



AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Family History Kit contents

Before you start

- Stolen Generations
- Proof of Aboriginality
- Understanding the challenges
- Indigenous names
- Thinking about place
- Researching one ancestor
- Past caring: barriers to research

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- Australian Capital Territory
- New South Wales
- Northern Territory
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Western Australia





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Stolen Generations

Family tracing and reunion services are available to members of the Stolen Generations through the national Link-Up program. Link-Up was established in 1997 as a result of the recommendations of the Bringing Them Home Report.

About the Stolen Generations

The Stolen Generations are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who, when they were children, were taken away from their families and communities as the result of past government policies. Children were removed by governments, churches and welfare bodies to be brought up in institutions, fostered out or adopted by white families.

The removal of Aboriginal children took place from the early days of British colonisation in Australia. It broke important cultural, spiritual and family ties and has left a lasting and intergenerational impact on the lives and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Government policies concerning Aboriginal people were implemented under different laws in the different states and territories of Australia. These laws meant that the lives of Indigenous people were controlled by government: marriages, work, wages, housing, children and access to health care.

Records about the Stolen Generations and their families were kept by governments, as well as by churches and missions. But many records have been lost: fires, floods, poor recordkeeping and changes to government departments can make it very difficult to trace family connections.

Link-Up

Link-Up organisations around Australia provide family tracing and reunion services to members of the Stolen Generations, their families, and foster and adoptive families. These services include:

- researching family and personal records
- emotional support when accessing family and personal records
- finding family members
- assistance and support at family reunions
- support and counselling before, during and after family reunion.



Link-Ups give priority to first generation members of the Stolen Generations who have directly experienced removal or separation from family and community, especially those who are elderly or have urgent health concerns.

Link-Ups also provide services to subsequent generations of family members who have been affected by intergenerational trauma related to removal, and to members of families and communities from whom children were removed.

Link-Up locations

There are Link-Up organisations in most states and territories.

- New South Wales: www.linkupnsw.org.au
- Northern Territory Stolen Generations: www.ntsgac.org.au
- Queensland: www.link-upqld.org.au
- South Australia – Nunkuwarrin Yunti: nunku.org.au/our-services/social-emotional/link-up/
- Tasmania – no Link-Up services operate in Tasmania
- Victoria: www.linkupvictoria.org.au
- Western Australia – Kimberley Stolen Generation: kimberleystolengeneration.com.au
- Western Australia – Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation: www.yorgum.org.au
- Australian Capital Territory – contact New South Wales

See: Where to get help – Link-Up services for all contact information.

History of Link-Up services

In 1997 the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) undertook the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families. The Commission's findings, Bringing Them Home Report, made 54 recommendations.

Among those recommendations 30a, 30b and 33-35 which addressed the need to:

assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people separated from their families under past laws, practices and policies of Australian governments, to undertake family tracing and reunion initiatives.

As a result, the Australian Government funded a national network of family tracing and reunion services – the National Link-Up Program. A number of Link-Ups or other organisations provide reunion and family tracing services for members of the Stolen Generations before this program.

State or territory	Service	Established
New South Wales	Link-Up NSW	1980
Queensland	Link-Up QLD	1984
Northern Territory	Link-Up Services in the NT	1985
	Central Australian Aboriginal & Islander Child Care Agency	1992
Victoria	Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency	1993
Tasmania	Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre	1994
Western Australia	Yorganop Child Care Aboriginal Corp	1992–93
South Australia	Aboriginal Link-up Family Information Sect, Dept of Family and Community Services	1994–95

AIATSIS Family History Unit and Link-Ups

The AIATSIS Family History Unit works closely with Link-Ups to help members of the Stolen Generations to find their family and to find out about their family history.

- With Link-Ups, AIATSIS has developed a Cert IV in Stolen Generations Family History Research and Case Management
- AIATSIS also offers ongoing research support in family tracing.
- AIATSIS has memorandums of understanding with institutions located in Canberra and can assist Link-Ups to find and retrieve documents from the following institutions: ACT Heritage Library and ACT Territory Records, Australian War Memorial, National Archives of Australia, National Library of Australia, and the Noel Butlin Archives Centre.



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Proof of Aboriginality

Please note: AIATSIS cannot comment on, prove or provide confirmation of anyone's Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Heritage.

Your Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage is something that is personal to you. You do not need a letter of confirmation to identify as an Indigenous person. However, you may be asked to provide proof or confirmation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage when applying for Indigenous-specific services or programs such as:

- grants (such as Indigenous housing loans, research and study grants)
- university courses (with specific positions for Indigenous students)
- Centrelink and housing assistance (Indigenous-specific)
- employment (Indigenous identified positions)
- school programs for Indigenous students.

Government agencies and community organisations usually accept three 'working criteria' as confirmation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage:

- being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person
- being accepted as such by the community in which you live, or formerly lived.

All of these things must apply. The way you look or how you live are not requirements.

Government agencies, universities and schools will often supply you with their particular guidelines, and ask you to complete a form or provide a letter of 'Proof' or 'Confirmation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Heritage'.

Why is it so involved?

Indigenous-specific services and programs are intended to address social, health and educational issues that Indigenous people face as the result of past removal policies and inadequate educational, employment and health services. Requesting proof of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage from applicants helps to make sure that this intention is honoured.



How do I obtain proof of my Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage?

Doing your family history may help you obtain proof of your heritage. You might find a birth, death or marriage record that traces your family to a particular Aboriginal station or reserve. Or you might have oral history stories that can connect you to a particular area or person or photograph.

Gather as much information about your family history and heritage as possible

Our online Finding Your Family resources can help you find evidence of your connection to your Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander ancestors.

Whatever your situation, contact a relevant Indigenous organisation for assistance.

When you apply for proof of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage through an Indigenous organisation, they will probably ask you to explain your heritage to their committee. For this reason it's useful to find out as much as you can about your family history before you contact them. This is particularly important if you or your ancestors have been displaced from your heritage.

A 'letter of confirmation' is usually obtained from an incorporated Indigenous organisation and must be stamped with their common seal.

Who to contact

You may need to contact an organisation where your family is from – someone in the community might know or remember your family.

An Indigenous organisation in the area where you currently live may also be able to provide you with this confirmation.

For example, if you live in Canberra and your family is from the Canberra region, you should contact the Ngunnawal Land Council in Queanbeyan. If you live in Canberra but your family is from somewhere else, you should contact the land council in the area your family came from or were best known in.

To find the contact details of a land council or other Indigenous community organisation:

- search the Yellow Pages – type 'Aboriginal' in the 'Business type or name' box and add a place name, or in the print version look under 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Associations and Organisations'
- do a web search for 'Aboriginal' and the place name
- call the Indigenous Co-ordination Centre (ICC) on 1800 079 098.





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Understanding the challenges

Most family history research projects are complex, time-consuming and frustrating. Tracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family histories poses a unique set of challenges. Stories passed down through your family and interviews with family members are a key source of information BUT they may be different from the information in historical records.

You have to be the judge of what's more likely to be right or wrong.

Finding your history

Researching your family history means looking for evidence – like a detective – often in the form of 'records'. Records are the many pieces of paper that officials or professionals make about us. Think Centrelink forms and records, or the records your doctor keeps about you.

What records might have information?

Records about Indigenous people have been created by a range of organisations and individuals, such as welfare and protection boards, adoption agencies, education and health departments, police forces, churches, missionaries, anthropologists and other academic researchers. See *Past caring* a paper by Kim Katon (2002).

Many records about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are part of complex recordkeeping systems maintained by governments, churches or other organisations.

Finding records with the information you want can be difficult, even when there are databases, guides, indexes and finding aids to help you.

Family histories and life stories are a good source of information

Since the 1980s many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have recorded their life stories and those of their families and communities. Native Title claims may also be a significant source for Indigenous family history researchers.

Sometimes the records you want don't exist or can't be found

But written proof may not exist because the records were:

- lost with the passing of time
- destroyed because they were no longer useful or because they were embarrassing or legally dangerous for the people who created them



- never created in the first place – for example, a baby whose birth was not registered will not have a birth certificate.

The content of historical records may upset you

You might find the content of records upsetting or offensive.

Offensive. Historical records reflect the perspectives and attitudes of the people who made them. Records about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people often reflect the biased and racist views of white officials, missionaries, station owners and others. They can contain material that is derogatory and use words and ideas you find offensive.

Personal. The records might contain very private and intimate information about you or your family members. They might contradict each other and present conflicting information. They might contain information that you know is wrong or that challenges what you have always believed about your family's past and present history.

But is it true? Information written down in an official-looking document seems to have a lot of weight (especially to other officials). But you can challenge the official sources and point out biases and inaccuracies. Understanding why records were created will help you to decide how much weight you are going to give to each record that you find.

Getting support

Indigenous family history research can take you on a very emotional journey. It's a good idea to make sure that someone is with you for support, debriefing and a 'reality check' the first time you get access to sensitive records.

Sometimes you may need support because it is just not possible to find what you want to know about your ancestors. You might not be able to prove who your ancestors were. This can be very frustrating and disheartening.

The bottom line – Make sure you have support!





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Indigenous names

Names are a real challenge in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history research.

Many names may be used throughout a lifetime

Your ancestor may have used or been known by many names throughout their life:

- a traditional name
- a kinship name
- a European first name and/or surname, sometimes the name of the pastoral station where they worked
- a nickname.

Their name may also have changed with marriage, partnerships, adoption or fostering.

It was common for people to use names that were different from the names they were given at birth. Even today family members might use a name that's different from the one listed on official documentation. For example, Vera Lillian at birth might have been known as Lillian (or Lily, Lilli, Lilly and Lillie) throughout life. Or a woman known as Mary Jane throughout her life might have been Janet May at birth.

Sometimes people chose to change their names and used different names in different circumstances.

But often names were changed by employers or missionaries or when a child was removed to a foster home or training institution.

Indigenous people who performed in rodeos or boxing tents may have been given 'stage names'.

In your family history research you are highly likely to find a range of different names for the same person. You will also probably find some unexpected variations in the spellings of names, especially in older documents.

Spelling mistakes

You will find that some of the problems with names are caused by spelling mistakes. Until very late in the 19th century few people could read and write and names were often written down as they sounded. The result was a lot of errors.



Indigenous names were written down in different ways by different Europeans. For example, an English station manager and a German missionary would spell the same Indigenous name differently because they spoke different languages themselves and heard Indigenous languages through the filter of their own language.

Also common English given names were sometimes abbreviated. For example, Chas for Charles, Geo. for George and Wm for William. Search Wikipedia for a useful list of 'abbreviations for English given names'.

When you are looking for records about your ancestor, it is important to check every known name, nickname and every possible spelling variation you can imagine. When you take notes or compile your own family tree, write people's names out in full and record any variations.

Key points to remember as you research your ancestors

- Sometimes the only recorded names we have for Aboriginal people, particularly from the 19th century, are nicknames or joke names given to them by Europeans – for example, 'Little Jack', 'Old Mary' and 'Billy Boy'.
- Old records sometimes include terms like 'native' or 'Aboriginal' or 'Aborigine' alongside the names of Aboriginal people.
- They may also include 'caste' terms like 'full blood', 'half-caste', 'quarter-caste' etc.
- Many Aboriginal people were known by a single or common first name and no surname – for example, Nellie, Jenny and Lizzy for women, and Bobby, Jimmy and Charlie for men.
- Surnames were often assigned by European employers and sometimes given the employer's surname.
- Some surnames were derived from the names of rural properties or place of residence.
- Some Indigenous people adopted aliases to avoid control by police and government.
- Women often used the surname of their male partner or husband, and were known by many different surnames over their lifetime.
- Children often used the surname of a step-father.

Examples of name variations

First name

Allen

Ann

Barney

Beverly

Bill

Catherine

Cecil

Charlotte

Christine

Desree

Dianne

Doreen

Dorothy

Edward

Elizabeth

Ellen

Ernest

Florence

Frances

Francis

Frederick

Helen

Jack

James

Jeffrey

Jessie

Joseph

Joyce

Judith

Katherine

Kathleen

Lesley

Lynette

Margaret

Name variants

Al, Alen, Alan

Hannah

Herbert

Bevely, Bev

William

Cathy, Kate, Kay

Cec

Lottie, Tottie

Christeen, Chris, Crissy, Chrissy, Christie

Des

Diane, Dianna, Diana, Di

Dor

Dolly, Dot, Dorrie

Edie, Eddie

Betty, Bess, Beth, Liz, Lizzie, Eliza, Tibby, Libby

Nell, Nellie

Ernist, Ern, Ernie, Erny

Florrie, Florry, Flo

Fanny, Fanno, Fran

Frank

Fred, Freddy

Nell

John

Jim, Jimmy, Jimmie

Jeff, Jefferey, Geoffrey, Geoff

Jessica Jessy, Jes

Joe, Jo, Joey

Joy

Judy

Cathy, Kate, Kay

Kathline, Kath

Leslie, Les

Lyn

Maggie, Meg, Peg, Molly, Daisy

Marjorie
Mary
Matilda
Michael
Nancy
Neville
Patricia
Patrick
Reginald
Robert
Ronald
Stanley
Steven
Valerie

Marjory, Marj
Maisie
Tilly, Mattie, Matie, Tilda
Mick
Agnes
Nevil, Nevel, Nev
Pat, Patty, Trish
Pat, Paddy
Reginal, Reg, Reggie
Rob, Bob, Bobby
Ron, Ronnie, Ronny
Stan
Stephen, Steve
Valery, Val

Family name

Hurley
Anderson
Holden
Hawkins
Henry

Alternative name

Early
Henderson
Olden
Orkins
Enemy



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Thinking about place

Place is central in uncovering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history. Knowing where your ancestors lived, worked and travelled is essential for locating relevant records. It also provides clues that help you solve research puzzles.

Start with what you already know about where your family lived

Where were you born? Where did you grow up? Where did your parents meet? Were they married? If so, where? Where were they born and raised? What places do they mention when they are telling stories about their lives?

The most basic piece of information you need is the state or territory. You need to know this to request birth, death and marriage certificates, for example. But beyond this, knowing the state or territory will help you locate other records, particularly those created by state, territory and colonial governments in their administration of Aboriginal affairs.

Colonies, states and territories

Before 1901 Australia's states were separate colonies, with their own governments, laws and policies. The colonies united at Federation and power was then shared between the new federal government and the state governments. The federal government was able to make laws about national matters, like defence, immigration and trade. The states (and later the territories) made other laws, including laws concerning Aboriginal people.

When you know where your family lived, you might also be able to get help from the relevant state and territory government Aboriginal family and community history unit.

Looking at the historical documents you find, keep an eye out for places. Take note of the town or suburb, and the street address if it's given. These details can lead to other sources and other records. Some documents will have names of pastoral stations or other properties.

Find out where your ancestors moved

Did they move between towns and between colonies or states, particularly if they lived near a border? Indigenous Countries nearly always crossed European boundaries. People moved for lots of different reasons – for example, a woman might have moved to her husband's home when she married, or a couple might have moved to find work, or they might have been moved onto a reserve, station or mission. People also travelled to participate in ceremony.

If your family did move through several states or territories, you will need to search for records and other traces of your ancestors in all of these places.



Explore the history of the places your ancestors lived

Learn as much as you can about the history of the places where your family lived. Was there an Aboriginal mission, reserve or station in the area? Were particular types of employment associated with the town? Was it a mining town or might your family members have worked on a pastoral property? Knowing this information can help you track down records.

Language groups and places

Learn as much as you can about the people and language groups that lived in the places where your ancestors lived. Local Land Councils will have extensive information about the people and language groups in that area. Native Title claims are also an excellent source of information.

The AIATSIS map of Aboriginal Australia may help you to identify the language groups associated with particular places. See: aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aboriginal-australia-map

The AIATSIS Language Groups Thesaurus in Pathways is a comprehensive list of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language groups. See: www1.aiatsis.gov.au/index.asp

Create your own map

It can be very helpful to mark the places your ancestors lived on a map. This helps you see how far places were apart and think about how and why your ancestors moved around. You can use a printed map or one that's online, like Google Maps. If you have trouble locating the places on a modern map, check the Geoscience Australia Place Names Search – it has the names of historical places. Local libraries often have historical maps, including maps of stations and properties.

Try to visit

If you can, visit the places where your ancestors lived. The local library, historical society or family history society might have useful information – they often have copies of cemetery records and photographs not available elsewhere, for example.

The local Aboriginal community organisation might be able to connect you with people who knew your family. You might also be able to track down the house your ancestors lived in, see the places they worked, and get a feel for what their local community was like.



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Researching one ancestor

The best approach to Indigenous family history research is to start with yourself and work backwards through the generations. But many people just want to look for particular people in their family tree and to find out more about them.

This type of research will put you in the same position as a stranger doing research on your ancestors.

- You will only have access to historical information that is publicly available.
- You will not be able to gain access to information where you have to prove your relationship to the person you are researching.

This may be frustrating if the reason you want to do research on this person is to prove your relationship to them.

What information do you need?

Our experience at the Family History Unit is that people may have one or more names, some places where the people lived, and perhaps information about when and where they died.

If you are in this situation:

- Write down everything you know about the person and try to be as specific as possible about names, dates and places.
- Think about all possible variations of the names and write these down.
- Ask anyone in your family who might have more information or might have photographs or documents. See Sources at home.
- Try to find out if the people lived on missions or reserves or had anything to do with government or church protection or welfare.

Where do you start?

- Start with BDM historical indexes – try every possible spelling or name variation. Try very broad searches (just the last name) and scroll through all of the results. If you find something great! If you don't, either the person was never registered, or they used a different name, or the name was misspelled, or the records were lost or destroyed.
- Then do name searches and place in the following indexes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:



- AIATSIS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI)
 - AIATSIS Mura® catalogue
 - Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies (CIFHS)
- If you think there is a chance that one of the people you are researching might have done military service, search the National Archives RecordSearch database.
 - Next dive deeply into the Indigenous family history resources available for each state and territory (see *Where to get help*). These guides will give you many ideas and resources – it will take time and persistence to work.

If your name searches don't find the exact people you are looking for, they may locate people with same surname in the same location. Depending on the timeframe and how common the name is, others with the same surname may be in the extended family. These search results might also give you an idea of places that may be significant.

- You can also contact the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history team in the relevant state or territory. See *Where to get help – state or territory*.

Researching places rather than names

Sometimes the best way (or the only way) to find out more about an Indigenous ancestor is to do in-depth research on the places where they lived. Reading histories of places, or histories of people who lived in those places may lead you to information about your ancestor (or at least information about what their lives may have been).

- The two AIATSIS searches (ABI and Mura) will give you a list of material held in the AIATSIS collections about that place. The best material would be a life story or the history of a family or a mission. You can then read about Indigenous people who may have lived at the same time and in the same place as the person you are looking for. In some cases, people in your family will be mentioned in the book.
- The CIFHS search on place will enable you to see what if any people are recorded at that place in the CIFHS collection. If you find people at the same place and time, you can then try searching for their names in AIATSIS indexes.

Other sources of information about places are:

- Google search on placename + Aboriginal – you may find reports or community websites or blogs or other information about the Indigenous history of that place. You are also likely to find language and group names associated with that place.
- Many government bodies publish environmental reports on places that include a significant section on the Indigenous history. These histories will name Aboriginal organisations and individuals who contributed information to the report.

- AIATSIS' Aboriginal Australia map is also a good source of information about the people and language groups associated with specific areas.
- Once you have a language/group name, you can search for Native Title Claims filed by that group. Sometimes the information about a claim includes a list of claimants and their line of descent from an original traditional owner. See: AIATSIS Pathways Thesaurus for information on languages and groups.

Extend your search net to more general resources

- Search the National Library of Australia's Trove newspaper database (this is a long shot, but occasionally you will find valuable information like divorce announcements).
- Search a genealogical database like ancestry.com.au or FindMyPast. Both of these require subscriptions, but some local libraries or local family history groups will help you. You might find information in Electoral Rolls.

Get help from government record agencies

If you haven't found information in the places listed above that are easily accessible to anyone, you can also try to get access to records that have 'access conditions'. This means that you won't be able to access the records unless you can prove some relationship to the person.

- Contact the government departments that assist Indigenous Australians to do family history research (see 'Where to get help' for the state where your ancestor lived).

Concerns about privacy and personal records – Access Conditions

It is a source of great frustration to many Indigenous family history researchers that they cannot get access to records they know must be there about their families. Mostly these are government records and mostly they are held by government record authorities such as archives and birth, death and marriage registries.

The record holders must balance the need to protect the privacy of the people records are about – they often contain very personal information – with the needs of the public to have access to information.

If you do find yourself feeling frustrated about access conditions, take a minute to imagine that these are records about you and that the person sitting next you on the bus has just tried to get access to them!

