Getting Started with Archiving

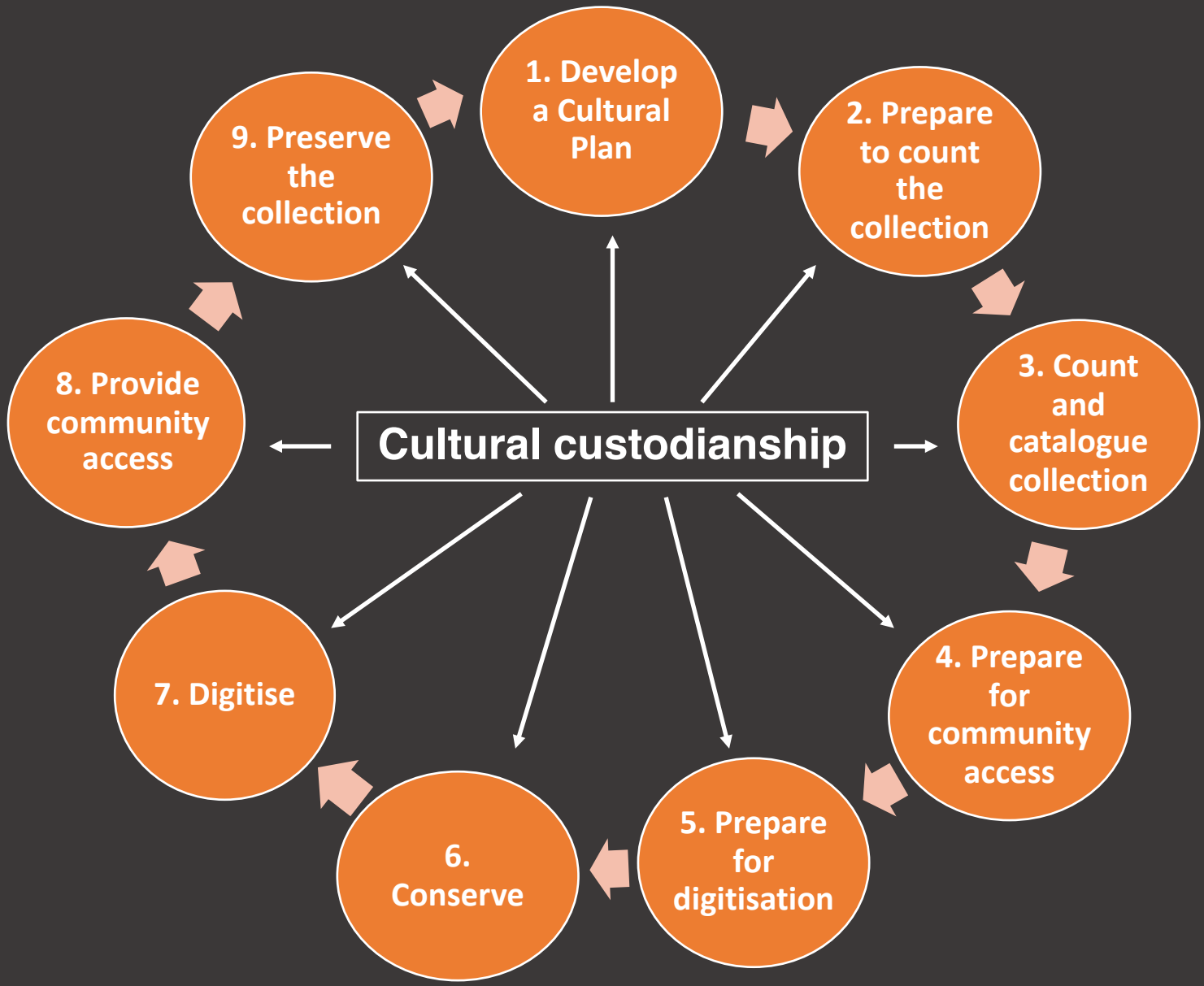
Presenter: Daniel Featherstone

The challenges

- Huge collections constantly growing
- Poor storage conditions
  - Lack of secure storage space
  - Dust, heat, humidity, and more
- Various media formats and types
  - audio, video photography
  - analog / digital
- Culturally sensitive and deceased content
- Lack of staff and training to do archiving
- Lack of funding

Where to start?

