Chapter 3

Collection development and management

Highlights 2007–08

- The Apology to the Stolen Generations was recorded and archived for posterity
- The AIATSIS thesauri received international recognition
- Work began on the preservation of a significant film collection
- Strategic purchases completed the Library's holdings of the main First Fleet writers
- Innovative technical solutions in digital preservation were designed and implemented
- An important collection of rare journals, notes and photographs was added to the Library.

About the collections

One of the Institute's goals is to develop, maintain and preserve well-documented archives and collections, and to maximise access to these materials, particularly by Indigenous peoples, in keeping with appropriate cultural and ethical practices. AIATSIS works towards this goal through its Library and Audiovisual Archive.

The Library holds one of the most comprehensive collections of print materials on Australian Indigenous studies in the world. The Library has adopted the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services. It holds print materials in all formats. These include manuscript materials, serials, language materials, books, rare books, the records of organisations, art catalogues, newspapers and newspaper clippings, maps, posters and kits, microfilms and CD-ROMs.

Access to the Library collection is provided through a public reading room; Mura®, the collections catalogue; and inter-library loans.

The Audiovisual Archive holds the world's premier collection of moving image, recorded sound and photographic materials relating to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories. Its vaults contain approximately 45,000 hours of recorded sound, 650,000 photographic images, 6,000 video titles and approximately 6.5 million feet of motion picture film. It also has a collection of around 1,000 artefacts and works of art. In total, the archive holds almost one million items.

The majority of items held in the Audiovisual Archive represent the primary results of field research funded by the Institute's research grants program as well as historical and contemporary items deposited by individuals, families and organisations for safekeeping and appropriate access. The majority of the material — around 98 per cent — is unique and irreplaceable. It provides an invaluable link between past, present and future generations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The role of the archive is to ensure the safety and longevity of the materials, and to migrate the information onto the latest technologies so that the material remains accessible for future generations of Australians.

The Audiovisual Archive also offers the specialist services of the Community Access unit, the Return of Materials to Indigenous Communities (ROMTIC) project, and archival training for Indigenous communities. Details of these programs can be found in Chapter 2.

Collection management

Mura®, the AIATSIS collections catalogue

Documentation of Library and Audiovisual Archive materials on Mura® is in accordance with standard bibliographic practices, and in line with Indigenous cultural practices. Value-added documentation includes annotations and the use of specialist thesaurus terms to provide a level of bibliographic access through Mura® that is unavailable from other library catalogues. Book, serials and manuscript records are added to Libraries Australia, a free internet-based service that provides access to the holdings of over 800 Australian libraries.

Acquisitions and donations

The Institute is grateful for donations of material from both individuals and organisations. These donations add significantly to the Institute's collections.

Print materials

During the year, a total of 2,987 items were added to the Library collections. This included 555 purchased items, 1,138 serial issues and 35 items acquired through the research grants program. Purchases for the year cost a total of $65,992.

The Library of Congress — said to be the largest library in the world — has approved the use of the AIATSIS Thesauri in catalogue records. The decision represents an important vote of confidence in the thesauri, which were developed by the AIATSIS Library to assist researchers seeking information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. The three thesauri were launched by AIATSIS Chairperson, Professor Mick Dodson, in March 2008, as new online tools covering the fields of subject, language and people, and place. They are available at <www1.aiatsis.gov.au/thesaurus/> and can be downloaded free of charge.

Priorities for the acquisition program include:

- materials of Indigenous authorship
- archives of people and organisations significant in Australian Indigenous affairs
- archives of people and organisations prominent in Australian Indigenous studies
- materials to support family history research.

Important donations received by the Library during the year included:

- In October 2007, AIATSIS received the collection of Herbert Read, a missionary who worked at Rauukan, South Australia and Goulburn Island, Northern Territory between 1906 and 1945. The Library's component includes rare published journals, diaries, teaching and sermon notes, and an extensive collection of glass plates. This collection represents a significant cross-section of the material used by Christian missionaries.
- Dr Betty Meehan deposited the field notebooks and site plans of the late Professor Rhys Jones. These notebooks are a significant addition to the collection and will be digitised as a special project.
- Government consultant Kathryn Wells deposited a large collection of materials related to her work in Aboriginal affairs

from the 1980s. Most of these materials are from the period when Clyde Holding was the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

- Dr Luise Hercus deposited a major work on the *Wurru* (Crane) mythology and song cycle of the Arabana and Wangkangurru people of the eastern and northern Lake Eyre Basin.

