



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL AND  
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT REPORT  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIATSIS has long understood the value of the unique collection it holds in trust for the Australian nation, and particularly Indigenous Australia. Various reviews in its history have reinforced this long-held view and proposed further collection support. Understanding the importance of an independent evaluation of the collection, an expert assessment was commissioned by AIATSIS, in order to validate or invalidate claims of unique collection importance. Within cultural heritage the accepted approach to making such an analysis is 'Significance Assessment'.

Significance International was appointed to undertake an AIATSIS Collection Significance Assessment in July 2014. Informed by the received *Significance 2.0* methodology (see Part 1 Item 3 for detail), a modular approach was taken to the task. This involved identifying the sub-collections comprising the whole, assigning format specialists to interpreting each sub-collection, and deriving a 'Whole Collection Statement of Significance' from this evidence base.

The final passage of the Whole AIATSIS Collection Statement of Significance reads:

'As an intergenerational keeping place for Indigenous Australians the AIATSIS collection is significant across all four categories – historic, artistic / aesthetic, research / scientific, and social / spiritual – and remains the most extensive and best contextualised collection of Indigenous Australia in the world. It is a site of pilgrimage.'

Available in full on the following page, this Statement also evidences the utility of the collection for a range of pressing contemporary challenges, and for reaching across cultures.

The Significance Assessment undertaken by Significance International was conducted within strict time constraints over several weeks and should therefore be regarded as a 'snapshot' assessment. However, it provides a good base from which to design future collection focussed strategies and activities, as understanding the values, meanings and importance of a collection – its strengths and weaknesses – is a natural precursor to its proper management.

Our two recommendations are:

1. To build upon the foundation laid by this 2014 Significance Assessment Report, establish a significance assessment program at AIATSIS to:
  - a. more fully evidence the proffered, necessarily 'snapshot', sub-collection significance assessments;
  - b. map priorities for sub-sub-collection and single item significance assessments, informed by areas of high significance arising from this Report and 'at risk' collection formats identified in the parallel Collection Risk Assessment Report (within the Collections Management Report).
2. To use products of significance assessments, particularly succinct, evidenced 'statements of significance', for a range of institutional purposes like setting collection management priorities (e.g. conservation and digitisation workflows) and communicating the values, meanings and importance of the collection via periodic press / social media / online exhibition releases, national and international register nominations e.g. to the UNESCO Memory of the World Program, and in fundraising.

This assessment informs the parallel AIATSIS Collection Management Review and Options Analysis for enhanced support for, growth, and usage of the Collection. This work was also undertaken by Significance International.

# WHOLE AIATSIS COLLECTION STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

## **Whole AIATSIS Collection Statement of Significance\***

Veronica Bullock

21 August 2014

Over its fifty years of life the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) has nurtured and safeguarded a unique understanding of Indigenous Australia through its collection. The core of the collection derives from research funded directly by the Institute through its long-running grant program, which supported ethnographic fieldwork and filmmaking. Indigenous contributions to the collection have increased since the 1989 revision of the original 1964 Act. Legislative requirements include enhanced connections between AIATSIS collection and research functions and the provision of policy advice to government.

The primarily visual and oral forms of Indigenous Australian knowledge transmission are well documented in the audio, art and artefact sub-collections, with many graphic renderings of nuanced worldviews and understandings of natural world workings. Aspects of this knowledge have also been captured in moving and still imagery shot by Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers. The outstanding AIATSIS moving image, audio, pictorial and manuscripts sub-collections are an 'inexhaustible' source of insight for contemporary and future Australians. These items hold some answers to complex environmental and social challenges ranging from reducing suicide rates through language and family reclamation to evidencing and potentially halting biodiversity losses.

Most of the estimated 250 Australian languages and 600-700 dialects are represented in the unrivalled AIATSIS language holdings from which the 'Australian Indigenous Languages Collection' has been registered with UNESCO Memory of the World Australian Program, and 40 'endangered languages' recorded by Luise Hercus between 1963 and 1999 have been inscribed on the National Registry for Recorded Sound. Language is a key to much of this specialised Australian knowledge and also to the future aspirations and opportunities of Indigenous Australians. The founders of AIATSIS would be pleased to see the collection being used for contemporary creative production by Indigenous Australians as directors rather than subjects. Historic imagery, music and language are reworked in new and distinctively Australian forms of understanding and expression, which simultaneously serve more urbanised lifestyles.

W E H Stanner was a founder of AIATSIS and shaper of its collecting remit. His maps, sketches, notes, diaries, photographic negatives, audio recordings, publications and the paintings of his research assistant then friend, Nym Bandak, are a fine example of meticulous anthropological work in collecting and linking information across material formats. The Stanner collection is a microcosm of the whole AIATSIS collection. This attention to meaningful detail was continued by expert anthropologists, archaeologists, collection managers, linguists and musicologists when they produced deep information records and finding aids for all future professional and personal collection data miners.

As an intergenerational keeping place for Indigenous Australians the AIATSIS collection is significant across all four categories – historic, artistic / aesthetic, research / scientific, and social / spiritual – and remains the most extensive and best contextualised collection of Indigenous Australia in the world. It is a site of pilgrimage.

\* The information supporting this Statement of Significance is presented below in seven sub-collection and two individual collection (or sub-sub-collection) significance assessments.

# PART I BACKGROUND

## 1. CONTEXT

In 2013 the (then) Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education commissioned an independent review of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). This was triggered by the 2012 Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People that recommended a review of AIATSIS to examine its future strategic direction, its role and functions, governance structures and levels of resourcing with a view to strengthening its capacity to preserve and disseminate Indigenous knowledge and support Indigenous research.

In response to this recommendation, AIATSIS commissioned expert reports using industry leaders and stakeholders across the range of functions, in parallel with the independent Review commissioned by the Department, to provide further detailed evidence to support the development of future strategic directions. The independent Review and other projects highlighted and confirmed the areas where AIATSIS could re-focus its priorities and functions.

AIATSIS recognises that the collection is integral to every aspect of the organisation's work and therefore wishes to ensure that the collection is managed at the optimum level and with optimum benefit for all stakeholders and clients of AIATSIS. For that reason, AIATSIS commissioned this Significance Assessment and the parallel Collection Management Review.

AIATSIS has long understood the value of the unique collection it holds in trust for the Australian nation, and particularly Indigenous Australia. Various reviews in its history have reinforced this long-held view and proposed further collection support. Understanding the importance of an independent evaluation of the collection, an expert assessment was commissioned by AIATSIS, in order to validate or invalidate claims of unique collection importance. Within cultural heritage the accepted approach to making such an analysis is 'Significance Assessment'.

Significance International was appointed to undertake an AIATSIS Collection Significance Assessment in July 2014. Informed by the received *Significance 2.0* methodology (see Part 1 Item 3 for detail), a modular approach was taken to the task. This involved identifying the sub-collections comprising the whole, assigning format specialists to interpreting each sub-collection, and deriving a 'Whole Collection Statement of Significance' from this evidence base.

## 2. OUTPUTS AND SCOPE

The AIATSIS Significance Assessment 'Request for Quote' document lists the following desired outputs:

1. A significance assessment of the collection as a whole
2. A significance assessment of one format of material
3. A significance assessment of two collections (material from a single depositor)
4. A significance assessment of two individual items

...and goes on to state: **'This may be negotiated dependent upon cost and time constraints.'**

Subsequently a list of single items from which to choose was provided, along with the suggestion to focus on one collection format only: 'Audio'.

As described in Methodology the recommended Significance International approach to assessing a whole collection is based on a concept of understanding the values, meanings and importance of each sub-collection unit that contributes to the whole. In this way an evidenced and defensible whole collection statement of significance can be derived. The sub-collections identified are: Art and Artefact, Audio, Manuscripts, Moving Image, Pictorial, Print, and Rare Printed.

We have proceeded on this basis and found ample evidence to derive a valid whole collection statement of significance via the seven sub-collection assessments, within which self-selecting single items are teased out – as naturally arose through the assessment process. Further, two sub-sub-collections are included, one by AIATSIS suggestion, the W E H Stanner collection, and the other, which includes an AIATSIS nominated single item, the Rom Ceremony collection including the Rom poles.

This report contains the detailed work of each assessor by sub-collection type in discrete chapters, structured according to our agreed Significance Assessment Template. The report therefore presents as a compendium of independently derived expert assessments. Each assessment can be extracted for future sub-collection specific work, particularly the ‘statement of significance’ (with supporting author attribution, date, references, and knowledgeable person consultation information). This evidence-base has been used to inform the high level ‘Whole Collection Statement of Significance’.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The Significance International proposal for the AIATSIS Significance Assessment Project stated:

‘The task of assessing the entire AIATSIS collection in about six weeks is gargantuan, some would say impossible. It can be done but must be carefully approached. The only way that a reliable whole collection statement of significance can be prepared is by approaching the task as modular.

Significance International therefore recommends preparing an SOS [statement of significance] for each of the seven sub-collections, as listed on the AIATSIS website (we exclude the ‘Online Collection’ as a compilation of other sub-collections for web access purposes. This logic may also hold for the ‘Languages’ Collection). These sub-collection SOS’s provide the evidence base for creating a whole collection SOS, which can be further informed by SOS’s for the selected collections (Meggitt Warlpiri drawings, and W.E.H. Stanner), and single items. The selection of the two individual items for assessment should be a joint decision once general findings from the sub-collection assessments are indicated.’

At the Project Initiation meeting on 7 July 2014 we learnt that, notwithstanding the Australian Memory of the World registered ‘Australian Indigenous Languages Collection’, languages is a theme across the entire AIATSIS Collection. We also learnt that there exists an ‘Art and Artefact’ sub-collection. As a result our sub-collection approach to inform the whole collection ‘statement of significance’ shifted to cover: Art and Artefacts (Wally Caruana), Audio (Vincent O’Donnell), Manuscripts (Michael Piggott), Moving Image (Vincent O’Donnell), Pictorial (Vincent O’Donnell), Print (Michael Piggott) and Rare Printed (Michael Piggott) sub-collections. Fortunately, we had the expertise within the existing team to address this restructure. We agreed to proceed forthwith on the Stanner assessment (Wally Caruana, Vincent O’Donnell and Michael Piggott for the various formats), and to probe the languages theme to truly reflect this apparent collection strength as well as to optimise alignment between the significance assessment work and the

endeavours of other parts of the Institute – whether as research focus or as part of the current shaping of theme options for high level fundraising.

The team agreed upon a standard eight-page Significance Assessment Template and set to work, following the recommended *Significance 2.0* 10-step process.<sup>1</sup> The aim of a significance assessment is to write a ‘statement of significance’ (Step 9). This is the result of a research process (Steps 1-7), and a test against the Primary and Comparative Criteria (Step 8). An item or collection must be found to be significant under at least one of the following Primary Criteria:

- Historic
- Artistic or Aesthetic
- Social or Spiritual
- Research or Scientific

This determination can be informed by the following Comparative Criteria:

- Provenance
- Rarity or Representativeness
- Condition or Completeness
- Interpretive Capacity

The Comparative Criteria also elucidate the degree of significance i.e. high, medium, low. This framework of criteria can be adapted for specific collection types if needed. For example, for Audio, Moving Image and Pictorial collections consideration of ‘creator/s’ is necessary.

Step 3 of the *Significance 2.0* process calls for consultation with people knowledgeable about an item / collection. The three assessors were asked for interviewee suggestions to enable Project Manager Veronica Bullock to collate suggestions and to conduct some interviews. AIATSIS staff also made helpful interviewee suggestions. This activity was designed to optimise the time assessors spent on-site with their sub-collections and to avoid interview duplication with ‘knowledgeable people’ suggested by more than one assessor. Bullock conducted telephone interviews and reported results back to the significance assessment team for incorporation into their work, as relevant.

Once a ‘statement of significance’ has been written, it may then be used (at Step 10) in a number of different settings, according to the needs of the collecting organisation e.g. to determine various staff workflows, to derive an emergency salvage priority list, to write object or theme labels for exhibitions, to promote the collection for purposes ranging from register nominations to fundraising. This portable statement of significance must be author attributed and dated, and travel with its ‘metadata’ – the list of sources consulted, both published references and knowledgeable people interviewed, and comparable collections. This documentation is also necessary because significance assessment is an iterative process which is naturally subject to diachronic (perspective) and synchronic (time) change. Significance assessments should therefore be reviewed periodically, especially if new sources of pertinent information come to light.

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1 The *Significance 2.0* methodology (criteria and process) is available at: Russell R and K Winkworth 2009 *Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections* Collections Council of Australia, Adelaide. It is available in .pdf form here: <http://arts.gov.au/resources-publications/industry-reports/significance-20>, and in online form (from the National Library’s Pandora Archive) here: <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/112443/20101122-1236/significance.collectionscouncil.com.au/index.html>

Our proposal also included the following notes on anticipated ways of efficiently approaching a collection analysis for over a million objects:

'Sampling strategies must also be used within massive sub-collections. Significance International has identified three format experts who can achieve reliable sub-collection SOS's within the tight timeframe. The sub-collection sampling strategy proposed is best explained in the following quote from Michael Piggott and Vincent O'Donnell:

*The intensity of our focus on each of the sub-collections nominated for assessment will inevitably vary. We will naturally take careful note of the primary and secondary collection categories AIATSIS itself has adopted to manage its collections (e.g. the Print Collection' comprises sub-sub-collections of Books & Pamphlets, Serials, a Reference collection, and CD-ROMS). In addition, if only because of the constraints of the project specifications and deadlines, we will also apply sampling where the sheer number of individual items in a sub-collection is massive (e.g. 4,300 items in the Languages collection, over 175,000 items in the Print collection and over 2,200 in Rare books). This will most likely be 'stratified sampling', which assumes homogeneity within sub-collections, and will be applied with close attention to single items which emerge during our research and consultation as justifying special consideration. Some items are effectively pre-ordained for attention and will self-select. Thus in the case of the Manuscripts collection comprising over 11,000 titles, sampling may be applied within specific categories such as 'higher degree theses' and 'research grant reports', while the collections of papers of renowned individuals (e.g. Jackie Huggins), and organisations (e.g. Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) will justify individual assessment.'*

Once on the premises the special cataloguing and access practices at AIATSIS gradually became apparent in each format area and affected the degree to which numerical sampling might have been implemented. In practice, the 'stratified sampling' approach described in our proposal was followed by each team member, according to their specialisation. These approaches are described within each significance assessment. This has naturally resulted in slightly differently styled sub-collection significance assessment reports, as anticipated.

On 21 July 2014 a meeting was held to discuss the languages theme and its impact on the choice of a second sub-sub-collection and single items. Veronica Bullock placed her comments in the context of collection significance assessment as a top down process which self-selects items worthy of individual attention. Bearing in mind that a whole collection 'statement of significance' should be one page or less in length (as for any significance assessment), it was suggested that, given the richness of the sub-collection investigation work to date, detailed single item assessments may not be required to enable a 'succinct, accurate and persuasive' SOS to be derived. In other words, the level of detailing achieved through the sub-collection level of investigation was providing sufficient detail to support the aim of the project – a number of the AIATSIS proposed single items naturally arising and being addressed through our higher level task. In later discussion with the Significance International team members we nevertheless agreed that it would be possible in the timeframe and useful to treat the Rom poles as a 'single item', which in turn could reinforce their role as part of a diverse and representative sub-sub-collection. Wally Caruana was able to prepare this assessment.



## PART II SUB-COLLECTION SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENTS

### 4. ART AND ARTEFACTS

#### Art and Artefacts sub-collection Statement of Significance

Wally Caruana  
4 August 2014

The AIATSIS Art and Artefacts sub-collection, comprising some 600 artworks and 500 artefacts, encompass a variety of objects of great artistic, aesthetic and historic significance that reflect expressions of Indigenous life, attitudes and aspirations, past and present. The works range from items of high art, ritual objects, folk art and children's art, reflecting the gamut of Aboriginal and Torres Islander experience. Several of the items are of social and spiritual significance.

This sub-collection has a regional span that covers most of the major and several of the minor art and artefact making traditions across Indigenous Australia, a temporal range that dates from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present, and it is based on the tradition of transmitting Indigenous knowledge through visual means.

The sub-collection is unique in that it includes items such as restricted images and objects that are not covered by the acquisitions policies of other national public institutions that collect the plastic arts and material culture of Indigenous Australians, viz. the National Gallery of Australia and the National Museum of Australia.

The sub-collection directly relates to and complements materials found in other sections of the AIATSIS Collection, such as manuscripts, anthropological field notes, published and unpublished texts, exhibition catalogues and other printed materials, photographs, film and sound recordings. The sub-collection also incorporates materials that relate to the Language Collection of AIATSIS.

