

DIGITAL ARCHIVING OF PACIFIC BROADCAST AND AUDIOVISUAL COLLECTIONS RESEARCH BRIEF

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Digital Archiving of Pacific Broadcast and Audiovisual Collections, Research Brief 2026

This brief summarises key insights from a comprehensive study on digital archiving across eleven broadcasters in the Pacific. Data collection commenced in the second half of 2025. The study was designed and led by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's International Development unit (ABCID) in collaboration with our Pacific partners. Fieldwork and analysis were conducted by Pacific archiving specialists, Opeta Alefaio and Solstice Middleby. ABCID extends its appreciation to all study participants for their time, insights, and generous contributions.

The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and research participants and do not necessarily reflect those of the Australian Government or the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). Unless otherwise stated, photographs in this report are sourced from ABCID programs, ABC staff, and ABC archives.

Cover photograph: Behind the scenes at the National Archives of Fiji with images overlaid from 'The Memory Project'.



Legendary PNG broadcaster John Isinii (late) broadcasting from Port Moresby. Image credit: ABC Archives

INTRODUCTION

Across the Pacific, media organisations hold decades of audio and video material documenting public life, cultural practice, political events, and national history. These archives are often used to support education, commemorations, public information, and current reporting.¹ In this sense, media organisations also function as cultural institutions, with a role in preserving and sharing collective memory—an aspect increasingly relevant to strengthening social cohesion, civic engagement, and shared community values.² As misinformation and disinformation remain ongoing concerns across the Pacific, accessible archives can strengthen public interest media by helping journalists verify events, provide historical context, and reinforce trusted information.³ This makes archiving an important regional issue for supporting informed, resilient, and connected Pacific communities. Strengthening archives also creates opportunities for deeper regional connection by supporting Pacific media organisations to preserve, share, and tell their own histories on their own terms.

This brief summarises findings from ABC International Development’s (ABCID) research on digital archiving across eleven Pacific media organisations, focusing on shared challenges, existing strengths, and practical opportunities. Across the research, some preservation and digitisation efforts were found to be supported by development partners, reflecting both the cultural value of these collections and the resource constraints faced by media organisations. The brief is intended to facilitate ongoing discussion within the media sector about the role, value, and future of archives. While archiving is widely recognised by the Pacific media sector as important, it is not always clear how it should be prioritised alongside other operational demands or how best to strengthen it in practice.

¹ [“The ‘ABC Pacific Collection’ and Digital Pasifik – Connecting People with Their Audio/Visual History.”](#) ABC International Development, 2022.

² [“How Fiji’s Archival History Is Helping Shape Its Future.”](#) ABC International Development, January 4, 2024.

³ [ABC International Development, *State of the Media: Pacific*](#) (Sydney: ABC International Development, 2025).



Damaged reel at 2AP's archive in Samoa. Image credit: ABC International Development

METHODOLOGY

This research used a Pacific-centred, partner-informed approach. It was guided by Indigenous Data Sovereignty and the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance.⁴ Eleven partner media organisations participated across Fiji, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. Data collection was conducted between November 2025 and February 2026 and comprised semi-structured interviews with staff responsible for archiving or content management, a regional survey, and a review of regional and international publications. Findings are evidence-based but not statistically representative of all Pacific media organisations.

REGIONAL FINDINGS

1. Archiving is widespread and valued, but rarely formalised

Archiving is taking place across all participating organisations to varying degrees and is widely valued as preserving national heritage for future generations; however, in most cases it is not managed through formal systems. Archiving often depends on individual staff initiative rather than dedicated roles, policies, or workflows. Only three of the eleven sampled organisations reported having a dedicated archival policy and/or staff working specifically on archives.

2. Ensuring optimal preservation conditions remains a constraint

Across the sample, around two-thirds of holdings remain on tape, disc, or other physical media. Storage conditions vary, and only a small number of organisations reported partial air-conditioning or relative humidity management. Common constraints include ageing playback equipment (e.g. tape decks and reel-to-reel players), unstable power, natural hazards, and limited backup systems. Respondents reported that older materials are becoming harder to access as tapes deteriorate and specialist equipment, such as tape playback machines and older broadcast playback systems, becomes increasingly difficult to maintain, service, or replace.

⁴ Global Indigenous Data Alliance (GIDA), [“CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance.”](#) *Data Science Journal* 19, no. 1 (2020): 43.

