

OUTPUT 3 — CULTURAL COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

HIGHLIGHTS

- AIATSIS Collection Development Policy was developed incorporating both Audiovisual Archive and Library.
- Library collection finding aids became searchable on the National Library of Australia's Trove service.
- Audiovisual Archive staff upgraded facilities for AIATSIS Public Programs.
- Significant extensions and upgrades were made to electronics engineering workshop, enabling it to maintain ageing analogue equipment.
- AIATSIS acquired a high-performance file storage system, the Digitised Collection Object Storage System, to manage its rapidly-growing volume of data.

COLLECTIONS DELIVERABLES

Deliverable Output 3	Result
Developing a strategic Collections Development and Management Plan.	An Institute-wide Collections Development Policy was completed, which will replace existing program-specific policies.
Digitising, preserving and conserving materials in the collections.	28,424 pictorial items, 3053 audio items, 191,596 feet (250 cans) of motion picture and 478 hours of video were transferred to digital format to international standards. The Library digitised 45,384 items in 2010–11.
Developing the collections through on-going acquisition of material.	26,129 new items were offered for deposit or donation to the Audiovisual Archive. 101 manuscript items were accessioned into the Library's collections. \$70,200 spent on acquiring books, serials and rare books.
Maintaining dynamic collections through recording and documenting of contemporary events.	Audiovisual Archive staff photographed and recorded video and audio of all AIATSIS public events.
Working to achieve the best possible value-added documentation, integration and appropriately negotiated access to the collections through the development of programs of copyright clearance and community consultation.	511 audiovisual collections were accessioned and catalogued onto AIATSIS's catalogue, Mura®. 40 audio collection finding aids, 10 moving image collection finding aids and 29 photographic collection caption lists were created and uploaded to Mura®. 10 video collections finding aids created. The Library created 1078 annotations to collection records.
Providing accurate, relevant and informative material to Indigenous communities and the general public.	<i>Koori Mail</i> online collection launched in May 2011. The Audiovisual Archive received 616 requests for materials. 228 clients visited the Audiovisual Archive. All requests were actioned and 403 requests were completed.
Facilitating the development of Indigenous communities' capacity to collect and manage their own archives and collections.	Advice given, however no 'Keeping your history alive' workshops conducted due to funding restraints (see 'strategic alliances').
Becoming the leader for advice about appropriate management of cultural collections.	Staff worked with other organisations on matters relating to the collections, including technical issues.

Deliverable Output 3	Result
Facilitating access to the collections through online discovery, direct request and through visitation.	<p>The Audiovisual Archive received 616 requests for materials. 228 clients visited the Audiovisual Archive.</p> <p>The library received 687 extended reference requests from 740 visiting researchers.</p> <p>Online collections received 507,414 web hits.</p> <p>Document supply requests from the Library have increased by 76 per cent over the previous year.</p>
Enhancing Indigenous access to the Institute via community outreach.	<p>64 per cent of requests for audiovisual materials came from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</p> <p>The Institute returned more than \$111,000 of audiovisual materials to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples free of charge.</p>
Assessing and monitoring growing demand.	<p>Accurate records are maintained in the Audiovisual Archive and indicate general growth in demand.</p> <p>Records also indicate that the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients is increasing by 10 per cent each year.</p> <p>Library reference enquiries up by more than 30 per cent since 2008–09.</p>

ABOUT THE COLLECTIONS

One of the Institute’s goals is to develop, maintain and preserve well-documented archives and collections. It also aims to maximise access to these materials, particularly by Indigenous peoples, in line 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. Print materials are in all formats including 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. The Library has adopted the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services, which set out appropriate ways to interact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to handle related cultural materials.

The Library’s collection can be accessed through a public reading room, Mura®, the online collections catalogue, the AIATSIS website and interlibrary loans.

The Audiovisual Archive holds the world’s largest Indigenous heritage collection of pictorial, moving image and audio materials. The collection of almost one million items contains some 47,000 hours of audio recordings, 10,000 video titles, 650,000 photographic images and 830 titles or eight million feet of motion picture footage. It also includes around 1000 works of art and items of material culture.

With the exception of around 2 per cent of published audio and video material, the items in the Audiovisual Archive are the primary results of field research. They are unique and irreplaceable. During the first three decades of AIATSIS (then Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies) materials largely came into the collection through the Institute’s grants program and commissioned research. Increasingly today,

Indigenous people prefer to deposit materials with AIATSIS, given its reputation for culturally appropriate handling of collections.

