



AIATSIS

Australian Institute of Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander Studies

AIATSIS LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2009-2012

The collections of the Library of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, along with the collections of the Audiovisual Archives, make up one of the world's premier collections of materials by or about Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. Over 500 languages-dialects-groups are represented within the collections.

As a research collection it contains both current and historical resources
The AIATSIS collections catalogue, Mura®, and the AIATSIS thesaurus, Pathways, are the gateway to Aboriginal studies and Torres Strait Islander studies.

The AIATSIS Library has adopted the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services*
http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/atsilirn/protocols.atsilirn.asn.au/index0c51.html?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

This policy does not cover material held in the AIATSIS Audiovisual Archives, which became a separate program in 1996.

AIATSIS Library collects Indigenous Australian material about

Languages and Linguistics	Education	History
Cultures and Societies	Land Rights	Sport
Family History and Biography	Native Title	Songs and Music
Visual arts	Business and Economics	Cultural heritage protection
Creative writing	Media, film and communications	Law and justice
Performing arts	Health and Mental Health	Politics and government

WHY WE COLLECT

One of the functions of AIATSIS is to:

...establish and maintain a cultural resources collection consisting of materials relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander societies (S. 5(e) of the AIATSIS Act 1989)

This is reflected in the Corporate Plan's aim to:

...develop, maintain and preserve well-documented archives and collections and to maximise access to these, particularly by Indigenous peoples, in keeping with appropriate cultural and ethical practices.

We aim to support research in major areas of Aboriginal studies and Torres Strait Islander studies, with particular strengths in languages and linguistics, cultures and societies, family history and visual arts.

The collections are for Australian Indigenous peoples and the broader Australian and international communities. The collections also reflect and support the research functions of the Institute.

Client access to the collections

Public access

AIATSIS Library is open to the public. Details of Library services for local and remote users and how they can be accessed are on the AIATSIS website at www.aiatsis.gov.au/lbry/index.htm

Online access to Mura®, the AIATSIS collections catalogue

All items in the Library's collection are included in the AIATSIS collections online catalogue, Mura®. Links to digitised or online items are included.

Restricted access for cultural reasons

Some manuscript items may have restricted access for cultural sensitivity reasons. Access conditions for unpublished manuscripts are noted in the catalogue records on Mura®. Clients requesting access to restricted items will be informed of the necessary procedures by Reference Desk staff.

What we collect

We collect published and unpublished items in a variety of formats and item types – books, journals, newspapers, microform, maps, manuscripts, pamphlets and electronic formats. The Library holds limited audio-visual material. The main body of the Institute's collection of film and video, pictorial and recorded sound material is held in the AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive.

There are a number of special collections within the Library collections: - The rare book collection -The Australian Indigenous Languages Collection -The rare serials collection -The manuscripts collection -The family history collection

Torres Strait Islands items

The Library collections hold over 2,500 items on the peoples and cultures of the Torres Strait Islands, and over 3,600 names in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index. This collection is integrated with the main collection but can be accessed by a place, language or name search on Mura®.

Digital Collections

The aims of the Library Digitisation Program are to digitise for preservation and digitise for access. Digitisation can also contribute to collection building, through cooperative agreements with other libraries to digitise material not held by the AIATSIS Library. Digital items may be found through the AIATSIS collections catalogue Mura®,

The Library's online collections <http://testweb/collections/exhibitions.html> present a selection of material digitised by AIATSIS. *Dawn and New Dawn* and *To Remove and Protect* are two such exhibitions with a wealth of digitised material from the AIATSIS Library and material borrowed from the NLA to digitise.

Preservation of Collections

The Library seeks to maximise the preservation of its collection through:

- 1) management of the environment
- 2) management of storage and handling
- 3) conservation of the physical object
- 4) digitisation of material for access

Relationship with other Libraries and collecting organisations

The Library contributes records to Libraries Australia (<http://librariesaustralia.nla.gov.au>), and RMIT's ATSIROM online Indigenous database (<http://www.informit.com.au/indexes.html>).

The collecting depth which the Library maintains for any given subject may take into consideration the interests and expertise of other collecting agencies, particularly those located in Canberra, such as the National Library of Australia, the National Museum of Australia, The National Film and Sound Archive, The Australian Institute of Criminology, The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the Australian War Memorial, the National Gallery of Australia, the Indigenous collection of the Library of the Department of

Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous affairs, and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library. The Family History Unit has close relations with many archives and other collecting organisations around Australia and can refer clients to other collections if necessary.

Donations

The AIATSIS Library buys books, journals and other published material for the Library. As it is unable to buy large collections of manuscripts, it relies on donation of these materials. The AIATSIS Library welcomes donations of posters and ephemeral items for its collection. Although these items are not actively sought the Library recognises the need to preserve ephemeral items for historical value.

AIATSIS participates in the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program. Donors may use the scheme for significant donations.

Selection, Deselection and Disposal

How we select items for the collection

Primary selection tools used by the Library are standing orders with Library suppliers, the internet, publishers' and retailers' catalogues, bibliographies, the National Library's "Discover Australian Collections" section of its website <http://www.nla.gov.au/>, RMIT and other databases, conference trade displays and exhibitions, and suggestions from staff and clients.

How we decide to deselect (remove) items from the collection

The archival nature of the collection and the strong emphasis on initial selection criteria means that deselection is not a significant tool of collection management. Where deselection is necessary the criterion for deselection is the relevance of the material to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, the number of copies and, where applicable, the condition of the item.

With manuscript material, items may be removed from the collection through 1) the request of the owners of deposited material and 2) access matters resulting from the application of sections 41(1) and 41(2) of the AIATSIS Act 1989.

As the Library seeks to retain at least three copies of published material the number of copies of individual items can be used as a criterion for deselection.

Disposal of items

Methodology is dependent on the status of the collection as a government asset.