

A SUBMISSION FROM [REDACTED]*Aboriginal language researcher/worker*

Submission to the Revive National Cultural Policy Consultation

A practitioner's call for change, aligned with UNDRIP

About this submission

I make this submission as an Aboriginal language worker [Gamilaroi Nation - South West Queensland]. My experience working with communities, archives and learners over many years has given me a practitioner's view of what is enabling Aboriginal languages, and what is holding the work back.

I make this submission to **call on the Australian Government** to use the Revive consultation — and in particular the **First Nations First** pillar — as the moment to commit to a set of substantive changes for First Nations languages.

Our call

I call on the Australian Government to commit to:

- recognition of First Nations language rights as inherent — not granted;
- guaranteed use of First Nations languages in public life and services;
- First Nations-led governance and funding oversight;
- stable, long-term investment insulated from political cycles; and
- community-led design rooted in self-determination.

These calls align directly with Australia's obligations under the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** (UNDRIP) — particularly Articles 13, 14 and 16 — and with the **International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–2032**, which is the policy window in which Australia must now act.

What these changes would mean — from a practitioner's view

1. A workforce that can stay in the work

Language workers are the people who do this. We sit with Elders, we sit in archives, we sit in classrooms, we sit at kitchen tables. The current funding environment cannot offer us secure work. Every short-term contract that ends without a next round is a loss of accumulated knowledge, relationships and trust that cannot be quickly rebuilt. I am calling for a serious, long-term investment in the First Nations language workforce — secure careers, mentorship pathways, professional recognition, and pay that reflects the skill the work requires.

2. Stable funding that respects the pace of the work

Language work is slow. It is built on relationships of trust, on time spent on Country and in community, on patience with archives and recordings, and on the cycles of learning and teaching. A funding system built around annual or biennial grant rounds is at odds with the work itself. I am calling for funding arrangements that respect this pace — multi-year

agreements, proportionate administration, and continuity insulated from political cycles. This will enhance sustainability of language programs across Australia.

3. Community-led, always

No language worker should be in the position of accountable to a funding body before they are accountable to the community. The framework Government commits to place community authority at the centre — over priorities, methods, pace, and the use of language materials. Practitioners work best when communities are clearly in charge.

In closing

I urge the Government to use the First Nations First pillar of Revive as the point at which it commits to the changes set out in this submission. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission further with the Minister and the Department.

Yours sincerely,



[Indigenous Languages Worker]