

Statement of Intent

(In response to Expectations of the Minister for Education, Science and Training)

Context

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) works to promote knowledge and understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures, past and present. The Institute is a statutory authority within the Education, Science and Training portfolio.

Expectation

AIATSIS will seek to position itself as the pre-eminent institution for information and research about the cultures and lifestyles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Intent

AIATSIS is positioned as the pre-eminent institution for information and research about the cultures and lifestyles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We will enhance this position by maintaining the highest standards of excellence in research, in dissemination of information, and collection development and management. We will continue to build relationships with our users and stakeholders, including AIATSIS Members, in the manner outlined in our Corporate Plan and Business Plan and in respect to performance indicators outlined in our Business Plan.

Corporate Governance

Expectation

Being responsive to Government and to the Parliament in fulfilling AIATSIS' functions, complying with all relevant legislation, including the *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Act 1989*.

Intent

AIATSIS will continue to respond to the Government and Parliament and will comply with all relevant legislation, while fulfilling our multiple functions set out in the *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Act 1989*.

In particular we will pursue our one endorsed outcome of “the promotion of knowledge and understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures past and present.”

In pursuit of this outcome we will deliver three outputs.

Output 1 - Research

AIATSIS will continue to promote outstanding research of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues through research by our staff, contractors and associates, and management of the annual research grants program.

Output 2 - Dissemination of Information

AIATSIS will continue to ensure the dissemination of information through the publications of Aboriginal Studies Press, research papers conferences, lectures and seminars, and through development of the AIATSIS website which makes resources available electronically.

Output 3 - Collection Development and Management

AIATSIS will continue to develop, maintain, and preserve well-documented archives and collections and maximise access to these, particularly by Indigenous peoples. The AIATSIS Library and Audio-visual Archive will continue to follow world's best practice in this regard.

AIATSIS will report to the Minister and Parliament in its Annual Report in respect to this outcome/output structure.

Expectation

Implement and maintain high standards of corporate governance, including through the development of strategic and business planning documents and performance monitoring frameworks.

Intent

AIATSIS will continue to maintain high standards of corporate governance through: production of our three year Corporate Plan; production of the annual Business Plan; maintenance of performance monitoring against these plans; by meeting Government compliance requirements; and by the provision of regular financial training to Council members.

Expectation

Ensuring robust risk management systems are in place and maintained across AIATSIS and documented in a risk management plan.

Intent

AIATSIS has developed and will maintain a Risk Management Plan for all areas of the organisation and will ensure that good risk management practices are understood and implemented by staff.

Expectation

Members of the Institute will continue to elect four Council members, and the Minister will retain the right to appoint the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson from the full membership of the Council, noting the convention has been to appoint these positions from the elected members.

Intent

AIATSIS acknowledges the Minister's right to appoint the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson from the full membership of Council. The convention of appointing these positions from the elected members is an important means for AIATSIS to gain the confidence of, and maintain democratic engagement with, its membership which includes some 500 experts in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies throughout Australia and overseas. AIATSIS will continue to advise DEST and the Minister of the outcomes of its Council elections for consideration in respect to these appointments.

Expectation

Future appointments of Councillors will be for three years, with any re-appointment also being for a period of three years.

Intent

Currently the AIATSIS rules state that elected members will serve a term of two years. To avoid creating two tiers of Council membership, AIATSIS Council may change the rules to allow for elected members to serve three year terms.

Expectation

To be consulted about the appointment of the Principal, prior to formal arrangements being made by the Council.

Intent

The AIATSIS Council Chairperson will consult with the Minister regarding appointment of the Principal prior to Council making the appointment.

Strategic Direction

Expectation

Monitor and assess developments in Australian Government policy and, where appropriate, ensure that they are made known and implemented across AIATSIS.

Intent

AIATSIS will continue to monitor and assess developments in Australian Government policy and, where appropriate, ensure that they are made known and implemented across AIATSIS.

Expectation

Enhance links between AIATSIS and government policies and programs by: collaborating with Departmental officers in the development of the Institute's research agenda; consulting with Departmental officers on cross-membership on committees; and, engaging with the Department in the development of plans relevant to the publication and dissemination of cultural resource materials.

Intent

AIATSIS will continue to engage with the Department, where appropriate, in respect to its research and publication and dissemination functions. The framework for communications with Departmental officers will be codified in a Memorandum of Understanding.

Expectation

Provide leadership and excellence in promoting, facilitating and undertaking high quality research in Australian Indigenous Studies, across disciplines including education.

Intent

AIATSIS will continue to provide leadership and excellence in promoting, facilitating and undertaking high quality research in Australian Indigenous Studies, across disciplines including education. The AIATSIS Council will continue to be advised in these matters by its Research Advisory Committee that includes a member representing the discipline of education and cultural transmission. Education remains an important topic of staff research and a topic in the AIATSIS competitive grants scheme. AIATSIS will continue its membership of the Co-operative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health and Co-operative Research Centre – Desert Knowledge, research involvement in ARC funded Linkage projects, and maintain output of peer review research papers as published in the Annual Report.

Expectation

Contribute effectively, including through collaboration with the Department, toward the Australian Government's four National Research Priorities and their associated priority goals.

Intent

AIATSIS will continue to contribute effectively, including through collaboration with the Department, toward the Australian Government's

four National Research Priorities and respective goals. The AIATSIS contribution will continue to be reported in its Annual Report.

Expectation

Develop, maintain and preserve well-documented archives and collections as a primary means of dissemination to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and facilitating research and education within the Australian population more broadly.

Intent

AIATSIS will continue to develop, maintain and preserve its collections for the primary benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and to facilitate research and education within the broader Australian population. Collections will be developed according to the Collection Development Policy (Library and Audiovisual Archives). In particular AIATSIS will improve preservation and access to the collections through continuation of its digitisation program according to the Digitisation Program Plan 2005-2008, provision of copy materials, and, where appropriate, publication of catalogues and materials on the internet. AIATSIS will continue its representation on the Commonwealth Collecting Institutions committee, National Archives of Australia Consultative Forum, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library and Information Research Network (ATSILIRN). AIATSIS will continue its work with the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH) on Indigenous Family History matters and support of the Link-Up network. AIATSIS will continue to develop its Thesauri for appropriate description of Indigenous collections by Australian Libraries.

Expectation

Produce digitised materials of high educative value for use in teaching Indigenous culture and history.

Intent

AIATSIS will continue to digitise important historical and other items for use by communities and for the purposes of research. Such material would also be available for use by the education sector once appropriate copyright, community and other permissions have been secured.

Expectation

Take active steps to secure revenue from sources other than Government in order to increase the revenue base for AIATSIS.

Intent

AIATSIS will continue to actively seek revenue from sources other than government appropriations in order to increase its revenue base.

AIATSIS has appointed a senior staff member to facilitate its revenue raising activities.

Communication

Expectation

Keep the Minister fully informed of AIATSIS' activities and alert the Minister in a timely manner to any significant events relating to AIATSIS' business.

Intent

The AIATSIS Council Chairperson will continue to meet with the Minister on a regular basis to share information about AIATSIS activities. Ministerial briefings will also be prepared in a timely manner on significant events relating to AIATSIS' business.

Expectation

Provide key information and documentation to the Department in parallel to providing it to the Minister.

Intent

The AIATSIS Principal and senior staff will continue to ensure that the Department is informed about any matters that have been addressed to the Minister.

Expectation

Build on the current working relationship with the Department by being party to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to cover reporting and communication flows.

Intent

A Memorandum of Understanding addressing communication and reporting between AIATSIS and DEST will be prepared.