

# Chapter 1: Research

## Highlights 2004–05

- 33 research grants totalling more than \$694,000
- Indigenous researchers involved in over half of all grants
- Research staff and Visiting Fellows published 52 peer-reviewed works including books and chapters
- Native Title Research Unit's website upgraded and re-launched
- AIATSIS 40th Anniversary Conference strongly supported by academic community
- Native Title Conference held in Gumbaynggirr country, Coffs Harbour

## Role of the Research Program

AIATSIS is a centre for research excellence. The Institute's Research Program undertakes high-quality, multi-disciplinary research in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. Its wide-ranging program includes work on Indigenous social health, regional organisation and governance, intellectual property, Indigenous natural resource management, family and community histories, linguistics, archaeology and cultural tourism, Indigenous arts, cultural heritage management, and native title matters. The program aims to offer an ideal research environment, especially for Indigenous scholars.

The Research Program carries out research in five ways. It employs a core number of visiting research fellows to carry out research and advise the Institute's Council on research matters. It employs visiting research fellows who undertake special research projects approved by the Council. The Native Title Research Unit, a special unit within the Research Program, addresses pressing research needs arising from the recognition of native title. The Institute also makes funding available to individuals and organisations through the research grants program; it provides training, facilities and support for Indigenous trainee researchers, and visiting and honorary scholars. In addition, the program commissions research projects and conducts work jointly with other organisations.

The Institute's eminence as a research body and the value of its contribution in the field of Indigenous scholarship are demonstrated by the high output and quality of its research. The range and diversity of AIATSIS research publications reflect the diversity of research staff interests and of the audiences for which they are produced, including Indigenous communities, academic bodies and government agencies.

The Research Program actively disseminates the results of its research through peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed publications and reports, the Institute's website, and presentations at seminars, lectures, workshops and national conferences.

The national and international renown of the Research Program flows from the observance by its members of world-class standards in academic research, dedicated associations with Indigenous Australian communities, responsiveness to Indigenous research requests, adherence to the directions established by the Institute's Research Advisory Committee and a comprehensive set of ethical research protocols that guide its work.

## Oversight of research by AIATSIS Council

The quality, independence and ethics of the Institute's research activities and its grantees are subject to oversight by the AIATSIS statutory Research Advisory Committee, the Native Title Research Advisory Committee, and the Research Ethics Committee, which advise the AIATSIS Council. Individual projects often have their own reference group, for example the Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project Reference Group. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a major role to play as members of these advisory committees. Committee membership for 2004–05 is shown on pages 17–18.

The **Research Advisory Committee** (RAC) assesses applications for research grants made to the Institute; makes recommendations to Council in relation to research matters; and advises the Council in relation to applications for membership of the Institute. The RAC comprises three members of the Council appointed by the Council; eight members of the Institute elected by members of the Institute in accordance with the Institute rules; and the Principal of the Institute. The committee, chaired by the Principal, Mr Steve Larkin, met twice during 2004–05 (in November 2004 and April 2005).

The **Native Title Research Advisory Committee** provides advice to the Principal on the Research Program of the Native Title Research Unit. Members of the Native Title Research Advisory Committee are appointed by the AIATSIS Council for two years. The committee meets twice each year. A new committee was established in late 2004.

The **Research Ethics Committee** is concerned with the clearance of ethical aspects of community-based research to be carried out by its staff (including fellows, visiting research fellows and consultants) and grantees as well as external collaborative research projects to be carried out with AIATSIS staff under the auspices of the Institute. Members of the Research Ethics Committee are appointed by the AIATSIS Council in line with categories established by the

National Health and Medical Research Council. The committee is required to meet four times a year, with additional meetings as required.

The **Indigenous Facilitation Project Reference Group** is a project reference group of experts in the field to advise on research directions and priorities for the Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project (IFaMP). IFaMP meetings are held twice each year. Members of IFaMP include a range of Indigenous and non-Indigenous experts including representatives of AIATSIS, mediation and facilitation practitioners, chief executive officers of Native Title Representative Bodies (NTRBs), the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT), the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) and academics.

## Committee members 2004-05

### Research Advisory Committee

During 2004–05 elected members of the RAC and their areas of expertise were:

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Mr Kim Akerman</b>                    | archaeology                         |
| <b>Ms Jeannie Bell</b>                   | linguistics                         |
| <b>Ms Brenda Croft</b>                   | arts                                |
| <b>Professor Ann Curthoys</b>            | history                             |
| <b>Dr Gaynor Macdonald</b>               | social anthropology                 |
| <b>Emer. Professor Garth Netheim, AO</b> | public policy, politics and the law |
| <b>Dr Colin Pardoe</b>                   | health and biological sciences      |
| <b>Mr Lester-Irabinna Rigney</b>         | education and cultural transmission |

Council representatives on the RAC were **Professor Larissa Behrendt**, **Professor Martin Nakata** and **Mr Michael Williams**. The Principal, **Mr Steve Larkin**, is also a member of the RAC.

### Native Title Research Advisory Committee

The members of the committee, appointed in late 2004, are:

#### *Council members*

**Professor Mick Dodson, AM**  
**Mr Michael Williams**

#### *Ex officio members*

|                        |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Mr Steve Larkin</b> | Principal                   |
| <b>Dr Luke Taylor</b>  | Deputy Principal – Research |
| <b>Dr Peter Veth</b>   | Director of Research        |

#### *Experts in the field of native title*

|                               |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Mr Robert Blowes</b>       | Barrister                 |
| <b>Mr Tony Johnson</b>        | CEO Gurang Land Council   |
| <b>Dr Kingsley Palmer</b>     | Consultant Anthropologist |
| <b>Dr Gaye Sculthorpe, AM</b> | Member – NNTT             |

#### *OIPC representative*

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Mr Peter Vaughan</b> | Group Manager, Land and Resources Group |
|-------------------------|---|

## Research Ethics Committee

The membership of the committee in 2004–05 was:

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Ms Christine Grant</b>     | Chairperson   |
| <b>Bishop George Browning</b> | Minister of religion  |
| <b>Ms Jenny Clarke</b>        | Lawyer  |
| <b>Mr Graeme Evans</b>        | Layman  |
| <b>Mr Mark McMillan</b>       | Person with knowledge of, and current experience in the areas of research regularly considered by the committee |
| <b>Dr John Thompson</b>       | Person with knowledge of, and current experience in, the care, counselling or treatment of people               |
| <b>Dr Laga Van Beek</b>       | Laywoman  |

## Indigenous Facilitation Project Reference Group

Members include:

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Mr Parry Agius</b>               | Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement, South Australia   |
| <b>Professor Larissa Behrendt</b>   | Member, AIATSIS Council; Director, Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) University of Technology, Sydney   |
| <b>Ms Valerie Cooms</b>             | Chief Executive Officer, Queensland South Native Title Representative Body, Queensland   |
| <b>Professor Mick Dodson, AM</b>    | Chair, The Australian National University Institute for Indigenous Australia; Reconciliation Australia's Good Indigenous Governance Program; Chairperson, AIATSIS; consultant mediation practitioner |
| <b>Dr Mary Edmunds</b>              | Fellow, The Australian National University Centre for Cross-Cultural Research  |
| <b>Dr Julie Finlayson</b>           | Head, Native Title Section, OIPC   |
| <b>Professor Marcia Langton, AM</b> | Chair, Australian Indigenous Studies, (University of Melbourne)  |
| <b>Mr Steve Larkin</b>              | Principal, AIATSIS; board member, Cooperative Research Centre Aboriginal Health  |
| <b>Ms Margaret O'Donnell</b>        | Consultant Mediation Practitioner  |
| <b>Mr Darryl Pearce</b>             | Chief Executive Officer, South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, Western Australia   |
| <b>Dr Gaye Sculthorpe, AM</b>       | Member, NNTT   |
| <b>Ms Diane Smith</b>               | Fellow, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University; Reconciliation Australia's Good Indigenous Governance Program  |
| <b>Dr Lisa Strelein</b>             | Manager, NTRU, AIATSIS   |
| <b>Dr Nancy Williams</b>            | Honorary Reader in Anthropology, University of Queensland  |

## Research output in 2004-05

The high level of activity by Research Program staff continued in 2004–05. Staff published 52 peer-reviewed papers, chapters and books, as well as more than 100 formal papers, manuscripts for reports, and presentations at workshops and conferences. A full list of each researcher's published work and presentations is at Appendix 1. The total represents a 25 per cent increase in peer and non-peer-reviewed books, chapters, papers and reports over the previous year.

