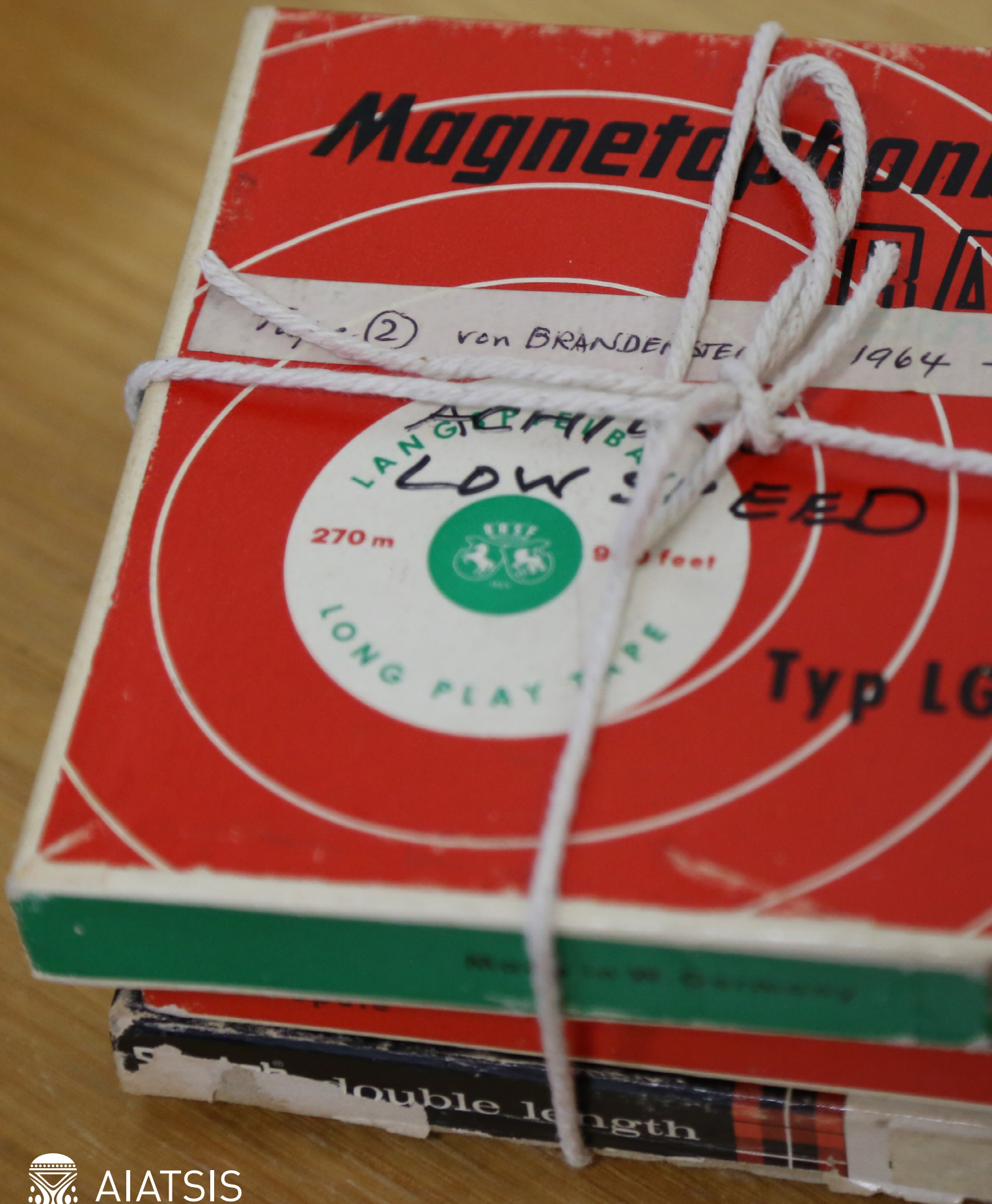


CREATING ARCHIVES





What is an archive?