Until 2010–11 the Audiovisual Archive has offered the specialist services of Community Access and the Return of Materials to Indigenous Communities (ROMTIC) program. However, Community Access services will not be funded in 2011–12.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

The Collection Management Committee developed a Collection Development Policy for AIATSIS incorporating the practices of both the Audiovisual Archive and the Library. This combined policy replaces the former existing program-specific documents. It outlines the types of materials collected by AIATSIS, criteria for selection, collection-building processes, collecting ethics, and methods of de-selection and disposal.

MURA®, THE AIATSIS COLLECTIONS CATALOGUE

Documentation of Library and Audiovisual Archive materials on Mura® adheres to standard bibliographic practices, as well as Indigenous cultural practices. To provide a unique level of bibliographic access through Mura® that is unavailable from other library catalogues, this documentation includes annotations and the use of the AIATSIS Thesaurus terms.

Some 113,184 searches were performed on the Mura® catalogue during 2010–11. This increase is the result of the new interface to the catalogue introduced during 2009–10.

Staff continued to add book, serial and manuscript records to Trove and Libraries Australia, both Internet-based services that provide access to the holdings of more than 800 Australian libraries and their web resources. Now available on Trove are the Library's analytical entries for books and the Audiovisual Archive's records of digitised collections.

ACQUISITIONS AND DONATIONS

The Institute appreciates donations of material from both individuals and organisations. These donations add significantly to its collections.

PRINT MATERIALS

During the year, 3623 items were added to the Library collections. This included 758 purchased items, serial issues and items acquired through the research grants program. Purchases for the year cost a total of about \$70,200.

Acquisition program priorities included:

- 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.

A full list of donations is available at www.aiatsis.gov.au.

AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS

During the year, 112 collections were offered for deposit or donation to the Audiovisual Archive. These contained 70,575 photographs, 2026 audio recordings, 6276 moving image items and 37 other items, including artworks and artefacts. The amount of material registered is significantly higher than last year's figure as 52,484 photographs and 301 moving image items acquired during the early days of the Institute were rediscovered and found not to have been processed. Collection materials offered to the Audiovisual Archive covered from 1890 through to the present day and arrived in a variety of analogue and digital formats.

Collections of particular note include:

- Three significant films from Scarlett Pictures, including the original 35 mm film negative of *Samson and Delilah* (2009), written and directed by Warwick Thornton. The film was highly acclaimed and won several awards in Australia and abroad, including eight AFI awards.

- Oral history interviews (in English) with Irene Coffin, Amy Dhu and Doris Mitchell, recorded by Mary-Anne Jebb for the Wangka Maya Pilbara Aboriginal Language Centre in 2009. The interviews were recorded as part of Wangka Maya's *Hidden Histories* project, which explores little-known stories of early contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the Pilbara.
- Oral histories in Nyangumarta and English with several elders from the East Pilbara, recorded by Anne Scrimgeour between 1992 and 2007. The recordings include an interview with Palyakulayi (Ginger Bob) in which he recalls his childhood living a traditional life in the Great Sandy Desert, travelling to pastoral areas with his family, working and travelling with Clancy McKenna, his initiation, and the 1946 Pilbara Strike, including recollections of unionist Don McLeod.
- Eighty short recordings collected by Myfany Turpin and Alison Ross featuring texts and conversations about cultural signs in Central Australia. The collection includes many texts in Alyawarr, Kaytetye, Eastern Anmatyerr and Central Arrernte relating to specific bird species and the meanings attributed to their sighting.
- A set of video recordings called *Big women from Borroloola: Aboriginal women from the gulf talk stories* created for the Papulu Aparr-Kari Aboriginal Corporation by Liz Mackinlay, Melissa Lucashenko and Alieta Grimes between 2007 and 2010.
- A rare black and white albumen print of Murray Jack, taken around 1880 by an unknown photographer in the Dalgety region, New South Wales. Murray Jack (or Yibaimalian) was born at Talbingo Mountain near Tumut where he became a leader of Wolgal (Walgal) and Ngarigo people. He passed away in 1891 and is buried in the Cooma Cemetery.
- Audio recordings of several sessions from a land rights 'teach-in' held at Sydney University in 1979. Joan Garvan, who was once a member of the Aboriginal Land Rights Support Group (ALRSG) who coordinated the event, submitted the recordings. They feature lectures from a number of prominent Indigenous land rights activists, including Joe McGinness, Mick Miller, Marcia Langton, Pat O'Shane and Steven Albert. Ms Garvan also supplied an oral history account of her involvement with the ALRSG, adding significant value to the other recordings.
- Three videos called the *Kulumindini video project*, capturing interviews and songs performed by people from the Elliot area in the Northern Territory. The videos were created in 1988 with funding from the Australian Film Commission and were deposited by the project's technical adviser, Stephen Stockwell.
- Eighteen CDs created by linguist Clair Hill documenting oral histories and stories of the Umpila and Kuuku Ya'u people from the Lockhart River region in north-east Cape York. Much of the material is restricted for ceremonial, gender or personal reasons.
- A large collection of colour slides taken by anthropologist Jessica De Largy Healy during fieldwork in north-east Arnhem Land in late 2004. Dr De Largy Healy was working on a digital documentation project and collaborated closely with Dr Joseph Neparrnga Gumbula, a research fellow at the University of Sydney. Dr Gumbula was the local supervisor of her research and a founding member of the Galiwin'ku Indigenous Knowledge Centre.
- An unusual collection of language recordings collected by American composer Kevin James in the Northern Territory's Top End. The recordings feature texts in Dalabon, Jawoyn, Kriol and Mayali. They were created specifically to be incorporated into musical works by Kevin James, which featured endangered languages from around the world.
- Five black and white glass plate negatives of Tasmanian Aboriginal people at Oyster Cove from 1858–1900. Due to their rarity, AIATSIS bought these images at auction.
- Some 110 hours of recordings created for the ARC-funded Warlpiri Songlines Project. Researchers Nicolas Peterson, Mary Laughren, Anna Peeti Meltzer and Stephen Wild worked with Warlpiri elders to record, transcribe

