

# Corporate overview

## Enabling legislation

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (also known as AIATSIS and the Institute) operates under the *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Act 1989* (Cwth) (No. 149 of 1989, assented to on 27 November 1989). This Act repealed the former *Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies Act 1964* (Cwth).

## Responsible minister

The responsible Minister is the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, MP. Until 24 June 2004 the responsible Minister was the Hon. Senator Amanda Vanstone, MP, Minister for Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. Under section 43(1) of the Act, the Minister may ask the Council of the Institute to provide advice on aspects of the culture, history and society of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.

## Functions

The functions of the Institute are set out in Part 3, Section 5, of the *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Act 1989*, as follows:

- to undertake and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies
- to publish the results of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies and to assist in the publication of the results of such studies
- to conduct research in fields relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies and to encourage other people or bodies to conduct such research
- to assist in training people, particularly Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, as research workers in fields relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies
- to establish and maintain a cultural resource collection consisting of materials relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies
- to encourage understanding, in the general community, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies
- such other functions as are conferred on the Institute by this Act, and

- to do anything else that is incidental or conducive to the performance of any of the preceding functions.

## **Members**

Members of the Institute are people who were members, associate members or corresponding members under the preceding Act, or who have been appointed by Council under the current Act.

Membership accords with AIATSIS rules and members must demonstrate an interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. Membership is awarded for five years and is renewable. Applications are considered by the Research Advisory Committee which then makes recommendations to Council.

During this financial year, 15 new members were appointed by Council resulting in 511 members at 30 June 2004.

## **Council**

The Council of the Institute consists of:

- four people elected by the members of the Institute in accordance with the Institute rules, being people who are themselves members of the Institute
- one person appointed by the Minister, being a person who is a Torres Strait Islander and whose appointment has been recommended by the Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board, and
- four other people appointed by the Minister, being people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

All Councillors are non-executive members and hold office on a part-time basis. A chairperson and a deputy chairperson are appointed by the Minister from among the Councillors.

During this financial year, membership of the Council and the term of each appointment were:

### ***Elected members***

Professor Michael Dodson, AM	16 May 2002–15 May 2004 16 May 2004–15 May 2006
Professor Larissa Behrendt	16 May 2002–15 May 2004 16 May 2004–15 May 2006
Emer. Professor Robert Tonkinson	16 May 2002–15 May 2004 16 May 2004–15 May 2006
Mr Michael Williams	16 May 2002–15 May 2004 16 May 2004–15 May 2006

## ***Appointed members***

Mr Eric Bedford	22 November 2002–21 November 2004
Ms Jackie Huggins, AM	22 November 2002–21 November 2004
Ms Natascha McNamara, AM, MBE	22 November 2002–21 November 2004
Ms Raymattja Marika	22 November 2002–21 November 2004
Professor Martin Nakata	20 September 2001–19 September 2003
	10 November 2003–9 November 2005

Professor Dodson, AM was appointed Chairperson and Emer. Professor Tonkinson was appointed Deputy Chairperson from 24 March 2003 until 15 May 2004. Council held three meetings in Canberra, ACT and one meeting in Fitzroy Crossing, WA in 2003–2004.

Councillors are provided with an indemnity for claims against them whilst performing their duties as Councillors. The indemnity is in the form of a standard insurance policy with Comcover, the Commonwealth's self-insurance agency. The value of the indemnity is \$100 million per claim. The premium in 2003–2004 was \$5,754.



**Professor Michael Dodson, AM** is a prominent advocate on issues affecting Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as other Indigenous peoples around the world. He was Australia's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. He currently holds the Chair of Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University, and he is a Director of Dodson, Bauman & Associates Pty Ltd, Legal and Anthropological Consultants. He holds a Bachelor of Jurisprudence and a Bachelor of Laws from Monash University, an honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of Technology and an honorary Doctorate of Laws from the University of NSW.

