



## First Nations Media Archive Platform Project

# Stage 2 Mukurtu Archive Platform Trial

## Evaluation Report

30/10/2020

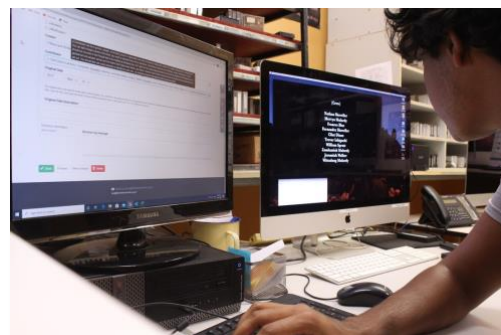
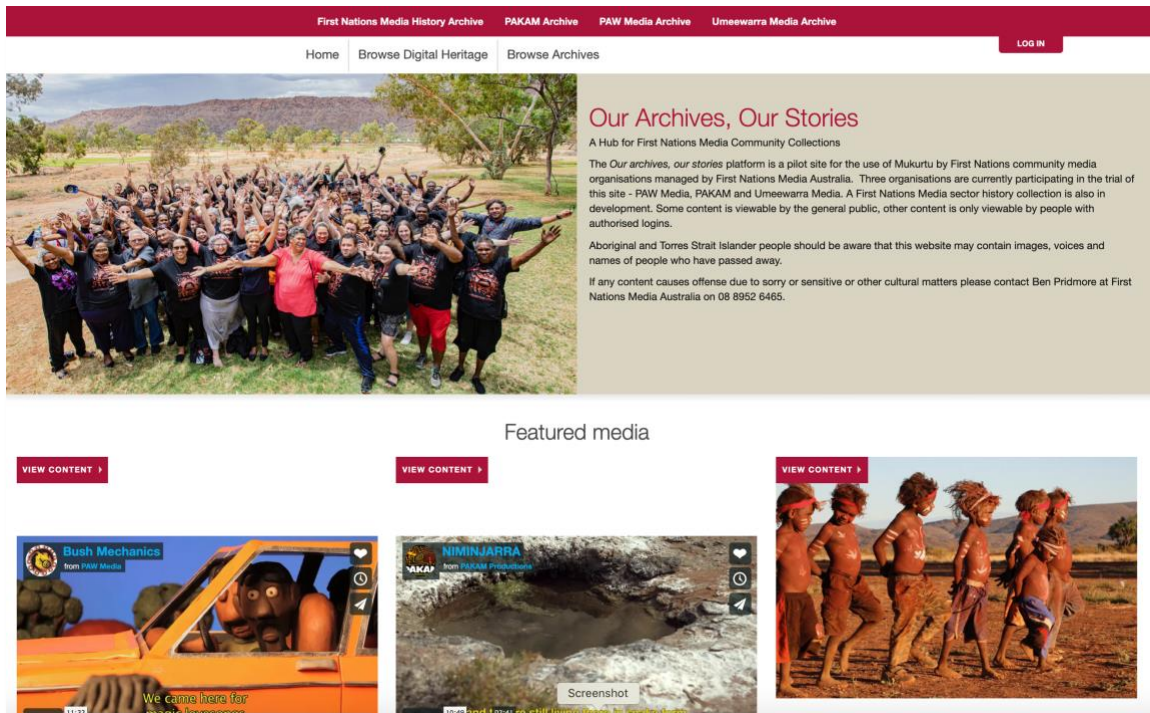
*“This has been such an important project. We now have some idea of the enormity of our collection and what needs to happen to ensure this important collection is saved for future generations and shared now with our community. We cannot thank First Nations Media enough for facilitating this project and allowing Umeewarra Aboriginal Media Assoc to be a part of the pilot project. We look forward to working with them moving forward. Our archives are our history; without our history we have nothing.” (Umeewarra Media)*

*“Mukurtu is a good keeping place for all our archives. We need to keep doing this work...We couldn't have done it without FNMA resources and assistance, we really appreciate the support.” (PAW Media)*

*“We found it a straight-forward learning process to input items. Our queries were quickly resolved... This Archive is great for content that would not go on public platforms like long interviews, oral histories and deceased content. We get lots of requests for old footage and photos... Mukurtu has the advantage of all our content and metadata being available into the future.” (Pilbara and Kimberley Aboriginal Media)*

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## 1. Project Overview

The aim of the First Nations Media Archiving Platform Project was to identify or develop, and trial, a culturally appropriate, affordable and Dublin Core compliant archiving platform for First Nations community media archives. The envisaged platform would include both cataloguing/collection management functionality plus a viewing component for digital media. The project also sought to build awareness and capacity for archiving of community collections held within the sector.

