

## OUTPUT 3 — CULTURAL COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Audiovisual Archive and Library developed integrated AIATSIS collection development and management policy and strategies.
- The Audiovisual Archive developed and implemented a new structure to achieve best outcomes.

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## COLLECTIONS DELIVERABLES

Deliverable output 3	Result
Developing a strategic Collections Development and Management Plan.	An AIATSIS Collection Development Policy for both print and audiovisual collections was finalised and ratified by the AIATSIS Council. A Collections Management Strategic Plan was developed and presented to the AIATSIS Council.
Digitising, preserving and conserving materials in the collections.	34,164 audiovisual items were preserved digitally to international standards for audio, pictorial and moving image. The Library digitised 22,410 pages.
Developing the collections through ongoing acquisition of material.	100 new collections were offered for deposit or donation to the Audiovisual Archive. 8 manuscript items were accessioned into the Library's collections. \$71,300 spent on acquiring books, serials and rare books.
Maintaining dynamic collections through recording and documenting of contemporary events.	Staff of the Audiovisual Archive have recorded several events, including Bridge March, NAIDOC on the Peninsula, AIATSIS Seminars, Native Title Conference, Language Revitalisation Workshop.
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' catalogue, Mura®. 47 audio collection finding aids, 10 moving image collection finding aids and 29 photographic collection caption lists were created and uploaded to Mura®. The Library created 2217 annotations to collection records.
Providing accurate, relevant and informative material to Indigenous communities and the general public.	Documentation of the collection and creation of finding aids ensures high level information about the collections for the Indigenous community and the general public. <i>Remembering Mission Days</i> online collection launched in March 2012.
Facilitating the development of Indigenous communities' capacity to collect and manage their own archives and collections.	Unfortunately due to resource issues the Audiovisual Archive was unable to conduct its Keeping Your History Alive course in 2011-2012
Becoming the leader for advice about appropriate management of cultural collections.	The Audiovisual Archive staff maintain alliances with other collecting agencies and share information about our practices.
Facilitating access to the collections through online discovery, direct request and through visitation.	659 Audiovisual access requests were completed Materials to the value of \$97,428 were sent to Indigenous individuals and communities free of charge under the ROMTIC program. The Library received 776 requests from visiting researchers. Online collections received 310,895 web hits. Extended enquiries received by the Library have increased by 5 per cent over the previous year.
Enhancing Indigenous access to the Institute via community outreach.	No activity in 2011—12, planning took place for community outreach activity in the 2012—13 FY.
Assessing and monitoring growing demand.	Detailed statistics are maintained to monitor growing demand.

## 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 is now no longer able to maintain the level of collecting and documentation that was possible in the past.

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 has custodial responsibility for the world's largest unique collection of Indigenous cultural heritage collection of audio, motion picture, video and pictorial materials. The collection of almost a million items comprises some 47,000 hours of audio recordings, 10,000 video titles, 650,000 photographic images and 830 items or 8 million feet of motion picture footage. It also includes around 1,000 works of art and items of material culture.

With the exception of around 2 per cent of published audio and video material, the Audiovisual Archive collection consists of unique primary results of field research.

## COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

The Directors of the Library and the Audiovisual Archive (AVA) convened a workshop for the AIATSIS Council on the strategic issues and options facing the Institute's collections. Outside of digitisation grant funds, there has been no real increase in funding for collections for 15 years and the workshop was to inform future directions and options for the Council to consider.

In the 2011–12 financial year, the AVA Management Team reviewed the current staff and line management structure and developed a new structure so that AVA will be well positioned in an uncertain budget environment. The structure combines collection management and technical areas into media units and allows for streamlined workflows. The structure is scalable to allow for fluctuations in funding and can be expanded or retracted to fit current funding. The quantum of AIATSIS digitisation funding for 2012–14 was less than previous years and the AVA Management Team have put measures in place to allocate resources to the largest and highest client demand media – audio and pictorial. The Moving Image and Artwork and Artefact collections will therefore be closed for the next two years. This decision was taken to ensure the continued viability of digitisation of the most at risk and highest client demand media.

AVA and Library staff collaboratively produced an AIATSIS Collections Development Policy which has replaced the previous program-specific documents. The policy outlines the types of materials collected by AIATSIS, our criteria for selection, collection building processes, collecting ethics, and methods of de-selection and disposal.

