



**AIATSIS**

Australian Institute of Aboriginal  
and Torres Strait Islander Studies

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*Further understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures, past and present through undertaking and publishing research, and providing access to print and audiovisual collections*

# **Vale Uncle Chicka Dixon: activist, leader and Aboriginal rights icon.**

*22 March 2010*

**Professor Mick Dodson AM, the Chairperson of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), has paid tribute to Aboriginal activist and leader the late Charles “Chicka” Dixon who passed away on the weekend aged 81.**

“Uncle Chicka’s life long contribution in the struggle for equal rights, recognition and the justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will forever be carved into this nation’s history.”

“We have lost a true pioneer and a gentleman.”

Professor Dodson said that Uncle Chicka’s achievements emphasise his remarkable commitment to the Aboriginal Rights Movement – from working in the 1960s with the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders - where he contributed to the groundwork for the triumph of the 1967 referendum - to being both an instigator and an organiser of the 1972 Aboriginal Tent Embassy.

“He was a foundation member of the Aboriginal Arts Board in 1973 (later becoming its Chairman) and being the first Aboriginal person to be appointed as a Councillor on the Australia Council.

“In the early 1970s, he helped establish the Aboriginal Medical Service and Aboriginal Legal Services in Sydney, in 1972 he led an Aboriginal delegation to the Peoples Republic of China in a mission to highlight Aboriginal issues internationally and he was the first recipient of Aboriginal Overseas Study Award in 1975.”

“These are stunning achievements for an Aboriginal boy who grew up at Wallaga Lake and Wreck Bay on the NSW south coast and at just 14 worked as a labourer on the waterfront at Port Kembla.”

Professor Dodson noted that generations of Australians will continue to be inspired by Chicka’s life and his involvement in the struggle for Indigenous rights.

“In September 2002, Uncle Chicka donated over 400 images to the AIATSIS audio visual collection to form a permanent record for the education of future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and for all Australians.”