Depending on your age and the age of the records you are seeking, you may find that in 5 or 10 years the records become 'open'. Each year there is a new release of records that fall within the 30, 75, 100 year limit. See Sources – birth, death and marriage records for information about Access Conditions.





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Past caring

This paper by Kim Katon explains why it might be difficult to find records when doing Indigenous family history research.

In looking beyond our usual professional preoccupations and in thinking about our place in the world as archivists and record keepers it is important to understand that Indigenous Australians have a relationship with records that is significantly different to the majority of other Australians. Considering this different relationship means considering what Indigenous people expect of archivists and other record keepers that other Australians may not.

The conference theme is based on past caring and our roles as mediators between society and records. Past caring therefore incorporates understanding the variety of barriers Indigenous people face in locating and accessing records that relate directly to themselves, their kin and community.

The first and most important aspect to consider is that generally Indigenous people are unaware of what records have been created about them, their families and communities, and the reasons behind their creation. Without this knowledge it is difficult to find a starting point in their search for their history. Therefore, Indigenous people must be informed about the records, the services available and their rights of access as this is one of the biggest barriers to Aboriginal people gaining control over their historical documents and thus their history. People who live in remote areas are often more disadvantaged by their geographical location.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Bringing Them Home Report acknowledged that "...most Aboriginal people do not know about the existence of records, their rights of access, how to go about the search or the availability of assistance" and that "... information about the availability of access to records should be widely communicated through Indigenous communities" (HREOC 1997:340). Further, an "... informed Aboriginal population will have much greater feelings of power over its own destiny" (Henrietta Fourmile in HEROC – 1997:354). Therefore, in looking outside the boundaries of our professions we need to look at, and rethink our history and our positions in relationship to Aboriginal people and existing historical records.

It is important to understand that records pertaining to Indigenous people were created by a range of agencies, for example, Protection and Welfare Boards, Adoption Agencies, Education and Health Departments, Police Forces, Churches, Missionaries, Anthropologists and a range of academics. They were created for a variety of reasons, for example, for the 'protection and care' of Aboriginal people, but most prominently they provided a means of regulating the lives of Aboriginal people. Agencies such as the Aborigines Protection and Welfare Boards existed in all states at various times. Most often the Board's representation came through the police force



where police officers were appointed as 'Guardians of Aborigines', thus acting as both protector and prosecutor and in doing so greatly diminished the legal rights of Indigenous Australians. From this imposed relationship came a paper trail documenting a history of oppression.

If we are to appreciate and understand the value of such documentation we must understand and accept that Indigenous people have experienced a different and discriminatory history to mainstream Australian society - a history that has, for the most part, been kept secret. In many cases the secrecy has been achieved through the loss and destruction of records which has often been "... due to concerns their contents would embarrass the government" (HREOC Report 1997:326).

In our professions we are aware that records are owned by those who created them and stored in a variety of places, not only archives and libraries. For many Aboriginal people knowing where to look can be a frustrating barrier as well as going through the process of gaining permission from the owner. Just knowing which agency was involved can be an obstacle as most people searching for family information were children when these records were created. Indexes, guides, databases and finding aids have been produced that can assist people, but generally they are not designed for use by people unaccustomed to research and thus can be seen as yet another barrier.

The history of exclusion from educational institutions for Aboriginal people is yet another barrier when it comes to researching Aboriginal history. It must be remembered that in NSW the authority to exclude an Aboriginal child from school based solely on their Aboriginality remained in the NSW Teacher Handbook until 1972. The consequences of this educational disadvantage is very evident in the low levels of literacy many people experience today and creates a huge barrier when people know that someone else will have to read the documents to them if they are ever to know the contents. It is also sometimes the situation that "...the jargon is simply incomprehensible to many ..." (HREOC Report 1997:343).

This not only causes embarrassment in the initial stages of request for information, but also can cause great distress when a stranger reveals the contents. People have sometimes taken great lengths to put the past in the back of their minds. The emotional responses experienced as a result of the content of these documents vary from happiness to great distress. The records are often written in a very derogatory manner, contain very private and intimate information, have many errors, but can also hold the key to a person's identity. It also causes great distress when people are informed that although the information contained within the document may be incorrect, they can't change it, they can't destroy the document and they can't take it away with them. They also fear what future generations will think when they read these documents, knowing that they will not be alive to explain that they are not true or to explain the situation or event from their perspective. The interpretation of these records therefore raises yet another barrier.

Another issue to consider is that there are not enough Indigenous people employed in the areas where Aboriginal people will be searching. This is slowly changing but the change is far too

slow. It is more often the case that Aboriginal people would rather have another Aboriginal person assist them in their research as experience has shown that often the non-Aboriginal archivist or librarian is unaware of the different history Aboriginal people have and therefore can offer no assistance with interpreting the records and as such can be seen as another barrier. More often than not, "Aboriginal people feel ill-at-ease and self-conscious when entering white institutions which emanate an entirely alien cultural presence. So much depends upon the person at the counter" (HREOC Report 1997:343), and hence The Bringing Them Home Report stated that "the role of Indigenous-controlled family tracing and reunion services is therefore critical" (HREOC 1997:339).

Many specialist Indigenous family research services do employ Indigenous staff, for example The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, State Records of New South Wales and State Library of New South Wales. However, agencies find it difficult to employ Aboriginal people because so few Indigenous people are suitably qualified. In addressing this situation HREOC Recommendation 28 states "That the Commonwealth and each State and Territory Government institute traineeships and scholarships for the training of Indigenous archivists, genealogists, historical researchers and counsellors" (HREOC 1997:352) as "Indigenous communities in Australia do not yet control and manage their own completed documentary history" (HREOC 1997:343). Link-Up goes further and ".. recommends the establishment of an Aboriginal Archive where all of the departmental records pertaining to Aboriginal people will be consolidated under an Aboriginal-controlled administration with uniform and culturally appropriate access procedures" (HREOC 1997:353). This is supported by a recommendation from the Bringing Them Home Report which clearly states that "... in the longer term Indigenous communities should have an opportunity to manage their own historical documentation" (HREOC 1997:346).

Finally, past caring means understanding the barriers people face and accepting our role as mediators for a nation of Indigenous people who are still very untrusting of government and its agents. The memories of past government and church involvement in their lives are still very fresh. As mediators we can take the opportunity to develop trusting relationships for the future.

Kim Katon (October 2002)
Senior Family History Officer, AIATSIS
AIATSIS, 2002–2003.

Conference paper: 'Past caring?: What does society expect of archivists?', Australian Society of Archivists Conference, Sydney, 13–17 August 2002.



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Family History Kit – Research step-by-step – contents

- Research step-by-step
- Develop your research plan
- Get organised
- Start with yourself
- Background reading
- Search for records
- Put it all together





Research step-by-step

The steps outlined here provide tips and advice on how to do Indigenous family history research. Some steps and sources will apply to your research, some won't.

Indigenous family history research in seven steps

Preparation

- **Before you start** – Read our information sheets on some of the challenges of Indigenous family history research. See [Before you start](#).
- **Develop your research plan** – The first step is to be very clear about what you want to know and why you want to know it. Then plan how you are going to achieve it. Update the Research plan as you go along. See [Develop your research plan and Toolkit](#).
- **Get organised** – Most people end up with piles of notes, photocopies and other papers. If you decide at the beginning how you are going to keep track of things, it will be easier in the long run. See [Get organised and Toolkit](#).

Close to home – yourself and your family

- **Start with yourself** – Family history research always starts with yourself and works backwards. Write down everything you know as the starting point for your research. Then gather as much information as you can from family members or friends of the family and the sources they have. Photographs, address books, birth, death and marriage certificates and STORIES. Collect all of the family stories you can. See [Start with yourself and Toolkit](#).

Further afield – tracking down the sources

- **Do some background reading** – Once you have a good idea of the places and dates that are important to your family, it may be useful to find out more about the history of the place. Look for family histories, biographies and the history of government legislation relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. See [Sources – background reading](#).
- **Search for records held by organisations** – Once you have gathered as much information as you can from the people know, it's time to get information from organisations. Most of these will be government agencies – libraries, archives, records authorities, registries. At this point you go back to your research plan and decide where you are most likely to find more information. See:
 - [Family history sources](#) – information about the type of information you may find in the different types of sources



- Where to get help – contact information by state and territory for key sources
- Toolkit – worksheets and checklists that will help you plan, search and keep track

Finishing up – what do you do with your research?

- **Put it all together** – Once you've done the research you may want to share it in a family tree, timeline, scrapbook, biography or family history. See: Put it all together.

Do you have to use the Worldwide Web?

Probably, yes.

It's difficult to do research these days without using the Web. Many of the resources that will help you to do your family history research are online. Some of them are only online.

You may need to go to your local library to use one of their computers. Many libraries have courses where you can learn how to search the Web or you can ask a librarian.

Family History Kit

If you are reading this online, AIATSIS has collected all of the information on the Finding your family website into an easy to download Family History Kit. You can download the whole thing at once, or section by section, or page by page. It includes a Toolkit of worksheets and checklists.

See: Family History Kit



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Develop your research plan

The first step in family history research is to be clear about what you're doing. What do you want to find out about your family? Are you just curious, or is there something specific you want to know? Is there a particular ancestor you want to find out about?

Why do you want to know more about your family history? Perhaps you want to:

- know more about your ancestors and where they came from
- create a family tree
- have a family reunion
- write about your life story or that of a family member
- connect with your community, culture and country
- find a family member
- confirm your Aboriginality
- make a native title, land rights, compensation or repatriation claim.

Being clear about what you want to find out, and why, will help you work out the best approach. It might be as simple as getting a copy of your Nan's birth certificate or it might involve in-depth research in historical archives.

Every journey is different

Every research journey is different, but it's a good idea to focus on one research area at a time. For example:

- a specific family group – your mother's father's people
- one surname or family line – the Edwards family
- a question you want to answer – who were your mother's parents?
- A specific person – grandfather John Edwards who lived in Tennant Creek, NT in the 1920s.

Even if you want to know everything about everybody, break up your research into bite-sized pieces. For example, if you want to create a complete family tree for your children, the best way to do this is to focus on one branch at a time working your way back from yourself.

Use the Toolkit Research Plan worksheet to help you organise your research journey.



What's in a research plan?

Aim: What do you want to know?

- Clearly define the aim of your research in the form of a question – What is the story of my mother's side of the family? Where were her parents from? What were their lives like?

Known facts: What do you already know, or what have you learned from previous research?

- Write down what you know and what records you've already searched, if any.
- Use concise statements to summarise this information. For example: My mother's birth certificate says she was born in Dubbo, NSW. Her name at birth was 'Susanne Smith'. Her mother's name was 'Mary Smith' and Mary was 16 at the time of Susanne's birth. Susanne's father's name is not on the birth certificate.

Possible sources: Where could you find out what you want to know?

- Identify records and other sources that might have the information you need. You might look for a marriage certificate or divorce papers. You might ask other family members unless you think they would find it distressing.
- Your possible sources will depend on the time period and location you are researching. For example, if your mother was born on a mission or managed reserve, there will be church or government records.
- You will need to become familiar with the range family history sources and decide which ones are most likely to have the information you are seeking.

Tracking down the information: How will you find the sources you want

- Make a list of sources starting with the ones most likely to answer your research question or easiest to get.
- Note where to find them – are they online? Can you get them from a local library or historical society? Can you ask for copies to be sent to you, or do you have to visit an archive?
- Write down your goal for each source.
- Work through the sources one-by-one and write down what you find out.
- Make a note of clues and random ideas for future research.

Family history research is full of frustrations and dead ends

It's important to step back from time to time and check how it's going.

- Have you found what you wanted to know?



- What have you learned from the information you've found?
- Were you surprised at what you haven't found? What did you learn from this?

If you get stuck

- Pick a new thread and follow this new trail.
- Go back to your notes and look at the notes on random information that you weren't looking for -- now is the time to follow these up.
- Do some more background reading. Reading other people's family histories may give you some fresh ideas. Also, there may be new family histories, new community histories, new historical works on places that are important for your family's history.
- Sometimes you need to come back to a problem later after you've checked other sources.
- Or, unfortunately, you might have to accept that you'll never know the answer to a particular question.

Stay flexible!

- Ask for help
- Debrief with a friend





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Get organised

When doing family history, you'll probably need a system for keeping track of things. Or, like most family history researchers, you will find yourself with piles and piles of photocopies, certificates, computer printouts and scribbled notes.

An organised approach will help you to keep track of:

- what information you have for each ancestor
- what information you are missing for each ancestor
- what sources you have checked and what you found out from them
- which documents and photographs you have as originals or copies
- who you have contacted (e.g. family members or archives) and the responses you received.

There are lots of options for organising your research. You can use:

- paper files or ring binders
- electronic documents and folders (e.g. Microsoft Word)
- genealogy software (e.g. Brothers Keeper, Legacy)
- family history websites (e.g. Find My Past, Ancestry).

What will work best for you?

Paper – simple and cheap. The simplest and cheapest option is a paper-based filing system – all you need is printouts of your worksheets, a notebook and some document wallets or ring binders and plastic pockets. This is a good way to start, even if you later decide to use genealogy software or electronic files on your computer.

Paper and computers. Many family historians use a combination of paper-based and computer systems. Genealogy software has the advantage of being easily updated and printed out, but you will probably still need some sort of system for organising your paper documents, printouts, handwritten notes, letters and emails and texts.

Taking care of original documents. Keep the originals of any old family documents and photographs separately from your research notes. This includes things like birth, marriage and death certificates, family letters, diaries and old newspaper cuttings. You should make a copy of these to keep with your research notes. If possible store the precious originals in acid-free



storage files or archive boxes. Read more on [preserving your family collections](#) from the State Library of Queensland.

Charts and worksheets

Charts and worksheets can help you to your family history research. They are good for:

- seeing your family history as a picture
- pinpointing gaps in what you know
- seeing patterns and connections to people, places and names
- keeping track of where you are so you don't double up.

TIP – working copies

You can keep two copies of charts – a working copy and a final copy where you record information once it is confirmed.

Family history toolkit

We have developed a range of checklists and worksheets that you can download and print. They're in Word so you can change them to fit your own needs.

- **Research plan** – this worksheet will help you to think through what you want to do and how to do it
- **Sources at home** – a checklist that will help you to find information at your own home and the homes of family members
- **Family member information** – a worksheet to help you gather and record information about any person in your family tree
- **Biographical outline** – a worksheet to help you organise information about a person in your family tree as a timeline
- **Records checklist** – a checklist to help you plan your research and think about the many places where you might find information
- **Contacts log** – a worksheet for keeping track of who you have asked for information
- **Research log** – a worksheet for keeping track of what you are doing
- **Planning a visit checklist** – a checklist that will help you plan a physical visit to an organisation like an archives or AIATSIS

TIP: Be consistent in how you write people's names and dates:

- Write surnames in capital letters to avoid confusion – a name written George Stacey could be read as either Stacey GEORGE or George STACEY.
- Refer to women by their maiden name.
- Always write out the name of the month and the full year – use 8 October (or Oct) 1899 not 8/10/99.

These are just suggestions and tools that might be helpful. In the end, you'll need to find a system that works for you!

Filing

Family history research creates stacks of papers and (if you decide not to use the piles of papers on the kitchen table approach) you will need to figure out how to file it.

- If you have computer folders as well as physical folders, use the same filing system and label your folders in the same way. Writing surnames in capital letters helps you scan folder names quickly (e.g. MILLER Annie).
- Make a folder for each family line (many people start with four such ancestral lines, one for each of their grandparents)
- Make a folder for each couple
- Make a folder for each surname
- Make folders by record type (birth records, electoral rolls, protection records)
- Label your folders clearly so that you can find material quickly.

Keeping track of your sources

A source is where you found information about the past. Some common historical sources are birth certificates, divorce papers, wills, photographs and other pictures, oral histories, family interviews, sound recordings, books, objects and buildings.

Historians divide historical sources into two categories: primary sources and secondary sources.

- **Primary sources** were created at or around the time an event took place. Someone with direct and personal knowledge of the event or time period created the record. Examples of primary sources are: birth certificates, diaries, newspaper articles, photographs, military service records. Primary sources are the most reliable sources, but they might still be incomplete, biased or inaccurate.

- **Secondary sources** were not created at the time that an event occurred. They were created by someone who did not experience the event or time period you are studying. They include published and unpublished histories (including family histories), indexes and databases. Secondary sources can provide you with good background information and clues for further research.
- **Family histories and biographies** are a special type of secondary source for people doing Indigenous family history research. A family history or life story written by someone whose family lived at the same places and times as your family could be very useful to you. Their history might mention members of your family, they may have photographs of significant places and they may point you to obscure sources.

It's important to keep track of your sources, make sure you write down:

- who wrote it – the organisation or author (NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages)
- what it is called – the title (Marriage Certificate)
- when it was created – the date (16 May 1951)
- where it can be found – the library or archive if it's unpublished, the publisher and date if it's published (NSW Registry of BDM, registration number xxxvcbcv)
- where you found the particular piece of information – the page number (if relevant).

These details might be hard to work out, especially for old documents held by archives or material you find on the web. For example, who is the author and what is the title and date of an old register of births kept over many decades by a church mission? Or how do you cite a memoir you found online on a distant cousin's website?

TIP: The key is to write down enough information so that you or someone else is able to locate the information and the source again at a later time.

Archives and libraries usually have a particular number that identifies the source in their catalogue or collection database. And they often have a fact sheet on 'How to cite' their material.

- if possible make a photocopy or digital photo, or print it out or save a copy if it's digitised
- always write down the source of your information at the time you find it, not later
- print out or copy information about the source from the library or archives catalogue
- keep track of the searches you've done and the records you've looked at, even if you find nothing (you won't want to do the same search again in six months)
- be very clear about your sources when you write up your family history or when you share information with others.



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Start with yourself

Family history research starts with **you and works backwards and outwards**.

First record what you know about yourself and your immediate family.

- What is your full name?
- When and where were you born?
- Who are your parents, including step-parents and adopted parents?
- Who are your siblings, including step-brothers and sisters?
- Who is your current spouse or partner?
- Who are your children, and your children's other parent?
- Who are your grandparents?
- Have you or your family members been known by different names, including nicknames?
- What are the dates and locations for important events for these family members – birth, adoption, marriage, divorce, death?
- Where have you lived during your life?

Write down everything you know.

Focus on writing down information you can remember or can find easily from documents you have at home. These documents include birth, death and marriage certificates, wills or court records, photographs and family letters.

After writing down what you already know, you can see what information is missing and what more you need to find out.

Ask your family

Your family are likely to be a great source of important information.

Start with the people closest to you, particularly older relatives whose memories might span four or five generations. Ask them for the same basic information about themselves that you've already recorded about you:

- full name and nicknames



- date and place of birth
- names of their parents, siblings, spouse or partner, children and grandparents
- dates and locations of important events such as births, marriages and deaths
- places they've lived.

At this early point in your research these conversations are fact-finding missions. You are looking for the names, dates and places that are held in your own memory and in the memories of family members or friends of the family who you can easily talk with. You may be surprised at how much information you are able to gather this way.

Write down everything you find out.

Your goal at this stage is to gather information that is fairly easy to get from home and family members. It won't be complete, but you will need these basics to begin the next stage of your research.

Ask your family members whether they have any old family documents and photographs, and whether you can have a copy. You can easily make a copy by taking a photo with a digital camera or smart phone.

Make sure you keep really good notes (or a sound or video recording) for each person you speak to. Also see if they can help you fill in information about other family members. You can also start to compare information you get from different sources.

Sensitivities about the past

Be aware that some family members might not want to talk about the past. It might bring up bad memories or touch on sensitive issues they'd rather forget. This can be frustrating for you as a researcher, but of course you will want to be respectful of their wishes. You can always try to talk to them again later, when you can show and tell them more about the research you've been doing.

Sources you might find at home

You probably have a lot of useful information and sources for tracing your family history sitting around the house – birth, death or marriage certificates, wills, old family photos, newspaper clippings or family letters, for example.

Have a look around your own house. Look especially for things that have been passed down through the family. They might be photographs, documents or objects, like household items, jewellery or even furniture.

Ask relatives if they have anything that might be useful. Older relatives might have already written down some of the family history or begun compiling a family tree or created a slideshow for a family reunion or a commemoration. Ask to make copies or use your phone to photograph items they have.

If relatives start to see you as the 'family historian', they might be happy to give material to you. People may be happy to know someone is going to put the things they have been saving to good use.

Of course, you won't want all these sources! But you might find just the piece of information you need. For example, one of your grandfathers or great grandfathers may have served in World War 1. No one in the family has ever mentioned this to you, but once you start asking questions people will tell you many useful details.