To Mr. Phillips, Steward to Lord Sidney.

Sidney New South Wales,
August 29 1796.

Sir

I am very well. I hope you are very well. I live at the Governour's. I have dinner there every day. I have not my wife. Another black man took her away. We have had muzzy doings. He speard me in the back, but I better now. His name is now Carroway. All my friends alive and well. Not me go to England no more. I am at home now. I hope Sir you send me any thing you please Sir. Hope all are well in England. I hope Mrs. Phillips very well. You nurse me Madam when I sick. You very good Madam. I thank you Madam, and hope you remember me Madam. Not forget. I know you very well Madam. Madam I want stockings. Thank you Madam. Send me two pair of stockings. You my good Madam. Thank you Madam. Sir you give my duty to Lord Sidney. Thank you very good my Lord, very good. Hope very well all Family, very well. Sir send me you please some handkerchiefs for pocket. You please Sir send me some shoes. Two pair you please.

Bannolong.



The rare 209-year-old German book containing the first printed version of a letter dictated by Bennelong to a scribe in 1796. It is celebrated as the first known use of written English by an Australian Aboriginal. Photograph by Kerstin Styche.

BENNELONG'S 'VOICE' EMERGES FROM 215-YEAR-OLD LETTER

The voice of a grateful man nursed through a serious illness leaps from the page.

Sir, I am very well. I hope you are very well ... I hope Mrs Phillips is very well. You nurse me madam when I sick. You very good madam; thank you madam, and hope you remember me madam, not forget. I know you very well madam ... Thank you very good my Lord; hope you well all family very well.

— Bannolong

The voice is 215 years old. It is that of Bennelong, one of the first Aboriginal people to interact with British settlers at Sydney Cove. He dictated these words to a scribe, and in so doing created the first known use of written English by an Australian Aboriginal person.

The letter was written to Mr Phillips, the steward who served Lord Sydney, the British Home Secretary. Mr Phillips, together with his wife, had nursed Bennelong through a grave illness during his visit to England in the early 1790s.

AIATSIS has brought this letter into its extensive collection by acquiring *Monatliche Correspondenz zur Beforderung der Erd- und Himmelskunde*, an 1801 German publication containing the first printed version of Bennelong's letter.

AIATSIS's Library Collections Manager, Dr Barry Cundy, said the Institute had been fortunate to obtain the publication from a Brisbane book dealer.

'It is the earliest piece of writing produced by an Aboriginal author and no earlier printings of this Bennelong letter are known,' Dr Cundy said.

The letter also provides an insight into what Bennelong, a senior man of the Eora Aboriginal people of Port Jackson, experienced when straddling two cultures.

... I live at the governor's. I have every day dinner there. I have not my wife; another black man took her away. We have had muzzy doings; he speard me in the back, but I better now; his name is Carroway. All my friends alive and well. Not me go to England no more. I am at home now ...

and interpret dreaming songs central to Warlpiri culture. Nicolas Peterson deposited the recordings on a hard drive, which was immediately backed up to AIATSIS network-attached storage.