AVA and Library staff also worked together to develop a Collections Management Strategic Plan which detailed short and long term strategies for the best management of the AIATSIS print and audiovisual collections.

The Directors of the Audiovisual Archive and Library facilitated an AIATSIS Council workshop to advise Council of the issues which the collections face into the future and present Council members with a number of strategies as well as long term goals.

## 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 selective annotations and the use of AIATSIS specialist thesaurus terms to provide a unique level of bibliographic access through Mura® that is unavailable from other library catalogues. Book, serials and manuscript records continued to be added to Trove, the National Library of Australia's national discovery service and Libraries Australia that provide access to the holdings of more than 800 Australian libraries and their web resources. The Library's book-analytic entries are now also available on Trove.

The Library and the AIATSIS Information Technology staff have undertaken work to move the full Mura® collections management system on to a new server. This was completed in June 2012 and will enable a new version of the software and mobile platforms for Mura®.

## ACQUISITIONS AND DONATIONS

The Institute appreciates donations of material from both individuals and organisations. These donations add significantly to Australia's Indigenous cultural heritage collection.

### PRINT MATERIALS

During the reporting period, a total of 1965 items were added to the Library's collections. This included 756 purchased items, 154 serial subscription renewals and 10 items acquired through the research grants program. Purchases for the year cost a total of about \$71,300.

Priorities for the acquisition program are outlined in the AIATSIS Collection Development Policy on [www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au).

A full list of donations is available on our website at [www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au).

The Library's Collection Managers conducted a survey of the backlog of unprocessed manuscript and published items in the collections. The survey showed backlogs of 191 shelf metres and 205 metres of material respectively, representing 10–15 years work to be undertaken.

## AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL

In 2011–12, 100 collections were offered for deposit or donation to the Audiovisual Archive. These collections included 16,055 photographic images, 1,537 audio recordings, 9,841 moving image items and 80 other items, including artworks and artefacts. Collection materials offered to the Audiovisual Archive were supplied in a variety of analogue and digital formats with subject matter spanning from 1911 through to the present day.

The following collections are of particular note:

- A framed painting of the Aboriginal flag by the French artist Laurent Perpoil. This work, which was donated by the French Embassy, is notable for the use of natural and recycled materials
- Three DVDs containing Amurdak language elicitation recordings by Robert Mailhammer on Croker Island, 2010 — 11
- A photo album donated by Kirstin MacLeod consisting of photographs taken by her great aunt during a trip to Central Australia in 1950. Among the prints are scenes from Hermannsburg and Arltunga missions and notable individuals including Albert Namitjira and Walter Ebataringa
- Over 180 hours of Garrwa language material, with appropriate documentation deposited by Ilana Mushin from the University of Queensland School of Languages and Comparative Cultural Studies
- Five sheets of 35mm black and white negatives (175 images in total) taken during Professor W. E. H. Stanner's 1957 trip to Fitzmaurice River recording rock art sites. This material was sent to AIATSIS by the ANU Research School of Asian and Pacific Studies with the permission of Mrs Patricia Stanner
- Four watercolour paintings by Hermannsburg artists donated by Merrel Davis on behalf of Miss Ellestan Dusing. One of the works is a small postcard painting done by Theresa Ryder when she was 17-years-old
- Twenty items (approximately 30 hours) of Wangkajunga oral history recordings collected by Audrey Bolger as part of a



## WANJINA WORDS: PRESERVING THE HOWARD COATE AUDIO RECORDINGS

AIATSIS holds three important collections of audio recordings created by Howard H J Coate in 1961–66 in the Kimberley, Western Australia. All three collections are now digitised and they are described in the detailed finding aids available at <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/ava/findingaid/SearchResults.asp>.

Several well-known Kimberley men feature on the recordings, including Bungal (David) Mowaljarlai, Albert Barunga and Bungguni. The recordings contain nearly 100 hours of narratives, primarily in Ngarinyin, Wunambal and Bunuba, with some short sections in other Kimberley languages.

