



International Decade of Indigenous Languages Directions Group—Indigenous Languages Priorities

“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, well-being, and knowledge. They are our connection to Country, Cultures and Kinships. Australia has one of the highest rates of language loss in the world. Past colonial policies deliberately broke our connection to languages and therefore cultural and spiritual identity. To this day, policies fail to recognise our languages and to nurture them. Immediate action is required to reverse this loss to allow our languages and our voice to once again thrive and survive.”

FIVE PRIORTIY POLICY REFORMS



DEVELOP A NATIONAL APPROACH

Secure a policy infrastructure that ensures safety, investment and ongoing commitment across governments.



SECTOR STRENGTHENING

Invest, recognise and strengthen the languages sector to undertake the work required to ensure the safety and strengthening of languages.



EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Embed language into the education system and language positions in professions.



TRUTH-TELLING AND CELEBRATION

Recognise and celebrate the beauty and importance of our languages while also acknowledging past wrongs impact today.



COMMUNITY ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Institutions’ policies must ensure that First Nations communities can access their historical language resources or materials.

KEY FOCUS AREAS OF THE POLICY REFORMS

- Legislate to safeguard languages
- Increase funding
- First Nations-led research
- Formal partnerships

- Develop a new funding model
- Appropriately remunerate First Nations languages experts
- Increase language programs and projects
- Build strong governance

- Language jobs across sectors
- Pathways for language professionals
- Bilingual schools and settings
- Implementation of the Yalbilinya: Workforce Strategy.

- Acknowledge the impact of past policies
- Establish a national week for languages
- Language is visible in all environments
- Opportunities to learn on Country

- Repatriation of language materials both within and outside Australia
- Easy access to historical language materials
- Development of language resources
- Coordinated approach between organisations and institutions

THREE PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

STOPPING THE LOSS

ENSURE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE CURRENT INVESTMENT

THINKING ABOUT A NEW WAY FORWARD

