





## Goal 4

Ensure our  
collections are  
safe, accessible,  
valued and  
growing

The AIATSIS Collection, which previously operated as a separate library and audiovisual archive, was brought together as a single unit in 2013–14. This was a large task that required an intensive focus on policy and planning plus the implementation of a range of practical reforms to ensure the desired benefits of scale, efficiency and consistency were realised. The amalgamation also had to be achieved while maintaining day-to-day operational management and access for the many users.

A new collection management plan 2013–16 was prepared and endorsed by the Council to provide an overarching strategy for how the collection will be managed across all media and stages of its life cycle – collection, archiving, access and use.

For some time AIATSIS has wanted to benchmark its collections activity relative to other Australian and international institutions. However, comparative data on collecting institutions has been unavailable. AIATSIS has stepped in to meet this need with a groundbreaking benchmarking study, developed during 2013–14 and implemented at the end of the financial year. Initial data and analysis will be available during 2014–15 and will be of value to both AIATSIS and collecting institutions worldwide.

## Goal 4 performance measurement

**Key performance indicator: AIATSIS is the repository of choice for Indigenous materials**

	Items 2013–14 (% change from 2012–13)
<p><b>Unpublished material offered to the collection in 2013–14 (items registered)</b></p>	<p>Print: 107 items (+20%)</p> <p>Audio: 912 items (+200%)</p> <p>Pictorial: 13,197 items (-17%)</p> <p>Moving image: 4050 items (+1000%)</p> <p>Art and artefacts: 222 items (+14%)</p>
<p><b>Material incorporated into the collection in 2013–14 (items accessioned; includes material registered in previous years)</b></p>	<p>Print: 1466 items (-9%)</p> <p>Audio: 329 items (-24%)</p> <p>Pictorial: 8671 items (-1%)</p> <p>Moving image: 7 items (N/A – nil in 2012–13)</p> <p>Art and artefacts: 220 items (N/A – nil in 2012–13)</p>



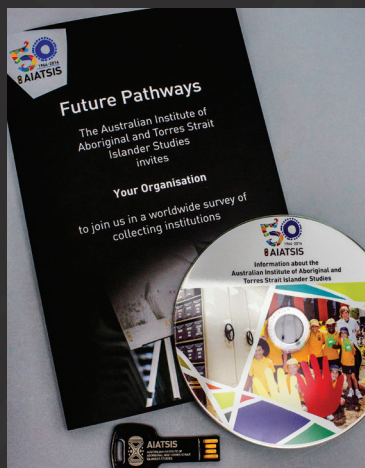
### Key performance indicator: AIATSIS is the repository of choice for Indigenous materials

	Items 2013–14 (% change from 2012–13)
Digital preservation (items digitised)	Print scanning: 73,205 images (+218%)
	Image preservation masters created: 36,163 (+1%)
	Audio preservation masters created: 5471 (–35%)
	Video preservation masters created: 93 (+365%)
	Motion picture preservation masters created: 91 (+355%)
Discoverability – audition sheets, finding aids and catalogue entries (items created)	Document finding aids: 2 (no change)
	Pictorial caption lists: 250 (+46%)
	Audio audition sheets: 135 (+4%)
	Audio finding aids: 30 (–60%)
	Original catalogue records: 995 (+109%)
	Annotations added to catalogue: 757 (–28%)

Factors contributing to changes in the collection throughput from 2012–13 include:

- items were accepted into the moving image collection again in 2013–14 after being excluded in 2012–13 due to resource priorities
- resources were prioritised to develop and update essential policy for part of the year
- staff with essential skills could not be replaced.

# Future Pathways benchmarking survey



After months of preparation and testing, the Future Pathways benchmarking survey was sent to 150 Australian and international collecting organisations on 24 June 2014, inviting them to participate.

The survey, developed completely in-house, was delivered in the form of a self-contained software application housed on a USB flash drive that can be safely handed from person to person to complete individual sections with no fear of losing data.

The Future Pathways survey is a point-in-time snapshot of local, national and international collecting institutions. It quantifies total collection sizes, growth, progress on digitisation, technical standards and other administrative and statistical aspects. The survey will clarify where AIATSIS, as a collecting organisation, 'fits' within the galleries, libraries, archives and museums landscape. Although the survey is focused on collections information in general, there are a small number of questions that relate to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other indigenous holdings.