The 9 Key Steps



FIRST NATIONS MEDIA AUSTRALIA

ACTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY MEDIA ARCHIVES

www.firstnationsmedia.org.au/fnma-archiving-resources

SUPPORTING ACTIONS

Significance & Preservation Needs Assessments | Collection Management Plan | Disaster Management Plan | Archive Policies

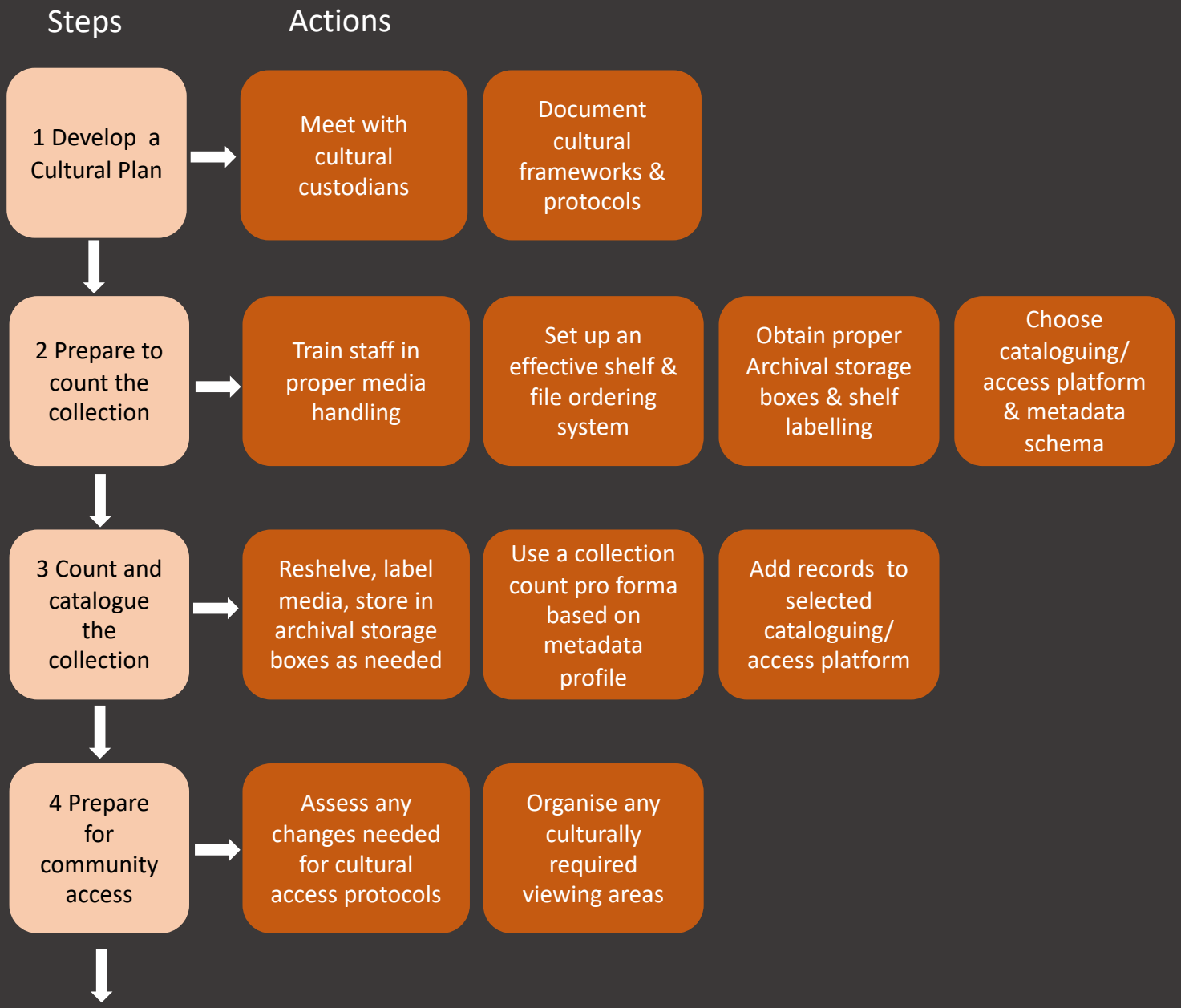
DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS

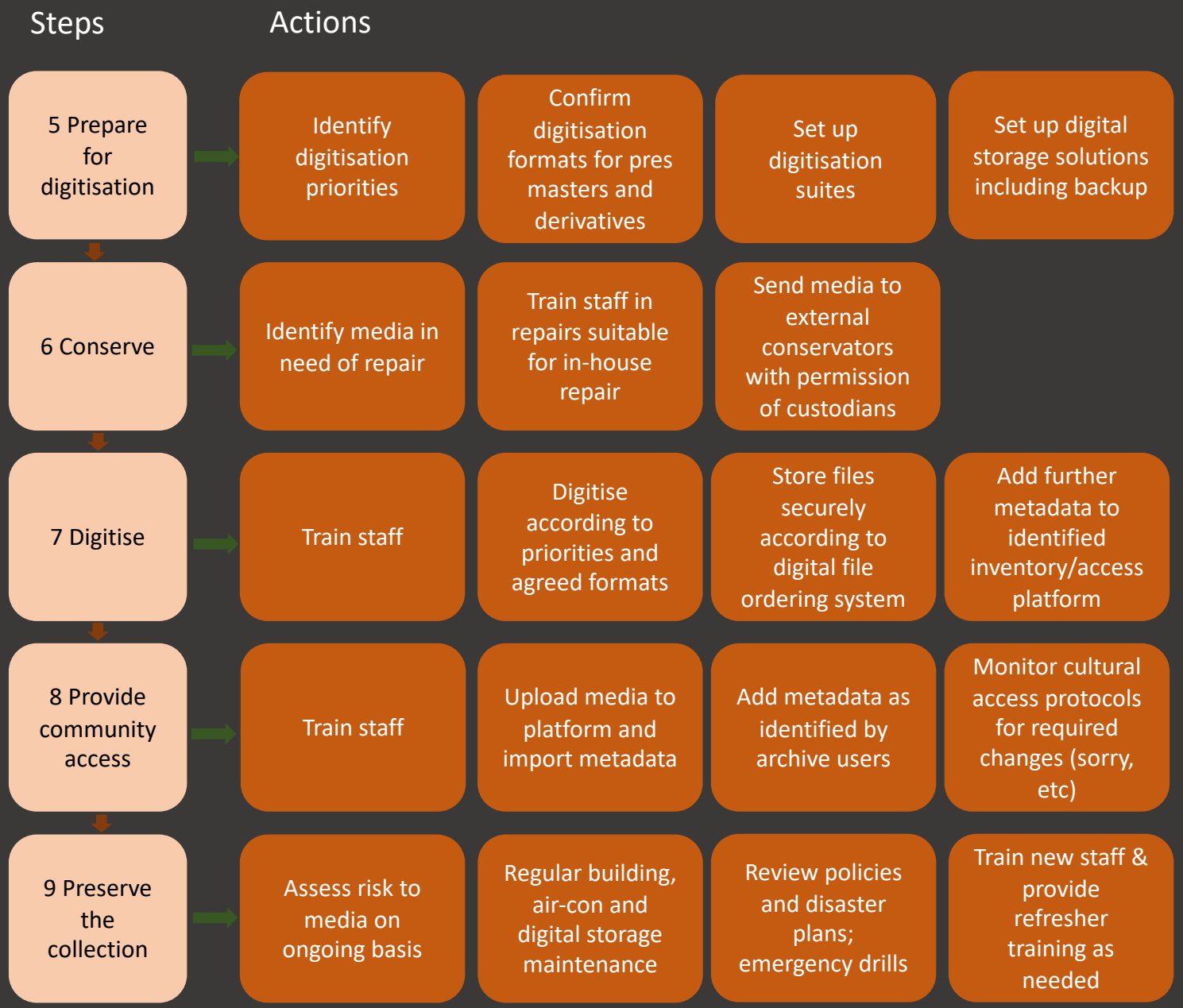
1 DEVELOP A CULTURAL PLAN
- Meet with cultural custodians
- Document cultural frameworks & cultural protocols

2 PREPARE TO COUNT THE COLLECTION
- Train staff in proper media handling
- Set up effective shelf & file ordering systems
- Obtain proper Archival storage boxes & shelf labelling
- Choose inventory/cataloguing/access platform and a metadata schema

3 COUNT & CATALOGUE THE COLLECTION
- Reshelve, label media, store in archival containers as needed
- Use a collection count proforma based on the agreed metadata profile
- Add records to selected inventory/ cataloguing/access platform