Auctions

Material acquired at auction included:

- Henry W Parker, *The Rise, Progress and Present State of Van Dieman's Land* (1833)
- William Lansborough, *Exploration of Australia from Carpentaria to Melbourne* (1866)
- HEA Meyer, *Manners and Customs of the Aborigines of the Encounter Bay Tribe*, South Australia (1846)
- Angus McLean, *Lindigo: The White Woman: A highland girl's captivity among the Australian Blacks*, Melbourne (1866).
- six articles from mid-nineteenth century English magazines on various Aboriginal themes, such as the Aborigines of King George Sound and Van Diemen's Land with an excellent representation of a 'Corrobory'.

The Library purchased a copy of Watkin Tench's *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay* (1789, Dublin edition). This completes the Library's holdings of the main works of the First Fleet writers. A series of mainly nineteenth century items was also purchased, including an 1836 newspaper article on Lord Glenelg's decision to appoint the first protector of Aborigines in South Australia and Edward Morris's *Austral English* (1898), which includes many Aboriginal words with extensive attributions to their historical sources.

Audiovisual materials

During the year a total of 132 collections were offered for deposit or donation to the Audiovisual Archive. These collections comprised 712 audio recordings, 12,906 photographic images, and 588 moving image items. These materials are held on a variety of analogue and digital carriers and date from the early 1900s to the present day. In addition, four artworks were donated to the archive.

Collections of particular note donated during the year are:

- Martin Munz's deposit of original videotapes recording events commemorating the 18th anniversary of the Wave Hill Walk-Off. The tapes, produced on behalf of the Central Land Council, consist of the original takes of the community re-enacting the strike at Dagaragu, Kalkaringi and Wattie Creek.

- A DVD documentary produced by the Wingecarribee Reconciliation Group entitled *Sorry*, which features interviews and footage from a series of public events held in Bowral in 1997 in response to the *Bringing Them Home* report. These activities were a forerunner to the nationwide Sorry Books campaign.

- Kim McKenzie's deposit of 149 photographs and 31 audiotapes collected by the late Les Hiatt during his visits to Maningrida over three decades of field work. Some of this material, including oral history recordings with Frank Gurrmanamana, was featured in their joint project *People of the Rivermouth*.

- Bob Plasto's deposit of 78 reels of 16 millimetre original negative for the working titles *World Heritage*; *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*; and *The Hill*. These working titles relate to the following production titles: *My Country*, *Coronation Hill* and *Land of the Apocalypse*.

- Rachel Perkins' large donation of materials relating to various film projects undertaken over the last twenty years. The donation comprises completed programs, film rushes, video and sound, costume items and props, multiple drafts of scripts, diaries, press materials and stills. Of particular note is the project *Arrernte Personal Histories*, which features interviews with senior Arrernte people, all since deceased. This material represents some of the leading knowledge holders and Arrernte Elders of the last twenty years. The footage was recorded on DV Cam, which was then edited and mastered onto Betacam SP tapes. The works in this collection are indicative of the resurgence in Australian filmmaking generally over the last twenty years, but also highlight the growth of Indigenous filmmaking in particular with films like *Radiance* and *One Night the Moon*. The examination of Ms Perkins' own Aboriginality through the many oral histories she made with key elders from the Arrente community, and the thorough research and documentation she carried out, will make an outstanding contribution to the depth of personal histories held in the AIATSIS collection.

- Patricia Stanner's donation of a painting by Nym Bandak, titled *Ku Wanddatji and Ku Kukbi* (Rock Python and Black Nosed

Ronald Rose with Aboriginal baby, June 1962, Snake Bay, Northern Territory.

Superb portraits of community life preserved

An intimate glimpse of people living close to country decades ago: cooking, spear throwing, digging for food. Here are children swimming or playing games, men hunting, group portraits. It is arguably the most impressive set of images in the AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive shot by a non-professional photographer. And all are preserved for future generations, and accessible right now by community members or researchers.

In late 2007 the AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive completed the digitisation of Ronald Rose's vast collection of original negatives, donated by his son, Chris Rose. Taken between 1950 and 1966, they include stunning images of the landscape, mission scenes and portraits of the individuals Rose worked with among the Pitjantjatjara, Arrernte, Bundjalung and Githabul peoples.