See: Sources at home.

Toolkit

The Toolkit contains a number of worksheets and checklists that you might find useful for organising your research.



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Background reading

There are two main types of background reading that will be useful to your research:

- **Family and personal histories** – family, community histories and life stories or biographies are histories of individuals, families, communities, missions, reserves or other places
- **Administrative histories** – histories of the legislation and administration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Family and personal histories

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have written histories of their own lives, their families and of communities such as missions or reserves. These are mostly published books and should be available in public libraries.

AIATSIS has a comprehensive collection of writings by and about Indigenous people. Some of the collection is indexed by name in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI).

Search strategies

Start your background reading by searching and browsing the ABI and Mura® catalogue.

- **Search the ABI for family names.** If there are too many search results, limit the results by place (see the left-hand side of the search results).
- **Browse the Family History section of Mura®.** There may be recent family histories relevant to your research.
- **Search the ABI by place.** If the place is relatively large (Northern Territory) you will need to try to narrow to a smaller place (Alice Springs). If your family isn't in the search results, you may find the names of other people associated with that place.
- **Search Mura® for names or places.** The search results list will include family and community histories.

Note that the search results will also give you some information about the language and people groups associated with places or names. See Thinking about place.

Other places to search for family histories:

- National Library catalogue – you might include family name, place, 'Indigenous' and 'family history' in your search string. For example: 'Smith Indigenous Northern Territory'.



- Google and Google books – you might include family name, place, ‘Indigenous’ and ‘family history’ in your search string.

Administrative histories

The term ‘administrative history’ refers to the protection and welfare legislation that the states and territories had for the protection or welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Each state was different so it’s worth knowing what happened in the states that are important to your family.

Why do you need to know?

Some of the records that may be available about your family were created because of the legislation. For example, the protection legislation may have allowed individuals to apply for an ‘exemption’ from the Act. This meant that an Aboriginal person wasn’t treated as Aboriginal for the purpose of the Act and means that there should be a file somewhere with the exemption application and other paperwork.

Research guides

Each of the state, territory and commonwealth archives that holds government records on Aboriginal protection welfare acts has created research guides to help people trying to find records about themselves or their families. All of these guides include a short history of the protection/welfare regime and the kinds of records that were created.

New South Wales

- Aboriginal Australians family history – State Library of NSW:
guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/aboriginal-australians
- Indigenous communities – State Records NSW:
www.records.nsw.gov.au/state-archives/resources-for/indigenous-people/indigenous-communities

Northern Territory

- Researching your Aboriginal family history – Northern Territory Archives Service:
www.artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/ntas/media/pdf/ATSI-Family-History_Oct2012.pdf (PDF 143kb)
- Tracking family: A guide to Aboriginal records relating to the Northern Territory – National Archives of Australia: guides.naa.gov.au/tracking-family



Queensland

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history – State Library of Queensland:
www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi
- Records about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – Queensland State Archives:
www.archives.qld.gov.au/Researchers/Resources/Pages/Indigenous.aspx
- Records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Brief guide 50) – Queensland State Archives:
www.archives.qld.gov.au/Researchers/CollectionsDownloads/Documents/BG50ATSI.pdf
(PDF 51kb)

South Australia

- Aboriginal family history – State Library of South Australia:
guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/AboriginalFH
- Aboriginal services – State Records of South Australia:
www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/aboriginal-services

Tasmania

- IRecords on Tasmanian Aboriginals – LINC Tasmania:
www.linc.tas.gov.au/tasmaniasheritage/guides-records/Pages/Aboriginal.aspx
- Documenting Tasmanian Aboriginal descent – LINC Tasmania:
www.linc.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/Aboriginal-ancestry.aspx

Victoria

- Aboriginal people and family history – State Library of Victoria:
guides.slv.vic.gov.au/aboriginalfamilyhistory
- walata tyamateetj: A guide to government records about Aboriginal people in Victoria:
www.prov.vic.gov.au/publications/walata-tyamateetj
- Finding your mob: Researching Aboriginal family history at the Victorian Archives Centre
<http://prov.vic.gov.au/publications/finding-your-mob>
- Finding your story: Resource manual to the records of the Stolen Generations in Victoria:
prov.vic.gov.au/publications/finding-your-story

Western Australia

- Indigenous family history – State Library of Western Australia:
www.slwa.wa.gov.au/find/guides/family_history/australia/indigenous



- Aboriginal family history – State Records Office of Western Australia:
www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/aboriginal-records/aboriginal-family-history
- Looking west: A guide to Aboriginal records in Western Australia – Department for Child Protection:
www.dcp.wa.gov.au/SupportingIndividualsAndFamilies/Documents/LookingWest.pdf (PDF 385kb)
- Signposts: A guide for children and young people in care in WA from 1920 – Department for Child Protection: signposts.cpfs.wa.gov.au

See also: Aboriginal protection and welfare records

AIATSIS online exhibition: To remove and protect

This online resource includes digital copies of legislation relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and some of the protector's reports submitted to state governments.

See: aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/remove-and-protect



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Search for records

Searching for records held by government organisations such as archives, registries and libraries is at the heart of family history research.

You have already ...

1. Read the information in Before you start.
2. Developed a Research plan.
3. Written down the information you know. See Start with yourself.
4. Written down the information your family knows. See Start with yourself.
5. Collected all of the certificates and documents that you and your family have. See Sources at home.
6. Organised your information and identified the gaps. See Toolkit.
7. Done some Background reading – especially checking whether there are any family histories or life stories that might be useful to you. See Background reading
8. Familiarised yourself with Finding your family resources – especially the Where to get help section to see the range of resources you can access in each state.

What's next?

1. Review and update your Research plan. (You will need to do this over and over – it's your family history research To Do list.)
2. Decide where you want to focus next.
 - You might want to work back through the generations: parents, grandparents, great grandparents.
 - You might want to work through either your mother's line or your father's line.
 - Or you might be interested in finding out more about a particular ancestor or group of ancestors. See Researching one ancestor.

TIP: It really helps to narrow your focus into small chunks.

Birth, death and marriage records



If possible, starting from your own birth certificate, try to get access to the birth, death and marriage certificates of your ancestors.

- For living relatives or certificates that are not historical you will need permission or to prove your relationship to them.
- Or you could ask people to get them for you. Note that most BDM certificates cost \$30–\$50.
- You can also search for historical BDMs if you know the names of your ancestors and apply for the certificates.

Each BDM you receive will set off a new round of requests – each new BDM will give you additional names and dates. It will also suggest places that were significant in your ancestor's lives.

See Birth, death and marriage records and Where to get help – contact information by state.

TIP: Don't forget to keep track of your searches and requests.

Aboriginal protection and welfare records

Once you have found and applied for access to BDM records, you should try to track down records made by the various Aboriginal protection government agencies.

Quick searches – name indexes

- **ABI.** It's worth doing a quick search in AIATSIS's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Index to see if your ancestors are mentioned in any of the missionary or protection board publications. If you find someone, this will not only give you direct information about them, you will also know that there are likely to be records about them. Search ABI index.
- **CIFHS.** It is also worth searching the Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies website. Here also you may find both direct information about your ancestors and knowledge that there are probably government records. Some CIFHS documents include file numbers. Search CIFHS.
- **NAA.** If you think any of the people you are looking for (or their partners) might have done military service, search the National Archives RecordSearch database. Military records are a rich source of family history information. See Military service records.

TIP: Don't forget to keep track of your searches.

Contact Aboriginal records assistance teams

Since the Bringing Them Home report on the Stolen Generations, governments have staffed specific departments – most of these have a number of Indigenous staff – to help Indigenous people find records about themselves and their families.



Records made by protection and welfare boards have very personal information and very strict access conditions. The staff will guide you through their process for accessing records.

See Where to get help – contact information by state

Other types of records

Once you've completed the research suggested above you can start to search other types of records. You can see from list of Family history sources that there is a lot to choose from and everyone will have different pathways.

It is worth remembering that some Indigenous people went to great lengths to avoid contact with officials – this means they also avoided leaving traces of themselves in the records.

The key to making the decision is making your best guess about the kinds of officials who might have made records about your ancestor. And then searching to see what you can find.

- Use the Records checklist in the Toolkit to help you choose which records might be useful.
- Then find out more about the records in Family history sources.
- Then find out where to get them in Where to get help.
- It is also worth returning to the Background reading and searching for any new names that have come up so far.

Family history research is slow, circular and methodical

It would be great if were easy to do family history research – but it isn't. It's slow, sometimes tedious and often circular.

Each new piece of information you get – like in a jigsaw puzzle – will add to the whole picture. And, normally, it will raise more questions than it answers.

It is really worthwhile to keep revisiting and updating your Research plan. It will help you to track your progress and plan the next steps.

It is also worthwhile returning to the Toolkit periodically. At the beginning it will all be overwhelming. But as you start collection information and planning what to do next, you may find the tools more useful.



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Family History Unit

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Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Put it all together

Researching your family history is fun, but eventually you'll probably want to share what you've discovered with others. Family history projects can take many forms. Which one is right for you depends on your time, interests, the reasons you started your research and who you want to share it with.

It's a good idea to start small. Finishing a smaller project is great for your self-confidence. You can also show what you've done to your family – it might encourage reluctant relatives to help you or to share family stories, photographs and documents with you. You can always turn shorter pieces of writing into chapters in a bigger book later.

Whatever form your project takes, the family history you prepare will be most useful for future generations (and other family researchers today) if you ensure that your sources are clear and that other people can find them again.

Different ways of putting together a family history

Family tree: You might have already compiled a family tree in the form of an ancestor chart when doing your research. Family trees are also useful for sharing the outcomes of your research, since they're simple and easy to understand. But while they help make sense of names and dates and places, they don't allow you to tell the stories of your ancestors' lives in any depth. See Family tree in the Toolkit.

Timeline or chronology: Another way to make sense of all the information you've uncovered in your research is to compile a timeline or chronology. You could focus on the most important and interesting events in the life of one ancestor, one couple, or all those in one family line. Events might include births, marriages, deaths, divorces, moving house, changing jobs, deaths, funerals and so on. At very least, for each event include the date, place and people involved, as well as the source of your information.

Scrapbook: If you are creative, you might like to put together a scrapbook that tells your family's story. You could focus on one particular family line, or on your direct ancestors back three or four generations. Include copies (not originals) of family photographs and historical documents, as well as stories, descriptions and a family tree.

Biography or life sketch: Writing about one ancestor at a time is less daunting than writing about many generations of the family at once. At its simplest, a life sketch can spell out the major events in a person's life, such as their birth, marriage, work, where they lived, children, death. Or you could focus on a particular part of your ancestor's life that you have a lot of information about. To make it more colourful, include stories or anecdotes and copies of photographs. Putting together a timeline first can help you work out what happened in their life.



Family history newsletter: If you have a big family keen to know about your research or if other relatives are also researching the family, you might like to put together a family history newsletter. It could include stories about interesting things you've uncovered, copies of family photographs, research mysteries, biographical sketches, and copies of interesting documents or newspaper articles you've found.

Blog: A blog can be a good way of writing regular small pieces about your family history research. You can make your blog public, to share with anyone, or private, so only your family and friends can see it. Blogs can be set up for free on sites like Blogger and Wordpress.com.

Video: You can make a video to share your research as well, even just using the video camera in your phone.

Family history book: Many family historians set out to write a book. This could be a 20-page story that you just print out at home, or it could be a 200-page book that you get professionally edited, designed and printed. Be realistic about what you are going to produce – your family would probably rather a shorter book now than something you never get around to finishing.

Find out more

There are lots of websites and books with advice on writing and publishing a family history. Some useful resources, mostly Australian, are listed below:

- Hazel Edwards, *Writing a non-boring family history*, GHR Press, 2011
- Noeline Kyle, *Writing family history made very easy: A beginner's guide*, Allen & Unwin, 2007
- Australian Society of Authors – Writing your family history (pdf, 833kb)
- State Library of Victoria – Publish your family history
- Australian Copyright Council – Family histories and copyright
- Genwriters – Writing resources
- Family Search – [Create a family history](#)

When you're finished, consider donating a copy of your family history to the local library and historical society where your family lived, to AIATSIS and to your state library.

If you're going to distribute your family history outside the family, remember to check with living relatives about any sensitive information before you do so.

It's also important to check whether you need to get any copyright or moral rights clearances on photographs or documents.



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Family history sources – contents

- Family history sources
- Sources at home
- Interviews
- Photographs
- Birth, death and marriage records
- Adoption records
- Burial and cemetery records
- Newspapers
- Tindale genealogies
- Military service records
- Mission and institution records
- Electoral rolls and voter records
- Police gazettes, court and gaol records
- Maps
- Land and pastoral station records
- Dawn and New Dawn Magazine
- Other records and collections





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Sources at home

A fundamental principle of family history research is to **start with yourself** and work backwards and outwards. In other words, start at home – your own home, your close relatives homes, and then keep moving out to more distant relatives.

Many people have useful information and sources for tracing their family history sitting around the house – birth, death or marriage certificates, wills, old family photos, newspaper clippings or family letters, for example.

- When you start researching your family's history, have a look around your own house to see what things you might have, especially things that have been passed down through the family. They might be photographs, documents or objects, like household items, jewellery or even furniture.
- Ask relatives if they have anything that might be useful. Older relatives might have already written down some of the family history or begun compiling a family tree or created a slideshow for a family reunion or a commemoration. Ask to make copies or use your phone to photograph items they have.
- If relatives start to see you as the 'family historian', they might be happy to give material to you. People may be happy to know someone is going to put the things they have been saving to good use.

Use a checklist

Use the Sources at home list to help you to think about all of the papers that you have at your home and the papers you might be able to ask other family members for. Of course, you won't want all these sources!

But some of them may have just the piece of information you need. For example, one of your grandfathers or great grandfathers may have served in World War 1. No one in the family has ever mentioned this to you, but you see an old photograph of a young man in uniform and ask who he is. Finding out that one of your ancestors served in WW1 means that he has a military service record. Since it's WW1, the record is available to the public and highly likely to be accessible via the Internet. Next of kin, place of enlistment, medical history and sometimes correspondence from family – all valuable information for your research.

Toolkit: Sources at home checklist.





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Sources – interviews

One of the most important parts of doing your family history is talking to older relatives and recording what they know before it's too late.

Older relatives had many experiences and remember people who have since passed away. They may also remember communities, missions or government stations that no longer exist.

If your older relatives have passed away, see if you can talk to their friends, neighbours or community elders – they might remember events involving your family.

Also, while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the key source of Indigenous history, non-Aboriginal people may be able to tell you important things too.

Some relatives might be very keen to be interviewed, others hesitant or fearful. Interviews can bring up memories of hurt and embarrassment, or remind people of old feuds and family disagreements. Being interviewed may be very distressing for your relative, especially if they are talking about their own or a family member's experience of separation or other difficult events in the past.

Getting started

You can use the **Family member information sheet** as a guide to the types of information you might be looking for in your interviews.

Family gatherings. Informal conversations at family gatherings and visits are a great way to get started. Tell people that you want to do some family history and ask them what they remember. It's also a good idea to ask them if it's okay if you take notes or write things down.

Photographs. Another useful way to break the ice is to talk about old photographs. Bring along any photos you have questions about and ask your relative to bring along family pictures too.

Visiting places. You might take older relatives back to the places of their childhood and walk around with them, getting them to tell you about where all the buildings were and activities took place. You can draw a map. It's likely that memories and stories will come back to them.

Email or letter. If you can't talk with someone face to face, you may be able to ask them questions by email or letter. You'll first need to ask them if they are willing to help you and explain what and why you are doing family history research. If they are willing to help you, send them a basic list of questions (see the Family member information sheet for ideas). You can follow up with more detailed questions if you need to.



Keeping track of information

Remember to make a record of your conversation – the best way is to record it using a voice recorder or smart phone. If you take notes you might miss an important piece of information or interrupt the flow of the conversation.

If you think you might only have one chance to interview a particular relative, you should consider doing a formal oral history interview. For this you'll need to do some preparation, such as writing down the questions you want to ask.

Find out more

More information about how to do interviews and oral histories for family research is available online or through your local library.

Books

- Thomas MacEntee, *Preserving your family's oral history and stories*, Unlock the Past, 2014
- Penny Taylor & AIATSIS, *Telling it like it is: A guide to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1996

Websites

- FamilySearch – Creating oral histories
familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Creating_Oral_Histories
- DoHistory – Step-by-step guide to oral history
dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html
- Smithsonian Institution – Folklife and oral history interviewing guide
www.folklife.si.edu/education_exhibits/resources/guide/introduction.aspx





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Sources – photographs

Photographs are a valuable source for family history. Both photos held in the family and those found in library, archive and museum collections can provide important research clues and help personalise your family history search.

Unfortunately many old photographs don't have much information – such as who is in the photo or when and where it was taken. Used together with your other research, however, you might be able to figure out the people and places.

Personal and family photos

When you start family history research, one of the first things you should look for is old photographs. Make a copy by scanning the photo so that you can make printouts to use while you're researching and keep the original safe at home.

Always label who is in photographs in your own collections, if you know. Do it in soft pencil on the back or on a separate piece of paper kept with them. Never use pen.

When you visit relatives, particularly older family members, take the photographs along and ask if they can identify the people or places.

Your relatives might also have copies of old family photographs you haven't seen before. Ask to borrow the photographs, get a copy made and return the original. Or you can take a photo of the photo if they are reluctant to part with it.

Ask your family members about the photos they have – the names of the people, when and where the photo was taken and what was happening.

You might consider making copies of family photographs available to your local keeping place and to AIATSIS.

Getting information from photographs

Identifying people, places and events in old family photographs can be difficult. But the images themselves can provide clues:

- The technology of photography has changed over time, and the type of photograph can help date it to a particular period – for example, small 'snapshot' photographs date from the early 20th century.



- If the photograph has the name of the photographer written on the front or the back, you might be able to work out the place and approximate date it was taken – start by searching for the photographer’s name in Trove digitised newspapers.
- Look closely at the photograph to see if there are any signs, shop names, street names or distinctive buildings in it – a search of Trove digitised newspapers might help identify the location.
- Pay attention to hairstyles and the clothes people are wearing in the photograph, especially women, as this can help you date the photograph.
- If your family lived on a particular mission, reserve or station, see if you can locate other photographs of that place and compare the landscape, buildings and even people to see if they match.

You can find lots of other tips and hints online – do a Google search for ‘dating family photos’. There are also a number of books about old family photos, such as *Identifying and dating old family photographs* by Graham Jaunay (Adelaide Proformat, 2014).

Photographs in library, archive and museum collections

Many library, archive and museum collections around Australia contain important photographic collections relating to Aboriginal people.

While the photographs may have been taken by non-Indigenous people for postcards or for pseudo-scientific study, they remain a valuable record of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their histories and cultures.

Even if these collections do not hold photographs of your family members, they might contain images of the places they lived.

AIATSIS

The AIATSIS Pictorial Collection contains around 650,000 photographs relating to Indigenous Australia, dating from the late 1800s to the present day. More than 90 per cent of the collection is unique material not held elsewhere and it is the world’s most comprehensive photographic record of Australia’s Indigenous peoples. You can search photo captions online in the Mura catalogue. Search Mura® for photographs: catalogue.aiatsis.gov.au

Some of the photos in the collection have been digitised – these can be searched and printed at the AIATSIS reading room in Canberra.

AIATISIS has also digitised the *Dawn* and *New Dawn* magazine – printed by the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board from 1935 to 1965. It contains a valuable photographic record for New South Wales Aboriginal people. All issues are available online and it is indexed in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI).



<http://aiatsis.gov.au/publications/products/dawn-and-new-dawn-1952-1975-mazagine-aboriginal-people-new-south-wales>

Tindale collection – South Australian Museum

Photographs of Aboriginal people make up a significant part of the Tindale collection held by the South Australian Museum. See Sources: Tindale genealogies for more information on where to access them.

Trove – National Library of Australia

Other collections of photographs of Aboriginal people are held in institutions such as the National Archives of Australia, state archives, the National Library of Australia, state libraries, museums and local historical societies.

You can search for images in many Australian and overseas collections through [Trove pictures, photos, objects](#).

Use search terms such as ‘Aboriginal’ or ‘Aborigine’ combined with a place name (for example, ‘Aboriginal Dubbo’) or search using a mission, reserve or station name (for example, ‘Ernabella’). You are less likely to find relevant photographs searching by people’s names.

Offensive language

Libraries, museums and archives collect material that may contain offensive and racist language in the captions. Historical photographs themselves may be offensive – some photographers used offensive backdrops and put people into costumes that fit current stereotypes. At the same time, posing for such photographs might have provided people with valuable goods as payment such as food or tobacco.





