

# our vision

A world in which all  
Indigenous peoples' knowledge  
and cultures are recognised,  
valued and respected.



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About  
AIATSIS

# What we are

AIATSIS is an independent statutory authority created by the *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Act 1989* (the Act). AIATSIS is governed by its own Council, which has a majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councillors. AIATSIS is based in Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory.

# Our legislation and functions

Under its establishing Act, AIATSIS' functions are to:

- undertake and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies
- publish the results of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies and to assist in the publication of the results of such studies
- conduct research in fields relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies and to encourage other persons or bodies to conduct such research
- assist in training persons, particularly Aboriginal persons and Torres Strait Islanders, as research workers in fields relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies
- establish, maintain and provide appropriate access to a cultural resource collection consisting of materials relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies
- encourage understanding, in the general community, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies
- carry out such other functions as are conferred on AIATSIS by the Act
- do anything else that is incidental or conducive to the performance of any of the preceding functions.

# Our outcome, strategy and program

AIATSIS' outcome, as stated in our Portfolio Budget Statement 2013–14, is to further understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures, past and present, through undertaking and publishing research and providing access to print and audiovisual collections. This outcome is delivered through a single program – AIATSIS Research and Collections.

AIATSIS has instituted a new Statement of Strategic Intent for the period 2013–16 that outlines our goals and strategies to achieve them. AIATSIS' six goals are:

1. Promote Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their heritage and culture.
2. Focus outward and engage collaboratively.
3. Provide the foundation for research excellence in Australian Indigenous studies.
4. Ensure our collections are safe, accessible, valued and growing.
5. Celebrate and build on 50 years of leadership and excellence in Indigenous studies.
6. Foster an effective organisation where people want to work.

## Ministers

As at 30 June 2014, the Minister for Education, the Honourable Christopher Pyne, had portfolio responsibility for AIATSIS.

Between the federal election on 7 September 2013 and the issue of amended Administrative Arrangements Orders by the Prime Minister on 12 December 2013, the minister responsible for AIATSIS was the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Honourable Nigel Scullion.

From 1 July 2013 until the federal election on 7 September 2013, AIATSIS was part of the Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education portfolio. The minister with portfolio responsibility for AIATSIS was the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator the Honourable Kim Carr.

# Our governance structure

Under its legislation, AIATSIS is governed by a nine-member Council. Four councillors are elected by AIATSIS' members, and five councillors, who must be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, are appointed by the Minister. In 2013–14 the members of the AIATSIS Council were as follows.



**Professor Michael (Mick) Dodson AM**  
(Chairperson)

Professor Dodson is a member of the Yawuru peoples, the traditional Aboriginal owners of land and waters in the Broome area of the southern Kimberley region of Western Australia. He is Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University (ANU) and a professor of law at the ANU College of Law. He is a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia. He was Australia's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, serving from April 1993 to January 1998. Professor Dodson was Australian of the Year in 2009.



**Professor Emeritus Robert (Bob) Tonkinson**  
(Deputy Chairperson)

Professor Tonkinson took his honours and master's degrees in social anthropology at the University of Western Australia, where he later held the Chair in Anthropology from 1984 until his retirement in 2004. He obtained his doctorate in anthropology at the University of British Columbia (1972) and taught at the University of Oregon (1968–80) and the ANU (1980–84) before returning to Western Australia. From the 1960s, he conducted research with Western Desert Martu people and on the islands of Ambrym and Efate in Vanuatu. He was active in land claim research on behalf of the Martu, who gained title to the bulk of their traditional homelands in 2002.





**Ms Neva Collings**

(until 18 June 2014)

Ms Collings is a lawyer from New South Wales who grew up in a fishing village on the Hawkesbury River. She has worked in international, national and local Indigenous issues and specialises in resource management and environmental issues for Indigenous peoples. She is the Principal of Orange Door Legal. Ms Collings has expertise in the fields of environmental law and policy, resource development, water management and planning, community protocols, Indigenous social justice and human rights.

She has worked as a policy officer with the Australian Human Rights Commission Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, and as a legal officer for Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation in the Northern Territory. She was a member of the NSW Attorney General's Department on the Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce, a solicitor with the NSW Environmental Defenders Office, and coordinator of the Indigenous Law Centre at the University of NSW.



