# CHAPTER 4
## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The *AIATSIS Corporate Plan 2010–11 to 2012–13* was published after being endorsed by the Council in 2010.

- The Institute's policies and procedures were consolidated into a single document, Principal's Instructions, and will be available to staff on 1 July 2010.

- The Institute's communications network was upgraded to improve the system's security and integrity particularly for users and stakeholders.

- The Institute's payroll system was upgraded to Aurion 10.

- Action was taken to continue to improve the Institute's governance, following the establishment of the Audit and Risk Committee.

## OVERVIEW

### Enabling legislation

AIATSIS operates under the *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Act 1989* (the Act).

### Responsible minister

The responsible minister is Senator, the Hon. Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

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.

### Council

In accordance with section 12 of the Act the Council consists of:

- four persons elected by the members of the Institute in accordance with the Institute rules, being persons who are themselves members of the Institute
- one person appointed by the minister, being a person who is a Torres Strait Islander
- four other persons appointed by the minister, being persons who are Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islanders.

All councillors are non-executive members and hold office on a part-time basis.

Membership of the Council during 2009–10 and the term of each appointment are set out in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Elected and appointed Council members and terms

| Elected members | Term of appointment |
| --- | --- |
| Professor Michael Dodson, AM | 14 Aug 2008 – 15 May 2011 |
| Professor John Maynard | 14 Aug 2008 – 15 May 2011 |
| Emeritus Professor Robert Tonkinson | 16 May 2008 – 15 May 2011 |
| Mr Michael Williams | 16 May 2008 – 15 May 2011 |
| **Appointed members** | |
| Mr Eric Bedford | 20 Sep 2007– 19 Sep 2010 |
| Dr Payi-Linda Ford | 5 Nov 2008 – 4 Nov 2011 |
| Ms Terri Janke | 20 Sep 2007 – 19 Sep 2010 |
| Mr Dana Ober | 5 Feb 2007 – 4 Feb 2009 |
| Dr Mark Wenitong | 20 Sep 2007 – 19 Sep 2010 |

Professor Dodson and Professor Maynard were appointed Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, respectively, from 14 August 2008 until 15 May 2011.

In 2009–10, the Council held four meetings:

- 20–21 August 2009 (Thursday Island)
- 3–4 December 2009 (Canberra)
- 4–5 March 2010 (Canberra)
- 9–11 June 2010 (Canberra)

Table 5 sets out the Council meetings held during 2009–10 and the number of meetings attended by each councillor.

**Table 5:** Attendance at Council meetings, 2009–10

| Name | Meetings eligible to attend | Meetings attended |
|---|---|---|
| Professor M Dodson, AM | 4 | 4 |
| Professor J Maynard | 4 | 2 |
| Mr E Bedford | 4 | 4 |
| Dr L Ford | 4 | 2 |
| Ms T Janke | 4 | 3 |
| Mr D Ober | 4 | 4 |
| Emeritus Professor R Tonkinson | 4 | 3 |
| Dr M Wenitong | 4 | 2 |
| Mr M Williams | 4 | 4 |

Council members are provided with an indemnity for claims against them while performing their duties as councillors. The indemnity is in the form of a standard insurance policy with Comcover, the Australian Government's self-insurance agency. The value of the indemnity is $100 million per claim. The premium in 2009–10 was $2,824.

Brief biographies of the Council members at 30 June 2010 are provided on pp. xix–xxi.

## AIATSIS members

Applicants for membership in AIATSIS must demonstrate an interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. Applications are considered by the Research Advisory Committee, which makes recommendations to the Council. Membership is awarded for five years and is renewable. During the financial year, twelve new members of the Institute were appointed, bringing total membership of the Institute to 517 at 30 June 2010.

## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Under the Act (s. 13) it is the responsibility of the **Council** 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'. The **Principal** is responsible for day-to-day administration of the Institute.

The Council is supported by a Finance Committee and an Audit and Risk 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 on the Finance Committee were Mr Michael Williams and Professor John Maynard.

