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Office for the Arts

**Presenters:**

**Ms Stacey Campton**  
Assistant Secretary, Indigenous Culture Branch  
(Canberra based)

**Mr Wallace McKitrick**  
Senior Program Officer, National Network  
(Adelaide based)

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Office for the Arts

**History of The Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Records (MILR) Program**

- **1973 – The Australian Government supported Indigenous languages through the Education portfolio.**
  - School Languages Other Than English (LOTE) program is still funded by Education department.
- **1991 – Reviews established Indigenous languages program administered through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC).**
  - This program had two parts:
    - the Maintenance of Indigenous Languages; and
    - Endangered Languages (those with fewer than 20 fluent speakers).

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## MILR addresses the erosion and loss of Australia's Indigenous languages by providing funding for their maintenance, revival and transmission

- MILR objectives are:
  - support the maintenance of Indigenous languages (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages only);
  - increase the use of Indigenous languages in a range of fields and media, including greater Indigenous community engagement;
  - increase public appreciation of Indigenous languages; and
  - support organisations working to support Indigenous languages by ensuring these organisations develop sustainably.

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## MILR underpins the National Indigenous Languages Policy

- The National Indigenous Languages Policy was announced in 2009 and confirms the Government's commitment to keep Indigenous languages alive and help Indigenous Australians connect with their language and culture.
- Organisations can apply for MILR funding through the annual competitive funding round. Details are located on [www.arts.gov.au](http://www.arts.gov.au)
- The full list of MILR projects being funded in 2011-12 can be accessed from [www.arts.gov.au/indigenous/indigenous\\_funding\\_2011-12](http://www.arts.gov.au/indigenous/indigenous_funding_2011-12)

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## Innovative State and Territory projects are funded through MILR

- **Kalyuku Niti – Puntuku Ltd (WA):** To preserve the local language and create materials for non-Indigenous people.
- **Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (NT):** To produce a documentary series on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.
- **Adelaide Research and Innovation Pty Ltd - Mobile Language Team (SA):** To provide high quality strategic services that assist maintenance and revival of Aboriginal languages.
- **Griffith Wiradjuri Aboriginal Preschool Inc. (NSW):** To increase the use of the Wiradjuri language using songs, rhymes and stories.

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## OFTA funds the 2012 National Indigenous Language Survey and other training organisations

### National Indigenous Languages Survey Report

- Over the next two years, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies will be carrying out the second National Indigenous Languages Survey with funding from the MILR program.

### Other Funded Training Organisations

- TAFE SA
- Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages
- Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity

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## The Australian Government facilitates Indigenous language information sharing through key organisations

- Eastern States Aboriginal Languages Group
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- **Mirima Council Aboriginal Corporation**
- Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Cooperation
- Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages
- North Queensland Regional Aboriginal Corporation Languages Centre
- Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Inc.
- Kimberley Language Resource Centre
- Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre
- Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation
- Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education

**The Mirima Council Aboriginal Corporation** has been funded triennially through the MILR program to assist in the maintenance of language across the Kununurra region, East Kimberley.

It does this through:

- the production of audio and video recordings in the community
- language classes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous target groups (e.g. at schools)
- producing radio programs in Indigenous languages

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**The North Queensland Regional Aboriginal Corporation Languages Centre** supports communities in the North Queensland region to maintain and record their languages.

This centre is funded to :

- facilitate field visits and community workshops for language research, revival and maintenance.
- to record and document languages with remaining speakers,
- assist community language groups to prepare language material for publication
- increase the use of Indigenous languages in a range of fields and media

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The **Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre** is funded to record, maintain and promote the Aboriginal languages of the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

The language centre provides a hub for language activity and supports community members interested in learning more about their languages and developing further language resources.