The project was funded through the Indigenous Languages and Arts Program to run from February 2019 to June 2020, extended to October 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19.

The project was undertaken in two key stages:

Stage 1: Evaluation of available archive platforms and recommendations of options for use by First Nations community media collections;

Stage 2: Trial of recommended archive platform (Mukurtu) with three pilot organisations.

This report relates to Stage 2, evaluating the outcomes of the Mukurtu trial, including a summary of the evaluation survey responses the three pilot organisations that participated in the trial- PAW Media, PAKAM and Umeewarra Media.

Overall, this project has enabled First Nations Media Australia to:

- Develop an [Archive Platform Options guide](#) based on different Archive needs;
- Establish the [First Nations Media archiving hub](#) using Mukurtu platform;
- Undertake a 6-month trial of the Mukurtu platform with three pilot organisations- PAKAM, PAW Media and Umeewarra Media;
- Establish a [First Nations Media History](#) archive collection on the hub;
- Expand our range of archive management and training resources and make these accessible on an interactive [FNMA Archiving Resources Toolkit](#);
- Develop two Manuals for Archive Managers and Archive Workers;
- Deliver two face to face training skills workshops (Remote Indigenous Media Festival 2019 and CONVERGE 2019) and five webinars;
- Convene a sector Steering Group and Expert Reference Group to guide the project;
- Build our partnerships with major archive institutions and universities to support future development and collaboration.

## 2. Acknowledgements

This project was made possible through funding support by the Indigenous Languages and Arts Program, managed by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications.

A huge thanks to Susan Locke for contributing her wealth of knowledge and experience in developing the First Nations Media Archiving Plan, the Archive resources and Stage 1 of this Archive Platform project; also for volunteering extensive time after retirement to support the Mukurtu trial setup and initial training. Thanks also to Ben Pridmore, FNMA Technical Coordinator, for configuring the Mukurtu hub and spoke setup and his technical expertise throughout this project.

A special thanks to the three pilot organisations- PAKAM, PAW Media and Umeewarra Media. Thanks also to the members of the Steering Group and Reference Group for the project.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our key industry partners - AIATSIS, National Film and Sound Archive, Library and Archives NT, Melbourne University, and Jumbunna Institute UTS - and to Washington State University for managing the open source Mukurtu platform.

### 3. Why This Project was needed

Through sector consultation over the last 7 years, FNMA has identified that most of the nearly 40 First Nations media organisations have begun, or are keen to begin, archiving their audio-visual collections but want to maintain control of their collections on country. Some of these collections date back to the early 1980s and contain thousands of hours of audio and video content and tens of thousands of images. Additionally, some organisations have become custodians of other personal or organisational collections. Key drivers for archiving include:

- the looming 2025 deadline for digitising of analogue materials;
- community demand for access to collections;
- desire to share historic content on websites, digital platforms or broadcast;
- lack of catalogue or filing system to locate content;
- rapidly growing born-digital collection with limited metadata collection;
- concerns about risks to collection due to poor physical and data storage, lack of backups, security, climatic conditions and risk of disaster;
- departure/loss of people with knowledge of collection or cultural stories relating to content;
- knowledge transfer to next generations, including language and cultural knowledge;
- desire to re-purpose historic content in new productions or exhibitions.

However, there are significant challenges to getting started with archiving, including lack of funding opportunities, limited staff resources, lack of equipment and facilities, and limited in-house archiving skills or knowledge. FNMA is seeking to build skills and capacity within the sector to address the issues while advocating for specific funding opportunities for community collections.

Another key challenge that organisations have consistently identified is the lack of an appropriate and affordable archiving platform to catalogue and manage their vast collections. This project seeks to address this need as a priority to enable organisations to begin managing and sharing their collection with existing resources.



## 4. Stage 1 Summary

The first stage of the project, managed by Susan Locke, was to identify options for archiving platforms suitable for the cataloguing and community access needs of First Nations media organisations. The cost of a custom-built platform was beyond the funding available to the project. Therefore, the project took an alternative and flexible approach based on affordable and culturally appropriate platforms that could be customised to align with the First Nations media metadata profile.

