

ARTICLE



Administration of the Aurukun archives held at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

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ABSTRACT

The Aurukun archives held at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies were initially developed in accordance with a ‘before it is too late’ model. In response to national controversy over proposed bauxite mining on Wik land, the Institute reorientated its documentation strategy towards collaborating with the Aurukun community. Wik people were not so much the subjects of the archive, but collaborators in its production. The outcome was an extensive multimedia archive which underpinned the Wik native title claim in 1993. Since then the collaborative relationship between the Institute and the Wik people has lapsed. Intermittent attempts to repatriate parts of the Aurukun archives were not successful in the long term. While revising controls over key Aurukun record groups, current Institute staff became aware of the extent and some of the strengths of the Aurukun archives. The staff have been attempting to revive the community’s awareness of their archives and their interest in them. Although the community’s interests presently have a different focus, revived collaboration between the Institute and the Aurukun community could result in some form of distributed custody and control of the Aurukun archives which may be of value to Wik society.

Why Aurukun?

In 2016, the manuscript team at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies¹ was working on archives of the Aurukun Mission (MS 1525) and the Aurukun Mission School (MS 1620) when the Aurukun School was closed after a series of violent incidents directed at teaching staff.² In the ensuing storm, swirling variously around Noel Pearson, the Queensland Education Department, leaders of the Aurukun community and members of Federal parliament, the picture that emerged was of a dysfunctional community engulfed by intractable problems.

There was one article, printed in the August 2016 *Women’s Weekly*, with a different narrative. The article is open about the community’s problems, nevertheless it tells a story about ‘a rich tapestry of a community’, consisting of determined groups that were ‘not going to shut up, no matter who tried to intimidate them’, working to keep children in school, planning for economic development, developing employment

opportunities and transforming the Indigenous Knowledge Centre.⁴ The sentiments in this article resonated with the picture of Aurukun that emerges from the Aurukun archives held in the Institute's collections. It seemed that these holdings could buttress the community, provide something on which they could draw to withstand negative perceptions and build their aims. Peter Sutton, a scholar who has lived and worked with Wik people for 40 years and who has carefully arranged for the preservation of his extensive research papers at the South Australian Museum, has a similar feeling:

Ninety per cent of the landscape in Cape York, as a rough figure, has now been lost from young people's memory, in terms of place names and stories, site locations and so on. But a huge amount of it is on record, on tape and in photographs, notes, maps and air photos. So, the big challenge for the next few years is going to be how to get all this stuff back to people – assuming they actually want it – in a form that's accessible, [such as] some kind of interactive DVD, with soundbites. A lot of people won't sit down and read page after page of details about story places but they might, for a while at least, listen to their old people talking in a language they can understand.⁵

The Institute's Aurukun archives document difficult times – they do not depict a paradise – their usefulness would perhaps be limited if they did depict a paradise – but in those collections strong, articulate leaders emerge, who have a clear sense of what they want and what is possible in the circumstances. The archives are extensive and include all formats. Some material was acquired in a 'before it's too late' paradigm, but the bulk were developed in collaboration between Wik people and the Institute, and were of direct use to the Wik people in their native title claim.

Our article gives an account of the Wik people, their land and current land use. We trace the development of the Institute's role as a keeping place for Aurukun archives, summarise their content and discuss their ongoing administration (Figure 1).

Wik country, missions, mining and land rights

Aurukun town is situated on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula, about 320 kilometres down the Gulf of Carpentaria from Thursday Island and 800 kilometres by road west of Cairns. Despite its isolation, Aurukun occupies a strategic site at a national level in the social and political development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. As Marcia Langton has pointed out, 'there has never been a decade in the past four in which the Wik peoples have not been fighting the Queensland government in court'.⁶

Aurukun is an almost entirely Indigenous community. In the 2016 census there were 1269 people living in Aurukun Shire: 92% of them Indigenous, and 76.5% spoke Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islands languages.

The traditional country of the Wik people is situated along the west coast of Cape York, south of Weipa and the Embley River as far down as the Edward River, and east towards Coen. Aurukun town is at the centre, near the mouth of the Archer River. There are about 15 languages in the Wik group, but Wik-Mungkan is the lingua franca in Aurukun.⁷ The citation for the Wik region in the *Register of the National Estate* describes an intimate relationship between the Wik people and their environment:

