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Ref. no.

Angurugu
Groote Eylandt.
18th September, 1979.

President & Councillors
Angurugu
Groote Eylandt.

Dear Sirs,

During my stay here I have been asked by many people for cassette copies of songs recorded on my previous visits to Groote Eylandt. I have been glad to be able to do this and would like you to know that after I finish my work here next year I shall leave all my work tapes in the Angurugu Library. The work tapes are copies of my original field recordings made in the years 1962, 1963, 1964, 1966 and , during filming, in 1969. The field tapes will be kept safely in an air-conditioned room in the Sound Archive of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra.

There are two things I would like to say to you before I go back to Canberra on Friday. The first is about your traditional song style; and the second is about keeping , or preserving , your recorded songs so that younger generations will be able to hear the voices of their old people.

1. Eneba and yiraga playing are different from all other kinds of Australian Aboriginal music. I know this because I have recorded songs of many different Aboriginal groups in Arnhem Land, in Cape York and in Kimberley districts. Your ways of singing and of playing the didjeridu are especially your own ; and I know that you have certain songs for each clan and for groups of clans. These songs are all part of your musical tradition. During my visits here I have noticed new tunes, new words in your songs ; but inspite of these changes , your songs have kept close to what is now recognised as the Groote Eylandt traditional style.

The first thing I want to say , then , is that I hope you will keep your own traditonal song style and not allow it to be mixed with the styles of other Aboriginal groups.

2. The second thing I want to say is about keeping, or preserving, the recordings that you make for yourselves.

During the Dance Festival that was held here two weeks ago, I noticed many young people holding cassette recorders as they moved about the dance ground. I have been wondering what will happen to these cassette recordings! Some of the songs recorded during the Festival belong to the people at Roper River, some to the people at Numbulwar, some to the people at Lockhart and Aurukun. The rest of the songs belong to Angurugu and Umbakumba people and are part of your own traditional heritage. I hope you will find a way of preserving these cassettes.

I am sure you know that there is a cassette-copying machine in the Angurugu Library and that for a small fee (40c) cassette copies can be made. I am suggesting that all the cassette recordings made of singing in the village , or during dance festivals , be taken to the Library so that a clean cassette copy can be made and kept there. The same thing might be done with recordings of your stories. The Angurugu Library needs a good microphone and a studio-type tape recorder. These things are urgently needed for good-quality recordings of speech so that your own language may be properly preserved. If you want tapes to last for generations they must be well-recorded and carefully preserved.

In many parts of the world there are Sound Archives where recordings

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on tape and disc are preserved in air-conditioned rooms and looked after by people with training who know how to copy tapes in a special way and to catalogue them so that songs may be found when they are wanted. I hope that some day you may be able to build a Sound Archive for keeping Grootte Eylandt recordings so that members of the clans can come and listen (with headphones) to their own songs and stories.

These songs and stories are your own 'books'. They describe your 'countries' or territories and the journeys that your ancestors made from place to place. The men who can sing these songs and tell these stories are like the authors of 'history' books.

Young people today have many new things to learn. Some of them may not have as much opportunity as you have had to learn their own songs; but if you are able to build a place where they could come and listen to the voices of their old people, then they will still know something about their own heritage and their own history.

I am sure you have all thought about these things many times. I shall be glad to talk over these suggestions with you when I come back next year.

Yours sincerely,

Alice Moyle

(Dr. Alice Moyle)

cc Angurugu Librarian