

PAPER PRESENTED AT  
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## **Indigenous Library Services - Preservation**

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### **Abstract:**

The opening of the Wujal Wujal Indigenous Knowledge Centre was accomplished coinciding with the completion of a building audit. This was the first preservation and built environment audit of this type of building, and would act as the basis to ensure that preservation issues are addressed in further provision of these unique facilities across the state.

The audit was completed by the Executive Manager, Collection Preservation, State Library of Queensland and accomplished:

- An overview to establish the type of buildings being used for Indigenous Knowledge Centres
- Completion of a building audit and report on recommendations for maximising passive environmental controls for collections
- Liaison with staff regarding collection development, and ascertain the range of media being collected including aboriginal artefact items
- Establishment of what preservation outreach programs will be required to support the delivery of Indigenous library facilities.

The completion of the preservation audit resulted in the identification of issues that may result in the acceleration of deterioration to the collections housed within the facility, and recommendations to minimise these factors.

### **Background**

“We know the region for the Indigenous Knowledge Centre, but what type of buildings are available? What do we have to consider in making the most appropriate building selection, and what alterations and works do we have to incorporate to retrofit this building into a site with the capacity preserve library collections?”

Discussion between the State Library’s Indigenous Library Service and Collection Preservation branch, had identified a need to put in place a system to identify and achieve the most stable environment for collections being located in Indigenous Knowledge Centres being established in Queensland. It was agreed that State Library’s Collection Preservation program would become pro-active in its participation to accomplish this outcome. This paper is designed to act as a case study and prompt future consideration of preservation issues in the roll out of Indigenous Knowledge Centre buildings throughout the State.

I carried out a field visit to Wujal Wujal Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC) to conduct a built environment audit. Wujal Wujal was the fifth IKC to be established and the first to be fully stocked with collections and installation of a series of PC’s. This visit also established for preservation management an indication and feel for the types of buildings being adapted for IKCs

The Wujal Wujal audit included:

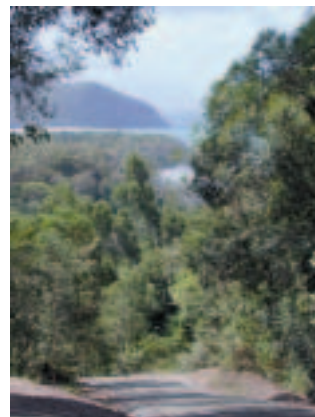
### **Geographic Profile**

#### **Key Finding**

This IKC is located between Cairns and Cooktown and is 400 metres from the banks of the Bloomfield River. It is in elevated

position and appears well above flood plains that are between the IKC and the river.

Far North Queensland is subject to cyclonic weather during the rain season.



## Building Construction

### Key Finding

- The external walls appear to be tin based with rectangular corrugations.
- The roofing is corrugated iron.
- Interior walls appear to be recently painted particleboard or fibro.



- Floors are partially varnished hard wood.
- Cracking in down pipes leading from the roof guttering.
- Roof guttering full of leaves.
- The location and elevation of the building allows for windows to collect any existing breezes. There is only one window at the rear of the building retarding the capacity for ventilation flow through, desirable for passive climate control within the library.



- There is a bakery on the lower portion of the building that is split-level. There are some concerns over heat transferred to upper levels in the IKC, if the ovens were to be used. The ovens have a dedicated venting system to the external parameter of the building.
- There is potential to tap into the air conditioning capacity servicing the café below. The view of the Chief Executive Officer of Wujal Wujal was to air condition the IKC with an independent system that logically would have the unit located either at the side or rear of the building.
- There is an office space adjacent to the IKC that is used by the Chairman of Wujal Wujal. This area is air conditioned by an independent unit.
- The security measures in place for the building is lockable windows and doors. No shutters are in place on the windows as a safeguard in the advent of cyclonic conditions.

### Recommendation

- That the Collection Preservation program of State Library develops a building audit checklist and issue to Indigenous Library Services in Brisbane and Cairns for future IKCs.
- Two whirly birds units should be placed into the roof to extract built up hot air from within the ceiling. If the IKC is not to be air

- conditioned, the option of ceiling insulation should be examined.
- The western wall should be insulated with a prefabricated thermal lining over the interior wall.
- Down pipes should be inspected to ensure there are no cracks that would cause leakage at the sides of the building and repaired as necessary.
- A maintenance schedule should be applied to clear gutters of debris to ensure against roof flooding.

The key to preservation of the collections is to try to achieve the most stable conditions with particular focus on relative humidity and temperature. Air conditioning for climate control in libraries should be on a 24 hour cycle as turning the system off of an evening can cause damaging fluctuations in conditions. Use of passive control (making best use of existing conditions) can often be better than part time artificial units. If there is to be no air conditioning then a further window should be built into the rear (western) wall. This would allow for a flow through ventilation effect that would further exhaust hot air from the IKC.

There should be security grills incorporating insect screens placed over the windows and at the front door.

## Repository

### Key Finding

- There are two freestanding fabric covered display boards
- One wooden framed glass display cabinet
- Book collections are stored predominantly on baked enamel metal shelving



- The entire collection holdings are on open access and shared with reading areas
- The repository is equipped with a water-based fire extinguisher
- Electronic/On-line and AV playing equipment
- The IKC has playing equipment for CD and video media. It also has internet access capacity.