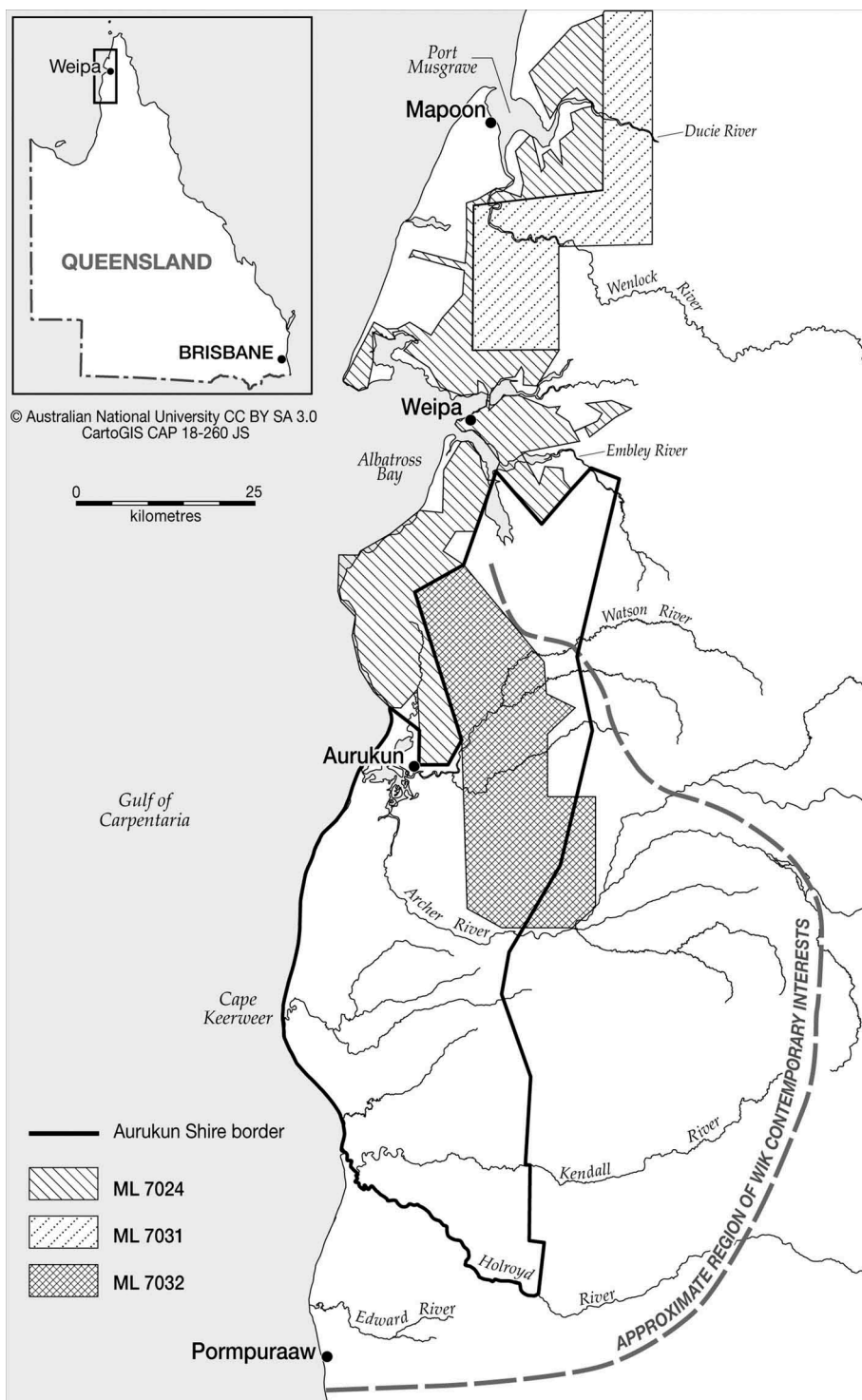


Figure 1. Aurukun Shire boundary, key bauxite special mining leases and approximate region of Wik interests.³

the whole Wik region is traversed by a complex network of mythological or historical accounts . . . that rely on careful observation of plants and animals and other features of the environment which they seek to integrate into the human domain, thus creating what might be called a total moral environment.⁸

Under the auspices of Presbyterian churches in Australia, Moravian missionaries established missions on western Cape York, first near Mapoon in 1891, then near Weipa in 1898, and finally at Aurukun on the Archer River in 1904. Aurukun township is still on the site of the original mission station. Rev. William MacKenzie and his wife, Geraldine, supervised the mission from 1924 to 1965.⁹ Bill MacKenzie was known as an authoritarian and charismatic figure. John von Sturmer, an anthropologist who has worked with Wik people since 1968, points out that MacKenzie maintained language and ceremony, and that his confrontational behaviour accorded with Wik custom.¹⁰ It is said that MacKenzie's harsh punishment of offenders helped to protect Wik women and children from domestic violence and that the MacKenzies were respected by the Wik people.¹¹ Perhaps not all of them. In 1953 seven Aurukun men were removed to Palm Island for causing an 'uprising' over low wages for compulsory mission work.¹²

Until Rio Tinto began constructing its Amrun (South of Embley) bauxite mine in 2015, there was little non-traditional use of Wik land. In 1956 large quantities of bauxite were discovered on the west coast of Cape York, with the Weipa Mission in the centre of the deposit. Subsequently the Queensland government issued three special bauxite mining leases over the Aboriginal reserve land in Western Cape York.