There was a significant escalation in the volume of requests for research collaboration received by the Institute from outside parties, including Indigenous communities and individuals, representative bodies, research consortiums, government agencies and universities. AIATSIS was successful in attracting a number of established Indigenous scholars to work at the Institute in 2004–05, including Ms Kerry Arabena, Mr Steve Kinnane, Mr Glen Kelly and Ms Donna Oxenham.

### INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Intellectual Property Fellow **Dr Jane Anderson** completed her Rockefeller Fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution's Centre for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. While in the United States, Dr Anderson also gave lectures at George Washington University and at Yale. In November 2004, sponsored by a grant from the Australia–India Council, she presented a conference paper in New Delhi. She also presented papers at the Queen Mary Intellectual Property Research Institute in London and at the Max Planck Institute in Munich. Dr Anderson recently signed a contract with Edgar Elgar, a leading publisher in the intellectual property field, for the publication of her PhD thesis.

**Ms Kerry Arabena** joined the NTRU as a short-term (three months) Visiting Research Fellow to complete a scoping paper about the new arrangements in the administration of Indigenous affairs. Ms Arabena, who has a background in social work, is a descendant through her father's mother to the Merriam people in the Torres Strait. Before taking up her fellowship she was the Director of the Regional Governance Unit in the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, Canberra. She has managed health services in rural and remote communities across Australia, and is an internationally recognised expert in sexual and reproductive health.

**Ms Toni Bauman** managed the Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project (IfaMP) within the NTRU. Over the past year she has made a number of conference presentations, including at the 2004 AIATSIS Indigenous Studies – Sharing the Cultural and Theoretical Space Conference (November 2004), the

True Talking, Forward Walking 7th National Mediation Conference in Darwin (July 2004), and the New Humanities Conference in Prato, Italy (July 2004) where she was sponsored by Newmont Australia. Ms Bauman organised the speakers' program for the Semester One AIATSIS Seminar Series concerning Indigenous decision-making and conflict management. She prepared the agenda for, or facilitated, a number of IFaMP workshops including a workshop of evaluation specialists, two workshops of Indigenous and non-Indigenous native title mediation practitioners, a workshop for the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre's Diploma course, and a workshop at the Native Title Conference in June 2005 at Coffs Harbour. She has been involved in developing a number of linkages with relevant partners and has been working towards the development of a national network of Indigenous facilitators and mediators.

**Dr Stuart Bradfield** continued his work on comprehensive settlements and agreement-making within the Native Title Research Unit. Dr Bradfield's paper, 'Principles of a treaty relationship', was published in a special edition of *Balayi* dedicated to the issue of Treaty. He delivered a number of conference papers. Dr Bradfield also worked with representatives of native title representative bodies on various projects relating to comprehensive settlements, particularly with the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council on the negotiation of a Comprehensive Regional Agreement with the WA Government. Dr Bradfield is currently working on an edited volume of papers from the 2004 Native Title Conference and 2004 AIATSIS Seminar Series relating to regionalism, Indigenous governance and decision-making.

History Fellow **Dr Geoff Gray** had five peer-reviewed papers and chapters published during the year encompassing studies of anthropological knowledge, native title, history and Aboriginality. He prepared three papers for presentation, covering the careers of several anthropologists and a linguist, and made a major contribution to the Plenary Paper for the AIATSIS 40th Anniversary Conference, 'Indigenous Studies – Sharing the Cultural and Theoretical Space'. Dr Gray was involved in the ARC Discovery Grant 'Collaborating for Indigenous Rights'. He is completing a book on the relationship between anthropologists and government on pastoral stations in northern Australia.

Visiting Research Fellow **Dr Graham Henderson** worked on several major projects under the aegis of the CRC for Aboriginal Health with a particular focus on the intersections between biomedical health and social and emotional indicators of wellbeing. He was instrumental in developing a funding bid for an international project on resilience in Indigenous health – the International Collaborative Indigenous Health Research Project (ICIHRP) on Resilience. Dr Henderson was off-site for several months providing medical and humanitarian aid in Sudan.

**Mr Glen Kelly** was appointed as a Visiting Research Fellow within the NTRU for a period of 12 months from April 2005. Mr Kelly is a Nyungar man with a background in cultural and natural resource management. He has worked for some years in the area of Indigenous involvement in the management of protected areas. Mr Kelly is working with the Kimberley Land Council to develop the Kimberley Aboriginal Natural Resource Management Strategy, looking at ways in which native title and traditional law is, and can be, applied in contemporary times, with an emphasis on the management of national parks and other protected areas. He is also preparing a 'Composite Report on the Status and Trends Regarding Knowledge, Innovations and Practices of Indigenous and Local Communities: Phase II, Threats to the Practice and Transmission of Traditional Knowledge in the Asia and Australian Region' for the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal, Canada. Mr Kelly is currently working with the Department of Environment and Heritage towards the development of an Australian consultative meeting into the threats to the practice and Transmission of Traditional Knowledge.

**Mr Steve Kinnane** began his fellowship in Social Organisation and Expressive Culture in March 2005. He is examining contemporary land and sea management alliances and the integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into resource management regimes within Northern Australia. He is also studying the research engagement between international Indigenous environmental networks, international sustainability, Indigenous rights movements and Northern Australian Indigenous stakeholders. In May 2005 he developed with colleagues a successful tender to the National Oceans Office, Department of the Environment and Heritage, for funding for a report titled 'A Review of Indigenous Interests in and Connection to Sea Country in the South West Marine Region.'

**Dr Patrick McConvell**, Research Fellow in Language and Society, participated in the ARC project, 'How mixed language input affects child language development: case studies from Central Australia.' He participated in a workshop on the project at the Max Planck Institute, Nijmegen in April 2005. Dr McConvell was recently co-awarded a grant of Euro 300,000 from the Volkswagen Foundation for research on the language and related cultures of the Victoria River District (with Eva Schultze-Berndt, Graz University). The *National Indigenous Language Survey (NILS) Report* was completed in May 2005, with Dr McConvell taking a lead role in its planning and writing as well as the supervision of Drs Doug Marmion and Kazuko Obata. The AUSTLANG (Web Indigenous Languages Database) was upgraded, with a beta testing version going online in March 2005. A Dictionary Making Workshop was

also organised and hosted by Dr McConvell with a grant from ATSIIS and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

**Dr Heather McDonald** finished her Visiting Research Fellowship in Health in July 2005. Her work focused on young people's understandings of health and illness, and young people's issues, particularly stress (and stress-relieving methods), cigarette smoking, and excessive alcohol and marijuana taking. She examined these issues in relation to kinship values, child-rearing practices, work practices, decision-making, concepts of time, intellectual satisfaction, boredom, sociality and conviviality. Dr McDonald co-convened the ICIHRP International Resilience Collaboration Workshop in December 2004 at AIATSIIS.

