



“...no value given to the treasures of our languages which hold our knowledge of everything”

- Denise Smith-Ali, Directions Group meeting- 12/09/2022

The International Decade of Indigenous Languages Directions Group

Our International Decade of Indigenous Languages Directions Group (Directions Group) has met four times during 2022 and formed two sub-committees including:

- The logo subcommittee – Worked with Gilimbaa to develop the Decade for Indigenous Languages logo in partnership with the Office for the Arts
- The priorities subcommittee – Drafted the Directions Group priority areas and presented these to the Directions Group in Alice Springs.

In this time we have become a strong collective voice with representation from all corners of Australia. Our members hold deep knowledge and passion for their languages. Our Terms of Reference can be found [here](#).

Alice Springs meeting 12-13 September 2022

We held our second face to face meeting on 12-13 September in Mparantwe on Arrernte Country. The meeting was opened with a Welcome to Country and a traditional Smoking Ceremony.

Building on the work of the priorities subcommittee, we discussed and agreed to a draft preamble for three priority objectives and five policy reforms that our group endorsed as a starting point for what we will advocate for as a collective voice.

Draft preamble

Language is a fundamental human right. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages are the first languages of Australia. They are the very essence of our identity, wellbeing and knowledge. They are our connection to Country, Cultures and Kinships.

Australia has one of the highest rates of language loss in the world. The impact of continuing colonial policies deliberately broke our connection to languages and therefore cultural and spiritual identity. The impact of these policies are still felt today.

Immediate action is required to reverse this loss to allow our languages and our voice to once again thrive and survive.

The Directions Group identified three reform objectives and five policy priority areas that require urgent action.

The three priority objectives include:

- Stopping the loss
- Ensure the safety and security of current investment
- Thinking about a new way forward





The five policy reforms include:

- Sector strengthening
- Access to education, employment and learning opportunities
- Community access
- Recognition, truth telling and celebration
- Develop a national approach

National Action Plan

We discussed and agreed on a high-level framework for Australia's National Action Plan for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages. We took part in powerful discussions that informed the development of five themes that will shape Australia's National Action Plan for the International Decade, and will be visually represented in the Action Plan in the formation of a tree. The five themes are:

- Stop the loss
- Community is centre
- Caring for Country
- Intergenerational knowledge transfer
- Truth telling and celebration

Any questions can be directed to:

First Languages Australia - Annalee Pope
Office for the Arts - Tamika Townsend

Annalee@firstlanguages.org.au
IndigenousLanguagesSecretariat@arts.gov.au

Attendees

NAME	POSITION	ORGANISATION/INDUSTRY
Mr Beau Williams	Member (Chair)	First Languages Australia (FLA)
Ms Annalee Pope	Member (Chair)	First Languages Australia
Ms Joyce Bonner	Member	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation
Mr Desmond Crump	Member	Academic
Mr Phillemon Mosby (apology)	Member	Local Government
Ms Jillian Mundy	Member	Media and Journalism
Mr Daryn McKenny	Member	Language Centre
Mr Gawura Wanambi (apology)	Member	Academic and Cultural Education
Ms Shania Armstrong	Member	Language Education
Mr Clayton Cruse	Member	Aboriginal Languages Teacher
Dr Vicki Couzens	Member	Academic, Language Reclamation
Ms Lorraine Injie	Member	Language Centre
Ms Denise Smith-Ali	Member	Linguist/Language worker





NAME	POSITION	ORGANISATION/INDUSTRY
Ex-Officio Members		
Doug Marmion (Lauren Reed attending on behalf)- In person	<i>Ex Officio Member</i>	Australian Institute of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)
Michelle Manning- In person	<i>Ex Officio Member</i>	National Indigenous Affairs Agency (NIAA)
Michelle Bedford – In person	<i>Ex Officio Member</i>	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
Pauline Halchuk- In person	<i>Ex-Officio Member</i>	Office for the Arts (OFTA)
Secretariat		
Sheridan Williams	Assistant Director	Office for the Arts
Sarah Davis – In person	Assistant Director	Office for the Arts
Stacey Rippon	Assistant Director	Office for the Arts
Marianne Schafer-Gardiner	A/g Assistant Director	Office for the Arts
Tamika Townsend	A/g Senior Policy Officer	Office for the Arts
Lily Gelai	Policy Officer	Office for the Arts
Liam Tucker – In person	Secretariat Officer	Office for the Arts