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Sources – birth, death and marriage records

Births, deaths and marriages form a chain linking one generation of your family to the next and one branch of your family to another. You can use the BDM information you find to follow these links back through your family tree.

Realistically, you will probably spend a significant amount of time tracking down BDM records as you do your family history research.

Australian government BDM records are indexed, which means you can search by name, place and date. Working backwards from yourself, you should think of all the family names you know, the year your family members were born, married or died and where they were from.

Three types of BDMs

There are two main types of 'mainstream' BDM records: **civil registrations** (which are government records) and **parish registers** (which are church records).

Information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births, deaths and marriages, however, may have been recorded differently. For example,

- In the Northern Territory nearly all Aboriginal people were named in a Register of Aboriginal Wards published in the *Northern Territory Government Gazette*, no. 1913, on 13 May 1957. It recorded place of residence, tribal and language groups and dates of births and deaths. A copy is now held by the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages in Darwin.
- Aborigines protection and welfare boards recorded Aboriginal births, deaths and marriages of people who were defined as 'Aborigines' and 'supervised' by the board.
- Church bodies that managed missions and other institutions recorded BDM information about inmates. Some, like the Aborigines Inland Mission (AIM), published newsletters which announced births, deaths and marriages.

When doing Indigenous family history research it is important to search both mainstream sources of BDM information and Aboriginal-specific sources.

What information will you find on BDM certificates?

BDM certificates can provide a wealth of information beyond just dates and places of birth, death and marriage. They often include addresses, names of witnesses who might be family members or friends, maiden names or former married names of women, occupations and religions.

However, the information found on certificates varies. Earlier records are likely to have less information. Some states collected more information than others.



Parish records might have extra information, such as your ancestor's original signature.

Information you might find on birth, death or marriage certificates

Birth certificate:	Marriage certificate:	Death certificate:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surname • Given name of the child • Date of birth • Place of birth • Sex • Father's name • Occupation • Mother's name • Mother's maiden name • Ages • Other children of the union • Place of residence • Registration number 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names of the bride and groom • Bride's maiden and former name/s • Their occupations • Usual place of residence • Where they were born • Any previous marriages • Names of their parents • Registration number 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of deceased • Sex • Date of death • Cause of death • Place of death • Age • Occupation • Residence • Place of birth • Place of marriage • Name of spouse • Children of the union • Where buried • Who the informant was • Registration number

Points to remember

- Information is only as reliable as the source. The informant on a death certificate may, for example, have hardly known the deceased person.
- Be mindful of spelling variations as people often recorded information as it sounded and in earlier times not many people could read and write.
- Try to double-check information on certificates with other records such as cemetery inscriptions or a family Bible.
- A marriage certificate may give details of the parents of each spouse, and is the most reliable certificate for information as both parties were present at the event and could give the information.
- Birth, death and marriage certificates will sometimes include statements as to Aboriginality, especially in earlier records.
- Births, deaths and marriages of Aboriginal people were often not registered. This was due, in part, to legal restrictions such as the Queensland *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of Sale of Opium Acts 1901*, which prohibited the marriage of Aboriginal women to non-Aboriginal men without the express permission of the government.



- Births of Indigenous children were not often registered in order to protect them from removal policies. Large number of Indigenous people worked on pastoral stations where events were recorded in station papers, diaries and resources rather than in the standard birth death and marriage registrations.
- Sometimes you will see the word 'native' on a birth, death or marriage certificate. This may or may not mean that the person was Indigenous.

How far back do BDM records go?

Compulsory civil registration of births, deaths and marriages was introduced in Australia in the middle of the 19th century. This meant that people were required by law to register these events with government authorities. Despite this, events were sometimes not registered, particularly in remote and rural areas.

In the early days of Australian colonisation the churches alone were responsible for recording baptisms, weddings and burials within their jurisdictions. These records are known as 'early church records' or 'parish registers'. Churches also continued to record events in parish registers after civil registration was introduced.

Government registries have tried to combine the information in early parish registers into the civil registration indexes where possible. If you don't find a registration in the indexes, think about what religion your ancestor might have been to and check if parish registers exist.

Year that civil registration of births, deaths and marriages began

- New South Wales 1856
- Victoria 1853
- Queensland 1856 (as New South Wales)
- Western Australia 1841
- South Australia 1842
- Tasmania 1838
- Northern Territory 1870 (formerly South Australia)
- Australian Capital Territory 1930 (formerly New South Wales)

Searching for historical BDM registrations

Some of the historical Australian BDM records have been indexed, meaning that you can search for BDM certificates by name, place and date. Anyone can use the BDM indexes.

You can do online name searches of historical BDMs for the following states:

- [New South Wales \(or search for 'NSW BDM'\)](#)



- Northern Territory – no online access
- [Victoria \(or search for 'Victoria BDM'\)](#)
- [Queensland \(or search for 'Queensland BDM'\)](#)
- [Western Australia \(or search for 'WA BDM'\)](#)
- [South Australia \(or search for 'SA BDM'\)](#)
- [Tasmania \(or search for 'Tasmania BDM'\)](#)

You can also access some BDM indexes through ancestry.com and Family Search.

Many libraries and family history societies have copies of BDM indexes on CD-ROM and/or microfiche.

If you are having trouble finding particular information using the online indexes, try those on CD-ROM. Although not as simple to use as the online indexes, you can do more complicated searches in the CD-ROM databases. This is useful if you only have limited information, for example, if you are looking for the birth of a child and you only know the mother's given name and an approximate year of birth.

Remember you can ask your local librarian or family history society staff for help. Some of the BDM registries also provide specialised services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Are all BDMs available?

Open period BDMs. Anyone can apply for copies of historical certificates. These are considered 'open'. The table below shows the open periods by state and territory. Note that they are all different!

Closed period BDMs. But there are concerns about privacy and identity theft for more recent BDM events. These are considered 'closed'.

What historical BDMs are available (years ago by state from 2016)

State	Birth	Marriage	Death
New South Wales	100 years ago	50 years ago	30 years ago
Queensland	100 (1829-1916)	75 (1829-1941)	35 (1829-1984)
Northern Territory	1870-1918	1870-1913	1870-1913
South Australia	100	75	30
Victoria	100	60	10
Tasmania	100	75	25
Western Australia	100	75	30
Australian Capital Territory	100	75	30



Access policies

Each BDM authority has rules about the availability of its records to the public. There are also rules about when you need to show permission from the person named in the certificate or show proof of your relationship to them (for example, your parents, children or grandparents).

- Australian Capital Territory:
<https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/ci/fattach/get/48385/1436744378/redirect/1/filename/Births%20deaths%20and%20marriages%20certificate%20access%20policy.pdf>
- New South Wales: <http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/family-history/family-history.aspx>
- Northern Territory:
http://www.nt.gov.au/justice/bdm/births_deaths_marriages/other/regaccess.shtml
- Queensland: <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/births-deaths-marriages-and-divorces/family-history-research/information-and-how-to-access-and-order-records/information-you-can-access/>
- South Australia: <http://www.cbs.sa.gov.au/births-deaths-marriages/bdm-other-topics/access-policy/>
- Tasmania: http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/bdm/access_policy
- Victoria: <http://www.bdm.vic.gov.au/utility/about+bdm/legislation+and+policies/access+policy/>
- Western Australia
 - birth: http://www.bdm.dotag.wa.gov.au/B/birth_certificate_access_policy.aspx
 - marriage:
http://www.bdm.dotag.wa.gov.au/M/marriage_certificate_access_policy.aspx?uid=3805-2981-7860-8859
 - death:
http://www.bdm.dotag.wa.gov.au/D/death_certificate_access_policy.aspx?uid=8783-7027-4626-4788

Where to get copies of BDM certificates

Each state and territory in Australia has a registry of births, deaths and marriages. You can apply to the registry for official copies of certificates, or use a transcription service where this is available (in New South Wales and South Australia only).

New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia have specialised services to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people find and get access to BDM and other information held in these archives about people known to be Indigenous.



New South Wales Family Records Unit – Aboriginal Affairs

The Family Records Unit at Aboriginal Affairs helps people from New South Wales access state government records about themselves and their family. They also give researchers permission to access Aborigines Protection Board and Aborigines Welfare Board records.

Level 13, Tower B, Centennial Plaza, 300 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010

Free call: 1800 019 998

Ph: 02 9219 0700

Fax: 02 9219 0790

Email: familyhistory@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/about/family-records-unit/

New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (NSW)

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages has records of birth, death and marriage in New South Wales from 1856, as well as some earlier church records. You can search family history indexes online. If you need to contact the registry you can request that an Indigenous staff member handle your inquiry.

35 Regent Street, Chippendale NSW 2008

GPO Box 30, Sydney NSW 2001

Ph: 13 77 88

Email: bdm-familyhistory@agd.nsw.gov.au (for questions about family history searches)

Web: www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/family-history/family-history (Family history)

www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/contact-us/aboriginal (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services)

Northern Territory Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages holds records about the births, deaths and marriages of people in the Northern Territory. The Aboriginal Population Register is also held there – this is a collection of genealogical information about Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory taken primarily from Census information dating back to the 1950s. The register was inherited from the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Email: AGD.RegistrarGeneral@nt.gov.au

Web: www.nt.gov.au/justice/bdm/index

Darwin office

Ground Floor, Nichols Place, Cnr Cavenagh and Bennett Streets, Darwin NT 0800

GPO Box 3021, Darwin NT 0801

Ph: 08 8999 6119
Fax: 08 8999 6324

Alice Springs office
Centrepont Building, Cnr Gregory and Hartley Streets, Alice Springs NT 0870
PO Box 8043, Alice Springs NT 0871
Ph: 08 8951 5339

Tennant Creek office
Tennant Creek Courthouse, Paterson Street, Tennant Creek NT 0860
PO Box 84, Tennant Creek NT 0861
Ph: 08 8962 4377
Fax: 08 8962 4375

Queensland

Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships – Community and Personal Histories

The Community and Personal Histories team can help you use Queensland state government records to research your family and personal history. If you or your family were born in Queensland, they may be able to help you with other information, such as proving your birth date.

Level 6A, Neville Bonner Building, 75 William Street, Brisbane QLD 4000
PO Box 15397, City East QLD 4002
Free call: 1800 650 230

Email: enquiries@datsip.qld.gov.au

Online form: www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/family-history-request-form/index.html

Web: www.datsip.qld.gov.au/people-communities/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-family-history

Queensland

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages has records of birth, death and marriage in Queensland from 1856, as well as some earlier church records. You can search and access historical birth, death and marriage records online.

110 George Street, Brisbane QLD 4000
PO Box 15188, City East QLD 4002
Free call: 1300 366 430

Email: bdm-mail@justice.qld.gov.au

Web: www.qld.gov.au/law/births-deaths-marriages-and-divorces/family-history-research

South Australia

Births, Deaths & Marriages Registration Office – Office of Consumer and Business Affairs

The Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Office is responsible for maintaining registers of births, deaths and marriages. You can apply for certificates online but only if you already know the details.

You can access the South Australian BDM indexes on CD-ROM at the State Library of South Australia and other libraries around Australia.

Genealogy SA has published extracts from the South Australian BDM indexes online at www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html

Level 2, Chesser House, 91–97 Grenfell Street, Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 1351, Adelaide SA 5001

Ph: 131 882

Web: www.cbs.sa.gov.au/wcm/births-deaths-marriages/bdm-other-topics/family-history

Tasmania

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Registration of births, deaths and marriages commenced in 1839 in Tasmania, the first Australian colony to take over the function previously conducted by the churches. The registry holds church records (burials, baptisms and marriages) from 1803 to 1839, and birth, death and marriage registrations from 1839 to the present day.

The Tasmanian Names Index provides access to historical Tasmanian birth, death and marriage records online.

Apply in person for birth, death and marriage certificates at Service Tasmania shops around the state

GPO Box 198, Hobart TAS 7001

Free call: 1300 135 513

Ph: 03 616 53457

Fax: 03 6233 6444

Email: bdm@justice.tas.gov.au

Web: www.justice.tas.gov.au/bdm/family_history

linctas.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en_AU/names/ (Tasmanian Name Index)

Victoria

Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria

Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria has records of birth, death and marriage in Victoria from 1853, as well as some earlier church records. You can search and access historical birth, death and marriage records online.



The Koori Access Team at Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria can help you apply and pay for Victorian birth, death and marriage certificates if you are a Koori, Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and you hold a pension concession card or health care card.

Ground floor, 595 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3001

GPO Box 5220, Melbourne VIC 3001

Free call: 1300 369 367 (General and family history inquiries)

Ph: 03 9613 5103 (Koori Access Team)

Email: vicbdm@justice.vic.gov.au (General and family history inquiries)

BDMIndigenousAccess@justice.vic.gov.au (Koori Access Team)

Web: www.bdm.vic.gov.au/home/family+history (Family history)

www.bdm.vic.gov.au/home/koori+services (Koori services)

Western Australia

Aboriginal History Research Unit – Department of Aboriginal Affairs

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs Aboriginal History Research Unit manages access to Western Australian state archives and some privately owned records. You can apply as a personal or family history applicants for your own records or those of your ancestors. You can apply for any records relating to you held by the department, or those relating to a specific purpose such as evidence of genealogy, dates and place of birth or a specific ancestor.

151 Royal Street, East Perth WA 6004

PO Box 3153, East Perth WA 6892

Free call: 1300 651 077

Fax: 08 6551 8088

Email: ahru@daa.wa.gov.au

Web: www.daa.wa.gov.au/community-development/ahru

Western Australia

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages has records of births, deaths and marriages in Western Australian from 1841. You can search historical indexes online for free.

Westralia Square, Level 10, 141 St Georges Terrace, Perth WA 6000

PO Box 7720, Cloisters Square, Perth WA 6850

Free call: 1300 305 021

Ph: 08 9264 1555

Fax: 08 9264 1599

Web: www.bdm.dotag.wa.gov.au



Transcription services

Transcriptions provide the same information as certificates and are usually cheaper and quicker, but can't be used for legal purposes. Ask the BDM registry if there are any transcription services in the state.

What if you can't find BDM records?

It may be difficult to find BDMs for family members. Some common reasons are:

- the registration name was spelled differently from the one you searched for
- the registration name was different from the name the person was usually known by
- the birth was registered under the mother's maiden name
- the registration name was a nickname or alias
- the event was never registered, due to reasons such as distance, suspicion of the system, and natural events like floods or fires
- the event was registered in an unexpected place – for example, the person was born at one place but registered in a different town
- information provided at registration was incorrect, either deliberately (for example, to hide illegitimacy or under-age marriage) or because the correct information wasn't known
- information recorded at registration was incorrect because the registrar misheard, misspelled or misinterpreted the information told to them
- a keyboard error or an error in interpreting the original handwriting was made when the index was compiled
- the event is outside the open period for access to BDM records.

What you can do

You can try to find other records for birth, death and marriage information, for example:

- BDM certificates of other people in the family, such as brothers and sisters of the person you're researching
- Trove digitised newspapers – birth, baptism, death, marriage, funeral and in memoriam notices for family members; reports on inquests, divorces, etc.
- Mission records – especially registers of baptisms, marriages, births and deaths
- 'Protection' and welfare records – letters, reports, censuses, diaries, records of children in training institutions



- Tindale genealogies or other ethnographical or anthropological collections
- War service records
- Divorce records
- Cemetery records
- Inquest records
- Electoral rolls
- Census records
- Family Bible

See [CoraWeb – Birth, death and marriage records: Australia](#) for more ideas.



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Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Sources – burial and cemetery records

Cemetery records can provide information about deaths, and can be useful when you can't find a death certificate. They might provide other information about the deceased person and their immediate family, too.

What are cemetery records?

Two types of cemetery records – **burial records** and **headstone inscriptions** – record information about people who have died.

Burial records are records of the actual burial event. They vary in the amount of information they provide, but might contain:

- the name of the person who died
- their age at time of death
- the date of their death and/or burial
- where they lived
- who performed the ceremony and the name of the undertaker
- their religion
- the location of their grave in the cemetery
- names of other people buried in the same grave
- a transcription of the inscription on the headstone.

Burial records list all burials in a cemetery, even when there isn't a headstone or plaque.

Headstone inscriptions are the words found in cemeteries on plaques, headstones and at gravesites. They often provide useful information not found elsewhere, particularly for early deaths where written records don't exist or contain little detail.

You will not always find a headstone on a grave. Many people were buried in unmarked graves, and old headstones have often weathered, been destroyed or are hard to read. In this case you might be able to find information from registers published by local family history societies.

A number of 'lonely graves' projects around Australia are documenting graves that are outside recognised cemeteries, such as those on rural properties. Do an online search for 'lonely graves' to find information about the various projects.



Other death records you might also check are death notices, funeral notices, obituaries and in memoriam notices published in newspapers, and wills and probate records. Mission records might also contain information about Aboriginal people who died or were buried there.

What information do you need to look for cemetery records?

To start researching you need to know:

- the name of the person
- their place of death.

It can also be helpful to know:

- their place of burial, which is usually given on their death certificate.

If you don't know where the person died or is buried, you might find this information by:

- looking at electoral rolls just before their death to find out their address or that of their children – it's likely they were buried in a cemetery nearby
- searching historical newspapers in Trove for a death or funeral notice, which might give a place of burial.

Where do you find cemetery records?

Burial and cemetery records are kept by cemetery trusts, church authorities and local councils.

Many of these records have been published and can be searched online or at your local library, state library or family history society. Sometimes transcriptions or photographs of headstones are also available online, but often you will need to visit the cemetery itself.

- [Australian Cemeteries Index](#)
- [National Library of Australia – Australian cemetery records](#)
- [CoraWeb – Cemeteries](#)
- [State Library of NSW – Deaths and burials](#)
- [State Library of Victoria – Cemetery records](#)
- [State Library of Queensland – Cemetery records](#)
- [State Library of SA – SA deaths](#)
- [State Library of WA – Aboriginal family history: Deaths and burials](#)
- [LINC Tasmania – Cemetery records](#)



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Records about adoption, fostering and institutions

Governments, churches and welfare bodies removed Indigenous children from their families from the first days of British colonisation. These children may have been adopted, fostered out to white families or brought up in institutions.

The institutions included both 'mainstream' and those exclusively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Some were dormitory schools within missions (run by religious groups) or stations (run by governments).

Why were Indigenous children sent to both types of institutions?

At different times in some states and territories until the 1960s governments followed 'assimilation' policies to remove children from their Indigenous families and raise them to become white Australians.

- Some Indigenous children were administered under Aboriginal protection and welfare laws and sent to segregated Indigenous institutions.
- If Indigenous children were quite 'fair' and looked non-Indigenous they were adopted, fostered or institutionalised under mainstream child welfare legislation and sent to mainstream institutions.

By the 1970s Aboriginal protection and welfare legislation was repealed, segregated institutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were closed, and Indigenous children were adopted, fostered or institutionalised under mainstream child welfare law.

The key point for family history research is that there were separate bureaucracies with different ways of keeping records about children in care.

Access to records is limited to protect privacy

Records about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care are very personal and subject to strict access conditions to protect their privacy. This includes access to historical records and access to name indexes.

Generally you can access records about yourself or very close relatives depending on the age of the records and your relationship to the person.

All state and territories have special teams that assist people to access their records.



Contact information

[Where to get help](#) has comprehensive contact information for accessing records in each state and territory.

Stolen Generations

Since the Bringing Them Home report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children removed from their families (1995), Australian governments have created special teams to assist people to get access to their records and special indexes that make these records easier to find.

Link-Up services have been established in most states and territories to assist Stolen Generations. See: [Stolen Generations](#) for more information.

Contact information

[Link-Up services](#) has comprehensive contact information for Link-Ups in each state and territory.

Forgotten Australians

In 2004 a Senate inquiry was completed on Australians who experienced institutional or out of home care as children – now known as the ‘Forgotten Australians’. The [Find & Connect](#) web resource was developed to provide information about children’s homes – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

The site has short histories of each institution and information about where to find the records of children who lived there. Find & Connect was set up to help people who were in out-of-home ‘care’ as children learn more about their histories and to locate and access their personal records. You can:

- find non-government institutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- trace the history of institutions that started as missions and were taken over by governments
- trace the name changes of institutions over time.
- read information about and view images of children’s homes
- get help to find records about your childhood in ‘care’
- connect with support groups and services in your state/territory.



No personal information or private records are shown on the Find & Connect website.

To find Find & Connect resources specifically about Aboriginal people, [search the site](#) using the term 'Aboriginal'. You can then limit the results by state or time period.