**Professor John Maynard**

(Deputy Chairperson until 16 May 2014)

Professor Maynard is a Worimi man from the Port Stephens region of New South Wales. He is a Director of the Wollotuka Institute and Chair of Aboriginal History at the University of Newcastle. He obtained his doctorate in 2003, examining the rise of early Aboriginal political activism. Professor Maynard was a member of the Executive Committee of the Australian Historical Association, the NSW History Council and the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council and has worked with and within many Aboriginal communities (urban, rural and remote). He is the author of eight books, including *Aborigines and the 'sport of kings'*, *Fight for liberty and freedom* and *The Aboriginal soccer tribe*.



**Mr Kado Muir**  
(from 17 May 2014)

Mr Muir is an anthropologist and archaeologist with many years' experience working in Aboriginal heritage, traditional ecological knowledge and native title research. He has previously served as a member of the AIATSIS Research Advisory Committee and has a long association with AIATSIS. Mr Muir is Chair of the Ngalia Foundation, which manages several community-based research projects including the Goldfields Aboriginal Languages Project, Goldfields Indigenous Heritage Project and traditional ecological knowledge projects through the Walkatjurra Rangers.

Mr Muir operates several businesses including an Aboriginal tour business and a heritage research and community development consultancy business. He is a long-time activist and is engaged in campaigns to stop uranium mining and promote alternative community-based enterprises. He brings to AIATSIS a strong community-based Indigenous research perspective and is interested in private sector funding for public collections and research.



**Mr Dana Ober**  
(until 18 June 2014)

Mr Ober is from Saibai Island in the western Torres Strait and holds a Bachelor of Arts with a major in linguistics and submajor in anthropology from ANU. He is a linguist and has an expert knowledge of Torres Strait Islander culture and history. At present Mr Ober is working at Tagai State College on Thursday Island; he was previously a lecturer at Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and the Chief Executive Officer of Saibai Island Council. He speaks three languages fluently: Kalaw Kawaw Ya, Yumplatok and English. His main areas of interest are the development and maintenance of Australian Indigenous languages and human rights, particularly Indigenous rights.



### **Ms June Oscar AO**

Ms Oscar is a Bunuba woman from Fitzroy Crossing in the central Kimberley region of Western Australia. She was appointed as an Officer in the Order of Australia in 2013 in recognition of her contribution to improving the lives of people in the Fitzroy Valley. She has a Bachelor of Business from Notre Dame University and is the CEO of Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre, inaugural Chair of the Bunuba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate, and a member of the Governing Committee for the Fitzroy Valley Futures Forum.

Ms Oscar is an Ambassador for Children and Young People in Western Australia, co-founded the Marulu Strategy (which focuses on foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)) and is a Chief Investigator in the Lililwan Project, which is researching the prevalence of FASD in the Fitzroy Valley. Ms Oscar is a local government councillor in the Shire of Derby / West Kimberley.



### **Ms Robynne Quiggin**

Ms Quiggin is CEO of the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute in Sydney. She is descended from the Wiradjuri people of central western NSW, with family in the towns of Euabalong, Lake Cargelligo and Condobolin. Ms Quiggin has practised as a solicitor since 2000 specialising in legal and cultural issues for Indigenous Australians, including consumer and intellectual property law.

Most recently, Ms Quiggin was Senior Manager of the Australian Securities and Investment Commission's Indigenous Outreach Program, assisting Indigenous consumers to resolve issues with providers of financial services and raising awareness with industry about cultural and regulatory issues for Indigenous Australians. She has worked in policy and as a senior researcher and lecturer at the University of Technology, Sydney, Macquarie University and the University of Notre Dame. Ms Quiggin serves on the Board of Bangarra and as a Trustee of the Australian Museum. Previous board service includes the Arts Law Centre of Australia and Gadigal Information Services (incorporating Koori Radio).





**Professor Sandy Toussaint**

(until 16 May 2014)

Professor Toussaint is an anthropologist who has worked with Aboriginal people since the early 1980s, undertaking applied and academic research particularly with the Walmajarri, Juwaliny-Walmajarri, Gooniyandi and Wangkajunga families in the northern Kimberley region of Western Australia and with Noongar groups in the state's south. Professor Toussaint worked for inquiries such as the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, the Aboriginal Land Inquiry, and Aboriginal Education. She has also worked for organisations such as the Kimberley Language Resource Centre and the Marra Worra Worra Corporation. She has undertaken research on matters relating to land and native title claims, human/environment interactions, Indigenous health, community organisations and material culture. Professor Toussaint is Associate Director of The University of Western Australia's Berndt Museum.

