

A SUBMISSION FROM CLAYTON CRUSE

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Submission to the Revive National Cultural Policy Consultation

A call for change, aligned with UNDRIP

About this submission

I make this submission in my capacity as a **member of the IDIL Australia Directions Group** — the First Nations-led body providing strategic direction for Australia's response to the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022–2032.

I make this submission in my roles listed above.

I make this submission as an Adnyamathanha/Antikirinya/Yuin/Gamilaraay man.

I also make this submission on behalf of the Aboriginal Languages team, Curriculum Directorate, Curriculum & Learning Division, South Australian Department for Education.

The Directions Group brings together First Nations language leaders, practitioners and community representatives to consider what a serious, decade-scale response to Indigenous languages requires in this country. This submission reflects that considered view, and my own grounding as a community member.

My call

I call on the Australian Government, through the First Nations First pillar of Revive, 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 framework of the Decade.

What these changes would mean — a Directions Group perspective

1. Inherent rights as the foundation, not an addition

From the Directions Group vantage, it is clear that no other element of a serious response works without this one. Recognition of First Nations language rights as inherent — not granted — sets the terms on which Government engages with the rest of the framework. If our rights are treated as granted, every other measure becomes a privilege the State can extend or withdraw. If they are recognised as inherent, the role of the State becomes one of enabling and resourcing rights that already exist.

2. First Nations-led governance — at scale and at depth

Across the work the Directions Group has done, the same pattern emerges: where decision-making authority sits with First Nations bodies and communities, the results are better, the work is more sustainable, and the trust required to do hard, long work is built. First Nations-led governance must operate at every scale — nationally, regionally, and at community level — and must carry actual authority, not advisory weight only.

3. Investment matched to the work, not to the politics

The current funding architecture is built around political and budgetary cycles. The work it is meant to support is built around generations. The mismatch is the single largest constraint we have observed on what is possible. Multi-year, indexed funding insulated from political cycles is not a nice-to-have. It is the change that would shift what is achievable across the Decade and beyond.

4. Community-led design as a structural principle

A national framework cannot succeed by being national in its delivery. The Decade Group's work confirms what community practitioners have long said: the most successful programs are the ones that have ceded design authority to the communities they serve. That principle must be built into the structure of whatever Government commits to — not as a process step, but as a feature of how the architecture itself is organised.

In closing

I urge the Australian Government to use the First Nations First pillar of Revive as the moment to commit to these changes. The IDIL Australia Directions Group stands ready, as do the many language communities, organisations and practitioners we work alongside, to help develop the detail of what this would mean in practice. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this submission further with the Minister and the Department.

Yours sincerely,

Clayton Cruse

[Adnyamathanha/Antikirinya/Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara/Yuin/Gamilaraay]

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