### Recommendation

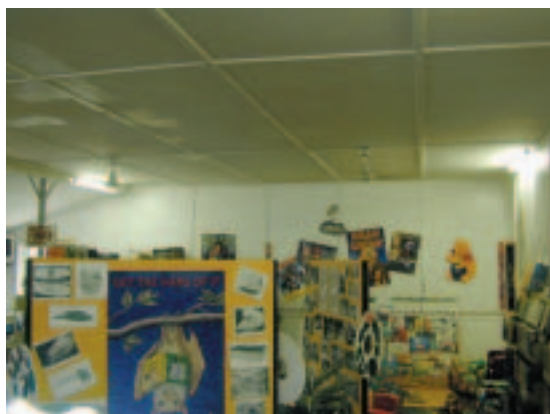
- Cleaning assists in the prevention of mould and insect activity and reactionary problems caused by dust such as foxing stains. To minimise the risk of these conditions, a program of:
  - Six monthly vacuuming of collections should be completed
  - A program of standard office cleaning of floors and windows.
  - Daily removal of rubbish from within the IKC.
- The implementation of an integrated pest management program will minimise the risk of infestation by pests (insects and rodents). This program relies upon a pro-active rather than chemical approach to pest control by :
  - Regular inspection of collections to detect any early signs of pest activity

- Banning food from within the repository in favour of potentially constructing an external patio for food and beverage consumption.
- Monitoring and detection of pest activity by setting blunder (sticky) traps
- Prevention of access by pests into the building by blocking access points such as windows and holes in the building.
- Collection Preservation provide a basic steps sheet on procedures for counter disaster.

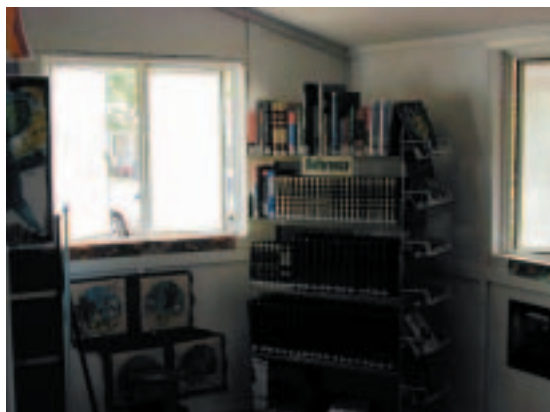
## Environmental Conditions

### Key Finding

- The building location has determined that the rear of the building is subject to the harshest of temperate conditions caused from the western sun. Only the most robust of collections and/or equipment should be located in this position.
- There is a refrigeration system located in the existing bakery that has potential to store collections such as film that would benefit from a reduced temperature storage environment.
- The greatest threat to collections surviving for the term of their useful life is high and fluctuating temperature and relative humidity. This is particularly prevalent in the Far North. This will impact adversely on paper, photographic, bindings, audiovisual/electronic media.
- There are four sets of ceiling fans in place within the IKC.



- There are no awnings over the seven sets of double windows or insect screens to prevent the entry of insects. Some collections are being subjected to direct sunlight. There is a proposal to have the erection of both an enlarged verandah and awning over the front portion of the building.



### Recommendation

- Dedicated display cabinets should be provided to house artefact collections. These should be constructed with

UV filtering panels and not located against wall panels, in particular the western wall.

- In the short term, the windows should be curtained using thermal insulated lining available from fabric warehouses. Awnings/Eaves should be placed over the windows to shield the repositories from direct sunlight and prevent rain entry.
- If the cold store unit in the café could be used for storage of film, then this material should be packaged to create microclimates to reduce the impact of fluctuating relative humidity. This cold store would provide greatly reduced temperatures that would greatly assist in the long term preservation of film based media.
- Ensure the follow up on the proposal to construct an extended front of house awning.
- Collections that are required for the shortest term should be the collections that are directly housed at the western wall end of the building.

## Collection Development

### Key Finding

*Currently Wujal Wujal holds*

- Hard and soft bound reference and children's books (this includes a major collection deposit of 4,000 reference books)
- Videos and CD Collections
- Photographs
- Display material
- Photographs
- Laminated Posters
- Children Art Objects (paper and textile)

To be located at Wujal Wujal:

- A major series of language collections formatted to cassette will soon also be housed in this centre.
- Community archival records
- Aboriginal Artefact items including clay pipes, woven baskets, bark paintings, wooden shields, boomerangs, fish traps and other community and ceremonial and cultural artefacts.

### Recommendation

- A built environment checklist that will form the basis for guiding preventive preservation measures for IKCs has been drafted. This document should have direct linkage to the collection development policy.

The future and sustainability of Indigenous Knowledge Centres will be dependent on a number of factors, including the ability to create sound housing, conducive to the preservation of collections. In particular, these facilities offer a haven to collections deemed irreplaceable indigenous artefacts.

In conjunction with programs being considered for the State Library's, Millennium Library Project, the instigation of preservation outreach programs for library services in Queensland, will allow for future capacity of increased pro-activity and on site consultation in preservation procedures for Indigenous Knowledge Centres.

*Keywords: Indigenous, Knowledge, Preservation, Environment, Wujal*