The composition of the **Audit and Risk Committee** comprised two independent members and one representative from the AIATSIS Council. Mr Williams was the Council member and Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for 2009–10. Advisory capacities are held by representatives from internal audit and the Australian National Audit Office. Consistent with the requirements of the *Commonwealth Authorities and*

# IN MEMORIAM

During the reporting period, the AIATSIS Council and staff mourned the loss of three long-term members who were icons for the Aboriginal Rights movement.

In January, former Chairperson of the Institute, Nyoongar leader and elder Ken Colbung, passed away aged 78. Mr Colbung had an illustrious career lobbying for Aboriginal land rights, conservation, education, and the preservation of Indigenous cultures. He rose from humble beginnings on WA's Moore River Native Settlement to become one of Aboriginal Australia's most respected political leaders.

He was a member of the Institute from1974 and was the first Indigenous Chairperson of AIATSIS from 1984–90. In 1988, he delivered the prestigious Wentworth Lecture, 'Not land rights, but land rites' and deposited historical and personal materials to our collections.

Mr Colbung's passion for Aboriginal rights and equality over last five decades saw him hold prominent positions with the Foundation for Aboriginal Affairs, the Aboriginal Advancement Council of Western Australia, the Aboriginal Rights League, the West Australian Legal Service, the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council, the Nyoongar Community College, the Aboriginal Lands Trust and the West Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council.

In March, Charles 'Chicka' Dixon passed away aged 81. Known simply as 'Uncle Chicka', his achievements reflected his remarkable commitment to the Aboriginal Rights Movement — from working in the 1960s with the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, where he contributed to the groundwork for the 1967 referendum — to being both an instigator and an organiser of the 1972 Aboriginal Tent Embassy.

He was a foundation member of the Aboriginal Arts Board in 1973 (later becoming its Chairman) and was the first Aboriginal person to be appointed as a Councillor on the Australia Council.

In the early 1970s, he helped establish the Aboriginal Medical Service and Aboriginal Legal Services in Sydney. In 1972 he led an Aboriginal delegation to the Peoples Republic of China in a mission to highlight Aboriginal issues internationally. He was the first recipient of Aboriginal Overseas Study Award in 1975.

In September 2002, Uncle Chicka donated more than 400 images to the AIATSIS audiovisual collection to form a permanent record to be used for the education of future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and for all Australians. The collection spans approximately 70 years of his life.

The whole collection was meticulously documented by Uncle Chicka, which was in turn captured on audio and video recordings. His forthright and humorous recollections and anecdotes make it a

rich resource for future research and education.

In June, Aboriginal rights campaigner Jack Horner passed away aged 88.

Jack Horner and his wife Jean were pioneers in the 1960s political movement to pursue constitutional change to empower the Australian Government in Aboriginal Affairs.

From 1958 to 1966, Jack was the hardworking Honorary Secretary of the Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship, during which time he came to understand conditions of life for New South Wales Aboriginal people and campaigned for the repeal of the New South Wales *Aborigines Protection Act 1935*.

Jack's skill and determination came to the fore when he served as the Executive Member of the National Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) 1966–73; General Secretary of FCAATSI 1969–70; and Secretary to the General Secretary FCAATSI 1972–73.

As a noted author, Jack penned two significant books — *Vote for Ferguson for Aboriginal freedom* (a biography of Aboriginal champion and activist Bill Ferguson) and *Seeking racial justice (an insider's memoir of the movement for Aboriginal advancement 1938–78)*, which was published by Aboriginal Studies Press.

He made an enormous contribution to AIATSIS, not only as a supporter and member of the Institute since 1980, but also as a writer and reviewer for Aboriginal Studies Press and an active participant in many of the Institute's seminars, exhibitions, workshops and conferences over the past 40 years.

AIATSIS holds Jack Horner's research notes for his book *Vote Ferguson for Aboriginal freedom* in its collections as well as his book collection, which he donated to the Library. The Audiovisual Archive contains much sought-after photos from the 1938 Day of Mourning which Jack collected as part of his research.

*Companies Act 1997* (CAC Act), the Audit and Risk Committee is established by the Council to provide a deliberative forum for developing the internal control framework, risk management policies and fraud prevention review.