3. Archives are used by media, but access is often manual

Archived content is used in news retrospectives, anniversaries, school projects, documentaries, and community requests. Nine organisations reported using archival material in their content in the past year. However, access to this material is often manual. Staff typically locate, retrieve, and transfer content directly, and most organisations lack searchable catalogues or consistent records of what has been shared. This can make access slow and limit reuse, even where material exists.

4. Digitisation is progressing, but unevenly

Five organisations reported some progress in converting legacy material (video and audio) to digital formats and cataloguing it. Even where this work is underway, its pace depends heavily on storage conditions, working equipment, metadata practices, and technical support. In Samoa, 2AP Radio and TV9 estimated that about 20 percent of holdings had been digitised since 2023, while in Tonga, TBC indicated that around 50 percent of archival holdings are now in digital form. In PNG, NBC has digitised around 5,000 tapes since 2022, while EMTV converted 490 tapes in January 2025. Fiji broadcasters have converted selected legacy videotapes into digital files. Elsewhere, progress has been slowed by equipment failure, fragile materials, or, in the case of Vanuatu, disruption from disasters such as the 2024 Port Vila earthquake.

5. Digitised archives support newsroom use and audience trust

Where digitised material is available, organisations reported faster retrieval, improved newsroom workflows, and, based on audience feedback, higher levels of trust. Respondents described historical footage as useful for verifying events and adding context to current reporting and major national coverage. Six of the eleven sampled organisations also noted that their archives are used in school curricula and support inter-generational learning within communities, which, based on audience feedback, was seen to strengthen trust in media content and deepen audience engagement. These benefits remain uneven, as they depend on whether material has been digitised and can be located quickly.

6. Monetisation remains a longer-term goal

No sampled organisations reported generating significant income from archives, although several expressed longer-term interest in exploring revenue options. There is interest in educational licensing, subscription models, and limited commercial access, but most respondents said that preservation, metadata, and governance systems would need to improve first. There was also consistent emphasis that any future monetisation must respect cultural protocols, consent, usage rights, and community control over sensitive material.



(left to right): NBC archivist Ben Takap (PNG); Tapes from 2AP's archive (Samoa); SIBC archivist Salei Rukasi; Tape from SIBC's archive (Solomon Islands).

Image credits: ABC International Development



NBC staff Ben Takap and Wilmah Songavare giving a tour of NBC's archive in Port Moresby. Image credit: Lemach Lavari, ABC International Development

ORGANISATION PROFILES

Fijian Broadcasting Corporation (FBC)

FBC, established in 1954, is Fiji's national broadcaster.⁵ Archive management is supported by a small internal team, including a content librarian and technical staff. Most expertise has developed through practical experience and internal mentoring. FBC has catalogued most of its post-digital programming and is gradually converting legacy videotapes into digital files. Respondents estimated that around 20–40 per cent of historical holdings have been digitised.

FBC uses internal servers and digital backup tape systems, alongside legacy analogue holdings. Some storage areas are air-conditioned, although specialised environmental preservation controls are limited. Archived footage is reused in retrospectives, commemorations, and special features, and is also requested by universities, cultural organisations, and government agencies. Access is managed through informal processes.

Respondents reported that digitised archival footage is beginning to support newsroom workflows, with staff able to retrieve historical clips more quickly for use in news reporting and special coverage, including major national events. They also noted that the inclusion of archival footage helps verify information and provide context. FBC continues to explore opportunities for digital distribution of archived material through streaming and online platforms, including its Viti+ streaming service and social media channels such as Facebook and YouTube.

Fiji Television Limited (Fiji TV)

Fiji TV is one of Fiji's longest-established commercial broadcasters and houses a substantial archive of national events, entertainment programming, and news coverage.⁶ It has a small internal team, including a librarian or content officer supported by technical staff. Most expertise has been developed on the job through practical experience. Fiji TV uses both legacy tape collections and server-based digital storage. Preservation decisions are guided by perceived editorial relevance and historical importance rather than a documented system for deciding what should be kept.

⁵ *Fijian Broadcasting Corporation, "About Us," accessed March 30, 2026.*

⁶ *Fiji TV operates Fiji One, its flagship free-to-air television channel. Fiji One News is the organisation's news service; Fiji One News, "About Us," accessed March 30, 2026.*

Digitisation of historical videotapes is ongoing, supported by technical advice from regional and development partners. Some storage areas are air-conditioned, but specialised environmental preservation controls remain limited. Archived footage is reused in retrospectives, anniversary coverage, and documentary programming, and is also repackaged for digital platforms and social media.