Archives are a record of an organisation's functions and activities. They ensure that information from the organisation and community remains available in the future.

Archives are important for helping communities keep culture strong by providing intergenerational access to knowledge.

Archives can be used for:

- Record community and organisational history
- Preserve knowledge/information for the future
- Reviving language and song
- Proving connection to Country for Native title claims, compensation and heritage
- Accessing knowledge about how to look after country
- Making movies, books, or dictionaries
- A repository for research so materials are available to communities and/or researchers in the future
- Researchers to access material collected by previous researchers
- Providing a record of decisions and activities of an organisation.



Above: Old tapes and films with important cultural information are kept safely so that families can continue to see them into the future.



Why is it important to have an archive?

- Record community and organisational history
- Preserve knowledge/information for the future
- Ensure people have documents to come back to if there is uncertainty
- Provides explanations for projects and the organisation's work
- You keep information and materials that might not seem significant at the time but become very valuable in the future, for example
 - Old records can be used for native title
 - Wangka Maya was able to gather materials from AIATSIS to start their own collections
 - AIATSIS still has Eddie Mabo's original grant application – it was very ordinary when the application was received but now it is very significant!



Top: Judith Coppin, Noelene Harrison Lorraine Injie, Annie Edwards-Cameron, and Jason Lee at Wangka Maya looking at old photographs which were kept in the AIATSIS archive.

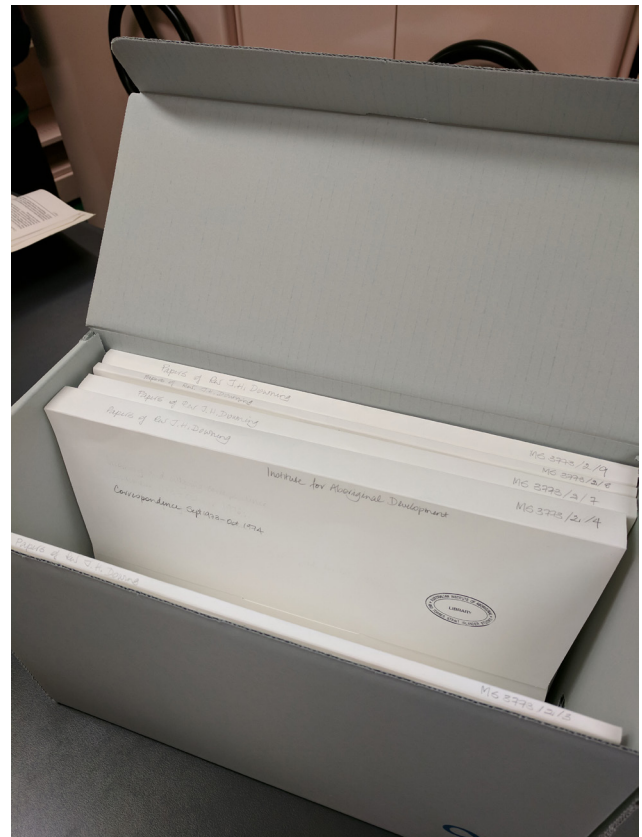
Above: Archives store information and make sure it is accessible now and in the future.



What goes in an archive?

Archives include records about the business and activities of an organisation as well as the products that it produces. This will include things like:

- Audio recordings, interview notes, transcripts
- Photographs or videos
- Reports produced by the organisation or by researchers
- Organisational records including Board meeting minutes and planning documents
- Agreements and MoUs that are signed including the negotiation processes of these.



Above: Folders of correspondence.