- ML 7024 in 1957: Comalco was granted a lease over the majority of the Mapoon and Weipa mission reserves and part of the Aurukun mission reserve.¹³ The Mapoon mission settlement was burnt down in a night-time raid by the police in 1963 and the people were forcibly removed. The mission station at Weipa became a Comalco company town. The northern parts of the Aurukun reserve covered by this lease were not mined at the time.
- ML 7031 in 1965: Alcan was granted a lease covering the hinterland behind Mapoon.¹⁴
- ML 7032 in November 1975: a consortium of mining companies was granted a lease under the *Aurukun Associates Agreement Act 1975* on the Aurukun reserve, inland from Comalco's lease south of the Embley River. There was no consultation with the Aurukun people or the mission authorities.

There was nationwide opposition to the Queensland government's proposed *Aurukun Bauxite Project*, as well as to its takeover of the Aurukun and Mornington Island Aboriginal Reserves in April 1978. While the Aurukun councillors contested these matters in the courts, they also appealed to the Institute for help. The Institute responded with a programmatic documentation strategy for mapping Wik land and culture that not only produced much of the research records held in its Aurukun archives, but also provided underlying evidence for the Wik people's ground-breaking claim for native title on pastoral and mining leases in 1993. David Martin argued that the Wik Case was:

the latest in a series of actions taken by Wik people to assert their fundamental customary and legal rights, and to demand recognition of their society and culture by the wider state. It is certainly seen as such by Wik people themselves.¹⁵

Following the High Court decision in December 1996, Wik and Wik Way native title was consolidated over most of their lands in a series of native title cases and,¹⁶ in 2005, the Ngan Aak-Kunch Aboriginal Corporation was established to hold their native title interests. However, the High Court rejected the Wik claim for native title on mining leases. It found that rights granted to mining lease-holders under special agreements, such as the Comalco mining lease, can extinguish native title. Even so, mining did not proceed on Wik land for the next 20 years and the exercise of the Wik people's customary and legal rights under native title, without economic sustenance other than passive welfare, was not able to maintain social cohesion in Aurukun.¹⁷

The controversy over the development of the Aurukun bauxite resource was a key factor in the acquisition and administration of the Institute's Aurukun archives. Mining on Wik land, south of the Embley River (ML 7024), is now in the construction phase and scheduled to start in 2019; it may again play a role in the shape and administration of the Institute's Aurukun archives.

Development of the Institute's Aurukun archives

One of the Institute's earliest documentation projects was an expedition to Aurukun in November 1962 led by Frederik McCarthy, the Institute's first Principal, and accompanied by WC Wentworth MHR, the politician who was instrumental in establishing the Institute.¹⁸ Aurukun was then described as a 'virtually closed community'. The aim was to continue to pursue two of the collecting areas established by the missionaries and earlier fieldworkers at Aurukun, such as Ursula McConnel and Donald Thomson: that is, document Wik dances and collect Wik sculptures. McCarthy arranged with Rev. MacKenzie for Wik dances to be filmed. *Dances at Aurukun* was filmed by the Commonwealth Film Unit, under the auspices of the Institute. A copy of the film and 44 reels of its rushes are held by the Institute,¹⁹ together with McCarthy's detailed notes on 43 totemic dance dramas, his photographs of the performances and additional photos taken by the cameraman, EL Cranstone.²⁰ Totemic figures made for the dances were taken back to Canberra and displayed in an exhibition curated by Helen Wurm at the Institute of Anatomy.²¹ They are now at the National Museum of Australia.

An important initial function of the Institute was as a documentation centre. The 1961 conference on Australian Aboriginal Studies argued for the establishment of a Centre of Aboriginal Studies in order to 'build up collections of precious records and materials in danger of becoming lost forever, and which would constitute a permanent record of Aboriginal culture, and a rich stock of material for all students of Aboriginal life'.²²

If the Institute's initial method of collecting was a kind of 'salvage methodology',²³ the groundwork was laid for a broader strategic approach involving collaboration and transfer of agency through community capacity building. Cape York was identified by the Institute as one of five areas which offered the best possibilities for research on traditional culture. As one aid to research, the Institute developed an annotated card

catalogue on Australian Aborigines, which by 1967 had over 100,000 references. The catalogue was used to produce a series of bibliographies on traditional Aboriginal cultures.²⁴ The second in the series, Beryl Craig's *Cape York*, was published by the Institute in 1967 to 'aid the planning of research, and to facilitate the research worker's access to literature on the Cape York tribes and their past history'. One of its purposes was to show the gaps in research work, thereby directing research workers towards subjects in need of attention.