- Twenty-four Aboriginal artworks and artefacts donated by former personal secretary to Sir Paul Hasluck, Ellestan Dusing. Some of the donated works are believed to have been acquired by Sir Paul Hasluck during his time as Minister for Territories. Included is a key acquisition for the Institute, the painting *The Legend of Kumangoor* by notable Wadeye artist, Simon Nganbe.
- Five watercolour paintings by Hermannsburg artists in the 1960s donated by Mrs Joan Bolton. The works, featuring Central Australian landscapes, are by Otto Pareroulta, Brentan Raberaba, Edwin Pareroulta and Helmut Pareroulta.

AUCTIONS AND SPECIAL PURCHASES

The Library bought six items for the collection including the earliest published version (1801) of Bennelong's letter to Mr Phillips, the first recorded use of writing by an Aborigine (see box p. 69). Other items included two articles incorporating versions of the portrait plates of Yerrangulaga and Mackabarang by illustrators on Nicholas Baudin's expedition to Australia, Nicholas-Martin Petit and Charles-Alexander Lesueur.

Library purchases of rare items in 2010–11, included:

- *Voyage de découvertes aux Terres Australes: historique*, the first volume of an 1924 atlas from Paris
- A mid nineteenth-century Japanese board game, Ikoku jinbutsu sugoroku, featuring an early Asian representation of an Aboriginal figure in a possum skin cloak
- Five nineteenth century glass slides of Tasmanian Aboriginal people (two portraits of William Lanne, one of Truganini, and two group portraits).

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 material is isolated in a specially-equipped quarantine room where it is inspected and treated before coming into contact with any other collection material.

The Library uses digitisation funding to employ a full-time conservator. The conservator assesses and devises treatments for any materials to be digitised, as well as for general collection items needing restoration. In 2010–11, a total of 126 treatments were completed on collection items.

The Library's conservator and collection management staff completed a major survey to list at risk collections to 2015. This listing will be the basis for the Library's future digitisation priorities.

Collections digitised from this list include:

- Geytenbeek and Gidabal texts
- Geytenbeek, Nyangumarta, Nyamal and Nyiyapali word lists
- Thomas Illidge manuscript word lists
- Robert Etheridge manuscripts
- Robert Layton field notebooks: Cox River land claim Aurukun Mission papers: original records of the Aurukun Mission, deposited by the Aurukun Council including the Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages 1891–1970
- SR Mitchell: stone implements manuscript.

The Library acquired three dehumidification units which will be used to control humidity in the open stack area, and as reserve units for disaster recovery or to support other Canberra collecting organisations in similar circumstances.

Audiovisual Archive vaults are monitored constantly for correct climactic conditions. Audio and video materials are housed at 16 degrees and 36 per cent humidity, motion picture and pictorial are stored at 5 degrees

A SENSE OF HISTORY

Sometimes an individual's sense of history can make the difference between keeping a significant record for future generations, and losing it forever.

Two history-conscious Canberra families recently made sure their valuable audio recordings and watercolours were protected for generations to come by giving them to AIATSIS for safekeeping.

Ms Joan Garvan, of Lyneham, who was a member of the Aboriginal Land Rights' Support Group in Sydney, donated rare 1970s recordings of now well-known Aboriginal activists speaking at an Aboriginal land rights 'teach-in' which had been organised by the group.

Speakers include the late Joe McGinness, Mick Miller, Lawrence Dugong, Marcia Langton, Pat O'Shane and Steven Albert.

'The Aboriginal Land Rights Support Group was a group of non-Indigenous people who offered support to Indigenous people who were actively fighting for land rights at that time,' Ms Garvan said.

'I thought it appropriate that AIATSIS take charge of protecting the tapes — particularly as it also holds the collection of the newsletter that the support group published for several years. These tapes are a valuable part of contemporary Indigenous history and should be properly cared for.'