During 2009–10 the Audit and Risk Committee met four times. Table 6 sets out the committee members and their attendance in 2009–10.

By assessing management outcomes and actions examined by internal and external audit, the Audit and Risk Committee supports the AIATSIS executive discharging its governance responsibilities. In so doing, the committee facilitates the ongoing development and strengthening of the management and accountability framework.

The Principal is supported by the **Executive Board of Management**, which comprises the senior managers and other officers. The board meets monthly to discuss matters affecting the Institute. Meeting minutes are published on the Institute's intranet.

The **Information Communications Technology Advisory Committee** provides advice to the Executive Board of Management on information technology and information management matters. The **Consultative Committee** is a joint management and staff forum that deals with workplace relations issues. The **Occupational Health and Safety Committee** deals with health and safety issues for all employees. Minutes for these committees are also published on the Institute's intranet. During 2009–10 the **Copyright and Intellectual Property Committee** was formed. This committee advises the Principal via the board on policy and training and will monitor copyright and intellectual property use.

The ***AIATSIS Corporate Plan 2010–11 to 2012–13***, which sets the strategic direction for the Institute, was published following Council endorsement in 2010. Copies of the corporate plan are available from the Communications Manager and online at www.aiatsis.gov.au/about_us/corporate_publications.

The new plan commits AIATSIS to developing a strategic management plan to cover key stakeholder relationships, including that of AIATSIS membership.

At its June meeting, Council endorsed a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approach to promoting and raising awareness of membership, engaging current membership, and increasing Indigenous representation (specifically female membership).

In 2010–11, a strategic management plan will be implemented in stages to include:
• auditing the current AIATSIS membership database

**Table 6:** Audit and Risk Committee members and attendance, 2009–10

| Member's name | Position held | Special responsibilities | Member's attendance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mr Michael Williams | Council member | Council representative | 3 |
| Ms Jenny Morison | Independent member | Member | 4 |
| Mr Neal O'Callaghan | Independent member | Member | 4 |

- establishing online access and a section tailored to members
- developing an active membership program
- raising awareness of our membership program
- developing initiatives and activities to engage members.

In June 2010, the Council endorsed a business plan for 2010–11.

During the year the charters of all committees were reviewed and updated.

The Institute's policies and procedures were consolidated into a single document and will be officially launched on the AIATSIS intranet on 1 July 2010 as Principal's Instructions. Prior to the launch, staff were briefed on the relevance of this document to their work.

**Corporate Services** provides finance, human resources, information technology and building management support to all AIATSIS programs. This includes assistance with regulatory compliance and accountability requirements, planning for sustainability, and risk management.

## STAFFING

A breakdown of staff employed at 30 June 2010 is shown in Table 7. At end of the year, 82 non-ongoing staff were employed together with 3 casuals and 43 ongoing staff. The total number of staff employed as at 30 June 2010 was 128.

**Table 7:** Staffing levels and numbers at 30 June 2010

| Level | Males | Females | Total | Ongoing | Non ongoing | Casuals | Indigenous | Non-Indigenous | PWD | NESB |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PEO | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SES | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| EL2 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| EL1 | 14 | 14 | 28 | 12 | 16 | 0 | 8 | 20 | 1 | 1 |
| APS6 | 7 | 19 | 26 | 9 | 17 | 0 | 7 | 19 | 3 | 0 |
| APS5 | 10 | 10 | 20 | 7 | 11 | 2 | 4 | 16 | 1 | 1 |
| APS4 | 4 | 21 | 25 | 4 | 21 | 0 | 7 | 18 | 2 | 1 |
| APS3 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 1 |
| APS2 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| APS1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Trainee/ cadet | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Totals | 47 | 81 | 128 | 43 | 82 | 3 | 37 | 91 | 8 | 4 |

Abbreviations: APS (Australian Public Service); EL (Executive Level); EL (Executive Level); PEO (Principal Executive Officer); PWD (People with a disability; NESB (non-English-speaking background; SES (Senior Executive Service)

## Workplace diversity

During the year the Institute continued its efforts in relation to workplace diversity as set out in the AIATSIS Workplace Diversity Program.