During the 1960s one of the Institute's main functions was to grant funds to external research workers and some of its staff to undertake research projects in the field. Funding research was part of a collection development strategy based on outreach. An infrastructure to support this function was set up: the Council and Executive Committee to determine areas of research; a committee system to develop collaborative research projects and allocate grants; appointment of subject-specialist Research Fellows; establishment of a film unit, a sites register, sound and pictorial archives, and a library to hold and catalogue published and unpublished research materials; appointment of bibliographers to collate and annotate research materials; and a publications arm for dissemination. The grants stimulated scholarship in Indigenous studies in other Australian institutions and the research materials produced by grantees, staff and other fieldworkers formed the core of the Institute's archival collections.

For example, the late Barbara Sayers, a linguist with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), who lived in Aurukun from 1961 until she lost her house in the Takeover in 1978,²⁵ deposited six hours of audio recordings of Wik Mungkan traditional stories and conversations about old times made in the 1960s (Sayers_B01). Sayers, her SIL colleagues and about 60 Wik contributors compiled a Wik Mungkan dictionary file over the period 1962 to 1984,²⁶ producing a *Dictionary and Source Book of the Wik-Mungkan Language* in 1986 (AILEC 0056), the *Wik Mungkan-English Interactive Dictionary* in 2011, and about 140 published and unpublished texts and audio recordings on Wik and some other Cape York languages. When Sayers passed away, in December 2017, Dereck Walpo, Aurukun Shire Council Mayor, praised her efforts 'to have the Wik Mungkan language recognised and written together with others and especially some of the men and women of Aurukun'.²⁷

Peter Ucko, the Institute's second Principal, from 1972 until 1981, is credited with 'instituting measures to increase the participation of Indigenous Australian communities in their heritage'.²⁸ For example, in 1973 the Institute established a committee on Mining and Preservation of Aboriginal Antiquities and Sites which, under various titles, supervised the Institute's Sites Register until 1988. In March 1975 the Institute's Research Committee resolved to reorientate its research priorities towards addressing contemporary matters: 'to assist expressed Aboriginal interests in the machinery of governing and in the development of their participation in social, political and legal institutions'.²⁹

Following the *Aurukun Associates Agreement Act 1975* and subsequent political events, until the early 1990s fieldworkers funded by the Institute helped Wik people to document their sites, clans, languages and cultures.³⁰ In collaboration with Wik councillors and other Elders, the Institute devised a documentation strategy, organised and implemented as a series of five research projects.

The first project was the *Aurukun Site Mapping – Shire Council Project*, established in response to an approach by Fred Kerindun, with the approval of Donald Peinkinna and Bruce Yankaporta, all Aurukun councillors. In December 1975, Kerindun wrote to Ucko reporting that he had asked John von Sturmer ‘to help me with my poison places. My father told me to protect them. We do not want to lose them. We do not want to lose everything like what happened in Weipa.’³¹ The Institute agreed to fund the Aurukun Council to engage the assistance of von Sturmer and Athol Chase to help Kerindun map country north of the Archer River.

In May 1976 Kerindun made a statement about his community’s interests at the Institute’s Biennial Conference:

I feel after my father died . . . that it’s my responsibility, to protect my sacred sites. That’s why I asked John and Athol if they could do the mapping for me . . . I think that everybody at Aurukun or around the Territory is very keen on their sacred sites. I have met a lot of people up Darwin, from Territory, and we were talking about the sacred sites a lot in the meeting that we had at Darwin. And it’s really sacred to us. We like to protect our land. We don’t want our land to be destroyed. That’s why.³²

Ucko sent an audiotape of Kerindun’s talk (AIAS_13) to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Ian Viner, pointing out that it showed how highly Aborigines ranked the importance of their own sites.³³ After the conference von Sturmer wrote to Ucko from Aurukun reporting on the excitement there and on the strength of the outstation movement: ‘land, land, land . . . Make a big effort to get out here. The whole thing has caught fire – and I think the Institute should be mobilized to cope with it’.³⁴ Joseph Swartz, the Institute’s Registrar of Aboriginal Sites, wrote to von Sturmer in September informing him that he was compiling a report of information relevant to the reserve land outstation situations, ‘300 pages so far’.³⁵

