



## [ABC Radio Australia](#)

### **Radio Australia - News - Conference considers world's disappearing languages**

[This is the print version of story <http://www.abc.net.au/ra/news/stories/s1850698.htm>]

Last Updated 18/02/2007, 21:28:41

Select text size:

Scientists at a conference in the U-S have heard how the world's disappearing languages could damage attempts to conserve the planet's biodiversity.

Over half the world's seven-thousand languages are likely to disappear before the end of the century.

Dr David Harrison of Swarthmore college in the United States says most knowledge of ecosystems is held within oral traditions.

He says preserving endangered languages could prevent such knowledge being lost and help protect animal and plant species:

"It seems obvious that knowing more about species and eco-systems would put us in a better position to sustain those species and eco-systems. We know much less than we think we do. And we have traditionally undervalued and under appreciated the types of scientific knowledge found in indigenous cultures" said Dr Harrison.

[< back](#)

© 2007 Australian Broadcasting Corporation  
Copyright information: <http://abc.net.au/common/copyrigh.htm>  
Privacy information: <http://abc.net.au/privacy.htm>