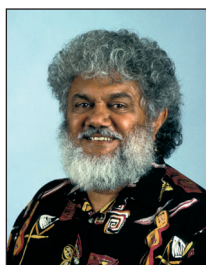


**Professor Larissa Behrendt** is Professor of Law and Indigenous Studies and Director of the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney. Her research interests focus on the protection of Indigenous rights, particularly those of Indigenous women, culturally appropriate mediation models and international human rights. She holds a Doctorate of Laws from Harvard Law School, a Master of Laws from Harvard Law School, a Bachelor of

Laws/Bachelor of Jurisprudence from the University of New South Wales and a Diploma of Practical Legal Training from the University of Technology, Sydney. She sits as a Judicial Member on the NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal (Equal Opportunity Division) and the Serious Offenders Review Council.



**Emer. Professor Robert Tonkinson** held the Chair of Anthropology at the University of Western Australia until his retirement in 2003. He is well-known internationally in his field of social anthropology for his contributions to the Aboriginal Australian and Melanesian literature. He has worked with Aboriginal people since 1962 and he has published extensively, especially on Western Desert society and culture. His closest links are with the Mardu people in the eastern Pilbara, with whom he has been closely involved for forty years. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) and a Master of Arts from the University of Western Australia and a PhD in Anthropology from the University of British Columbia.



**Mr Michael Williams** is the Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at the University of Queensland. His ongoing research focuses on cultural heritage, archaeology and social history and is conducted in close collaboration with other members of his Goorang Goorang community. Other research interests include issues in higher education and ethics as well as research in the Torres Strait. He holds an MPhil (Qual.) from Griffith University.



**Mr Eric Bedford** is Chairman of the Malarabah Regional Council. He has strong family and cultural links throughout the Fitzroy Valley in the Kimberley region of WA. He was previously the Executive Director of the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre. He has been active in developing concepts and models for regional autonomy for Aboriginal people to enable communities to exercise their right to self-determination, and in promoting economic development projects in the Fitzroy Valley.



**Ms Jackie Huggins, AM** is Deputy Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at the University of Queensland, a Co-chair of Reconciliation Australia and a Director of the Telstra Foundation. Her work spans academia, bureaucracy and community activities. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Queensland, and a Diploma of Education and Honours Degree in History/Women's Studies from Flinders University.



**Ms Natascha McNamara, AM, MBE** has a distinguished career in Aboriginal education. She is extensively involved across a broad spectrum of public life in both the Aboriginal and mainstream communities, with many and varied interests including the media and the international domain. She holds a Bachelor of Business Studies, a Diploma in Teaching and a Diploma in Business Administration.



**Ms Raymattja Marika** is the Teacher Linguist at the Yirrkala Community Education Centre. She has a long involvement with issues relating to Aboriginal education and is the author of some twenty papers covering a range of topics in the areas of education, history and ethnobotany. She is a Rirratjingu woman and speaks Rirratjingu, Gumatj and English. She holds a Graduate Diploma in Adult Education and Training from the University of Melbourne and an Advanced Diploma of Teaching (Primary) and a Certificate of Literacy Attainment from Batchelor College, NT.



**Professor Martin Nakata** is Director Indigenous Academic Programs, Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at the University of Technology, Sydney. He has worked in the field of Indigenous education for over two decades and has published extensively in national and international journals and anthologies. His current research interests are in Indigenous Knowledge systems and online learning possibilities for Indigenous students. He holds a Bachelor of Education with First Class Honours and a Doctorate of Philosophy from James Cook University.

## Council meetings

The following table sets out the number of Council meetings held during the financial year and the number of meetings attended by each Councillor.

Name	Meetings eligible to attend	Meetings attended
Professor M. Dodson, AM	4	4
Emer. Prof. R. Tonkinson	4	4
Mr E. Bedford	4	3
Professor L. Behrendt	4	3
Ms J. Huggins, AM	4	2
Ms R. Marika	4	1
Ms N. McNamara, AM, MBE	4	4
Professor M. Nakata	4	4
Mr M. Williams	4	4

## Corporate goals

To carry out its functions as defined in the Act, the Institute has adopted the following goals:

1. To provide leadership and excellence in promoting, facilitating and undertaking high quality research in Australian Indigenous Studies.
2. To maximise the role of Australian Indigenous peoples in the activities and services of the Institute.
3. To develop, maintain and preserve well-documented archives and collections, and to maximise access to these, particularly by Indigenous peoples, in keeping with appropriate cultural and ethical practices.
4. To create, develop and disseminate a diverse range of publications and services about Australian Indigenous cultures.
5. To develop and maintain strategic alliances that add value to our activities.
6. To manage efficiently and effectively in a transparent, accountable and supportive manner.