The initial round of data gathering will be undertaken through the survey. It will be followed up by some more in-depth discussion with agencies that prove to be similar to AIATSIS in collection and activities. AIATSIS hopes the survey will also identify opportunities for collaboration, knowledge transfer, skills development and innovation.

AIATSIS will provide all participants with a copy of the survey report. We believe this is a first for a benchmarking exercise of this scope and we are anticipating an excellent response.



## Building the collection

The AIATSIS Collection Development Policy, which sets out why, what and for whom we collect, was revised in 2013–14. This policy guides staff when assessing material that is offered to AIATSIS or available for purchase. It also provides potential donors and depositors with an understanding of what we will accept and why.

### Material offered to AIATSIS in 2013–14 – highlights

The most noteworthy pictorial material offered to AIATSIS in 2013–14 was a collection of more than 5000 colour slides taken by Dr Michael Smith during archaeological fieldwork at many locations in central and South Australia between 1971 and 2004, including excavations at Puritjara, Glen Thirsty and Malakunanya.

Another noteworthy collection of photographs was offered by Ms Gail Russell. These photos record the work and recreational activities of the Hunt and Quayle families around Gilgandra, Bourke, Wanaaring and Wilcannia between the 1930s and 1950s. Images depicting the important contribution of Aboriginal people to the pastoral industry feature prominently, along with everyday activities, camps, housing and the impact of drought and floods. This valuable collection complements the oral history recording of Mrs May Hunt (nee Quayle) held in the AIATSIS Collection.

Most of the moving image material offered to AIATSIS came from the Department of Social Services, which transferred material recorded and/or collected by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission before 2004. Content ranges from records of

official meetings to commercial releases and off-air recordings of television programs. The original items have been transferred, along with digital preservation copies of moving image materials.

Other notable moving image material includes a series of Betacam SP tapes containing interviews with the Archibald family, all descendants of Frank and Sarah Archibald of the Gumbanjerri. Frank Archibald is the depositor's grandfather and the son of King Billy from Armidale.

Among audio recordings presented to AIATSIS were two significant sets of oral history materials: one from Professor John Maynard and another from Mr Noel Pearson. Professor Maynard lodged recordings of interviews with Indigenous jockeys, directly related to his publications *Aborigines and the 'sport of kings'* and 'Aboriginal stars of the pigskin'. Mr Pearson lodged a series of interviews with people who were associated with and lived on the Hope Vale Mission in the first half of the 20th century, which forms part of the research for his history honours thesis. Both of these collections have already been accessioned and catalogued.

### Material incorporated into the AIATSIS Collection in 2013–14 – highlights

The most significant manuscripts incorporated in the collection were:

- Professor Tasaku Tsunoda's notebooks and linguistic papers
- Dr Maggie Brady's papers and research notes on petrol sniffing
- Dr Michael Smith's field notes on the Puritjarra excavation



Above: Illustration plates from George French Angas's *South Australia Illustrated* (1847).

- Dr Walter Wood's notes and papers related to the Broadbeach excavation
- Mr Richard Buchhorn's papers on the Boobera Lagoon dispute
- Ms Clair Hill and Mr David Thompson's Lockhart River language maintenance learning materials
- A thanksgiving service for the life of Winifred Hilliard donated by David Kaus.

The Jon Altman manuscript collection has been sorted and rehoused into 260 boxes (a process that has taken three years to complete) and the finding aid is now in preparation.

Rare books acquired include *South Australia illustrated*, by George French Angas (1847), *A voyage to Botany Bay...*, by George Barrington (1800), *Van Diemen's Land...* by Henry Melville (1833) and *A voyage of discovery to the Southern Hemisphere*, by Francois Peron (1809).

The majority of the pictorial items accessioned were photographic prints from the Francis Birtles Collections, which have now been digitised. These rare and valuable photographs dating back to the early 1920s were taken by Mr Birtles during his expeditions across Australia, first by bicycle and then by motor vehicle, and feature images of housing, material culture, camp scenes and rock art. The negatives from his collections were accessioned and digitised in 2012–13. These have now been complemented with his photographic prints, in some cases better preserved at better quality than the negatives, and 24 pen-and-ink drawings by Mr Birtles depicting scenes and encounters during his travels.

AIATSIS is not attempting to build a comprehensive art and artefacts collection, but is selectively focused on items of very high cultural value and/or relevance to the wider collection. Within this strategy, artworks accessioned included 193 crayon drawings produced by various Warlukurlangu artists of Yuendumu during a drawings workshop facilitated by Dr Melinda Hinkson in 2012.

