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Aboriginal Languages Group

**Response to House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
Inquiry into language learning in Indigenous communities
By Eastern State Aboriginal Languages Group
August 2011**

It is the belief of the members of the Eastern States Aboriginal Languages Group that connection through language is at the core of our cultural identity. That from the point of reconnection to that which has been lost, people can begin to heal the wounds that bleed us of our collective strength, our sense of self worth and our rightful place in the community.

Eastern States Aboriginal Languages Group – background.

The Eastern States Aboriginal Languages Group was established in 2008 to identify and address issues which are common to Eastern Australian Aboriginal Language communities. Through observing the efforts of communities working in language reclamation and revitalisation around Australia over the past 20 years, it became apparent that a different set of needs have emerged for Aboriginal communities in those parts of Australia which were the earliest and most heavily colonised.

ESALG members took a key role in meeting with Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin to put the case for the National Indigenous Languages Policy to be announced in 2009.

This group is looking at ways to support community language programs, and to set priorities for the effective use of the resources available and the engagement of a wide range of organisations to support the shared goals.

The work of ESALG includes coordinating consultation between Government and non Government departments and key Indigenous organisations, for the benefit of the many individual language programs with whom we have contact. In this role, we speak with our colleagues in the community language programs, and work to identify the issues that are of most concern for them in developing and sustaining their programs.

The benefits of giving attention and recognition to Indigenous languages The contribution to Closing the Gap and strengthening identity and culture.

Learning language re-enforces the idea that you are different and that the difference matters and is IMPORTANT for Australia's knowledge of itself. Language is a declaration of identity and pride. When communities engage with language they also recall and reclaim great slabs of culture they thought were lost. The knowledge of language in the home encourages kids that their identity is important and has an intellectual foundation rather than identifying with the too often available negatives.

Those working with young Aborigines in the prison system report the belief that many of the problems of these young people stem from the sense that their lives don't matter and that their race is a burden. Language acquisition can re-engage young prisoners with their culture and as they find in the language a source of wisdom and solid values. This is not just feel-good whimsy about 'innate ecologists or noble savages', but deep knowledge of a cultured race who prided themselves on effective and judicious governance and a spirituality, where the care of the country was foremost. Learning language tells you immediately of the profound connection between people and country and how that insisted on conservative use of resources.



Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

The potential benefits of including Indigenous languages in early education and measures to improve education outcomes in those communities where English is a second language.

- Language is a key factor influencing the educational challenges facing many Indigenous children. Quite simply, if we ignore the fact that children are not being offered the connection between the spoken language of their home with a set of matching resources in preschool and early school years, we are condemning them to a life of severe educational disadvantage.
- If we present a small child with resources and instruction in a language with which they are not familiar, we are compounding the confusion to a degree that only the most outstanding learner can overcome.
- Children need to have resources available which support them to learn to read in the language they use at home, if they are to achieve at a comparable rate to English speaking primary students. To ignore this point is to continue to compound the problems faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in remote areas. From day one, these children are 'set up to fail' at school.
- Early teaching of Indigenous languages offers a gateway to improved engagement with and benefits from mainstream education. It needs to be done through the implementation of well resourced and supported Indigenous language teaching programs. These programs are developed and implemented through Indigenous communities.
- The evidence is significant and mounting that Indigenous and minority cultural groups are severely disadvantaged by mainstream teaching practices and curriculum. Evidence also exists to show that Indigenous students in particular can succeed in mainstream as long as their culture is actively promoted and that language and culture are embedded in the curriculum.

The educational and vocational benefits of ensuring English language competency amongst Indigenous communities.

The improvement in English competency outcomes for Indigenous children cannot be achieved without firstly ensuring that the child and the family are engaged with and in the education system. As with all effective communication, this requires that basic steps are taken to connect in ways that the child and the family understand. Education must make the student and family feel comfortable with the style of communication and importantly should not make a child choose between the family and the schooling system.

Extensive research, noted in the list attached with this submission, supports the knowledge that effective early childhood education in the mother – tongue of the student contributes significantly to strong outcomes in all learning areas, including English. Similarly the research supports the value of any form of multi-lingualism for improved learning achievements.

The reported failure of bi-lingual programs in Australia has however overlooked the method of delivery of those programs in making recommendations for their closure. Any program which is from the outset poorly delivered and resourced will produced poor outcomes. In the case of bi-lingual teaching programs, this situation was wrongly used as a case against the effectiveness of traditional language learning as a means of supporting the development of English language competency.



Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

The effectiveness of current maintenance and revitalization programs for Indigenous languages

The effectiveness of current language programs is severely hampered by lack of adequate funding. Lack of funding means that only a very small number of people in Australia actually can afford the time and effort to run a local language program. Only a small number of people can help to establish the consultations and teaching support necessary to see language programs started and maintained in schools. Only a small number of people can record the words of their Elders in the precious weeks and months left before they are gone.

There need to be career pathways for people involved in Language employment. Language positions cannot be supported simply as an adjunct to cultural projects, but need to be given respect and prominence as the core field of heritage preservation. If not addressed now it will certainly be reflected on with great regret in the future.

Inadequate funding means that language programs run on very short term (and mostly) annual grant funding. What this means in terms of job security and development of career pathways is that the field is continually held back, without the ability to lure bright and interested youth to engage with community language programs as a viable means for long-term future employment.

The existing community language programs contribute in many ways to the strength of the communities involved. These benefits include:

Intergenerational connection and strengthening of cultural bonds, capacity building and employment opportunities within the community, developing arts and cultural projects and as previously stated, a raft of positive educational outcomes.

Below is a summary of what we hear from many people working in the language programs. We believe that it may be of value to this inquiry to consider these issues.

This is a list of issues concerning Indigenous language centres and project teams:

- **Funding and staffing of language programs.**
- **Dealing with major collecting institutions**
- **Training: Aboriginal Language teachers career pathways and payscales.**
- **Dealing with Departments of Education.**
- **Resources: Development and copyright**
- **Connection and promotion of language projects.**
- **The need for state based language centres.**



Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

Funding and Staffing

- There is a commitment by language centres to want to engage new communities and support them in taking up new projects. However this is limited by the amount of funding available and causes major concerns in relation to reducing funding to currently supported programs in order to help others take up language work.
- Funding for training language centre staff is an issue for the small work teams in language centres.
- Skills shortages for the work to be done in the language centres, which can include submission writing and dealing with Government procedures and reporting requirements.
- Non recognition of community based knowledge and skills bank. It is problematic that International Endangered Languages Funding and other key organisations require that projects are undertaken by person with Ph.D. or similar academic qualifications.

Collecting institutions

- Community members feel a sense of disconnection from the collecting institutions in which much of their historical language information is held.
- Lack of staff within these institutions to support community in research ventures
- Isolation and the difficulty of reaching capital cities to access major libraries.
- A need for regional distribution points for language materials
- Connecting with local libraries
- ESALG is working on a National Framework for Indigenous Languages Collections. *The draft document is attached as Appendix B.*

Training

- There currently exist the following levels of training for Indigenous Language teachers and project workers.
 - Degree
 - Advanced Diploma
 - Diploma
 - Certificates 1 – 4.
- There is a need to establish pathways for training for high school students.
- This has been done already for students wishing to become Environment Officers/ Rangers.
- There is a need for program development for the following:
 - Traineeships
 - Apprenticeship
 - School based training such as available for conservation and land management.



Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

This could be achieved by:

- researching the positions available
- Identifying the roles/skills needed
- Developing appropriate training.

I.e. look at the jobs available and work backwards to develop the training.

Using this approach, a training program can be broadened to include a range of skills appropriate to arts, culture, education, languages, and then offer elective subject areas for specialist skills development.

Pay Scales and Career Pathways.

There is an urgent need for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language teachers. Points to consider:

- Accreditation for prior knowledge
- Encouraging professional development
- Language centres could access University and Higher learning institutes' ethics committees to educate Indigenous teaching students about language. VACL doing this in Victoria.
- Instigating mandatory community based professional development in language studies. Delivered through language centres to all primary teachers and languages teachers in high school.
- Review the relevant awards.

Education Departments.

- An issue which needs to be addressed is ownership of copyright of printed resources, which have been produced through the physical resources of Dept. of Education facilities.
- Departments need to understand and respect community control of language teaching.

Resources.

- If language teaching is to progress there is an urgent need for injection of funds into the development of resources. Obvious issues here are the vast number of different languages to be resourced, the different levels of language strength between regions, the individual preferences for teaching being adopted by the communities, and the degree to which the primary research has been completed to provide basic material for resources.
- There is a need to recognise and encourage the benefits of sharing resources between centres to avoid 'reinventing the wheel' and to stimulate the development of new materials.
- A need to support information sharing for the same reasons as well as to help overcome issues that arise due to the isolated nature of the work.
- Need to look to the long term establishment of a library for Indigenous Language resources.



Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

Connection between centres: Promotion and raising awareness

- Need to raise awareness about language documentation so that even more communities are involved.
- A need for all language centres to be able to establish their own websites.
- Look to establishing partnerships with organisations such as
 - Natural Resources and Land Management
 - The National Land and Sea Conference.
 - Native Title bodies.

The need for State based language centres

To help address a number of the issues listed above, the funding and resourcing of state based language centres has been considered by some to be an effective method of utilising high cost services and skills, for use on a needs basis by regional programs.

These services could include, linguist skills, administrative support, publication and resource preparation, mobile language teams, recording, negotiation with Government agencies, training and skills development.

The effectiveness of the Commonwealth Government Indigenous Languages Policy.

The National Policy appears to have prompted increased interest in Indigenous languages around the country. This is particularly highlighted by the increase in action by Education departments in (Queensland and Victoria) moving towards offering inclusion of Indigenous languages studies in schools state wide.

A whole of government approach to support the National Indigenous Languages Policy now needs to be adopted. This approach will help overcome current problems with inter-departmental policy coordination; improve needs assessments for allocating existing funding and identify priorities for future funding opportunities.

The whole of Government support for the Policy will establish Indigenous languages as a priority area for funding in government programs across a range of relevant portfolios.

It will provide support for the states and territories in the development of statewide language policies and indigenous language curricula in schools.

The National Indigenous Languages Policy if fully supported and implemented across Government offers the potential to deliver strong outcomes in the following ways:

- In places where Indigenous language services are available they have been found to be vital to the effective delivery of educational, health and social services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and in the strengthening of cultural identification within communities. Languages are a key to unlocking Indigenous disadvantage.



Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

- World-wide, starting children's formal education by teaching in their mother-tongue, if properly implemented, has been shown to be an effective route to the dominant language and education more generally. Indeed, it has been endorsed by UNESCO as the most effective educational strategy for all children, and much research has been carried out confirming this. (ALAA 2009)
- Language education and promotion is proving vital to the establishment of positive identity for Indigenous youth. This in turn relates to education and employment, and results in improved social dividends.
- The due recognition of the importance of Indigenous languages is essential for the preservation of cultural heritage, and an integral step in the process of reconciliation.
- The maintenance of our languages will be encouraged through a concerted effort of promotion to the broader community, through increased support for established programs and a dramatic increase in the recognition given to its role by Government policy makers.
- Recognising the potential for positive economic and employment outcomes through the teaching and use of languages, particularly in the areas of tourism, travel, education and health.
- Science and sustainability - Australian indigenous languages carry with them an intimate understanding of the ecological systems and the land from which they came. Preserving these languages protects knowledge of species, behaviours, habitats, climatic patterns and sustainability practices.

With the right mix of community involvement, coordinated government support and innovative policy development, Indigenous Australians can maintain and reclaim their languages and with them a wealth of cultural and ecological knowledge of value to all Australians.

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Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

Appendix A.

List of articles and reference materials of relevance to the Inquiry into Language Learning in Indigenous Communities.

List compiled by Eastern States Aboriginal Languages Group 2011

The benefits of giving attention and recognition to Indigenous languages

Speaking one's mother tongue is vital

Noel Pearson, The Australian, May 21, 2011 12:00AM

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/commentary/speaking-ones-mother-tongue-is-vital/story-e6frgd0x-1226059932608>

Bread vs Freedom: Treaty and stabilising Indigenous Languages. Lester-Irabinna Rigney.

www.treatynow.org/docs/Rigney.doc

The first is what I call the 'Bread' verses 'Freedom' debate in relation to treaty. The second is the urgency to stabilise Indigenous languages and its ...

Recognition Rights and Reform - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages (AUSTLII)

Part of Reconciliation and Social Justice Library[29/11/1998]

Economic Costs and Benefits of Australian Indigenous Languages : Discussion Paper. Mühlhäusler, Peter Damania, Richard (AIATSIS)

<http://www.arts.gov.au/indigenous/MILR/publications>

Language and Culture in Aboriginal Australia. Michael WALSH and Colin YALLOP (eds). AIATSIS. 2005, 1993.