**Dr Lisa Strelein**, Research Fellow and Manager of the NTRU, conducted research on native title and self-government, comprehensive agreements, native title practice and the legal concept of native title. Dr Strelein met regularly with staff of the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) as well as with the Native Title Research Advisory Committee and other key stakeholders. Dr Strelein's ARC partnership with Professor George Williams and Professor Larissa Behrendt culminated in the publication of *Treaty* (The Federation Press, 2005), co-authored with Sean Brennan, which was launched at the Sydney Writers' Festival. The ARC partnership also held a conference, 'Indigenous Health and the Treaty Debate', in September 2004. Dr Strelein presented a number of papers and received a number of requests to republish material in various collections. Dr Strelein completed a Visiting Fellowship with the Faculty of Law and Native Law Students Association, University of Victoria and was a Visiting Scholar at the University of Arizona Indigenous Peoples Law and Policy Program and the Native Nations Institute (home to the Harvard Project) during October and November 2004. During this time Dr Strelein presented a number of seminars, public and student lectures and was a guest at the Canadian Indigenous Bar Association, 16th Annual Conference, Calgary, Alberta, 15–16 October 2004 and, as an expert resource person, at the National Judicial Institute Conference, Judiciary of the Maritimes, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 24–26 November 2004. On invitation, Dr Strelein contributed an article ('From *Mabo* to *Yorta Yorta*: Native Title Law in Australia') to the Washington University *Journal of Law and Policy* (Spring 2005) special edition entitled 'International and Comparative Perspectives on Indigenous Rights.' Dr Strelein has also been invited to join an international interdisciplinary Consortium on Democratic Constitutionalism (Demcon) based at the University of Victoria, Canada. Dr Strelein continued as a member of the editorial committees for the journal *Balayi: Culture, Law and Colonialism* and the Native Title Research Unit's issues paper series *Land, Rights, Laws: Issues of Native Title*.



Governance Fellow **Dr Patrick Sullivan** was Acting Director of Research for part of the reporting period in addition to carrying out research on his fellowship. Dr Sullivan began a new research project on whole-of-government approaches to service delivery. This study will employ an anthropological approach in examining policy frameworks and requires working with Kimberley Indigenous Coordination Centres. Dr Sullivan completed the co-editing of a volume of papers for the *Australian Journal of Anthropology* called *Delimiting cultures*. Dr Sullivan convened a panel on 'A Theoretical and Practical Framework for Dealing with Culture and Conflict' with Ms Toni Bauman for the 40th Anniversary Conference.

Education and Cultural Transmission Fellow **Dr Anthea-Jo Taylor** began her Visiting Research Fellowship on 1 June 2005. Dr Taylor has carried out research on Indigenous education and curriculum development for over 25 years and has previously held research positions/lectureships at Murdoch University, Curtin University and the University of Western Australia. She has carried out varied and extensive field studies in the Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne regions of Western Australia.

During 2004–05, **Dr Peter Veth** was Acting Deputy Principal (Research), Acting Deputy Principal (Collections) and is now substantive Director of Research. Dr Veth was appointed to an Adjunct Senior Research Fellowship at the Centre for Cross Cultural Studies at the Australian National University. He made a number of presentations including the Inaugural Norman Tindale Lecture in Adelaide in November 2004. In 2005 Dr Veth completed the volumes *Desert Peoples: Archaeological Perspectives* (co-edited with Drs Mike Smith and Peter Hiscock) for Blackwell Publishing; and *Archaeology of the Aru Islands* (co-edited with Dr Sue O'Connor and Professor Matthew Spriggs) for the Australian National University's *Terra Australis* series. He co-edited (with Drs Harrison and McDonald) a thematic edition of *Australian Aboriginal Studies* (2005/1) on native title, claimant connections to sites and contact archaeology. He completed papers and chapters for a range of volumes including *The Social Archaeology of Indigenous Societies*; *23 Degrees South: The Archaeology and Environmental History of Southern Hemisphere Deserts* and the journal *Rock Art Research*. Dr Veth also carried out fieldwork on the remote desert homelands east of the Canning Stock Route with Martu peoples in July 2004.

Research Fellow in Cultural Landscapes **Dr Graeme Ward** continued his research in the Wadeye area into cultural heritage tourism management, ranging across the specifics of 'condition reporting' and related conservation measures through techniques of visitor management, issues of ownership and control of use of intellectual property, and implementation of applied projects. Dr Ward

organised the 40th Anniversary Conference, convened a session on Indigenous tourism within the 2004 Conference, and authored or co-authored and presented or co-presented papers at two international conferences. He was a co-editor of the volume *The Power of Knowledge, the Resonance of Tradition*, ASP, Canberra. He also compiled and co-edited the collection of papers comprising the first electronic publication of conference proceedings by the Institute's Research Program. Dr Ward edited or compiled several discussion papers, session proceedings, and two editions of *Australian Aboriginal Studies*.

#### VISITING SCHOLARS PROGRAM

To foster excellence in research, AIATSIS pursues a vigorous intellectual environment and seeks to maximise the benefits of developing networks of academics, practitioners and thinkers in Indigenous Studies. AIATSIS encourages people in the field to join the Research Program for academic sabbaticals, short stays and short-term fellowships. The value of this approach is twofold: the professional development of both staff and visitors, and the contribution of papers, seminars and research outcomes. AIATSIS encourages a diversity of visitors, including through its International Indigenous Fellowship Program in the Native Title Research Unit (NTRU), the Indigenous Scholars Program for postgraduate scholars, short-term visiting fellowships (of one to three months), and honorary visiting fellowships appointed by Council. The Institute also provides opportunities for seminars and workshops to be presented by occasional visitors.

During 2004–05 the NTRU hosted **Dr James (Jimmy) Weiner** for a six-week visiting fellowship. During his time at AIATSIS Dr Weiner investigated the impact of native title processes on anthropological practice and issues relating to connection materials in southern and eastern Australia. Dr Weiner also wrote a comment on *Johnny Jango & ors v Northern Territory of Australia & ors* for the *Native Title Newsletter* (July/August) No. 4/2004.

The NTRU is also hosting **Ms Donna Oxenham**, an Indigenous researcher whose family come from the Shark Bay/Carnarvon region in the north-west of Western Australia. She is currently completing her Masters thesis investigating issues of identity and cultural continuity with communities from the south-west of Western Australia.

**Dr Morgan Brigg**, a trainer and mediator currently working with the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Queensland, spent several weeks with IFaMP during May 2005. During this time he delivered a joint presentation with Mr Patrick McIntyre, Barrister and Co-Chair of the Mawul Rom Cross-Cultural Mediation & Leadership Program, as part of the

AIATSIS Seminar Series. The presentation focused on issues associated with the development of appropriate training in the cross-cultural context with prospects for improved practice. Dr Brigg made valuable contributions to current research efforts undertaken by the project.

**Professor Colin Tatz** continued his tenure as an Honorary Visiting Fellow, working on a reference work titled 'The Politics of Property: Aboriginal Land Policies 1966–2006'. He donated images from his personal collection (see page 77) to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sports Hall of Fame, launched by Professor Mick Dodson in November 2004, with selected black and white images now on display in the Mabo Room.