## Outcome and outputs structure

There was no change to number, wording or structure of AIATSIS's outcome or outputs structure during 2003–2004.

<b>Outcome 1</b> Promotion of knowledge and understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures past and present		
<b>Output 1</b> Research	<b>Output 2</b> Dissemination of information	<b>Output 3</b> Collection development and management

## Report structure

The structure for this Annual Report differs from other years. This report more directly reflects the outputs across the organisation to achieve the outcome, rather than by individual program area. Each chapter contains information on the activities of the Institute's program areas — Research, Audiovisual Archives, Library, Aboriginal Studies Press and Corporate Services — relevant to the output.

Chapters 1 to 3 capture the following outputs:

1. Research.
2. Dissemination of information.
3. Collection management and development.

Chapter 4 deals with corporate management and accountability.

AIATSIS's Corporate Goals, outlined in the *AIATSIS Business Plan*, have been used as sub-headings within each chapter as they relate to each output. This second level of subheadings more closely defines the content of the paragraphs that follow them, and demonstrate the achievements across the organisation to meet its goals.

## AIATSIS organisation structure — senior managers

<b>Council</b>	
<b>Principal</b> Steve Larkin	
<b>A/g Deputy Principal Collections</b> Luke Taylor	<b>A/g Deputy Principal Research and Information</b> Peter Veth
<b>Director Audiovisual Archives</b> Di Hosking	<b>Deputy Director Research</b> Patrick Sullivan
<b>Director Corporate Services</b> Tony Boxall	<b>A/g Director Aboriginal Studies Press</b> Rhonda Black
<b>Director Library</b> Barbara Lewincamp	

## **Corporate governance**

Under the AIATSIS Act (s13) the Council is responsible for 'the proper and efficient performance of the functions of the Institute and to determine the policy of the Institute'. The Principal is responsible for day-to-day administration of the Institute.

Council is supported by a Finance Committee and an Audit Committee. The Finance Committee consists of two Council members, the Principal, the Deputy Principal and the Director of Corporate Services. During the year, Council representatives were Professor Martin Nakata and Mr Michael Williams.

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu provides internal audit services under contract. This work is overseen by the Audit Committee, which consists of the members of the Finance Committee plus representatives from Deloitte and the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO). The ANAO did not report any adverse findings during 2003–2004. There were no reports on AIATSIS's operations by Parliamentary committees and there were no judicial decisions which are expected to have a material impact on operations.

A review of governance arrangements was close to completion at 30 June 2004. The preliminary findings indicate that AIATSIS has sound governance structures, but that more work is needed on risk management.

Other reviews commenced during the year dealt with the management and operation of the Audiovisual Archives (conducted by Archive Associates), the Library (Libraries Alive!) and strategic aspects of the Institute's IT security. The Institute has completed a fraud risk assessment which is being used to update the fraud control plan. Progress is monitored by the Audit Committee.

The Principal is supported by the Executive Board of Management (EBM), which comprises the senior managers and other officers. EBM meets monthly to discuss matters affecting the Institute. Meeting minutes are published on the internal Intranet.

The Information Technology Advisory Committee provides advice to the EBM on IT and information management matters. The Consultative Committee is a management/staff forum which deals with workplace relations issues. Minutes for both of these committees are also published on the Intranet.

The AIATSIS Corporate Plan for 2002–2004 was reviewed and some minor amendments drafted. Subject to endorsement by Council, the updated Plan will be published during 2004–2005. An annual business plan for 2004–2005, which includes specific projects to be undertaken, was endorsed by Council in May 2004.

## **Social justice and equity**

AIATSIS is committed to social justice. It has constituted committees and has a policy of 'Aboriginalisation' of the Institute's membership, governance, staff and functions to achieve this aim. Provision is made in the Institute's Act for the Council to have a majority (five out of nine) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



members. Since November 2002 there have been eight Council members in this category. At 30 June 2004 twenty-nine of the Institute's 108 staff were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

One of the greatest contributions that the Institute makes to social justice in general terms is its dissemination of information on Indigenous Australians resulting from research. It does this through publishing books and CD-Roms; through its journal, *Australian Aboriginal Studies*; through seminars, and by answering requests for information.