Rose assiduously recorded the people and places encountered during the trips he undertook with his wife (and fellow researcher) Lyndon throughout Central Australia and along the East Coast. In the introduction to *Living Magic: The realities underlying the psychical practices and beliefs of Australian Aborigines*, published by Chatto & Windus in 1957, Rose says that his book is 'essentially the story of how parapsychological tests were applied to Australian Aborigines in an attempt to determine the fact and fancy underlying their magic'.

There is little doubt that Rose was an enthusiastic and dedicated researcher in the fields of psychokinesis and extrasensory perception, but one suspects that his legacy will be based more on his narrative abilities and his superb portraits of community life, material culture and ceremonial activity.

Python). This artwork has immense historical significance to AIATSIS because of the association between the artist and Professor WEH Stanner. The painting is a rare and excellent example of the Murrinh-Patha style, and was collected by Professor Stanner in 1959 during the course of his fieldwork in the Port Keats (Wadeye) area. Documentation by Professor Stanner relating to similar paintings is held at AIATSIS.

- Mrs Denise Roder's donation of nearly 1,500 photographs comprising the Herbert Read Collection. This donation consists of early photographic material ranging from glass plate negatives and lantern slides to large format negatives and prints. Most of the images were taken at Raukkan and Goulburn Island, where Herbert Read worked as a missionary between 1906 and 1945.

- Dr Betty Meehan's deposit of nearly 7,000 colour transparencies mostly taken by her or the late Professor Rhys Jones in the 1970s and early 1980s at various locations in Arnhem Land. The images are an outstanding record of material culture and hunting and gathering activities of the Anbarra people.

A full list of donations and gifts received during the year is at

Preservation and conservation

AIATSIS houses materials to archival standards, with collections held in secure, temperature- and humidity-controlled vaults. All new collection materials are assessed for insects and mould on arrival at AIATSIS and any suspect materials are isolated in a specially equipped quarantine room where they are inspected and treated before coming in contact with any other collection materials.

Audiovisual materials are delicate and vulnerable to deterioration from poor handling, climatic conditions and storage prior to lodgment, as well as the natural chemical decomposition of the media on which the information is held. The Audiovisual Archive undertakes conservation work on material in poor condition and makes digital preservation copies of each item to ensure its permanent accessibility. This is a time-consuming process; at the current rate it will take more than twenty-five years to copy every item in the collection. This estimate does not allow for the ongoing expansion of the collection.

Audiovisual materials are prioritised for preservation using criteria that include the physical condition and age of the original material, rarity of the content, obsolescence, and level of demand. In recent years the Audiovisual Archive has shifted away from using analogue carriers to preserve collection material towards using digital hardware and software exclusively. This change has been driven by the decline in availability and utility of analogue media as the industry has rapidly switched to digital media and systems.

The funding received from the AIATSIS Digitisation Project 2005–08 allowed the archive to purchase and commission a large amount of now crucial digital infrastructure as well as employ more than 30 staff to operate the equipment, document the collection and facilitate access to it.

A number of key audiovisual collections have been preserved in the past twelve months . The Library undertook a six-month project to assess, rehouse and consolidate the storage of the unsorted collections held in its closed-access stacks. This project, together with the installation of larger compactus units, will provide much-needed additional shelving for some years into the future.

The Library's Manuscripts Officer finished employment with the Library in August 2007. The Library now has no ongoing archivist to work on collections of personal and private papers.

A guide to the Library's ephemera collection has been placed on the AIATSIS website. The ephemera collection consists of a variety of print and non-print materials that are generally associated with a particular event, such as an exhibition, performance, dinner, course, seminar or public gathering

Finding aids

Finding aids were created and uploaded to the website for 65 audio collections, representing a total of 693 field recordings. One collection of note was the result of a joint Australian Research Council funded project between the Yarrawarrra Aboriginal Corporation and the University of New England. The 81 cassettes were recorded between 1996 and 1999 and are largely oral histories and personal stories of Gumbaynggir people from the Corindi area of the north coast of New South Wales. There is also some Gumbaynggir language elicitation and conversation. The interviews cover subjects such as material culture, settlement of the area, sites of significance such as middens and family histories.

The extensive finding aid to the papers of Jackie Huggins, a former AIATSIS Council member, was officially launched at the AIATSIS Conference in November 2007. The event was also important to encourage Indigenous researchers to consider depositing their papers in the AIATSIS Library.

A complete list of finding aids created in 2007–08 can be found at Appendix 5.