Aboriginal Languages: Why The Struggle To Keep Them Alive? - Lingua Franca - 24 January 2004

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2004/1008591.htm>'As each language dies, science loses one more precious source of data, one more of the diverse and unique ways that the human mind can express itself through a language's structure and vocabulary.'

From the lips of children - Lingua Franca - 17 October 2009 -

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2009/2714000.htm>

Whereas the mission stations set up for the settlement of Australian Aborigines typically resulted in the loss of Indigenous languages, it seems that last century the children living at the Mt Margaret mission in south-central Australia

Call for a national Indigenous languages policy - Lingua Franca - 8 November 2008

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2008/2410952.htm>

Despite Australian Indigenous languages being among the most endangered in the world, their use in education facilities is becoming evermore restricted, with the focus instead on schools providing better English-language skills to Indigenous



Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

Place and time - Lingua Franca - 11 September 2010 -

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2010/3007980.htm>

People don't necessarily refer to where things are as being in front of or behind them, or to their left or right but can, instead, use the cardinal points of east/west/north and south to describe spatial relations. And this has a knock-on effect on

Saying 'sorry' and being sorry - Lingua Franca - 27 December 2008

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2008/2455289.htm>

The word, 'sorry', has different meanings in Australian English and Aboriginal English. So what did Prime Minister Rudd's historic apology actually signify for the Indigenous Australians to whom it was offered?

Senator Aden Ridgeway (Aden Ridgeway/FATSIL) Interview with Senator Aden Ridgeway, a Gumbaynggir man from northern NSW, and senior parliamentarian for the Australian Democrats. [02/01/2003]

State of Indigenous Languages in Australia - 2001 (P McConvell and N Thieberger/Department of the Environment and Heritage)

Australia State of the Environment Technical Paper Series (Natural and Cultural Heritage), Series 2, 2001. Study with case studies, charts, maps etc. [15/05/2005]

Strangers at home. Lingua Franca - 10 January 2009

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2009/2462018.htm> - 10 Jan 2009

The Miles Franklin Award-winning writer, Kim Scott, describes his non-verbal sense of self and heritage, growing up without knowing Noongar, his ancestral Indigenous language.

The Value of Our Imperilled Native Tongues - 11 Mar 2007, Noel Pearson.

www.valuesineducation.org.au/pdf/pearson070310.pdf

The Value of Our Imperilled Native Tongues. Noel Pearson. In 1973, a linguist doing field work on Aboriginal Australian languages realised ...

The legacy of lost languages Australia's greatest tragedy?. David Ashkanasy. Queensland Independent, 1 October 2003

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING THE MOTHER TONGUE IN AN ADOPTED COUNTRY ...

www.valuesineducation.org.au/pdf/senadeera061210.pdf Similar

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING THE MOTHER TONGUE IN AN. ADOPTED COUNTRY. BY SHANTI SENADEERA. INTRODUCTION. It is through language that we develop our thoughts...

Living hard, dying young in the Kimberley

Nicolas Rothwell, The Australian, April 30, 2011 12:00AM

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/living-hard-dying-young-in-the-kimberley/story-fn59niix-1226046773687>

Community before culture

Verity Edwards, The Australian, August 02,

2006 <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/community-before-culture/story-e6frgcs6-1111112145310>



Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

The contribution of Indigenous languages to Closing the Gap and strengthening Indigenous identity and culture

Living Black article: Aboriginal Languages To Help Close The Gap

<http://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/aboriginal/highlight/page/id/172271/t/Aboriginal-Languages-To-Help-Close-The-Gap>

Building the Tools: toward the integrated protection of indigenous languages and Knowledge as part of indigenous heritage (Luisa Maffi)

Terralingua Discussion Paper #14. Starts from the developing recognition of human and cultural rights and argues that this should also be extended to linguistic heritage. [04/02/2007]

<http://www.terralingua.org/DiscPapers/DiscPaper14.htm>

Building Stronger Communities: Indigenous Australian Rights In Education and Language (Lester Irabinna Rigney/FATSIL)

A submission delivered to the UN Commission on Human Rights, describing the officially unacknowledged status of Aboriginal languages. [02/01/2003]

<http://www.fatsil.org/papers/research/rigney-1.htm>

Culture and Heritage: Indigenous Languages (Department of the Environment and Heritage (authors John Henderson and David Nash))

Australia: State of the Environment Technical Paper Series (Natural and Cultural Heritage), Series 1 Language allows the expression and transmission of knowledge within and across generations. This paper (a downloadable PDF) surveys the state of Australia's indigenous languages up to January 1995. Many languages now have only a handful of elderly speakers, and almost all of the traditional languages currently spoken could be gone within a generation. [23/10/2004]