For more information about the records and accessing them, see [Find & Connect – Information about records](#).





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Sources – newspapers

Historical newspapers are a very valuable source for family history. Australian newspapers, especially local and country newspapers, published lots of material about individuals and families in their area.

Newspapers often contain information about people that you can't find anywhere else.

The sorts of information you might find includes births, deaths, funerals, marriages, obituaries, inquests, court cases, social events, church activities, sporting events, legal notices, land sales, advertisements for businesses and military service.

Many researchers find material in newspapers that help them flesh out their family histories, making them more than just lists of names and dates.

While you are more likely to find non-Indigenous people in newspapers, this can be particularly useful when families include both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The State Library of Queensland has produced an excellent online guide *Newspapers: family history info guide* (www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/newspapers).

Trove digitised newspapers

The National Library of Australia provides free access to digitised copies of historical newspapers through [Trove Digitised Newspapers](#). More than 180 million newspaper articles are available!

You can search Trove Digitised Newspapers using keywords like your ancestor's name and the place they lived. You can limit your search in various ways – by date, state, newspaper or article type.

Here are some tips for searching:

- When you search for a name, add a place name to your search. Searching for both a person's name and place at once might bring up more relevant results. Also try variations of the person's name (surname, given name, full name, different spellings).
- Try searching using both your ancestor's name and the term 'Aboriginal' or 'Aborigine' – for example, 'Tommy' and 'Aborigine'. Newspapers often referred to Aboriginal people by their first names only or by nicknames, using phrases like 'Tommy, an aborigine' or 'the aboriginal Tommy'.



- Try searching using both the name of place your family lived and the term 'Aboriginal' or 'Aborigine' – for example, 'Bega' and 'Aborigine'. Many newspapers reported in general terms about Aboriginal people, rather than using names of individual people.
- Remember that historical newspapers often reflect the racist attitudes of the white people who wrote and published them. You might find your ancestors described using words that are offensive, or you might find out distressing personal details about your ancestors and their lives.

Read more about using Trove Digitised Newspapers:

- [Using Trove: Digitised newspapers](#)
- [Using Trove: Searching in newspapers](#)
- [Trove tips for family historians](#)

The National Library is continually adding more digitised newspapers to Trove, but not all historical newspapers are available yet. See this [list of available newspaper titles](#). Read on for ideas about accessing newspapers that aren't available in Trove.

Hard copy newspapers

For newspapers that aren't digitised in Trove, you will need to visit a library that has original hard copies or microfilm copies. This research can be difficult and time consuming unless you have a specific date and event to look for.

Some newspaper indexes are available, but they probably won't include the sorts of terms you would want to look up.

State libraries are the best place to look for newspapers that aren't available in Trove. Copies of suburban or country newspapers might also be held by the local public library, historical society or museum.

- [National Library of Australia: Newspapers](#)
- [State Library of New South Wales: Newspapers](#)
- [State Library of Victoria: How to find newspapers](#)
- [State Library of Queensland: Newspapers](#)
- [State Library of South Australia: Newspapers](#) and [Fact sheet: newspapers](#)
- [State Library of Western Australia: WA newspapers](#)
- [LINC Tasmania: Tasmanian newspapers](#)
- [Northern Territory Library: Northern Territory newspapers](#)
- [ACT Heritage Library: Newspaper holdings](#)



Aboriginal newspapers

Newspapers and magazines published by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people might be of interest. The following publications are digitised and available online:

- [The Australian Abo Call](#), published by the Aborigines Progressive Association in 1938 (Trove)
- [Dawn and New Dawn](#), published by the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board from 1952 to 1975 (AIATSIS)
- [Koori Mail](#), digitised copies are available for issues published from 1991 to 2011 (AIATSIS).
- The [Australian Indigenous Index](#) (InfoKoori) from the State Library of NSW is an index to the *Koori Mail*. It is also an index to biographical information from various magazines including: *Our Aim* (1907–1961), *Dawn* (1952–1969), *New Dawn* (1970–1975) and *Identity* (1971–1982).

AIATSIS has an extensive collection of Aboriginal newsletters and newspapers. Some were published over many years, some only lasted a few years.





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Sources – Tindale genealogies

The South Australian Museum has a large and important collection of photographs of Aboriginal people, together with accompanying genealogies. Many of these are the work of Norman Tindale from the 1930s to 1950s. Anthropological collections like the Tindale collection provide genealogical information about Aboriginal families.

What are the Tindale genealogies?

Norman Tindale was an anthropologist based at the South Australian Museum. He recorded vast amounts of genealogical information about Indigenous communities from all over Australia, the majority being collected during the 1920s and 1930s.

Over 50,000 Indigenous people are included in the genealogies, as well as thousands of named photographic portraits.

The genealogies are charted in hand-written field notes, usually with one extended family included on each chart. Some charts trace families back as far as 1860 and sometimes include the language groups and/or traditional names of people.

WARNING: Tindale was very interested in 'caste', the 'admixture of Aboriginal and European blood', and therefore his notes contain racist and offensive language.

What information do you need to search the genealogies?

To protect the privacy of the people whose personal information was recorded by Tindale, access to the Tindale genealogies is limited. Usually only direct descendants and persons with permission from families or communities can view and copy the genealogies.

To start searching you need to know:

- the place your family came from or where they lived
- the name of the person or people you are researching.

Where do you find the Tindale genealogies?

The entire Tindale archive, which includes the genealogies, is available from the South Australian Museum. Various state and community organisations also have relevant copies of the genealogies.



All of Australia

The **South Australian Museum** is the custodian of the complete Tindale collection. It holds material about families and communities all around Australia – individual places are listed under the states below. You will need to make an appointment with the museum's Family and Community History Consultant to view the material.

- [Overview of the Tindale collection](#)
- [Online gallery](#) of examples from the Tindale collection
- Detailed [finding aid to the Tindale collection](#)
- Contact details for the SA Museum [Family and Community History Consultant](#)

New South Wales

The **State Library of New South Wales** has copies of genealogical charts and photographs from nine NSW communities, mostly collected through 1938. These include Boggabilla, Brewarrina, Cummeragunga, Kempsey, Menindee, Pilliga, Walgett, Wallaga Lake and Woodenbong. Check the [Index to the NSW Tindale Genealogies \(pdf, 196.22kb\)](#) before making an appointment with one of the library's [Indigenous services librarians](#). See the [SLNSW website](#) for more information.

Muda Aboriginal Corporation holds copies of genealogies for Brewarrina only.

[Dhiyaan Indigenous Centre](#) in Moree holds copies of genealogies for all of New South Wales (Cnr Balo & Albert Streets, Moree NSW 2400, Ph: (02) 6757 3374).

Northern Territory

Tindale collected genealogies from Aboriginal people in the following places in the Northern Territory: Cockatoo Creek, Granites and Mount Leibig. They are held by the South Australian Museum. See *All of Australia* above.

Queensland

The **State Library of Queensland** has copies of genealogical information and photographs for the Queensland Aboriginal communities of Yarrabah, Cherbourg, Mona Mona, Palm Island, Woorabinda, Bentinck Island, Doomadgee and Mornington Island, as well as two northern New South Wales communities at Boggabilla and Woodenbong. You can search the library's [Normal Tindale Collection Alphabetical Index](#) (pdf, 1.55mb). See the [SLQ website](#) for more information.

Townsville CityLibraries Indigenous Services holds copies of Tindale genealogies for Queensland. See the [CityLibraries website](#) for more information.

South Australia



Tindale collected genealogies from Aboriginal people in the following places in South Australia: Koonibba, Macumba, Mirramitta, Nullabor, Pandi Pandi, Point McLeay, Point Pearce, Port Augusta and Swan Reach. They are held by the South Australian Museum. See *All of Australia* above.

Tasmania

Tindale collected genealogies from Aboriginal people in Cape Barren Island in Tasmania. The [Riawunna Aboriginal Education Centre](#) at the University of Tasmania holds copies (Ph: (03) 6226 2772).

Victoria

Tindale collected genealogies from Aboriginal people in Lake Tyers in Victoria. They are held by the South Australian Museum. See *All of Australia* above.

Western Australia

The **Aboriginal History Research Unit in the WA Department of Aboriginal Affairs** holds copies of the Tindale genealogies, photographs and journals, as well as other anthropological records relating to Aboriginal people in Western Australia. See the [Department of Aboriginal Affairs](#) website for more information.

Tindale collected genealogies from Aboriginal people in the following places in Western Australia: Albany, Balgo, Borden, Broome, Christmas Creek, Collie, Derby, Fitzroy Crossing, Forrest River, Gnowrangerup, Gogo, Gordon Downs, Inverway, Jigalong, Laverton, Leopold, Livinga, Margaret River, Meda, Moola Boola, Moore River, Mount Barker, Noonkanbah, Norseman, Quanbun, Southern Cross, Sturt Creek, Wiluna and Wotjulum.





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Sources – military service records

Indigenous people have served in every military conflict that Australia has been involved in since the Boer War (1899–1902). Military records are a rich source of information about the men and women who served in the armed forces, and sometimes their family members.

What are military records?

Military records were created by the Australian Army, Navy, Air Force and Department of Defence. They were created for management and administration purposes.

The most useful military record for family history is the personal service record or file. These files document an individual's military career. Often this is the only official documentation about a person who served in the armed forces. The contents and detail of service records varies with each conflict.

What information do you need to look for military records?

To start researching you need to know:

- the name of the person who served in the Australian armed forces.

It's also helpful to know:

- the person's date and place of birth
- when the person served – Boer War, World War I, World War II, Vietnam and so on.

To take your research further you might need to know information such as the person's service number and unit name – you can find this information in their service record.

Where do you find military records?

Two national government agencies, located in Canberra, hold most of the records on Australian service men and women:

- National Archives of Australia
- Australian War Memorial.

State archives also have records from before Federation (1901) relating to the Boer War.

See this [overview of service records](#) from the Department of Defence for a quick guide to where records are held – for both current and ex-serving members.



Family history websites like Ancestry and Find My Past provide access to some military records, but nothing that you can't also access through the National Archives, Australian War Memorial or state archives.

National Archives of Australia

The National Archives of Australia holds personal service records of people who served in the Australian defence forces in conflicts since 1901.

These records usually include information like place of enlistment, address, age, next of kin and the person's service history including dates and places of service and medical information. Some files have physical descriptions and/or photographs.

Some files note that the person was Indigenous but others don't – some people didn't identify themselves as Indigenous when they joined up.

The National Archives also holds other records relating to military service, including courts-martial, civilian service, munitions workers and soldier settlement.

Records in the National Archives are available to the public if the records are more than 20 years old, called 'the open period'. Many are available online.

For more information see:

- [Finding defence service records](#) – read an overview from the National Archives' *Tracking Family* guide
- [Service records](#) – learn more about military service records
- [Discovering Anzacs](#) – search this website for records about your service person (World War I and the Boer War)
- [RecordSearch](#) – search the National Archives collection database for records about your service person (all conflicts).

Australian War Memorial

The Australian War Memorial maintains a set of searchable lists called 'rolls' which are names of service persons in the following categories:

- Roll of Honour – names of service persons who died on active service
- Commemorative Roll – names of people who were not in the defence forces but who died during or as a result of war
- Nominal rolls
 - Conflicts before World War I
 - World War I Embarkation Roll – recorded as defence persons left for overseas



- World War I Nominal Roll – recorded when service persons received repatriation assistance
- Honours and awards – details of military honours
- Honours and awards – details of recommendations
- Red Cross wounded and missing
- Prisoners of war
- Australian Naval Force 1903 to 1911.

For more information see:

- [Search for a person](#) – search the rolls for your ancestor's name
- [People profiles: Indigenous service](#) – a list of 940 known Indigenous service persons
- [Family history](#) – learn more about how to research your family member's military service.

You can find out more about what your family member did in the armed services by looking at other records held by the War Memorial. For example, war diaries recorded the daily activities of Australian Army units and can provide more details about your family member's movements during the war. To read war diaries and other records online, see the War Memorial web page about [Digitised records](#).

Other resources

Online

These online resources provide information about men and women who served in the Australian armed forces. Some of the resources focus specifically on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

[Indigenous Australian servicemen](#) (Australian War Memorial) – an overview of the history of Indigenous service

['All in' – Indigenous service](#) (Department of Veterans Affairs) – a website about World War II and the people who served

[Mura® catalogue](#) (AIATSIS) – search for 'WW1', 'WW2', 'Vietnam' or other conflicts for material on Indigenous service persons

[Cemeteries](#) (Department of Veterans Affairs) – information about locating the burial place of a service person

[First AIF database](#) (University of NSW) – an online database containing the details of 330,000 men and women who served in the first Australian Imperial Force, 1914–1918

[World War II nominal roll](#) (Department of Veterans Affairs) – a database with information from the service records of the more than one million persons who served during World War II

[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander soldiers of the First World War](#) (pdf 2.9MB) – a list of Indigenous people who enlisted, produced by the *Kurbingui Star*

[Bombing of Darwin roll of honour](#) (Northern Territory Library) – a roll of honour that focuses on people, including Aboriginal people, who died on 19 February 1942

[Military records on CoraWeb](#) – a website with links for family history research

Books

These books talk about the involvement of Indigenous people in war. Many of them include stories and accounts of specific Indigenous Australians. Your local library might have them or be able to order them for you on interlibrary loan.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Volunteers for the AIF by Philippa Scarlett (Macquarie ACT: Indigenous Histories, 2011)

Aborigines in the Defence of Australia edited by Desmond Ball (Sydney: Australian National University Press, 1991)

Biographical Register of Queensland Aborigines Who Served in the Great War, 1914-1918 compiled by Rod Pratt (Wynnum: Rod Pratt, 1993)

Defending Whose Country? Indigenous soldiers in the Pacific war by Noah Riseman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012)

Fighters From the Fringe: Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Recall the Second World War by Robert Hall (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies, 1995)

Forever Warriors: This book honours all Western Australian Indigenous men and women who served in all conflicts by Jan Kabarli James (Northam WA 2010)

Forgotten Heroes: Aborigines at War from the Somme to Vietnam by Alick Jackomos (South Melbourne: Victoria Press, 1993)

The Black Diggers: Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the Second World War by Robert Hall (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989)



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Sources – mission and reserve records

Missions, reserves and stations were reserves of land to which Aboriginal people were forcibly relocated.

- **Missions** were in the control of churches and missionaries with little or no government involvement.
- **Reserves and stations** were generally run by the government, although churches, especially the United Aborigines Mission and the Aborigines Inland Mission, were sometimes active on government settlements although they didn't always have an administrative role. Aboriginal reserves were overseen by government 'protectors', who controlled many aspects of the lives of Aboriginal people.

The types of records that remain vary. They might include diaries, daily occurrence books, photographs taken by visitors and resident missionaries, letters between church officials and people working on the church settlements, and registers of Aboriginal children and adults living there. Some missionaries recorded local languages and culture, and described daily life. Churches also published magazines and newspapers that included information about missions and church institutions.

Mission and reserve records can best be described as patchy. Of the many Aboriginal missions and reserves that were established, some still exist but many have disappeared. Records that remain are usually held by the church or in state archives. Records relating to one mission may be split between church bodies and government bodies.

See AIATSIS subject guide: [How to find mission and reserve records](#) (has a comprehensive list of AIATSIS holdings on missions and reserves).

Find & Connect

The [Find & Connect](#) web resource includes a lot of information about missions where Aboriginal children lived. Find & Connect lists records relating to the missions, and who to contact to get access to the records. You can search or browse on their [Look for homes](#) page.

Search AIATSIS or National Library

A lot of research has been done into Aboriginal missions and reserves. You can read the histories of the particular mission or reserve where your family lived. Understanding the history of Aboriginal missions more generally, can help you understand what your family members' lives were like and might provide further clues. Most of mission/reserve histories will also list sources and locations of records.



Search the [AIATSIS Mura catalogue](#) or [Trove](#) using the mission name or the word 'mission' and the name of the relevant state.

What information do you need to look for mission records?

To start researching you need to know:

- the name of the person
- the name or at least the general location of the mission, reserve or station they lived on.

It's also helpful to know:

- other personal details such as dates and place of birth, marriage and death
- the name of the government or church body that managed the mission, reserve or station.

Where do you find the records?

Aboriginal records units in most states and territories can help you with locating mission and reserve records about you and your close family. These units are mostly within state government departments of Aboriginal affairs and specialise in locating personal records.

New South Wales Family Records Unit – Aboriginal Affairs

Level 13, Tower B, Centennial Plaza, 300 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010

Free call: 1800 019 998

Ph: 02 9219 0700

Fax: 02 9219 0790

Email: familyhistory@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/about/family-records-unit/

Northern Territory Archives Service

Northern Territory Archives Centre, Kelsey Crescent, Millner NT 0810

GPO Box 874, Darwin NT 0801

Ph: 08 8924 7677

Fax: 08 8924 7660

Email: ntac@nt.gov.au

Web: www.artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/ntas (Northern Territory Archives Service)

www.artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/ntas/research/protocol (Protocol for Aboriginal family history research)

www.artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/ntas/media/pdf/ATSI-Family-History_Oct2012.pdf (Fact sheet on Aboriginal family history research)

Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships – Community and Personal Histories

Level 6A, Neville Bonner Building, 75 William Street, Brisbane QLD 4000

PO Box 15397, City East QLD 4002

Free call: 1800 650 230

Email: enquiries@datsip.qld.gov.au

Online form: www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/family-history-request-form/index.html

Web: www.datsip.qld.gov.au/people-communities/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-family-history

State Records of South Australia – Aboriginal Access team

State Records Research Centre (in the State Library of South Australia building), Corner North Terrace and Kintore Avenue, Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 464, Adelaide SA 5001

Ph: 08 8204 8767 or 08 8204 8791

Fax: 08 8204 8777

Online form: www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/contact-us-form

Email: srsaAboriginalServices@sa.gov.au

Web: www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/aboriginal-services (Aboriginal services)

www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/family-history (Family history)

LINC Tasmania

2nd Floor, 91 Murray Street, Hobart TAS 7000

Ph: 03 6165 5538

Online form: <http://sltas.altarama.com/reft100.aspx?key=Research>

Web: www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/guides-records/Pages/Aboriginal.aspx (Aboriginal family history)

www.linc.tas.gov.au

Public Record Office Victoria – Koorie Records Unit

Victorian Archives Centre, 99 Shiel Street, North Melbourne VIC 3051

PO Box 2100, North Melbourne VIC 3051

Free call: 1800 657 452

Ph: 03 9348 5735

Fax: 03 9348 5656

Email: koorie.records@prov.vic.gov.au

Online form: prov.altarama.com/reft100.aspx

Web: prov.vic.gov.au/community-programs/koorie-records-unit
prov.vic.gov.au/publications/finding-your-mob

Aboriginal History Research Unit – Department of Aboriginal Affairs

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs Aboriginal History Research Unit manages access to Western Australian state archives and some privately owned records. You can apply as a personal or family history applicants for your own records or those of your ancestors. You can apply for any records relating to you held by the department, or those relating to a specific purpose such as evidence of genealogy, dates and place of birth or a specific ancestor.

151 Royal Street, East Perth WA 6004

PO Box 3153, East Perth WA 6892

Free call: 1300 651 077

Fax: 08 6551 8088

Email: ahru@daa.wa.gov.au

Web: www.daa.wa.gov.au/community-development/ahru

Missions and reserves by state and territory

The state-by-state listings below give the names of many (but not all) of the church and government missions and reserves around Australia.

To find records by yourself, you will need to know the name of the mission or reserve, and then find out the name of the government or church body that managed it.

New South Wales – selected missions and reserves

(The abbreviations are explained in the section ‘Church names, missions and abbreviations’.)

Name of mission	Church	Period
Bomaderry	UAM	1908–88
Bowraville	RC	1923–?
Goulburn Inland Mission Station	MTH	1916–?
La Perouse	unknown	1895–?
Lake Macquarie (Ebenezer)	LMS	1824–41
Maloga Mission School	unknown	1874–94
Parramatta	CE	1820–28
Sydney Aboriginal Mission	unknown	unknown
Warangesda	CE / ABM	1879–1920
Wellington Valley	CMS	1832–42
Yelta	unknown	unknown

Source: *Lookin for Your Mob: A Guide to Tracing Aboriginal Family Trees*, by Diane Smith and Boronia Halstead, Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990. Although this list is not complete, it includes the most relevant reserves and missions for family history research.

More information

- State Records NSW holds various records relating to reserves. See [State archives relating to Aboriginal people](#).
- Also see [Living on Aboriginal reserves and stations](#), a NSW Government Environment & Heritage website.

Victoria – selected missions and reserves

(The abbreviations are explained in the section ‘Church names, missions and abbreviations’.)