## Indigenous staff

The Institute's Agency Agreement 2007–11 includes a number of specific provisions for employing and retaining Indigenous staff within the organisation.

AIATSIS attracts Indigenous people to vacant positions through advertising in Indigenous newspapers and networks as well as in the mainstream press. It offers Indigenous cadetships and training positions to provide paid work experience with the aim of improving future employment opportunities for Indigenous people. The Institute employed three Indigenous cadets who will complete their cadetships during 2010–11.

At 30 June 2010, the Institute employed a total of 128 staff, 29 per cent of whom identified as Indigenous (Figure 8).

The **Indigenous Caucus** is an internal working group supported by management, which provides Indigenous staff with a forum to discuss various issues affecting them. The Caucus has assisted management in reviewing matters such as work level standards, and is consulted when employment policies are reviewed or training courses

developed. The Caucus is represented at the Consultative Committee, the forum that brings staff and management together to discuss employment issues.

Indigenous staff members are also eligible to join the **Indigenous APS Employees Network** (IAPSEN), which supports and advocates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests, values and perspectives in the Australian Public Service. Staff members are encouraged to join the network and participate in discussion groups. New Indigenous staff are informed about the network when they join AIATSIS. The Institute is also involved in IAPSEN with the Principal serving as a member of the steering committee for the network.

The position of Indigenous Coordinator, created in 2008–09 was maintained during 2009–10. The position's priorities were to support the Indigenous Researchers' Fund, coordinate the Indigenous Caucus, coordinate the Institute's Reconciliation Action Plan as well as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy.

The Institute's Reconciliation Action Plan 2010 was approved by Reconciliation Australia. With the support of the AIATSIS Council, a Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group was established to report on and review the current action plan.

A review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment and Career Development Plan is near completion.

## Staff remuneration

As at 30 June 2010 all staff except those covered by Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) were covered by the *AIATSIS Agency Agreement 2007–11* (see the agreement's salary range in Table 8).
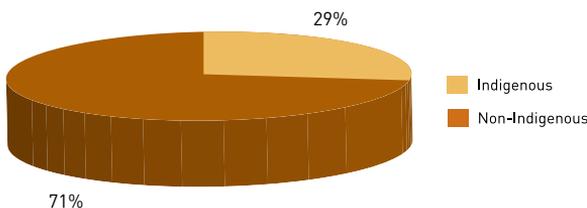


29%

- Indigenous
- Non-Indigenous

71%

**Figure 8:** Staff identifying as Indigenous

The contribution of AIATSIS female staff were recognised at a reception held at AIATSIS to celebrate International Women's Day. Photography by Kerstin Styche.

## AIATSIS HONOURS WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION

AIATSIS had good reason to celebrate International Women's Day 2010.

Not only are 64 per cent of its 118 staff female, but a number of past and present female staff have worked at the Institute for decades.

AIATSIS celebrated their contribution and the international day with a reception on 10 March.

Chairperson Professor Mick Dodson AM and Councillor Ms Terri Janke spoke at the reception.

Professor Dodson paid tribute to the past and present service of female staff such as Jacquie Lambert (37 years), Grace Koch (35 years), Cathy Jones (29 years), Alana Harris (26 years), Di Hosking (24 years), Pat Brady (24 years), Jennifer Wood (22 years) and Alana Garwood-Houng (21 years).

'They, like so many others have made AIATSIS part of their life, and we are all truly grateful — their contributions and commitment is priceless,' Professor Dodson said.

He said today's female AIATSIS staff had 'inherited and continue a breathtaking passion and commitment of the many women who have worked in the Institute over the last five decades'.

As well as acknowledging the contributions of women to AIATSIS, the reception also showcased the Institute's research, collecting and publishing work to 140 reception guests who included delegates of Oxfam Australia's Straight Talk 2010 Summit as well as senior Indigenous women working in government departments and local community agencies.

The Straight Talk 2010 summit brought together more than 80 Indigenous women from around the country to give them the opportunity to develop their understanding of the Australian political system and to build relationships with women in Federal Parliament.

