

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

# ANNUAL REPORT

2012–2013



**AIATSIS**

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF  
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT  
ISLANDER STUDIES

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is made against the AIATSIS 2012–13 Portfolio Budget Statement's Outcomes and Planned Performance, and the final of AIATSIS annual report to be made against the AIATSIS Corporate Plan of July 2010–July 2013.

The Chairperson's and Principal's contributions together provide a snapshot of the Institute's achievements and challenges during the year under review.

We would welcome your feedback on this year's annual report. Please contact:

Jacqui Malins  
Director, Executive Unit  
AIATSIS  
GPO Box 553  
Canberra ACT 2601

Tel: (02) 6246 1123  
Email: [Jacqui.Malins@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:Jacqui.Malins@aiatsis.gov.au)

## CONTACT OFFICE

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies is located in Canberra at the following address:

Lawson Crescent  
Acton ACT 2600

Requests for additional information to be made available to Members of Parliament and Senators should be forwarded to:

The Principal  
AIATSIS  
GPO Box 553  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Tel: (02) 6246 1111  
Fax: (02) 6261 4285  
Email: [executive@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:executive@aiatsis.gov.au)

This report is also accessible from the Institute's website at [www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)

Published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies  
GPO Box 553  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Tel: (02) 6246 1111  
Fax: (02) 6261 4285  
[www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)

© Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies 2013

This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Publication data: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies:  
Annual Report 2012–2013  
ISSN 1321-4837

Writing support: Richard Thompson

Editing: Karen Deighton-Smith

Design and typesetting: Adam J Bragg | [www.adamjbragg.net](http://www.adamjbragg.net)

Front cover: Torres Strait Islanders Cess Nakata and Ina Titasey (nee Mills, from the Mills Sisters) at the community access visit organised by AIATSIS on Thursday Island on 22–25 April (see page 72). Photographs by Daniel Walding.

The Hon Senator Nigel Scullion  
Minister for Indigenous Affairs  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Minister

It is my pleasure to submit on behalf of the AIATSIS Council, the annual report of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies for the year ended 30 June 2013.

The report is forwarded in accordance with Section 9 of the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997 (CAC Act) and provides a report of operations, including a financial report and audited financial statements) in accordance with Section 9 and Schedule 1 of the Act.

Yours sincerely



Professor Michael Dodson, AM  
**Chairperson**

14 October 2013



In July a selection of prints from the Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame was the focal point of a four-week exhibition at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Canberra headquarters as the main display for their Canberra based NAIDOC Week 2012 activities. Pictured above is Secretary of the Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Dennis Richardson (far left) and AIATSIS Chairperson Professor Mick Dodson (far right) with former Olympian and member of the Indigenous Sporting Hall of Fame Danny Morseau and his son, Danny.

# CONTENTS

About this report	ii	<b>Figures</b>	
Letter of transmittal	iii	Figure 1: Outcome and output structure	13
		Figure 2: Organisational and governance structure	14
<b>Introduction</b>		Figure 3: External revenue 2012–13	26
Chairperson’s message	7	Figure 4: Revenue 2012–13	26
Principal’s report	9	Figure 5: Breakdown of clients	71
		Figure 6: Comparison of Audiovisual Archive client requests 2011–12 and 2012–13	71
<b>Overview</b>		<b>Tables</b>	
Highlights 2012–13	11	Table 1: Requests for library services, 2009–13	75
AIATSIS at a glance	12	Table 2: Library performance statistics	77
Functions	12	Table 3: Native title research and access transactions	84
Outcome and output structure	13	Table 4: Website statistics	101
Organisational and governance structure	14	Table 5: Council appointments and reappointments	106
Our Council	16	Table 6: Council meetings held in 2012–13 and meetings attended by each councillor	107
		Table 7: Audit and Risk Committee members and attendance, 2012–13	109
<b>Report on outputs</b>		Table 8: Staffing levels and numbers at 30 June 2013	111
<b>Output 1</b> — Research	21	Table 9: Salary ranges on 1 July 2013 under the AIATSIS Enterprise Agreement 2012–14	114
<b>Output 2</b> — Dissemination of research and information	47	Table 10: Employment sustainability indicators	117
<b>Output 3</b> — Cultural collection development and management	85	Table 11: Environmental sustainability indicators	118
<b>Output 4</b> — Corporate governance	103	Table 12: Economic sustainability indicators	119
<b>Financial statements</b>	121		
<b>Appendixes</b>			
1. Research publications & presentations	159		
2. Research staff memberships, offices and other activities	168		
3. Auctions and special purchases	171		
4. Donations to the collection	173		
5. Finding aids 2012–13	174		
6. Contracts and consultancies	177		
Abbreviations and acronyms	178		
Compliance index	181		
Index	183		



In November, John McCarthy, KCSG, Australia's new Ambassador to the Holy See (Vatican) presented his credentials to the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI. Prior to departing Australia to take up his appointment, AIATSIS gave Mr McCarthy some AIATSIS publications including the *Aboriginal Australia languages* map and the book *The Lone Protester*. Mr McCarthy said that he was keen to present the Aboriginal Languages Map to his Holiness.

