



PARADISEC

Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources
in Endangered Cultures



**Acting before it is too late!
Finding, preserving and reconnecting recordings
in the 2000 languages of the Pacific**

WHAT IS PARADISEC?

An innovative Australian project that engages with the Pacific, and provides:

- ✓ expertise in preserving recordings of music and oral tradition
- ✓ relationships of trust with Pacific cultural agencies
- ✓ research infrastructure to curate and disseminate records
- ✓ regular training sessions in recording, transcription, and data management for cultural materials
- ✓ help building new digital archives in the region

Since 2003, our group has worked with agencies in the Pacific with a mission to safeguard the records of the many languages of the region. A collaborative project between the ANU, University of Sydney, and the University of Melbourne, we have always operated on small grants, mainly from the Australian Research Council, but also from international agencies (e.g. Endangered Languages Documentation Programme; Endangered Archives Programme).

DEADLINE 2025

International archivists advise that analogue tapes are only expected to be playable until 2025. After that point, as recording media deteriorate, playback machines break down, and we lose staff expertise to repair machines and digitise old recordings, precious and unique cultural heritage will be lost. This loss of heritage is particularly devastating for the many small communities across the Pacific whose languages and traditions are under threat from globalisation and displacement.

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Follow Us



WHAT WE HAVE DONE

We have built a collection of over 11,800 hours of audio records, in 292,000 files. We also have hundreds of hours of video, and many thousands of page images and text documents. This represents recordings of oral tradition, dictionaries, songs, and texts, in 1,231 languages. This collection of 75 terabytes is managed and made accessible via individual access agreements with depositors. The University of Sydney has taken responsibility for housing the collection into the future. Our catalog can be seen here: <http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/>

We have worked with the following agencies to digitise tapes in their collections or to return recordings to them: Vanuatu Cultural Centre; Solomon Islands National Museum; University of New Caledonia; Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies; University of French Polynesia.

We have run training sessions on recording methods and data management techniques in English, Bislama, and French, in Honiara, Port Vila, Noumea, and Papeete.

In 2013, PARADISEC was added to the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register in recognition of the international significance of our collection. In 2019 we were awarded a data seal of approval by the World Data System in recognition of excellence in our data management systems.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

We continue to:

Search for recordings that need to be digitised, and then digitise more of them every week. We initiated an international "Lost and Found" project to identify tape collections needing digitisation and as a result have located and preserved 15 collections.

Work with IT experts on methods for appropriate delivery of recordings that will work in local conditions. This includes the use of small local wifi transmitters loaded with relevant PARADISEC content, accessible on mobile devices.

Collaborate with appropriate agencies to build local capacity in records management and to develop locally relevant resources. For example:

- ✓ In 2018/2019 we worked with the various language academies in French Polynesia on methods for creating good records, and supporting the development of the Tahitian dictionary.
- ✓ We are working with the Kulu Language Institute in the Solomon Islands and have run workshops (August 2019, November 2020) with them.
- ✓ In 2019-21 we partnered with a British Library project of £500,000 to repatriate recordings from wax cylinders, made in the late 1800s.
- ✓ In 2019, with two grants of \$18,000 each, we digitised hundreds of tapes from the Divine Word University in Madang, PNG, and from Malaita island in the Solomon Islands.

WHAT WE COULD DO WITH MORE RESOURCES

With more resources, we could:

- ✓ run training workshops in more places to develop skills in the region so that local agencies can record more and digitise their own collections.
- ✓ localise our catalog in French and Melanesian Pijin for greater accessibility.
- ✓ locate more records to make safe and to make available online.
- ✓ regularly refresh backups of collections in Pacific Island countries to safeguard against equipment failure or natural disaster
- ✓ develop our catalog interface for better delivery of materials

PLEASE DONATE!

We hope to hear from donors who are willing to support PARADISEC's activities.

PARADISEC (Inc) is a deductible gift recipient, which means that any donations over \$2 can be claimed as a tax deduction.

<http://www.paradisec.org.au/support-us/>

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