

Wednesday 25 March 2009

AIATSIS announces new Chief Executive to head Australia's leading centre on Indigenous Studies

Professor Mick Dodson AM today announced the appointment of Mr Russell Taylor as the new Chief Executive (Principal) of Australia's leading centre for information and research on the world's oldest continuing cultures.

Mr Taylor, whose appointment is for a five-year period, will commence at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) today, 25 March 2009. Russell (Russ) Taylor was born and raised in Millers Point, an inner city waterfront suburb of Sydney which today forms part of the tourist precinct area now more commonly known as 'The Rocks'. Mr Taylor proudly identifies as a Kamilaroi man with family connection to La Perouse in Sydney and to traditional country in the New England area of New South Wales.

Mr Taylor most recently held the position of Chief Executive Officer at the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office. His impressive career includes more than 15 years in various Senior Executive Service positions including terms with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, the Australian Development Commission and previously as Principal at AIATSIS (1997 – 2003). Mr Taylor's career also includes 20 years in the banking financial sector.

"Russell Taylor returns to AIATSIS at a time of increased momentum for advancing the living conditions, health and well-being of Indigenous Australians and a growing commitment to reconciliation," said Professor Mick Dodson, AIATSIS Council Chairman. "This leads to increased interest by non-Indigenous people to learn about, research and understand the richness and diversity of the cultures and histories of the First Australians."

"Russell is well placed to enable AIATSIS to meet the challenges it faces in meeting increasing demands for the preservation of and access to unique and at risk cultural heritage materials for Indigenous Australians and for the broader community", said Professor Dodson. Mr Taylor has maintained his close affiliation with AIATSIS since his first term as Principal, including as a member of the AIATSIS Research Advisory Committee.

Senator Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research welcomed Mr Taylor's appointment to this key role in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

Senator Carr said, "Mr Taylor brings to AIATSIS a wealth of experience in the field of Indigenous studies, demonstrated through his many leadership and advisory roles across the public, private and academic sectors and matched with his strong record in public administration. I congratulate Russell on his appointment from a strong field of candidates and look forward to the continued development of this important Indigenous institution under his leadership."

Professor Dodson also thanked Dr Luke Taylor who has filled the role since December 2008. Dr Taylor is Deputy Principal of Research at AIATSIS.

AIATSIS is Australia's leading centre for quality, community-based research about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and lifestyles – past and present. It plays a unique role as the keeping place of the world's largest collection of materials relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples including films, stills, recordings and printed materials. Through its work, AIATSIS raises awareness among all Australians of the richness and diversity of the world's oldest continuing cultures and histories.

For more information or to request a photo of Mr Russell Taylor please contact AIATSIS Director Public Affairs, Suzi Clark, on (02) 6261 4254 or 0419 978 035.