

ALIA TEAM – OUT AND ABOUT

The Team at ALIA House will spend time in 2013 visiting libraries across Canberra as an opportunity to see where our members work and the services they provide to their clients.

During 2013 we will feature one library visit in each issue of INCITE so the team can share their experiences with you. From university libraries to special libraries to public libraries and the Parliamentary library, we hope you enjoy seeing and reading the snapshots of each library as much as we enjoyed our visits to each of them.



As we visit libraries across the nation's capital we will ask lots of questions about the level of activity in each library, how they connect with their sometimes unique communities, and we'll be sharing the highlights of each visit with you!

First cab off the rank was the AIATSIS Library situated adjacent to The National Museum of Australia on the shores of beautiful Lake Burley Griffin. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) is the world's premiere institution for information and research about the cultures and lifestyles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, past and present.

Lyndall Osborne is the Director of Library Services at AIATSIS and our ALIA people spent just over two hours with Lyndall and her team who took us on a tour.

As part of one of Australia's key cultural institutions, AIATSIS Library's role is not only to develop, maintain, and preserve well-documented collections, but also to provide the best possible access to clients, both in person and remotely via the internet. The library holds over 170 000 items, including around 10 000 unique manuscripts – priceless cultural treasures widely used by both researchers and Indigenous people and communities. Letters, diaries, notebooks, field notes, recording transcripts, and papers of people significant in Australian Indigenous affairs are major components of this collection.

The AIATSIS Languages Collection and the collection of Sorry Books are both inscribed on UNESCO's memory of the World register.

The library holds all types of print materials – from current publications to rare books and serials and pamphlets to newspaper clippings. Almost 70 000 pages of digitised content are made available through the website. Films, videos, sound recordings, and photographs are primarily held in the Audiovisual Archive.

Mura, our collections catalogue, is rich in metadata to enhance access to the collections, particularly by Indigenous peoples. It includes terms from the AIATSIS thesauri to describe items by appropriate geographic and language headings and includes subjects from an Australian Indigenous perspective. The thesaurus is recognised by the Library of Congress for use in catalogue records around the world.

The Library is recognised for its promotion of the ATSLIRN protocols

outlining appropriate ways to interact with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to handle materials with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content.

The library is open to the public for study and reference on weekends between 11:00 am and 3:00 pm. For more information on all their work visit AIATSIS at <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/or> join them on Facebook.

ALIA's Tour

ALIA's tour of the AIATSIS library included the Reading Room, digitisation program, and the closed books stacks. In the Stanner Reading Room, Margaret (image 1) informed us of the library's main users, internal and external, and how the library is used by these members of the community.

AIATSIS's two reference libraries receive an average of 75 reference requests a month, and fill them within a 25 day maximum turn around. AIATSIS does not loan out items from its collection and the only way to borrow from the library is through an Inter-Library Loan.

On our tour of the digitisation office, Gerald (image 2) explained the process of digitisation and their methods. One of the biggest projects that AIATSIS has undertaken so far is digitising the Koori mail for online access, which was done with the help of CAVAL digitisation services.

Dr Barry Cundy (image 3) took us on a tour of the special collection stacks, which allowed us to see some of the rarest items, including the first published book about Aboriginal peoples: *Field Sports of the Native Inhabitants of New South Wales*.

'AIATSIS hosts many visiting groups from all over the world, but it was a special pleasure to show our library and our work to ALIA staff. We are always delighted to share our work with colleagues.' Lyndall Osborne, Director Library Services