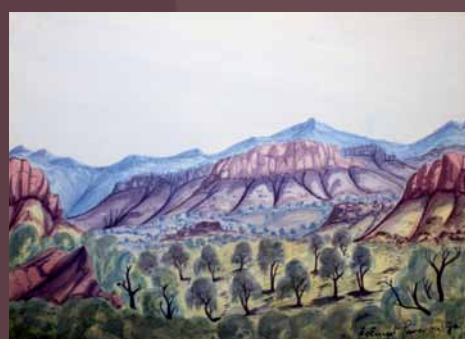
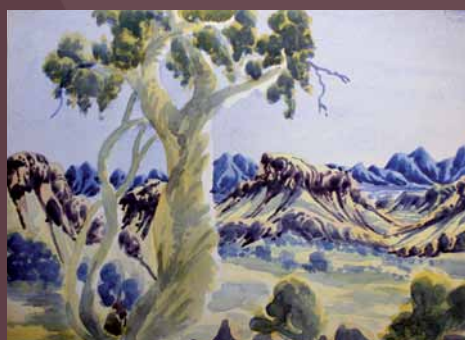
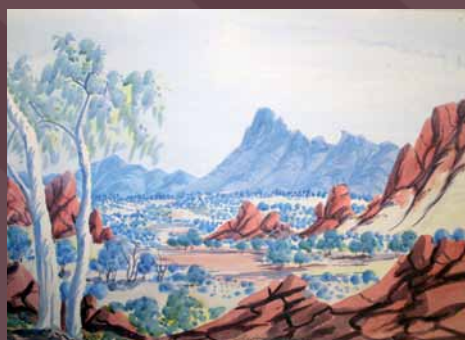
With similar generosity of spirit, Mrs Leigh Murray, of Hughes, donated five watercolours painted by Hermannsburg artists some fifty years ago. They are now valued at between \$15,000 and \$20,000.

Two of the works were painted by Artist Otto Pareroulta. The other three works were painted by Helmut and Edwin Pareroulta, and Brentan Raberaba.

'The paintings belonged to my 92-year-old aunt, Mrs Joan Bolton, who now lives in Queanbeyan, and she wanted to make sure that they were not locked away in some private collection and we decided to donate them to the Institute,' Mrs Murray said.

The Institute's growing archive holds almost a million items of unique and priceless audio and videotape, photos, film records and written material of Indigenous peoples' ceremony, culture, lifestyles, art, music, languages, and oral history.

Five watercolours painted by Hermannsburg artists, Otto Pareroulta, Helmut and Edwin Pareroulta and Brentan Raberaba, some 50 years ago. These watercolours were generously donated to AIATSIS by a Canberra resident in June 2010. Photographs by Kerstin Styche.



and 36 per cent humidity and works of art and artefacts of material culture are housed at 22 degrees and 50 per cent humidity.

Before pictorial and motion picture materials are worked on they are taken from the cold vault into an acclimatisation room where they are slowly brought up to 22 degrees. This saves the material from being damaged by condensation. Prior to being played and migrated in the digital format, audio and video technicians use an archival oven to bake and stabilise any analogue tapes showing signs of deterioration.

AIATSIS DIGITISATION PROGRAM 2008–11

The funding received from the AIATSIS Digitisation Program 2005–08 and 2008–11 allowed the Audiovisual Archive and Library to purchase and commission a large amount of now crucial digital equipment, and to employ more than 35 staff to operate the equipment, preserve and document the collections at risk, and provide access to it where appropriate.

During 2010–11, the last year of the 2008–11 AIATSIS Digitisation Program, work continued on digitally preserving the Institute’s collections. The Library focused on a range of projects including the major achievement of making accessible the full twenty-year backset of the *Koori Mail* newspaper. Major work was also undertaken to improve most of the existing online collections. For further information on digitisation, see Chapter 2.

The migration of the AIATSIS digital archive files to a new storage facility was completed in June 2011. Servers for the digital archive were also replaced, increasing the capacity and reliability of the system.

Digitisation of audiovisual collections

Library digitisation staff started converting audiotapes from the language and educational kit materials held in the Library. These will be made available to clients.

After months of consultation and trials, AIATSIS acquired a high-performance file storage system, the Digitised Collection Object Storage System (DCOSS). This system has an integrated data

management application, specifically designed to manage the rapidly-growing volume of data. The system means that the Institute will be able to provide safe, secure and appropriate access to its priceless audiovisual collection well into the future. The DCOSS has now been installed and several staff are transferring files to the new system. To date 78 per cent of all digitised collection materials have been uploaded to the DCOSS.

The following collection materials were digitised for preservation in 2010–11:

Pictorial

- 28,424 archive items digitised to preservation master standard, an increase of 53 per cent on the previous financial year
- 50,043 archive items mastered to access master or JPEG standard, an increase of 51.7 per cent over the previous financial year
- 57,954 photographic files edited (renumbering and renaming), an increase of 89.4 per cent over the previous financial year
- 229 access client requests completed, totalling 3527 images
- 79 hours were devoted to maintaining scanners and the colour calibration of monitors
- 104 hours of technical support provided to AIATSIS
- 12,318 images quality checked
- the still image unit introduced a quality and assessment function.