**Dr Les Hiatt**, an AIATSIS Honorary Visiting Fellow, continued his work on a number of research projects relating to Arnhem Land and Tasmania, as well as sorting and cataloguing his extensive collection of papers for deposit in the Institute's archives.

## Native Title Research Unit (NTRU)

The Native Title Research Unit (NTRU), located within the Institute's Research Program, was established in 1993 through collaboration between ATSIC and AIATSIS in response to the High Court decision in *Mabo v Queensland [No.2]* (1992), which recognised Indigenous peoples' rights to land under the legal concept of native title. The NTRU plays a key role in coordinating information, developing capacity and facilitating policy debate within the native title system.

In addition to specific research projects of Fellows within the Unit, the NTRU produces a wide range of publications and resources for the native title sector. In late 2004 the Unit's website was re-launched, featuring new and updated resources. Features of the new website include research resource pages and the Native Title Resource Guide, which significantly increases the availability of online information for native title researchers and practitioners. The NTRU's in-house publications, the issues paper series *Land, Rights, Laws: Issues of Native Title* and the *Native Title Newsletter* were also reviewed and re-designed to improve readability and reduce production costs.

The NTRU hosts a range of activities and events relating to native title, including seminars, workshops and the annual Native Title Conference. In April 2005 the NTRU hosted a Claims Research Management workshop for staff of native title representative bodies (NTRBs). The purpose of the workshop was to provide an opportunity for NTRB staff to share information about different approaches to claims research management. Feedback from the

## **Report on sea country highlights ancient management practices**

It's a timeless reality familiar to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people all along Australia's vast coastline: ancient cultures living astride the land and the sea, managing complex littoral economies in accordance with their strong spiritual connections to both land and water.

It's manifest in the fish traps, shell middens and camp sites which have been used for thousands of years, and which continue to play an important part in the lives of traditional owners, who not only continue to use the facilities, but who protect, respect and maintain them as their ancestors did before them.

AIATSIS Research Fellow Steve Kinnane is part of a team reviewing Indigenous connections to sea country in Australia's South West Marine Region (SWMR) for the National Oceans Office. The review is looking at contemporary and historical use of marine resources by Indigenous peoples, Indigenous governance arrangements, and the key issues and challenges of engaging Indigenous people in the region.

'The SWMR extends west along the Australian coastline from the eastern edge of Kangaroo Island in South Australia to the port of Fremantle in Western Australia,' Steve explains. 'The research will be used by the National Oceans Office to engage with Indigenous traditional owners, individuals and representative organisations which have direct linkages and obligatory responsibilities within the SWMR.'

'Indigenous sea country has been managed over thousands of years using natural cultural resource practices such as ceremonial rejuvenation rituals, allocation of resources within the community and control of entry into marine estates by outsiders,' says Steve.

'Management has also involved issues such as seasonal exploitation of particular marine resources according to seasonal and ecological occurrences, and restrictions on the harvesting of particular species according to observations of species decline, customary rights or avoidance relationships.'

The final report is expected to be delivered in late 2005.

workshop was extremely positive with participants highlighting the value of exchanging precedents with colleagues from other representative bodies. Also in April 2005, the NTRU hosted a forum for native title researchers to share information about current native title research projects, identify opportunities for collaboration and discuss future research priorities.

Through consultation with stakeholders, the NTRU seeks to identify emerging needs within the native title sector. The Native Title Research and Access Officer, Ms Grace Koch, undertook a survey to see what sort of planning was being done by NTRBs in relation to the future of documents generated by the native title process. The results of this survey were disseminated to all NTRBs, and further discussed and examined in a workshop for NTRBs at the 2005 Native Title Conference held in June 2005 at Coffs Harbour (see page 40). Interest in this topic was so strong that a second session on the topic was organised during the conference. A series of recommendations arising from these workshops will serve as the basis for a project in the coming year.

The Native Title Research Unit undertakes collaborative research projects with a wide range of Indigenous researchers and organisations, including the ARC Treaty Project and native title representative bodies. Indigenous researchers and practitioners were also strongly represented in the seminars, workshops and conference convened by the NTRU including the AIATSIS Seminar Series, the claims research management workshop and the Native Title Conference.

The NTRU also has an International Indigenous Fellowship program which provides an opportunity for Indigenous scholars to undertake research projects within NTRU. The inaugural International Indigenous Fellow was Professor John Borrows, an Anishinabe/Ojibway man and a member of the Chippewa of the Nawash First Nation in Ontario, Canada.

In addition to the general services provided to clients by the AIATSIS Library (see Chapter 3), the NTRU provides a dedicated service for people doing research on native title claims wanting to access the AIATSIS collections.

During 2004–05, the NTRU distributed a survey seeking feedback on its publications, website and services.

## INDIGENOUS FACILITATION AND MEDIATION PROJECT (IFaMP)

The Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project (IFaMP), within the Native Title Research Unit, is concerned to

- support a culture of evaluation in the native title context
- identify best practice in Indigenous decision-making and conflict management
- build on Indigenous ways of making decisions and managing conflict in the design and implementation of flexible, responsive, reliable and sustainable decision-making and dispute management systems
- identify relevant training
- raise awareness of the need for procedural expertise and skills and long term relationship building in dealing with Indigenous decision-making processes and conflict management beyond a more common emphasis on substantive outcomes.

The three-year project commenced in July 2003 and is coordinated by Ms Toni Bauman.

It receives core funding from the Office of Indigenous Policy Co-ordination in the Department of Immigration, Multiculturalism and Indigenous Affairs.

IFaMP conducted a number of workshops throughout 2004–05, which were sponsored by the National Native Title Tribunal. A workshop involving a range of evaluation specialists was held in September 2004 to explore and consider the range of principles and issues that underpin the development of a useful, coherent and easily applied evaluation framework in relation to training and service delivery programs.

IFaMP held a workshop in October 2004 to bring together CEOs from NTRBs; staff, including Indigenous staff, from New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria; and staff from community mediation organisations to explore linkages of mutual benefit.

Workshops were also held in February and March 2005 with Indigenous and non-Indigenous native title mediation practitioners to discuss best practice issues that arose out of IFaMP's survey of native title mediators. The survey was conducted by Ms Rhiân Williams, a consultant research fellow with IFaMP, in early 2004.

IFaMP is currently producing a manual of existing products, providers and pathways for NTRBs and others in mediation, facilitation, negotiation and dispute management, including private and government intuitional providers. This will form part of a training framework for NTRB staff and others in decision-making and conflict management processes. The framework will involve negotiating vocational pathways at TAFE-certified levels, as well as through private providers.

In addition, IFaMP has compiled working contact lists of Indigenous and non-Indigenous practitioners of facilitation and mediation intended for the use of NTRBs. The lists are not intended as a referral service but rather as a source of information to be followed up by NTRBs and others in seeking facilitation and mediation engagement. Lists are not distributed until related issues are fully canvassed with those who appear in them. A paper outlining these issues has been prepared and distributed. IFaMP has also established a preliminary email network for Indigenous facilitators and mediators.

The project has produced a number of papers for practical application by NTRBs and others. These include a guide to making complaints about native title mediation, a basic facilitation skills manual, and a poster that sets out the differences between the processes of negotiation, facilitation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration. A draft guideline for NTRBs to develop decision-making and dispute management policy has now been developed, and will be workshopped with an NTRB for feedback and further revision in the next financial year.

