05 September 2011

Maratja Dhamarandji
[redacted]

Committee Secretary
House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

RE: Submission to the Inquiry into Language Learning in Indigenous Communities

Dear Committee,

Please accept the video submission from Maratja Dhamarrandji. It can be found on the unlisted website: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ub7QbHOe3A

Maratja Dhamarrandji belongs to the Yolŋu people of East Arnhem Land and he is a high standing community member of Galiwinku. Currently Maratja is the chairperson of Aboriginal Resource and Development Service, the Area Resource Worker for the Northern Regional Christian Congress and he is a member of the NT Government Indigenous Affairs Advisory Council. He was also a member of the Djambarrpuyŋu bible translation team and is an interpreter.

In Yolŋu society Maratja is considered a Liya-ŋärramirr man for his Djambarrpuyŋu tribe. This means that he is considered to be an up and coming leader with a mind for the Djambarrpuyŋu Ðärra parliament (I.E he has good discernment and judgement in law).

Maratja is a true Multilingual and bicultural individual and was educated as a child during years of a successful bilingual program in Galiwinku. He has also built on this capacity by working in multilingual workspaces, including Aboriginal Resources and Development Service, which specialises in concept education using 1st language.

In Maratja's video submission he uses his personal experience to highlight that 1st language educational engagement and instruction is crucial for learning meanings, concepts and ideas from a foreign culture (I.E Mainstream Australia). The alternative is to rote-learn, but not comprehend. This argument is aimed at focus points 1-4 and 6.

The submission was filmed without rehearsal and represents Maratja's primary thinking on the issue.

Maratja is happy to provide further information as the committee requires.

Sunrise Alliance is a Galiwinku based community development not for profit association.

Yours sincerely,
Kendall Trudgen
Coordinator
Sunrise Alliance Inc.

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