At least one recording features an oral history account about Jandamarra, the famous leader of the Bunuba Resistance. Jandamarra's story is told in Bunuba by Jimmy Bird who was born just a few years after Jandamarra was shot by black trooper Micki and brutally beheaded by the Lennard River Police in 1897. Coate originally restricted access to another of the Jimmy Bird recordings because Bird gives the names of several white men who killed Aboriginal people. Jimmy Bird also relates in Bunuba, his first contact with non-Indigenous people.

The Coate collections also contain valuable cultural information. There are several recordings of David Mowaljarlai talking about Wanjina cosmology in Ngarinyin. Mowaljarlai's desire to pass on his knowledge of the Wanjinias and their homeland was the motivation behind much of his life's work. He received an Order of Australia in 1993 for his 'service to Aboriginal culture'.

Howard Coate, who worked variously as a missionary, linguist, pack-mule mailman, rock art explorer, government official and midwife, passed away in 2002 at the age of 91. Howard Coate clearly respected the culture of the Aboriginal people he worked with. His family recalls the many disagreements he had with Australian anthropologist Charles P Mountford when assisting with the American–Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land in 1948: Coate was concerned over the number of artefacts the expedition was acquiring.

Copies of the Coate audio recordings were returned to the community at Fitzroy Crossing as part of an AIATSIS outreach event in 2007.

project to document activities undertaken by women who had recently moved from a traditional lifestyle to residence on pastoral stations

- A collection of oral histories and language materials from the Ngalakgan, Alawa and Ngandi Language Programs by Jennifer Munro. There is limited Urupunga, Marra and Alawa material in the Moving Image collection and this collection contains some significant material for language revitalisation.

### ACCESS TO NEW ITEMS

During the reporting period, 511 audiovisual collections were accessioned and catalogued onto AIATSIS' catalogue, Mura®. These catalogue records provide sufficient information to facilitate access to audio, photographic and moving image materials held in the Audiovisual Archive. Access is further enhanced through the development of finding aids and caption lists.

Finding aids were created for 47 audio collections, representing approximately 875 hours of sound. This brings the total number of finding aids to 404. Audio finding aids offer a significant improvement on the level of documentation of sound recordings, which were once only searchable in aggregate collections via Mura®. Two hundred and nine finding aids can now be accessed directly through various web search engines and clients are no longer reliant on the catalogue to find material. Notable collections recently documented to this level include:

- Elicitation of Mamu and Ngadyan language and songs, recorded by RMW Dixon, 1964-81
- Oral histories from South-East Queensland documenting the language, culture and history of the Waka Waka and Gooreng Gooreng peoples, recorded by Michael Walsh and Diana Eades, 1980
- Narratives from the Numbulwar area, recorded by Jeffrey Heath, 1974-7
- Language elicitation, songs and narratives in Ngiyampaa, Birladapa, Adnyamathanha, Paakantyi, Ngiyambaa, Kurnu and Wailwan, recorded by Luise Hercus, 1969
- Gurindji narratives recorded by Norman McNair, 1977—85
- Language elicitation in Flinders Island language, Kuku-Wara, Barrow Point language, Lama-Lama, Guugu-Yimidhirr, Marrett River language and cultural discussions, recorded by Peter Sutton, 1975.

A complete list of finding aids produced in 2011—12 is found in Appendix 3.

## AUCTIONS AND SPECIAL PURCHASES

The Library has limited funds to purchase rare items. In 2011–12 these included:

- Barrabee, Austin *Bing Bing Bungarra and other stories*, Sydney: John Sands
- Blumenbach, JF 1865 *The anthropological treatises of Johann Freidrich Blumenbach*, London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green
- *Bulletin of the Council for Aboriginal Rights*, 1955
- Calvert, GH 1832 *Illustrations of phrenology*, Baltimore : W&J Neal
- Chewings, Charles 2010 *The sources of the Fink River: and other expeditions*, Adelaide: Friends of the State library of South Australia
- Commissioner for Native Welfare *Report on Moola Bulla*, 1955
- Doolan, JK *Report on the Gurindji Victoria River Downs walk-off 1972–73*
- Etudes de Voyages. *Go-roo-bar-roo-boo-lo*, 1841
- Favenc, Ernest 1893 *The last six battles: tales of the Australian tropics*, Sydney: The Bulletin
- Gladstone, Hugh 1938 *Thomas Watling: limner of Dumfries*, Dumfries: Thos, Hunter, Watson & co.
- Hasluck, Sir Paul - *Letter from to Professor John Mulvaney* in 1958
- Ireland, John 1845 *The Shipwrecked Orphans*, New Haven: Babcock
- Jones, FW 1934 *Australia's vanishing race*, Sydney: Angus and Robertson
- *Melbourne Punch* Six cartoons and poems 1856 and 1858, which contain depictions of Indigenous people
- Wakefield, EG 1849 *A view of the art of colonisation*, London: John W. Parker.