IFaMP convened the AIATSIS Seminar Series for Semester One 2005, titled 'Native Title, Decision-making and Conflict Management'. A great deal of interest was expressed in the series, with IFaMP receiving numerous requests for papers. Some of the topics included: 'Aboriginal Law and Native Title Mediation: The Spear Creek, Port Augusta Example' by Parry Agius of the Aboriginal Legal rights Movement; 'The Trouble with Native Title Mediation' by Kurt Noble of the Indigenous Healing Centre, Pormpuraaw; 'Apples and Oranges: the intersection of Aboriginal law and native title mediation' by Associate Professor Craig Jones of James Cook University; and 'Native Title Mediation Practice: the commonalities, the challenges, the contradictions' by Ms Rhiân Williams.

The IFaMP web page is regularly updated with new resources and continues to provide a comprehensive range of research materials on Indigenous facilitation and mediation. This includes a bibliography, also published in hard copy, which contains readings on Indigenous decision-making and conflict management, broader alternative dispute resolution readings and some practice manuals.

IFaMP will continue in the third and final year of the project (2005–06) to promote the development of a national network of Indigenous mediators and facilitators to work not only within the native title context but also in areas created by and associated with shared responsibility and regional partnership agreements.

## **IFaMP linkages with other organisations**

The National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Council (NADRAC), the Federal Court and IFaMP are collaborating to carry out a scoping study of case studies in mediating Indigenous disputes with the aim of identifying best practice in Indigenous mediation across a range of contexts.

An application for an ARC linkage grant that will focus on Indigenous conflict, culture and land has been submitted through the Centre for Cross Cultural Research and the National Centre for Indigenous Studies, both at the Australian National University. This research would begin in late 2005 to mid-2006 and involve Dr Mary Edmunds and Ms Toni Bauman.

Ms Bauman has also held discussions with the Native Title Unit of the James Cook University and the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Queensland.

## **AIATSIS 2004 Conference**

The AIATSIS 40th Anniversary Conference was held at the Manning Clark Centre, Australian National University, 22–25 November 2004.

The theme of the conference, 'Indigenous Studies – Sharing the Cultural and Theoretical Space', built upon a previous conference with a similar theme that was held by the Flinders University Yunggoorendi First Nations Centre, the Australian Studies Program and the International Australian Studies Association (INASA) in 2002. The purpose of the conference was to bring together various disciplines to begin to negotiate a new space for past and emerging Indigenous Studies theory.

The conference was strongly supported by the Council and staff of AIATSIS as well as academics, scholars, educators, researchers and students from around the country. There were 287 registrations and more than 90 delegates presented papers, and/or convened sessions and workshops. The major sponsor of the conference was the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), with significant support from the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA). The New South Wales and Victorian Departments of Aboriginal Affairs provided funding to support Indigenous participation at the conference.



The Steering Committee for the Conference comprised a sub-committee of the AIATSIS Council and the RAC, as follows:

**TABLE 2 AIATSIS 2004 CONFERENCE STEERING COMMITTEE**

|                           |                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Mr Steve Larkin           | Principal, AIATSIS – Chair         |
| Dr Gaynor Macdonald       | Research Advisory Committee        |
| Mr Lester-Irabinna Rigney | Research Advisory Committee        |
| Dr Luke Taylor            | Deputy Principal Research, AIATSIS |
| Mr Michael Williams       | AIATSIS Council Member             |

The AIATSIS Research Program produced the event. Various staff worked on the project throughout the developmental and production stages, particularly Dr Graeme Ward, who was conference convener and responsible for programming, and Mr Craig Greene, who was responsible for coordination, logistics and production.

The conference had three plenary sessions:

**TABLE 3 AIATSIS 2004 CONFERENCE PLENARY SESSIONS**

| 23 NOVEMBER                                   | 24 NOVEMBER   | 25 NOVEMBER   |
|---|---|---|
| Professor Mick Dodson, AM<br>ANU/AIATSIS      | Chief Judge Joe Williams,<br>Maori Land Court                                   | Mr Alvin Warren, Santa<br>Clara Pueblo, Espanola,<br>New Mexico |
| <i>AIATSIS: Forty years of<br/>Excellence</i> | <i>Great Expectations: The<br/>Treaty Settlement Process<br/>in New Zealand</i> | <i>Becoming our own<br/>Cartographic Masters.</i>               |

The conference included sessions on:

- sharing land and the politics of property
- making space for Indigenous cultural expressions of well-being in Aboriginal health research and practice
- Indigenous research
- mapping the shared terrain: Indigenous and non-Indigenous concepts of landscape
- cultural groups in space and time: developing a theoretical and practical framework for culture and conflict
- sharing the place: innovation and sustainability in Indigenous tourism
- repatriation: return of Indigenous remains and objects of cultural significance

- native title and world and national heritage nominations
- what is a knowledge centre? a contemporary approach to Indigenous cultural resource management
- developing a national strategy for intellectual property
- making dictionaries for Indigenous languages.

## Australian Code for Conducting Research 2004

AIATSIS responded in March 2005 to an invitation from the National Health and Medical Research Council to make a submission to the draft Australian Code for Conducting Research 2004 (the Australian Code). The code contains standards for research practice across all disciplines. In its response AIATSIS drew attention to its own Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies, which emphasise both the responsibilities of researchers and the rights of those who are the focus of research. AIATSIS advocated inclusion of a number of principles in the Australian Code relating to consultation, negotiation and mutual understanding; respect, recognition and involvement; benefit, outcomes and agreement; and the underlying rationale for the principles—namely recognition that, as the focus of academic study, Indigenous communities and individuals contribute to the research and should be acknowledged for the intellectual contribution to research outcomes including in authorship. It was noted that working with Indigenous peoples requires time for the development of protocols or written agreements in relation to issues such as access to confidential or sensitive material such as medical records.

Copies of the AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies are available on request from the Research Administrator, AIATSIS.

## Grants awarded

In 2004–05 Council approved the awarding of 33 research grants totalling \$694,515 as recommended by the Research Advisory Committee. Consideration of a further two grants was deferred to the next Council meeting. The full list of grants awarded is at Appendix 2.

Over one hundred applicants requested a total of \$3,272,740 in grant funds. This is indicative of the high level of participation in the competitive research grants scheme. Grant applications came from a diversity of disciplines and many multidisciplinary requests were received. New areas of research were proposed such as built environment design and resource management. Many applications addressed the special emphasis categories for the 2004–05 round and there was a strong response to the new category of Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

There was a high level of successful Indigenous participation in the Competitive Research Grants Program. Applications showed an increasing trend towards more collaborative research, with Indigenous researchers involved in well over half of all applications and monies awarded. The mentoring of Indigenous applicants by grants staff has been a priority towards increasing the capacity of Indigenous researchers. Research staff have provided individuals, communities and organisations with feedback on eligibility and proposed research projects and facilitated access to resources and networks. Familiarity with the Institute's Research Programs is actively supported through personal contact and involvement in the Institute's research workshops, seminars and conferences.

During 2004–05, the research grants team engaged in presentations and workshops in Darwin (Charles Darwin University and Batchelor College), Maningrida, Alice Springs (Charles Darwin University) and Canberra (Ngunnawal Centre, University of Canberra), and gave a number of in-house presentations to visiting groups.

This year AIATSIS will offer grantees training in audio-visual techniques to support quality project outputs.

## National Research Priorities Report

Table 4 summarises the actions recommended in the AIATSIS Implementation Plan 2004 for greater engagement with the Australian Government's National Research Priorities.

Significant progress on the plan has been made during 2004–05. A June 2005 report on progress by the Chief Scientist, Dr Robin Batterham, noted the positive actions taken by the Institute, with particular focus on the health agenda.