4 PREPARE FOR COMMUNITY ACCESS
- Confirm cultural restrictions for counted media; reshelve or reorder as needed
- Organise any culturally required viewing areas


Steps
Actions
1 Develop a Cultural Plan
Meet with cultural custodians
Document cultural frameworks & protocols
2 Prepare to count the collection
Train staff in proper media handling
Set up an effective shelf & file ordering system
Obtain proper Archival storage boxes & shelf labelling
Choose cataloguing/ access platform & metadata schema
3 Count and catalogue the collection
Reshelve, label media, store in archival storage boxes as needed
Use a collection count pro forma based on metadata profile
Add records to selected cataloguing/ access platform
4 Prepare for community access
Assess any changes needed for cultural access protocols
Organise any culturally required viewing areas


Steps
Actions
5 Prepare for digitisation
Identify digitisation priorities
Confirm digitisation formats for pres masters and derivatives
Set up digitisation suites
Set up digital storage solutions including backup
6 Conserve
Identify media in need of repair
Train staff in repairs suitable for in-house repair
Send media to external conservators with permission of custodians
7 Digitise
Train staff
Digitise according to priorities and agreed formats
Store files securely according to digital file ordering system
Add further metadata to identified inventory/access platform
8 Provide community access
Train staff
Upload media to platform and import metadata
Add metadata as identified by archive users
Monitor cultural access protocols for required changes (sorry, etc)
9 Preserve the collection
Assess risk to media on ongoing basis
Regular building, air-con and digital storage maintenance
Review policies and disaster plans; emergency drills
Train new staff & provide refresher training as needed

Planning the Archive

1. Develop a Cultural Plan with cultural custodians:

- Who can use the Archive?
- Who will look after the Archive?
- Where to store physical and digital records?
- How to manage sensitive or sorry content?
- What information can be included?
- Who has access to the archive? How?
- How can items be used/shared?

2. Develop a Collection Management Plan and Policies

3. Use this Plan help get funding and partners (eg NLA Community Heritage Grants)

See FNMA Resources: 'Assessing and Planning Your Archive'; 'Developing a Cultural Plan and Collection Management Plan' and Templates

Template

PART 1 THE HISTORY OF OUR ARCHIVE
PART 2 WHAT WE HOLD IN OUR ARCHIVE
PART 3 THE SIZE OF OUR ARCHIVE COLLECTION
PART 4 WHAT ISN'T KEPT IN OUR ARCHIVE
PART 5 HOW CULTURAL CONTENT IN MEDIA OBJECTS IS MANAGED BY OUR ARCHIVE
PART 6 WHO CAN USE OUR ARCHIVE AND THE CONDITIONS OF ACCESS
PART 7 HOW WE RECORD WHAT'S IN OUR ARCHIVE, STORE IT AND MAKE IT AVAILABLE
PART 8 WHO OUR ARCHIVE STAFF ARE
PART 9 WHAT ARCHIVE PLANS AND POLICIES WE HAVE IN PLACE
PART 10 (Optional) OUR CHALLENGES
PART 11 (Optional) OUR ARCHIVE PARTNERS

Cataloguing your collection

- Start with an inventory of collection using Excel or Google Sheets
- Inventory can be expanded later to a full catalogue with all data fields.
- Work from the label – don't play video or audio recordings yet.
- Ask Cultural custodians/archive worker so identify Cultural Access value (Open, Closed, Sensitive, Restricted for example).
- Make an initial decision on whether you plan to digitise or not.
- Set up a naming/ ID system for collection
- Assess condition of the object – fragile or damaged items may need specialist attention (eg NFSA or AIATSIS).
- Use AIATSIS Thesauri for place names, subjects, language names http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/

See FNMA Resources: Counting and recording the Archive Collection; Directory and File Naming; Metadata profiles and templates for inventory and cataloguing

Inventory Data Fields

- Title
- Date
- Genre
- Content summary
- If Analog object:
  - Format of original
  - Physical format
  - Location of object
- If Digitised or Born Digital
  - Digital Container format
  - Location/file name
  - Encoding format
- Cultural rights category
- Administrative fields
  - Record created date
  - Record created by
  - Processing complete

Who will work on your collection?

