



**BIBLE  
SOCIETY**  
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## INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE FACT SHEET



# Indigenous Scripture

## General Language Information

Before the arrival of European settlers in Australia there is believed to have been over 250 diverse Indigenous languages spoken by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. Of the 145 languages still spoken in Australia, 110 are critically endangered. A report by the National Indigenous Language Survey (NILS) 2005 recommended that “*All of Australia’s indigenous languages face an uncertain future if immediate action and care are not taken.*”

These indigenous languages are from linguistically distinct language families and represent the cultural diversity among the indigenous population. (see over page Map of Australian Indigenous Languages, courtesy AuSIL)

The 2006 Australian Census revealed that more than 55,000 Aboriginal and Islander people in Australia speak their own indigenous language at home (an increase from 45,000 around 15 years before). Of these, at least two thirds have today, or have had in the past, some linguistic and Bible translation work going on in their languages.

Bible Society Australia is committed to supporting the translation of Scripture into the ‘heart’ language of every indigenous language group.

## Useful Links....

Some of the information contained in this Fact sheet is from the following websites:

[www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)

To follow the Pitjantjatjara Old Testament Translation Project go to  
[“tjukurpapalya.wordpress.com”](http://tjukurpapalya.wordpress.com)



**For further information please contact:  
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# BIBLE STATISTICS

**There are at least 48 indigenous languages with some part of the Bible today**

- ✓ Only 1 has a complete Bible (Kriol)
  - ◊ 7 languages have partial Bibles published ('MiniBibles') with some NT & some OT sections;
  - ✓ 13 have complete NT—sometimes with sections of OT ('Shorter Bibles')
  - ✓ 5 have at least one complete NT book eg. a Gospel
  - ◊ 9 have just portions of Scripture
  - ✓ 16 languages have Scripture recorded in audio format

# Languages of Australia