## 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 was not able to fund a conservator position from either ongoing funding or digitisation funding sources. Treatments for materials either to be digitised or collection items needing restoration are now placed into a backlog with no foreseeable possibility of treatment. Only the most basic treatments by other Library staff were undertaken in 2011–12.

The Library's collection management staff completed a major survey which listed the collections that are at risk to 2015 that require digitisation. From this list, the following collections were digitised in 2011–12:

- MS 4667 – Bruce Wright: 31 field notebooks, site recording — 2455 pages;
- MS 2616 – William H MacFarlane, papers, diaries and journals, notes on Darnley Island Mission, anthropological material 1917–33 — 1788 pages
- MS 531 – Brian Geytenbeek, language field notes — 1565 pages
- MS 21 - P J Gresser, papers, Bathurst — 1486 pages
- MS 2270 – Peter Lucich, field notebooks, Kalumburu, W.A. 1963–4 — 1516 pages;
- MS 1857 – Peter Worsley: 20 field notebooks, papers, genealogical tables, Groote Eylandt 1952–3 — 1050 pages
- MS 845 – Prof WEH Stanner, Fitzmaurice River notebooks — 722 pages
- MS 10 – Hamilton Aborigines Uplift Society — 1022 pages
- MS 2303 – Harry Warner, notes on Brinja-Yuin people of Tuross, N.S. — 1,000 pages
- MS 3217 – Anne Dineen, field notebooks text transcriptions – Maung — 693 pages

- MS 2816 – Peter Lawrence Gillan: 6 field notebooks, diaries, tape transcripts, family trees, Torres Strait Islands, 1980-1 – 625 pages
- MS 802 – Christine Kilham Gunavidgi language notes, Maningrida 1963 – 174 pages
- MS 4747 – Gary Lee Sketch Book – 42 pages
- PMS 2098 – Investigation and report on Aboriginal welfare throughout Australia, Yallourn Junior Chamber of Commerce, 1965 – 87 pages.

The Audiovisual Archive houses materials to archival standards with collections held in secure temperature and humidity controlled vaults according to international standards for each respective type of media. The vaults are monitored constantly for correct climactic conditions. Audio and video materials are housed at 16 degrees Celcius and 35 per cent relative humidity, motion picture and pictorial materials are stored at 5 degrees Celcius and 35 per cent relative humidity and works of art and material culture are housed at 22 degrees Celcius and 50 per cent relative humidity.

Before motion picture and pictorial materials are taken from the cold vault to be worked on or copied they are moved into the Acclimatisation Room where, over at least 24 hours, they are gradually brought to an acceptable condition for processing. Acclimatisation prevents any condensation that would otherwise occur when material is transferred from a cold and dry environment to the warmer, more humid conditions that prevail in the work areas.

Often audio and video recordings have suffered from hydrolisation and require 'baking' in an archival oven at a low temperature, sometimes for weeks, to drive out the moisture and stabilise them so they can be played and digitally transferred. Often these tapes can only be played once due to their deteriorated physical condition.

All new collection materials are assessed for insects, mould and dust on arrival at AIATSIS and any suspect material is isolated and treated in a specially equipped quarantine room to ensure that the collections are not contaminated.

## **AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVE DIGITISATION PROGRAM**

Funding by the Australian Government for the AIATSIS Digitisation Program to preserve our 'at risk' collections ceased in June 2011. As a result, the AIATSIS Council decided to fund the existing level of activities for 2011–12 from AIATSIS financial reserves and to pursue funding for digitisation from the Australian Government for 2012-13 and onwards. The 2012–13 Federal Budget contained \$6.4 million grant funding for two years to June 2014.

The migration of the complete AIATSIS digital archive files to a new storage facility was completed in June 2012. In addition, servers for the digital archive were replaced which will increase the capacity and reliability of the system.