# INTRODUCTION



## CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

During the year the report of The Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (the Behrendt review) was released in July 2012, followed by the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs report, *Our Land Our Languages* in 2012, both of which have implications for AIATSIS. The national cultural policy, Creative Australia, was also released in May 2013, with a central goal to 'recognise, respect and celebrate the centrality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to the uniqueness of Australian identity'. As a result of these reports' recommendations, Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education has commissioned a review of AIATSIS, which commenced at the end of June 2013.

I welcome the Review as an opportunity for the Institute to demonstrate the value of our work and its contribution to the field of Indigenous studies and the nation. This is partly demonstrated in this report in the outline of our

achievements during 2012-13. The report also demonstrates the growing demands on AIATSIS and what the Institute could contribute given more resources.

AIATSIS' achievements in 2012-13 must be considered in the context of the changes in the Indigenous affairs landscape. Since its establishment almost 50 years ago, our recognised community of stakeholders has grown tremendously. Fifty years ago, Indigenous people were not counted in the census at all, but in 2011, 548,370 people who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin were counted in the Census, and this is estimated to be an undercount of more than 100,000.

Research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture was a niche pursuit, but there are now Indigenous-focused research centres in most universities and research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is being performed in mainstream faculties, schools and centres across many disciplines. The need for

leadership on matters such as ethics and culturally proficient practice is clear and growing, and AIATSIS' achievements in 2012-13 demonstrate its preeminence in this area. AIATSIS revised the Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies, is reviewing the NHMRC ethics guidelines in partnership with the Lowitja Institute, and is now offering its high quality ethics approval service to other researchers and institutions.

While there has been progress in 'closing the gap' on outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the distance still to travel demonstrates the need for well-targeted, well designed research undertaken in partnership with Indigenous communities. The skills to partner effectively with communities need to be built and maintained, and as the Chair of the AIATSIS Council, it was a great pleasure to endorse the Towards Cultural Proficiency – a phased approach to building capability 2013-2015 Strategy which will place AIATSIS at the cutting edge of culturally proficient practice.

Three Indigenous researchers completed their doctorates in 2012-13 with the support of AIATSIS, and many other of our researchers are enrolled in further education. The impact of this cannot be underestimated, in research and in the influence these examples have on educational participation and attainment by other Indigenous Australians. AIATSIS secured \$6 million in funding for Indigenous workforce development and training, an achievement that will enable AIATSIS to keep leading the way.

AIATSIS finishes the 2012-13 financial year looking forward to the celebration of its 50th anniversary in 2014. The achievements of the past year add much to celebrate, and I thank the staff and executive of AIATSIS, and the Ministers who supported us through the year, for your contribution.



Professor Michael Dodson, AM  
**Chairperson**





## PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

As the Principal of AIATSIS, I cannot help but be proud to lead an organisation that is so small, yet achieves so much. The Institute's achievements in 2012–13 once again demonstrate its value in the creation of knowledge, secure cultural material, resources, and relationships. The skills and dedication of our staff make it possible to accomplish a great deal. I only have room here to acknowledge some of our achievements, and I encourage you to read further and learn more.

From our research programs, I would like to mention the completion of the second National Indigenous Languages Survey and drafting of the *Australian Curriculum: Languages – Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages*, and completion of a National Climate Change Research Adaption Facility project on the role of Indigenous knowledge in climate change activities. We launched a new channel to communicate

our research findings – AIATSIS Research Publications, a new imprint of the Institute's publishing arm Aboriginal Studies Press.

In our collections, digitisation targets for audio and pictorial material were exceeded, helping to ensure this precious material will still be available to communities and researchers in the future. Four very successful community access visits were also made to return audiovisual materials to communities in Cootamundra, Leeton, the Torres Strait and Kowanyama.

These visits are just one part of our response to increased demand from clients and broader community interaction. Use of the AIATSIS website alone increased by 10 per cent in 2012–13. In addition, we have seen increases in formal and informal visits to AIATSIS as well as increased our participation in events, seminars and conferences. The National Native Title Conference was once again a standout.

Operational challenges included continuing changes in the technological environment. Digitising our collections for preservation and access is just one part of our response, and we continue to plan and adjust as the digital and online world becomes ever more dominant as the platform to interact with our clients and the world. Planning in 2012-13 indicates this will need more investment in the coming years.

Our premises also offer challenges. At ten years old, our building is relatively modern and in a magnificent location, but we are already running out of room for our collection and staff, and limited in the way we can engage with our stakeholders in person. Nevertheless, AIATSIS continued to improve its environmental performance and received ACT Smart Office accreditation in 2012-13.

Significant effort has been invested in our organisational strategy and health through 2012-13. In this year of preparing for the future we have developed a new Statement of Strategic Intent, refreshed our business planning and budget processes, rebalanced our organisational structure and incorporated

workforce and succession planning into our broader operational plans. Our investment in ensuring that the cultural proficiency of our staff reflects cutting edge practice has also taken a step forward with implementation of the Towards Cultural Proficiency – a phased approach to building capability 2013-2015 Strategy now under way.

At the close of 2012-13 I am pleased to reflect on a year that leaves us stronger in terms of our strategy, planning, capability and culture. I thank the Ministers who have had oversight of AIATSIS, our Council Chair Professor Mick Dodson and all the other Council members, our committees, our members, and importantly I thank the committed staff of AIATSIS for your support and contributions in 2012-13.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RTaylor', enclosed within a large, stylized oval shape.

Mr Russell Taylor  
**Principal**