The workshop was conducted as part of Dr Hinkson's research into drawings made by Warlpiri men at Hooker Creek in 1953, when they were invited to draw with crayons and paper by anthropologist Mervyn Meggitt. The 1953 drawings are in the AIATSIS Collection and the Warlpiri men's descendants have been introduced to them through Dr Hinkson's research. As outlined under Goal 2, AIATSIS has been working in partnership with the National Museum of Australia to produce an exhibition of the 1953 and 2012 Warlpiri drawings, alongside publication of a book on the subject through Aboriginal Studies Press.

AIATSIS also purchased a Wunda shield (ca 1910–1920) of exceptional quality and cultural significance from the Shark Bay region of Western Australia.

## Discoverability of the collection

### Implementation of Resource Description and Access cataloguing

Resource Description and Access (RDA) is a descriptive cataloguing standard developed to suit the digital environment. It is now the preferred standard for Australian libraries.

AIATSIS' implementation of RDA was completed in 2013–14, making us one of the first institutions in Australia to use it. The new standards and procedures are in place and cataloguing templates, policies and procedures have been updated to reflect the new cataloguing guidelines.

### Implementation of new online interface for Mura® catalogue

Work has started on the design and specification of a new online interface for the Mura® Collection catalogue. This will dramatically modernise the interface and improve the user experience. User consultation, testing and implementation will take place in 2014–15.

### Finding aids, audition sheets and caption lists

Audition sheets and caption lists make the AIATSIS Collection discoverable by describing in text (which can be searched) what is contained in a sound recording, photograph or film. Finding aids improve discoverability of materials by articulating personal names, places and language groups. In 2013–14, AIATSIS made significant gains in the production of these discoverability tools across most media.

To support an urgent access request, one of Luise Hercus's audio collections, with unusually little documentation, was auditioned in record time following its digitisation. The collection features more than 40 hours of Adnyamathanha, Paakantyi, Wakaya and Wambaya language elicitation and cultural discussions recorded in the late 1970s and early 1980s. A finding aid is now in preparation.

An audio finding aid was produced for Harold Koch's audio collection. This was a part of Kaytetye material Mr Koch offered in 2012–13, comprising 60 reels and cassette tapes. Kaytetye is a language spoken in a region about 300 km north of Alice Springs. Mr Koch also offered 13 field notes, which have been digitised. With this and other



material, AIATSIS now holds the largest and most complete collection of Kaytetye material in existence.

## Leadership on access to cultural collections

The AIATSIS Collection Access and Use Policy, as updated in 2013–14, represents current best practice in implementing access to cultural collections and serves as a model for other institutions holding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural material. The policy was reviewed using AIATSIS' in-house expertise and experience. Terri Janke, an Aboriginal lawyer specialising in intellectual property and culture, reviewed the policy and provided advice to AIATSIS.

Below left: Andrew Spiker and Daryl Ciubal checking print material after bulk digitisation.  
*Photo credit – Daniel Walding*

Below right: Archivist Cathy Zdanowicz shows Professor Jon Altman the work being done on his extensive collection. *Photo credit – Andrew Turner*



## Ensuring the long-term survival of our collection

A digital preservation policy and road map for the AIATSIS Collection was developed and is near completion. It included a review of technical standards applied within all media format digitisation workgroups. Preservation strategies identified by the Open Archival Information System reference model ISO 14721:2012 and the RLG – Trusted Digital Repository reports are under consideration to inform future directions.

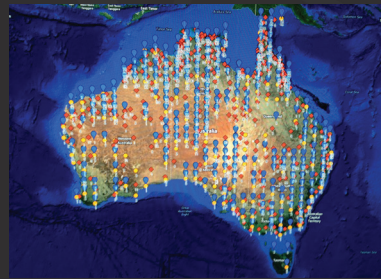
### Digital preservation

Although digitisation of audio material declined in 2013–14 due to constraints discussed earlier, several important collections were digitised this year. They included:

- 40 hours of oral history interviews conducted by the late Kim McKenzie between 1992 and 1994 as part of the Oscar Project. The interviews feature analyses of a series of drawings by Oscar of Cooktown, born in 1877, held by the National Museum of Australia



## Languages and Collection mapping projects



Two exciting new projects started this year provide a powerful resource discovery tool for AIATSIS clients.