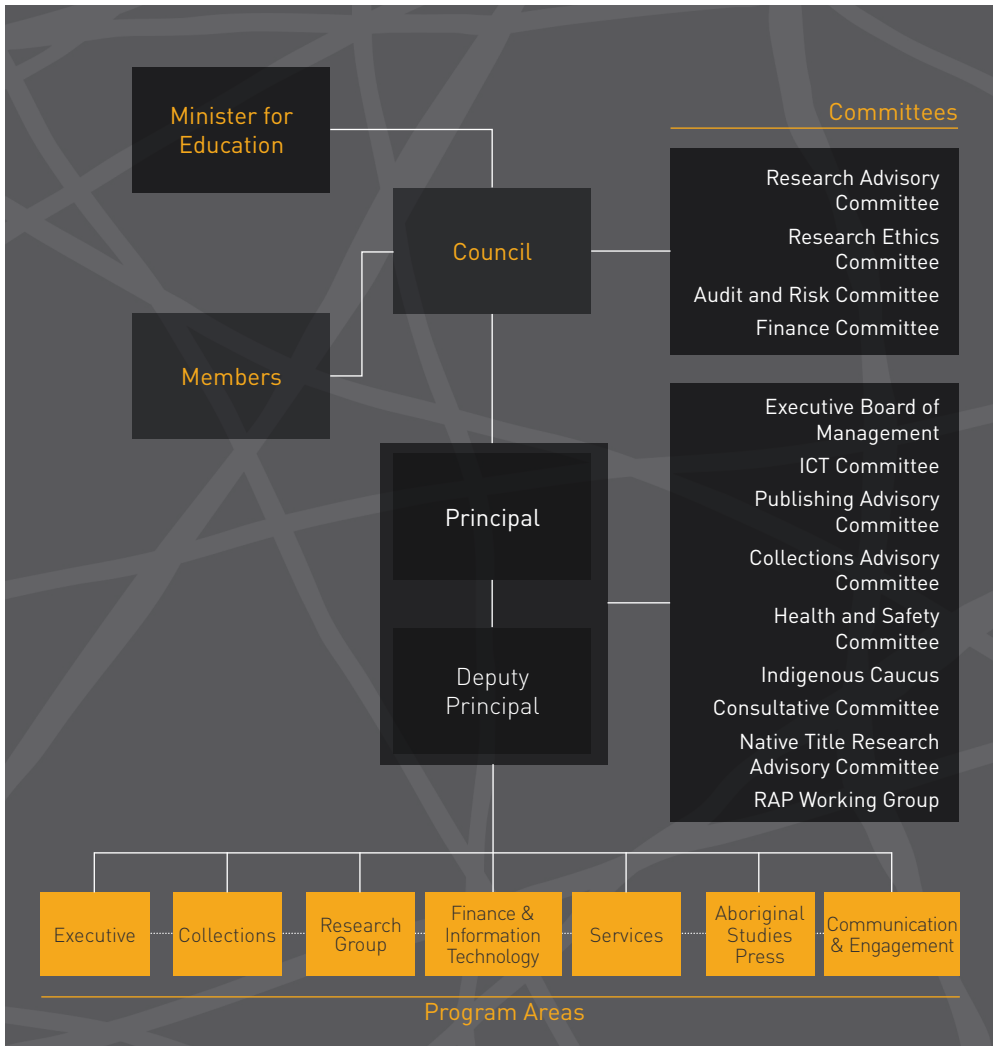


**Associate Professor Mark Wenitong**

Dr Wenitong is an Adjunct Associate Professor in the School of Public Health, Tropical Medicine and Rehabilitation Sciences at James Cook University. He is from the Kabi Kabi tribal group of South Queensland and is the Senior Medical Adviser to Apunipima Cape York Health Council.

Associate Professor Wenitong was previously the Senior Medical Officer at Wuchopperen Health Services in Cairns and worked as the Medical Adviser for the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health in Canberra. He is founder and a past president of the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association, and was the acting CEO of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) as well as the NACCHO Public Health Medical Officer in 2013. Dr Wenitong received the 2011 Australian Medical Association (AMA) President's Award for Excellence in Healthcare and was one of the chief research investigators who received the 2013 AMA Award for Best Research Publication in the *Medical Journal of Australia* in 2012.

## AIATSIS structure



For more details about AIATSIS governance, including the role and membership of committees, please see Goal 6 and Appendixes A (Council operations) and B (Governance committees).