The Aurukun Film Project started in September the following year, 1977. The Institute’s Film Unit crew, Judith and David MacDougall, began by filming *Familiar Places*, about Angus and Chrissie Namponan visiting their hereditary clan land with their children and Peter Sutton. The Namponans hoped to live there one day, ‘facing the world on their own ground – not turning their back on the world’.³⁶

In April 1978 the MacDougalls filmed the Queensland government takeover on site at Aurukun at the request of the Aurukun Council. One scene in the film, *Takeover*, shows Gladys Tybingoompa speaking to Ian Viner about Federal protection from the Queensland takeover: ‘Anyone outside thinking of violence here – well, they wrong . . . By just talking strong that’s the way we doing it. We won’t fight anybody. If my grandfather was still here, he would spear [them other men?], but he is dead and gone.’³⁷

Following the takeover, a general meeting of the Institute’s members resolved to express its support for the outstation movement and self-management and, ‘out of grave concern over land rights in Queensland, particularly in Aurukun and Mornington Island’, urged ‘the Commonwealth and Queensland governments to secure the land rights of those Aboriginal people in perpetuity’.³⁸ The Institute Council issued a press release to this effect and over the next few years continued to work closely at an official level with the Federal Minister and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in support of

the Aurukun outstation movement and self-management, particularly on mapping shire boundaries and sub-leases south of the Archer River.

Early in 1979, John Adams, the Aurukun Community Adviser, wrote to Peter Ucko suggesting that the administrative records of the defunct Aurukun Mission be transferred to the Institute. Ucko and his deputy, Warwick Dix, gave the proposal their full support: 'We must get this stuff.' They pushed Brownlee Kirkpatrick, the Institute's senior Bibliographer, to accomplish the transfer quickly. The papers were shipped by Jane Karyuka the following year. Diane von Sturmer arranged and described them. Her *Guide to the Aurukun Mission Papers* (1981) was the first in a series of Manuscripts Guides published by the Institute.

Transfer of the Aurukun Mission archives stimulated the *Aurukun Community Records Project*. There was an attempt to collate Aurukun genealogies. The Moravian Archives in Herrnhut, East Germany, supplied microfilm copies of records of the Weipa, Mapoon and Aurukun Missions, 1885–1916.³⁹ John von Sturmer arranged for the deposit of Aurukun Mission School's papers. The MacKenzies' personal papers and diaries were transferred, along with about 2000 photographs,⁴⁰ 53½ hours of oral history recordings of mission workers and Wik people,⁴¹ together with several movie films.⁴² Other records gathered include James Stuckey's biographical material on the MacKenzies, Robert Wilson's mission diaries, Don Siemon's International Development Action papers, Neil McGarvie's community photographs and Michael Heppell's housing and dance photographs.

The *Aurukun Clan Sub-lease Mapping Project* was set up in response to a letter sent in April 1984 from John Adams (the Aurukun Community Development Officer) to Sutton at the South Australian Museum (SA Museum), stating that the Shire Council needed maps of clan areas south of the Archer River. The aim was for clan groups to gain limited title over their land in the form of a sub-lease from the Aurukun Shire Council. In October 1984, having received an application from Sutton, the Institute's Research Committee allocated a grant to the Shire Council for Aurukun mapping to be administered by the SA Museum. In March 1985 further support was supplied by the appointment of Roger Cribb as Research Fellow in Aboriginal Studies at the SA Museum under a grant provided by the Institute.⁴³

The fifth project, *the Aurukun Shire Mapping Project*, gathered Wik cultural data from south of the Archer River in 1985 and 1986. The SA Museum submitted lists of site names with corresponding maps to the Institute (PMS 4206). David Martin submitted an interim report including notes and tape transcripts concerning ritual, resources and campsites (PMS 4225). Field audio recordings made for the *Project* were also supplied by Martin (MARTIN_D01) and Athol Chase (CHASE_A07). In March 1986 Cribb and Sutton provided a *Final Report to AIAS on the Aurukun Mapping Project 1985–86*, which is described as an 'ethnographic database' (PMS 4207).

The series of Aurukun cultural landscape mapping projects culminated with the *Aurukun Database Project*, 1987–1990, which contributed to the success of the Wik Case. David Martin pointed out that the database is 'the formal compilation of the vast body of anthropological and historical work, documenting the complexities and realities of Wik groups' ownership of their traditional lands, which underlies the Wik native title claim'.⁴⁴

Roger Cribb developed the database system under Sutton's direction at the SA Museum, supported in part by research grants from the Institute. Cribb described the *Aurukun Database Project* as a digital consolidation of site-mapping data and other cultural information on Wik people between the Embley and the Edward Rivers gathered since the late 1960s and earlier.⁴⁵ There was a trial run in 1986: Cribb's and Sutton's *West Cape York Ethnographic Database* (MS 2196).