**Table 8**: Salary ranges under Agency Agreement, 2009–10

| Level | Minimum ($) | Maximum ($) |
|---|---|---|
| Executive 2 | 90,544 | 102,675 |
| Executive 1 | 78,538 | 84,815 |
| APS 6 | 61,349 | 70,473 |
| APS 5 | 56,802 | 60,230 |
| APS 4 | 50,926 | 55,295 |
| APS 3 | 45,693 | 49,316 |
| APS 2 | 40,116 | 44,486 |
| APS 1 | 35,446 | 39,177 |
| Cadet/ trainee | 13,760 | 19,071 |

AIATSIS provides a range of non-salary benefits, details of which are set out in the agreement, available online at: www. aiatsis.gov.au/about_us/corporate_ publications.

As at 30 June 2010, five AIATSIS staff were covered by AWAs — one Senior Executive Service (SES) staff member and four non-SES staff. Except for remuneration, the employment conditions in these AWAs are similar to those in the Agency Agreement and reflect AIATSIS employment policies.

One employee received a performance bonus in 2009–10, and nine employees received Excellence Awards. There were four individual awards and two group awards. These totalled $9,000.

## Staff training and career development

AIATSIS is committed to continually developing its staff by providing training and opportunities for career advancement. This reflects the Institute's need to retain and develop high-quality staff in a tight job market, and the needs of staff to improve their skills and job satisfaction. The Institute spent $88,771 on staff development activities during 2009–10.

The AIATSIS Agency Agreement requires that the Institute's Performance Feedback Scheme be linked to remuneration increments. The scheme outlines the arrangement for discussing an individual's performance, sets forth the basis for providing training and development opportunities, and assists with workforce planning.

During 2009–10 AIATSIS renewed the memorandum of understanding with the Australian Public Service Commission to assist with the Institute's training and development needs.

## COOPERATIVE WORKPLACE RELATIONS

The Institute is committed to promoting a cooperative workplace and to ensuring that staff participate as appropriate in decision-making processes. Both staff and management recognise that maintaining cooperative workplace relations provides all staff with an opportunity to participate in decisions that impact directly on them.

Health and safety, human resource development, workplace diversity and access and equity issues were also addressed through the Institute's consultative mechanisms, ensuring that the Institute's obligations were met while maintaining a cooperative workplace.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The 2008–09 AIATSIS Health and Safety Management Agreement was reviewed

and reissued. This agreement, along with other policies and guidelines, assists in providing and maintaining the highest degree of health and safety for all employees. The policy aims to:

- prevent all accidents and ill health caused by working conditions
- protect all employees from any health hazard that may arise out of their work or the conditions in which it is carried out
- place and maintain employees in an occupational environment designed to satisfy their needs for health, safety and welfare at work.

To demonstrate the Institute's commitment, the Principal signed an employer's 'statement of commitment' with Comcare for 2002–12. The statement covers the following four targets:

- reducing the incidence of workplace injuries and diseases
- eliminating all fatalities due to workplace injury
- reducing the average lost-time rate
- reducing the average time taken for rehabilitation intervention.

Measures taken during the year to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees at work included:

- testing emergency evacuation procedures
- training staff in workplace practices, including the responsibilities of fire wardens
- providing equipment needed by staff to deal with occupational health and safety concerns
- holding a health week, including influenza vaccinations and individual health checks for staff wishing to participate.

The Agency Agreement now includes a formal statement of the Institute's policy

on the use of drugs in the workplace, and provides for access to Employee Assistance Program counselling services for staff and their families.

During 2009–10 two accidents were reported that required notification under section 68 of the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991*. No notices were received by AIATSIS during the year under sections 30, 46 or 47 of that Act, nor were any directions given under section 45.

## STRATEGIC ALLIANCES TO SUPPORT CORPORATE ACTIVITIES

As a small agency, AIATSIS has limited resources available to handle the many accountability, management and reporting policies required to support good corporate governance. The Institute works to improve its effectiveness by joining with other agencies with similar corporate directions to share policy ideas. During 2009–10, the Institute maintained membership of the Cultural Managers' Forum — a group comprising the Canberra-based cultural agencies — to discuss common issues in information technology.