Event recording

AIATSIS recorded several significant events during the year. These included:

- the lead-up to and events surrounding the Apology in Canberra
- the handing back of human remains from the British Museum to Torres Strait Islander Elders
- a performance by Chooky Dancers from the Northern Territory, in Canberra for the Multicultural Festival
- NAIDOC Day 2007.

The digital photographs, video and audio created by recording these events have become a valuable part of the Institute's collection and are now preserved for future generations.

Technical innovation

The AIATSIS collections pose many technical challenges. The video collection alone consists of 33 different tape-based formats and more than 30 different video file types. Each format needs its own machine and presents its own unique preservation difficulties. The audio collection, the film collection and the photographic collection all pose similar challenges. As a result, collections staff have designed and implemented a number of innovative technical solutions to ensure preservation and ongoing management of the collection is to world's best practice. Four of these solutions are:

- commissioning of two Quadriga 2 four-way ingest systems with high-end computer and specialist software, which has resulted in a four-fold increase in output from these workstations
- using Wavelab software with customised modifications to facilitate automatic generation of all required derivative files, allowing greater output of archive master files for preservation to our digital asset management system
- building and commissioning the only fully functioning J-format video player in Australia to preserve the material held on this rare video format

A rare video tape of Professor WEH Stanner has come to light during digitisation of the obsolete and endangered J-Format video collection. Produced by Institute staff members in 1979, this tape is an example of the diversity of the Institute's collection that would have remained unviewed and uncopied if the digitisation project had not enabled the refurbishment and restoration of the equipment.

- developing subject, language and place thesauri that provide appropriate and accessible descriptions of collection materials—see breakout box for details.

Overview of the Digitisation Project 2005–08

In May 2005, the Australian Government announced that it would allocate $13 million to AIATSIS over three years (2005–08) for the digitisation of a proportion of our film, video and audio collection and selected items from our paper-based collection. The AIATSIS Digitisation Program (ADP) was officially launched on 29 June 2006.

The ADP's goals are to:
- provide better client access to primary research collections held by AIATSIS
- preserve a substantial proportion of vulnerable and deteriorating audiovisual materials

- create online exhibitions and an online historical research library
- return materials to Indigenous individuals and originating communities
- undertake research and negotiation into the copyright, intellectual property and ethical cultural rights of the collections
- undertake community consultation projects, including production of a best practice handbook to assist agencies that need to undertake consultation with Indigenous communities.

Infrastructure

The ADP funding enabled AIATSIS to undertake a significant upgrade of facilities including internal alterations to the building to accommodate extra staff and equipment. This increased our capacity to preserve and provide access to all of our collections. During the project we digitised the following amounts of collection material:

- 9,325 audio items
- 41,775 photographic items
- 485,000 feet of film, which equates to 2,098 motion picture items
- 1,215 video collection items
- 35,163 digital files for preservation and access.

The Audiovisual Archive also purchased and commissioned both new and obsolete pieces of equipment. The new equipment has enabled us to digitise, preserve and provide access to collection material. The obsolete equipment is essential for playback of material so it can be digitised, such as material held on old formats like reel-to-reel audiotapes. The new equipment included:

- one overhead book scanner to digitise unique and fragile books and manuscripts including the Protectors' Reports (see Chapter 2 for more details on this project)
- STE-B1 Shadow Telecine to digitise moving image collections
- two Quadriga 2 four-way ingest systems from Cubetec in Germany
- three Imacon 949 scanners.

The obsolete equipment included:

- 11 Studer 807 1/4 open-reel playback machines from Canada
- a Studer A 820 1/2 open-reel master playback/record machine for very delicate materials
- an Umatic cleaning machine
- a rebuilt J-format video player.

Digital archive

The digital asset management system (DAMS) is where the Institute's digitised collections are stored. The DAMS is a developing software and the Library's DAMS Manager has done extensive work to maximise its capacity. The DAMS is the best option to ensure the long-term preservation of our digitised collections. It fully meets all technical standards and provides a transition path to future software. The Digitool software

has now been selected by three state libraries, which will open up opportunities for AIATSIS to cooperate in providing access to digitised material by Indigenous knowledge centres.

The work to automate the ingest of large numbers of digital files, mainly audio, into the DAMS is now complete. Additionally, new software called Media Beacon was selected and acquired that will allow the Audiovisual Access Unit to easily search and retrieve digital files for client requests.