For further information on digitisation see Chapter 2.

## **AUDIO INVENTORY PROJECT**

The Audio Inventory project is progressing as staff resources permit. We now have detailed inventories for 737 audio collections. The majority of the 'not yet archived' collections have now been inventoried, while new collections are inventoried as they are accessioned.

Recently, some mini cassette material was discovered in the audio collection. Mini cassettes look almost identical to micro cassettes but unlike micro cassettes and compact cassettes, mini cassettes do not use a capstan drive system. Rather, the tape is propelled along by its reels. AIATSIS has now purchased a player to enable staff to digitise mini cassette material.

Among material digitised during this period were a collection of oral histories collected along the Canning Stock Route in 1987, mainly in Wangkajunga and Walmajarri with some English, and a large collection of interviews about education in the Torres Strait in 1873–1941. These interviews were recorded in various locations in the Torres Strait by Alan Williamson in the early 1980s.

## WORRORRA PHOTO COLLECTION UNCOVERED

In 2011–12, Pictorial Unit staff undertook a thorough inventory of collection material deposited with the Archive over the years but not accessioned due to limited staff resources.

Among the material was a significant collection of 438 black and white photographs taken by Reverend James Robert Beattie Love (1889–1947) during his time as Superintendent of the Presbyterian Mission at Kunmunya, Western Australia, in 1920–30s.

The prints, which record Worrorra ceremonies, rituals and a wide range of material culture, are in photo albums with annotations provided by the renowned anthropologist Derek Freeman, who deposited the material with the Institute in 1986. Importantly, the annotations include information provided by Worrorra man Albert Barunga who lived on the mission at the time the photographs were taken. Barunga had a close association with Love, helping him over the years with many Worrorra translations including the gospel of St Mark.

As a missionary, Love was noted for his enlightened approach towards Indigenous people. Many of his efforts to understand traditional cultural practices and languages are described in his book *Stone-Age Bushmen of Today* (Blackie, London, 1936) and some of the photographs in the albums with AIATSIS feature prominently in the book.

Love was a prolific linguist and produced many papers on the grammar and vocabulary of the Worrorra as well as the Pitjantjatjara with whom he worked after establishing a mission at Ernabella, South Australia in 1938.



Reverend James Robert Beattie Love (1889–1947) during his time as Superintendent of the Presbyterian Mission at Kunmunya, Western Australia, in 1920–30s.

Most of Love's papers and photographs are held in the State Library of South Australia (SLSA). His son, John Love, is currently working with SLSA organising and describing the vast collection. We are looking forward to reconciling the photographs and associated information held in the respective collections in the near future.

**Pictorial**

- 30,884 archive items were digitised to preservation master standard. This is an increase of 8 per cent over the previous financial year.
- 62,913 archive items mastered to access master or JPEG standard. This is an increase of 21 per cent over the previous financial year.
- 40,813 photographic files edited (renumbering and renaming). This is a decrease of 30 per cent over the previous financial year.
- 144 access client requests completed, totalling 3,258 images.
- 62 hours devoted to maintenance of scanners and colour calibration of monitors.
- 244 hours of technical support provided to AIATSIS.
- 108 collections comprising 19,144 digital preservation master images and 19,144 digital access master images quality checked.

**Audio**

- 3280 master preservation files in sealed BWF format. This is an increase of 7 per cent over the previous financial year, an incredible achievement as there were fewer staff engaged in the work. This result was made possible by years of groundwork in which improvements to workflows and equipment were made.
- 236 audio files created for client requests. Although this number is 12 per cent higher than the previous financial year, numbers are expected to drop in coming years as Access Unit staff are now able to make copies of most digitised material without the assistance of an audio technician.
- 81 hours of technical support provided to AIATSIS. This is a decrease of 21 per cent over the previous financial year.

**Moving Image**

- 547 hours invested in video preservation.
- 688 hours of digital viewing files created for clients.
- 73 hours of technical support provided to AIATSIS.