Sutton explained that the 1990 version of the Aurukun Database was produced in response to a request by Wik clan leaders to support their application for an emergency declaration to prevent Comalco exploring for oil and gas on their land.⁴⁶ In November 1989 Sutton took the first draft to Aurukun for checking. Sutton, Cribb and Martin worked on the final version from March until June 1990. The final printed report, *Aak: Aboriginal Estates and Clans between the Embley and Edward Rivers Cape York Peninsula* (SA Museum, 1990), mapped 3829 Wik archaeological and historical sites, mortuary sites, camps and shelters, resource sites, ritual sites, mythological sites, including associated clans, narratives and songs. A copy was lodged with Aurukun Traditional Owners in June 1990. Three copies are held in the Institute's archives, marked as confidential information, not to be copied, '© Aboriginal traditional Owners and the authors' (MS 2878). The Institute does not have a copy of the digital database itself.

Ongoing administration of the archive

The overall results of the Institute's Aurukun documentation strategy are evidenced in the volume of Aurukun research archives now held by the Institute in all formats:

Audio: 70+ entries Aurukun audio recordings made by 23 researchers, nearly all of them Institute staff, grantees or associated scholars, involving about 200 community members and performers. They record ceremonies, stories, songs and dance, site information, languages and contemporary political events, including Aurukun Council meetings and radio broadcasts. Kathleen Hinchley recorded 54 hours of oral history interviews with 67 community members.⁴⁷

Pictorial: about 68 Aurukun photograph collections, including the Mission photos, produced by about 35 photographers, amounting to about 4500 photographs.

Manuscripts: 30 record groups of research papers (not including the documents in the Pamphlet Manuscript series). Key collections are field notes and research papers of John von Sturmer and Peter Sutton.⁴⁸ Several collections focus on the Aurukun dispute.

Moving image: 29 titles, including researchers' field recordings and three major films made by Judith and David McDougall for the Aurukun Film Project – *The House-Opening*, *Takeover* and *Familiar Places*, including their extensive rushes.

The imperatives, for both the Institute and the people of Aurukun, have since shifted, so that the collaborative relationship between the Institute and the community lapsed. During preparation of our talk presented to the 2017 Information Technologies Indigenous Communities Symposium, it emerged that both the community and current Institute staff were unaware of the extent of the Aurukun archives. Fortunately, the Institute's registry files reveal the history of the Aurukun archives and the collaborative relationship that underpinned its administration. In an environment in which the

archives have become dormant, the Institute can rely on its recordkeeping as a key to maintaining contact with the community. In an environment in which archivists are asking 'how we can go beyond mere consultation and engagement, and question whether supporting true diversity involves relinquishing authority, custodianship and control',⁴⁹ an understanding of the Institute's documentation strategy is central to initiating and implementing these changes in administrative practice.

Maintaining the administrative record – accruals, new arrangements for management or stewardship, new uses or re-uses of the archives – enables efficient management of the holdings, under whatever regimen applies, and makes visible the life of the archive to future users. It also mitigates against a relationship becoming dormant, in this instance because neither the Institute nor the Aurukun community have had the resources to keep in continuing contact.

Efforts to share the archive with the community, through return of copies, have had mixed results. In February 1976, Warwick Dix delivered three copies of the Institute's film, *Lockhart River Dance Festival*, to dance troops at Aurukun.⁵⁰ It is not known what became of the films. In 1982 Judith MacDougall reported that film prints of *Dances at Aurukun* were kept in a galvanised iron shed, which effectively baked them. A replacement print was sent at MacDougall's request. She noted that community would use the film to show visitors and to run at the school.⁵¹

In 1981 the Institute sent the Aurukun Council 35 boxes of photocopies of the Mission archives, together with the guide to the records. In 1984 Jeannie Adams reported that the records had 'no proper home, so it's probably not worth doing ... again'.⁵² Digital copies of the MacKenzies' diaries, the Mission School papers and part of the Aurukun Mission records have been made by the Institute, but not yet supplied to Aurukun.

When we contacted the Aurukun Shire Council in mid-2017 about the archives and preparation of this article, we imagined a dialogue about the content of the article and future administration of the archive. Frankly, the community were nonplussed by our approach, coming as it did out of a silence possibly two decades long. They were, however, interested in knowing what the holdings were and what *re-use* they could make of the content, and in getting a copy of *Takeover*, which had recently screened on SBS TV.