By and large, items in the Art and Artefacts sub-collection have been acquired as a consequence of field research sponsored by the AIATSIS, although a large number of works have entered the sub-collection by donation or purchase

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- National Gallery of Australia: <http://nga.gov.au>
- National Museum of Australia: <http://www.nma.gov.au>

## Knowledgeable people consulted

In the course of working with the AIATSIS Art and Artefacts sub-collection intermittently over the last thirty years, and in some depth for exhibitions from the Collection that I curated in 2004 and 2012, I have consulted a number of experts on specific aspects of Indigenous art and artefact making. These include:

- Kim Akerman, ex-Senior Curator, National Museum, ex-AIATSIS Research Committee member
- Prof Jon Altman, ex-Director, CAEPR, ANU
- Dr Kim Barber, anthropologist
- Dr Carol Cooper, Senior Curatorial Fellow, NMA
- Mark Crocombe, Director, Kanamkek-Yile Ngala Museum, Wadeye
- Michael Desmond, Curator, ex-NGA, Powerhouse Museum, National Portrait Gallery
- Prof Sasha Grishin, Sir William Dobell Professor of Art History, ANU
- Dr Melinda Hinkson, Australian Research Council Future Fellow
- Diana Hosking, ex-AIATSIS, Pictorial Collection Manager

- Paddy Japaljarri Sims, Warlpiri elder and artist
- David Jeffrey, AIATSIS, Collection Manager (Image)
- David Kaus, NMA
- Dr Grace Koch, ex-AIATSIS Native Title Research and Access Officer
- Professor Howard Morphy, Director RSHA ANU
- Doreen Mellor, Indigenous curator and author
- Tobias Ngumbe
- Adjunct Professor Joseph P. Reser, Griffith University
- Bruce Rigsby, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, University of Queensland
- Dr Luke Taylor, ex-AIATSIS staff, ex-NMA, ANU
- Dr Graeme Ward, ex-AIATSIS Deputy Principal
- Dr Stephen Wild, ethnomusicologist, ex-AIATSIS staff

## Comparable Collections

Collection policy at AIATSIS is underscored by the fact that 'Australian Indigenous societies have traditionally transmitted knowledge through oral and visual means, and AIATSIS is the only [*my emphasis*] Commonwealth institution charged with the custodianship of collections which attempt to document those traditions.' [AIATSIS Collection Guidelines Item 4]

While '[t]here is no active collecting programme for artworks, objects and artefacts, however, donations of important, unique materials that complement or augment related items held in the AIATSIS Collection [are] considered provided they are sufficiently documented and provenanced.' [AIATSIS Collection Guidelines, Appendix B – Item Types / Artworks, objects and artefacts]

The AIATSIS Art and Artefact sub-collection is assessed in relation to the Indigenous collections of the two major national and public collecting institutions in Canberra, the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) and the National Museum of Australia (NMA). I have a thorough knowledge of the Indigenous collections of the NGA where I worked with the collection for 21 years. The NGA's collecting criteria for Indigenous art are based on artistic and aesthetic merit and aim 'to represent Australia's Indigenous artistic expression across all regions, styles, media and themes.' However, it does not collect sacred and restricted works of art other than those 'that [are] approved for display in consultation with appropriate Indigenous representatives and communities' (<http://nga.gov.au/Collection/AquPolicy.pdf>; page 9).

I also have extensive knowledge of the Indigenous art and artefact collections of the NMA, where I have recently undertaken the role of consultant curator to a major exhibition. The NMA's collecting policy is defined as '... [working] with Indigenous communities to collect, preserve and exhibit their objects and stories' (<http://www.nma.gov.au/history/Aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-cultures-histories/about>).

In addition, I have extensive knowledge of the following public collections of Indigenous art with which to compare the Art and Artefact sub-collection of AIATSIS:

- Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
- Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

- Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
- Australian National University, Canberra
- Berndt Museum, Perth
- British Museum, London
- Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne
- Musée du quai Branly, Paris
- Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, incorporating the Araluen Cultural Centre, Alice Springs
- Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
- Museum Victoria, Melbourne
- National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane
- Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, USA
- Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC
- South Australian Museum, Adelaide
- Western Australian Museum, Perth

While there is a degree of overlap, the Institute's sub-collection in its entirety remains distinct from these both in scope and in the types of objects collected.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE ART AND ARTEFACTS SUB-COLLECTION**

### **RELEVANT PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

Overall, the AIATSIS Art and Artefacts sub-collection is of historic, artistic and aesthetic, and social significance. In addition, it has a high level of research potential, and some items are of spiritual significance.

The significance of this sub-collection as an entity is best demonstrated through a description of a range of individual or groups of items in relation to the primary and secondary significance criteria.

The list of selected works discussed below is not hierarchical in terms of significance, rather it aims to describe and evaluate the significance of each object or group of objects.

Two groups of works, the Rom collection of ritual objects and associated paintings, and the set of paintings by Nym Bandak, collected by W E H Stanner, are treated in separate documents.

### **Drawings by Mickey of Ulladulla**

Eight drawings dating from the 1870s and 1880s by Mickey of Ulladulla (aka Mickey the Cripple, Yuin people, NSW, 1820s-1891), are of high artistic and aesthetic significance, and of outstanding historic significance. The drawings depict coastal life in southern New South Wales at a time of great social and cultural change: these include scenes of fishing, industry (saw mills), ceremonies, sedentary life, seascapes with sailing ships, and fauna.

### **A painting by Simon Ngumbe (aka Ngadbe), *Kanamkek Kimul*, c.1960**

This work is related to the paintings by Nym Bandak collected by W E H Stanner. The painting is of great artistic and aesthetic significance. It also possesses historic and current social significance. The artist has painted a coastal landscape depicting the estates of the various clans in the Daly / Fitzmaurice Rivers region so as to compose an anthropomorphic image of Kumangoor or Kanamkek, the ancestral being that unites the clans: in conceptual artistic terms the painting is an extraordinary achievement.

The painting has historic significance in that, in the early 1960s, it was donated by the Wadeye (Port Keats) community to the then Minister for Territories, Paul (later Sir Paul) Hasluck on an official visit to Wadeye in the expectation that the Commonwealth Government would respect traditional Murrinh forms of land ownership. Consequently, the painting also possesses great social significance for the peoples of the Daly / Fitzmaurice Rivers region: a printed version of the painting is displayed prominently in the Kanamkek-Yile Ngala Museum at Wadeye as a mnemonic of clan estates; and the Museum holds yet another version painted on bark by Simon Ngumbe.

### **A collection of 169 crayon drawings by Warlpiri artists collected by Mervyn Meggitt at Lajamanu (Hooker Creek), Central Australia, in 1953-54**

This collection of drawings is of exceptional artistic and aesthetic significance.

The drawings were commissioned by the anthropologist Mervyn Meggitt in the course of his fieldwork, initially as a form of exegesis to illustrate aspects of Warlpiri ancestral beliefs and ritual (in particular sacred / secret initiation rites). The majority of the works fulfil this aim, and amongst this group are several drawings that are deemed by contemporary Warlpiri elders to be restricted from public display, thus attesting to the social and spiritual significance of the works (and the role the Institute can play in protecting and preserving such material). The complement of the collection includes works that respond to contemporary community life, depict landscapes and flora and fauna, while others are autobiographical.

In terms of Australian art history, these drawings in introduced materials are of great significance in that they pre-date the emergence of the acrylic painting movement in the nearby community of Papunya by nearly two decades: the Papunya painting movement is commonly regarded as the first occasion in which European materials were used to depict ancestral imagery. According to Dr Melinda Hinkson 'the existence of these drawings contradicts a misconception...that the Central Desert art movement spontaneously emerged at Papunya from 1971... the Warlpiri drawings mark the carrying of ancient artistic expression into a new medium, (Hinkson in Caruana, ANU, 2004: 32).

### **The diptych, *Toyota Dreamings*, 1984, by the Warlpiri artists Paddy Japaljarri Sims, Paddy Japaljarri Stewart, Larry Jungarrayi Spencer, Paddy Jupurrurla Nelson and Towser Jakamarra Walker**

The diptych *Toyota Dreamings*, 1984, is related to the Meggitt crayon drawing collection by dint of the fact that two of the artists, Larry Jungarrayi Spencer and Paddy Jupurrurla Nelson, who collaborated on the paintings, also produced crayon drawings for Meggitt in 1953-54. The diptych is a symbolic public rendition of the Warlpiri Fire Ceremony (initiation) and is of great artistic and aesthetic merit, but it is also of the highest historic significance: these two canvases were the first large paintings by senior Warlpiri men intended to be sold on the art market. They herald the entry of the Warlpiri into the modern world of art where they have, and continue to make, a significant contribution.

### **Butcher Joe Nangan (1910-1989), drawings from the 1960s**

A collection comprising a sketchbook containing 72 drawings collected and documented by the ethnomusicologist Alice Moyle and linguist Nora Kerr, Broome, 1968, and 12 sketchbooks from 1964 collected and documented by Peter R Dalton.

Butcher Joe Nangan was a renowned Nyikina ritual leader, lawman and artist from Broome. To quote Kim Akerman, his drawings are 'brilliantly executed pencil and watercolour pictures of flora and fauna, spirit beings, and mythological and historical events. These works, executed in a distinctive, naturalistic style and which illustrated Joe's knowledge of the complex narratives of the region, first appeared in the mid-1950s' (Akerman in Caruana, ANU, 2004). The drawings are of high artistic and aesthetic significance, and possess vast research potential in terms of understanding the ancestral landscape and cosmology of the Nyikina and other western Kimberley groups. The documentation accompanying the drawings includes Nangan's descriptions in the Nyikina language.

### **Fred Mundraby (c.1883-c.1942?), a sketchbook, 1941**

Fred Mundraby (traditional name Mandi Ngarrbay) was a Yidiny artist and shield maker working at the former mission at Yarrabah on the traditional lands of the Gunggandji people in Far North

Queensland. In 1941, Mundraby was commissioned by the mission superintendent C.G. Worms to produce this unique sketchbook. It contains 19 drawings of shields that represent contemporary versions of traditional designs. The designs are outlined in pencil and painted in natural pigments. The drawings are of extraordinary artistic and aesthetic merit, and of art historical significance, in that they show how abstracted designs found on traditional rainforest and *gulmari* shields from eastern Queensland may be derived from natural, figurative forms such as flora and fauna, as well as man-made objects. Each drawing is annotated by Worms and contains Yidiny terms.

## **Drawings by children and younger people in Indigenous communities**

This sub-collection includes sets of drawings by children and youths from a number of Indigenous communities and reserves. One set of drawings was made at the designated Aboriginal Public School at Tabulam in north-eastern New South Wales, and other sets were made at the remote mission and sheep station at Ernabella in the Musgrave Ranges in South Australia. Both groups date from the 1950s. The drawings express contrasting experiences of life for children in the era of the official policy of assimilation. The Ernabella drawings are based on forms found in nature, and express a sense of exuberance and fantasy. The watercolour drawings from Tabulam, on the other hand, display a sense of strict regimentation and orderliness in the children's depictions of daily life, the dances, the school bus, and teachers, gardeners and other people in the community. These sets of drawings are of high historic and social significance.

## **Aboriginal Tent Embassy materials**

The Aboriginal Embassy, originally established on the lawns opposite Old Parliament House in 1972, stands for the ongoing struggle for Indigenous rights and sovereignty. The Aboriginal Tent Embassy, as it became known, is particularly important in the Land Rights movement and holds a highly important place in the history of Australia. The sub-collection of Artefacts includes the sign of the Aboriginal Embassy from 1976 and a set of teacups used in the tent. These items are of the highest historical value being associated with a critical period in Australian history, for their symbolic (and in the case of the tea cups, also ironic) values.

## **Ken Colbung materials**

The sub-collection includes a kangaroo skin cloak worn by Nyoongah elder Ken Colbung on 21 April 1988 when he presented a *bambooroo* (a message) to Queen Elizabeth II to beseech the Australian Government 'to rectify the anomalies that exist in relation to our Aboriginal people' for changes to Federal Government policy and raised issues of recognition of Aboriginal culture and religious practice, the teaching of Aboriginal culture in the education system and an amnesty for all Aboriginal prisoners to help end the deaths of Aboriginal prisoners held in custody that had reached alarming proportions at the end of the 1980s and were the subject of a Royal Commission. These items are of high social significance.

## **RELEVANT COMPARATIVE CRITERIA**

### **Drawings by Mickey of Ulladulla**

Mickey of Ulladulla was one of a small number of Aboriginal artists of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that we know by name, who created rare pictorial records of an era of great societal change seen from

the Indigenous perspective. Ceremonial life persisted in the region into the 1860s: Mickey was likely to have been initiated and to have attended a ceremony organised by the anthropologist A W Howitt in Bega in 1883.

This set of drawings is extremely rare in the canon of Australian Aboriginal art. Of the 26 extant drawings by Mickey, the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, holds nine individual drawings. The Institute holds eight drawings, a Yuin word list and a map of the coast of southern New South Wales, making the AIATSIS collection of Mickey of Ulladulla materials the largest in the country. The provenance of the works is impeccable and can be traced to the original owner, Mary Ann Gambell, the wife of the lighthouse keeper at Ulladulla who is thought to have supplied Mickey with drawing materials. The drawings were acquired by AIATSIS through its first Director, Frederick McCarthy.

### **The painting by Simon Ngumbe (Ngadbe), *Kanamkek Kimul*, c.1960**

The painting has an exceptional provenance and demonstrates the important role of the Institute's Art and Artefacts sub-collection. Records indicate that Sir Paul Hasluck kept the painting until his death in 1993 when it was passed on to his long-time press secretary Ms Ellestan Disting. In 2010, the executor of Ms Disting's estate alerted the Institute to the existence of the work, but that if it were of no interest to AIATSIS, it would be taken to the local rubbish tip within 24 hours. The Institute acted promptly.

The painting was employed in the service of communicating systems of Aboriginal law and land tenure to the apical settler authority, the Commonwealth Government. As such it belongs to an historically important genre of Aboriginal art at the frontier between Indigenous and settler legal systems that include the Yirrkala Bark Petitions (1963) and the Barunga Statement (1988), both now on display in Parliament House, Canberra.

The current social significance of the painting to the Wadeye community was attested to by the late artist's brother Tobias Ngumbe who travelled to Canberra to see the work and to attend its first public showing in the exhibition *Likan'mirri II: The AIATSIS Collection* at the Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, in 2012.

### **A collection of 169 crayon drawings by Warlpiri artists collected by Mervyn Meggitt at Lajamanu (Hooker Creek), Central Australia, in 1953-54**

The drawings are attributed to individual artists, a number of whom became prominent painters in the public domain over thirty years later. The existence of early works (i.e. made before Indigenous art enjoyed the popularity we now know, by the end of the 1980s) by known artists is a rarity in the history of Indigenous Australian art. The collection is especially rich in drawings by Larry Jungurrayi Spencer (c.1919-1990) and Abie Jangala (c.1919-2002) who were identified by Meggitt as being exceptional artists, and whose later paintings are held in several major public collections in Australia and abroad.

The collection also includes drawings by women artists which in itself is a rarity for the period, but is especially relevant in contemporary times given that Warlpiri women artists were a driving force in the early days of the development of the public painting movement in the 1980s, and that today the majority of practicing Warlpiri artists are women.

The collection of drawings is well-documented in Meggitt's notes, and in a recorded interview between the anthropologist and Peter Hamilton. It is also supported by Meggitt's photographs and offers much potential for further research into the ceremonial life and art history of the



Warlpiri, and into the oeuvre of individual artists. This is evidenced by a project currently underway at the National Museum of Australia to exhibit contemporary Warlpiri artists' responses to the Meggitt collection of crayon drawings: the exhibition *Walpiri Drawings: Remembering the Future* opens in August 2014.

### **The diptych, *Toyota Dreamings*, 1984, by the Warlpiri artists Paddy Japaljarri Sims, Paddy Japaljarri Stewart, Larry Jungarrayi Spencer, Paddy Jupurrurla Nelson and Towser Jakamarra Walker**

The historical significance of these two canvases is enhanced by the fact that they were made in Yuendumu following on from the Yuendumu School Doors painting project that was initiated by senior Warlpiri men in 1983. This included four of the *Toyota Dreamings* painters: Sims, Stewart, Spencer and Nelson. The project allowed artists to paint ancestral images on a large scale for the first time in a public setting and provided the impetus for the Warlpiri to enter the art market in a concerted manner. In 1987 the Institute published a book documenting each of the school doors in Warlpiri and in English (see Warlukurlangu Artists, 1987, in Section 4. References).

The provenance of the canvases is also exceptional. Among the collaborators on the work, Paddy Japaljarri Sims and Paddy Japaljarri Stewart, who went on to become stalwarts of the Warlpiri art movement, had intended to sell the canvases through a commercial gallery in one of the state capitals. However an anthropologist working at Yuendumu at the time, and sponsored by the Institute, Dr Eric Michaels, recognised the potential historic significance of the works and determined they should be kept in public hands. He exchanged two Toyota 4WD vehicles supplied to him by the Institute for the paintings thus securing them for the Institute's collection. The manner in which the diptych was exchanged provides another clue to its social significance as the vehicles became the means by which the artists returned to their homelands to perform ceremonies for the first time in decades (Sims, pers. comm., 2004).

### **Butcher Joe Nangan (1910-1989), drawings from the 1960s**

Nangan was renowned for his engraved pearl shells and boab nuts but his pencil sketches and drawings constitute a rare and remarkable corpus of Aboriginal art from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The Institute's collection is one of the most substantial holdings of Nangan's work, the others being in the collection of National Gallery of Australia and that of the late Lord McAlpine. The AIATSIS Audio-Visual sub-collection contains recordings of songs by the ethnomusicologist Alice Moyle related to Nangan's drawings collected by Nora Kerr.

### **Fred Mundraby (c.1883-c.1942?) sketchbook, 1941**

The sketchbook is an absolute rarity; it is unique in the corpus of early, pre-World War II Aboriginal art from northern Queensland. Mundraby was one of the artists at Yarrabah who, in 1930, was commissioned to make shields by the anthropologist Ursula McConnel. (Among them was a shield made by three Koko Bera artists that forms the basis of the AIATSIS logo.) The sketchbook is in excellent condition.

### **Drawings by children and younger people in Indigenous communities**

The sub-collection includes sets of drawings and paintings by children and youths from Aurukun in Queensland and from Groote Eylandt in the Northern Territory as well as those from Tabulam and Ernabella. This is not the type of work normally collected by other public museums and institutions and therefore is relatively rare, although the National Gallery of Australia owns the

vast Frances Derham Collection of children's art that contains some work by Aboriginal children from Aurukun and Hermannsburg.

The Tabulam children's drawings received a mention in *Dawn*, a monthly magazine published by the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board that recorded 'conditions' and activities on Aboriginal reserves, stations and schools (*Dawn*, June 1954, p.18). A set of the serial *Dawn* forms part of the AIATSIS Print sub-collection.

### **Aboriginal Tent Embassy materials**

The tea cups from the Aboriginal Tent Embassy were donated by John Moloney and are well-provenanced in the Moloney papers (MS 4013).

### **Ken Colbung materials**

The kangaroo skin cloak was worn by Ken Colbung at a garden party at Government House, Perth, when he presented the *bambooroo* to Queen Elizabeth II. The cloak, the message stick and the Nyoongah Flag donated to the Institute by Mr Colbung, possess a high level of interpretative capacity in terms of the history of Indigenous political action and the struggle for the recognition of Indigenous human and social rights. The significance of these objects is enhanced by their association with a prominent Australian, Ken Colbung, who was also Chairman of the AIATSIS Council from 1984 to 1990.