Name of mission	Church	Period
Buntingdale	WMS / MTH	1839–48
Coranderrk	GOVT	1863–1924
Framlingham	CE	1865–67
Framlingham	GOVT	1869–70
Goulburn Station	GOVT	1841–54
Lake Boga	MOR	1851–56
Lake Condah	CE	1867–1913
Lake Condah	GOVT	1913–18
Lake Hindmarsh (Ebenezer)	MOR / PRES	1858–1903
Lake Tyers	CE	1861–1908
Lake Tyers	GOVT	1908–70
Lake Wellington (Ramahyuck)	MOR / PRES	1862–1908
Merri Creek School	BAP	1845–51
Mount Franklyn Station	GOVT	1839–64
Mount Rouse Station	GOVT	1841–51
Narre Narre Warren Station	GOVT	1841–43
Yarra Mission	CMS	1837–39
Yelta	CE	1855–68

Source: *Lookin for Your Mob: A Guide to Tracing Aboriginal Family Trees*, by Diane Smith and Boronia Halstead, Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990. Although this list is not complete, it includes the most relevant reserves and missions for family history research.



More information

- The [Mission voices](#) web site contains background information, stories, timelines and maps on Victorian missions and reserves.

Queensland – selected missions and reserves

Here we have listed missions visited by anthropologist Norman Tindale in the 1930s – see Tindale genealogies for more information.

(The abbreviations are explained in the section ‘Church names, missions and abbreviations’.)

Name of institution	Church	Period
Aurukun	MOR / PRES	1904–78
Bamaga	CE	1947–86
Bethesda	L	1866–89
Bloomfield River (Wujal Wujal)	L	1886–1902, 1957–87
Bowen	CMS	1878–1901
Cherbourg (Barambah)	CE	1904–86
Cowal Creek	CE	1915–87
Daintree River	AOG	1939–?
Doomadgee	BR	1932–83
Edward River	ABM	1935–67
Elim (<i>see Hopevale</i>)		
Fantome Island (Leper Station)	RC?	unknown
Fraser Island	ABM	1897–1904
Gorge Mission	AOG	unknown
Hopevale (Cape Bedford)	L	1886–1986
Kowanyama (Mitchell River)	ABM	1904–78
Lockhart River	ABM	1924–67
Mackay	MTH	1871–1901
Mapoon	MOR / PRES	1891–1987
Marie Yamba	L	1888–1902
Maryborough	CMS	unknown
Mona Mona	ADV	1913–?
Moreton Bay	L / PRES	1837–45
Moreton Bay	CMS	1837–46
Mornington Island	PRES	1914–78
Noangir (<i>see Moreton Bay</i>)		
Palm Island (St Michael's School)	RC	1931–86

Purga	SAL	1915–48
Somerset	SPG (CE)	1867–68
Stewards Creek	MTH	1885?–1901?
Stradbroke Island (Myora Mission)	RC	1843–47
Thursday Island	ABM	unknown
Thursday Island	LMS	1871–1915
Trubanaman (see <i>Kowanyama</i>)		
Weipa	MOR / PRES	1896–1966
Woorabinda	RC	1911–86
Yarrabah	ABM	1891–1960
Yungaburra	AOG	unknown
Zion Hill (see <i>Moreton Bay</i>)		

More information

The most thorough listing of Queensland missions is at the State Library of Queensland – see [Missions and reserves](#).

Western Australia – selected missions and reserves

(The abbreviations are explained in the section ‘Church names, missions and abbreviations’.)

Name of institution	Church	Period
Albany	RC	1845–48
Albany Boys Home	RC	unknown
Amy Bethel House	UAM	1956–75
Annesfield	unknown(Private)	1852–71?
Badjalang	UAM	1930–50?
Balgo Hills (Billiluna, Lake Gregory)	RC(P)	1931–80
Beagle Bay (West Kimberley)	RC(T/P)	1891–1976
Bennett House (previously East Perth Girl's Home)		
Boulder Working Youths Hostel	AAEMB	unknown
Broome Convent	RC	1908–?
Carrolup Native Settlement (Katanning)	GOVT	1915–22
Cundeelee	AAEMB	1950–?
Derby (Leper Station)	RC	1937–1987
Derby (Leper Station)	UAM	1930–75
Derby (Gibb River, Mowanjum, Pandanus)	RC	1940s–today
Disaster Bay	RC	1895?–1903
Drysdale River (see <i>Kalumburu</i>)		

Dulhi Gunyah Mission Home (Victoria Park)	UAM	1909–17
East Perth Girl's Home (later Bennett House)	GOVT	1931–?
Ellensbrook (Busselton)	GOVT	1899–1917
Esperance Mission Home	AAEMB	unknown
Fairhaven (Esperance)	CC	unknown
Fitzroy Crossing	UAM	1952–87
Forrest River (Kimberley)	CE / ABM	1913–71
Fremantle (<i>see Swan River</i>)		
Gascoyne	CE	1885–?
Gnowangerup	UAM	1926–73
Guildford	RC	1846–48
Halls Creek	UAM	1957–67
Halls Creek (Parochial Mission area)	RC	1961–today
Holy Child Orphanage (Broome –previously St John of God Home for Native Girls)	RC	1912–70
Jigalong (East Pilbara)	APC	1945–69
Kalgoorlie Girls Home	SAL	1909–30
Kalumburu (East Kimberley – previously Drysdale River)	RC(B)	1907–82
Karalundi	ADV	1954–?
Katanning	BAP	1952–?
Katukutu Home	BAP	unknown
Kellerberrin	BAP	1939–50?
Kunmunya (Kimberley – previously Port George IV)	PRES	1913–53
Kununurra	RC	1964–today
Kurrawang	BR	1952–?
Kyewong Home	BAP	unknown
La Grange (West Kimberley)	RC (PSM /P)	1924–85?
Lombadina (One Arm Point, Cygnet Point)	RC (PSM)	1911–85?
MacDonald House (Perth)	CE	unknown
Maria Goretti Home	RC	1960s
Marribank (<i>see Katanning</i>)		
Methodist Children's Home	MTH	unknown
Mogumber	MTH	1951–?
Moola Bulla (East Kimberley)	GOVT	1911–54
Moore River Native Settlement (Mogumber)	GOVT	1918–51
Mount Magnet	UAM	unknown

Mount Margaret (Goldfields)	UAM	1921–75
Mowanjum	PRES	1956–81
New Norcia (Victoria Plains)	RC (B)	1846–70
Norseman	CC	1942–?
Ocean View Home	RC	unknown
Pallotine Boys Hostel (Albany)	RC (P)	1968–78
Perth Native Institution	MTH	1840s
Port George IV (later called Kunmunyah)	PRES	1910–16
Range View Students Home	PRES	unknown
Rockhole (Balgo)	RC	1934–?
Roelands Native Mission Farm	INTER / CC	1938–today
Rossmoyne Training Centre	RC	1955–today
St John of God Home for Native Girls (Broome – later called Holy Child Orphanage)		
St Joseph's Home (near Derby)	RC	1961–today
Sister Kate's Home (Queens Park, Perth)	ANG	1933–50?
Smithies Mission (Perth)	WMS	1842–55
Sunday Island (Kimberley)	UAM / ABM	1898–1964
Swan Native and Half–Caste Home/Mission	ANG	1870–1921
Swan River	CE	1852–?
Tardun (Pallotine Mission School)	RC (P)	1948–today
Vasse Mission School	CE	unknown
Wandering (St Xavier Native Mission)	RC	1944–76
Waneroo (Perth)	MTH	1831–54
Warburton Ranges	UAM	1933–77
Warminda Girls Home	MTH	unknown
Wiluna	ADV	unknown
Wonguntha Mission Training Farm (Esperance)	INTER	1954–?
Wotjalum	PRES	1953–56
Wyndham	unknown	1959–today

More information

- The State Records Office of WA holds extensive records relating to missions which are listed in [Looking West: A Guide to Aboriginal Records in Western Australia \(pdf, 385kb\)](#). Also see their webpage about [Aboriginal records](#).
- Information on missions in Western Australia can also be found at [Signposts: A Guide for Children and Young People in Care in WA from 1920](#).

South Australia – selected missions and reserves

(The abbreviations are explained in the section ‘Church names, missions and abbreviations’.)

Name of institution	Church	Period
Adelaide Children's Home	ABM	unknown
Adelaide School	L	1839–48
Colebrook Home	UAM	1927–78
Davenport	BR	1937–65
Encounter Bay	L	1840–48
Ernabella	PRES / UC	1937–today
Finniss Springs	UAM	1939–65
Gerard	UAM	1925–61
Kadina	MOR	1865–?
Killalpaninna (<i>see Kopperamanna</i>)		
Koonibba	L	1901–63
Kopperamanna	L	1866–1917
Limbuana (<i>see Encounter Bay</i>)		
Manunka Aborigines Mission Home	unknown	1902?–06?
Mount Gambier	AFA	unknown
Nepabunna	UAM	1930–today
Oodnadatta	UAM	1924–?
Ooldea	UAM	1933–54
Point McLeay	AFA	1858–1916
Point Pearce	unknown	1868–1915
Poonindie	ABM	1850–75
PortLincoln	L	1840–45
St Francis House (Adelaide)	ABM	1949–57
Swan Reach (<i>see Gerard</i>)		
Umeewarra	BR	1937–65
Yalata	L	1954–75

More information

- The State Library of South Australia has prepared a research guide on [Aboriginal missions in South Australia](#).

Tasmania

- There were no church–run Aboriginal missions in Tasmania – see [Aboriginal missions](#) in the *Companion to Tasmanian History* for more information.

- Anthropologist Norman Tindale visited the Aboriginal communities on the reserve on Cape Barren Island in the 1930s – see Tindale genealogies.

Northern Territory – selected missions and reserves

(The abbreviations are explained in the section ‘Church names, missions and abbreviations’.)

Name of institution / mission	Church	Period
Alice Springs (Children's Home)	ABM	unknown
Alice Springs/Arltunga	RC	1937–42, 1942–54
Angurugu (Groote Eylandt)	CMS	1921–78
Areyonga	L	1942–55
Bagot Compound	AIM	unknown
Bamyill (Katherine)	AIM	1969–?
Baptist Home (Darwin)	BAP	1969–76?
Bathurst Island	RC(MSC)	1911–today
Belyuen (see Delissaville)		
Berrimah Leper Station (<i>see Channel Island</i>)		
Borrooloola	AIM	1951–today
Buckingham Bay (<i>see Elcho Island</i>)		
Channel Island (Leper Station)	RC	1930–43, 1955–82
Croker Island	MTH	1940–today
Daly River	RC(J/MSC)	1886–99, 1956–today
Dellssaville(Belyuen)	AIM	1946?–?
East Arm Settlement (Leper Station)	RC	1923–24
Elcho Island	MTH	1922–23, 1942–today
Elliot	UAM	unknown
Emerald River (Groote Eylandt)	CMS	1921–42
Finke River Mission House (Alice Springs)	L	?–today
Galiwinku (<i>see Elcho Island</i>)		
Garden Point	RC	1940–?
Goulburn Island	MTH	1915–today
Haast Bluff	L	1940–54
Hermannsburg	L	1877–1982
Kahlin Compound	AIM	1940–?
Kalkaringi	B???	1971–today
Katherine (Donkey Camp)	AIM	1941–today
Lajamanu (Hooker Creek)	B???	1962–today
Melville Island	RC(MSC)	1940–68

Milingimbi	MTH	1925–today
Newcastle Waters	AIM	1940s–72?
Numbulwar	CMS	1952–78
Oenpelli	CMS	1924–74
Palmerston	CMS	unknown
Papunya	L	1946–54
Phillip Creek	AIM	1936–51
Port Essington	RC	1846–49
Port Keats	RC	1935–today
Rapid Creek	RC(J)	1882–91
Retta Dixon Home (Darwin)	AIM	1946–80
Roper River	CMS	1908–68
Rose River (<i>see Numbulwar</i>)		
St Mary's Hostel (Alice Springs)	CE / AIM	1946–today
St Teresa	RC(MSC)	1954–today
Serpentine Lagoon	RC(J)	1889–91
Tennant Creek	RC	1936–today
Umbakumba (Groote Eylandt)	CMS	1958–66
Uniya	RC(J)	1886–99
Warrabri (Ali Curung)	BAP	1957–today
Yirrkala	MTH	1935–today
Yuendumu	BAP	1947–today

Source: *Lookin for Your Mob: A Guide to Tracing Aboriginal Family Trees*, by Diane Smith and Boronia Halstead, Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990. Although this list is not complete, it includes the most relevant reserves and missions for family history research.

More information

- Records of some churches with missions in the Northern Territory are held in the NT Archives Service and are listed in [Guide to archives relating to Aboriginal people](#) (pdf, 85kb). These include the personal records of missionaries and government workers.
- The National Archives of Australia also holds records relating to Aboriginal missions and reserves in the Northern Territory. See the chapter on [Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory](#) in their guide, *Commonwealth government records about the Northern Territory*.

Australian Capital Territory

There were no missions or reserves in the ACT.





AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Church names, missions and abbreviations

AAEMB – Australian Aborigines Evangelical Mission Board

ABM – Australian Board of Mission

ADV – Seventh Day Adventists

AFA – Aborigines' Friends' Association

AIM – Aborigines Inland Mission

ANG – Anglican

AOG – Assembly of God

APC – Apostolic Church

BAP – Australian Baptist Missionary Society

BR – Brethren

CMS – Church Missionary Society

CC – Church of Christ

CE – Church of England

GOVT – Government-run

INTER – Interdenominational

L – Lutheran Church of Australia

LMS – London Missionary Society

MTH – Methodist Overseas Mission

MOR – Moravians

PRES – Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions

RC – Roman Catholic

RC(B) – Benedictine

RC(J) – Jesuit

RC(MSC) – Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

RC(P) – Pallotine

RC(PSM) – Pious Society of Missions

RC(T) – Trappists

SAL – Salvation Army

SPG – Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

UAM – United Aborigines Mission

UC – Uniting Church

WMS – Wesleyan Missionary Society





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Sources – electoral rolls and voter records

It's a common belief that the 1967 Referendum gave Indigenous people the right to vote. This isn't true. Aboriginal people could vote before 1967, but many didn't know their rights or were discouraged from voting.

Laws about who could and could not vote changed over time and differed between the states. For example, Point McLeay mission in South Australia got a polling station in the 1890s. Aboriginal men and women voted at Point McLeay in South Australian elections and voted for the first Commonwealth Parliament in 1901.

Also, many Aboriginal people were granted exemption from the protection and welfare laws and exercised their right to vote. Others were never caught by the protection and welfare system or 'passed' as other kinds of 'coloured' people and had the same rights as any other citizens.

So, it's worth checking if your ancestors ever enrolled to vote. You might find out the family's residential address or track changes of address over time. Electoral rolls can also help identify other adult family members living at the same address.

What are electoral rolls?

Electoral rolls are lists of people who registered to vote in state, territory or federal elections. They are updated before every election and may provide information such as:

- address
- occupation
- age
- other people registered at the same address
- other people who were neighbours.

What information do you need to search for electoral rolls?

To start researching you need to know:

- the name of the person you are researching
- the electorate, town or general area where they lived.



Where do you find electoral rolls?

Historical electoral rolls

- Electoral rolls can often be searched at your local library, state library or family history society.
- The [National Library in Canberra](#) keeps microfiche of the Commonwealth electoral rolls from 1901 to present. Some of these may be slightly imperfect. The library also holds a limited number of state electoral rolls on microfiche for the time prior to Federation in 1901. They provide a limited look-up service if you can't visit the library.
- [Ancestry.com.au](#) provides access to scanned and searchable electoral rolls from 1903 to 1980 for every state and territory, except South Australia, and earlier for New South Wales.

Current electoral roll

You can view an electronic copy of the current electoral roll (e-roll) at any office of the Australian Electoral Commission. See the [AEC website](#) for more information.

Other resources

- [Indigenous people and the vote](#) (Australian Electoral Commission)
- [Indigenous Australians – electoral timeline](#) (Australian Electoral Commission)



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Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Sources – police gazettes, court and gaol records

Legal records, including records created by the police, the courts and the gaols, can be useful for locating information about your ancestors. In fact, these records might be the only official mention of particular Aboriginal people.

During the early periods of white settlement, police officers in isolated regions often took on the role of local magistrate and sometimes became 'Protectors' of Aborigines, distributing rations and carrying out government policies.

Aboriginal people also worked with the police as trackers, sometimes in special native police units.

What are police, court and gaol records?

Police, court and gaol records are a diverse range of records that date from the early decades of white settlement. They include records like:

- police station occurrence books and charge books
- records about members of the police force
- judges' bench books and court case files
- photographs of prisoners and registers of inmates.

These records can provide many details about people's lives.

Police gazettes are a good example of this. They were circulated to police stations and contained lists of crimes committed, escaped prisoners, warrants issued and court reports. Not all the people mentioned were on the wrong side of the law – information was published about the victims of crimes, too, and about missing persons.

What information do you need to look for these records?

You'll need to search using a combination of these three things:

- the name of the person you are researching
- the place they lived
- the dates they lived there.



You can find useful information about police and court matters – such as newsworthy incidents, police arrests, court hearings and legal trials – in historical newspapers. It is worthwhile checking [Trove Digitised Newspapers](#) first to see what you can find.

Sometimes newspaper accounts are the only remaining record of events, since not all police, court and gaol records have been kept until today.

Where do you find police, court and gaol records?

The police, courts and gaols were run by colonial governments, then state and territory governments after 1901. This means that you will find the records in the state or territory archive for where your ancestor lived.

Family history websites like [Ancestry](#) and [Find My Past](#) provide access to some police, court and gaol records, but nothing that you can't also access through government archives. The [Centre for Indigenous Family History](#) has indexes to some police records.

These websites are useful for doing a quick check – but because they generally only have the 'most popular' records, for more in-depth research you'll need to look at the archives too.

New South Wales

See these resources from State Records NSW:

- [A guide to New South Wales State archives relating to Aboriginal people](#) – has chapters listing records relating to the police, courts of petty sessions and Supreme Court
- [Index to Aboriginal colonial court cases, 1788–1838](#)
- [Police service records](#) – has information on records about Aboriginal trackers who worked with the police

Northern Territory

From 1863 to 1910 the Northern Territory was part of South Australia. From 1911 it came under the control of the Commonwealth government until the Territory won self-government in 1978.

See these resources:

- [Guide to archives relating to Aboriginal people](#) (PDF 85 KB) from Northern Territory Archives Service
- Northern Territory Archives Services in the *Tracking Family* guide

Queensland

See these resources from Queensland State Archives:

- [Records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples](#) (PDF 51 KB)
- [Police gazettes](#) (PDF 44 KB)
- [Court records](#) (PDF 329 KB)
- [Murder files](#) (PDF 73 KB)
- Complete list of [Brief guides](#) from Queensland State Archives

You might also find information at the [Queensland Police Museum](#), which has material about the native mounted police and Aboriginal trackers.

South Australia

See these resources from State Records of South Australia:

- [Finding your Aboriginal history](#)
- [Courts](#)
- [Gaols](#)

You may also find information at the [South Australia Police Historical Society](#).

Tasmania

See these resources from LINC Tasmania:

- [Tasmanian court records](#)
- [Tasmanian prison records](#)

Victoria

See these resources from the Public Record Office of Victoria:

- [Koorie heritage: Aboriginal records at PROV](#) – includes links to an exhibition about the native police and to other articles of interest
- [walata tyamateetj: A guide to government records about Aboriginal people in Victoria](#) – includes a section on legal, police and prison records
- [Court records](#)
- [Prison records](#)



- [Police records](#)

You might also find information at the [Victoria Police Museum and Historical Services Unit](#).

Western Australia

See these resources from the State Records Office of WA:

- [Aboriginal records](#) – lists police, court and prison records relating to Aboriginal people
- [Court records](#)
- [Police records](#)
- [Prison and gaol records](#)



AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Sources – maps

Place is central to your research into your Aboriginal family's history. Knowing where your ancestors lived helps you to locate records about them, but it also helps you understand what their lives were like. For example, you can track how they moved throughout their life – whether they stayed close to where they were born, or whether they moved long distances.

Contemporary maps, like a printed road map or Google Maps online, show things how they are today. They're a good place to start to work out where exactly it was that your ancestors lived.

Historical maps show places as they were at some time in the past. If possible you should try to find one from the period you are researching.

Historical maps are particularly helpful if your ancestors lived on a rural property or a small or remote place that may not exist today. It can be hard to locate such places on contemporary maps, but if you know the general area you might be able to find them on a historical map. Historical maps can also help when the spelling of a place name has changed.