Based on varying sector needs, it was determined that no single existing platform was suitable for all Archives. As a result, a [Platform Options guide](#) was developed based on seven scenarios of different Archive management needs, cultural considerations and community access needs. Susan convened meetings of the sector Steering Group and Reference Group at key stages of the project for input and feedback, with endorsement from both of the options model and other project outcomes. The full Stage 1 report is available upon request.

## 5. Stage 2 Project Outline

Based on the Stage 1 review, the Mukurtu CMS<sup>1</sup> was selected for the Stage 2 Trial due to being designed for First Nations collections with cultural protocols for managing user access, cloud-based, open source and therefore license-free and sustainable, using Dublin Core metadata fields, and able to support Inventory/Collection Management and community access to digital media.

The Stage 2 trial involved the establishment of the [First Nations Media archiving hub](#) and a 7 month trial from March to October 2020 with three pilot organisations:

1. Pintubi Anmatjere Warlpiri Media and Communications (PAW Media)
2. Pilbara and Kimberley Aboriginal Media (PAKAM)
3. Umeewarra Media

FNMA provided the following support:

1. Set up and administration of the hub and spoke configuration on Mukurtu platform;
2. Setup of the three pilot site archives according to each organisation's needs, as well as server setup for media content;
3. Initial targeted training and a set of dedicated resources for each organisation;
4. Ongoing training and support until October 2020.

With Susan Locke retiring in December 2019, Daniel Featherstone took over project management in February 2020. Susan volunteered time in March-April to develop the Mukurtu hub and pilot sites setup, develop Mukurtu training resources and deliver initial training to the pilot organisations. Ben Pridmore (FNMA Technical Coordinator) also worked on this project providing the Mukurtu CMS configuration and management and technical support to pilot organisations.

While the trial project was underway, FNMA undertook a number of additional activities to help build archiving capacity and awareness within the sector, as outlined in the Project overview above.

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<sup>1</sup> Mukurtu is open-source archiving software initially developed as part of a research project at Tennant Creek NT by Dr Kimberley Christen. The Mukurtu platform is now supported by Washington State University in the US and used extensively by First Nations organisations in North and South America and Australia.



We have also built partnerships with AIATSIS, NFSA, Uni of Melbourne, Jumbunna Institute and Mukurtu to help support the sector's needs and build sustainability beyond this project.

## 6. Stage 2 Project Evaluation

### 6.1. Evaluation Survey Responses from Pilot Sites

Evaluation surveys were undertaken with the three Pilot Organisations in October 2020. The summarised responses to the questions are as follows:

#### 1. *Briefly describe the nature and size of your organisation's archive collection?*

**PAW Media:** Several thousand magnetic media carrier items containing over 2,000 hours of original video recordings, and over 200 hrs of audio and other multimedia content. PAW commissioned a Significance Assessment in 2009 and a Preservation Needs Assessment was prepared in 2014.

**PAKAM:** Approximately 900 video tapes (VHS, S-VHS, MiniDV, Betacam SP- being digitised), over 750 edited productions in digital format; Over 120 audio recordings; over 7500 photographs, mostly digital; 150 music recordings. No Significance Study done. Collection stored in production room.

**Umeewarra Media:** Umeewarra has a large collection of audio, video, photos/ slides (including donated collections), eulogy cards (on paper) plus 16mm film. A lot of deceased content. Collection mostly stored in boxes, no dedicated storage room.

#### 2. *For your organisation, how important is it to archive your collection? (out of 5) Why?*

**PAW Media: 5 / 5** - Preservation of important social, family and cultural history held in records created since early 1980s, keen to ensure analogue collection digitised and safely stored before deadline 2025. Need to manage on country with men's and women's business managed properly and accessed by appropriate people. New needs always arising for collection, including request for research by numerous universities and museums.

**PAKAM: 5 / 5** - Primary reason for the archive is to make our content accessible, share back to community. Have sourced some collections relevant to region (keen to get more) and shared collections on various platforms (ICTV Play, indigiTUBE, Storylines).

**Umeewarra Media: 5 / 5** - Our collection holds the history of the organisation and the local Aboriginal community, including deceased people, in photos, video and audio (oral histories, cultural stories in language). Includes personal collections of photos for community access and use in eulogy cards. Old people's cultural stories and interviews vital to knowledge transfer to next generations.