We sent lists of the Aurukun archives, a DVD copy of *Takeover* and a draft of this article to the acting Director of Community Services at the Shire Council,⁵³ who said that some of the material would be passed on to the Aurukun Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC). The refurbished IKC re-opened in November 2016.⁵⁴ The Aurukun IKC was not consistently staffed in 2017, but a permanent appointment has been made (2018), and we are waiting to hear what parts of the archive might be copied to form part of its collection.

Has this archive served its purpose, in recording a particular period in Aurukun's recent history? Or, is it time to seek out a new round of deposits, both reviving the relationship and opening the archive's doors? In restarting the collaboration between community and Institute, do we focus on co-creation, such a feature of the past relationship? Or do we attempt to formulate co-management or joint custody and stewardship? Initial community interest is not about the latter – these are our

aspirations, not theirs at this point – but rather about use of the material for their own purposes.

Bauxite mining is only now starting in the Aurukun Shire, 60 years after the Comalco Agreement Act of 1957.⁵⁵ Rio Tinto is constructing its Amrun mine on Wik Way land south of the Embley River. Glencore, the current lease-holder, may begin the Aurukun Bauxite Project (ML 7032), if it can obtain an Indigenous Land Use Agreement. Will the mining create circumstances that will revive the Wik people's relationship with their archives, including further collaborations?

Conclusion

Research for this article revealed the extent of the Institute's Aurukun archives and the collaborative nature of their formation. Rather than soliciting deposits, the Institute's documentation strategy evolved from a salvage methodology to creating content with the Wik people, a collaboration facilitated by research workers who were funded by the Institute.

The archives produced by this collaboration are extensive and multi-formatted. They record details of the Wik people's languages and culture and their struggles, aspirations and determination. Throughout the Aurukun archives and the Institute's administrative records there is evidence that the Wik leaders strongly and clearly articulated what they wanted from politicians and from the Institute. The richness of the Aurukun archives suggests that it might be a resource for the community to counter media portrayals of endemic intractable dysfunction.

Also revealed is the importance of the Institute's recordkeeping as a buffer against the loss of corporate and community memory of how the Aurukun archives were formed. Remembering that history reawakens the dormant relationship between the Institute and the community, produces a clearer understanding of the entirety of the Aurukun archives, facilitates future re-uses of the archives and opens the way for new methods of developing the Aurukun archives.

Recent attempts to return some of the records to the community have led to a re-familiarisation with past work on the Aurukun archives. It is a preliminary step in rebuilding the relationship between the Institute and the community. Possibilities for the future include: a new round of collection development, either by deposit or co-creation in response to mining the Aurukun bauxite reserves; return of the Institute's holdings in digital format contributing to the development of the local Indigenous Knowledge Centre and for community re-use in production of new material; and the formation of a new relationship, perhaps based on new arrangements for administration, custody or joint stewardship.

Each of these possibilities has a precedent in the formation of the Aurukun archives and the accompanying administrative files. Ongoing recordkeeping by Institute will support its administration through any changes to development, management and use. Maintaining records of future changes will insure against loss of corporate and community knowledge of the archive.

There is the possibility that the Institute's Aurukun holdings have served their initial purposes but, with the beginning of mining activity, their usefulness may be revived to a different end. The wealth of the holdings could contribute to the 'rich tapestry of a

community' mentioned at the beginning of this article, a community with visions of education, economic development, employment and cultural resilience.

In the opening key note of the 2017 Australian Society of Archivists conference, 'Passion for Archive', Verne Harris suggested that what he termed 'liberation work' could not occur within the archive – but that the archive was essential to that work. In an echo of that sentiment, the Aurukun archives held at the Institute may be something on which the Wik people at Aurukun can draw for resilience and to achieve their aims.