The large increase in productivity reflects the employment of two extra staff for the 2010–11 financial year.

Audio

- 3053 master preservation files in sealed BWF format
- 211 Mp3 files digitised for client requests
- 103 hours of technical support provided to AIATSIS.

Over the past six years audio staff have converted 18,000 items to digital format. This means that 40 per cent of the recorded sound collection is now digitally available to clients.



From left: Ameer Glass, Nancy West and Dorothy Hackett during a break in a field trip to Warburton in 1963. Photograph from *The Ameer Glass Collection* (AIATSIS Ref. Glass.A1.CS-150107).

45 YEARS OF RESEARCH AND COLLECTING

Forty-five years of recordings, images and documentation collected by two Warburton Mission linguists, is now part of the Audiovisual Archive.

Over the past three years Ameer Glass and Dorothy Hackett have been depositing their remarkable collection with AIATSIS. It includes oral histories, stories, women's traditional songs and dance, Christian songs set to semi traditional tunes, and a Christmas pulapa (corroboree).

The two women arrived in Warburton in 1963, initially to undertake literacy work, and ended up spending more than 45 years living and working with the Ngaanyatjarra people.

They taught many people to read Ngaanyatjarra, at one point working closely with more than thirty Ngaanyatjarra speakers, to translate the New Testament into Ngaanyatjarra, which was published in 1991. They worked on other publications including *The Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaatjatjarra to English dictionary*, *The Ngaanyatjarra learner's guide* and *The Ngaanyatjarra language course*.

Both Ameer and Dorothy were made Members of the Order of Australia in 2006.

They have now deposited more than sixty-four hours of audio material as well as some 1000 colour slides and extensive accompanying documentation at AIATSIS. The slides show their recording process and the people they worked with, general community and mission activities, as well as traditional practices on the Ngaanyatjarra lands such as hunting/gathering of bush tucker and ceremonies.

We felt that to finish our work we needed to ensure that all of the valuable material that we have collected over the forty-five years we have worked with the Ngaanyatjarra people should be safely deposited in a secure place.

— Ameer Glass, June 2009

The entire collection represents an invaluable resource for current and future generations of Ngaanyatjarra people and is a most impressive addition to the AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive.

Work on digitising the remaining 60 per cent continues. However, given current reduced staff levels, expansion of the collection will outstrip the ability to keep up.

The Institute's multiple-ingest system has allowed the highly efficient digital preservation of previously archived reel-to-reel tapes. Field tapes, on the other hand, can only be preserved one tape at a time so that technicians can monitor speed, volumes, wind and other recording noises and adjust accordingly. This means that the rate of digitally preserving these tapes will be much slower.

The Audio Archiving Unit continues working on highly vulnerable formats as a priority including 7 inch masters, DATs, CDs, minidisks, microcassettes and tapes from vulnerable manufacturers (where such information is catalogued). The AIATSIS Collection Management Unit is auditing the number of hours contained in these specific collections. Unfortunately, most of the newer technologies are the most vulnerable at risk materials in the archive. This means that these recordings have a higher preservation priority than older materials that are themselves deteriorating rapidly.

Moving Image

- 191,596 feet (about 250 cans) of film have been transferred to digital Betacam using the telecine machine
- 478 hours invested in video preservation
- 659 hours of digital viewing files created for clients, including *The spear in the stone* collection consisting of forty reels of vision and a further thirty-seven reels of film sound which were digitised and provided to a client
- 119 staff hours of technical support provided to AIATSIS.

The Moving Image Unit has now completed the project to preserve the highly vulnerable at-risk J-format and Video8 materials. This was a high priority given the rapid degradation of their carriers and the increasing difficulty of maintaining their playback equipment. Although Video8 was a common domestic format from the mid-1990s, the tape itself is very thin, poorly

made (regardless of the brand), very fragile and prone to failure. Once the digital preservation of the highest risk materials was completed, work started on other collections. It has become evident that these items are also deteriorating quickly. Many Umatic, Hi8 and VHS tapes need to be conserved before being digitally preserved, to avoid being damaged or destroyed once placed in the players.

Since 2001, AIATSIS has been actively preserving and migrating all of its analogue materials to a digital format before they are lost forever. To date the AIATSIS Digitisation Program has created more than 900,000 digital objects, including preservation masters, client viewing copies, reference files and finding aids. This equals more than 33 terabytes of data.