<http://www.deh.gov.au/soe/techpapers/series1/indigeno.html>

The perilous state of Indigenous languages in Australia. Chapter 3. HREOC Social Justice Report 2009

The potential benefits of including Indigenous languages in early education

Indigenous Literacy - Life Matters - 25 July 2011

Summary: Only one in five children living in a remote indigenous community in the Northern Territory can read at the basic minimum standard, and this has lasting ramifications on their future education.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2011/3275676.htm>

Indigenous language education - Life Matters - 14 February 2011

Summary: The importance of bilingual education in remote Indigenous schools has become more evident since the Northern Territory government ruled that classes should be in English for the first four hours of each day.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2011/3136565.htm>

Learning Indigenous languages - Life Matters - 19 January 2009

Summary: There were once 250 separate Indigenous languages spoken in Australia.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2009/2438628.htm>



Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

ABC Message Stick: WAYS OF BEING, WAYS OF TALK. Directed by Michelle White
Sunday 13 October @ 1:30 PM

A half hour documentary about recognising and respecting Aboriginal English. The way we speak English is a distinct part of culture and identity. It's been shaped by our history, put simply, we speak the way we do because of what we've been through. It's a marker of who we are as a people.

The Need for Community Consultation to assist in the Development of Aboriginal Language Programs in schools: A Draft Discussion Paper (Kevin Lowe/FATSIL)
Examines issues raised during the development of Aboriginal language programs in NSW schools. Kevin Lowe is Chief Education Officer with the Aboriginal Curriculum Unit, Office of the Board of Studies NSW. [02/01/2003] <http://www.fatsil.org/papers/research/lowe-1.htm>

Aboriginal languages (DETE SA (Languages and Multicultural Resource Centre))
South Australian school-based Indigenous language programs - description of schools, programs, and languages, other resources. [29/01/2003]

Ilakardi thawarla ini, Your Majesty (FATSIL)
Queen Elizabeth included a visit to the Muda Aboriginal Corporation in Bourke on her Australian tour. Here, she spoke at the Yandruwandha Language Program, run by Greg McKellar. [02/01/2003] <http://www.fatsil.org/VOTL/Articles/15-1.htm>

Indigenous language programs in South Australian schools: issues, dilemmas, and solutions (Rob Amery/NSW Board of Studies)
Report on Indigenous language education (its history and current state) in SA schools, with regard to establishing similar language programs in NSW [PDF 20pp]. [29/01/2003]

Indigenous Languages and Culture Report (Northern Territory Government, Department of Employment, Education and Training)
Indigenous Languages and Culture in Northern Territory Schools, 2004-5. Report outlining response to the Collins report, describing the "imperative set by the NT Government to have an increased focus on Indigenous languages and culture programs in ... schools and put bilingual education back on the agenda"&quo;. [04/02/2007]

Marjorie Petrick (Marjorie Petrick/FATSIL) From Voice of our Land
Arrernte woman Marjorie Petrick is pioneering the use of Braille to read and write the Arrernte language, supported by the Centre for Australian Languages and Linguistics unit at Batchelor Institute. [02/01/2003]

A Matter of Survival - Teacher Training (AUSTLII)
Teacher training, the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and the maintenance of their first language (part of the Reconciliation and Social Justice Library). [14/01/1998]

Owning language: Copyright, ethics and the development of Aboriginal language programs (Kevin Lowe, New South Wales Board of Studies)



Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

Paper about the interaction between schools and communities, in regard to establishing language programs. Includes discussion about ownership and controls that Aboriginal communities seek over their languages. See also the abstract, which notes the author details. [30/10/2004]
<http://www.aare.edu.au/01pap/low01352.htm>

Primary and secondary activity, languages:Teacher's note. (National Indigenous Times)
Teachers' notes and resources for less in awareness raising about Australian languages.
[12/02/2007] http://www.nit.com.au/downloads/files/Download_23.pdf

Walgett Languages (St Josephs School, Walgett/ABC)
ABC Video showing the revitalisation of Yuwaalaraay/Gamilaraay in Walgett, with interviews with the late Uncle Ted Fields, Karen Flick, "JB" John Brown, and John Giacon. [10/02/2007]

