

Report on survey of NTRBs
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The survey was conducted in order to find out current storage practices and plans for the future for documents that have been either collected or generated by the Native Title process. The second part of the survey asked for ideas as to how AIATSIS could be of help to NTRBs. Telephone contact was made with each NTRB, and interviewees consisted of records managers, anthropologists, and lawyers.

General points:

All NTRBs are at different stages in the Native Title process with some having reached a number of determinations and others still in process. Also, there are varying levels of storage facilities ranging from secure fireproof areas to material being held in offices.

Issues for storage:

Status of material held for Native Title:

- With the DIMIA funding contract for the NTRB can copies be made within the provisions of that contract?
- What are the implications of the Privacy Act for Native Title materials?
- What does the court keep and what may the NTRB keep, especially in litigation?

Provisions for external storage:

- All NTRB's want materials to be readily available to traditional owners.
- Some have approached other organisations for storage but have not finalised anything yet.
- Before collections could be copied or transferred for storage, they would need to be assessed for duplication, uniqueness of material, and general value of each document.

Costs:

- All require help with funding generally, and security storage is just one need amongst many.

Access:

- If material is stored externally, there is a concern that access conditions be maintained.
- Materials need to be accessible for claimants and firm conditions set respecting Indigenous control.

Issues as to how AIATSIS could help NTRB's

Long-term storage:

- All were happy to consider AIATSIS as a security storage venue and want to know about access conditions/restrictions as used by AIATSIS.
- Some mentioned the issue of short-term vs. long-term storage and have approached possible archives. One NTRB thought it would be great to have a team come from AIATSIS and make scans of all relevant documents!
- Any storage would have to have the consent of the claimants and have explicit access conditions that would be strictly maintained.
- There was a question of when to store- during the process of native title or afterwards when a determination or agreement has been reached.

Managing arrangement, description, and conservation/preservation:

- Most organisations mentioned that they would like some help in records management, information management, IT, and digitisation practice.
- One NTRB proposed a 'mentoring' or training program where NTRB staff could come to AIATSIS and learn from staff here in the above areas of info.

DVDs of claim materials:

- One NTRB mentioned that they would like all claim material to be available digitally. They targeted DVDs because they have videos and other audiovisual material as well as reports. They want to submit a grant proposal to get someone qualified to do this for them.

- Other NTRBs hinted at this as well once items are digitised.

Protocols:

- There was much interest in the AIATSIS system of access and copying procedures, and they would like to adapt some of these to their own purposes.
- It was suggested that protocols be drawn up for legal representatives of non-Indigenous respondents to help make the process less onerous for indigenous people.

Locating material that should have been deposited with NTRBs:

- Consultants do not always lodge their reports with NTRBs. They would like some help in tracking down this sort of material.