The natural disaster in Japan delayed the supply of blank recording and data tape, spare parts and other components, in turn postponing several preservation projects, including the digital transfer of 1 inch video.

In August 2010, a short-term contract was let for a project to sort and document the Scarlett Pictures donation of *Samson and Delilah*, *Bourke boy* and *Bit of black business*. Material deposited includes the original 35 mm film negative rushes (89 reels); some 40 DVDs, 30 DATs and a production log. The Institute acquired a high definition, video playback system (HDV) in order to preserve this new HD video format, making it available into the future.

DOCUMENTATION AND FINDING AIDS

The Library has no permanent capacity to document its collections of personal or private papers of individuals or organisations. However, some collections have been processed as part of the AIATSIS digitisation program. This includes the substantial collection received from Dr Jon Altman documenting much of the work of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research of the Australian National University. This will continue into 2011–12.



DCOSS Project Manager, Mark Denbow, configuring the tape library backup. Photograph by Kerstin Styche.

DIGITISED COLLECTION OBJECT STORAGE SYSTEM

UNESCO believes that the world has just fourteen years to preserve all of its audiovisual materials.

Aware of this deadline, AIATSIS has been actively preserving its own collections since 2001, migrating all analogue materials onto a digital format before they are lost forever.

To date the AIATSIS Preservation Program has created more than 800,000 preservation objects, client viewing copies, reference files and finding aids, totalling a massive 33 terabytes of data.

To safely store that volume of digital objects, AIATSIS needed a digital version of its existing climate controlled, media preservation vaults.

In August 2010, the Institute invited industry to put forward options for safely storing its digital material. The storage needed to be able to cope with the steadily increasing volume of digital objects expected in the future.

After months of consultation and trials, AIATSIS selected a joint Hewlett Packard and Quantum StorNext digitised collection object

storage system. This has a high-performance, file sharing design. It also manages data efficiently, in particular the rapidly growing volumes of data, and the very large digital objects associated with multimedia applications and archiving.

Audiovisual preservation creates two types of files, one for preservation and the other for client access. The StorNext solution works like an 'active archive' where all stored objects are readily available on demand, but are also safely checked, copied or replicated onto redundant LTO5 tape, providing appropriate levels of protection and disaster recovery.

Due to StorNext's design, the Institute's existing DigiTool preservation system and the MediaBeacon client request and fulfilment application will be able to use the same storage arrangements.

This new system will enable AIATSIS to provide safe, secure and appropriate access to its priceless audiovisual collections well into the future.

The Library received a large manuscript collection containing the papers of Julia Koppe who was a project field officer in the Queensland Department of Education's Van Leer Language Development Programs for Schools in Aboriginal Communities.

The Library also received the papers of Barbara Nicholson, for many years an executive member on the committee of Link-Up NSW and a former president of the Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Watch Committee.

AIATSIS has been working with the National Library of Australia to make the finding aids to its collections available through the Trove web discovery service. This should create far greater access to these now well-documented AIATSIS collections.

Staff accessioned and catalogued 511 audiovisual collections into the AIATSIS catalogue, Mura®. These records contain enough information to allow access to the Audiovisual Archive's audio, photographic, and moving image materials. Developing finding aids and caption lists further improves access.

Staff created forty finding aids for some 810 hours of sound in the audio collections. A total of 358 finding aids are now available. Audio finding aids are a significant improvement on the existing sound recording documentation, which was once only searchable in aggregate collections via Mura®. Clients are no longer reliant on the catalogue to find material as 187 finding aids can now be accessed directly through various web search engines. For example, a Google search on the name 'Maudie Naylor' will bring up finding aids for three audio collections submitted by Gavan Breen which feature Mrs Naylor, who spoke Ngamini and Yarluandi, and several other languages. Notable collections recently documented to this level include:

- language, songs and stories from South Australia, south-west New South Wales, north-west Victoria, western Queensland and Central Australia, recorded by Luise Hercus between 1965 and 1970

- Gumbaynggir language and songs recorded by Diana Eades in Bellwood, Nambucca Heads, Purfleet and Scotts Head in the mid-1970s
- Yir Yoront language elicitation and texts recorded by Barry Alpher in Kowanyama in 1987
- language and songs from south-west Western Australia, recorded by Wilf Douglas in the mid-1960s
- narratives, cultural discussions and songs in various languages from north-east South Australia and Arnhem Land, recorded by Bernhard Schebeck between 1965 and 1967
- oral histories and cultural discussions from various parts of New South Wales, recorded by Howard Creamer as part of the NSW Aboriginal Sites Survey.