The one [Geoscience Australia Place Names Search](#) is a useful tool in locating places around Australia.

Historical maps are held in many library collections around Australia. A growing number are digitised and available to view online, while others you will need to view in the library itself.

Maps of Aboriginal Australia

Maps that illustrate Indigenous language groups and tribal boundaries might also be helpful in your research. Some of these maps show Indigenous group boundaries as they existed when Europeans first colonised Australia. Other maps represent current distributions of language use.

- [AIATSIS Aboriginal Australia map](#)
- State Library of South Australia: [Maps of Aboriginal Australia](#)
- Western Australian Department of Aboriginal Affairs: [Maps](#)

Online guides to maps

National

- National Library of Australia: [Australian maps for family historians](#)
- Trove: [Maps](#)



- Noel Butlin Archives Centre: [Maps](#)

New South Wales

- State Library of NSW: [Map collection](#)
- NSW Land and Property Information: [Parish and historical maps](#)

Queensland

- State Library of Queensland: [Maps](#)

South Australia

- State Library of South Australia: [Maps and geodata](#)

Tasmania

- Tasmania: [Town and property maps, plans and names](#) in *Guide to resources for Tasmanian genealogy* by Malcolm Ward

Victoria

- State Library of Victoria: [Maps for family history](#)
- University of Melbourne: [Map collections](#)

Western Australia

- State Records Office of Western Australia: [Maps online](#)



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Sources – land and pastoral station records

Aboriginal stock workers and domestic staff worked for generations on pastoral stations, particularly in northern Australia. If someone in your family was born, passed away or worked on a pastoral property it's a good idea to find out if any records were kept on that station and whether they still exist.

Station owners and managers might have kept records about the people they employed or about Aboriginal people who lived on the station. Even if you don't find direct information about your ancestor, finding out about where they lived or worked helps you understand what their life was like.

What are land and pastoral station records?

Land and pastoral station records include materials about:

- the ownership and management of land – mostly created by government agencies
- the management of rural properties – mostly created by station owners and managers.

The records might include pastoral maps, land surveys, documents of land ownership, diaries, wage and ration books, registers of birth and registers of employees.

What information do you need to look for land and station records?

To start researching you need to know:

- the name of the person who lived or worked on the property
- the name of the property or, at very least, the property's general location.

If you don't know the name of the property, pastoral directories might be helpful. These were published listings of pastoral properties, their names, owners and locations. The most comprehensive directory was the Australian Pastoral Directory, but it did not include properties in Western Australia. There were many other short-lived directories.

Pastoral directories and maps that might help you to identify a property are held at the Noel Butlin Archives in Canberra. You can also search the [Australian Pastoral Directories \(1913–1954\) in Find My Past](#). State and local libraries also hold copies of pastoral directories.



Where do you find land and pastoral station records?

Land and property title records

State and territory government land and title agencies can help you to find information about pastoral properties. They have pastoral maps, records of land surveys and detailed records of who has bought and sold properties over time.

- Australian Capital Territory – [Access Canberra: Land titles](#)
- New South Wales
 - Land and Property Information: [Historical research](#)
 - Land and Property Information: [Parish and historical maps](#)
- Northern Territory
 - [Northern Territory Land and Planning Services](#)
 - Northern Territory Archives Service: [Guide to archives relating to the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory](#)
 - National Archives of Australia: [Records about the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory](#)
- Queensland
 - Department of Natural Resources and Mines – [Land and property](#)
 - Queensland State Archives Brief Guide 5 – [Land tenure records](#) (PDF, 170kb)
- South Australia – [Housing, property and land: About historical searching](#)
- Tasmania – [Land Tasmania](#)
- Victoria – Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning: [Land titles](#)
- Western Australia – Landgate: [Historical records](#)

Pastoral station records

There is a range of other records that provide historical information about pastoral properties. These vary across place and time, so it might take some digging to find things that are relevant to your family history. Here are some suggestions for where to look.

- A search of [Trove](#) for the name of the station or property might find books, images, oral histories or newspaper articles about the property.
- Some station owners or managers kept records like diaries, wage and ration books, and registers of births, deaths and marriages. The [Noel Butlin Archives Centre](#) at the Australian



National University in Canberra holds some of these records, mainly for farms and cattle properties in New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

- State libraries and archives can provide help in finding land records. Have a look at these research resources:
 - New South Wales: [Land records available at State Records NSW](#)
 - Queensland: [Land records from the State Library of Queensland](#)
 - Queensland: [Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying](#)
 - Queensland: Queensland State Archives – [Lands](#)
 - South Australia: Family History SA – [Land, maps, place names](#)
 - Victoria: [Land records at the Public Record Office of Victoria](#)
 - Tasmania: [LINC Tasmania research guides](#), including land titles, place names, building histories
 - Victoria: Researching your Victorian ancestors – [Land records and rates books](#)
 - Western Australia: [Guide to WA history – Land from the State Library of WA](#)
- Local archives, historical and family history societies often have records relating to their local area, which might include copies of station records, photographs and maps.
- If the station or property still exists, the current or previous owners might still have station records. The local historical society or library might be able to put you in touch, or you can contact the [Noel Butlin Archives Centre](#) (which has lots of pastoral station records) for help tracking ownership.
- [Ancestry](#) and [Find My Past](#) provide access to certain land and property records.
- CoraWeb has a section on [maps, place names and land records](#).





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Sources – Dawn and New Dawn Magazines

The *Dawn* and *New Dawn* were magazines published between 1952 and 1975 by the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board, with the aim of providing interesting information and an exchange of news and views. The *Dawn* and *New Dawn* were also a way for Aboriginal people to keep in contact.

The magazines are a valuable source of family history information as they include details of births, deaths, marriages and baptisms, as well as hundreds of photographs.

The *Dawn* and *New Dawn* contain articles about the conditions and activities on reserves, stations, homes and schools throughout New South Wales. During their time of publication the magazines were also used to report the work of the Aboriginal Welfare Board.

What information do you need to research these magazines?

The *Dawn* and *New Dawn* have been fully indexed in the AIATSIS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI) and the State Library of New South Wales INFORKOORI index.

This means that you can search for articles in the magazines using keywords such as:

- your ancestor's name
- the name of the place they lived, worked or studied.

Where do you find the *Dawn* and *New Dawn*?

AIATSIS has made digital copies of the entire collection of the magazines and published them on our website. It also has hardcopies of the magazines. To search and view the *Dawn* and *New Dawn* you can:

- search the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Biographical Index (ABI)
- search INFOKOORI
- browse the digital copies of the Dawn and New Dawn
- find hard copies held by Australian libraries using Trove (National Library of Australia):
 - [Dawn: A magazine for the Aboriginal people of NSW](#)
 - [New Dawn: A magazine for the Aboriginal people of New South Wales](#)





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Sources – other records and collections

Biographical indexes and dictionaries

An index is a detailed alphabetical guide to names, places or topics, with a reference to where the information can be found. Indexes don't contain actual information, though they might include a summary.

A **biographical index** is a list of people's names and the location (e.g. page numbers and library catalogue numbers) of the information about them.

There are a number of useful biographical indexes of Aboriginal people:

- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index](#) – AIATSIS
- [INFOKOORI Australian Indigenous Index](#) – State Library of New South Wales
- [Bringing Them Home Index](#) – National Archives of Australia
- [Indigenous indexes](#) – Queensland State Archives
- [Index to the Chief Protector of Aborigines files 1898–1908](#) – State Records Office of WA

Biographical dictionaries are alphabetically indexed lists of people containing information about their lives.

For example, the *Dictionaries of Western Australians* was a major project that includes four volumes about Aboriginal people. Names were taken from the records of the Colonial Secretary's Office, private journals, newspapers and published journals. For example, the names and details of Aboriginal people imprisoned on Rottnest Island are listed.

You can find other biographical dictionaries through a search in [Trove](#).

Census records

Aboriginal Australians have been counted in some censuses of the Australian population, but have been deliberately excluded from others. Section 127 of the *Constitution Act 1900* stated that 'Aboriginal natives shall not be counted', but exclusion also occurred in earlier censuses.

Government definitions of Aboriginality have also varied over time, meaning an Aboriginal person of mixed ancestry might have been counted in one census and excluded from another census.



Some census records therefore include information about Aboriginal people. In New South Wales, for example, the 1891 and 1901 Census collectors books list the names of householders and the number of Aboriginal people living in each household.

The State Library of Victoria has a guide on [early Australian census records](#), including a section on [censuses of Aboriginal Australians](#).

Local history collections in public libraries and local museums

Many local public libraries in suburbs and towns collect books, photographs, maps, letters and newspapers about their local area – a local history collection. Many towns also have small local museums. These collections can be useful to Aboriginal researchers because they might have records of local properties listing Aboriginal stock workers, local newspapers, family diaries and photographs.

Two websites that maintain lists of family history and historical societies are:

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies:
www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- Cape Banks Family History Society – Australian Family History & Historical Societies:
www.capebanks.org.au/australian-family-history-societies/

You can use **Australian Libraries Gateway – Find a Library** (www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries) to locate libraries with family history and local history collections. Under location select your state and under library type select 'Local/Family history'. You can also browse using the map.

Land council records

Your local land council or other Aboriginal organisation (such as cultural and arts groups, training institutes, medical and legal services) might have their own resource collections. They might hold books, pamphlets and newsletters about local events and people, as well as tribal and contact history. Some Aboriginal communities have organised their own family history groups and work together recording oral histories and writing community histories.

Union, company and employment records

The Noel Butlin Archives Centre at the Australian National University collects business and labour records from Australian companies, trade unions, industry bodies and professional organisations. Its collection includes records of trade unions and pastoral properties. See [Records about Aboriginal people](#) (PDF 119 KB) for more information.





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Family history kit – Where to get help – contents

- Link-Up services
- Australian Capital Territory
- New South Wales
- Northern Territory
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Tasmania
- Western Australia





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Where to get help – Link-Up services

Link-Up services are geographically based. Contact the Link-Up located where separation took place or where you are currently living.

Australian Capital Territory

There is no Link-Up in the ACT. Pre-1988 welfare services in the ACT were delivered by New South Wales.

Link-Up New South Wales Aboriginal Corporation

Link-Up NSW assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the Stolen Generations – those who have been fostered, adopted or raised in institutions under government policies of the time. Link-Up helps members of the Stolen Generations trace their families and be reunited with them (or their gravesites, country or kin).

Lot 4, 2 Central Place, Ropes Crossing NSW 2760

PO Box 185, St Marys NSW 2760

Free call: 1800 624 332

Ph: 02 9421 4700

Fax: 02 9673 4740

Email: linkup@nsw.link-up.org.au

Web: www.linkupnsw.org.au

Link-Up Northern Territory – Northern Territory Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation (NTSGAC)

NTSGAC helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people separated from their families under the past laws, practices and policies of Australian governments to undertake family tracing and family reunions with counselling support. Link-Up counsellors at NTSGAC give priority to Stolen Generations clients, especially the elderly and those requiring urgent assistance due to health concerns.

Suite A, Ground Floor, Building 3, Cascom Centre, 13–17 Scaturchio Street, Casuarina NT 0811

PO Box 43372, Casuarina NT 0811

Ph: 08 8947 9171

Fax: 08 8947 9173

Web: www.ntsgac.org.au



Link-Up Queensland

Link-Up Queensland provides services to individuals, families or communities who have been affected by past Australian government removal policies and practices, including separation through adoption, fostering, removal or institutionalisation. It provides family history research assistance to members of the Stolen Generations.

Free call: 1800 200 855

Email: contact@link-upqld.org.au

Web: www.link-upqld.org.au

Brisbane office

3-5 Reid Street, Woolloongabba QLD 4102
PO Box 3229, South Brisbane, Queensland QLD 4101
Ph: 07 3034 8444

Cairns office

18 Scott Street, Parramatta Park QLD 4870
PO Box 298, Bungalow QLD 4870
Ph: 07 4041 7403

Townsville office

c/-Relationships Australia, 745 Riverway Drive, Thuringowa QLD 4817
PO Box 247, Thuringowa QLD 4817
Ph: 0410 639 645

Mt Isa office

1/81 Miles Street, Mt Isa QLD 4825
PO Box 296, Mt Isa DC QLD 4825
Ph: 0417 097 322 or 0459 028 380

Link-Up South Australia – Nunkuwarrin Yunti

Nunkuwarrin Yunti's Link-Up SA program provides family tracing, reunion and counselling services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families who have been separated under the past policies and practices of the Australian Government. Assistance is also provided to people over the age of eighteen years who have been adopted, fostered or raised in institutions.

Web: nunku.org.au/our-services/social-emotional/link-up

Adelaide office



182–190 Wakefield Street, Adelaide SA 5000
Ph: 08 8406 1600
Fax: 08 8232 0949

Elizabeth Downs office

28–30 Brady Street, Elizabeth Downs SA 5113
Ph: 08 8254 5300
Fax: 08 8254 9182

Tasmania

There is no Link-Up service in Tasmania.

Link-Up Victoria

Link-Up Victoria helps Indigenous people over the age of eighteen who were adopted, placed in foster care, institutionalised or forcibly removed to trace and be reunited with their families. Among its services are tracing family, conducting reunions and delivering counselling for Stolen Generations.

34 Wurruk Avenue, Preston VIC 3072
Free call: 1800 687 662
Ph: 03 9470 3666
Fax: 03 9470 3788
Email: linkup@vacca.org
Web: www.linkupvictoria.org.au

Link-Up Western Australia – Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation

Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation provides Link-Up services to Aboriginal people affected by past government policies relating to the removal of children. Its case workers coordinate family research, client reunification, back to community and overall Link-Up activities.

Email: reception@yorgum.org.com
Web: www.yorgum.org.au

Perth office

176 Wittenoom Street, East Perth WA 6004
PO Box 236, Northbridge WA 6865
P: 08 9218 9477
F: 08 9221 0487

South Hedland – Link-Up



Suite 4/ 3 Brand Street, South Hedland WA 6722

Ph: 08 9140 4029

Fax: 08 9140 4031

Kalgoorlie – Link-Up

16-18 McDonald Street, Kalgoorlie WA 6430

Ph: 08 9091 6359

Fax: 08 9091 9247

Link-Up Western Australia – Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Service

The Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Service in Broome helps members of the Stolen Generations find information about their family and locate their family members. It also helps reunite family members who have not met before.

28 Barker Street, Broome WA 6725

PO Box 2775, Broome WA 6725

Free call: 1800 830 338

Ph: 08 9193 6502

Fax: 08 9193 5693

Email: kimberley.linkup@iinet.net.au

Web: www.kimberleystolengeneration.com.au





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Where to get help – Australian Capital Territory

Organisations in each state and territory can help with your Indigenous family history research. There are also a number of national organisations and non-government websites that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history.

- **Libraries** hold a range of material that is useful for family history, including books, indexes and original manuscripts. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Some libraries have online research guides to help you understand their collections.
- **Archives** hold original records, created by government agencies, private organisations or individuals. Archives are different from libraries, and you will need help from an archivist to locate and access records.
- **Indigenous family history services** are provided by state and territory governments to assist you in accessing records and personal information about your and your ancestors held in government archives.
- **Link-Up organisations** provide services to members of the Stolen Generations, their families, and foster and adoptive families. These include researching family and personal records, finding family members and support and counselling.
- **Organisations for adoptees and care leavers** (and their families) can help you find information about your personal and family history and connect you with family. They also provide counselling and support services.
- **Family history community projects and organisations** offer practical help in researching your family history. Some are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused. They may have library collections, computers, online resources and provide training courses and workshops.

Before you contact them

Try to collect and organise as much information as you can before approaching organisations for help. They will need names, dates and places in order to help you with your research.

See Family history sources to find out more.



Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

The AIATSIS Family History Unit can help people researching their Indigenous family history. The AIATSIS Finding Your Family website is an online resource with a focus on helping people to learn how to do Indigenous family history research. AIATSIS offers an Australia-wide service. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index enables you to do an online name search of some of the material in the collection. AIATSIS cannot compile family trees or help you to confirm Aboriginality.

51 Lawson Crescent, Acton ACT 2601
GPO Box 553, Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: 02 6246 1111
Freecall: 1800 352 553
Fax: 02 6261 4285
Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au
Web: www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family

ArchivesACT

ArchivesACT provides access to ACT government records, including records about divorce, child welfare, cemeteries, schools and housing. Access to records is by appointment only, so you need to contact the archives first. Records relating to the area that is now the ACT are also held by State Records NSW and by the National Archives of Australia.

GPO Box 158, Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: 02 6207 5726
Fax: 02 6207 5835
Email: archives@act.gov.au
Web: www.archives.act.gov.au

Office of Regulatory Services – Births, Deaths and Marriages

The Office of Regulatory Services manages the registration of births, deaths, marriages, changes of name, changes of sex and adoptions in the ACT. You can apply for copies of records for family history purposes and ask them to search their index for you. The cost of BDM records varies from state to state but is normally \$30 to \$50 per certificate.

Note: records prior to 1930 were registered in the New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

255 Canberra Avenue, Fyshwick ACT 2609
PO Box 158, Canberra City 2601
Ph: 02 6207 3000



Email: ors@act.gov.au

Web: www.ors.act.gov.au/community/births_deaths_and_marriages

ACT Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

The ACT Government undertook an extensive genealogy project with the ACT Aboriginal community to compile a comprehensive genealogical database. The database documents more than 5000 individuals and includes a collection of some 2000 primary source records.

Level 8, 11 Moore Street, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: 02 6207 9784

Email: oatsia@act.gov.au

Web: www.communityservices.act.gov.au/atsia

Guide:

www.communityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/394385/CSD_GSR_web.pdf

(Our Kin Our Country)

Find & Connect Support Service ACT

Find & Connect supports people who grew up in orphanages, children's homes, institutions and foster homes. Find & Connect can help you obtain your personal records, trace your history and understand why you were placed into care, as well as providing counselling and other services.

15 Napier Close, Deakin ACT 2600

Free call: 1800 16 11 09

Ph: 02 6122 7100

Web: www.findandconnect.gov.au

Post Adoption Resource Centre – Benevolent Society

The Benevolent Society's Post Adoption Resource Centre provides information, counselling and support to people affected by adoption in New South Wales and the ACT.

Suite 253, Level 5, 7–11 The Avenue, Hurstville NSW 1481

Ph: 02 9504 6788

Email: parc@bensoc.asn.au

Web: www.benevolent.org.au/connect/post--adoption--support--home

ACT Heritage Library

The ACT Heritage Library collects, preserves, promotes and provides access to documents that record the lives of Canberrans. It has resources on the history of Aboriginal people of the ACT as well as general family history material.

Level 1, Woden Library, Corner Corinna and Furzer Streets, Phillip ACT 2606
GPO Box 158, Canberra City ACT 2601
Ph: 02 6207 5163
Web: www.library.act.gov.au/find/history

Canberra and District Historical Society Inc.

The Canberra and District Historical Society encourages the study of the history of Canberra and district. It holds activities such as lectures and excursions, provides research services and maintains a resource centre with books, periodicals, maps, photographs and extensive and unique files of newspaper cuttings.

Curtin Shopping Centre
PO Box 315, Curtin ACT 2605
Ph: 02 6281 2929
Email: admin@canberrahistory.org.au
Web: www.canberrahistory.org.au

National Library of Australia

The National Library collects and makes available material of national significance about Australia and Australians. It holds books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs and oral histories that could be useful in researching your family – much of this is available online through Trove. The library has a family history collection and staff you can help you to locate material.

Parkes Place, Canberra ACT 2600
Ph: 02 6262 1111
Fax: 02 6257 1703
Ask a Librarian (online contact form): www.nla.gov.au/askalibrarian
Web: www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/family-history
www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/indigenous

Australian War Memorial

Indigenous people have served in every military conflict that Australia has been involved in since the Boer War (1899–1902). Military records are a rich source of information about the men and women who served in the armed forces, and sometimes their family members.

Treloar Crescent, Campbell ACT 2612
Ph: 02 6243 4211
Fax: (02) 6243 4325
Email: info@awm.gov.au
Web: www.awm.gov.au



Indigenous Australian servicemen: www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/indigenous/
People, profiles and biographies: www.awm.gov.au/people/profiles/ (940 Indigenous service persons)

Research guides for Indigenous family history

Research guides provide comprehensive information for people doing family history research. They often include an outline of the history of colonisation and Aboriginal protection/welfare legislation, linking these to the records that were created about Indigenous people.

Books published by AIATSIS

- Penny Taylor, *Telling it like it is: A guide to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history*, AIATSIS, 1992
- Diane Smith and Boronia Halstead, *Lookin for your mob: A guide to tracing Aboriginal family trees*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990.