### **NOTES**

This Significance Assessment is based on the investigator's prior extensive knowledge of this sub-collection. The selection of works discussed is not a cross-section of types of objects within the sub-collection, nor is it representative of these types. Rather, the selection was made to draw attention to some of the outstanding objects in the AIATSIS sub-collection of Art and Artefacts; to distinguish this sub-collection from any other public collection of similar materials, and to reflect AIATSIS's roles in the field of Indigenous affairs.

### **AIATSIS Art and Artefact sub-collection Significance Assessment by Wally Caruana, 4 August 2014**

## 5. AUDIO

### Audio sub-collection Statement of Significance

Vincent O'Donnell  
19 August 2014

"Loss of land has some remedy in law (Mabo, Wick) but loss of language bars the way back to culture and heritage." (Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann, 28 July 2014)

The Audio sub-collection contains approximately 39,000 hours of recordings of most, if not all, known Australian Indigenous languages – some 250 languages and 600-700 dialects. This is a remarkable achievement given the success of past policies that led towards linguistic extinction (especially the teaching of children only in English) or occasionally, glottophagy, whereby a more popular or dominant language or dialect replaced – effectively ate – the less popular or less commonly spoken language in normal usage.

Approximately 40% of the sub-collection concerns linguistics and 45% musicology, while 25% comprises oral history, events of historical importance and personalities (NB 10% is hybrid). A significant feature of the sub-collection is the many original field recordings made by Australia's most outstanding researchers in the field of Indigenous linguistics including Luise Hercus, Gavin Breen, Alice Moyle, Janet Mathew and Lynette Oates, and in Indigenous musicology, especially Alice Moyle and Stephen Wild.

Significant largely because of its close documentation of daily life, this sub-collection includes:

- Records of immense value to documentary linguists as they construct dictionaries of uncommon languages and refine the dictionaries, grammars and thesauri of more widely spoken languages, and pronunciation guides for revival linguists and communities seeking to recover their ancestors' language. These products lead to enhanced interpretation of other sources and cross-cultural understanding, and can provide pathways to improved wellbeing amongst Indigenous Australians.
- Numerous musical and ceremonial performances, some of which are little or no longer undertaken, but which are important to identity and cultural heritage.
- Evidences of diversity of thought and of environmental knowledge e.g. weather knowledge, site descriptions, ethno-botany, biology, medicine, and ecological ideas.
- Recordings of crucial events and with individuals who have shaped the modern Indigenous story. Some examples include: an interview with Eddie Mabo about the organisation of fishing rights among his people, the issue at the heart of the High Court's historic Mabo decision; interviews and sound recordings made at the 'Tent Embassy'; interviews about the 'Freedom Ride', one event that prepared the ground for the successful 1967 referendum that removed two discriminatory clauses from the Australian Constitution and saw Indigenous Australians counted in the census for the first time; *vox populi* recordings at Prime Minister Rudd's 13 February 2008 apology to Australia's Indigenous People.

This is the largest, most comprehensive, and well documented collection of sound relating to the first peoples of Australia and the Torres Strait Islands. It is a valuable central holding for linguistic, historic, and ethno-musicological research, identity recovery, modern media adaption / reinterpretation, and even climate change research.

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## Knowledgeable people consulted

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- Cameron Burns, Senior Audio Technician, AIATSIS. Collection structure & maintenance
- Dr Ray Edmondson, Principal, Archive Associates, former Deputy Director NFSA. Status of the collection, comparable world collections.
- John Giacon, Linguist, ANU PhD candidate. Gamilaraay / Yuwaalaraay languages in school and the AIATSIS audio collection (Interviewed by V M Bullock).
- Dr Melinda Hinkson, Senior Lecturer in Anthropology, ANU. Great depth and breadth of research, writing, and production with Indigenous Australians in modern media (Interviewed by V M Bullock).

- Dr Mary-Ann Jebb, Research Fellow AIATSIS, and until recently at ANU. National spread but collection mostly focused on regions or local areas 'vernacular histories', intangible and hard copies, deep context (Interviewed by VM Bullock).
- Grace Koch, (formerly) Family History Unit and Native Title Unit AIATSIS. Uses of collection especially for family history and land claims.
- Ms Judith MacDougall, ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences. Ms MacDougall and her partner, David MacDougall, now Adjunct Professor, Research School of Humanities and the Arts, ran the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) Film Unit from 1975 to 1986. Contribution of film unit to Pictorial sub-collection.
- Professor D J Mulvaney Emeritus Professor of Prehistory, ANU, Status and growth of collection over time (Interviewed by V M Bullock).
- Dr Kazuko Obata, Collection Manager (Audio), AIATSIS. Range of audio holdings, languages aspect of audio holdings.
- Professor Jane Simpson, Chair of Indigenous Linguistics, ANU. Pan-Australia coverage, great historic depth, evidence of diversity of thought and ideas in the records, and in environmental knowledge e.g. weather knowledge, ethno-botany, biology, medicine, the work of Gavin Breen and Luise Hercus (Interviewed by V M Bullock).
- Dr Michael Walsh, Dr Doug Marmion, Ms Sally McNicol, AIATSIS linguistics researchers on the value of languages, quality of metadata numbers of languages, some say 600-700 dialects but of the 250 original languages AIATSIS holds material on most if not all of them (Interviewed by V M Bullock).
- Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann, D.Phil. (Oxon.) Chair of Linguistics and Endangered Languages, School of Humanities, The University of Adelaide. Use of pictorial collection in rebuilding communities and revival language programs.

## Comparable Collections

- Archive of Māori and Pacific Music, University of Auckland, New Zealand: <http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/ampm/>
- Linguistic Data Consortium, University of Pennsylvania, USA: <https://www ldc.upenn.edu/>
- National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, ACT: [www.nfsa.gov.au](http://www.nfsa.gov.au)
- National Anthropological Archives & The Human Studies Film Archives, Department of Anthropology, Collections and Archives Program, Smithsonian Museum, Washington, DC: <http://www.si.edu/>
- Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures: <http://www.paradisec.org.au/home.html>
- Phonogrammarchiv – The Austrian Audiovisual Research Archive, Vienna: <http://www.phonogrammarchiv.at>
- Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America <http://www.ailla.utexas.org/site/welcome.html>
- Reel to Real: Sound at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK: <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/sound.html>
- The South Australian Museum, <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au>

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE AUDIO SUB-COLLECTION

### RELEVANT PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

#### Historic significance

Recordings in the sub-collection largely date from post-WW II, most from the late 1950s onwards, when reliable portable tape recorders became readily available. The oldest original recordings held would appear to be ones made by Professor Arthur Capell in the Darwin areas in August 1949. Copies held of recordings by Sir Baldwin Spencer or Alfred C. Haddon at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are without doubt historic being the earliest recordings of the speech and music of the first Australians and Torres Strait Islanders.

AIATSIS staff identified a number of oral history items of particular importance and worthy of individual mention for their significance.

- The interview with Eddie Mabo (approx. 60 min.) explaining the organisation of fishing rights among his people, the issue at the heart of the High Court's historic Mabo decision. (JOHANNES\_R01)
- Tent Embassy: Some 16 hours of interviews for Scott Robinson's 1991 MA thesis including Kevin Gilbert, Chicka Dixon, Jack Waterford, Gough Whitlam, Gordon Briscoe, Roberta Sykes, Pauline Gordon. (ROBINSON\_SO1)
- Derek Freeman's 1973 recordings made at the Tent Embassy as police sought to close it, and a speech by Norman Tindale at a 1973 Symposium dinner. (FREEMAN\_DJ01)
- Interviews from 1993 / 4 made for Anne Curthoys' 'Freedom Ride' project, with the original participants. (CURTHOYS\_A01, READ\_P02)
- *Vox populi* recordings among the crowds listening to PM Rudd's apology of Feb, 2008, including the speech and the reply by the Leader of the Opposition with listeners' response audible in the background. (AIATSIS\_67)
- A variety of recording around the Gurindji hand-over including Gurindji songs and stories from Vincent Lingiari and Lachlan Major, Wattie Creek, NT. (BILS\_001)

As historic, but not centred on landmark events or personalities, are items like *Following Granny Moysey. Kurnu Paakantyi stories from the Darling, Warrego and Paroo Rivers* recorded and deposited by artist William 'Badger' Bates, sixteen and a half hours of family stories from north-west NSW, and numerous similar items.

#### Artistic or aesthetic significance

These are less precisely demonstrable qualities, often more evident in their absence. In some cases the recordings attract interest having both linguistic and musicological qualities.

Recordings with a principally linguistic focus, these being undertaken for scientific documentation, are often collected in the field. While the technical quality is far from studio quality this has limited impact on the value of the recording for the intended use, that is, the *ad hoc* value of the recording.

To date, the music in the collection is essentially of traditional performances, not of contemporary Indigenous performers. Much of the music collected is aesthetically pleasing and demonstrates

artistic qualities. Some of these recordings have been published by AIATSIS, the series *Songs of the Northern Territory, Volume 1 to 5*, is an example.

The recordings of music made by Alice Moyle on Groote Island, now repatriated to the Groote Island community, are in regular use in the maintenance of ceremony and song.

## **Scientific or research significance**

The Audio sub-collection is of clear scientific or research significance as evidenced by the use of the recordings in many cultural and language programs and the immense number of vocabularies, dictionaries and thesauri drawn for the recorded work. The AIATSIS language thesaurus, itself, would not have been possible without the use of this collection.

Ethnomusicology, too, draws heavily on recorded sound. These modern studies would be near impossible without sound recordings of original performances to work from. The early work of Grace Koch should be noted here.

The work of Luise Hercus in the making of recordings of more than 40 endangered Aboriginal languages was recognised outside the linguistic community when her collection was added to the (Australian) National Registry of Recorded Sound in 2012.

In addition, the Audio sub-collection contains evidence of diversity of social and cultural thought across individual communities. There may be found elements of environmental knowledge e.g. weather, ethno-botany, biology, medicine, and elements relevant to ecological change such as the presence in a language of names for animals that are no longer found in the district(s) where native speakers lived. Such references may bear on studies as diverse as agronomy, astronomy or climate change.

Of particular importance is that the Audio sub-collection is drawn from across all Australia and so, in reach, is broader in its catchment of language, music and ceremony than the Moving Image sub-collection. This is illustrated by the overlapping but complementary work of the major linguists represented: Gavin Breen—Lake Eyre basin, central and western Queensland into the NT; Luise Hercus—South Australia and western New South Wales, Northern Territory (central) and inland Victoria; Alice Moyle—far north Queensland, the north of the Northern Territory and adjacent islands and the Kimberley; Lynette Oates—inland northern and north-western NSW; Janet Mathew—South Coast NSW and Western NSW, especially the of the Muruwari language (in the Brewarrina and Enngonia region). Linguistics in the west has received the attention of Wilfred Douglas, Norman Tindale and Nicholas Thieberger, and more recently in the large collection, the *Noongar Language and Culture Centre Audio Collection* made by the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council.

## **Social or spiritual significance**

The Gamilaraay / Yuwaalaraay Language Project in central and northern New South Wales is one of many applications of the spoken word and musical content of the AIATSIS Audio sub-collection. Such applications are of social or spiritual significance as evidenced in accounts by AIATSIS staff of emotional re-connections of Indigenous people with parents' languages thought to be lost. The revival of the Gamilaraay language is supported by the composition of songs in Gamilaraay by urban Aboriginal singers Nardi Simpson and Kaleena Briggs. Known as 'The Stiff Gins', Simpson and Briggs make connections for themselves and their listeners with their ancestral country in this way. From only 400 Gamilaraay language speakers in the 1980s, now

there is more than ten times that number, the growth aided by language teaching in schools (Giacon, July 2014).

Other examples are the use of recordings of the late Uncle Tiger Buchanan in the Gumbaynggir Language Recovery Program to teach pronunciation and the use of Gavin Breen's recordings by the Woorabinda Knowledge Centre in teaching Gungabula and Wadja in primary schools.

The use of the Audio sub-collection has been important, too, in the Family History and Native Title work of the Institute. Audio recordings and supporting documentation help establish an individual's or family's connection with country and specific language groups.

## RELEVANT COMPARATIVE CRITERIA

Provenance is varied. Much audio material is donated, so written agreements ensure that the presence of the material in the AIATSIS collection is legitimate. If the provenance of the material prior to donation is of concern, it must be subject to case-by-case examination. This investigator has not been able to pursue this latter matter in greater depth within the time-frame of this project. The collection holds copies of rare recordings, the earliest dating from Tasmania in the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century for example. The oldest originals date from the late 1940s in the work of Professor Arthur Capell.

The immense size of the Audio sub-collection, more than 39,000 recordings in all, suggest it approaches representativeness – at least for major linguistic groups and musical genres. It has fair coverage of some events of historic interest and a wealth of oral histories of the experience of ordinary communities and individuals.

The condition of the master recordings is good but subject to slow deterioration despite good storage conditions. The Institute has adopted a triage approach to digitisation, copying the audio from those media such as DAT (Digital Audio Tape) and Minidisc where replay equipment is becoming unavailable, or where the carrier medium, some brands of ¼ inch tape for example, are deteriorating faster than expected. Digitisation of all audio is proceeding as fast as resources allow.

## NOTES

The collection includes all forms of carrier for audio material: cassettes, typically C60 and C90, but some C30 and C120; streaming ¼ inch audio tape typically 7 or 5 inch spools with a few 10 inch spools, but 10 inch tapes were previously used for back-up copies; there are also microcassettes such as used in analogue dictaphones, DAT (digital audio tape) cassettes; Minidiscs, MD70 and MD80, many compact disks (CD) and, increasingly, USB format thumb drives. Copies of 'significant historical recordings held in overseas and interstate collections' are typically held on a ¼ inch carrier if not already digitised. Auditing copies are usually either digital files or on compact disks, CDs.

In preparing this report, the investigator read through the Excel file 'audio collection excel.xlsx' in detail. The file contains 2,725 entries, and some entries refer to a related group of between twenty and sixty tapes, usually 5 inch, as conveniently fits on a Nagra III or IV with the lid closed. Thus the number of individual tapes is considerably more than 2,575 items, the best estimates put the number in the order of 39,000. The listing also identifies the quite diverse sources for material in this sub-collection, so much being received by donation from both academic and amateur collectors.



The assistance of AIATSIS staff in identifying key historic material among this huge archive is gratefully acknowledged.

**AIATSIS Audio sub-collection Significance Assessment by Vincent O'Donnell, 19 August 2014**

## 6. MANUSCRIPTS

### Manuscripts sub-collection Statement of Significance

Michael Piggott  
4 August 2014

The AIATSIS manuscript collection is highly significant, a rating incorporating both historic and research significance. Underpinning these primary judgements are four additional considerations: a strongly documented provenance; high, if slightly qualified, rarity; the fact that the 'Sorry Books' already have national significance status via the Australian Memory of the World registration; and the W E H Stanner papers ought, according to an accompanying assessment, to have an equivalent importance.

The thousands of unpublished primary sources in the AIATSIS Manuscripts sub-collection ranging in type from single items such as reports, theses, pamphlets and folders through to hundreds of boxes of personal or organisational papers, represent a concentration of specialist material unique within the Australian archives sector. This is because they: focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander subjects nationally; embody historical evidence of most of the crucial events people and developments in 20<sup>th</sup> century Australia's Indigenous-settler relations; and they provide research infrastructure for both pioneering and secondary use.

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- Rebecca Bateman, ex-AIATSIS Family History Unit Researcher
- Barry Cundy, AIATSIS Collection Development Manager
- Grace Koch, ex-AIATSIS Native Title Research and Access Officer
- Rita Metzenrath, AIATSIS Senior Collections Officer
- Professor Nicholas Peterson, School of Archaeology and Anthropology, ANU
- Professor Sandy Toussaint, Berndt Museum, UWA
- Cathy Zdanowicz, AIATSIS Archive Officer

## **Comparable Collections**

- Berndt Museum, University of Western Australia  
<http://www.culturalprecinct.uwa.edu.au/venues/galleries-and-museums/berndt-museum>
  - National Archives of Australia (see especially *Fact Sheets on Indigenous Australian*  
<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/on-indigenous-australia/index.aspx>
  - National Library of Australia Indigenous collections <http://www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/indigenous>
  - State Library of NSW Indigenous collections  
[http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover\\_collections/history\\_nation/indigenous/index.html](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/history_nation/indigenous/index.html)
  - Strehlow Research Centre <http://www.artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/museums/strehlow>
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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE MANUSCRIPTS SUB-COLLECTION

## RELEVANT PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

### Historic significance

The AIATSIS manuscript sub-collection has clear strong historical significance. It is directly associated with influential organisations, people, and pivotal events of Australian Indigenous-white relations in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The correspondence, diaries, reports, minutes, agenda papers, and files of newspapers cuttings were generated at the time these events, debates and struggles unfolded by some of the key participants and organisations. Examples include:

- Land rights campaigns: Aboriginal Land Rights Support Group - MS 2538; Queensland Aboriginal Land Rights campaign, 1978 - MS1797
- Campaigns for a treaty: H C Coombs / Aboriginal Treaty Committee - MS 1897
- Reconciliation / apology: Sorry Books MS
- Events:
  - 1965 'Freedom ride' - Ann Curthoys MS 4186; Pat Healy - MS 4185;
  - 1959 Stuart case - Father Thomas Dixon - MS 3764
  - 1972 Aboriginal Tent Embassy - John Moloney - MS 4045
  - 1967 Referendum - Joe McGuinness - MS 3718; FCAATSI records - MS 3759
- Influential Indigenous bodies: Council for Aboriginal Affairs / Barrie Dexter MS 4167; Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders - MS 3759; National Aboriginal Conference - MS 4000; Northern Land Council – MS 2262 and MS 3196.

### Research significance

The AIATSIS manuscript collections comprise over 12,000 'titles'. Over half are 'pamphlet manuscripts' (PMS1-6537), while the remainder (MS 1-6000) range from a single volume (e.g. higher degree theses; grantee research reports), to very large collections of records generated by organisations and personal and official papers accumulated by prominent individuals.

The AIATSIS manuscript collections have high research significance.

Because they constitute primary research resources, these collections are understandably highly prized by a diversity of users from such sectors as government, academia, the media and communities. The collections have and can continue to sustain inquiries into the future from across the entire range of subjects covered in *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia* (1994), and the research categories identified by the AIATSIS Research program (see <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/publications.html>).

