

United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights  
of Indigenous Peoples

15<sup>th</sup> Session Geneva, 04 - 08 July, 2022



New South Wales  
Aboriginal Land Council

ABN: 82 726 507 500

**Item 7: International Decade of Indigenous Languages**

INTERVENTION by the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, delivered by Councillor Leeanne Hampton for the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, Councillor for the Wiradjuri region, member of the Wiradjuri and Ngiyampaa Nations.

Thank you <sup>Madeleine Chouli</sup> ~~Chair~~, <sup>Yindamanna</sup> ~~Chair~~ <sup>All</sup>  
Yindamanna

We pay our respects to the Elders and Ancestors, past and present, and extend our appreciation to Indigenous experts and <sup>our brothers + sisters</sup> participants at this session.

The NSW Aboriginal Land Council recommends that Governments must:

- Value and respect Aboriginal language and culture
- Empower and resource Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to take full ownership of their culture and heritage, including our languages. Government can never own or control our languages and its role must be to work in partnership with Aboriginal peoples.
- Resource the capacity building of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to not only protect and preserve Aboriginal Languages, but to ensure a revitalization and sustained increase in the number being spoken, starting with our children.

Indigenous Peoples rights and freedoms to speak our own language is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in Article 13, 14 and 16 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

<sup>UNDRIP</sup>  
<sup>we should not be condemned for wanting + trying to speak our own</sup>  
**ALWAYS WAS. ALWAYS WILL BE.** <sup>language</sup>

Federal

While the Australian Government endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in 2009, <sup>state</sup> governments in Australia have been slow to practically implement the Declaration in laws, policies and programs.

The Australian Government's Indigenous Languages and Arts program supports a network of 20 Indigenous language centres across Australia. These language centres are helping to preserve, revive and maintain over 150 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages.

However, in Australia there are more than 250 Indigenous languages and around 800 dialects. To ensure ~~the~~ <sup>real</sup> preservation, revitalization and maintenance of Aboriginal languages there needs to be support from all levels of government across Australia.

Languages are vital and alive, they connect people to Country, culture, ~~and~~ <sup>and identity.</sup> their ancestors. It is essential that there is adequate resourcing to ensure Aboriginal languages are seen and heard in everyday life and that Aboriginal peoples' goals and priorities in relation to the maintenance and preservation of languages are met. The unique contribution that Aboriginal languages bring to the identity of Australia must be promoted, celebrated and sustained.

Lets remind Govt's - <sup>- we are here -</sup> Always was, Always will be,  
Aboriginal Land.

Thankyou.

**ALWAYS WAS. ALWAYS WILL BE.**

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