Aboriginal Child Language Acquisition Project (Patrick McConvell, Jane Simpson, Gillian Wigglesworth)
Research following 5-10 children and their families in 3 communities from 2004-2007, to study the language input children receive in multilingual environments. Languages include Gurindji, Kriol, Walmajarri, Warlpiri and Warramungu. [12/02/2007]
<http://www.linguistics.unimelb.edu.au/research/projects/ACLA/index.html>

Aboriginal Child Language Acquisition Project (AIATSIS, University of Melbourne, University of Sydney). Australian Research Council

Learning Walmajarri - Lingua Franca - 19/6/1999:
How a CD-ROM is helping Aboriginal children in the Kimberley to learn their heritage language as they listen to and read illustrated stories and individual words in Walmajarri and English
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/ling/stories/s32610.htm> - 19 Jun 1999

Measures to improve education outcomes in those Indigenous communities where English is a second language

Bilingual Education Cuts (NT) (various)
Selection of resources created after the NT Government announced that Bilingual Education Programmes would be axed in 1999. [18/07/2000] <http://www.dnathan.com/VL/alert.htm>

Learning Lessons Implementation Steering Committee (Northern Territory Government)
This committee was established to advise the government on the implementation of the controversial "Learning lessons" review. [04/02/2007]

A matter of survival - bilingual education (AUSTLII)
From the Commonwealth's Reconciliation and Social Justice Library: "..There are sound educational reasons for establishing literacy in the child's first language before developing literacy in English.." [15/07/2000]

Utulu Kutjungku Nintini: Teaching in one group (FATSIL)
Bilingual education at Areyonga (Utju), NT. [02/01/2003]



Eastern States Aboriginal Languages Group

Gaps in Australia's Indigenous Language Policy: Dismantling bilingual education in the Northern Territory

Jane Simpson, Jo Caffery, and Patrick McConvell
AIATSIS Discussion Paper Number 24

"English as a Second Language, Aboriginal Englishes" (AATE, Monash University)
Position Paper from AATE (The Australian Association for the Teaching of English Inc.)

Lingua Franca - 20 February 1999 ; - Bi-Lingual Education Programs in Aboriginal Schools...
Summary: Why the Northern Territory Government should retain bi-lingual education programs in Aboriginal schools. Federally-funded bi-lingual programs were
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/1999/685319.htm> - 22k - [html] - 20 Feb 1999

CLOSING THE GAP - Education Strategy. Dept of Education & Training (DET), Queensland
In response to the targets set through the National Indigenous Reform Agenda – otherwise known as Closing the Gap – Queensland's Department of Education and Training has produced its Closing the Gap Education Strategy. This document outlines how DET (Qld) will meet the Closing the Gap targets agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

The DET (Qld) Closing the Gap Education Strategy includes English as a Second Language as a component of the evidence base (p. 8) for a priority area:-

Priority area: Indigenous students who have English as a Second Language - professional development for teachers

"ESL learners are those learners who have Standard Australian English as their second language and hence are unable – to varying degrees – to access the curriculum in Queensland state schools where the language of instruction is English. Teachers working with Indigenous students need to understand second language acquisition, as well as being aware of, acknowledging, accepting and valuing the use of home languages."

Department of Education & Training (Qld) Closing the Gap. Education Strategy. Queensland Government. p.30

<http://www.learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=31201>

The educational and vocational benefits of ensuring English language competency amongst Indigenous communities

First complete Bible translation in an indigenous language - The Religion Report - 2 May 2007 -
The first complete translation of the Bible into an Australian indigenous language - Kriol - spoken by around 30,000 indigenous Australians
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/religionreport/stories/2007/1911894.htm>

Early language and reading skills in indigenous children in Australia - Ockham's Razor - 24 January 2010 -

Professor Margot Prior from the Department of Psychology at the University of Melbourne has been working in Aboriginal child health for over 10 years. In this program she talks about the terrible state of literacy in Aboriginal children and some of
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/ockhamsrazor/stories/2010/2770796.htm>



Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

Measures to improve Indigenous language interpreting and translating services

Aboriginal English in the Courts (Queensland Government)

Extensive handbook on communication issues for speakers of Aboriginal English in courts [PDF 35pp] [15/05/2005] <http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/courts/pdfs/handbook.pdf>

Interpreters in the courtroom - The Law Report - 16 September 2008

We look at the role of interpreters in the courtroom. If they get it wrong the consequences can be enormous. An innocent accused might be found guilty, or a criminal might escape conviction. <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lawreport/stories/2008/2364837.htm>