Scholars interviewed for this assessment made similar points, stressing recent work on the environment, biodiversity, ethno-botany and 'weather knowledge'. The Institute's Native Title Research and Access Officer Grace Koch commented similarly, citing as examples Allan Marett *Songs, Dreamings and Ghosts; the Wangga of North Australia* (Wesleyan University Press, 2005); Bain Attwood, *Rights for Aborigines* (Allen & Unwin, 2003); Bain Attwood, *Possession. Batman's Treaty and the Matter of History* (Miegunyah Press, 2009); and Jim Wafer and Amanda

Lissarrague, *A Handbook of Aboriginal Languages of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory* (Murrumbidgee Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative, 2008).

This research potential also covers those critical events and organisations referred to above (i.e. historical significance), including the individuals involved. In fact biography is a particular research resource strength of this sub-collection. There are rich materials on such high profile activists, politicians or scholars as Jackie Higgins, Cathy Freeman, Mick Dodson, Fred Hollows, W C Wentworth, Daryl Melham, Aden Ridgeway and Joe McGuinness. In addition there are multiple examples of Indigenous life writing. The 2008 Aboriginal History Monograph 17 *Indigenous Biography and Autobiography* provides one marker, the offerings of higher education programs e.g. unit HAB252, Indigenous Life Histories, offered by the University of Tasmania in 2013, provides another.

What gives the manuscripts collections an additional importance, unique within the Australian archival scene, is the concentration of field research data available for re-use. From its beginnings in the mid 1960s AIAS / AIATSIS was a sponsor and grant giving body fostering original research. It therefore accumulated, as a direct by-product of studies, large quantities of data from anthropological, ethnomusicology, genealogical, linguistic and other fields of research. Thus the Sue Norman collection of 'Ossie Cruse research material' (MS 4678) originated from a 2006 AIATSIS grant.

AIATSIS has also actively sought the papers of scholars from the nearby ANU from among those who have served on its staff, boards and committees, and visited from overseas (Peter Austin - MS 1199; John G Breen - 22 mss collections; Arthur Capell - MS 4577; Alan Dench - MS 2906; Jane Goodale - MS 4679; Derek Freeman - MS 4065 and MS 2533; L R Hiatt - MS 4129; Frederick McCarthy - MS3513; Howard Morphy - MS 3493 and 3176; R H Mathews - MS 1606 and MS 3179; Rhys Jones - MAR07/004). Beyond their value supporting new questions within the subject areas of their initial generation, these researchers' materials now support Native Title work.

## RELEVANT COMPARATIVE CRITERIA

### Provenance

It is clear from the information recorded in their Manuscripts Finding Aids (specifically, their Scope and Content notes), and a sampling of its acquisition depositor forms, that the provenance of AIATSIS manuscripts is known, recorded and preserved. Institute staff have also scrupulously noted where material has been created or collected by one individual and passed to the custody of another before arriving at AIATSIS (e.g. Father Dixon and the Stuart case - MS 3764). The AIATSIS policy of documentation, arising because material is often deposited with external ownership and control conditions, makes for comprehensive provenance knowledge, in both archival and curatorial understandings of the term, and enhances the evidential trustworthiness and significance of the entire manuscripts collection.

### Rarity

Considered individually, each manuscript 'item' held by AIATSIS is by its very nature unique (e.g. the Olive Pink papers; the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders archive), or exists in only a very small number of extant copies and thus extremely rare e.g. higher degree theses. Some are photocopies rather than originals (e.g. the papers of Father Frank Brennan, SJ - MS 4082).

Considering the total Manuscript sub-collection by format, its rarity varies. Theses and Sorry books illustrate the point.

- Theses. The central and departmental libraries of Australian universities which have strong Indigenous studies programs will hold copies of higher degree theses on Indigenous topics (e.g. see Sean Ulm, Anna Shnukal and Catherine Westcott, *An Annotated Bibliography of Theses in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies at the University of Queensland, 1948-2000. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit Research Report Series. Volume 5.* Report. University of Queensland, 2001; see also the 'theses' icon for the Australian National University Library Indigenous Studies guide at <http://libguides.anu.edu.au/indigenous>). On the other hand, no collection other than that at AIATSIS has a concentration of theses on Indigenous subjects spanning the entire Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander field and drawn from dozens of Australian universities.
- Sorry Books. Much has been made of the Institute's collection of Sorry Books (MS 4398, MS 3569 and MS 3795), and they are justifiably acknowledged via inclusion on the Australian Memory of the World register. But of the approximately 1000 originally issued, it has 480 (see <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/exhibitions/sorrybooks/background.html>). Copies are also held at the University of South Australia Library (26) and the J. S. Battye Library of West Australian History (45). Balancing this, the AIATSIS collections also include substantial numbers of unofficial sorry books, and some of the administrative records documenting the Sorry Books campaign. In short these collections are not in every sense unique, but considered *in toto* they remain Australia's largest Sorry Book & Related collection. Indeed because this is known, the Institute has attracted further additions of Sorry Books.

Considering the mss sub-collection as a single critical mass of primary source materials documenting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders requires care in avoiding an 'apples and oranges' trap. AIATSIS is a so-called 'collecting archive' in that it draws archival material from individuals and bodies across Australian society rather than draws from and operates within a single organisation, e.g. a bank or a church, or a single government jurisdiction, e.g. a state or local council.

So on the one hand, the Institute has no statutory responsibility to manage official government records, and thus has nothing to compare with the vast holdings of the State and Commonwealth Governments, and it must compete with others who collect archives and manuscripts such as the National and State libraries, and libraries and museums in university settings. In summary, there are concentrations of Indigenous archives and manuscripts held outside AIATSIS; indeed in over fifty places according to *Indigenous Australians. A report of the Archives Working Group of the Cultural Ministers Council*, 1997.

On the other hand, the fact remains that while cultural institutions around Australia are known for one or two large manuscript collections of high profile names e.g. Elkin - University of Sydney Archives; Mabo, Perkins, Mulvaney - National Library of Australia; Spencer - Museum Victoria; Tindale - South Australian Museum; Howitt - State Library of Victoria; Mountford - State Library of South Australia; the Berndts - Berndt Museum, University of Western Australia; Robinson, Unaipon - State Library of New South Wales; O'Donoghue - Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Library; no other Australian cultural institution operating as an archives has AIATSIS's single collecting focus, and no other Australian archives has developed such a concentration of specialist archival material.

## **Completeness**

As can happen for reasons usually to do with creator / depositor preferences, but also sometimes because of competition between cultural institutions, personal papers and organisational records can end up in different collecting archives. For example, the Institute's FCAATSI records (MS 3759) relate primarily to 1971-1978. Records relating to the period 1958-1973, however, were deposited with the Mitchell Library, Sydney (ML MSS 2999 and ML MSS 2999 Add-on 1507).

More generally collections can become split when a specialist cultural institution is only interested in the special matching component of a person's career, or conversely, is seen by the depositor as only partially an appropriate repository. For example AIATSIS has Indigenous related papers of / from the journalists Michelle Grattan (MS 4084) and Jack Waterford (MS 2995) and the ophthalmologist Fred Hollows (MAR08/102). Another instance is H C Coombs. The Institute holds a collection of Coombs papers (4 boxes, MS 1897), and there are Coombs letters, documents and publications in many of its other manuscript collections. But the main Coombs collection, a vast archive of nearly 100 boxes, is held at the National library (MS 802).

So obviously not being the sole repository for a significant person's or organisation's total archive detracts from the significance of that repository's collections. It cannot be ignored in the present context, though the point applies only in a handful of cases.

## **NOTES**

Method: Methodical visual inspection of the compactus holding the manuscript titles and secondly the unprocessed accessions using a plan of the compactus provided by Cathy Zdanowicz. I sampled at random, then narrowed my sample via the sub-sub-collections supported by online finding aids, with special attention being paid to the Stanner material among others.

## **AIATSIS Manuscripts sub-collection Significance Assessment by Michael Piggott, 4 August 2014**

## 7. MOVING IMAGE

### Moving Image sub-collection Statement of Significance

Vincent O'Donnell  
19 August 2014

The Moving Image sub-collection contains visual and aural records of the life and rituals of Australia's first people. It is especially rich in materials collected between 1964 and 1988 in north Australia. AIAS, now AIATSIS, was the first such institution dedicated to the study of the people of a single continent, and among the first to use cine-film for systematic and sympathetic documentation. This collection is considerably larger with more detailed documentation than comparable collections for Australia and the Torres Strait held by institutions such as the National Anthropological Archives and the Human Studies Film Archives of the Smithsonian in Washington DC, or the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford.

The AIAS commissioned a vast amount of original film material through its Film Unit (1962-1988), commencing with Djalambu, a mortuary ceremony filmed at Milinginbi by filmmaker Cecil Holmes, and including some films by Curtis Levy (1974-1980). However, the major contribution to the collection came from anthropologist / filmmakers Roger Sandall, David and Judith MacDougall, and Kim McKenzie. Some of this work achieved international acclaim outside of anthropological circles. Most significantly, original and unedited source footage for many titles produced by the AIAS Film Unit, which staff estimate comprises about 70 per cent by volume of the whole Moving Image sub-collection, is preserved. These cine resources are complemented by the extensive work of Ian Dunlop at the Commonwealth Film Unit (now Film Australia).

Attitudes to anthropological filmmaking have changed over time and the AIATSIS collection reflects these changes. In more recent times the collection contains works of drama or documentary by directors like Phillip Noyce, Ivan Sen, Richard Franklin, Darlene Johnson, Rachel Perkins and Warwick Thornton. The Australian Government Cultural Gifts Program has enabled the acquisition of 26 titles from independent filmmakers, including the original source materials, so continuing the original curatorial role of the former AIAS Film Unit.

The collection has been swelled with copies of TV programs from CAAMA and Imparja TV, event records and other film and video material. These more recent elements are significant because they represent a further development: Indigenous people behind the camera directing the content, sometimes produced in local languages, sometimes with content derived from earlier ethnographic footage. This development is an emerging area of academic interest in a number of disciplines, and a cause for cultural re-engagement on the ground. Both are evidence of the dynamism of modern Indigenous Australian culture.

The earliest original material held is from Charles Mountford and the American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land of 1948. In addition to original materials, copies are held of films by Sir Baldwin Spencer and Alfred C. Haddon at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and early commercial cinema that include Indigenous references like *Pearls and Savages* (Frank Hurley 1921) and *Coorab on the Island of Ghosts* (Francis Birtles 1922).



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[www.anthropology.si.edu/naa/home/hsfahistory.html](http://www.anthropology.si.edu/naa/home/hsfahistory.html), sighted 18 & 22 July 2014.
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## Knowledgeable people consulted

- Dr Ray Edmondson, Principal, Archive Associates, former Deputy Director NFSA. Status of the collection, comparable world collections.
- Ms Judith MacDougall, ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences. Ms MacDougall and her partner, David MacDougall, now Adjunct Professor, Research School of Humanities and the Arts, ran the AIAS Film Unit from 1975 to 1986. Contribution of film unit to Pictorial sub-collection.
- Professor D J Mulvaney Emeritus Professor of Prehistory, ANU, Status and growth of collection over time (Interviewed by V M Bullock).
- Professor Nicolas Peterson, Professor of Anthropology, ANU. Extent and status of collection, status of Sandall and the MacDougall, comparable collections (Interviewed by V M Bullock).
- Nick Richardson, Collections and Access Manager, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne. Status of the collection, overlaps with other Australian collections.

- Professor Jane Simpson, Chair of Indigenous Linguistics, ANU. Major sound, video and texts cross-Australia coverage, and great historic depth (Interviewed by V M Bullock).
- Keith Windschuttle, Editor, *Quadrant* magazine. Forthcoming collection of essays by the late Roger Sandall.
- Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann, D.Phil. (Oxon.) Chair of Linguistics and Endangered Languages, School of Humanities, The University of Adelaide. Use of pictorial collection in rebuilding communities and revival language programs.

## Comparable Collections

- Linguistic Data Consortium, University of Pennsylvania, USA: <https://www ldc.upenn.edu/>
  - Museum Victoria: <http://museumvictoria.com.au/>
  - National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, ACT: [www.nfsa.gov.au](http://www.nfsa.gov.au)
  - National Anthropological Archives & The Human Studies Film Archives, Department of Anthropology, Collections and Archives Program, Smithsonian Museum, Washington, DC: <http://www.si.edu/>
  - Phonogrammarchiv - The Austrian Audiovisual Research Archive, Vienna: <http://www.phonogrammarchiv.at>
  - Pitt Rivers Sound Collections, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK: <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/sound.html>
  - South Australian Museum: <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/>
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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE MOVING IMAGE SUB-COLLECTION

### RELEVANT PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The Moving Image Collection is as many as five or six distinct collections, according to the selection typology chosen. Each has a distinct purpose in its acquisition:

- Output of the AIAS / AIATSIS Film Unit, 1964 to 1988. High historic and research significance; some, occasionally high, spiritual significance; good artistic or aesthetic significance. Much, in some cases nearly all, is in the language(s) spoken in the community. This material is of particular value to revival linguistics as it shows language in use in a social context.
- Cine work by other anthropologists. Historic and research significance; some spiritual significance; varied artistic or aesthetic significance. Some language components arising from context of narrative.
- Cine works on riparian interests by independent filmmakers. Some historic and research significance; some spiritual significance; varied artistic or aesthetic significance.
- Television program material, largely from CAAMA and Imparja Television. Historic and research significance; limited artistic or aesthetic significance, some social or cultural significance. Some of the CAAMA, Imparja Television material is in the languages spoken by the target audiences.
- Video records of speeches and conferences of direct interest. Likely historic and research significance; possible spiritual significance; uncertain but, likely very varied, artistic or aesthetic significance.
- Video records of events of relevance to Indigenous interest. Likely some historic and research significance; little spiritual significance; uncertain but, likely very varied, artistic or aesthetic significance.

### RELEVANT COMPARATIVE CRITERIA

#### **Output of the AIAS / AIATSIS film unit, 1964 to 1988, Cine work by other anthropologists, Cine works on riparian interests by other filmmakers**

Provenance may be regarded as secure for these three classes.

The 'Output of the AIAS / AIATSIS film unit' is without doubt rare; some recorded practices are no longer followed. Its degree of representativeness is harder to judge, but high representativeness was the intention. Certainly, the archiving of the uncut camera rolls and field audio recordings allows re-evaluation of this quality.

Concerning condition and completeness, the materials in the collection, especially original material has received the best preservation possible, but as Ray Edmondson remarked in his 2004 report, preservation is a continuing, not a set and forget, process.

In many cases, the creators of the works include filmmakers, anthropologists and ethnographers of standing and significance, such as Nicolas Peterson or Rachel Perkins.

## **Indigenous video and television content, Video recordings of speeches and conferences of direct interest, Video records of events of relevance to Indigenous interests**

These three classes are a little more problematic. The Indigenous video and television content, largely from CAAMA and Imparja Television, has clear provenance and is supported by documentation

Clear provenance applies to a lesser extent to 'Video records of speeches and conferences of direct interest' and 'Video records of events of relevance to Indigenous interests'. Formal permissions are likely to exist for the former and 'implied consent' in the latter cases. For video / television content from CAAMA and Imparja Television and similar sources, provenance appears clear. Material recorded by the AIATSIS staff, and that acquired by donation, also have clear lines of provenance.

The 'Video records of speeches and conferences of direct interest', are likely to be rare in the sense that few if any copies exist, but their condition or completeness is unresolved as too little time has been available for viewing.

Provenance for the items that make up the 'Video records of events of relevance to Indigenous interests' is less clear. However they are likely to be rare, that is being few in number, perhaps unique. However, rarity alone does not confer significance.

Some value does lie, however, in providing an independent, alternative representation to mainstream media coverage, of events of political or social concern to Indigenous citizens.

## **NOTES**

### **Output of the AIAS / AIATSIS film unit**

For the first three parts of the Moving Image sub-collection (Output of the AIAS / AIATSIS film unit, 1964 to 1988, Cine work by other anthropologists, Cine works on riparian interests by filmmakers) the investigator has relied on his professional experience of many of the filmmakers concerned and limited viewing, to appreciate the dimensions of the collection.

For the other three parts (Indigenous television productions, Video records of speeches and conferences of direct interest, Video records of events of relevance to Indigenous interests) a catalogue review and limited sample viewing has been employed.

The AIAS film unit operated from 1965 to 1972 under filmmaker Roger Sandall, based at the University of Sydney, and from 1975 to 1986 under David and Judith MacDougall. It was officially disbanded in 1988 and its Assistant Director, Kim McKenzie, reassigned within the Institute. McKenzie, in 1980, made the highly regarded *Waiting for Harry*, a very accessible film for general audiences, about ritual, cultural practice and simple humanity.

Influenced by *cinéma verité*, Roger Sandall employed long, uncut takes that allow the story to unfold as if the frame was a proscenium arch, albeit a moveable one. This non-mediated non-directed approach was to allow the circumstances – 'the truth' – to become apparent to the viewer, rather than have the audience guided to the filmmaker's vision of the truth, as constructed by the use of the syntax of cinema. Thus events chosen by Sandall and the Institute for coverage were approached in this manner.

In some cases, the sound recordist (most frequently Lawrie Fitzgerald) would run his recorder continuously, creating an almost continuous aural coverage, while the camera operator (Sandall himself) would button-on for a long take of the crucial aspect of the event. The Audio sub-collection may be home to the original quarter inch audio recording. As a crew of only two or three were present, the impact of the sound and cine-recording on the course of the event was minimised, given hundreds of people were often in attendance. This 'observer effect' as a physicist would put it, is consciously acknowledged by at least one participant when in *Camels and the Pitjantjatjara*, Nosepeg, who while demonstrating rabbit hunting by digging-out the burrows, counsels his wife: "Don't look at the camera, look at the rabbits".

The Eastman negative or reversal film stock used in the field was processed to commercial standards and then rewashed to further reduce the presence of chemical residues. A work print of the entire camera footage was made, picture and sound were synchronised and, it seems, a dub of everything recorded on location was made. Subsequently, a first edit was made that used most of the shot footage, so as to allow the event to unfold on the screen over considerable time, then in some cases, a considerably shorter version was made, with more concession to the syntax of cinema, and intended for public exhibition.