#### 3. *For your organisation, how important is it to enable community access to your collection? Why?*

**PAW Media: 5 / 5** - Families want access, especially to old content on analogue media; Would reduce staff time to have content on an access platform. Archive platform enables community consultation for collecting metadata and cultural clearance/advice on deceased or sensitive content.

**PAKAM: 5 / 5** - Communities want access. Most videos on ICTV. Couldn't afford Keeping Culture license but put content on WA Storylines instead.

**Umeewarra Media: 5 / 5** - Vital, the point of the collection to make it accessible. People give us photos to share back to the community, becomes a massive custodial responsibility. We've been digitising photos for families. We need Mukurtu to enable this community access.

4. *What resources (funding, staff roles, equipment, facilities etc) do you have to support archiving of your organisation's collection?*

**PAW Media:** One day a week staff member for archiving, plus two part-time Yapa archive workers. Have good IT equipment. Have dedicated archive storage room set up in 2016. Can play most video and audio formats.

**PAKAM:** We can do archive work approx. 10hrs/wk. We have our own archive facility to digitise VHS and Betacam SP.

**Umeewarra Media:** We have no resources or spare staff time for archiving, need a dedicated person to do archiving. We have got scanners for photos/images.

5. *What additional resources do you need to be able to effectively archive your collection?*

**PAW Media:** Mostly need more staff time to work on archive. Napaljarri wants to do more Mukurtu time, needs own computer to do that. Need S-VHS deck, U-Matic, ¼" reel (could outsource these).

**PAKAM:** Need better video equipment for archiving. Need S-VHS machine as priority.

**Umeewarra Media:** Mostly need staff time to do archiving work as its time consuming.

6. *Did the Mukurtu Pilot Project meet your needs or expectations? Yes / No / Partly*

**PAW Media: Yes,** met our expectations, and Mukurtu was reasonably easy to use and add data. Would be good to be able to speed up process for multiple records, have all metadata on one page rather than separate tabs, and auto-fill some fields. Viewing of archives not as smooth as Keeping Culture. Should bring up similar items, enable scroll to next item.

**PAKAM: Yes,** we found it a straight-forward learning process to input items. Our queries were quickly resolved. Most time-consuming part was finding metadata, but a good process to collection this information. All video collection now safely on NAS server, in folders by community. Good to be able to search Mukurtu for items/names. Have put items on Vimeo and Soundcloud but slows process down due to upload time. Mukurtu has the advantage of all content and metadata being available into the future.

**Umeewarra Media: Yes,** absolutely. Made us think about importance of archiving our collection urgently before 2025. Mukurtu is an easy way to enable community access. Mukurtu makes it possible to work with different cultural protocols - there are 40 language groups in Pt Augusta. COVID made it difficult to do the work. All staff are onto it now.

**Training and Support:**

7. *How would you rate the training and support you received from FNMA?*

**PAW Media: 4 / 5** - Support was good but we acknowledge FNMA's limited resources, part-time support role. Would have liked some face to face support (not possible with COVID).

**PAKAM: 5 / 5** - Introductory training with Susan was excellent, got us moving. Daniel has been on call for support since.

**Umeewarra Media: 5 / 5** - Brilliant, really good training and support. Training sessions were clear, easy to understand, practical, hands on, tailored to our needs. Support was available when we

needed it. The level of cultural understanding and empathy was really important. FNMA took the time to make the training fit for our needs and work through issues unique to our collection.

8. *How would you rate the training resources provided by FNMA?*

**PAW Media: 4 / 5** - Resources are good, helped to have in printable form to refer to. Some resources very text-based, need more visuals, made it a bit hard for Yapa to understand. Was important to have a support person to answer questions.

**PAKAM: 5 / 5** - Mukurtu intro, metadata prep forms and fields manual etc were all good. Our staff found it easy to follow.

**Umeewarra Media: 5 / 5** - Extensive. Could find answer to anything you wanted. Brilliant phone and skype support made it a fairly easy process.

9. *What further training or support would you like to improve your archiving skills or knowledge?*

**PAW Media:** Want more face to face training in community, but happy to do online training too. Would like to do a digitising workshop. Want to visit sites doing digitisation to learn how they do it, hard to learn without physically seeing and using equipment.