The first project will update and align two existing language resources so they operate in tandem:

- The Language and Peoples Thesaurus, which lists and defines all the terminology relating to Australian languages and language groups, including multiple and alternative spellings. The thesaurus is being updated to incorporate the most recent findings and understanding about Australian Indigenous languages.
- The AUSTLANG Australian Indigenous Languages Database, which provides a comprehensive resource for material on Australian languages. AUSTLANG includes geographic data that can be used to link to geospatial mapping.

The second project brings together these language resources, the wider AIATSIS Collection (through the catalogue) and the power of geospatial mapping to allow the collection to be searched, viewed and analysed geographically.

The AIATSIS collection maps project will provide a new type of interface to the collection catalogue and incorporate elements of data visualisation. Among other uses, this will allow AIATSIS to identify collection deficits in terms of geographic spread so that we can be more strategic in collection development and fill the gaps.

AIATSIS chose the sound collection for the development of a prototype using Google Maps. The prototype was presented at the Museums Australia National Conference in May 2014. Feedback confirmed interest in such a tool, reinforcing the value of making the maps interactive to encourage users to search further, and other ways in which the product can be improved. The first completed maps will be published on the AIATSIS website in 2015.



- recently acquired Hope Vale and Wujal Wujal oral history interviews recorded by Mr Noel Pearson and Ms Adelaide Baird in the 1980s and 1990s
- all of Professor Jon Altman's audio recordings, which are in demand from people at Maningrida who are undertaking ceremonial revitalisation.

Staff worked with Professor Barbara Glowczewski, Adjunct Professor at James Cook University, over two days facilitating access to digitised versions of film material that she recorded at Lajamanu and deposited with the institute in 1979. Professor Glowczewski was impressed with the quality of the film transfer and was able to provide further information regarding the ceremonial practices featured. Professor Glowczewski also worked with access and collection management staff in reviewing access conditions for her collections held

at AIATSIS and completing deed of gift forms to enable better administration of those collections.

Completion of the Olive Pink manuscript collection was a substantial achievement as the original is more than 11,800 pages in length and contains many items that are fragile, loose and diverse in size/format. The only outstanding item scheduled to be digitised from this collection is the botanical specimen album, which will require a photographic digitisation process to proceed.

A collection of unique Sanyo V-Cord videotape cassettes were transferred to uncompressed digital master files in the first tapeless archiving project the moving image section has embarked on since setting up the uncompressed preservation file protocol. The files are created using the Motion JPEG2000 codec with MXF file wrapper. This step places the AIATSIS

moving image collection at the front of digital preservation practices on the national and international scene.

Significant manuscripts digitised during the year included a large collection of papers and correspondence from the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) from 1961 to 1978. FCAATSI played a major role in Aboriginal affairs during this period, campaigning on issues such as alcohol prohibition in the Northern Territory, nuclear testing at Maralinga, equal wages in the cattle industry, education equality, land rights and compensation for dispossession. FCAATSI was considered influential in petitioning for the 1967 referendum.

The papers of Lester R Hiatt were digitised. Hiatt, one of the leading anthropologists of his period, worked among the Anbara/Gigjingali people of central Arnhem Land from the late 1950s. His extensive papers include his field diaries, notes, unpublished and published papers, correspondence, photographs and papers related to his various administrative roles.

A stocktake of the rare pamphlet collection was completed in preparation for outsourced digitisation in 2014–15.



## New software for more efficient digitisation

AIATSIS has purchased Capture One software to improve efficiency and throughput in digitising pictorial items and artefacts. Capture One allows full camera control via computer in a studio environment, greatly improving the workflow of image capture and monitoring during photography.

Rather than having to manually adjust settings on a camera and framing and focusing through the viewfinder, Capture One allows remote control and viewing of all these features via a computer and colour-calibrated monitor. Capture One has improved speed and accuracy and reduced the risk to objects and staff when working in a studio environment.

## Digitisation equipment review

AIATSIS started a review of its digitisation equipment in 2013–14 to plan and prepare for challenges it will face with its digitisation program over the coming years, including:

- loss of skills (due to retirement of technicians) and equipment (including spare parts) to keep operating obsolete playback machinery so historical media formats can be digitised
- significant costs and accommodation challenges when investment in new equipment is required due to capacity or technological developments.

Opposite page: Margery Brown (holding Beverley) dictating story to Dorothy Hackett (August 1965, Warburton, WA).

Left: An antiquated Sanyo videotape player being reassembled.