**TABLE 4 AIATSIS CONTRIBUTION TOWARD NATIONAL RESEARCH GOALS**

| NATIONAL RESEARCH PRIORITY GOAL  | PROPOSED AIATSIS CONTRIBUTION TO OUTCOMES   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Responding to climate change and variability</b></li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase research focus on issues relating to Indigenous land management, co-management plans and ATSI natural resource knowledge banks</li> <li>● Foster research on the history of human/landscape relationships</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Strengthening Australia's social and economic framework</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support project <i>Facilitating Indigenous Decision- and Agreement-Making and Managing Disputes in Land Issues</i></li> <li>● Prioritise activities of the Research Fellows in Health towards outputs in the CRC for Aboriginal Health</li> <li>● Use role of AIATSIS on the CRC Board to initiate further research links with industry and community</li> <li>● Continue emphasis of research into the environmental and social causes of ill-health (with research partners)</li> <li>● Mobilise Fellows' work on governance to address the provision of health servicing to Indigenous clients</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Promoting an innovation culture and economy</b></li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase research outputs on Indigenous knowledge systems and intellectual property</li> <li>● Maintain focus and increase outputs on Indigenous success stories (both community and industry)</li> <li>● Focus on current and future projects which enhance understandings of cultural transmission, education and cultural heritage</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Understanding our region in the world</b></li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Foster research that has a bearing on regional and international treaties/agreements and protocols</li> <li>● Increase focus on historical trends by which Indigenous communities increasingly become profiled in international portrayals of wider Australian society</li> </ul>  |

The Institute's draft National Research Priorities Report to the Minister for Education, Science and Training (July 2005) is at Appendix 3.

TABLE 5: AIATSIS OUTPUTS IN RELATION TO NRP GOALS/AIATSIS RESEARCH PROGRAMS

| Research Outputs              | Understanding our region in the world   | Promoting an innovation culture and economy   | Strengthening Australia's social and economic framework                            | Sustainable use of Australia's biodiversity          | Responding to climate change and variability | National Research Priority Goals                        |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|---|
|                               | Culture/Heritage/Transmission/Education, Land Tenure/Mediation/Treaty, Country and Resource Management/Indigenous Knowledge, Grants, Publications/Conferences | Culture/Heritage/Transmission/Education, Country and Resource Management/Indigenous Knowledge, Grants, Publications/Conferences | Health, Governance, Land Tenure/Mediation/Treaty, Grants, Publications/Conferences | Country and Resource Management/Indigenous knowledge | Culture/Heritage/Transmission/Education      | AIATSIS Research Programs                               |
| 52                            | 27  | 2   | 10   | 3  | 3  | Peer-reviewed papers, chapters and books                |
| 67                            | 13  | 6   | 45   | 3  | 0  | Non-peer-reviewed papers, technical and applied reports |
| 60                            | 30  | 5   | 18   | 4  | 3  | Other public communications                             |
| 1.295M                        | \$120 000   | -   | 1.1M   | \$70 000   | \$5 000                                      | External funds  |
| 7 Conferences<br>c.2,165 cpds | Circa 100 cpds  | 2 065 conference people days  | 4 conf.  | 2  | 1  | Conferences, Seminars, Workshops and Fora               |
| 34                            | 12  | 5   | 15   | 2  | -  | Funded projects in the grants program (approx. only)    |
| 1 265*                        | -   | -   | -  | -  | -  | Library and archive requests                            |
| 41                            | c. 10   | 2   | 25   | 1  | 3  | Requests for research and capacity building             |

cpds: conference people days

\* This figure represents the total number of transactions involved in processing requests across all NRP areas.

## Strategic research alliances

### INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE INDIGENOUS HEALTH RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP (ICIHRP)

As part of the CRC Aboriginal Health (see below), in August 2004 the AIATSIS health team, together with research colleagues from the Australian Centre for Health Promotion at the University of Sydney, Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council, James Cook University, Massey University in New Zealand and the University of Manitoba in Canada, developed a successful expression of interest (EOI) to the International Collaborative Indigenous Health Research Partnership (ICIHRP) Grant Scheme on Resilience<sup>1</sup>. The title of the EOI proposal was 'Indigeneity, Resilience and Best Outcomes for Health'. The proposal was subsequently developed into a full research application to the ICIHRP Grant Scheme in March 2005. Formal advice on the outcome of the \$5 million bid was received on 1 July 2005. While the application was unsuccessful, a number of possible collaborations may arise out of project planning undertaken for the application.

### OFFICE OF INDIGENOUS POLICY COORDINATION

The Institute's native title activities are primarily conducted through the Native Title Research Unit (NTRU) in its strategic alliance with the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC). OIPC provides funding for the core activities of the NTRU with further funding for additional projects including the Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project (IFaMP) and the annual Native Title Conference. The Unit's research program is developed in consultation with the Native Title Research Advisory Committee, which includes OIPC representation.

### NTRU'S INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

NTRU plays a key role in coordinating information, developing capacity and facilitating policy debate within the native title system.

In 2004–05, NTRU hosted a forum to discuss research projects of institutional partners including the Federal Court of Australia, the National Native Title Tribunal, Research Fellows within AIATSIS, OIPC, James Cook University (Native Title Program), University of Melbourne (Agreements, Treaties and Negotiated Settlements Project), Monash University (Castan Centre), the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, the National Centre for

---

1. This is a funding initiative of the Tripartite Cooperation Agreement between Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC NZ), and the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia (NHMRC).

Indigenous Studies, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and Reconciliation Australia. The purpose of the forum was to bring together researchers from universities and other institutions and organisations to share information about current native title research projects, identify opportunities for collaboration and discuss future research priorities. Information arising from this forum will be provided to participants and native title representative bodies and registered native title bodies corporate, to increase awareness of current research and promote greater levels of communication and collaboration between researchers and practitioners. There was a very positive response from forum participants who indicated that an annual forum of this nature would be very valuable.

#### **ARC LINKAGE GRANT**

AIATSIS (Dr Lisa Strelein), together with colleagues from the University of Melbourne (Prof Marcia Langton; Ms Maureen Tehan; Dr Lisa Palmer; Dr Lee Godden) and in partnership with Rio Tinto Limited and the Office of Indigenous Policy and Coordination, were successful in an application for an ARC Linkage Grant of around \$446,000 over four years, entitled 'The Implementation of Agreements and Treaties with Indigenous and Local Peoples in Postcolonial Australia'. The project involves a comparative study by an interdisciplinary team of the implementation of agreements with Indigenous and local peoples across selected Australian and international jurisdictions. Agreement-making is now a major policy tool for governments, industry and Indigenous peoples. Using case studies, this project will address the critical need for research on implementation of agreements and the factors promoting long-term sustainability. This will involve examination of legal, governance, economic development, land/heritage, environmental management issues that arise in agreement implementation, and investigation of the features of agreements that enhance social, cultural and economic outcomes for Indigenous communities.

#### **FEDERAL COURT WORKSHOP**

Dr Lisa Strelein and Ms Toni Bauman of the NTRU were invited to participate in the Federal Court's Native Title Workshop held in Brisbane in April 2005. Ms Bauman's paper was entitled 'Learnings from the Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project'. Dr Strelein's paper was entitled 'The Strategic Use of Agreement-making and the Negotiation of Agreements under the Shadow of the Law'.