These short versions enjoyed considerable success inside and outside anthropological circles: *Emu Ritual at Ruguri*, won the top award in the Ethnographic Film Section at the Biennale di Venezia in 1968, though *Quadrant* magazine claimed, in its obituary for Sandall, that the film won the Lion of St Mark at the Venice Film Festival that year, the Festival's premier award (<https://quadrant.org.au/magazine/2012/10/vale-roger-sandall/>). W E H Stanner is reported to have cited *Warlpiri Ritual at Gunadjari* (1968) as 'in some respects a little masterpiece'.

Judith and David MacDougall joined the AIAS in 1975. Both Sandall and the MacDougall's filmmaking at the AIAS was shaped by strong theoretical underpinnings. Unlike Sandall's films, the work of David and Judith MacDougall willingly, some would say extravagantly, acknowledges the presence of the filmmakers and, by manifesting the 'observer effect', seeks to neutralise it. They also empowered the subjects of the films, composing the soundtrack with their voices and sub-titling their conversations with anthropologists and others for non-native speakers viewing the film. The narrative voice of authority, the *vox dei*, was replaced by their voices and those of the community in which they were working.

## Cine work by other anthropologists

Notable among the earliest records held by AIATSIS are copies of cine footage recorded by Sir Baldwin Spencer, either working alone or with Francis J Gillen, from expeditions to Central Australia, and by Alfred C Haddon, from his work in northern Australia and the Torres Strait. The original films are mostly held in the British Museum, together with audio recorded in the field.

In the pre-WW II period works by T G H Strehlow and Norman Tindale, ethnologist at the South Australian Museum, are noted and, later, films made by Charles Mountford. Another film, *The Flint Miners of the Nullarbor* (Robert Edwards 1969), has an interesting connection. It is visually inventive in response to the challenge of filming deep within the Koonalda doline on the Nullarbor, with no access to electricity and dependent only kerosene lanterns for lighting. Edwards went on to be a Deputy Principal of the AIAS and the founding director of the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council.

## **Cine works on riparian interests by filmmakers**

There are copies of early commercial productions such as *Kodak's Native Australia* (Brooke Nicholls 1922), *Pearls and Savages* (Frank Hurley 1921) and *Coorab on the Island of Ghosts* (Francis Birtles 1922), and after World War II, titles from the Commonwealth Film Unit (Film Australia), then the extensive work of Ian Dunlop whose *People of the Western Desert* and later series were undertaken in collaboration with the Institute. Dunlop's influence on photographer Jon Rhodes, who has credits in the MURA Pictorial catalogue, should be noted too.

However, with the commencement of public funding of film making in the 1970s, the number of titles in this class grew significantly. Prominent among these films are the series of films from Alessandro Cavadini and Carolyn Strachan starting with *Ningla A-Na* (1972), *Backroads* (Phillip Noyce 1977), the out-takes and trims (deposited by Ansara for preservation ) of *My Survival as an Aboriginal* (Essie Coffey & Martha Ansara 1978), and *My life as I live it* (Essie Coffey & Martha Ansara 1993).

From the late 1970s the use of 16 mm cine-film in production is gradually replaced by videotape of increasing technical quality. After the late 1990, the number of titles produced and / or directed by Indigenous filmmakers increased substantially. Notable among them are Tracy Moffatt, Ivan Sen, Richard Franklin, Leah Purcell, Darlene Johnson, Rachel Perkins and Warwick Thornton, but the collection hold the work of at least another sixty filmmakers, less well known to the general public, collected over the past two decades or so.

However, as an artefact of the MURA cataloguing, titles by some Indigenous filmmakers, including Ivan Sen, do not appear in the Moving Image collection but in open and closed stacks records.

## **Video off-air recordings of programs of direct interest**

The program material in the collection from CAAMA and Imparja Television is an archive of program content from a time when Indigenous people of Central Australia went from being media objects to media activists: program makers, not just watchers.

## **Video records of speeches and conferences of direct interest**

This material is, principally, of archival interest as records of conferences and similar proceedings. Doubtless, there are printed copies of speeches made but the ability to find them would vary between academic presentation and contribution of community members to such events.

The camera coverage of these events is most likely from tripod-mounted cameras, but the sound pick up is crucial to the utility of the recording for anything but private listening. It is frequently the case that the sound recorded from a camera-mounted microphone, at the back of a hall or theatre, is barely intelligible. Individual microphones or a direct pick up from the PA system, if in use, is the only way to record such events at a quality acceptable for production. Even then, mechanical noise from shuffling papers and speakers striking the lectern can render parts of such recording unusable for significant periods.

One only tape has been viewed, that of Senator Aden Ridgeway addressing a NAIDOC breakfast at Westmead Children's Hospital. The edited, two-camera coverage was of good, non-broadcast quality, with sound from the PA system. No generalisation is made from this one example from the collection.

## **Video records of events of relevance to Indigenous interest**

This is an allied collection to the **speeches and conferences** collection. In a world where public opinion is so shaped by television news, having available an alternative coverage of news events is a politically strategic as well as an academically valuable idea.

I have viewed only one example from this class. It is a 44 minute coverage of a march from the Tent Embassy to the forecourt of the ACT Legislative Assembly to protest the 2004 death of T J (Thomas) Hickey in Redfern. Of the 44 minutes, perhaps 10 minutes is usable, with only 4 minutes really stably framed and with cogent sound. The camera operator seems not well versed in the conventions of TV news coverage and as there seemed to be no sound recordist, the audio is not very good. Thus this tape has marginal value, but no generalisation is ventured. For this kind of coverage to be of more interest than a home movie, it needs to be technically proficient and the coverage directed so as to create an alternative viewpoint to conventional news coverage, and cover aspects of the event the conventional news approach does not.

## **Cultural Gifts Program**

The Cultural Gifts Program has provided a slow stream of moving image donations to the collection, 26 titles and ancillary material since about 1992. Titles include (but are not limited to) twenty-five boxes of materials that went into the making of *First Australians* (Rachel Perkins and Darren Dale, producers, 2009) and the source material for *Sisters, Pearls and Mission Girls* (David Batty 2003).

The *First Australians* collection is likely to be the most significant addition to the AIATSIS collection of the past decade, containing, as it does, the uncut, original footage from which the six part television series was drawn, including many hours of oral history. Such material honours the curatorial traditions established by the AIAS Film Unit.

## **AIATSIS Moving Image sub-collection Significance Assessment by Vincent O'Donnell, 19 August 2014**

## 8. PICTORIAL

### Pictorial sub-collection Statement of Significance

Vincent O'Donnell  
18 August 2014

This is the largest single sub-collection of objects / items held by AIATSIS. More than 90% of the 650,000 photographs and other graphic items are original and unique to AIATSIS. These images primarily record the daily life of the first people of Australia and the Torres Strait from the late 1800s to the present day. A growing component of this sub-collection is its archive of historically significant events, people and places one that is increasingly accessed by government and non-government publishers.

Features of the Pictorial sub-collection are its pre-1940 focus, some of which is of high aesthetic significance, and its complementarity to other AIATSIS sub-collections e.g. Manuscripts, Moving Image. Together these resources are a powerful and immediate aid both for Indigenous Australians to rebuild their cultural heritage and traditional connections with country, and for other research purposes e.g. environmental science.

Amongst the work of amateur, academic and professional photographers are recognisable names from other AIATSIS holdings including Baldwin Spencer, Norman Tindale, W E H Stanner, Rhys Jones and Ian Dunlop. Also worthy are other historic and contemporary contributors ranging from Francis Birtles, Herbert Read, J W Schomberg, and Walter Geiser, right through to the contemporary work of such Mervyn Bishop and Merle Morgan and artists as Trace Moffitt, Jon Rhodes and Leah King-Smith. The collection also holds other printed materials and original sketches, such as those by the Rev. Jim Downing for the Health Education series *Charlotte and Charley: The Story of TB*.

This is the world's most comprehensive photographic record of Australia and the Torres Strait Islands' Indigenous peoples. It is a living collection which continues to receive significant new imagery by donation, purchase and AIATSIS staff documentation.

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Taylor P (ed.) 2008 *After 200 years: Photographic essays of Aboriginal and Islander Australia today* Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.

## **Knowledgeable people consulted**

- Dr Ray Edmondson, Principal, Archive Associates, former Deputy Director NFSA. Status of the collection, comparable world collections.
- Dr Melinda Hinkson, Senior Lecturer in Anthropology, ANU. Great depth and breadth of research, writing, and production with Indigenous Australians in modern media (Interviewed by V M Bullock).
- Dr Mary-Ann Jebb, Research Fellow AIATSIS, and until recently at ANU. National spread but collection mostly focused on regions or local areas 'vernacular histories', intangible and hard copies, deep context (Interviewed by V M Bullock).
- David Jeffery, Collection Manager (Image), AIATSIS. Range of images, source of images, states of image preservation.
- Grace Koch, (formerly) Family History Unit and Native Title Unit AIATSIS. Uses of collection especially for family history and land claims.
- Ms Judith MacDougall, ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences. Ms MacDougall and her partner, David MacDougall, now Adjunct Professor, Research School of Humanities and the

Arts, ran the AIAS Film Unit from 1975 to 1986. Contribution of film unit to Pictorial sub-collection.

- Professor D J Mulvaney Emeritus Professor of Prehistory, ANU, Status and growth of collection over time (Interviewed by V M Bullock).
- Professor Jane Simpson, Chair of Indigenous Linguistics, ANU. Major sound, video and texts cross-Australia coverage, and great historic depth (Interviewed by V M Bullock).
- Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann, D.Phil. (Oxon.) Chair of Linguistics and Endangered Languages, School of Humanities, The University of Adelaide. Use of pictorial collection in rebuilding communities and revival language programs.

## Comparable Collections

- Archive of Māori and Pacific Music, University of Auckland, New Zealand:  
<http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/ampm/>
  - Archives New Zealand *Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga*: <http://archives.govt.nz/>
  - Australian Indigenous Ministries Collection, 1903-1998:  
<http://acmssearch.sl.nsw.gov.au/search/itemDetailPaged.cgi?itemID=420979>
  - Macleay Museum, University of Sydney.
  - Museum of New Zealand *Te Papa Tongarewa*:  
<http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/pages/default.aspx>
  - National Anthropological Archives & The Human Studies Film Archives, Department of Anthropology, Collections and Archives Program, Smithsonian Museum, Washington, DC:  
<http://www.si.edu/>
  - Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures:  
<http://www.paradisec.org.au/home.html>
  - Phonogrammarchiv - The Austrian Audiovisual Research Archive, Vienna:  
<http://www.phonogrammarchiv.at>
  - Pitt Rivers Sound Collections, Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK:  
<http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/sound.html>, especially the EE Evans-Pritchard and Wilfred Thesiger collections, Enquiries: [ms-photo.colls@prm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ms-photo.colls@prm.ox.ac.uk)
  - Professor A P Elkin papers (University of Sydney Archives):  
<http://sydney.edu.au/arms/archives/elkinbio.shtml>
  - The Strehlow Collection (Strehlow Research Centre):  
<http://artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/museums/strehlow/collection> and  
<http://artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/museums/strehlow/manuscripts>
  - The South Australian Museum, <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au>
-

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE PICTORIAL SUB-COLLECTION

### RELEVANT PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

#### Historic significance

While much of the Pictorial sub-collection is of art, rock paintings and engravings, or of other cultural artefacts, an important fraction is of images of a people, places and events. It is the commonplace of life in Australia, made uncommon by the photographic record. That is a strength that distinguishes the sub-collection from similar pictorial collections in many scholarly institutions.

The sub-collection may be appreciated in three chronological phases, each having different historic, aesthetic, scientific and social significance.

In the period pre-1940s, a substantial part of the sub-collection is from amateur sources: missionaries recording their lives and work and the occasional traveller or adventurer like Francis Birtles; professional photographer-artists producing exotic images for post cards, magazines and books, and a small but growing number of anthropologists, especially from the 1930s, using photography to document their work and their findings for later re-examination – for example the early work of Norman Tindale and W E H Stanner, and of course, Baldwin Spencer and Alfred Haddon from the turn of the century. Many of these sets of photographs are well documented with location, subjects' names, dates and other information.

These images are historic as a valuable record of a changing natural landscape and of the human interventions, Indigenous and immigrant. Prominent sets from this period include the Herbert Read collection (Raukkan SA, 1917–25, South Goulburn Island, 1925–28), the J W Schomberg collection (Moa and Babu Islands, 1921–36), and the Walter Geiser collection (Adelaide to Darwin, overland, and other travels, 1925–27).

The second phase, post-World War II, is characterised by a rapid growth in the number of images recorded by field workers in the burgeoning academic study of Australian anthropology. In this period, field studies flourish in Australia, not least because of the establishment of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, and the financial support that flowed into anthropological research of all kinds, from universities and the Institute. The period, too, saw the use of more sophisticated technology, close-up lens and improved photographic emulsions, especially colour film, and sound and cine recordings.

Photography was essentially a research tool, and while the work is generally competent, functionality is a first concern, not art or aesthetics. Rhys Jones and Ian Dunlop, between them, contributed some 8,000 images during this period. Other collections from the period, like that from US academic the late John David McCaffrey, were added by donation.

In the 1980s, however, the artist photographer returns to the sub-collection and, more important, Indigenous photographers emerge in significant numbers. Their interest across the spectrum of photographic practice from the commercial and magazine photographer, Mervyn Bishop, to artist-photographers like Tracey Moffatt and Jon Rhodes, and social photojournalists like Destiny Deacon and Lisa Belleir – though neither of the latter two seems well represented in the sub-collection. Anthropologists, linguists and musicologist continued to contribute their images to the collection too.

Complementing these collection practices were the amateur collectors, like Alick Jackomos, of Greek heritage, who was married to Merle Morgan from Cummeragunja. These collectors were 'Hoovering-up' photographic prints from, mainly, domestic sources, documenting them in detail, making quality copy negatives, and returning the prints to their owners. Their collections are housed in many Australian collections but copies are brought together as a single resource in the AIATSIS Pictorial sub-collection.

Thus the sub-collection has an unrivalled historic collection with chronological depth and social, cultural and academic breadth.

## **Artistic or aesthetic significance**

The range of content is great but certain generalisations appear valid.

Much of the pre-1940 material from amateur photographers, including a number of missionaries, is rich in social material: weddings, community events, visits by church and civic leaders, domestic scenes and, in the case of J W Schomberg, boats, ships and shipbuilding. The earliest material, from a time when photography was not commonplace and materials expensive, has a self-conscious quality of studied composition, especially evident in the Schomberg and Geiser sets. Many of their images could be hung in a gallery to acclaim. Even some of the images captured by Baldwin Spencer of the Arrente / Aranda of central Australia have a gracefulness and express artistic and aesthetic qualities.

Much of the later material is more purposeful, technically competent documentation of event, places and people. Some is artistically considered and pleasing to the eye. But if artistic, it seems it is artistic in support of its instrumental intentions.

Of the most modern phase of the sub-collection, works by Rhodes, Moffatt, Bishop and others, qualify as fine art as well as fine photography. Tracey Moffatt is now a well-established artist. Rhodes' solo show, *Cage of Ghosts*, photographic images of remnant indications of Indigenous culture, especially in Australian cities, was shown at the National Library in 2007, and published as a book with the same title.

In 2008, the best, artistically, aesthetically and historically of the sub-collection was brought together in *After 200 years: Photographic essays of Aboriginal and Islander Australia today*, edited by Penny Taylor. Presently out of print, the volume offers a keyhole view of the Pictorial sub-collection of the AIATSIS.

## **Scientific or research significance**

Much of the collection is made up of images that were created in support of scientific work, and that value remains strong. In some cases the visual documentation within one community now has a longitudinal chronology that expends its utility as evidence of change, of transformation of social and cultural practices.

The visual documentation of domestic and cave art and engravings in some communities offers the equivalent documentation for the community's visual arts practices that the *catalogues raisonné* does to a fine art practice. The development of *catalogues raisonné* would aid the battle against the trade in forged Indigenous art works.

In addition to documenting social change, the clarity of much in the collection, especially earlier material where the camera was tripod mounted, is sufficient to identify the species of plants,

bushes and tree, so offers possibilities for a historic-botany as evidence of climate change studies etc.

## **Social or spiritual significance**

The sub-collection is a huge reservoir of social and spiritual connections. Professor Ghil'ad Zuckermann described moving scenes in his work with the Barngarla Language Reclamation Project on the Eyre Peninsula where photographs drawn from the AIATSIS collection brought tears to the eyes of modern Barngarla people. This is just one of many similar anecdotal reports. This collection is also drawn on in Family History and Native Title land claims work, where visual documentation is powerfully effective as evidence. The Pictorial sub-collection aligns well with the extraordinary significance of the UNESCO registered 'Australian Indigenous Languages Collection', developed and held by AIATSIS.

The sub-collection has significance wider than to Indigenous interests. In a media world where still photographs from fictional films about historic events are used to illustrate stories about those events (an example of Jean Baudrillard's simulacrum), there is a demand for the authentic. The Pictorial sub-collection is a vast library of authentic historic and contemporary images for publishers and the media to draw-on, in their quests for authentic images of the first peoples of Australia and the Torres Strait.

## **RELEVANT COMPARATIVE CRITERIA**

### **Provenance (including creator)**

Provenance is varied but even with the oldest material, especially material not associated with academic research expeditions acceptable lines of provenance are available. The Institute's acquisition practices assure that acquisitions have sure prior custodianship, and allow a variety of copyright regimes to exist with different items.

In terms of photographs made prior to 1955, copyright has elapsed and AIATSIS (the owner) is free to use the images. However, due regard for sacred content, as it exists in elements of the collection, requires respectful consideration.

### **Rarity or representativeness**

Photographs become rare when the original negatives are lost or destroyed. Some 90% of the Pictorial sub-collection is original material, almost all supported by the original negatives or transparencies, so in this sense, the photographs are not rare, nor likely to become rare.

Rare, however, are the circumstances of the making of the images in the sub-collection: journeys of exploration in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Australia and living on mission stations of the time. More recently, there are photographs whose creation depended on the access and trust awarded to the photographers, academic researchers or professional photographers, by the Indigenous people they have worked with. Much of the collection is irreplaceable. As the collection is huge and is added to continually, it approaches representativeness with asymptotic certainty.