**PAKAM:** Digitising skills need improving.

**Umeewarra Media:** Need more training in use of Mukurtu to build a workflow for staff to add new content onto Mukurtu. We also want training in use of Adobe Lightroom to edit, batch export and compress images. Also how to set up filing of content on hard drive.

**Mukurtu Platform Use:**

10. *Approximately how many items did you add to the Mukurtu platform and how long did it take? What are the next priorities?*

**PAW Media:** Added about 70 items, mostly videos already on Vimeo account. Individual photos take time to add info. Added audio as multiple tracks for a record.

**PAKAM:** 135 audio, 8 images, 39 video. Would ideally have links to our own server rather than on Vimeo or Soundcloud.

**Umeewarra Media:** We didn't get a lot up due to impact of COVID, taking up all staff resources. Priorities are uploading all of our Eulogy cards collection and NAIDOC photos taken over many years.

11. *How would you rate the Mukurtu platform for ease of use to add media and metadata? Why? What challenges did you have?*



**PAW Media: 2-** Got easier once used to it. A bit confusing at first, including what data to put in each field. Often didn't have right data to enter, so left fields blank to fill in later. Need to improve our systems for collecting data, filing records and file naming.

**PAKAM: 2-** Finding metadata the main issue. Decided to put up songs instead of albums to give individual metadata. Using AIATSIS thesaurus is a bit challenging, some names/ places not listed.



**Umeewarra Media: 2** - Once you get used to Mukurtu, it gets easier. An issue for us is that you can only put up 1-2MB files, so we need to compress photos before uploading.

*12. Do you have any suggested changes to the platform or its setup? Please describe:*

**PAW Media:** Would be good to bring data (eg names, keywords) and protocols for item from SCALD library into Record data. We decided not put much info into SCALD. Would prefer all key data fields in first tab.

**PAKAM:** Be good to enable links to ICTV Play or own server rather than just Vimeo.

**Umeewarra Media:** Not currently.

*13. Was there any feedback from community members about use of the platform (if relevant)?*

**PAW Media:** Mukurtu is a good keeping place for all our archives. We need to keep doing this work. We've mostly used Keeping Culture previously, which is more user-friendly and engaging but expensive.

**PAKAM:** Have shown visitors but no community access yet. This Archive is great for content that would not go on public platforms like ICTV eg 2 hr interviews/ oral histories. Deceased content is an incentive for people to access archive, where items not on public platforms. We get lots of requests for old footage/ photos.

**Umeewarra Media:** Yes, a couple of people with collections saw it and really liked it. Some were very keen to add other collections.

*14. Will you/ your org continue to use the Mukurtu archive platform? Yes / No / Maybe*

**PAW Media: Yes,** absolutely. Mukurtu looks like best option at the moment.

**PAKAM: Yes**

**Umeewarra Media: Yes,** absolutely, it is user friendly, it is culturally appropriate and it allows easy access for our community.

*15. Would you recommend the Mukurtu platform to other organisations? Yes / No / Maybe*

**PAW Media: Maybe,** depends on their capacity to manage the archive.

**PAKAM: Yes.**

**Umeewarra Media: Yes.** We already have recommended Mukurtu to several local groups who are very keen to learn more about it.

*Any other comments or feedback you would like to give:*

**PAW Media:** Couldn't have done it without FNMA resources and assistance, appreciate the support.

**PAKAM:** No other comments.

**Umeewarra Media:** This has been such an important project. We now have some idea of the enormity of our collection and what needs to happen to ensure this important collection is saved for future generations and shared now with our community. We cannot thank First Nations Media enough for facilitating this project and allowing Umeewarra Aboriginal Media Assoc to be a part of

the pilot project. We look forward to working with them moving forward. Our archives are our history, without our history we have nothing.

## 6.2. FNMA Project Evaluation

This project was driven by a growing need for a user-friendly and affordable archiving platform that can be used to both catalogue First Nations community collections and enable community access and can be tailored to the specific cultural protocols of each collection and community. It is beneficial to have a consistent archiving system for use within the sector that can be operated as a hub and spoke model, to enable consistency of training and technical support, inter-operability and sharing of public content, and reduced costs of bespoke systems. The trial of the Mukurtu platform has demonstrated that there is an open source platform available that meets these requirements.