Respondents reported strong audience interest in archival content based on audience feedback and said digitised material has begun to support newsroom workflows, with staff able to retrieve and reuse archival footage more quickly in current reporting and special coverage. Fiji TV has expressed interest in future paid subscription or streaming models for archived programming, but respondents noted that metadata and rights arrangements would need to be strengthened first.

National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), PNG

NBC, established in 1973, is PNG's national broadcaster, providing radio and television services across the country.⁷ Archival work is managed by broadcast officers. Respondents indicated that around 40 staff nationally have some archival responsibilities, but no formal training program is currently in place, and the most recent digital archiving training took place in 2007–08. In 2023, a broadcast officer leading NBC's archive digitisation initiative completed a two-week placement at ABC Archives in Sydney, gaining exposure to digital archiving systems and processes to inform NBC's ongoing archive development.

NBC's archive is estimated to contain around 35,000 to 40,000 analogue items, including audio reels, audio cassettes, vinyl recordings, and legacy video materials. Around 5,000 tapes have been digitised since 2022, but most of the collection remains analogue. Respondents also stated that online content produced by NBC is not currently archived.

Archive materials are stored in Port Moresby across two sites, with limited air conditioning in some spaces. Most material remains on physical media, while digitised items are stored on hard drives. Cloud backup, a digital archive system, and a fully operational metadata system are not in place.

Archived content is mainly used for major anniversaries and national events, including PNG's 50th Anniversary of Independence. Requests for archived material routinely come from government agencies, community groups, and families, but retrieval remains manual. Respondents described clear value in the archive but said its impact on routine newsroom operations remains limited, as retrieval systems are still developing.

EMTV, PNG

EMTV is a long-established commercial television station in PNG, broadcasting since 1987.⁸ Archiving is overseen by two staff in the production unit, with most expertise developed on the job through practical experience. Much of the archive remains in legacy formats including videotapes and older broadcast media, and access is becoming more difficult as playback equipment ages and replacement parts become scarce. Decisions about what material to archive are made informally, typically based on perceived editorial or historical significance.

⁷ National Broadcasting Corporation, "[About NBC.](#)" accessed March 30, 2026.

⁸ EMTV, "[About EMTV.](#)" accessed 30th March 2026.

EMTV stores its archive on-site and backs up material on hard drives and Linear Tape-Open (LTO)⁹ digital backup systems. In January 2025, 490 tapes were digitised through support from the Media Development Initiative (MDI). Further progress has slowed due to ageing playback and storage hardware. EMTV plans to migrate its digital holdings to a Telkom-hosted cloud system once the infrastructure is operational. It also works with the National Film Institute in Goroka to digitise selected legacy recordings, such as tapes, reels, and older broadcast media.

Historical footage is reused in news and feature programming, and respondents reported that early digitisation has improved retrieval and enabled the sharing of archival material in national storytelling. This was evident during the 2025 Independence coverage, which involved exchanging archival content with other broadcasters, including NBC TV and TVWAN.

Requests for archival material also come from government, broadcasters, and educational users. Respondents noted interest in future licensing as a potential revenue stream but said clearer governance and consent processes would be needed first.

Radio 2AP and TV9 Samoa

Radio 2AP and TV9 operate under the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, with archival responsibility, according to respondents, sitting in practice within the broadcaster.

There are no dedicated archival staff, and archival work is carried out alongside other duties. Since 2023, an ABCID-supported initiative to preserve and improve access to Radio 2AP's broadcast heritage has accelerated digitisation, with all audio now digitised. These include early Samoan-language recordings such as content covering the 1970 papal visit. However, workflows remain informal, and selection decisions continue to be guided by perceived cultural or historical significance rather than documented criteria.

Digitised copies are stored on-site on a server and hard drive, with no cloud-based backup in place. Respondents also identified inconsistent metadata as a barrier to retrieval. Archived content is used on Radio 2AP in storytelling and cultural programming, as well as anniversaries and community features. Requests for archival material also come from universities, cultural institutions, and government agencies, but respondents noted the absence of a documented system to guide access, permissions, or consent. There were also concerns about how open-access digital material may be reused without appropriate context.

Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC)

SIBC operates as the national broadcaster and, in practice, holds much of Solomon Islands' recorded audiovisual heritage. Archival work is managed by a three-person library team who also carry out newsroom or production duties. Archiving remains largely manual. Content is selected after broadcast and moved from the on-air server to an archive server, but respondents did not identify a consistent documented system for deciding what should be kept or how it should be tagged with metadata. Respondents also noted that much of the collection remains in analogue formats, including recordings from the colonial period through independence.