Notes

1. In order to maintain consistency, in this article we refer to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and its predecessor, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS), as 'the Institute'. The AIAS was established in 1961 under an interim Council. Its name was changed in 1989.
2. For example, 'Machete Kids Force Cape York's Aurukun School to Close', *The Australian*, 26 May 2016; Lauren McMah, 'Man Dies in Aurukun as More Violence Engulfs the Troubled Community', 28 November 2015, available at <<http://www.news.com.au/national/queensland/man-dies-in-aurukun-as-more-violence-engulfs-the-troubled-community/news-story/01230765fb5c3eefdd8fe5639f0f1133>>, accessed 6 May 2018.
3. Susan Chenery, 'The Fight to Save Aurukun's Children', *Australian Women's Weekly*, August 2016, pp. 62–8.
4. Catherine Ford, 'The Aurukun Blues of Peter Sutton', *The Monthly*, May 2013.
5. Source of region of Wik interests: 'Map 2, The Wik Region, West Cape York Peninsula', in David Martin, 'Autonomy and Relatedness: An Ethnography of Wik People of Aurukun, Western Cape York Peninsula', PhD thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, February 1993, p. xiv.
6. Marcia Langton, 'The Hopes of the Wik People Have Been Cruelly Dashed', *The Australian*, 15 November 2014.
7. The generic term Wik is used in this article to refer to Wik, Wik Way and Kugu peoples.
8. 'Wik Region – Aurukun Place, Aurukun, QLD, Australia, Description', Register of the National Estate, Place ID 100304, January 1996, available at <<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/register-national-estate>>, accessed 20 August 2017.
9. Geraldine MacKenzie, *Aurukun Diary: Forty Years with the Aborigines*, Aldersgate Press, Melbourne, 1981.
10. John von Sturmer, *Anthropology and the Politics of Exemption: Remarks after the Fact*, lecture, Symposium: The Ends of Worlds, University of Sydney, Department of Anthropology, 25–26 March 2010, available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tl9rM-VSOQ4>>, accessed 10 September 2017.
11. *ibid.*
12. 'Aurukun', in Queensland Government, *Community Histories*, April 2015, available at <<https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/community-histories-aurukun>>, accessed 2 August 2017.
13. *Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Limited Agreement Act 1957* (Qld). According to Frank Stevens ('Weipa: The Politics of Pauperization', *Australian Quarterly*, vol. 41, no. 3, September 1969) it was an invasion of property rights of Aboriginal people – their common-law rights and the inalienable nature of Aboriginal reserves.
14. *Alcan Queensland Pty. Limited Agreement Act 1965* (Qld).
15. David F Martin, 'The "Wik" Peoples of Western Cape York', *Indigenous Law Bulletin*, vol. 4, no. 1, April 1997, p. 9.

16. See five Federal Court cases findings, October 2000 to October 2012, in the Wik and Wik Way Native Title registrations, in the Native Title Register, available at <<http://www.nntt.gov.au>>, accessed 18 May 2018.
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30. Peter Sutton, Athol Chase, John von Sturmer, Dermot Smyth, Roger Cribb and David Martin were major contributors to the Institute's Aurukun archives.
31. Kerundun to Ucko, 3 December 1975, AIATSIS Registry file, Projects – Research: Aurukun Site Mapping – Shire Council Project, 75/143.

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33. Ucko to Viner, 2 June 1976, AIATSIS Registry file, Aurukun Site Mapping – Shire Council Project, 75/143.
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36. *Familiar Places*, David and Judith MacDougall, Director, Editor & Camera, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1980 (AIAS_047).
37. *Takeover*, David and Judith MacDougall, Director, Editor & Camera, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1979: rushes and trial print (Accession No. FC00220_1–227).
38. Resolution moved Professor Rigsby, seconded Dr Beckett, 11 May 1978, AIATSIS Registry file, Aurukun Consultation – Communities, 75/138, Pt 4.
39. MF 187–188 in *The Moravian Mission in Australia Papers, 1832–1916*, MF 163–188.
40. In the period 1982–85, Rev. James Stuckey deposited historical photographs of Aurukun, known as the MacKenzie Collection, 1905–65, MACKENZIE.W01-10.BW. See also: *F Allan Cane Collection*, photographs taken of daily life in missions in northern Queensland, 347 negs, 1930s–1940s, CANE.F01.BW; and Nancye Grant, *People and Activities at Presbyterian Missions*, 49 prints, 2 drawings, 1950s–1960s, DAVIDSON G01. BW.
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49. Australian Society of Archivists 2017 Conference, ‘Diverse People, Diverse Collections, Diverse Worlds’, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 25–28 September, available at <<https://www.archivists.org.au/learning-publications/asa-2017-conference/asa-information>>, accessed 13 May 2018.
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51. Judith MacDougall to Eric Wilmot, 11 March 1982, AIATSIS Registry file, 75/138, Pt 4.
52. EF Kunz to Donald Peinkinna, 9 June 1981, and Jennie Adams to Diane Smith (von Sturmer), 5 August 1984, AIATSIS Registry file, Aurukun, 75/138, Pt 4.
53. *Takeover*, and many other titles made by the Institute’s Film Unit, are distributed on DVD by Ronin Films in Canberra.
54. Curtis Pitt (Treasurer, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Minister for Sport, Queensland), ‘Aurukun Learning Hub Connects Community and Culture’, Media Release, 24 November 2016, available at <<http://statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2016/11/24/aurukun-learning-hub-connects-community-and-culture>>, accessed 20 May 2018.
55. Rio Tinto’s current East Weipa and Andoom mines worked parts of both ML 7024 and ML 7031, north of Wik country, but they are now close to worked out.

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