## **SOUTH WEST ABORIGINAL LAND AND SEA COUNCIL**

Dr Stuart Bradfield and Dr Lisa Strelein continued their work collaborating with the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council on the development of a single native title claim and a Comprehensive Regional Agreement. This included meetings in Perth, Canberra and Coffs Harbour, and this year resulted in publication of an Issues Paper by Dr Strelein and a report to the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination by Dr Bradfield. Dr Bradfield also discusses the South West process in a contribution to the forthcoming volume edited by Professor Marcia Langton and her team from Melbourne University, *Settling with Indigenous Peoples*.

## **COOPERATIVE RESEARCH CENTRE FOR ABORIGINAL HEALTH**

The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health (CRCAH) is a 'virtual' organisation bringing together research users, research providers, policy makers and service delivery agencies. The new CEO for the CRCAH, Mr Mick Gooda, commenced work in Darwin in November 2004, and the Principal of AIATSIS, Mr Steve Larkin, continued in his role as a member of the CRCAH Board. The CRCAH Board endorsed the October 2004 paper entitled 'An integrated programmatic approach to the CRCAH'S research and development activities'. Five program areas were identified. These are: healthy skin (scabies); chronic diseases; primary health care, systems and workforce; social determinants and the physical environment; and Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing. The AIATSIS health research team (six members) attended the CRCAH Convocation in April 2005 in Alice Springs where the five program areas were further discussed and developed.

The projects of three Visiting Research Fellows at AIATSIS were officially endorsed as in-kind projects for the CRCAH during 2004–05. These were:

- Governance as a social determinant of Indigenous health (Dr Patrick Sullivan)
- Socio-cultural factors facilitating or inhibiting Indigenous health and health delivery, especially in relation to cardiovascular disease and respiratory illness: an East Kimberley project (Dr Heather McDonald)
- Indigenous social and emotional wellbeing and what we can do to improve it: Muuji Regional Centre Research Project (Dr Graham Henderson).

Two further projects have been submitted to the CRCAH for approval as in-kind projects. These are:

- The National Trachoma and Eye Health Program (NTEHP) History Project (Dr Geoffrey Gray)
- Research on the policing implications of cannabis, amphetamine and other illicit drug use in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (Dr Peter Veth).



Five CRCAH-commissioned large review papers involving AIATSIS research staff as co-authors were presented at the CRCAH Social Determinants of Aboriginal Health Workshop held in Adelaide (July 2004). These review papers were subsequently developed into smaller papers for peer-review and publication by the CRCAH. The five papers are entitled:

- ‘Governance, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, as a social determinant of Indigenous health’ (Dr Patrick Sullivan and Ms Katharine Oliver)
- ‘Culture in health research and practice’ (Dr Heather McDonald and Ms Janelle White)
- ‘Social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the broader context of the social determinants of health’ (Dr Graham Henderson, Ms Carrie Robson, Mr Craig Dukes, Dr Komla Tsey, Dr Leonie Cox, and Dr Melissa Haswell)
- ‘Framework for research on Aboriginal health and the physical environment’ (Ms Kayli Wayte, Dr Ross Bailie, Dr Natalie Gray and Dr Graham Henderson)
- ‘Social capital and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health: problems and possibilities’ (Dr Mark Brough, Dr Graham Henderson, Ms Rosemary Foster, and Ms Heather Douglas).

#### **DESERT KNOWLEDGE COOPERATIVE RESEARCH CENTRE**

Involvement with the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre (DKCRC) continued in 2004–05, with Dr Patrick Sullivan receiving seed funding for a project on organisational culture and whole-of-government service delivery to Indigenous communities in the Kimberley. He undertook a three-week research trip in April 2005. This was made possible by his enrolment as a Research Associate at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR), a partner of the DKCRC, and as a research collaborator on the CAEPR/Reconciliation Australia/ARC linkage grant for the Indigenous Community Governance Project. The DKCRC was restructured during 2004–05 and no longer has a governance stream but will continue to support Dr Sullivan’s involvement in the new Core Research Project Four – Accessing Services in Desert Settlements.

#### **TREATY RESEARCH NETWORK**

Dr Lisa Strelein is a partner investigator in an ARC partnership with Professor George Williams (UNSW) and Professor Larissa Behrendt (UTS) examining the public law implications of a treaty between Indigenous peoples and the Australian government. In September 2004 the project hosted a forum entitled

‘Indigenous health and the treaty debate.’ As noted above, the project culminated in the publication of *Treaty* by Mr Sean Brennan, Professor Larissa Behrendt, Dr Lisa Strelein and Professor George Williams (The Federation Press, 2005).

## Native Title Conference 2005

The 2005 Native Title Conference was co-hosted by AIATSIS and New South Wales Native Title Services Limited. The conference was held in Coffs Harbour, the traditional country of the Gumbaynggirr people. As in the past couple of years, pre-conference workshops for native title representative bodies were held on 1 June 2005, providing an opportunity for native title claimants and their representatives to discuss issues of concern.

Gumbaynggirr Elders held a Welcome Ceremony on the evening of Wednesday 1 June. Mr Tony Flanders led a Smoking Ceremony together with Mr Ken Craig and Mr Trevor Wilson to cleanse those visiting Gumbaynggirr country. Elders from throughout the Gumbaynggirr language group area gave short speeches welcoming participants in the Conference. The Jumbaal Dancers also performed at the Opening.

The Opening Plenary on 2 June was presented by Mr Tom Calma (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission) and Mr Warren Mundine (Chief Executive Officer, New South Wales Native Title Services Limited) on the topics ‘Challenges and Opportunities in Times of Change’ and ‘Aboriginal Governance and Economic Development’ respectively.

Conference delegates then chose from a range of sessions, addressing the following topics:

- Indigenous Talking Circles on the litigation experience, negotiating and implementing agreements, and the roles and responsibilities of applicants
- the new arrangements in Indigenous Affairs
- a forum convened by the Federal Court of Australia on experts and evidence
- a panel discussion on communal ownership of land and individual wealth creation
- negotiating and implementing agreements, recent determinations
- mediation and Court practices
- ‘Our Land’, presented by Gumbaynggirr Elders and workshops run by the Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation project and the National Native Title Tribunal.

## The human face of native title

Indigenous leaders at the 2005 AIATSIS annual Native Title Conference forecast new significance for the event as a forum for traditional owners.

The sixth Native Title Conference, held at Coffs Harbour in northern New South Wales from 1 to 3 June 2005, saw lively discussion, not only on issues of native title but also on broader questions of cultural identity and heritage.

Convened by AIATSIS and NSW Native Title Services, the conference was titled ‘The Human Face of Native Title.’ Arguably the most important annual event for the collective discussion of Australian native title, it was held on Gumbaynggirr traditional country.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Tom Calma told the audience that, following the demise of ATSIC, the conference was one of the last remaining forums for Indigenous groups to organise and speak with a single voice.

‘I encourage conference organisers and attendees to use the conference as a mechanism through which to set the Indigenous agenda on land issues, and make recommendations to government,’ he said.

Delivering the Mabo Lecture, Senator Aden Ridgeway said the conference now stood as one of very few forums in which Indigenous people were able to get together annually to assess ‘where they were at,’ to share information about successes, to identify systemic problems in the native title system, and to look for ways forward.

*‘We need to give attention to the issue of how we will have a voice at a national level, and this conference is ideally placed to set some directions for governments by indicating with clarity what Indigenous people think about the current state of land law in this country.’*  
– Senator Aden Ridgeway.