⁹ Linear Tape-Open (LTO) is a digital tape storage system used to back up and preserve large digital files. Unlike older analogue tapes, LTO stores digital data and is commonly used for long-term backup and archiving.

A digitisation studio was previously established with UNESCO support, but equipment deterioration has limited its use. In 2024, support through ABCID enabled digitisation of around 2,000 analogue tapes. Storage remains concentrated at a single site and there is no dedicated climate-controlled archive space. Archived material is not embedded consistently in newsroom workflows, and access requests from researchers, students, and veterans' groups are handled manually. Respondents also indicated that any future monetisation, including licensing or educational partnerships (e.g. access for schools or universities), would require stronger governance and preservation systems.

Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC)

TBC operates as Tonga's national broadcaster and is the primary broadcaster used for public information during emergencies.¹⁰ It holds a substantial collection of audiovisual material documenting national events, culture, and public life. Archiving responsibilities are managed by one dedicated staff member, with support from the news and content team. Respondents estimated that about 99 per cent of current output is archived. Historical collections date back to Radio Tonga's establishment in 1961 and include speeches, cultural programming, and national ceremonies. Around 50 per cent of archival holdings have been digitised, but the remainder remains in analogue formats, and some materials are difficult to access due to limited availability of functioning playback equipment.

Storage relies mainly on external hard drives, some of which respondents said have failed over time. Certain materials are stored in air-conditioned environments, but more stable long-term storage is not in place. Archived content is used in news programming and is regularly requested by ministries, schools, churches, NGOs, and diaspora communities. TBC currently charges a nominal fee for community access and is exploring a more structured online model, including possible subscriptions through its website. Respondents did not identify formal cultural governance or consent frameworks, but indicated that archive use is expected to align with community expectations around cultural sensitivities.

Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation (VBTC)

VBTC operates as Vanuatu's national broadcaster and primary channel for emergency communications. Archive work is led by the Head of Content and a full-time librarian. Most materials have been catalogued, but respondents said there is no structured system for deciding what should be preserved over time. Older analogue recordings remain difficult to access due to their condition and the limited availability of functioning playback equipment.

VBTC stores legacy tapes, cassettes, and discs in a dedicated archive room next to the newsroom. Systematic digitisation has not begun. Staff explained that progress was disrupted by the 2024 Port Vila earthquake, which displaced shelves and materials and required archive items to be manually matched back to the catalogue. Backups are stored locally and through a cloud arrangement, but respondents did not identify this as providing off-island redundancy. Requests for archival material are common, especially from researchers and students, but respondents noted that materials are rarely loaned due to their fragile condition. Respondents emphasised that any future monetisation plans would require stronger governance and consent procedures.

¹⁰ Tonga Meteorological Service, [Tropical Cyclone Operational Procedures, sec. 71](#), "Tonga Broadcasting Commission," accessed June 1, 2026.



Newspaper archive at former Taimi o Tonga office, Nuku'alofa. Image credit: ABC International Development

CROSS-CUTTING RECOMMENDATIONS

The following regional recommendations are informed by findings across the six countries and participating media organisations. The recommendations are specific to media organisations, relevant government agencies, and development partners supporting media and information systems in the Pacific. They are structured as practical, staged actions that can be adapted to different national contexts, recognising that capacity, infrastructure, and resources vary across organisations.

Short term: Stabilise and make existing archives usable

1. Conduct structured assessments of archival holdings and risks

Key actors: Media organisations (lead), with support from development partners and regional archival organisations where requested (technical advice)

Respondents expressed interest in developing a clearer understanding of what archival material exists in their organisation, where it is stored, and what is most at risk. This involves undertaking a structured stocktake of collections, including formats and quantities, storage conditions, and priority content. In most organisations, knowledge of collections remains undocumented and held by individual staff.

2. Improve storage of physical collections

Key actors: Media organisations (lead), with support from regional archival organisations and development partners where requested (technical advice and practical storage guidance)

Findings indicate that many physical collections are stored without dedicated temperature or relative humidity management. Respondents noted that secure, clean, and stable storage remains an operational necessity, including appropriate shelving and reducing the use of boxes stacked on floors.

Where collections are split across multiple locations, consolidation may also help organisations monitor and manage materials more effectively until digitisation is possible.

