

Launch and Celebration of the AIATSIS Centre for Australian Languages

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The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) has officially unveiled the AIATSIS Centre for Australian Languages and the 'Our Languages Keep Us Strong' program, which is dedicated to protecting and preserving Indigenous Australian cultures and knowledge.

The centre and program are proudly supported by [Rio Tinto](#), which in 2022 committed A\$10 million over five years towards their establishment and implementation.

Since its inception in 2023, 'Our Languages Keep Us Strong' has made significant progress towards its key objectives of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to strengthen their languages locally and increase national and international understanding of the value of Australia's first languages.

AIATSIS Interim Chief Executive Officer, Leonard Hill said language is critical in preserving cultural identity.

"AIATSIS is dedicated to community-led language revitalisation efforts, and I firmly believe that our key objectives, including consistent baseline documentation, community-based revitalisation, support for teaching and learning, evidence-based monitoring, and fostering collaboration among language communities, can pave the way for Indigenous cultures to thrive."

Rio Tinto Chief Executive, Australia, Kellie Parker said "The launch of the AIATSIS Centre for Australian Languages is a significant milestone in the ongoing effort to preserve and celebrate the linguistic diversity of Australia's First Peoples.

"AIATSIS plays a vital role in preserving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and cultures, ensuring their recognition, respect and celebration.

"Through community-driven initiatives, AIATSIS, is paving the way for a future where Indigenous languages continue to thrive, ensuring that the rich tapestry of Indigenous culture endures for future generations.

"Rio Tinto's support for this and other initiatives is part of our 'Living Languages Living Cultures program' which invests in preserving, reviving, and celebrating Indigenous cultures in Australia."

The AIATSIS Centre for Australian Languages was officially launched at the 2024 AIATSIS Summit in Naarm (Melbourne) last month.

Note to editors:

AIATSIS is located on Ngunnawal Country in Canberra and is Australia's only national cultural institution solely dedicated to preserving and celebrating the diverse history, cultures, and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Established in 1964, AIATSIS has protected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples culture and heritage by preserving and caring for a vast collection of over 1 million items encompassing film, photographs, audio recordings, art, objects, printed materials, teachings, and more.

The AIATSIS Centre for Australian Languages is a program of initiatives, projects and activities, rather than a physical centre.

In 2023, Rio Tinto launched the Living Languages Living Culture (LLLC) program as part of its commitment to find better ways of working with communities and Indigenous Peoples. This initiative in Australia is focused on the preservation and revitalisation of traditional language and culture. Through work nationally and locally, the program aims to promote a deeper connection to Country, raise awareness, and provide crucial support to Indigenous communities. Educational initiatives, language immersion, and cultural programs are focus areas of this effort to revitalise and celebrate Indigenous languages and cultures.

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