

12 June 2008

## **AIATSIS and the National Museum of Australia honour the memory of Ms Marika**

The National Museum of Australia will join with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies to honour the memory of AIATSIS Council member Ms Marika.

Ms Marika died suddenly on 11 May; a memorial service to honour her life and work will be held in Yirrkala NT on Sunday 15 June. The National Museum of Australia will lower its flags on that day to mark Ms Marika's passing.

"Ms Marika's contribution to the Institute, to her community and to Australian society throughout her life goes beyond what most of us ever hope to achieve," AIATSIS Chairperson, Professor Mick Dodson said.

"A Yolngu woman of the Rirratjingu clan, Ms Marika was an exceptional Indigenous Australian. She was committed to improving the education outcomes for Indigenous children and always fought to keep culture and language strong for her people and more broadly for all Indigenous Australians," Professor Dodson said. Yolngu country is in Arnhem Land in the North-East of the Northern Territory.

AIATSIS Principal Steve Larkin said Ms Marika's work for the Institute over the past seven years was carried out with high distinction and unrivalled depth and breadth of expertise about remote Indigenous Australia.

"As a representative of Council on the AIATSIS Research Advisory Committee, in particular, her critique of applications for research grants brought an important perspective and unique scholarly contribution to the Committee's work," Mr Larkin said.

Ms Marika's contribution was acknowledged in 2006 through her appointment by the Northern Territory Government as "Territorian of the Year" and, in 2007, by her nomination for 2007 Australian of the Year made by the Northern Territory Government.

Ms Marika had been a member of numerous Aboriginal education committees in the Northern Territory and is a past member of the Northern Territory Board of Studies, Aboriginal Education Standing Committee Working Party. She held the position of Research Fellow at the Mulka Centre, Yirrkala.

Charles Darwin University granted Ms Marika a Doctor of Education, Honorius Causa, in October last year for her contribution to education, especially to the education of Aboriginal people in the NT, and her services to reconciliation and inter-cultural understanding.

The National Museum of Australia and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies have a close relationship as important collecting institutes. Many artworks and artefacts on display in the National Museum's First Australians exhibition are on loan from the AIATSIS collection.

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**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

DANIKA NAYNA      AIATSIS Media & Communications    6246 1108

CHRIS RYAN        AIATSIS Media & Communications    0408 688 026