Staffing

Central to the success of the ADP was the recruitment and retention of more than 30 highly skilled staff. In addition, AIATSIS worked in collaboration with the Canberra Institute of Technology to run an Indigenous Trainee Program for seven young Indigenous people in the areas of photography, audio and information management.

Access

The Library's role in the ADP is to provide access to materials to communities, researchers, schools and the general public through the website and CD-ROM. ADP funding has allowed the Library to build on its past work and develop a program and supporting project plan that include the themes of family history, language and Indigenous history. The Library has also been digitising the AIATSIS Council's minutes and other official records back to 1965.

As part of the ADP, the Library has archived a wide range of Indigenous websites and individual publications. ADP funding has enabled the Library to increase its commitment to PANDORA—Australia's Web Archive, managed by the National Library of Australia and its partner institutions.

During the course of the ADP, the Library has created many successful online exhibitions including:

Sorry Day:
National Apology recorded for posterity

'For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.' As Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered the words many Stolen Generations people had longed to hear in Parliament's National Apology on 13 February 2008, AIATSIS Audiovisual and Media and Communications staff were on site recording the day's historic events for posterity.

Two roving units had video and sound equipment rolling in front of Parliament House in Canberra, recording the speeches and performances and talking to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other onlookers about their feelings. Two photographers were also active.

'I'm here to finally put to rest the Stolen Generations story, and to hear the word "sorry",' Rob Clegg, a member of the Wiradjuri Council of Elders, told us.

'My grandmother's brothers got taken away at a young age, so it was good to come along and support my grandmother and be with her in spirit,' Kayeleene Brown of the Bundjalung–Weilwan/Thawarwal people said.

Young and old, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, were interviewed, their emotions and opinions on this historic day captured. The recordings and images have been safely archived for access by the participants — and their descendants — in perpetuity, together with the already vast treasure trove of Australian Indigenous history held at AIATSIS.

AIATSIS hosted an historic ceremony to mark the first ever return of Torres Strait Islander remains in June, a highly emotive and symbolic event. Island Councillor, Mr Sarie Tabo was overcome with emotion on the day, joining Canberra-based Torres Strait Islander dancers, Beizam Koedal in a traditional island dance.

- *Indigenous Australians at War*
- *Yes! The 1967 Referendum*
- *To Remove and Protect*
- *The Freedom Ride*
- *Collectors of Words*
- *Day of Mourning and Protest.*

Over the life of the project, there have been a total of 6.25 million hits on the online exhibition web pages.

The funding also allowed the Audiovisual Archive to undertake a large-scale return of materials to four Indigenous communities through its Community Consultation Project. This was an intensive three-year project where AIATSIS worked closely with a number of communities throughout Australia. The project, called 'Giving it Back', focused on Brewarrina, Cherbourg, Palm Island and Fitzroy Crossing. All four communities are well represented in the Audiovisual Archive collection.

The aims of the project were to visit each community several times over three years and establish a relationship of trust between community members and AIATSIS. Materials held at AIATSIS from the four communities were digitised with the aim of returning copies to individuals and community centres. The ADP funding allowed us to make a number of visits to these four communities and to return more than 12,000 copies of photographs to Indigenous individuals. These photographs have become an important part of both community and family collections.

Native title research and access service

The NTRU's Native Title Research and Access Officer provides expert advice, research and access assistance to native title clients on the holdings of the AIATSIS Library and Audiovisual Archives. Table 3 provides a summary of the sources of

Table 3: Requestor type and number of requests, 2007–08

Requestor	2005–06		2006–07		2007–08	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Indigenous individuals	99	8%	57	4%	107	8%
Indigenous organisations	342	25%	400	29%	404	29%
Government	623	45%	314	22%	364	26%
Consultants/private companies	131	10%	330	23%	229	16%
Other	168	12%	317	22%	289	21%
Total number of transactions	1,363	100%	1,418	100%	1,393	100%
Number of requests	318		330		288	
Number of visits	31		50		54	

requests for this service and the number of requests received as well as visits by claimants and researchers hosted by the Access Officer.

Digitisation Program 2008–11

Funding has been provided for AIATSIS to continue its digitisation program for another three years. The amount of funding for the 2008–11 AIATSIS Digitisation Program is $10 million, a reduction of 30 per cent on the 2005–08 ADP funding level. While this funding is not sufficient to continue the existing program, various options are being explored to boost AIATSIS's funding on a more permanent basis.