3. Secure access to critical playback equipment or digitisation support

Key actors: Media organisations (lead), with support from development partners (technical advice, indicative costings, and guidance on equipment sourcing)

Respondents consistently identified the importance of securing access to essential playback equipment for older formats, recognising that many machines are obsolete, difficult to repair, and increasingly hard to source. Where equipment cannot be repaired or replaced, respondents noted that organisations may have to work with specialist providers or archival partners who can transfer legacy material into digital formats. In most organisations, some content remains inaccessible due to non-functioning equipment.

4. Strengthen basic cataloguing and metadata practices

Key actors: Media organisations (lead), with support from regional archival partners and development partners (training and tools)

Across most sampled organisations, respondents highlighted the importance of introducing simple and consistent ways to record information about archived content as part of routine practice. They noted that basic metadata (such as titles, dates, unique identifiers and locations) can substantially improve how material is found, reused, and prepared for digitisation.

5. Target digitisation of priority materials

Key actors: Media organisations (lead), with technical support from development partners and regional archival organisations

Respondents highlighted the importance of prioritising digitisation for materials that are deteriorating, culturally significant, or frequently requested. As older tapes deteriorate and playback equipment becomes harder to source, respondents noted that this work should begin as a priority rather than wait until all storage, metadata, and governance systems are fully developed.

6. Develop simple internal processes for archive requests and access

Key actors: Media organisations (lead), with input from cultural institutions and development partners where relevant

Respondents raised the need for clearer internal processes to manage external requests for archival content. This includes recording enquiries, identifying requested material, documenting approval decisions, and tracking what has been shared. In many organisations, current practices are informal, which can make access inconsistent and difficult to monitor.

Medium term (3–5 years): Build systems and strengthen collaboration

7. Assess feasible local digital storage options

Key actors: Media organisations (lead), with support from universities (hosting infrastructure and technical input), telecom providers (connectivity, cloud or data hosting options, and network reliability), ICT (Information and Communication Technology) ministries (alignment with national digital infrastructure and standards), and development partners (technical assistance for feasibility assessments)

Interview and survey findings highlight the need to explore more stable and locally sustainable storage options. This includes considering server-based, university-hosted, or hybrid cloud solutions. Any assessment should take into account cost, bandwidth, redundancy, and long-term maintenance to ensure solutions are practical and sustainable.

8. Strengthen rights, permissions, and cultural-use frameworks

Key actors: Media organisations (lead), with input from Pacific legal advisers, cultural institutions, rights holders, and development partners where relevant

Findings point to the need for clearer guidance on who can approve access to archived material, how permissions should be recorded, and what conditions apply to reuse. This should include rights and attribution arrangements, consent processes for culturally sensitive material, and simple records of what has been shared externally. Clearer rights frameworks would also provide a foundation for future educational licensing, partnerships, or monetisation.

9. Strengthen regional peer learning and technical exchange

Key actors: Media organisations (lead), with support from regional organisations and development partners

Interview and survey findings highlighted the value of strengthening peer learning and technical exchange across Pacific broadcasters. This includes sharing practical tools, experiences, and approaches to common challenges. Respondents noted that regional collaboration can improve efficiency by enabling shared solutions to common technical and resource constraints.

Longer term (5+ years): Expand access and sustainability

10. Explore small-scale, ethical access and monetisation models

Key actors: Media organisations (lead), with support from development partners (technical advice) and telecom providers (platform and payment infrastructure where relevant)

Overall findings indicate interest in exploring small-scale and low-risk ways to provide paid access to archived content, including paid educational licensing and managed access for research and documentary purposes. Respondents also emphasised that any monetisation should be introduced gradually and only after improvements in preservation, metadata, and governance are in place. Respondents further highlighted that access and use must follow clear consent processes and respect cultural protocols, particularly for sensitive material.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this comprehensive research on digital archiving in the Pacific show that media organisations across the region are actively preserving and using archival material, providing a strong foundation for further development. At the same time, the findings suggest that strengthening digital archiving is best approached in stages. Immediate priorities relate to stabilising physical collections, improving basic storage, and enabling access. Medium-term efforts can build systems and collaboration, while longer-term opportunities such as monetisation depend on these foundations being in place. Although some organisations expressed interest in monetisation, respondents generally saw this as only feasible once archives are preserved, findable, and usable. This staged approach reduces risk and aligns investment with what organisations are currently able to sustain. Strengthening archives also presents an opportunity for Pacific broadcasters, development partners, cultural institutions, technical providers, and relevant government agencies to work together on a shared regional challenge that no single organisation can address alone.