Top: Old tapes are also kept

STEP 1: Survey what you have

When thinking about starting an archive you need to have a picture of what information you have. You take the broadest possible view of what your organisation does and think about:

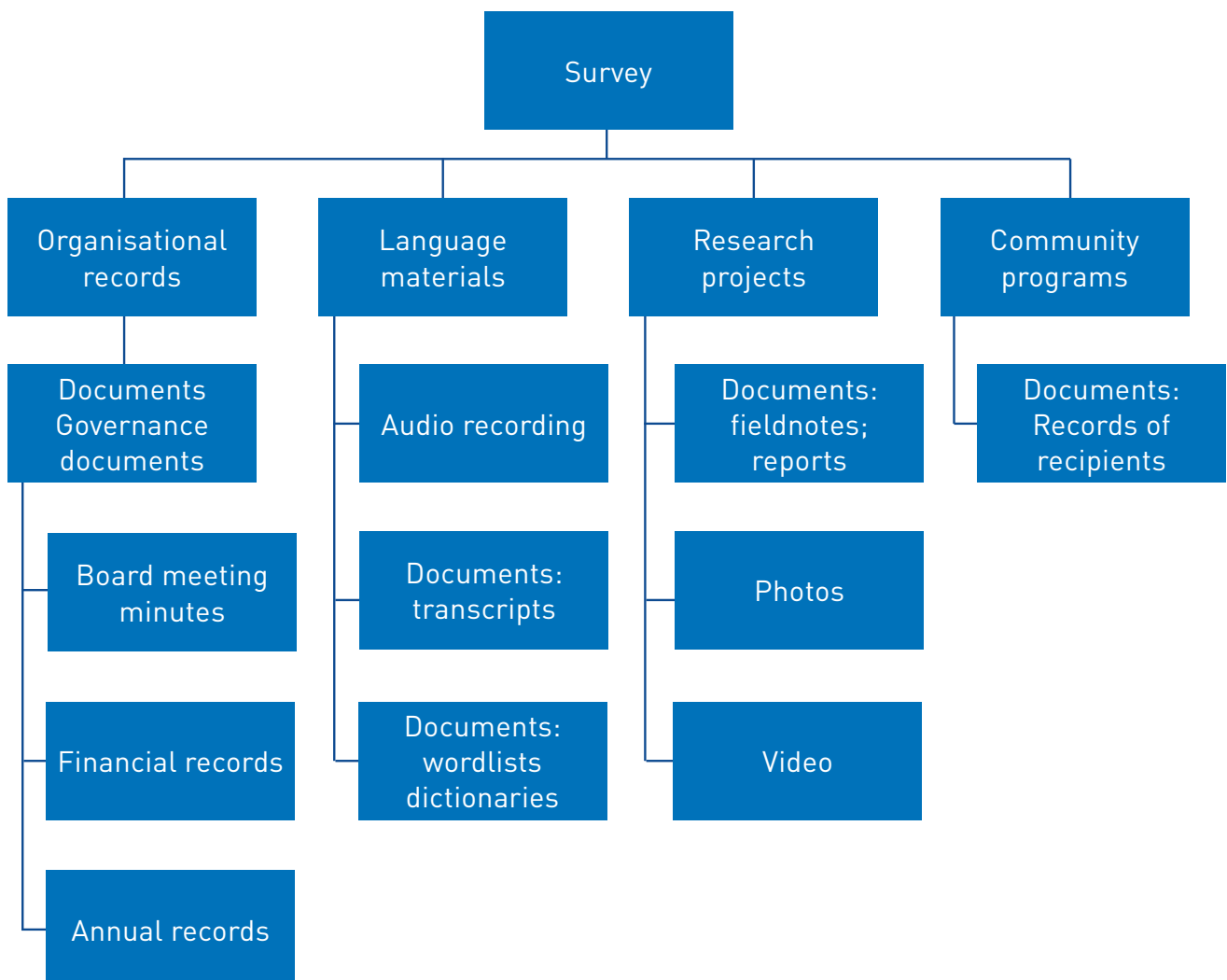
- How was your organisation established?
- What does your organisation want to achieve?
- What information do you currently have?
 - Organisational records?
 - Language materials?
 - Research projects?
 - Community projects?
- What do you want to archive?
- How will you sort these?

- Are you bound by any archiving requirements because of law or affiliations? Eg PBCs under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act, or a company under the Corporations Act?

Knowing what you have will help you organise your information. This should be based around your functions and activities. Organising your information will help to show how things fit in your archive and how future projects could be fitted in.