- What roles do you need?
  - Cultural Custodians
  - Archive Manager:
    - Planning and policies
    - Set up of storage
    - Resourcing/funding
    - Training of staff
  - Archive Coordinator/s:
    - Digitisation and cataloguing
    - Community access & engagement
    - Collection care and maintenance
- Do you need both men and women?
- Do you need funding for jobs?
- What training needed? Where sourced?
- Any partners or volunteers to assist?
- Any elements outsourced or all in-house?

See FNMA Resources: Staffing Policy; plus Planning templates

Storage and handling of the collection

Physical media storage

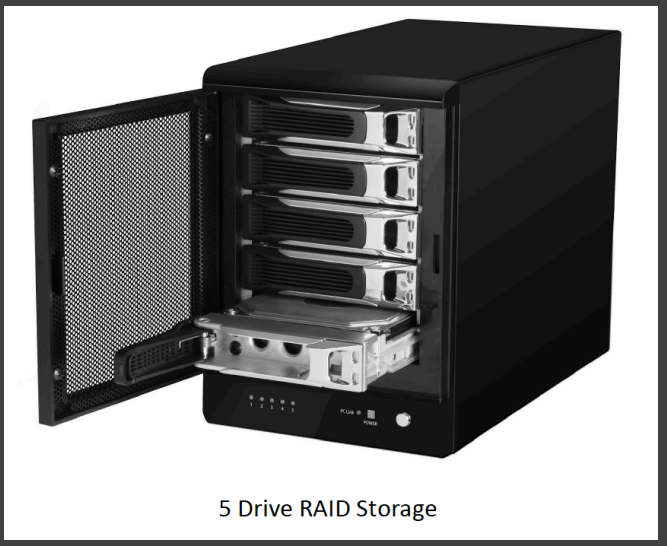
- Temperature/humidity control, air lock entry, dust reduction
- Shelving
- Archival quality boxes
- Shelf order/item IDs
- Access security
- Fire extinguishers

Digital media storage

- Type(s) of storage - NAS/RAID, LTO, cloud – and backup onsite/offsite
- Data integrity routines

Set up Disaster Management plan

See FNMA resources for Safe handling, Digital Storage and Disaster Management



5 Drive RAID Storage

Prepare for digitisation

Deadline 2025 for analogue recordings is coming fast, but…

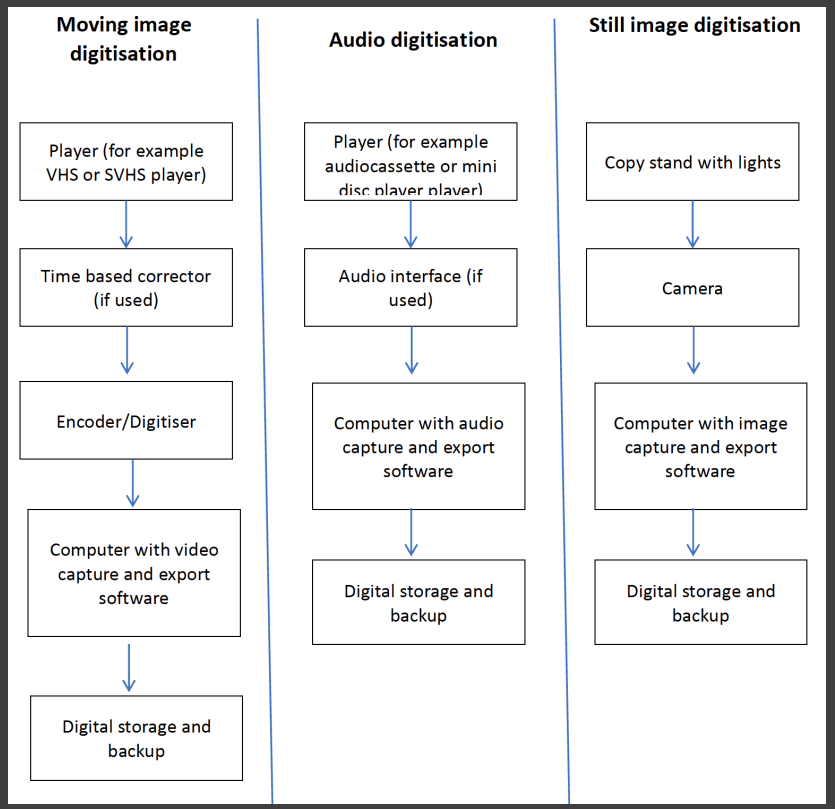
Do it once, do it right. Plan first!

