

# AIATSIS AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVE

## Collections Management Policy Manual

### 10.0 Code of Ethics

#### 10.1 Frame of reference

This Code of Ethics was developed by AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive staff to publicise their commitment to professional conduct within the field of audiovisual archiving and the management of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural materials. The code explores concepts not covered in detail by pre-existing codes of conduct and policy documents, namely the [\*Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Service Charter\*](#) and the *Public Service Act 1999*.

This code has been prepared with reference to the UNESCO document *Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles*, the International Council of Archives' *Code of Ethics*, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library and Information Resource Network's *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services*, Museums Australia's *Code of Ethics 1999* and the *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Act 1989*.

The AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive's Code of Ethics was examined and endorsed by the AIATSIS Council in August, 2005.

#### 10.2 Statement of intent

The AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive Code of Ethics is a statement of professional conduct and values, which seeks to clarify mandatory standards of practice within the AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive and to inspire public confidence in AIATSIS as a world-class collecting institution. All AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive staff are required to read the code and commit to its observance in writing.

#### 10.3 Code provisions

##### 10.3.1 Care of the collections

- a) All original material in the care of the Audiovisual Archive, including temporary holdings, will be protected against manipulation, falsification, censorship or destruction.
- b) All material in the care of the Audiovisual Archive, including temporary holdings, will be stored in conditions conducive to their preservation.
- c) The intellectual content of the collections will be managed in accordance with appropriate cultural and ethical practices.

- d) Preservation copies will be faithful replications of the content from the original carrier.
- e) Where original material is incomplete, distorted or damaged, preservation copies may be modified only where such treatment will not affect the integrity of the content as it was intended by its creators.
- f) Copies which are not accurate replications of the content of the original will be clearly identified as such.
- g) Original carriers will be retained for their functioning lifespan.
- h) Original carriers which convey significant documentary evidence supplementary to their audiovisual content, will be retained beyond their operational lifespan, provided that their retention does not place other collection items at risk.
- i) Material will only be de-selected or disposed of in accordance with the *Deaccessioning Policy*. Registered materials which are not accepted into the collection will be returned to the originating depositor.

#### *10.3.2 Access to the collections*

- a) The rights of the legal copyright owner will be respected. The Audiovisual Archive also recognises the rights of Indigenous communities and individuals, who are the owners of most of the knowledge contained in the collections. Every attempt will be made to provide access to the collections in accordance with the wishes of the copyright owner(s) and Indigenous owner(s).
- b) Copies of material will only be provided for publication purposes if the requestor has consulted with the relevant Indigenous community or individual(s) and has received written permission to proceed, even in such cases where the copyright owner has approved publication.
- c) Interactions with clients will be courteous at all times. Information provided to clients will be accurate and procedures transparent. Every effort will be made to keep clients abreast of developments affecting their access to the collection.
- d) The privacy of all clients will be respected, including that of the legal copyright owner.
- e) The AIATSIS Audiovisual Archive will not charge for listening or viewing an item on site, or for minor research on behalf of a client. Fees will be charged for copying or for major research in order to recoup costs.
- f) All clients requesting copies of archival material must sign an indemnity form stating their intended use and prohibiting any other use, manipulation of sounds or images, or uses which may cause pain or embarrassment, or offend the sensitivities of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

g) The Audiovisual Archive encourages the widest possible access to its collections, but recognises the right of Indigenous communities to decide how their knowledge is communicated.

h) Material which has been identified as secret/sacred will not be made available without the consent of the relevant Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

i) The Audiovisual Archive will actively seek to improve accessibility of its collections through documentation; promoting its collections; and proactively and reactively repatriating copies to originating communities.

j) Public communication of collection materials by the Audiovisual Archives will be developed in consultation with Indigenous owner(s) and with permission from the copyright owner(s). Pressure from expedient parties to change the content or style of such presentations, will be resisted.

k) Collection materials which are publicly communicated will be accompanied by an acknowledgement of authorship and cultural ownership.

l) Collection materials which are publicly communicated will be accompanied by an accurate and culturally appropriate description, in keeping with the views and sensitivities of the relevant Indigenous owner(s) obtained through a process of consultation.

m) Although it may not be possible to provide access to certain collection materials due to cultural or other restrictions, the Audiovisual Archive recognises the public's right to ask for access and an honest explanation as to why such access is, or is not, possible.

n) Access to duplicate material from another archive will be dependent on the conditions specified by the originating archive.

### *10.3.3 Personal conduct*

a) Staff will freely share their knowledge and experience in the interests of acquiring, preserving, documenting or facilitating appropriate access to audiovisual, artistic and material culture items documenting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and history.

b) Staff will pursue professional excellence through involvement in archival and technical professional associations and continual enhancement of knowledge and skills relevant to audiovisual archiving.

c) Staff will not use their position to unfairly benefit financially or otherwise.

d) Staff will treat all colleagues and clients with respect.

e) Staff will honour confidences and refrain from communicating confidential information ascertained during the course of their duties.

- f) Staff will undergo Indigenous cultural awareness training.
- g) When accepting public engagements as a speaker or author and identifying themselves as an AIATSIS employee, staff will submit their papers to the Director, Audiovisual Archive for approval. Papers presented in a personal capacity will be clearly identified as such.
- h) Staff will not acquire material from other archives without the consent of the originating archive.
- i) Staff will not remove collection items from AIATSIS, except where such removal is approved by the Director, Audiovisual Archive, for purposes such as preservation or loan to another institution. Removal of an item from the AIATSIS premises will be recorded in writing and the item will under no circumstances be removed from the catalogue.
- j) Staff will adhere to the provisions of this code, the *APS Code of Conduct*, the *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Service Charter* and all relevant legislation, whilst both on the AIATSIS premises and off-site.

© AIATSIS 2005

Source:

[http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/audiovisual\\_archives/audiovisual\\_archives\\_collection\\_management\\_policy\\_manual/code\\_of\\_ethics](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/audiovisual_archives/audiovisual_archives_collection_management_policy_manual/code_of_ethics)