Senator Aden Ridgeway delivering the Mabo Lecture at the 2005 AIATSIS Native Title Conference

A regular feature of the Native Title Conference is the Mabo Lecture, which opens proceedings on the anniversary of the High Court's historic Mabo decision on 3 June 1992. As in previous years, Mrs Bonita Mabo provided introductory remarks delivering a pre-recorded welcome message for conference delegates. Students from St Mary's Primary School in Bowraville entertained delegates with songs sung in Gumbaynggirr. The 2005 Mabo Lecture was presented by Senator Aden Ridgeway on the topic 'Addressing the Economic Exclusion of Indigenous Australians through Native Title'.

Delegates then chose from a range of sessions addressing the following topics:

- native title and economic development
- oceans and waterways
- comprehensive approaches to settling native title
- representation and governance
- Speer Creek – a case study
- native title – the personal journey
- a forum convened by the Office of Native Title WA focussing on the evidence requirements of the State in the mediation process.

A Native Title Youth Forum was also held on Friday 3 June.

During the Conference the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Mr Tom Calma, launched the Aboriginal Studies Press publication *Mutton Fish: the surviving culture of Aboriginal people on the south coast of New South Wales* by Beryl Cruse, Liddy Stewart and Sue Norman (see story on page 54).

## National Indigenous Languages Survey

The National Indigenous Language Survey (NILS) was commissioned by the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DCITA) and carried out in 2004 by AIATSIS in association with the Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages (FATSIL). The NILS report, over 200 pages in length, was submitted to DCITA in April 2005, with Dr Patrick McConvell, Dr Doug Marmion and Ms Sally McNicol as the main writers. It provides a summary and analysis of results from the survey of Indigenous languages vitality status and resources, and 53 policy recommendations. The survey was innovative in being an Internet survey with respondents providing online answers to the questionnaire, assessments that could be processed as numbers, and free text commentary, supplemented by telephone interviews and meetings and a survey of collections of material.

## AUSTLANG

AUSTLANG is a database about Australian Indigenous languages built on work done by Dr Nick Thieberger for AIATSIS on the Indigenous Languages Database (ILDB). Dr Doug Marmion prepared a scoping report on a web-enabled upgrade and this was developed by the Language Technology Group (LTG), Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering, University of Melbourne under contract to AIATSIS in 2004–05. The beta version of AUSTLANG became available in February 2005. AIATSIS has presented a demonstration of the database on a few occasions and has received positive comments and suggestions. The Institute plans to install it on a server at AIATSIS in August 2005 with an AIATSIS launch projected for 2006.

AUSTLANG currently contains the following datasets, all of which are owned by AIATSIS or used under licence: ILDB datasets; AIATSIS Library thesaurus; Regional Language Handbooks; OzBib (Australian Languages Bibliography); Australian Bureau of Statistics datasets; Geoscience Australia maps; and SIL Ethnologue. AUSTLANG allows users to search by entering a key word, for example a language name, or by clicking a location on a map. From the search result, users can bring up a language profile, which provides information on AIATSIS code; AIATSIS reference name and alternative names by source; summary of documentation (audio, ethnolinguistic, grammar, language, literature); a list of maps where the language is spoken, and a map that shows the location where the language is spoken.

Software and content development is expected to continue for at least another year after the launch if funding is available. Many more functions, datasets (such as the National Indigenous Language Survey above) and linkages can be added. More complex or refined search functions can also be added, for example search by a number of speakers, languages with grammatical description available, and so on.

## Illicit Substance Use and Policing Protocols Project

In July 2005 AIATSIS and the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) completed a landmark study of issues associated with the policing of cannabis, amphetamine and other illicit drug use in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in rural and remote areas. The research, funded by the National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund, examined the current patterns of substance use and discussed ways to improve the capacity of police to work more effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on illicit drug issues.

## **Drug use researchers given strong community support**

It sounds like a tough assignment for a couple of city-based researchers—travel to rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in four states and territories, and investigate the extent of illicit drug use and the effectiveness of policing. But for Brendan Delahunty and Judy Putt, together with research partners from a range of Indigenous and/or policing backgrounds, the project proved to have real resonance for the communities involved.

Far from feeling unwelcome on the ground, the researchers found an extraordinary well-spring of concern and goodwill from both community members and police.

‘Everybody, whether they were members of community councils, justice groups, men’s and women’s groups, or working police, was keenly interested in talking to us,’ said Brendan. ‘We were impressed with the level of urgency and the marked level of concern about the damage being done by hazardous or excessive drug use. People were generous with their time and keen to progress the issues.’

The landmark study of issues associated with the policing of cannabis, amphetamine and other illicit drug use was carried out by AIATSIS and the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), with funding from the National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund. It examined the current patterns of substance use and discussed ways of improving the capacity of police to work more effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on illicit drug issues.

A major component of the study was a groundbreaking web-based survey of police jurisdictions, devised by the AIC, which was trialled on the project.

The final report highlighted an urgent need for action in the light of changes such as a recent surge in cannabis supply and use in many isolated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and a rise in organised drug trafficking.

The research also highlighted positive developments taking place as police and communities look for ways to respond more effectively to illicit drug use and reduce drug-related harms.

## Database will help preserve endangered languages

Indigenous communities will have direct access to a new online database of Indigenous languages, which it's hoped will play a vital role in maintaining languages that are endangered, or at risk of becoming endangered.

The database, AUSTLANG, based at AIATSIS in Canberra and being developed by the University of Melbourne, will be a dynamic storehouse of knowledge on the languages of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Recent research by AIATSIS staff conducted for the National Indigenous Languages Survey, in cooperation with other agencies, has shown that of the more than 250 original known Indigenous languages, only about 145 are still spoken. The vast majority of those—about 110—are in the severely and critically endangered categories, as they are spoken only by small groups of people mostly over 40 years of age.

AIATSIS Research Fellow in Language and Society Dr Patrick McConvell said an important feature of AUSTLANG was that both communities and researchers would be able to provide feedback to the database to add value and accuracy to its holdings.

'They will be able to enter suggested corrections to the database's information, for example on the current status of a language or on the names given to that language', he said.

'Our experience is that community knowledge centres and regional language centres are keen to have access to standard systems that they can plug into. Many of them have their own databases already.

'Our system will provide a national framework, and we will work in partnership with regional bodies in cataloguing existing knowledge.'

Dr McConvell said AUSTLANG would provide a searchable profile of the various languages, showing their endangerment status and the status of documentation of each language, for example available descriptions and grammars.

The beta version of AUSTLANG became available in February 2005, and work is continuing towards a full launch of the database early in 2006.



Workshop held at AIATSIS in Canberra in June 2005. From left to right, Andrew Turk from Murdoch University, Ysola Best from Yugambeh Museum Language & Heritage Research Centre, and Annette Chaunama from Mirima Dawang Woorlab-gerring Language and Culture Centre, all working on Indigenous language projects.

The project, which was carried out for AIATSIS by Research Officer Brendan Delahunty, featured a national survey of police officers and extensive fieldwork involving communities and police, principally in the Northern Territory (Darwin and the Tiwi Islands), Queensland (Rockhampton, Woorabinda and Mount Morgan), South Australia (the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yungantjatjara Lands) and Western Australia (Kalgoorlie, Laverton and Warburton). The research highlighted the need for urgent action in a number of areas as well as the positive developments taking place as police and communities look for ways to respond more effectively to illicit drug use and reduce drug-related harms (see page 44).

## International Union for Quaternary Research

Planning commenced for the first domestic INQUA Congress, to be held later this year in Canberra. It is being coordinated by Dr Peter Veth (AIATSIS) and Professor John Dodson (University of Western Australia and Brunel).

Understanding long-term human and environmental dynamics is seen to be both an AIATSIS strength and of relevance to the Australian Government's National Research Priorities.