## Condition or completeness

The condition of the sub-collection, as a whole, is good. Most of the earliest material is in fine condition, being silver-halide based, though some images show degrees of reticulation of the emulsion and other damage. More modern materials are consistently well preserved, and cold storage assures the stability of the base material in the long term. The program of digitisation allows ease of access without exposing the original material to further hazard. Probably the items most at risk are 35mm (and larger format) colour slides. The program of cold storage has slowed deterioration and digitisation has fixed the image in electronic form and does allow cautious re-colourisation.

## NOTES

This investigator was curious about the extent to which the Pictorial sub-collection, contained celebrity content or images of notable figures of the last century. Eight search terms were run through the MURA database. The search terms were: Haddon; Norman Tindale; Vincent Lingiari; Pat Dodson; Marion Scrymgour; 1967 Referendum; Uluru; Wesley Enoch. The choice was intended to explore the chronological dimensions and depth of the collection. The results of this search are presented in the following table.

Search term	All MURA returns	Pictorial sub-collection returns
Haddon	79 returns: mostly publications by or referring to A C Haddon. Several for Kathleen Haddon	Torres Strait images from the 1898 Haddon expedition, 491 copy negatives
Norman Tindale	484 returns: 361 as author or collector	11 returns: map, sketches, and photographs
Vincent Lingiari	85 returns: mostly books, but also video recordings and music	11 returns: mostly photographs of the hand-back of land at Wave Hill (Kalkarindji) to the Gurindji people.
Pat Dodson	209 returns: 52 as first or added author, the balance as speeches, quotes and references	10 returns: mostly of Mr Dodson present at official occasions
Marion Scrymgour	15 returns: mostly news reports or magazine articles, one as author of 'Whose national emergency?: Caboolture and Kirribilli? or Milikapiti and Mutitjulu?' Charles Perkins Oration 2007'	No returns
1967 Referendum	331 returns: from books to radio programs and videos	5 returns: totalling 253 images in colour and B&W
Uluru	805 returns: mostly books but...	41 returns: people, places, rock art and events including the hand-over; the start of the Olympic torch

Search term	All MURA returns	Pictorial sub-collection returns
		relay; 4893 slides - a collection of images covering art, material culture, ceremonial activities, rock art in all states of Australia by Charles Mountford
Wesley Enoch	41 returns: book, articles, around 10 as author / playwright	No returns

This survey tends to support the observation that the Pictorial sub-collection is largely about events, individuals and families who would not make the headlines as well as art and artefacts. Given a reasonable level of documentation for each item, the Pictorial sub-collection becomes an archival record of the commonplace daily experience, as well as a source for historic images of people and places.

### **AIATSIS Pictorial sub-collection Significance Assessment by Vincent O'Donnell, 18 August 2014**

## 9. PRINT

### Print sub-collection Statement of Significance

Michael Piggott  
4 August 2014

The Print sub-collection comprises some 1380 reference texts, 3740 serials titles, and nearly 16,000 books. There are innumerable subcategories, as well as bound and loose newspaper clippings (photocopies and microfilm), while some famous titles such as *Dawn* and *New Dawn* have been digitised. This sub-collection is differentiated from other printed items such as rare pamphlets and rare books by security requirements. The Print sub-collection is held on shelving open to the public.

The main content of the Print sub-collection means it is typical of the material found in any 'special' library established to support its parent institution. However four factors raise its significance well beyond being just an ordinary special library collection also open to the public. The first two concern the publications which comprehensively document AIATSIS and its predecessor the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS), and the bound volumes of newspaper cuttings which track the media monitoring of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). The other two relate to the research use of the Print sub-collection by Institute staff to support Native Title cases and especially Link-Up services to members of the Stolen Generations. This deployment of information is rarely visible but it can and does have fundamentally important consequences for Indigenous individuals and communities, and means the Print sub-collection is very significant indeed.

### References

AIATSIS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index 'ABI' *Selection Policy*, November 2013.

AIATSIS FACT SHEET 8: ABI 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index'  
<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/files/fhu/8%20ABI%20Index.pdf>

AIATSIS Collections Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 'ABI' Indexing Policy 2013-2016:  
[http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/files/collections/policies/abi\\_indexing\\_policy.pdf](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/files/collections/policies/abi_indexing_policy.pdf)

AIATSIS Collections webpages: <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/library/books.html>

AIATSIS Family History Unit: <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/fhu/about.html>

AIATSIS Link-Up services: <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/fhu/linkup.html>

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) 2000 *The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture* Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 530

Barwick D, M Mace and T Stannage eds 1979 *Handbook for Aboriginal and Islander History* Aboriginal History, Canberra. Entries on 'Archives', 'Libraries' and 'the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies'.



Chapman V 1988 'The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies', in P Biskup and D Goodman, eds *Resources for Australian studies in the Australian Capital Territory* Centre for Library and Information Studies, School of Communication, Canberra College of Advanced Education, Canberra, pp. 194-214.

### **Knowledgeable people consulted**

- Judith Cannon, AIATSIS ABI Indexer, Family History Unit
- Eleanor Galvin, AIATSIS Senior Reference Librarian, Access & Client Services Unit
- Grace Koch, ex-AIATSIS Native Title Research and Access Officer
- Irene Mills, AIATSIS Reference Librarian, Access & Client Services Unit
- Professor Nicolas Peterson, Professor of Anthropology, ANU
- Peter Thorley, Senior Curator, NMA

### **Comparable Collections**

- Australian Government Libraries Information Network: <http://www.aglin.org/>
  - Australian War Memorial Research Centre: <https://www.awm.gov.au/research/>
  - Databases relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies: <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/library/databases.html>
  - St Mark's National Memorial Library: <http://www.stmarks.edu.au/library>
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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE PRINT SUB-COLLECTION

### RELEVANT PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

#### Research significance

The Print sub-collection, in many ways typical of materials sought by special libraries, comprise some 1380 reference texts, 3740 serials titles, and nearly 16,000 books. They are located on open shelves adjacent to the Stanner Reading Room on the ground floor of the main AIATSIS building, and informally identified by Institute staff with the former Library. Further breakdowns of these categories are available e.g. that the serials include magazines, newspapers, Australian Bureau of Statistics reports, annual reports, transcripts of Royal Commissions and court cases, House of Representatives and Senate Committee Proceedings (see <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/library/books.html>).

These materials provide an information resource:

- for staff from all areas of the institute, including in house researchers see: <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/about.html>;
- for the public; and
- drawn on by the Collection Program's Access and Client Services staff incorporating the Family History Unit. By its nature then, there is nothing extraordinary about their contents; many government departments and organisations whose role and functions include research have such resources, a reality which would justify nothing more than an average significance rating.

However, several features of the AIATSIS Print sub-collection are distinctive.

The first feature concerns the inclusion in its serials run of what in effect is an 'archive' master set of annual reports, newsletters, bibliographies and catalogues of both the original AIAS and its successor AIATSIS. In addition, there is a complete set of titles published by AIATSIS's Aboriginal Studies Press (location S 06.1/AIAS/7A-Z). Essentially captured there is the story of a national organisation which is, by any measure, without parallel; one which began in the mid 1960s with an academic focus essentially on anthropology and 'has been central to the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies as a distinctive, unique and substantial field of study in Australia incorporating disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology, art, health, education, linguistics and ethnomusicology.'

(<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/corporate/history.html>) If self descriptions are inherently suspect, the 2013 view of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples is crystal clear: 'Although a government agency, AIATSIS holds a valued place in the hearts and minds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples because it is the only national collection and cultural institution that is entirely about our Peoples'

([http://www.acilallen.com.au/cms\\_files/31.%20National%20Congress%20of%20Australias%20First%20Peoples.pdf](http://www.acilallen.com.au/cms_files/31.%20National%20Congress%20of%20Australias%20First%20Peoples.pdf) )

The second feature concerns the inclusion in the collection of newspaper resources. These are extensive (see handout *Indigenous Issues in Newspapers & Other Media' news clippings held in AIATSIS Library* - compiled 2002, updated 2006 and 2014) and include some very important sets of bound newspaper cuttings grouped around events, people, incidents and news stories. The convenience these summaries afford researchers is obvious. Even more important is the fact that the largest group of bound newspaper cuttings comprises 157 volumes originally compiled

by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs Library which was then passed to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) before finally being 'de-accessioned' to AIATSIS (call number SF 07.1/2; 1965-1988). Researcher convenience aside, the volumes provide a unique view of what media topics these two pioneering Commonwealth agencies were monitoring during decades of the crucial rise of a new activism and self awareness within Indigenous communities, and acceptance within the wider community that past injustice had to be remedied.

The third feature derives from the direct support the Print sub-collection provides to the Institute's Native Title Research Unit, and in particular its Research and Access Service. This service 'provides expert advice and access assistance to native title clients on the holdings of the AIATSIS Library and Audiovisual Archives. Services offered include: making catalogue searches and listings of AIATSIS Library and Audiovisual Archives holdings; arranging for individual and group research visits and copying relevant material from the Library or the Audiovisual Archives'. <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/ntru/overview.html>

Fourth and most importantly, the Print sub-collection's use directly affects Indigenous individuals and communities. This impact is made possible by the intense value added cataloguing which mines detail in publications and records resulting in name and place rich 'annotations' in the catalogue entries for books, magazines, journals, newspapers, pamphlets and language texts where they happen to contain biographical information; in combination with the use of an in-house developed 'Language and Peoples' thesaurus or list of approved names and terms (<http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/thesaurus/language/language.asp>), and a personal name index to these published materials (i.e. the 'ABI' <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/fhu/searchABI.html>). The product of this cataloguing and indexing is made available by AIATSIS's Family History Unit (FHU) to Indigenous communities and particularly to people such as members of the Stolen Generations who are seeking Link-Up help so as to reconnect with their family <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/fhu/about.html>.

The impact of this use (and thus the sub-collection) is fundamental. As FHU staff Rebecca Stubbs and Judith Cannon put it in 2012: 'One cannot overestimate how important it is for Indigenous people to know about their family; to know who they are and where they come from. From being strong in your personal identity to having a sense of belonging in community and on country, knowledge about family is key to the social and emotional wellbeing of Indigenous people.' ([http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/files/research/StubbsCannon\\_20121105\\_000.pdf](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/files/research/StubbsCannon_20121105_000.pdf))

## RELEVANT COMPARATIVE CRITERIA

### Provenance

The sources of items in AIATSIS's Print sub-collection is known and recorded. Its Collections Development staff follow accountable and professional processes to document acquisition. Where appropriate, the catalogue entries provide background as well, and also where there is a particular story, in the Institute's publications and media. Thus, on acquiring a set of the Aboriginal publication *Dawn* in 2005, it reported that: '...AIATSIS Library manager Rod Stroud said the magazine set was especially significant given its provenance, as the magazines are the Editor's own copies presented to him by the Aborigines' Welfare Board when he retired from the position. 'True story Dawns through chance encounter' [p 11]: see <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/files/news/InstituteNews/Dec05.pdf>

## NOTES

Method: I focussed on runs of material for further investigation from a methodical visual survey of the open shelves (e.g. the bound newspaper clippings; the master set of AIAS / AIATSIS publications).

**AIATSIS Print sub-collection Significance Assessment by Michael Piggott, 4 August 2014**

## 10. RARE PRINTED

### Rare printed sub-collection Statement of Significance

Michael Piggott  
4 August 2014

The Rare Printed sub-collection comprises approximately 2600 rare books, 2180 rare pamphlets, 1690 rare serials, and over 1000 art catalogues. A further set of 4360 books, pamphlets and related genres such as children's' readers, bible translations, dictionaries, grammars, vocabularies, works of imagination and learning kits in 200 languages comprise the 'Australian Indigenous Languages Collection' (AIRC). This collection has been independently found to be part of the world's significant documentary heritage through acceptance on the Australian 'Memory of the World' Register. While one or more copies of the majority of titles within these categories is held in other libraries, collectively they constitute the world's only specialist holding of printed Australiana specifically selected to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies.

These materials are in effect primary source documents of great significance to academic, public and community research. Scholars use historic works to track Indigenous-European interaction and the spread of European knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders writing. Such popular writers as Inga Clendinnen (*Dancing with Strangers*, 2003) draw contemporary inspiration from these holdings, while some of their facts inform Native Title cases – Edward M Curr's four volume *The Australian Race: Its Origins, Languages, Customs* (Melbourne, 1886-87) was used a century later in the Yorta Yorta native title case (1994-2001). For communities the connection between the AIRC language resources and the national language maintenance and revitalisation agenda is direct, vital, and crucial for wellbeing and therefore of palpable social significance.

### References

AIRTSIS Australian Memory Of the World Program Press Release:

[http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/files/news/2009mr/2009\\_1610\\_MOW.pdf](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/files/news/2009mr/2009_1610_MOW.pdf)

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<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/exhibitions/collectors/index.html>

AIRTSIS 'Languages and People Bibliographies':

<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/library/languagebibs.html>

AIRTSIS 'Languages Thesaurus': <http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/thesaurus/language/language.asp>

AIRTSIS online exhibition 'Rare Books':

<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/collections/exhibitions/rarebooks/sensitivity.html>

AIRTSIS Rare Book 'Australian Indigenous Languages Collection' at:

<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/library/languages.html>

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[http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/corporate/annual\\_reports/current.html](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/corporate/annual_reports/current.html)

Australian Memory Of the World Program 'Australian Indigenous Languages Collection' citation:

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Di Gravio G 2005 *Guide to the collections relating to aboriginal history and culture*, University of Newcastle Archives Rare Books & Special Collections:

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/Resources/Divisions/Academic/Library/Cultural%20Collections/pdf/aborigine.pdf>

Massola A 1971 *Bibliography of the Victorian Aborigines: from the earliest manuscripts to 31 December 1970* Hawthorn Press, Melbourne.

McBryde I 1979 'Ethnohistory in an Australian context: Independent discipline or convenient data quarry', *Aboriginal History* Vol 3 (2) pp. 128-151.

Overell R 1993 *Early images of the Australian Aborigine. An Exhibition of Material from the Rare Book Collection Monash University Library 14 October - 29 November 1993*:

<http://monash.edu/library/collections/exhibitions/aborigines/xaborcat.html>

Russell L 2010 'Repressed, resourceful and respected' *La Trobe Journal* [theme issue Indigenous Victorians ] No 85, May, pp. 3-12.

'Treasure Trove. Bennelong's letter' [re 1801 German serial including first appearance in print of an Aboriginal person] profiled by 666 ABC Canberra:

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2013/08/08/3821136.htm>

## Knowledgeable people consulted

- Wally Caruana, Consulting Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander art specialist
- Des Cowley, Manager, Rare Printed Collections, State Library of Victoria
- Barry Cundy, AIATSIS Collection Development Manager
- Rita Metzenrath. AIATSIS Senior Collections Officer
- Noellen Newton, Librarian, National Museum of Australia

## Comparable Collections

- Dealers (specialising in Australiana including Indigenous items):  
Douglas Stewart Fine Books <http://douglasstewart.com.au/categories/ethnography/>  
Michael Treloar Antiquarian Booksellers  
<http://www.treloars.com/>
- Harbeck Rare Books Manuscripts Art & Antiques <http://www.harbeck.com.au/>

- National Museum of Australia Special Collections at [http://library.nma.gov.au/library/library\\_guide/physical\\_collections](http://library.nma.gov.au/library/library_guide/physical_collections)
  - Rare Printed Aboriginal Australiana collections of the State and university library sectors; available via: <http://www.caul.edu.au/caul-programs/research/special-collection>  
<http://www.nsla.org.au/>
-

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE RARE PRINTED SUB-COLLECTION

### RELEVANT PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

#### Research significance

Online, AIATSIS describes its Rare Printed items as ‘one of the major features of the AIATSIS Library’, adding that there are ‘early published works of ethnographic, anthropological and historical importance, including works containing sensitive cultural information.’ AIATSIS languages material is also highly rated, being housed with other rare material in the Closed Access Stack and combined with them in bibliographies. Established early in 1981, this collection includes children’s readers, bible translations, dictionaries, grammars, vocabularies, works of imagination and language learning kits in 200 languages.

Thirty-five years ago, Isabel McBryde noted the use of historical literature as ethnographic source material, writing ‘Many Australian prehistorians have been sensible of the value and importance of the source material available in the historical literature;...’. That importance concerns recorded and published observations of explorers, settlers and officials, which as a consequence now allow scholars to track Indigenous-European interaction and the spread of European knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

AIATSIS’s special printed materials comprise many titles, now very rare and highly valued and prized by collectors of Australiana. They include published works recording:

- The first depiction of a corroboree (James Wallis, *An historical account of the colony of New South Wales and its dependent settlements: in illustration of twelve views*, 1821; Institute copy at RBEF W214.54/H1)
- The first known use of written English by an Indigenous Australian (Monatliche Correspondenz zur Beförderung der Erd- und Himmels- Kunde / herausgegeben vom Freyherrn von Zach, vol 4 1801; Institute copy at RB Z150.59/M1)
- The first portrait of a named Indigenous Australian person (François Péron, *Voyage de découvertes aux terres australes : exécuté par ordre de sa Majeste, l'Empereur et Roi, sur les corvettes le Geographe, le Naturaliste et la Goelette le Casuarina, pendant les années 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803 et 1804; publié par décret imperial*, 1801-1817; Institute copy at RBF P453.50/V1 (CUPBOARD) and Riley, George, 1804 ‘Curious and interesting account of the original natives of New South Wales, including particularly Botany Bay, Port Jackson etc, with the disposition, manners, customs and habits, of the wonderful inhabitants of that part of the globe / communicated by James Thompson’ *The New Wonderful Museum and Extraordinary magazine* Vol. II no. 17/18 page 815-822; Vol. II no. 22 p. [1036]-1038 (letter) RB R573.32/C1)

As McBryde anticipated, such works have become essential texts for scholars writing for the academy, but have featured in works for the wider public and in native title cases as well.

From the academy there is the work of Dr Shino Konishi and her ‘Through Travellers Eyes’ research, resulting for example in ‘Discovering the Savage Senses: French and British explorers’ encounters with Aboriginal people’, in John West-Sooby, ed. *Discovery and Empire; the French in the South Seas*, University of Adelaide Press, 2013, pp. 99-140.

