



**AIATSIS**

Australian Institute of Aboriginal  
and Torres Strait Islander Studies

# MEDIA RELEASE

*Worldwide knowledge and understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures, past and present*

Tuesday 23 June 2009

## Bilingual education symposium to discuss NT policy

Media are invited to attend a one-day symposium on Bilingual Education in the Northern Territory and an evening reception hosted by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies this Friday 26 June in Canberra.

The symposium will feature presentations by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Mr Tom Calma, Professor Joseph Lo Bianco, linguists, researchers and community members from Yirrkala, Areyonga and Yuendumu in the Northern Territory.

At the evening reception, AIATSIS Chairperson Professor Mick Dodson will launch *Gaps in Australia's Indigenous language policy: Dismantling bilingual education in the Northern Territory* - an AIATSIS Discussion Paper by Dr Jane Simpson (Sydney University), Dr Patrick McConvell (ANU) and Dr Josephine Caffery (ACU).

The Discussion Paper will be available to media from Thursday 25 June under embargo to 5:00 am Friday 26 June.

**What:** Bilingual Education in the Northern Territory: Principles, Policy and Practice  
**Where:** Visions Theatre, National Museum of Australia, Canberra  
**When:** 9:00am–5:15pm, followed by a reception at AIATSIS, Lawson Crescent, Acton Peninsula, Canberra.

**Background:** At the start of the 2010 school year, the number of hours of bilingual teaching in Northern Territory Two-Way schools is set to decrease by more than half.

AIATSIS is holding the symposium to debate and discuss the policy change and its implications. Issues to be discussed include: the historical role of bilingual education; the status of research into its efficacy and practice; implications of the policy change; and bilingualism and language rights.

The symposium will bring together Australia's leading experts in bilingual education and practitioners in Northern Territory Indigenous schools, bilingual educators, linguists, educationalists, policy makers and prominent Indigenous specialists.

**Media contact:** For further information, interviews or to register your interest to attend contact Chris Ryan, AIATSIS Communications  
[chris.ryan@aiatsis.gov.au](mailto:chris.ryan@aiatsis.gov.au)  
02 6261 4254 or 0408 688 026