Dictionary of anatomy - Lingua Franca - 18 September 2010

Summary: The first-ever bilingual dictionary of anatomy between English and an Australian Aboriginal language, Djambarrpuy, has been published as a necessary resource in communicating health care in the Northern Territory. <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2010/3013596.htm>

Aboriginal evidence in Bowraville murder trial - Lingua Franca - 11 December 2010 -

Summary: What happens, in linguistical terms, when Aboriginal people are negotiating legal interviews in court or in encounters with members of the police force or, actually just generally in communication with non-Aboriginal people, is a cultural clash that <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2010/3090442.htm>

Indigenous Literacy Day- Lingua Franca - 30 August 2008

On Indigenous Literacy Day, 3 September this year, Australian booksellers and publishers, writers, libraries and schools will join together to raise awareness and resources to promote literacy in English in remote Indigenous communities. <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2008/2350003.htm>

The effectiveness of current maintenance and revitalisation programs for Indigenous languages

FATSIL Voice of the Land. Issues 1 to 33. The Language of the Month articles provide an overview of language programs around the country. Further articles in each issue will be relevant to other of the terms of reference of this enquiry.

Reviving Indigenous languages - Life Matters - 19 July 2011

Summary: More than 100 Aboriginal languages are critically in danger of disappearing unless more effort is put into reviving them. <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2011/3272073.htm>

Holding our tongues - Away! - 2 January 2010 -

We often think that the 'tides of history' have washed away most of the languages in south eastern Australia. But Aboriginal people say those languages are not dead, just sleeping. We hear the stories of three different Aboriginal nations whose <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/awaye/stories/2010/2758510.htm>



Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

Street stories my language my culture

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2005/1449166.htm>

Aboriginal language resurrected in South Australia (ABC)

Transcript of article about Kurna "being spoken as a result of a joint effort by black and white Australians to revive what had been considered by many to be a dead language" [ABC 7.30 Report 28/02/01]. [23/09/2001] <http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/stories/s252923.htm>

Bibliography on Language Endangerment (Tasaku Tsunoda)

Deals with many topics on language endangerment, revival, policy, and social and ethical issues. [01/12/2003]

Language revitalization: revival of Warrungu (Australia) and maintenance of Maori (New Zealand) (Tasaku Tsunoda)

A short report of Professor Tsunoda's experience in the preservation and revival of the Warrungu language of the Upper Herbert River area of north Queensland. [24/04/2002]

<http://www.sgu.ac.jp/com/ksasaki/kaken/essay/essay-tsn.htm>

The Spoken Word: Keeping the Aboriginal Language Strong (Christobel Swann)

Christobel Swann is a Conservationist who works as an Aboriginal Linguist in Alice Springs. She gives a personal and community perspective on the state of languages, especially her own, southern Arrernte. [15/07/2000] <http://www.bri.net.au/spokenword.html>

The Tjapukai Language (Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park)

Describes efforts to relearn the Tjapukai language, beginning in 1987. Since then, the language has experienced a revival [16/08/1999] <http://www.tjapukai.com.au>

Warrabarna Kurna! Reclaiming an Australian Language (Rob Amery/Swets & Zweitlinger)

Study of the reclamation of the Kurna Language, in collaboration with Kurna people and other educators. It uses an "ecological" approach and describes many practical methods. [13/01/2003]

Aboriginal revival languages - Lingua Franca - 27 June 2009 -

Summary: The work of language reclamation in Australia is showing that languages of revival are their own type of language, with characteristics and needs peculiar to themselves, that are well worth understanding.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2009/2607320.htm>

Aboriginal loanwords in Australian English: Lost and found - Lingua Franca - 9 August 2008 -

Summary: Borrowings from Aboriginal languages into Australian English have not been so numerous. Those on record total around 400, most of which relate to the bush environment.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2008/2325921.htm>

Narangga Warra...Lingua Franca - 13 August 2005 -

Narangga Warra: how the Narungga people of the Yorke Peninsula in South Australia are reclaiming their language.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/linguafranca/stories/2005/1433360.htm>

Aboriginal languages spoken, sung and written - RN Book Show - 29 November 2006



Eastern States

Aboriginal Languages Group

We don't usually do unpublished books on The Book Show but today is different, because these books are different. They are books which come from the community library in the Katherine Regional Aboriginal Language Centre.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/bookshow/stories/2006/1799837.htm>