Staff in Corporate Services maintained and built on the Institute's strategic alliance with the Indigenous Employment Strategy team at the Australian Public Service Commission.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The financial result for the year produced a surplus of $736,000. This exceeds the forecasted breakeven situation. There are a number of reasons for this result. Revenue increased as the result of new

grant money, and the write back of Unearned Income. Offsetting this was an increase in expenditure. Under the Agency Agreement the Institute funded a 4 per cent wage increase, effective 24th July 2009 (expires 2011). Our Comcare premium doubled as the result of two cases. Delays in recruitment action along with delays in scheduled minor works.

Detailed information is provided in the CFO Report and fincial statements.

As part of the Institute's risk management framework, all business continuity, disaster recovery and critical process recovery plans were updated. All plans comply with international and Australian Risk Management Standards. This year a consultant carried out a desktop exercise to test the effectiveness of the Institute's current risk management plans. Testing was completed successfully with no major findings or adjustments required.

The Institute again participated in the Comcover review of the risk management strategy, which resulted in a decrease in the cost of the premium.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

The Institute's Continuous Improvement Plan provides for a review of all human resources policies, procedures and systems, as well as outlining an overall training and development plan. As required by the plan, policies, procedures and systems were reviewed during the year.

Improvements made in 2009–10 include an update of the payroll system to Aurion 10. The electronic timesheet system that interfaces to the payroll system was also updated. Work continues on developing

an electronic orientation program for new staff.

During 2009–10 the human resources area provided ongoing recruitment support, resulting in 39 staff movements into the Institute.

## INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Significant work was undertaken to improve the information communication technology (ICT) service to the Institute's users and stakeholders including upgrading the network to improve the system's security and integrity. A number of server enhancement projects were carried out during the year. Systems were deployed to improve user support functions. These included implementing System Centre Essential to monitor individual PCs for updates and viruses, and helpdesk management systems, which now provide the Institute with valuable information relating to helpdesk enquiries. An email and Internet monitoring system was introduced to manage the effective use of Internet technologies, allowing management to monitor Internet access at a high level.

The Information and Communication Technology Strategic Plan was updated to align with the AIATSIS business plan and to reflect relevant ICT trends and directions.

Staff introduced an online registration facility for AIATSIS conferences, live webcasting for seminars and provided an improved communication facility for AIATSIS users particularly in remote areas.

(Left) Adam Shipp (aka Battleshipp) entertaining the crowd at NAIDOC on the Peninsula; (Right) Children enjoying one of the free kid's activities at NAIDOC. Photography by Kerstin Styche.

## NAIDOC ON THE PENINSULA 2009

More than 3,000 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, young and old, celebrated NAIDOC on the Peninsula 2009 at AIATSIS on 11 July.

Visitors milled around the forecourt and amphitheatre of the Institute's building on the shores of Canberra's Lake Burley Griffen to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Indigenous Australians.

To mark the national NAIDOC theme of *Honouring our elders, nurturing our youth*, festivities included a market with more than 30 stalls, a free concert, a photographic exhibition, didjeridoo competition, storytelling, dancing, crafts, an elders' tent and dozens of activities for children.

A notable line-up of local Indigenous performers entertained the crowd. Performers included Phil Brown and the Black Cockatoo Band, Johnny Huckle, Adam Shipp Hip Hop, Wiradjuri Echoes dance troupe, Lexine Solomon, and Dale Huddleston and the Riverbank Band.

This fifth annual celebration was the most successful to date. It was organised by the AIATSIS communications team and was hosted in partnership with the National Museum of Australia.

Feedback from visitors listed the friendly, community and family-oriented atmosphere as the greatest strength of the day.

## AIATSIS WEBSITE

The redeveloped AIATSIS website went live in August 2009. In the next phase, the site will be further augmented by implementing Web 2.0 technologies, RSS feeds, advanced search functionality and assimilating other AIATSIS websites.