For a public audience is Inga Clendinnen’s award winning *Dancing with Strangers* (Text, 2003), a book based on a close reading of early printed journals and reports from the earliest years of late



18<sup>th</sup> century Sydney, a number of which are held by AIATSIS (e.g. a rare first edition of Judge Advocate David Collins' *An Account of the English colony in New South Wales...1798*; Institute copy at RBF C712.27/A1). A further example of early accounts are the works of Edward M Curr, squatter and author / compiler of the much quoted *Recollections of Squatting in Victoria* (Melbourne, 1883), and four volume *The Australian Race: Its Origins, Languages, Customs* (Melbourne, 1886-87). Curr's writings featured a century later in the Yorta Yorta native title case (1994-2001). The AIATSIS run of Curr's writing is exceptional, and includes several titles not listed in the bibliography of Samuel Furphy's *Edward M Curr and the Tide of History* (ANU E Press, 2013).

## Social significance

The Institute's Australian Indigenous Languages Collection (AIRC) is a discrete component of the Institute's rare printed sub-collection. It is a separately managed and profiled holding of four thousand plus titles and accessible via a special thesaurus, developed in-house, and via compiled bibliographies. The AIRC was accepted by the Australian Memory of the World Program in 2009 as having national significance, the citation noting in part that:

'The AIRC plays a vital role in preserving these languages, and assisting Indigenous groups to revive them, and thus is of considerable community significance for Australia's Indigenous people.'

There is also a particular strength around Aboriginal languages in the rare books pamphlets and serials. This is obvious from the 'languages' and 'people' bibliographies in which sources are listed and their rich catalogued annotations displayed (see <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/library/languagebibs.html>).

Awareness of the importance of such language resources deliberately generated (e.g. a dictionary compiled by a modern professional linguist or a nineteenth century amateur anthropologist), or inadvertently recorded (a bible produced by a missionary in an Indigenous language), has grown rapidly in recent decades. Governments, peak bodies such as First Languages Australia, AIATSIS and communities are all now seized with the crucial need to halt the decline of languages, not only for purposes of identity and therefore wellbeing, but also because there is an understanding that their structures and elements may help construct ontologies or approach problem solving in novel ways. Vehicles for this may be school or higher education curricula frameworks. AIAS and later AIATSIS has led this movement in many ways, initially compiling bibliographies and later maps, building collections, contributing to databases (e.g. AUSTLANG), establishing the 'Centre for Australian Languages', hosting conferences and conducting or supporting language surveys and research.

The connection between the AIATSIS language resources and the national language maintenance and revitalisation agenda is direct and crucial. One of the best articulations is provided in the 2014 statement by National and State Libraries Australasia's *National Position Statement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library Services and Collections*:

'National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) recognises the reclamation of first languages in Australia as a proven and powerful means of enhancing community well-being, strengthening community capacity and resilience, and improving awareness and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history.'

In short, the 2009 MOW acceptance of the Languages Collection (AIRC) as of national social significance is now even more strongly confirmed.

## RELEVANT COMPARATIVE CRITERIA

### Provenance

The sources of AIATSIS's rare printed material are known and recorded. Its Collections Development staff follow accountable and professional processes to document acquisition. Where appropriate, the catalogue entries provide background as well, one of the entries for Edward M Curr's *Recollections of Squatting in Victoria* (RB C 976.14/R1), for example noting 'Acquisitions source: Copy 2 - donation from Tom Austen Brown collection'. When rare printed titles have been sourced from deposits of manuscripts this is also noted in the Manuscripts Finding Aid.

### Rarity

While even technical library definitions of 'rare book' vary, that used in *Harrod's Librarians' Glossary and Reference Book* (Ashgate, 2005), encapsulates most of the common elements. These include age, scarcity, incunabula, 16-18<sup>th</sup> century imprints, first editions, special illustrations bindings or editions, unique copies and books of interest for their associations. In common understanding, there are very few extant, or known to be preserved in public collections, or in some shared and agreed sense exceedingly special.

This also applies to AIATSIS. Its rare book online exhibition refers to 'rare and valuable books and pamphlets', while the Collections page informs us items 'are selected on the basis of age, rarity, value or sensitivity of the material for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and individuals'. Attempting to proceed further requires a decision as to what test should be set to allow a conclusion that the Institute has a collection of printed Aboriginal Australiana without equal.

A matching of the Institute's rarest 120 or so titles against holdings of other libraries revealed by Trove (<http://trove.nla.gov.au/>) shows that at least one other Australian library has a copy of each title. Another test is suggested by the State Library of Victoria's Des Cowley, who in 2004 researched that Library's copy of the 1867 pamphlet *Vocabulary of Dialects Spoken by Aboriginal Natives of Australia 1866-1867*. It 'was to become a rare pamphlet,' he wrote, 'unrecorded by Ferguson's *Bibliography of Australia*, and, until recently, held by few Australian libraries'.

Considering when the great collectors and institutional holdings of printed Australiana began, not to mention their budgets, this duplication is understandable. And one can still justifiably claim that the Institute holds most of the material listed in John Greenway's authoritative *Bibliography of the Australian Aborigines and the Native Peoples of Torres Strait to 1959* (Angus and Robertson, 1963), and a good number too in Aldo Massola's *Bibliography of the Victorian Aborigines: from the earliest manuscripts to 31 December 1970* (Hawthorn Press, 1971).

Comparative strength's vary of course, depending on the particular component of the collection one is considering. Assessed against Massola's listing above, the State Library of Victoria's holdings outrank the Institute's. A further illustration can be advanced considering the 1000 or so art catalogues held by AIATSIS. About them the Indigenous art expert Wally Caruana advised: 'the NGA library holds a much more comprehensive collection of ATSI art catalogues, including some very early and rare ones dating back to Baldwin Spencer 1929 etc.'. He added, however: 'it would be fair to say that the Institute's holdings of art catalogues and books / printed materials relating to Indigenous art is the most extensive in the country. And that many of the resources (books, journals, serials, MS, ethnographies, field notes, audiovisual, film, photographs etc.) also

relate to Indigenous art, making the Institute's holdings the most comprehensive in existence, and a rich resource for continuing research.'

Finally, the Indigenous language materials. This collection can justifiably be considered rare. It is a unique gathering and so difficult to improve on the recent expert opinion of Doug Marmion, Kazuko Obata and Jakelin Troy: 'The AIATSIS collection contains an unparalleled amount of relevant historical documentation for Australian languages; however, most libraries and collections throughout the country will hold language materials. In addition there are significant holdings in international and private collections.' (*Community, Identity, Wellbeing: the report of the Second National Indigenous Languages Survey*, AIATSIS for the Ministry for the Arts, Attorney-General's Department, Commonwealth of Australia, p 49).

## NOTES

Method: I focussed firstly on the categories within the compactus in the Closed Access Stack such as rare pamphlets, art catalogues etc., then within them at random. In the case of 'The Cupboard' holdings of the rarest of the rare, I considered individual titles within them.

**AIATSIS Rare Printed sub-collection Significance Assessment by Michael Piggott, 4 August 2014**

## PART III SUB-SUB-COLLECTION SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENTS

### 11. ROM CEREMONY COLLECTION

#### Rom Ceremony collection Statement of Significance

Wally Caruana  
4 August 2014

Among the Anbarra and related groups across central Arnhem Land, the Rom ceremony is performed to cement goodwill between peoples as a form of diplomacy symbolised by the exchange of gifts.

The Rom ceremonial objects in AIATSIS's collection were made for public rituals that affirm the strong and long established relationship between the Anbarra people of Arnhem Land and the Institute, dating back to the establishment of the Institute.

The objects are emblematic of the role played by AIATSIS in its active engagement with Indigenous society at large, and the Anbarra people in particular; and as a repository of Indigenous knowledge and objects that are made accessible to Indigenous communities and researchers. Consequently, the Rom ceremonial objects are of the highest social significance loaded with symbolism; they possess exceptional artistic and aesthetic attributes; and they were made for historically significant occasions.

Furthermore, their significance is enhanced when considered in combination with the wealth of related materials arising from AIATSIS sponsored research into Anbarra society and culture.

#### References

- Hiatt L 2004 'Wild Honey and Morning Star' in Caruana W et al.. *Likan'mirri—Connections: The AIATSIS Collection of Art* Australian National University Institute of Indigenous Australia and the Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra.
- Hiatt L et al. 1994 *It's About Friendship. Rom: A ceremony from Arnhem Land* Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.
- Horton D (ed.) 1994 *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia* Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.
- Morphy H 1998 *Aboriginal Art*, Art & Ideas series, Phaidon, London.
- Wild S A (ed.) 1986 *Rom: An Aboriginal ritual of diplomacy* AIAS, Canberra.

## **Knowledgeable people consulted**

In the course of working with the AIATSIS Art and Artefacts Sub-Collection intermittently over the last thirty years, and in some depth for exhibitions from the Collection that I curated in 2004 and 2012, I have consulted a number of experts on the Rom collection. These include:

- Prof Jon Altman, ex-Director, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, ANU
- Diana Hosking, ex-AIATSIS, Pictorial Collection Manager
- David Jeffrey, AIATSIS, Collection Manager (Image)
- Dr Luke Taylor, ANU, ex-AIATSIS staff, expert in art of Blyth River region of Arnhem Land
- Dr Stephen Wild, ethnomusicologist, ex-AIATSIS staff, editor of AIAS book on the 1982 Rom ceremony.

## **Comparable Collections**

Coherent sets of ceremonial Rom poles and associated ritual objects, and equally importantly, the accompanying documentation, are rare in public collections, although a number of museums and some art galleries hold similar objects such as Morning Star poles. Among these are:

- Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
  - Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin
  - Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
  - National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
  - National Museum of Australia, Canberra
-

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE ROM CEREMONY COLLECTION

### RELEVANT PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The context in which the Rom poles and associated objects were made is germane to their significance. The relationship between AIATSIS and the Anbarra has its origins in anthropological fieldwork on the Blyth River in north central Arnhem Land undertaken by the anthropologists Les Hiatt, Betty Meehan and Rhys Jones dating back to 1958. In 1979 two Anbarra elders Frank Malkorda and Frank Gurrmanamana, owners of the Rom Djambidj song cycle, expressed a desire to Meehan and Jones to perform a Rom ceremony in Canberra in recognition of the Institute's interest in Anbarra culture, and its role in recording and preserving Anbarra knowledge for future generations.

The first of three Rom ceremonies was held at the Institute in 1982 to mark the opening of the Institute's new premises at Acton House, Canberra. The Anbarra donated the pair of Rom poles and other ceremonial icons to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS as it was then),\* which in turn presented the Anbarra with a time capsule containing a computer key to the Institute's Anbarra documentation.

Other Rom ceremonies followed in 1995 and again in 2001 at the opening of the new Institute building. In each case the Institute received the ceremonial objects made for the occasion, highlighted by pairs of Rom poles.

The ritual objects are meticulously crafted and exhibit a high degree of artistic and aesthetic character; they are also of profound historic significance given the purpose and circumstances in which they were made. In combination with related materials that include sound recordings, photographs, film and field notes held in the AIATSIS collection, they are a rich resource for further research into Aboriginal society and culture, languages, history, health and wellbeing, and northern Australian ecology and environmental studies.

A list of the ceremonial Rom objects in the Institute's collection is at the end of this report.

\* The Anbarra elders originally gave the ceremonial icons to the three anthropologists who in turn donated them to the Institute.

### RELEVANT COMPARATIVE CRITERIA

The Rom collection is of impeccable provenance, in sound condition and rare in terms of the contexts in which they were created, that is to celebrate and affirm the relationship between the Anbarra people of Arnhem Land and AIATSIS.

The materials with a high degree of interpretive potential associated with the Rom ritual objects include:

- 48 film reels (cassettes) from the making of the 1980 film, *Waiting for Harry*, directed by Kim McKenzie, that documents an Anbarra mortuary ceremony conducted by Frank Gurrmanamana and involving Les Hiatt. In 1982 the film won the Royal Anthropological Film Prize, and the Special Prize at the Festival Internationale du Film du Grand Reportage d'Actualité, Luckon, France;
- footage of each of the Rom performances in Canberra and some related rituals in Arnhem Land;

- sound recordings of the Goyulan song cycle by Margaret Clunies Ross, and other recordings of songs and language by Betty Meehan;
- among the related documents in the AIATSIS collection are the pages of L R Hiatt (MS 4129) and a Finding Aid that runs to 66 pages.

**Rom Ceremony collection Significance Assessment by Wally Caruana, 4 August 2014**

## 12. W E H STANNER COLLECTION

### Whole W E H Stanner collection Statement of Significance\*

Vincent O'Donnell  
4 August 2014

The works of W E H Stanner (1905-1981) have been described as 'a continuing—one may say without exaggeration, inexhaustible—source of insight to students of Australian Aboriginal society...' (*On Aboriginal Religion*, with introductions by Francesca Merlan and L. R. Hiatt, Sydney University Press, 2014, pp. 1, 25). Stanner's national standing is testified to by innumerable academic, civic and other honours arising from his work as field researcher, teacher, scholar, advisor, and public policy advocate. His lifetime achievements and associations culminated in his inclusion in the 1988 Bicentennial List of the 200 people 'who made Australia great.'

The W E H Stanner collection extends from his first field work in the 1930s to the writings and reflections in the latter-most part of his life. His vast professional archive is held at AIATSIS (MS 845 and MS 3752) and evidences deep historic and research significance in at least three areas:

- Field notes comprising written field note books, sketch books, supporting maps and other topographic details, numerous photographs and apparent audio recordings, are a rich vein of insight into the lives of First Australians with whom he spent much time and whose world view he studied as an anthropologist.
- Commissioned art works by Nym Bandak, in which Stanner recognised the limits of the Western approach to documenting the Indigenous experience. These works are also of artistic significance, as are some of the photographs.
- Stanner's respectful approach to the wide range of people he met in the course of his many works serves as a model for today's working anthropologists and, more broadly, for those who came to make Australia home.

\* The information supporting this Statement of Significance is presented below in three component significance assessments.



### W E H Stanner collection Artworks Statement of Significance

Wally Caruana  
4 August 2014

The significance of these paintings lies within the relationship between the artist and W E H Stanner, the circumstance in which they were created, in the paintings' intrinsic artistic and aesthetic qualities, their art historical dimension, and their extraordinary interpretive potential.

### References

Barber K 'All the World: Paintings by Nym Bandak' in *World of Dreamings*,  
[www.nga.gov.au/Dreaming/Index.cfm?Refnc=Ch4](http://www.nga.gov.au/Dreaming/Index.cfm?Refnc=Ch4)

Caruana W et al. 2004 *Likan'mirri—Connections: The AIATSIS Collection of Art* Australian National University Institute of Indigenous Australia and the Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra.

Hinkson M and J Beckett eds 2008 *An Appreciation of Difference. W E H Stanner and Aboriginal Australia* Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.

Stanner W E H 1966 *On Aboriginal Religion* Oceania Monograph No 11.

Stanner W E H 1979 *White Man Got No Dreaming: Essays 1938-1973* Australian National University Press, Canberra.

### Knowledgeable people consulted

- Dr Kim Barber, anthropologist
- Mrs Patricia Stanner, widow of W E H Stanner

### Comparable Collections

Paintings by Nym Bandak are held in the following public museum collections, but none match those in the AIATSIS Sub-Collection in terms of scope, quality and provenance:

- Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
- Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth
- Australian National University, Canberra
- Macleay Museum, University of Sydney
- Musée du quai Branly, Paris
- National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
- National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE NYM BANDAK ARTWORKS IN THE W E H STANNER COLLECTION

### RELEVANT PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE CRITERION

Nym Bandak (c.1904-1981) was a ritual and social leader of the Murrinhpatha people, in the community of Wadeye (Port Keats) in the Daly / Fitzmaurice Rivers region of in the Northern Territory, a gifted artist and the primary research companion to W E H Stanner over a period of four decades.

They first met in 1935 when Stanner accompanied Father Docherty and other Catholic missionaries to establish a mission in the Port Keats area, which at the time was considered by white Australians to be 'home to warlike groups of Aboriginal people'. Bandak and Stanner developed a close friendship and working relationship. Bandak's exegesis of Murrinhpatha cosmology, social and cultural systems, and concepts of land tenure, had a major influence on Stanner's scholarship and the latter's advocacy on behalf of Indigenous Australians in the area of federal government policy.

Bandak's intellectual influence on Stanner comes to the fore in the latter's landmark monograph *On Aboriginal Religion*. The group of six paintings by on board Bandak, two of which are restricted from public view, depict symbolic ancestral landscapes and are of rich artistic, aesthetic and historic significance.

The paintings relate to other holdings of Stanner materials in the AIATSIS collection. Stanner's recording of Bandak's descriptions of the paintings and his annotated diagrams lend the paintings substantial interpretative capacity as has been demonstrated in the writings about the paintings by more recent researchers such as Kim Barber.

### RELEVANT COMPARATIVE CRITERIA

Nym Bandak's paintings possess an impeccable provenance enhanced by the circumstances in which they were created. They were made by Bandak in 1959 at Stanner's behest and it is through these and related paintings from the period that Bandak is now widely recognised as a leading Aboriginal artist. The paintings are pictorial renditions of the ancestral landscape, incorporating systems of belief, law, kinship, and the relationship between individuals (and clan groups) and the land, which are expounded upon in Stanner's research and writings to describe an Aboriginal world view and cosmology. Stanner's reported audio recording of Murrinhpatha terms to describe elements in the paintings also associate them with the AIATSIS Language Collection. These recordings, at present, are untraced.

### NOTES

Checklist of paintings by Nym Bandak in the AIATSIS Art and Artefacts sub-collection.