For example, if you were to start an oral history project in the future, would it fit into something the organisation already does or is it something completely new?

EXAMPLE OF HOW SURVEY INFORMATION MIGHT BE ORGANISED





STEP 2: Record information and documentation about your materials

Keeping original documentation (from the people who made or hold the material) is important for ongoing management of the materials especially copyright and cultural rights that will influence what an archive can do with the material. Important information about materials might include:

- A record of who is allowed to access certain materials (for example, consent forms, copyright agreements)
- Context of the material/information
- Labelling or warnings for certain content such as gender restricted material or if a person has passed away
- Contact details of people or families who have rights to the material, including copyright and cultural rights.



Above: Having records about your material allows you to have it stored in different sections including keeping secret/sacred material separate to ensure it is protected.



STEP 3: Plan and undertake long term management

Maintaining archives takes long term planning. Knowing what formats your materials are in will help you think about how to manage each of the different types:

- What are the different types of materials that you have? Audio? Documents? Photographs?
- Where will you keep physical materials?
 - How will you keep the space as dust-free as possible?
 - How much can you keep insects out?
 - Are there leaks in the area you're planning to use as your archive that need to be sealed?
 - How often will the area be cleaned/swept/vacuumed?
- Do some materials have particular needs? For example, boxes for paper documents, temperature controlled rooms for audio reels
- Will you digitise any of your physical items? Or get another organisation to digitise them?

- How much digital storage space and resources will you need to keep digital items?
- Are there any technical details you will need to follow? Will you have standard file types, sizes, and quality?
- Where else will you deposit your materials to make sure they are protected in the event of a disaster?

Create some management guidelines

- What do you want to achieve with the archive?
- How long will you keep material?
- What will you dispose of? Knowing what to throw away keeps your archive a manageable size – you can't keep everything!

The functions of your organisation can assist in deciding these. For example

- Language recordings – always archived
- MoUs – always archived
- Final project reports - always archived. What about drafts?
- Photographs – always archived after sorting?
- Correspondence or bank statements – archived for 5 years only?

Above: Different material might need to be stored differently. How you store things might depend on the space you have.



STEP 4: Provide access to your archive

Allowing access to the archive is part of what makes it so valuable. The archive forms a rich source of history for people to access and use in the future. You will need to decide how to manage access including considering:

- How will people find information in your archive? Will you create a database that people can search?
- Who is allowed to see and have copies of material? Community members? Non-community researchers?
- Will access only be available on site or can copies be made and sent out?
- Who makes decisions about certain materials? Family groups or individuals who are depicted or discussed in material? Language groups?
- If you don't own the information, to make a copy you will need
 - Permission from the copyright owner directly or through an agreement
 - Or copy for research or study anytime
- How will you make copies?
 - Digital copies on USBs, photocopies, print outs?
- What information do you need from someone who wants a copy?
 - Contact information, what material they want, preferred format of copy, purpose of copy.



Above: Important cultural material can only be viewed by the right people and must be done so in certain rooms.

Top: Alice Mitchell and Teena Taylor, Nyamal Elders, visit to AIATSIS with Collections Staff.



Links to other resources and contacts

- Archivists Society of Australia, Useful Resources
<https://www.archivists.org.au/learning-publications/the-archival-profession/useful-resources>
- Public Record Office Victoria, Managing Your Collection
<https://www.prov.vic.gov.au/community/managing-your-collection>
- State Records Authority of WA, Useful Links
<http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/about-us/links#management>
- National Archives of Australia, Managing Information
<http://www.naa.gov.au/information-management/managing-information-and-records/index.aspx>
- Archivists at AIATSIS can assist with organising information and giving preservation and technical assistance:
 - Film – movingimageteam@aiatsis.gov.au
 - Manuscripts, books, and printed material – manuscripts@aiatsis.gov.au
 - Pictorial – pictorialunit@aiatsis.gov.au
 - Sound – audiounit@aiatsis.gov.au