assist in developing their Cultural Heritage Management Plan, a project on salt water country project examining cultural heritage values and tourism in Prince Regent River (Wanambul), Berkley River (Balangarra) and Horizontal Waterfalls (Talbot Bay) sites, a project on weeds management on native title lands and involvement in a one aspect of a broader project on Dampier Peninsula planning project. On a larger scale, the Upper Fitzroy Valley Sustainable Livelihoods project involved a partnership between AIATSIS, the Kimberley Land Council, Kimberley Development Commission, Environs Kimberley and the Australian Conservation Foundation. These relationships have been reinforced through regular contributions from Kimberley traditional owners and organisations to various AIATSIS conferences seminars and events.

AIATSIS' work in the Kimberley also contributes to building research capacity in communities that would not otherwise have access to funding, enabling traditional owners to present their own stories. The AIATSIS research grants program has also supported the *Kulpakurna jina walyjangka. Going back on our footprints - stories of Warnman-Manyjilyjarra families* project carried out by Sue Davenport that provided the original research for *Cleared Out: first contact in the Western Desert*, which describes the moment of contact using oral histories, detailed archival research, photographs and rare film footage. The book won the 2005 Western Australian Premier's Book Award and History Award. Another title which involved detailed research with individuals and communities, an understanding of what's important to them to be told to a wider audience and which required approval to publish is *Paddy's Road*. In that, Kevin Keeffe used family stories, interviews and government archives to explore Patrick Dodson's achievements as Australia's first Aboriginal Catholic priest, a land rights activist, Royal Commissioner and founder of Australia's reconciliation movement from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective.

AIATSIS has twice visited Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley region of Western Australia to return material to the community. Interactions regarding the collection included a visit to AIATSIS by the Gooniyandi and Walmajarri people from Western Australia's Kimberley communities in April 2011 and a large deposit of



materials. The area covers four major language groups and around 50 Aboriginal communities. The AIATSIS Family history Unit have recently signed a partnership agreement with the Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation to support our joint work with Link Up clients through AIATYSIS helpdesk services and case file training for KSGAC staff.

In the last ten years the AIATSIS Council have twice held their away Council meetings in the Kimberley (Fitzroy Crossing and Broome), which has provide an opportunity for Council to meet and Aboriginal organisations stakeholders and reinforce these links.



COMMENTS FROM USERS OF THE AIATSIS COLLECTION

"Thank you for making our visit to AIATSIS such a memorable and enjoyable experience."

"We would like to thank you very much for your generous assistance when we were researching our MacFarlane family history in Torres Strait"

"Thank you so much for your assistance. I was so excited I rang my mother and played the recording over the phone for her. Thanks to AIATSIS – it is a wonderful gift to hear the voice of our elders!!"

"Our client will be so grateful for what you have done so I thank you on her behalf, no doubt she will be one happy person when she finds out"

"Thank you for all of your support in getting me the resource that I need for future studies. I thought of you and wondered if by sending a picture of me will put a face to a person that exist in real terms and not only on emails"

"I am currently in Roebourne starting up our new improved digital archive system and have been working with our physical archivist. She showed me the copies of the audio recordings you sent to us in April 2011. Thank you very much for that. We are in the process of back loading all our material onto the new system and will be able to add this. I appreciate your assistance in getting this material to us. Hope to get back to AIATSIS one day to continue looking at your collection. Thank you for your kindness while we were there."

"Thank you so much, I am so excited (although emotional as well at the prospect of hearing my great Grandmother for the first time)"

"Thank you very much, the recording is going to be treasured by my family as I have heard my great Grandfather's voice for the first time"

"Thank you for your response to my request for ... files relating to my family. Me and my family are very excited about hearing our ancestors and past Elders. It is unbelievable"

"ROMTIC Program is fabulous!"

COMMENTS FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS, TORRES STRAIT COMMUNITY ACCESS, 2012

"It's enlightening as we need to understand where our history began because history is our foundation. We need to know where we come from"

"It really connects people with their past and when I was looking through the photos I thought how important in the past is how people shaped the Torres Strait where it is today. Without the past you cannot have the present."

**COMPARISON OF ROLE AND REMUNERATION OF AGENCIES**

Organisation	Type of agency/committee	Chair/members have powers under legislation	Remuneration rate Chair (\$)	Remuneration rate Member (\$)	Level of engagement	Responsibilities
AIATSIS Council	Statutory Agency CAC Act	Yes	698	621	Council meets quarterly	Council has extensive decision-making powers under its Act.
AIATSIS Research Advisory Committee	Statutory committee	Yes	-	434	Committee meets twice a year	Research Advisory Committee provides advice relating to research matters, membership and research grant applications
Publically funded research agencies						
Australian Institute of Marine Science	Statutory Agency CAC Act	Yes	\$41,490	\$21,240	Council meets quarterly	Council has extensive decision-making powers under its Act.
Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation	Statutory Agency CAC Act	Yes	\$41,490	\$21,240	-	Headed by a CEO under legislation
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation	Statutory Agency CAC Act	Yes	\$108,310	\$54,180	The Board meets formally every second month	Board has extensive decision-making powers under its Act.
Australian Curriculum Accreditation and Registration Authority	Authority under CAC Act	Yes	93,210	925	Council meets quarterly	Board has extensive decision-making powers under its Act.



Organisation	Type of agency/committee	Chair/members have powers under legislation	Remuneration rate Chair (\$)	Remuneration rate Member (\$)	Level of engagement	Responsibilities
Australian Research Council	Authority under CAC Act	Yes	41,490	21,240	Council meets quarterly	Council has extensive decision-making powers under its Act.
Cultural Institutions						
National Library Council	Statutory Agency CAC Act	Yes	30,080	15,060	Council meets 3 time a year	Council has extensive decision-making powers under its Act.
National Film and Sound Archives	Statutory Agency CAC Act	Yes	922	698	-	Board has extensive decision-making powers under its Act.
National Archives Advisory Council	Advisory Council	Yes	698	621	-	The Council provides advice to the Minister and Director-General to which the functions of the Archive relate. The Director-General seems to have broader powers under its act.
Australia Council	Authority under CAC Act	Yes	52,600	15,060	Last year the Board meet 7 times	Council has extensive decision-making powers under its Act.
National Capital Authority	Statutory Agency		52,600	21,240	Authority meets 6 times a year	Headed by a CEO under legislation

Organisation	Type of agency/committee	Chair/members have powers under legislation	Remuneration rate Chair (\$)	Remuneration rate Member (\$)	Level of engagement	Responsibilities
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies						
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	Authority under CAC Act	Yes	63,250	34,300	Last year the Board meet 7 times	Board has extensive decision-making powers under its Act.
Indigenous Land Corporation	Authority under CAC Act	Yes	63,250	34,300	Last year the Board meet 6 times	Board has extensive decision-making powers under its Act.
Indigenous Business Australia	Authority under CAC Act	Yes	63,250	34,300	-	Board has extensive decision-making powers under its Act.
Non-Statutory committees						
NHMRC – Australian Health Ethics Committee	Advisory committee	Yes	59,060	-	-	Advises Council and Minister under its Act.
Co-operative Research Centres Committee	Advisory committee	No	1,117	922	Committee meets twice a year	Committee appointed by Minister to provide advice in relation to the activities of Cooperative Research Centres
Indigenous Advisory Committee, PM&C	Advisory committee	No	818	621	The Board meets twice a year	Comprises Secretaries of Australian Government agencies. No legislative power.



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