Title, date:	<i>Ku Wandatji, the Rock Python</i> , 1959
Medium; size:	natural pigments on masonite; 113.0 x 94.5 cm
AIATSIS number:	ATS 246
Provenance:	Collected by Professor W E H Stanner 19 <sup>th</sup> April 1959 at Wadeye
Title, date:	<i>No title (two Rainbow Serpents)</i> , 1959
Medium; size:	natural pigments on masonite; 90.0 x 45.5 cm

AIATSIS number:	ATS 316
Provenance:	Collected by Professor W E H Stanner 19 <sup>th</sup> April 1959 at Wadeye
Title, date:	<i>No title (two large Rainbow Serpents with five smaller serpents emerging from one), 1959</i>
Medium; size:	natural pigments on masonite; 45.5 x 122 cm
AIATSIS number:	ATS 317
Provenance:	Collected by Professor W E H Stanner 19 <sup>th</sup> April 1959 at Wadeye
Title, date:	<i>Ku Wandatji and Ku Kukbi (Rock Python and Black-nosed Python Python), 1959</i>
Medium; size:	natural pigments on masonite; 39 x 122 cm
AIATSIS number:	ATS 318
Provenance:	Collected by Professor W E H Stanner 19 <sup>th</sup> April 1959 at Wadeye
Title, date:	<i>Untitled, n.d.</i>
Medium; size:	natural pigments on masonite; 92 x 95 cm
AIATSIS number:	ATS 248
Provenance:	Collected by Professor W E H Stanner
Status:	RESTRICTED
Title, date:	<i>Untitled, n.d.</i>
Medium; size:	natural pigments on masonite; 40 x 37cm
AIATSIS number:	ATS 267
Provenance:	Collected by Professor W E H Stanner
Status:	RESTRICTED
Title, date:	<i>Untitled (two pythons and four emus), 1965</i>
Medium; size:	natural pigments on eucalyptus bark; 24.5 x 80 cm
AIATSIS number:	ATS 599
Provenance:	Commissioned and donated by Emeritus Professor John Mulvaney, accompanied by photographs of the process of preparing and painting on bark

**AIATSIS W E H Stanner Collection Artworks by Nym Bandak Significance Assessment by Wally Caruana, 4 August 2014**

### W E H Stanner collection Photographs and Audio Statement of Significance

Vincent O'Donnell  
4 August 2014

Photographs are an integral part of the whole W E H Stanner archive.

The silver halide negatives and colour slides span more than thirty years in and around communities in the Northern Territory, especially of Wadeye (Port Keats) in the Daly / Fitzmaurice River region. Rock paintings and engravings are captured in representative form along with images of social life and practices. These photographic records document changes in the material culture of the community over that time, while also providing reliable referencing for rock art conservation. Their research significance is clear. One series of images of pearling luggers under sail is of high artistic or aesthetic significance.

The photographic collection also provides opportunities for the people of the region to connect with their own family history. Many of the photographs record images and events subject to respectful restrictions on viewing.

During this significance investigation, two collections of audio tapes were identified by AIATSIS staff. They were recorded in 1950 and 1952 and catalogued as STANNER W01 and STANNER W02. Both of them were made with the Murinhpatha and may be related to Stanner's publications on the Murinhpatha in the 1960s.

### References

Digital indexes and digital data stores, Stanner photographs, AIATSIS

References to the documents should be read as to include references to the photographs in the collection

### Knowledgeable people consulted

- Wally Caruana, Indigenous art specialist
- David Jeffery, Collection Manager (Image), AIATSIS
- Grace Koch, (retired) Native Title Unit, AIATSIS

### Comparable Collections

- Archives New Zealand *Te Rua Mahara o te Kāwanatanga*: <http://archives.govt.nz/>
- Macleay Museum, University of Sydney.
- Museum of New Zealand *Te Papa Tongarewa*:  
<http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/pages/default.aspx>

- National Anthropological Archives & The Human Studies Film Archives, Department of Anthropology, Collections and Archives Program, Smithsonian Museum, Washington, DC:  
<http://www.si.edu/>
  - Phonogrammarchiv - The Austrian Audiovisual Research Archive, Vienna:  
<http://www.phonogrammarchiv.at>
  - Professor A P Elkin papers (University of Sydney Archives):  
<http://sydney.edu.au/arms/archives/elkinbio.shtml>
  - The Strehlow Collection (Strehlow Research Centre):  
<http://artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/museums/strehlow/collection> and  
<http://artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/museums/strehlow/manuscripts>
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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE W E H STANNER COLLECTION PHOTOGRAPHS AND AUDIO**

### **RELEVANT PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

The photographic collection is an integral part of the whole Stanner collection. It spans more than thirty years in the Northern Territory, especially around the community of Wadeye (Port Keats) in the Daly / Fitzmaurice region, and therefore documents changes in the material culture of the community over that time. It also preserves, in a highly representational form, paintings and rock engravings whose states of preservation may have declined due to changes in cultural practices or environmental conditions.

This makes the photographs recording rock art of conservation value. While the initial purpose of such photography is technical, that is the faithful recording of images, the photographic component of the collection also holds incidental images of social life and practices. One series of images of pearling luggers under sail is of high artistic or aesthetic significance. Until quite recent times, these vessels were the preferred means of transport and freight on the northern Australian coast.

The documentation within the whole Stanner collection, of which the photographs are a vital part, provides opportunities for further scientific or research work, a form of paleo-ethnography. The photographic collection also provides opportunities for the people of the region to connect with their own family history. Many of the photographs record images and events that are subject to respectful restrictions on viewing. The administration of those restrictions is an important and appropriate matter for AIATSIS to manage.

### **RELEVANT COMPARATIVE CRITERIA**

The provenance of the photographs is bound to the provenance of the collection as a whole, which is firmly associated with W E H Stanner as creator of the work. When the detail of the works in a range of media and the degree of preservation are combined with their firm provenance the research potential and therefore significance is very high. The photographic collection is extensive and though some photographic material may be in the possession of Stanner's widow, absolute completeness is impossible to tell.

Stanner is known to have used a tape recorder in the 1950s. Some tapes may be found at STANNER\_W01 and STANNER\_W02, while the tape recorder itself is on loan to the National Museum of Australia (NMA loan no IL 2010/0269).

### **NOTES**

The state of preservation of the film originals, mostly silver halide negatives, is generally excellent. Their cold storage offers the prospect of long term preservation. The black and white negative material is in a variety of formats, sheet film (1/6 plate) two and a quarter square (120 roll film), 6x9 cm, 6x4.5 cm, and 35 mm. Emulsions include Kodak Pan-F, Ilford HP5 and Perugia black and white, low contrast negative.

The colour slides are less well preserved. Colour material is almost exclusively on 35 mm, and seemingly all transparencies i.e. reversal stock. The dyestuffs used in the reversal colour processes of all colour slides is fugitive and even under the most rigorous storage conditions, will fade in time.

The digital scanning of all film originals is complete. While electronic re-colouring of the electronic copies of faded material is easy, it must be noted that such processing can introduce undocumented variables to the image.

It is not clear whether Stanner was consciously using the different stocks for their differing panchromatic rendering (differing sensitivities to rendering colour in black and white) for their different sensitivities or contrast qualities.

Of particular interest to this investigator were papers in MS 845 from Paiyiniambi in 1952. Here the intimate linkage of field note book, traverse sketches, field sketch books and the photographic record of cave and rock art, noted during several surveys, was most apparent. Photographs were immediately recognisable from Stanner's pencil sketches.

Inspection of other selected elements of the documents collection, cross referencing with the photographic collection, inspection of the original negative and viewing of the digitised files, confirmed the rigor exerted by Stanner in his field work.

### **AIATSIS W E H Stanner collection Photographs and Audio Significance Assessment by Vincent O'Donnell, 4 August 2014**

### W E H Stanner collection Manuscripts Statement of Significance

Michael Piggott  
4 August 2014

W E H Stanner is 'one of Australia's best known and most highly regarded anthropologists' (Hinkson & Beckett, 2008). His vast archive is held by AIATSIS (MS 845 and MS 3752). It documents in rich and extensive detail all Stanner's lifetime of achievements and associations as a field researcher, teacher, scholar, advisor and public policy advocate. Almost all relate to aspects of Indigenous Australian history and studies.

This signal highly prized collection also incorporates through its preserved research evidence great potential for scholarly re-use. The historical and research importance of the manuscripts of this eminent internationally renowned Australian, if anything upgraded because of their provenance and completeness, means they are of great significance. Indeed, as they are easily comparable with the nationally significant collections of anthropologists of Norman Tindale and Charles Mountford, the AIATSIS Stanner manuscripts too should be ranked as of national significance.

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## Knowledgeable people consulted

- Kim Akerman, former AIATSIS Research Committee
- Dr Melinda Hinkson, ANU
- Emeritus Professor John Mulvaney, ANU
- Dr Michael Walsh, AIATSIS linguistics researcher

## Comparable Collections

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# BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE W E H STANNER COLLECTION MANUSCRIPTS

## RELEVANT PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

### Historic significance

The two AIATSIS collections of W E H Stanner manuscripts (MS 3752 and MS 845) have the highest possible historical significance because they document Stanner's associations with and central influence within:

- the history of Australian Indigenous studies and public policy,
- a number of highly significant historic developments and events, and
- Australian Indigenous studies and public policy.

There is complete unanimity within academic and scholarly opinion that Stanner was a major influence on the development of Australian Indigenous scholarship and public policy. His 1968 ABC Boyer lectures, collectively titled *After the Dreaming*, became a much republished and quoted classic, not least for his coining the phrase 'the great Australian silence'.

His standing is encapsulated by John Mulvaney in his *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry, more fully explained in anthologies produced in 1985 (edited by Diane E. Barwick, Jeremy Beckett and Marie Reay) and in 2008 (edited by Melinda Hinkson and Jeremy Beckett), and acknowledged in reflective personal pieces by scholars such as Clendinnen, Langton and Reynolds.

His influence on Australian historians was, in Ann Curthoys' judgement, 'very considerable' (Hinkson and Beckett, p. 246). Most of these appraisals, naturally, draw on Stanner's publications documented in his papers (MS 3752, series 1) at AIATSIS and / or on the papers directly.

### Direct association with highly significant historic developments and events

Stanner helped initiate or was a foundation member of highly significant bodies including the National Conference on Aboriginal Studies (which lead to the establishment of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies and of which he was its first Executive Officer), the Council for Aboriginal Affairs, the Aboriginal Treaty Committee, and the National Museum of Australia.

He was also an activist in other ways, including advisor, expert witness and consultant for Australia's first land rights claim, i.e. the 1968-71 The Gove Land Rights Case, also referred to as the *Milirrpum Case*, but officially known as *Milirrpum v. Nabalco Pty Ltd and the Commonwealth of Australia*; Technical Advisor to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and developments and events; and Consultant to the Land Commissioner in the Northern Territory.

Stanner's manuscript collections document these associations and, thus, the events themselves, the pivotal Yirrkala case in particular depth (see series 12-15). As Nancy Williams wrote ('Stanner, *Milirrpum*, and the Woodward Royal Commission in Hinkson and Beckett, eds, pp. 198-216 at pp. 198-9), 'The *Milirrpum Case* was the first in Australia to test an Aboriginal claim to interest in land and Stanner played a central role in arguing that the interest was proprietary in nature.' [MP emphasis] The failure of that case led to the 1973 Woodward Royal Commission, to

which Stanner's contribution was, Williams says, 'substantial'. This led, in turn, to the legislation in 1976 that provided a significant pre-condition for the 1992 Mabo ruling.

It is impossible to understate Stanner's (and thus his documentation's) importance.

## Scientific or research significance

The Stanner manuscripts became available and widely known following their preservation at AIATSIS and the production of a 100 page Finding Aid. In addition to the collection's comprehensive set of Stanner's published and unpublished writings, it is rich in correspondence documenting all stages of his life and career, including research records in field notebooks, diaries and reports (see for example finding aid for MS 845 and series 3-6, 27-29 and 33 of finding aid for MS 3752).

The potential for this material to support research has long been evident, involving not only investigations into Stanner and his many associations, but in addressing new research questions by re-mining his original research notes.

This is already become evident in the new century as, drawing on the Stanner collection - especially its research field notes - scholars such as Elizabeth A. Povinelli (e.g. *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*, 2002), Melinda Hinkson ('The Intercultural Challenge of Stanner's first fieldwork', *Oceania*, March-June 2005), Peter Sutton ('The system as it was straining to become: fluidity, stability, and Aboriginal country groups' in *Connections in Native Title: Genealogies, Kinship and Groups*, CAEPR Research Monograph No 13, 1999) and John Taylor (e.g. *Social Indicators for Aboriginal Governance: Insights from the Thamarrurr Region, Northern Territory*. CAEPR Research Monograph no 24, 2004) have pushed the boundaries of what has been accepted of Aboriginal Studies.

As is also evidenced by the chapters by Alberto Furlan, Ian Keen, Howard Morphy and John Taylor in Hinkson and Beckett, eds, 2008, these new fields now include demography, ecology and sustainability, economic change ethno-biology and Indigenous astronomy. Fittingly, in the final chapter of this anthology, Jon Altman summarises Stanner's continuing relevance, including questions regarding land rights, economic development, mainstreaming and difference, inter-generational welfare dependence and social justice.

The reissue, in 2014, of Stanner's essays *On Aboriginal Religion* based on his fieldwork of the 1930s, provides a timely last illustration. Francesca Merlan describes the essays as 'a continuing—one may say without exaggeration, inexhaustible—source of insight to students of Australian Aboriginal society...', and concludes that Stanner's ideas still 'are suggestive not only for students of Aboriginal social life in particular, but also for those many more concerned with developing better understanding of the social grounds of religious phenomena in general.' (*On Aboriginal Religion*, with introductions by Francesca Merlan and L R Hiatt, Sydney University Press, 2014, pp. 1, 25).

## RELEVANT COMPARATIVE CRITERIA

### Provenance

At the beginning of his 'W E H Stanner and the foundation of the Australian Institute for [sic] Aboriginal Studies, 1959-1964' (Hinkson and Beckett, pp. 58-75), John Mulvaney wrote:

'Today, the Stanner Reading Room at the institute pays tribute to this prominent founder. Ignoring many early slights, Stanner generously honoured the institute by depositing in the library 17 metres of invaluable papers that document his varied life's work.'

Mulvaney also noted in his *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry:

'After his retirement Stanner worked from an office in the AIAS, where he sorted his voluminous papers, assisted by Diane Barwick.'

In short, the AIATSIS Stanner manuscripts collection has impeccable archival provenance. The papers without doubt were 'created' (i.e. accumulated, filed etc.) by Stanner and under his authority by colleagues and staff. Their internal integrity in turn was preserved during sorting and listing.

As the Institute's main Stanner Finding Aid explains in its Scope and Content Note (MS 3752, p 1): 'The files were arranged and labelled by Diane Barwick prior to their being donated to the Library. This arrangement has been retained by the Library, with item titles taken from the original file labels. The material within the items is generally in chronological order.' This can be separately validated via documentation in Barwick's own papers at the State Library of Victoria, collection accession number MS 13521.

Further ensuring its provenance quality is the papers' custodial history, which remained with the family following Stanner's death in 1981. The following year, the papers were donated to the Institute by his wife Mrs Patricia Stanner with further additions in 2005. The acquisition is documented in the Institute's official file 0080/1-3.

## Completeness

To the extent that the completeness of an individual's archival *fonds* can ever be known with certainty, the Institute's Stanner manuscript collection is near complete. As additional material surfaced post the 1982 donation, it too was forwarded to AIATSIS for incorporation.

For example, as one of its Finding Aids notes (MS 3752, p 86):

'In July 2002 the Library acquired W E H Stanner's papers on Africa, Papua-New Guinea and the Pacific from the Australian National University Library. These papers have been incorporated into the collection as Series 27-38.'

## NOTES

Such completeness does not deny the logical existence of archival documents relating to Stanner located in other collections. For example material is held by the Australian National University (ANU) Archives.

From D J Mulvaney's ADB entry on Stanner (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/stanner-william-edward-bill-15541>):

'With the establishment of the Australian National University, Stanner was appointed, in September 1949, reader in comparative social institutions in the department of anthropology and sociology, Research School of Pacific Studies. In 1964 he became professor of anthropology and next year head of department. He was a foundation fellow

(1953-55) of University House, where he resided, and a member (1965-68) of the ANU Council.'

Stanner's long association with the ANU is captured in several series held in the Archives. Within the Marie Reay collection (ANUA 440), are copies of papers written by Stanner; correspondence between Reay, Stanner and Raymond Firth; and papers and correspondence relating to the production of a festschrift in honour of Stanner.

Stanner's appointment to ANU, promotion to Professor of Anthropology and later head of the Department of Anthropology are documented in the ANU official file series ANUA 53. His work within the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, and the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies is captured in ANUA 283; 476 and 535. His involvement with University House [may be] documented in its Administrative Files and Governing Board Minutes ANUA 207 and 353. Stanner was also a member of the ANU Council from 1965-1968, whose minutes and decisions are documented in series ANUA 34; 198 and 280.

It is worth noting, too, that the ANU was the recipient of a major painting by Nym Bandak:

Title, date:	<i>All the world</i> 1958-59
Medium; size:	Natural pigments and watercolour on composition board; 92 x 157.4 cm
Provenance:	Gift of Patricia Stanner, in memory of W E H Stanner, to the ANU 1998.

The Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at the ANU owns three other paintings by Nym Bandak, collected by Stanner.

### **AIATSIS W E H Stanner Collection Manuscripts Significance Assessment by Michael Piggott, 4 August 2014**

## PART IV RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To build upon the foundation laid by this 2014 Significance Assessment Report, establish a significance assessment program at AIATSIS to:
  - a. more fully evidence the proffered, necessarily 'snapshot', sub-collection significance assessments;
  - b. map priorities for sub-sub-collection and single item significance assessments, informed by areas of high significance arising from this Report and 'at risk' collection formats identified in the parallel Collection Risk Assessment Report (within the Collection Management Report).
2. To use products of significance assessments, particularly succinct, evidenced 'statements of significance', for a range of institutional purposes like setting collection management priorities (e.g. conservation and digitisation workflows) and communicating the values, meanings and importance of the collection via periodic press / social media / online exhibition releases, national and international register nominations e.g. to the UNESCO Memory of the World Program, and in fundraising.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AIAS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (precursor to AIATSIS)
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AILC	Australian Indigenous Languages Collection
ANU	Australian National University
ANUA	Australian National University Archives
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CAEPR	Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, ANU
MS / ms	Manuscript (the plural is MSS / mss)
NGA	National Gallery of Australia
NMA	National Museum of Australia
NSLA	National and State Libraries Australasia

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