The Mukurtu platform, once configured by FNMA to each organisation's specific needs, proved to be an effective platform for uploading media content and enabling managed community access (although there has been limited opportunity to trial community access as yet to be able to evaluate user feedback). As shown in the survey responses in 5.1, all three pilot organisations found the platform to be relatively user-friendly once they had received initial training and guides for adding metadata, although some refinements were suggested. The system was tested with a range of media types.

The key challenges identified by the pilot organisations did not relate to the platform itself- they included impact of COVID restrictions, staff resources, lack of available metadata, and time spent uploading content due to bandwidth issues.

### *6.2.1. Pros and Cons of the Mukurtu platform*

The pros and cons of the Mukurtu platform, compared with other platforms include:

Pros:

- Well established mature system with large community of users and ongoing viability, and large online collection of existing support material;
- Open source software (built on Drupal CMS), making it free license and relatively sustainable for organisations with limited or no recurrent budget for archiving;
- Can be managed as a hub and spoke model, enabling shared access to public content, and reducing expense for each individual setup and management of archives;
- Uses Dublin Core metadata and common fields for sharing records with other archive systems, or import/export of records;
- Relatively easy to add content and metadata;
- Has an App version for use on mobile devices.

Cons

- Requires an administrator with Drupal CMS knowledge to set up configuration of hub and of each organisation, and make changes with CMS updates;
- Requires training to get started with using platform and some ongoing support;
- Time consuming to add media items to platform and collate/add metadata (similar to other archive systems);
- Requires reasonable internet upload speeds and data limits to upload media content;
- Double process of loading media to SCALD library and records to Mukurtu is not intuitive and leads to double entry of some fields;

- Only enables access copies of items to be uploaded, with only photographs stored on the centralized server by the system (for data storage reasons). Video and audio items need to be loaded to an alternate storage platform (eg Vimeo, Soundcloud) to access from the site.

#### *6.2.2. Challenges to be Addressed:*

Some issues identified through this project that FNMA will seek to address in future projects include:

- *Storage of Access Copies of Audio and Video Content:* The loading of audio and video content to a mainstream site can become costly, raise security risks and have limitations for sensitive content. A better system of a secure cloud-based server for all content of each organisation, possibly including preservation masters, needs to be developed longer term. However password access will need to be addressed. Options for cloud-based storage of collections need to be explored to ensure security and cost-effectiveness.
- *Data Transfer from SCALD library:* To reduce duplication of data entry, data entered in the SCALD library should be able to pre-populate the fields in the Record when the item is imported.
- *Interface design:* Design work could be done to improve the look of the viewing interface and to hide metadata fields unless selected.

FNMA will continue to submit suggestions for CMS upgrades to Washington State University and identify further options for local customisation.

#### *6.2.3. Demand for Archiving Platform and Support*

Through the course of this project, about 15-20 First Nations media organisations have indicated interest in setting up an archive or getting support to do so. However, most have limited resourcing to do so, including staff resources, and over half have not yet begun the process of auditing or securely housing their collections. A key issue is the lack of a funding program for archiving of community collections, a matter that FNMA has been advocating to have addressed for some time.

## 7. Next Steps

Beyond this pilot project, FNMA is keen to provide continuity of the First Nations Media Archiving Hub and expand usage and support to other organisations, while continuing to build archiving capacity in the First Nations media sector.

However FNMA currently does not have ongoing funding or staff resources to continue this activity. The key costs involved in hub coordination and archives' support include:

- Staffing for training and support of existing and new archives;
- Technical support for hub management and support to platform users;
- Data storage, internet and IT equipment costs;
- Training delivery and resource development;
- Administrative and project coordination costs.

FNMA's applications for ILA and Screenrights funding to expand the rollout of the Mukurtu platform beyond the trial project were unsuccessful and we are awaiting notice on an application to Australia Council. We are currently exploring other resourcing options, including funding agencies, philanthropic support, fee-for service model, and partnerships with archive institutions and universities.

FNMA has however been successful in securing ABA funding to establish and run a digitisation facility in Alice Springs from early 2021 to mid 2023. While this funding does not currently include the coordination of the First Nations Media Archiving Hub, it would provide a complementary outcome for the project, as each digitised collection will need to be catalogued and have a platform for managed access. FNMA will investigate this as an interim resourcing model.

Beyond this report a Business Plan is needed to identify options for a longer-term sustainable model for supporting archiving with the First Nations media sector and potentially to play a role in supporting other First Nations arts and community organisations to manage and share their collections.