

Saturday 17 October 2009

## **AIATSIS helps Christine Anu on “*Who Do You Think You Are?*”**

Iconic Torres Strait Islander singer Christine Anu found out her singing voice came from her grandfather after hearing his voice for the first time thanks to an audio recording held at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in Canberra.

The key piece of audio will provide a dramatic and emotional climax to SBS television’s “*Who Do You Think You Are?*” program about Ms Anu tomorrow night (Sunday). In it, her grandfather sings a traditional war song from Sabai Island, accompanied by a lone drumbeat. The moving experience was filmed for the SBS program last year at AIATSIS by a film crew working for producers Artemis International and Serendipity Productions.

“I did not know of AIATSIS prior to filming my story but of course there would be archives somewhere in Canberra! I was thoroughly impressed with the information that was made available, things I never knew existed!” Ms Anu said.

“To hear a sound recording of my grandfather 28 years after his passing was like connecting with my grandfather himself right in the room with me. I would recommend that everyone go visit AIATSIS if you're interested in finding out things about family and relatives, you never know what you'll find you may be pleasantly surprised, as I was!”

Ms Anu’s grandfather was a songman who had been recorded by ethnomusicologist Wolfgang Laade in 1963. The show’s director, Jane Manning said the preservation of the tape was critical to the episode.

“The tape had been kept in absolutely pristine condition in the AIATSIS archives. This was a truly amazing find - better than gold! - and everyone involved in the episode is so grateful there is an organisation like AIATSIS who had cared for this precious piece of Australian history,” Ms Manning said.

AIATSIS Principal Russell Taylor encourages all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to visit AIATSIS – either through the internet or in person – and start their own journey into the Institute’s archives.

“AIATSIS is the place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can search for information, photos, sound recordings and film footage about their family and community, their traditions and cultures. We have the world’s greatest collections of materials relating to Indigenous Australians and we help people connect with people or information that they will not find anywhere else,” AIATSIS Principal Russell Taylor said today.

“AIATSIS was so pleased to help Christine Anu find missing pieces in her story – just as we are pleased to help all of our Indigenous clients – with respect and understanding. Nothing makes us happier than to connect people with their Country, community and family,” Mr Taylor said.

To find out more about the AIATSIS Library and Audiovisual collections, visit [www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)  
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? screens on SBS ONE at 7.30pm on Sunday nights.

**Media contact:** A photograph of Ms Anu is available.  
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