Things to think about:

- Digitisation Priority Plan
- Digitisation equipment – what ‘s available? condition? What else needed?
- Where can digitisation be done? Who can do it?
- What formats for Preservation masters and access copies?
- Where will digital files be stored?
- Digitisation workflow for different media
- What to do with fragile or damaged media?

See FNMA resources for digitisation standards, equipment and software needs, priorities, workflows

Digitisation Workflow by Media Type



Archive Platform Review 2019 - Outcomes

INVENTORY/COLLECTION MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

- Excel
- The Collecting Bug
- NeoFinder

INVENTORY/COLLECTION MANAGEMENT & CATALOGUING OPTIONS

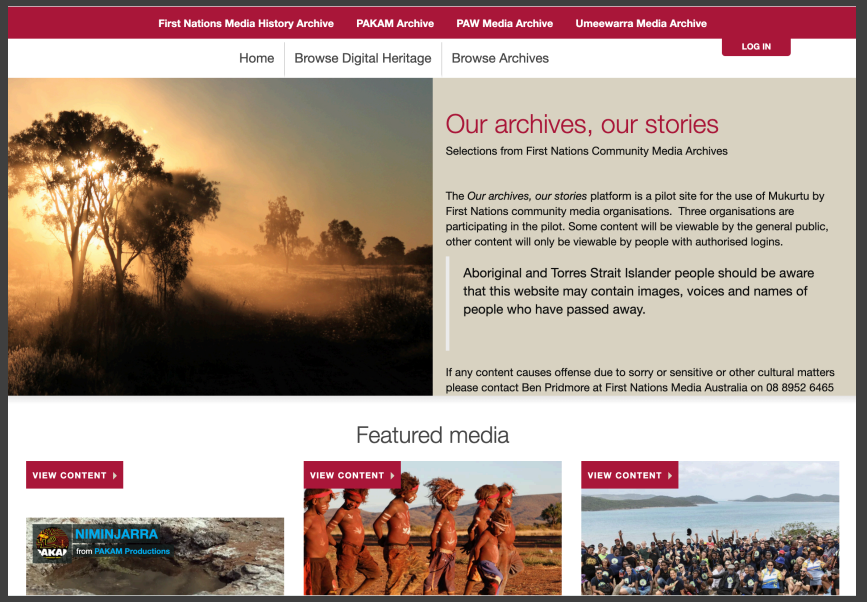
- Archive Developed Database
- Mukurtu
- The Collecting Bug

