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AIATSIS celebrates Indigenous information online

The search for information relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures has become easier with the AIATSIS library launching new online tools in Canberra today.

The Institute has developed a national thesaurus – or word list - to describe documents relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and issues. The three thesauri cover language and people, place and subject and are used in the Mura™ catalogue.

Launching the thesaurus at AIATSIS, Chairperson Professor Mick Dodson encouraged people to use the new resource.

“The thesauri are now available to browse and search on the AIATSIS website and can also be downloaded for free. They are AIATSIS’ gift and I strongly encourage others to use them.”

Today’s event marks another milestone for Indigenous research and researchers in Australia, he said.

“Today we not only launch a national thesaurus that will make the search for information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples easier, we also mark the 10th anniversary of the Institute’s online collections catalogue, Mura,” Professor Dodson said.

Launched in 1998 and named after the Ngunnawal word meaning “pathways”, Mura™ has demonstrated how Indigenous materials should be sensitively and appropriately described.

“For 10 years people from Australia and around the world have been able to search and discover the AIATSIS collections in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner,” Professor Dodson said.

“I am proud to say that the United States of America’s Library of Congress has now approved the thesauri to be used internationally in catalogue records.”

The Thesauri can be found through the Library section of the Institute’s website www.aiatsis.gov.au

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