Table 2: Collections digitised to date

Collection	Total Collections	Digitised to date	Percentage digitised
Video	9,350 titles	3,235 titles	29%
Motion picture	830 titles Approximately 6,156,213 film feet	233 titles 810,398 feet film feet	13.2%
Pictorial	3,409 collections Approximately 650,000 images	950 collections 100,275 images	26.5%
Audio	2,668 collections Approximately 37,858 hours (not including film sound material, which is approximately 17,000 hours)	Approximately 17, 664 hours (6,416 hours have been quality checked)	47% digitised but only 17% quality checked

There are now 220 preserved moving image collections available for clients, consisting of 1,215 viewable files in Windows Media Format (.wmv file extension). Each file contains the necessary metadata for ease of accessibility for client use. Each collection available on DCOSS now contains the accurate and updated catalogue record.

### **Manuscripts and finding aids**

During 2011–12, finding aids were created for 40 audio collections, 10 moving image collections and caption lists were created for 29 photographic collections comprising 6,749 individual images.

Creating finding aids is extremely labour intensive, however, they are of great value and importance to AIATSIS clients. The AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive holds 100,000s of individual historical items which are of inestimable value for research. However, without detailed descriptions of the materials to make relevant materials accessible to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, clients would remain unaware that the material they seek is in the Archive.

A complete list of finding aids produced in 2011–12 is found in Appendix 3.

The Library has no permanent capacity to document its collections of personal or private papers of individuals or organisations. Some collections have been processed as part of the AIATSIS Digitisation Program. This includes the substantial collection received from Dr Jon Altman which documents much of the work of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research of the Australian National University. This continued into 2011–12 with the limited funding available.

The Library's Digitisation Unit completed the scanning of all the Library's deposit agreements for its manuscripts collections. These agreements include the conditions from the depositors of collections that Library staff must follow in providing access to manuscripts to clients. The completion of this project is important for their preservation and for staff productivity with desktop access to these agreements.

The Library took delivery of the following manuscript collections:

- a large collection of the papers of the Indigenous Social Justice Association
- Professor John Bern's collection of material relating to land rights claims;
- Professor Colin Tatz sent a small amount of manuscript material and some videos to add to the manuscripts and books he deposited with the Library in 2004
- Dr Michael Smith donated his field notes and working sheets relating to his work on the Puritjarra archaeological site
- Dr Ian Keen donated the first part of collection of papers relating to his work as an anthropologist
- Two manuscripts from Prof. Nicolas Peterson: papers arising from an anthropological conference held in 1974 and papers from his involvement with the Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Board
- Barbara Nichols added mainly books and pamphlets to material she donated in 2010–11.

AIATSIS has been working with the National Library of Australia to make its collections finding aids available through its Trove web discovery service and was completed in 2011–12. This will result in a far greater awareness of AIATSIS collections given the quality documentation in these guides.

## TECHNICAL INNOVATION

### **Best practice audio archiving: maintaining networks with international experts**

Digitising audio materials is a complex process and keeping up to date with standards and processes is crucial to the success of the AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive.

The Audiovisual Archive (AVA) must not only archive and preserve the collection materials, but also the playback equipment for the many different formats on which the material was recorded. Until standards were reached there were many different video formats: AIATSIS holds materials recorded on 31 of these formats.

Electronic Engineers are pivotal to the continued viability of the AVA's digitisation future. All analogue equipment is now obsolete, cannot be replaced nor spare parts purchased. The engineers maintain and repair the equipment often manufacturing spare parts themselves in the workshop and routinely researching trade magazines and the internet to try to locate equipment which we do not hold or can be used for spare parts.

DamSmart at Mitchell donated a portable one-inch video trolley. This will assist the engineering technicians and Moving Image staff to work more safely with this large tape player. A staff member, Andrew Willett, donated a domestic Betamax VCR.

Moving Image and Audio have successfully bid on several items of obsolete equipment from the local Allbids warehouse in Fyshwick and eBay. The items acquired were a SVHS professional tape deck an analogue waveform monitor, a Tascam professional cassette deck, and a TEAC A-3440 four track reel-to-reel audio player, and a mini cassette player. Until this year the AVA only owned one four track player. It is best practice to own at least two of each machine in case of malfunction.

Engineering staff completed routine service of the Digital Betacam J-30 player and repaired the EIAJ half-inch video cleaner.

Electronic Engineer, Rob Hanson, assisted Moving Image staff to troubleshoot a problem with the telecine machine. He installed new analogue to digital convertor cards in the telecine room.