## BUILDING MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

AIATSIS experienced no major problems with building operations during 2009–10 and no new major works were carried out.

The Institute continued its rolling preventive maintenance program, taking a proactive approach to identifying potential problems before they occur.

AIATSIS occupies a relatively new building with modern controls for managing energy use that are designed to minimise environmental impacts. Energy use is monitored to ensure the lowest use consistent with archival and office requirements. Most heating uses natural gas. Water use is minimised, for example, through the use of dual-flush toilets and by not irrigating lawns around the building. Used office paper and cardboard is recycled where possible and toner cartridges are collected for recycling.

Building security was enhanced through a systems upgrade, installing additional access control and improving the ability to detect intruders.

A business case to support a request to government for extensions and/or upgrades to the current building has been provided in draft form. Further cost/benefit analysis is being undertaken to support the Institute's case for funding.

Subsequent to ongoing business continuity planning exercises, various measures to improve the Institute's readiness for disaster and recovery were identified and implemented.

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Two requests for information were received under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* during the year.

## JUDICIAL DECISIONS AND EXTERNAL REVIEWS

In 2009–10 AIATSIS was not subject to any judicial decisions, parliamentary committees, or other external reviews.

## GOVERNMENT POLICIES NOTIFIED BY THE MINISTER AND MINISTERIAL DIRECTIONS

In 2009-10 there were none issued.

## ADVERTISING AND MARKET RESEARCH

The Institute spent $43,426 during the year on recruitment advertising. In addition, $119,287 was spent on marketing and promoting AIATSIS. No funds were spent on advertising campaigns (i.e. market research; outdoor, television, radio or cinema advertising; or direct mail advertising).

## SERVICE CHARTER

The Institute's Service Charter operated throughout the reporting period. The charter sets out the standards of service that clients can expect, and encourages client feedback. Client dissatisfaction is investigated and, where possible, resolved. The Service Charter is available online at www.aiatsis.gov.au/about_us/corporate_publications.

## CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTS OVER $10,000

The Institute let five consultancies during the year with a total estimated value of $169,414. In addition, 21 contracts, totalling $1,201,237 were let. The largest of these contracts was for venue hire and catering for the 2010 Native Title Conference held in Canberra. For details of consultancies and major contracts, see Appendix 5.

## COMPETITIVE TENDERING AND CONTRACTING

All contracts had provisions allowing access by the Auditor-General.

## EXEMPT CONTRACTS

No contracts were exempt from publication in the *Purchasing and Disposal Gazette.*

## SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

AIATSIS is committed to social justice and equity. It has constituted committees and has a policy to maximise the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Institute's membership, governance, staff and functions. 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 2002 there have been eight Council members in this category.

At 30 June 2010, 37 of the Institute's staff identified as Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders.

One of the greatest contributions that the Institute makes to social justice in general is its wide dissemination of information on Indigenous Australians, which has emerged from research. It does this through publishing; through its journal, *Australian Aboriginal Studies*;

through seminars; and by answering requests for information.

The AIATSIS collections are open to all for reference and research. Some material is restricted because it is culturally sensitive or because donors or stakeholders have requested that access be limited.

## COMMONWEALTH DISABILITY STRATEGY

AIATSIS is committed to supporting staff with disabilities and ensures that all programs and services are accessible to people with disabilities. AIATSIS continued to improve access for both staff and visitors with disabilities. All new AIATSIS facilities and major refurbishment projects addressed requirements under the relevant building codes.

AIATSIS is committed to ensuring that recruitment processes encourage people with disabilities to apply for AIATSIS positions, that workplace strategies support the employment of people with disabilities, and that staff training and development programs include relevant information about the needs of people with disabilities, as members of the community, as residents and as staff. The Institute is also committed to incorporating the requirements of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* into its policies and guidelines.

AIATSIS has conducted a self-audit using the performance-reporting template as recommended in CAC Orders 2009. It consults and liaises with staff, staff representatives and relevant external agencies, including Comcare, the Australian Public Service Commission and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. All relevant performance requirements have been met.