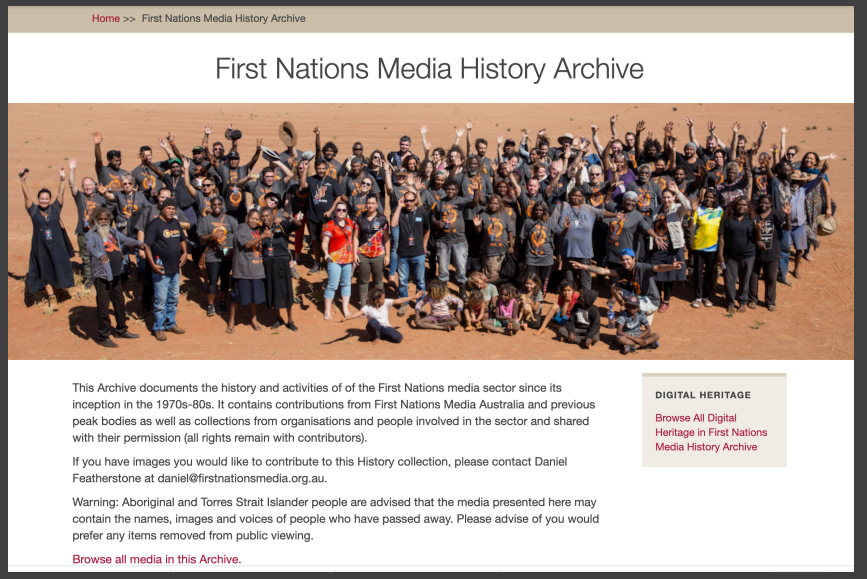
ONLINE COMMUNITY ACCESS OPTIONS

- Mukurtu
- The Collecting Bug
- Keeping Culture

Mukurtu Archiving Platform

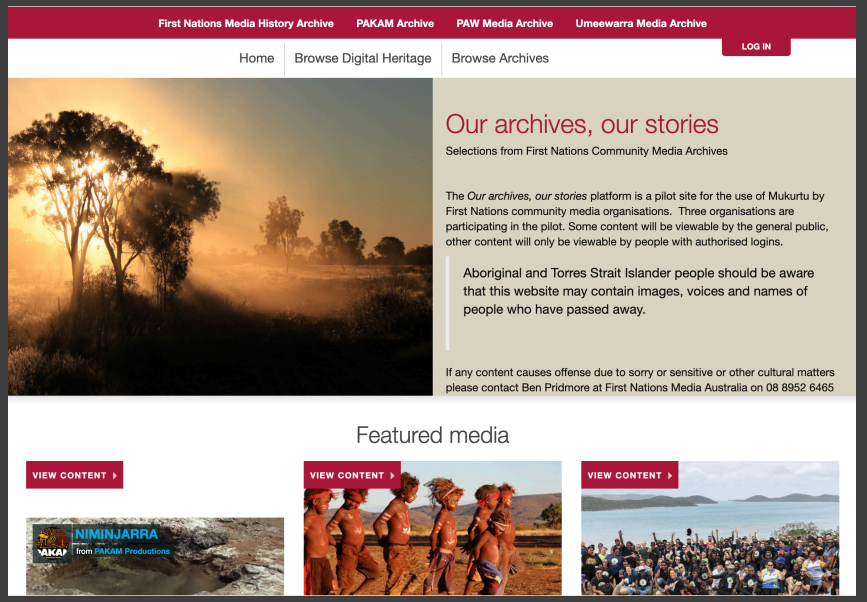
- FNMA has set up a hub and spoke model of Mukurtu with specific sector needs
- Open source software, free license, used internationally
- Good for cataloguing and community access
- Links to access copies, not preservation masters
- Doing trial with three pilot organisations- PAKAM, PAW Media and Umeewarra Media. Doing training and support.
- Also collating a First Nations media history collection
- ‘Open’ records can be viewed by all users
- Seeking funding to expand to more orgs and provide ongoing training and support, and build collection

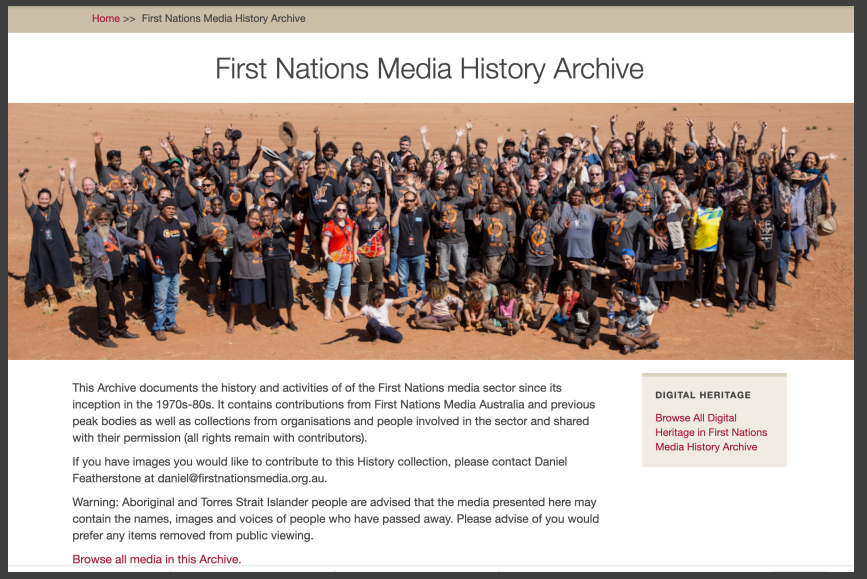




Other FNMA activities

- Developing a First Nations Media Archiving manual and interactive online training resource, to complete in June.
- Working with Charles Darwin University to develop 3-unit VET skill set for archive workers to learn how to digitise and catalogue audio, video and photographs. Can be delivered by RTOs with scope for Cert 3 in Screen and Media.
- Digitisation facility in Alice Springs (pending ABA funding agreement) for digitising and training archive workers, plus mobile kit
- Developing a data collection and ingestion system with Ng Media
- Partnerships with NFSA, AIATSIS, Jumbunna Institute/UTS, Uni of Melbourne, NT Library and more





Any Questions?

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