'Clean power' has been installed into the AVA part of the building, to provide a stable power supply to the delicate digital equipment. The regular failure of some of this equipment with subsequent down time and costly repairs has been traced to the normal power supply or 'dirty power'. Since the installation the equipment has been more reliable.

Early in 2011 a number of staff from the National Library of Australia's (NLA) Sound Preservation and Technical Services team visited AIATSIS to investigate our set-up and workflow for digitising and monitoring multiple recordings simultaneously using a single workstation, commonly referred to as 'multiple ingest'. (see box p.100).

During the last financial year, the engineering workshop has continued to maintain the full range of equipment used by the AVA and made modifications to the building systems and equipment.

Modifications including:

- Continued day-to-day maintenance and testing of equipment and planning within the engineering workshop. This covers almost all equipment used by the AVA staff, wiring, Mabo Room facilities and some computer equipment.
- Installation of cabling from the six audio booth work stations to the remote audio machine room. This was a significant upgrade and modification for the audio area allowing all noisy (fan noise) computer equipment to be located in one controlled environment. This has been in operation and working successfully since January 2012.
- Modifications to the main meeting and seminar room, the Mabo Room, were carried out;



Audiovisual Engineer in Training, Mark Campbell. Electronic Engineers are pivotal to the continued viability of the Audiovisual Archive's digitisation future. [Photograph by John Paul Janke]

- All audio equipment for recording events and sound reinforcement was moved from the front of the Mabo Room to the purpose built equipment space at the rear of the room. Technicians can now provide technical and recording services for all AIATSIS public programs unobtrusively and without disturbing any event being held.
- Much needed maintenance was carried out on our one-inch video recorder bringing it, and a spare machine, originally held for spares, to near factory specification.
- Modifications were carried out on the film winder with the addition of cleaning rollers bringing this machine up to a higher standard than the original design.
- A major rebuild of the 'j' Format video tape cleaner, previously built from a modified tape recorder was carried out adding reliability and a further degree of functionality to it.
- All alterations made to the engineering workshop were completed during the earlier part of the financial year. With the installation of a milling machine and lathe the work area now caters for high level electronic and mechanical repairs and maintenance for most archiving equipment in use by the AVA.



Four way or 'multiple ingest' manages workflow for digitising and monitoring multiple recordings simultaneously using a single workstation.

## BEST PRACTICE AUDIO ARCHIVING: MAINTAINING NETWORKS WITH INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS

Digitising audio materials is a complex process and keeping up-to-date with standards and processes is crucial to the success of the Audiovisual Archive. This is partly achieved through membership of professional organisations who publish journals and guidelines—but it often requires more direct contact between archives. Organisations communicate regularly to solve immediate problems resulting from fast changes in technology and the pressing need to digitise analogue recordings before they become unplayable due to deterioration or obsolescence of playback equipment.

Early in 2011, staff from the National Library of Australia's (NLA) Sound Preservation and Technical Services team visited AIATSIS to investigate our how we digitise and monitor multiple recordings simultaneously using a single workstation, commonly referred to as 'multiple ingest'. The NLA went on to set up their own multiple ingest system based on what they had observed.

In November 2011, AIATSIS staff visited the NLA to investigate a novel technique for monitoring multiple ingest, using a MIDI (musical instrument digital interface) application. These ideas were also taken on board by CubeTec, the

company who designed the audio software used by many major national and international audio archives. After detailed discussion with staff member Mark Campbell, CubeTec have now developed a function that allows cycling of audio inputs which will be incorporated in their audio software.

In late 2011, Peter Kolomitsev from the State Library of South Australia visited AIATSIS. He was especially interested to learn more about AIATSIS' multiple ingest set-up and audiovisual engineering facilities.

In February 2012, Head of Technical Services at the British Library's Sound Archive, Will Prentice, visited AIATSIS. Mr Prentice was in Australia undertaking an internship at the National Film and Sound Archive. Mr Prentice spent a considerable amount of time at AIATSIS, building a personal relationship with the audio technicians and engineers.

The British Library's collection is huge, holding approximately 2.5 million audio items. We are keen to observe how their approach to digitisation changes over time, and if AIATSIS can benefit from their research.