Finding aids were also created for ten moving image collections including footage from a 1950s Charles Melville expedition in the north and west of South Australia. The 8 mm film shot during the trip includes many scenes of ruined buildings, wildflowers, hunting and landscapes. It has been edited with intertitles and maps to explain the routes taken and the locations filmed.

A complete list of finding aids created during the year can be found in Appendix 4.

Staff created caption lists for 29 photographic collections containing 6749 individual images. Each image is described, detailing information such as date and place taken, subject matter and names of individuals appearing in the photograph. These caption lists are available as html files through a link on the Mura® catalogue records. Noteworthy collections described at this level include more than 2000 photographs taken by Rhys Jones during archaeological fieldwork at various sites in Tasmania, South Australia and the Kimberley, and nearly 2000 historic photographs from the Lutheran Archives of missionaries and mission activities taken between 1870 and 1977.



Senior Workshop Engineer, Doug Smith (right) overseeing the installation of a new lathe for the Technical Engineering Unit. Photograph by Nicole Roberts.

GUARANTEED PLAYBACK FOR RAREST MATERIALS

Every audiovisual format, whether film, recorded video or audio, requires different equipment to replay its content.

This equipment is now obsolete. In some cases it has been discontinued for more than forty years. Compounding this, manufacturers and agents no longer carry spare parts nor the specialised tools to support them.

This is an international problem. The UNESCO Memory of the World (of which AIATSIS is a participant) has given the world just fourteen years to preserve all audiovisual materials, particularly magnetic audio and video tapes, before they are lost forever.

To do this AIATSIS needed to acquire and maintain the playback equipment, the parts and the tools, for each and every format type in its collections.

In 2010, as part of the Institute's 2025 Preservation Plan, the Audiovisual Archive refurbished and expanded its engineering facility to include a mechanical engineering area.

This enabled AIATSIS to store spare parts and complete playback systems more safely. More importantly, it has meant that the Institute could maintain its own obsolete equipment.

AIATSIS staff can now completely remanufacture long-gone parts, rebuild bearings and spindles; in short construct almost every mechanical component in a playback system.

This, together with the expanded repair area for component electronics, ensures that AIATSIS can provide equipment that is aligned and calibrated to factory specifications. This will minimise damage caused when playing increasingly fragile magnetic tapes.

AIATSIS now has one of the very few facilities of this type within state or national cultural institutions. It will help to ensure that the priceless contents of the Institute's audiovisual collections continue to be available to future generations.

STATE OF THE ART TECHNOLOGY

Audiovisual Archive staff improved the quality of video and audio in the Institute's public access area, the Mabo Room. They upgraded the video projection and conferencing systems and installed an amplifier to enable hearing impaired staff and visitors to have the seminar presenter's audio broadcast directly to their hearing aids.

Vendor product testing is being undertaken to determine the best method of improving the lighting in the Mabo Room. A new media splitter will enable the Institute to support eight external media organisations with a high quality sound feed at any one event (previously only three could be supported).

The Audiovisual Archive has acquired a new, small and easy to deploy Boss Public Address System for events in the AIATSIS foyer (Rom Gallery) and the library reading room (Stanner Room). The system was trialled successfully at the launch of the *Koori Mail* online exhibition.

ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING SUPPORT

The electronics engineering workshop has been significantly extended and upgraded. Workshop staff Rob Hansen and Doug Smith installed new workbenches, metal milling and turning equipment to manufacture parts which can no longer be purchased. This will enable ageing analogue equipment to be maintained (see box, p. 77).

Electronics engineers started to remotely connect all audio computers to the new machine room. When completed this will

remove the noise of computer fans so that the audio technicians can hear and fix problems with audio recordings. Installation of digital audio cable for running digital signal streams to and from remote audio workstations has also begun.

AIATSIS has one of the very few facilities of this type within state or national cultural institutions.

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Audiovisual Archive and Library representatives comprise the Collections Management Committee. The members of the committee are:

- Di Hosking (Chair), Director, Audiovisual Archive
- Barry Cundy, Collection Manager, Library
- David Jeffery, Manager, Collections Management Unit and Pictorial, Audiovisual Archive
- Pat Brady, Collection Manager, Library
- Marisa Harris, Collection Manager, Audio, Audiovisual Archive
- Lara McLellan, Collection Manager, Moving Image, Audiovisual Archive
- Steve Leahy, Archive Officer, Audio, Audiovisual Archive
- Tasha Lamb, Manager, Audiovisual Access Unit, Audiovisual Archive.