Online guides

- Our Kin Our Country (ACT Aboriginal Genealogy Project)
www.communityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/394385/CSD_GSR_web.pdf
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – National Archives of Australia:
www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx

Websites

- Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies (CIFHS) – a name searchable archive of some government documents relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The site is updated with new records continuously. Some of the documents contain offensive language.
www.cifhs.com

General family history resources

Local family history groups, local history societies and local libraries are valuable sources of information and resources. They can put you in contact with people with a good knowledge of the local history of a town or area that you are interested in. Many also have local studies collections with books, newspapers, family histories, photographs and manuscripts.

The Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra Inc.

HAGSOC helps people trace their family history, providing genealogy advice and running regular workshops, seminars and talks. It has an excellent family history library and is a great place to start if you are new to family history research.



Cook Community Hub, Unit 7, 41 Templeton Street, Cook ACT 2614
GPO Box 585, Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: 02 6282 9356
Fax: 02 6282 4865
Email: hagsoc@hagsoc.org.au
Web: www.hagsoc.org.au

Find local libraries

You can use Australian Libraries Gateway – Find a Library (www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries) to locate libraries in Victoria with family history and local history collections. Under location select 'VIC' and under library type select 'Local/Family history'. You can also browse using the map.

Family history research websites

- [CoraWeb](#): a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links and useful advice about tracing your family history (Australia)
- [Ancestry – Help & Advice](#): general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia)
- [Cyndi's List](#): a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (USA)
- [FamilySearch Learning Center](#): articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)

Find family history and historical societies

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies:
www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- Cape Banks Family History Society – Australian Family History Societies:
www.capebanks.org.au/australian-family-history-societies/

Society of Australian Genealogists

The Society of Australian Genealogists helps people trace their family history, providing genealogy advice and running workshops and lectures. It has an excellent family history library and a manuscript collection in central Sydney.

'Richmond Villa', 120 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Ph: 02 9247 3953
Fax: 02 9241 4872
Email: info@sag.org.au
Web: www.sag.org.au





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Where to get help – New South Wales

Organisations in each state and territory can help with your Indigenous family history research. There are also a number of national organisations and non-government websites that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history.

- **Libraries** hold a range of material that is useful for family history, including books, indexes and original manuscripts. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Some libraries have online research guides to help you understand their collections.
- **Archives** hold original records, created by government agencies, private organisations or individuals. Archives are different from libraries, and you will need help from an archivist to locate and access records.
- **Indigenous family history services** are provided by state and territory governments to assist you in accessing records and personal information about your and your ancestors held in government archives.
- **Link-Up organisations** provide services to members of the Stolen Generations, their families, and foster and adoptive families. These include researching family and personal records, finding family members and support and counselling.
- **Organisations for adoptees and care leavers** (and their families) can help you find information about your personal and family history and connect you with family. They also provide counselling and support services.
- **Family history community projects and organisations** offer practical help in researching your family history. Some are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused. They may have library collections, computers, online resources and provide training courses and workshops.

Before you contact them

Try to collect and organise as much information as you can before approaching organisations for help. They will need names, dates and places in order to help you with your research.

See Family history sources for more information.



Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

The AIATSIS Family History Unit can help people researching their Indigenous family history. The AIATSIS Finding Your Family website is an online resource with a focus on helping people to learn how to do Indigenous family history research. AIATSIS offers an Australia-wide service. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index enables you to do an online name search of some of the material in the collection. AIATSIS cannot compile family trees or help you to confirm Aboriginality.

51 Lawson Crescent, Acton ACT 2601

GPO Box 553, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: 02 6246 1111

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4285

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Web: www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family

State Library of New South Wales

The State Library of New South Wales has a significant collection of books and manuscript material relating to Aboriginal people, as well as many family history resources. The family history area of the library has staff who can help you get started with your research and show you how to use the library's collections. You can also contact the Indigenous Services librarians.

Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 02 9273 1414

Fax: 02 9273 1255

Email: info.koori@sl.nsw.gov.au (Indigenous Services)

Web: www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/indigenous (Indigenous Services)

www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/family_history (Family History)

State Records NSW

State Records NSW holds NSW state government records. Many records relate to Aboriginal people, in particular those created by the Aborigines Protection Board (later Aborigines Welfare Board) from the 1880s to the 1960s.

If you think there might be state government records about your Aboriginal family, you can contact the Family Records Unit at Aboriginal Affairs (see below) who can search on your behalf.

143 O'Connell Street, Kingswood NSW 2747

PO Box 516, Kingswood NSW 2747



Ph: 02 9673 1788

Fax: 02 9833 4518

Email: info@records.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.records.nsw.gov.au/state-archives/resources-for/indigenous-people

Family Records Unit – Aboriginal Affairs

The Family Records Unit at Aboriginal Affairs helps people from New South Wales access state government records about themselves and their family. They also give researchers permission to access Aborigines Protection Board and Aborigines Welfare Board records.

Level 13, Tower B, Centennial Plaza, 300 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010

Free call: 1800 019 998

Ph: 02 9219 0700

Fax: 02 9219 0790

Email: familyhistory@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/about/family-records-unit/

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (NSW)

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages has records of birth, death and marriage in New South Wales from 1856, as well as some earlier church records. You can search family history indexes online. If you need to contact the registry you can request that an Indigenous staff member handle your inquiry. The cost of BDM records varies from state to state but is normally \$30 to \$50 per certificate. There is a fee waiver policy that includes Stolen Generations and forced adoptions.

35 Regent Street, Chippendale NSW 2008

GPO Box 30, Sydney NSW 2001

Ph: 13 77 88

Email: bdm-familyhistory@agd.nsw.gov.au (for questions about family history searches)

Web: www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/family-history/family-history (Family history)

www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/contact-us/aboriginal (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services)

www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Documents/PO-02-05-Fee-Waiver-Policy-2014-08.pdf (fee waiver policy)

Link-Up New South Wales Aboriginal Corporation

Link-Up NSW assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the Stolen Generations – those who have been fostered, adopted or raised in institutions under government policies of the time. Link-Up helps members of the Stolen Generations trace their families and be reunited with them (or their gravesites, country or kin).

Lot 4, 2 Central Place, Ropes Crossing NSW 2760
PO Box 185, St Marys NSW 2760
Free call: 1800 624 332
Ph: 02 9421 4700
Fax: 02 9673 4740
Email: linkup@nsw.link-up.org.au
Web: www.linkupnsw.org.au

Find & Connect Support Service New South Wales – Wattle Place

Find & Connect supports people who grew up in orphanages, children's homes, institutions and foster homes in New South Wales from the 1920s to the 1990s, no matter where they live. Find & Connect can help you obtain your personal records, trace your history and understand why you were placed into care, as well as providing counselling and other services.

67 High Street, Harris Park NSW 2150
Free call: 1800 16 11 09 or 1800 663 844
Email: wattleplace@ransw.org.au
Web: www.nsw.relationships.com.au/ourservices/services-library/fass.aspx (Wattle Place)
www.findandconnect.gov.au (Find & Connect)

Post Adoption Resource Centre – Benevolent Society

The Benevolent Society's Post Adoption Resource Centre provides information, counselling and support to people affected by adoption in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

Suite 253, Level 5, 7-11 The Avenue, Hurstville NSW 1481
Ph: 02 9504 6788
Email: parc@bensoc.asn.au
Web: www.benevolent.org.au/connect/post--adoption--support--home

Adoption and Permanent Care Services Unit – Family and Community Services

The Adoption and Permanent Care Services Unit offers services about past adoptions in New South Wales to adoptees, birth parents, adoptive parents and other family members.

Ph: 02 8855 4900
Email: adoption@community.nsw.gov.au
Web: www.community.nsw.gov.au/docs_menu/parents_carers_and_families/fostering_and_adoption/adoption/past_adoptions.html



National Archives of Australia (Sydney)

The National Archives of Australia holds federal government records, including many about Indigenous Australians (mostly people from Victoria and the Northern Territory). The archives has offices around Australia. Records about New South Wales are mostly held in Sydney and Canberra. The Bringing Them Home name index can help you find information about Indigenous family members in National Archives records. The index isn't public, but the Archives will do a search for you.

The National Archives also holds military service records of all people who have served in the armed services since the Boer War (1899–1902). The WW1 records have been digitised and are available online. These are an excellent source of family history information for the thousands of Indigenous military servicepersons.

120 Miller Road, Chester Hill NSW 2162

Locked Bag 4, Chester Hill NSW 2162

Ph: 02 9782 4900

Fax: 02 9782 4999

Email: ref@naa.gov.au

Web: www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)

www.naa.gov.au/collection/family-history (Family history)

National Library of Australia

The National Library collects and makes available material of national significance about Australia and Australians. It holds books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs and oral histories that could be useful in researching your family – much of this is available online through Trove. The library has a family history collection and staff you can help you to locate material.

Parkes Place, Canberra ACT 2600

Ph: 02 6262 1111

Fax: 02 6257 1703

Ask a Librarian (online contact form): www.nla.gov.au/askalibrarian

Web: www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/family-history

www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/indigenous

Australian War Memorial

Indigenous people have served in every military conflict that Australia has been involved in since the Boer War (1899–1902). Military records are a rich source of information about the men and women who served in the armed forces, and sometimes their family members.



Treloar Crescent, Campbell ACT 2612

Ph: 02 6243 4211

Fax: (02) 6243 4325

Email: info@awm.gov.au

Web: www.awm.gov.au

Indigenous Australian servicemen: www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/indigenous/

People, profiles and biographies: www.awm.gov.au/people/profiles/ (940 Indigenous service persons)

Noel Butlin Archives Centre

Some pastoral station owners or managers kept records like diaries, wage and ration books, and registers of births, deaths and marriages. The Noel Butlin Archives Centre at the Australian National University in Canberra holds some of these records, mainly for farms and cattle properties in New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

ANU Archives

The Australian National University

Menzies Building

2 Fellows Rd

Acton ACT 2601

Ph: 02 6125 2219

Email: butlin.archives@anu.edu.au

Web: archives.anu.edu.au/collections

Research guides for Indigenous family history

Research guides provide comprehensive information for people doing family history research. They often include an outline of the history of colonisation and Aboriginal protection/welfare legislation, linking these to the records that were created about Indigenous people.

Books published by AIATSIS

- Penny Taylor, *Telling it like it is: A guide to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history*, AIATSIS, 1992
- Diane Smith and Boronia Halstead, *Lookin for your mob: A guide to tracing Aboriginal family trees*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990.

Aboriginal Australians family history – State Library of NSW

guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/aboriginal-australians

Indigenous communities – State Records NSW

www.records.nsw.gov.au/state-archives/resources-for/indigenous-people/indigenous-communities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – National Archives of Australia

www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx

Indigenous family history websites

There are many family history websites, some developed by individuals or communities doing their own family histories, some developed by individuals or organisations to help people with Indigenous family histories. New sites come online everyday.

- Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies – a searchable collection of material from state and territory archives. Contains personal information that some people may find objectionable. www.cifhs.com

General family history organisations

Family history groups, local history societies and local libraries

Local family history groups, local history societies and local libraries are valuable sources of information and resources. They can put you in contact with people with a good knowledge of the local history of a town or area that you are interested in. Many also have local studies collections with books, newspapers, family histories, photographs and manuscripts.

Find local libraries

You can use Australian Libraries Gateway – Find a Library (www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries) to locate libraries in New South Wales with family history and local history collections. Under location select 'NSW' and under library type select 'Local/Family history'. You can also browse using the map.

Family history research websites

- [CoraWeb](#): a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links and useful advice about tracing your family history (Australia)
- [Ancestry – Help & Advice](#): general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia)
- [Cyndi's List](#): a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (USA)
- [FamilySearch Learning Center](#): articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)

Find family history and historical societies

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies:
www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- Cape Banks Family History Society – Australian Family History Societies:
www.capebanks.org.au/australian-family-history-societies/

Society of Australian Genealogists

The Society of Australian Genealogists helps people trace their family history, providing genealogy advice and running workshops and lectures. It has an excellent family history library and a manuscript collection in central Sydney.

'Richmond Villa', 120 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 02 9247 3953

Fax: 02 9241 4872

Email: info@sag.org.au

Web: www.sag.org.au





AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Where to get help – Northern Territory

Organisations in each state and territory can help with your Indigenous family history research. There are also a number of national organisations and non-government websites that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history.

- **Libraries** hold a range of material that is useful for family history, including books, indexes and original manuscripts. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Some libraries have online research guides to help you understand their collections.
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51 Lawson Crescent, Acton ACT 2601

GPO Box 553, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: 02 6246 1111

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4285

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Web: www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family

Northern Territory Library

The Northern Territory Library is the Northern Territory's major reference and research library. It collects, preserves and provides access to the territory's documentary heritage. The library can help you find out more about your ancestry through a free family history research service which offers a wide range of resources in both print and electronic formats.

Parliament House, Cnr Bennett and Mitchell Streets, Darwin NT 0800

GPO Box 42, Darwin NT 0801

Free call: 1800 019 155

Ph: 08 8999 7177

Email: ntl.info@nt.gov.au

Web: www.artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/northern-territory-library/family_history

Northern Territory Archives Service

The Northern Territory Archives Service holds Northern Territory Government archives created since the government's establishment in 1978, as well as inherited records from the periods of administration by the South Australian Government (1863–1910) and the Australian Government (1911–1978). It also preserves community archives such as oral histories, personal papers, photographs and organisation records. The Northern Territory Archives Service is the designated first point of contact for Stolen Generations researchers seeking access to Northern Territory Government records.



Northern Territory Archives Centre, Kelsey Crescent, Millner NT 0810

GPO Box 874, Darwin NT 0801

Ph: 08 8924 7677

Fax: 08 8924 7660

Email: ntac@nt.gov.au

Web: www.artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/ntas (Northern Territory Archives Service)

www.artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/ntas/research/protocol (Protocol for Aboriginal family history research) www.artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/ntas/media/pdf/ATSI-Family-History_Oct2012.pdf (Fact sheet on Aboriginal family history research)

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages holds records about the births, deaths and marriages of people in the Northern Territory. The Aboriginal Population Register is also held there – this is a collection of genealogical information about Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory taken primarily from Census information dating back to the 1950s. The register was inherited from the federal Department of Aboriginal Affairs. The cost of BDM records varies from state to state but is normally \$30 to \$50 per certificate.

Email: AGD.RegistrarGeneral@nt.gov.au

Web: www.nt.gov.au/justice/bdm/index

Darwin office

Ground Floor, Nichols Place, Cnr Cavenagh and Bennett Streets, Darwin NT 0800

GPO Box 3021, Darwin NT 0801

Ph: 08 8999 6119

Fax: 08 8999 6324

Alice Springs office

Centrepont Building, Cnr Gregory and Hartley Streets, Alice Springs NT 0870

PO Box 8043, Alice Springs NT 0871

Ph: 08 8951 5339

Tennant Creek office

Tennant Creek Courthouse, Paterson Street, Tennant Creek NT 0860

PO Box 84, Tennant Creek NT 0861

Ph: 08 8962 4377

Fax: 08 8962 4375

Link-Up Northern Territory – Northern Territory Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation (NTSGAC)

NTSGAC helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people separated from their families under the past laws, practices and policies of Australian governments to undertake family tracing and family reunions with counselling support. Link-Up counsellors at NTSGAC give priority to Stolen Generations clients, especially the elderly and those requiring urgent assistance due to health concerns.

Suite A, Ground Floor, Building 3, Cascom Centre, 13–17 Scaturchio Street, Casuarina NT 0811
PO Box 43372, Casuarina NT 0811
Ph: 08 8947 9171
Fax: 08 8947 9173
Web: www.ntsgac.org.au

Find & Connect Support Services Northern Territory – Relationships Australia NT

Find & Connect supports people who grew up in orphanages, children's homes, institutions and foster homes. Find & Connect can help you obtain your personal records, trace your history and understand why you were placed into care, as well as providing counselling and other services.

Free call: 1800 16 11 09
Web: www.nt.relationships.org.au/services/find-connect

Darwin office

Level 2, 43 Cavenagh Street, Darwin, 0800
Ph: 08 8923 4999
Email: reception@ra-nt.org.au

Alice Springs office

4/11 Railway Terrace, Alice Springs, 0870
Ph: 08 8950 4100
Email: receptionas@ra-nt.org.au

National Archives of Australia (Darwin)

The National Archives of Australia holds federal Australian Government records, including many about Indigenous people from the Northern Territory. The Australian Government administered the Northern Territory from 1911 until self-government in 1978. Records about people from the Northern Territory are mostly held in Darwin and Canberra. The Bringing Them Home name



index can help you find information about Indigenous family members in National Archives records. The NAA has published a guide to Aboriginal births, deaths and marriages in the Northern Territory.

Northern Territory Archives Centre, Kelsey Crescent, Millner NT 0810

PO Box 24, Nightcliff NT 0814

Ph: 08 8999 6890

Fax: 08 8999 6905

Email: ref@naa.gov.au

Web: <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx> (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)

www.naa.gov.au/collection/family-history (Family history)

guides.naa.gov.au/records-about-northern-territory/part2/chapter8/8.7.aspx (Aboriginal births, deaths and marriages in the Northern Territory)

National Library of Australia

The National Library collects and makes available material of national significance about Australia and Australians. It holds books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs and oral histories that could be useful in researching your family – much of this is available online through Trove. The library has a family history collection and staff you can help you to locate material.

Parkes Place, Canberra ACT 2600

Ph: 02 6262 1111

Fax: 02 6257 1703

Ask a Librarian (online contact form): www.nla.gov.au/askalibrarian

Web: www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/family-history

www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/indigenous

Australian War Memorial

Indigenous people have served in every military conflict that Australia has been involved in since the Boer War (1899–1902). Military records are a rich source of information about the men and women who served in the armed forces, and sometimes their family members.

Treloar Crescent, Campbell ACT 2612

Ph: 02 6243 4211

Fax: (02) 6243 4325

Email: info@awm.gov.au

Web: www.awm.gov.au

Indigenous Australian servicemen: www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/indigenous/

People, profiles and biographies: www.awm.gov.au/people/profiles/ (940 Indigenous service persons)

Noel Butlin Archives Centre

Some pastoral station owners or managers kept records like diaries, wage and ration books, and registers of births, deaths and marriages. The Noel Butlin Archives Centre at the Australian National University in Canberra holds some of these records, mainly for farms and cattle properties in New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

ANU Archives
The Australian National University
Menzies Building
2 Fellows Rd
Acton ACT 2601
Ph: 02 6125 2219
Email: butlin.archives@anu.edu.au
Web: archives.anu.edu.au/collections

Research guides for Indigenous family history

Research guides provide comprehensive information for people doing family history research. They often include an outline of the history of colonisation and Aboriginal protection/welfare legislation, linking these to the records that were created about Indigenous people.

Books published by AIATSIS

- Penny Taylor, *Telling it like it is: A guide to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history*, AIATSIS, 1992
- Diane Smith and Boronia Halstead, *Lookin for your mob: A guide to tracing Aboriginal family trees*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990.

Online guides

- Researching your Aboriginal family history – Northern Territory Archives Service: www.artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/ntas/media/pdf/ATSI-Family-History_Oct2012.pdf (pdf, 143kb)
- Tracking family: A guide to Aboriginal records relating to the Northern Territory – National Archives of Australia: guides.naa.gov.au/tracking-family
- Aboriginal births, deaths and marriages in the Northern Territory – National Archives of Australia: guides.naa.gov.au/records-about-northern-territory/part2/chapter8/8.7.aspx
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – National Archives of Australia: www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx



Websites

- Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies (CIFHS) – a name searchable archive of some government documents relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The site is updated with new records continuously. Some of the documents contain offensive language.
www.cifhs.com

General family history organisations

Family history groups, local history societies and local libraries

Local family history groups, local history societies and local libraries are valuable sources of information and resources. They can put you in contact with people with a good knowledge of the local history of a town or area that you are interested in. Many also have local studies collections with books, newspapers, family histories, photographs and manuscripts.

Find local libraries

You can use Australian Libraries Gateway – Find a Library (www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries) to locate libraries in the Northern Territory with family history and local history collections. Under location select 'NT' and under library type select 'Local/Family history'. You can also browse using the map.

Genealogical Society of the Northern Territory

The Genealogical Society of the Northern Territory promotes family history research, collects historical information, provides family history education, and urges the preservation of personal historical records. Its research library holds an extensive range of family history resources including books, journals and indexes.

1st Floor, 25 Cavenagh Street, Darwin NT 0800
PO Box 37212, Winellie NT 0821

Ph: 08 8981 7363

Fax: 08 8981 7363

Email: gsntinc@bigpond.net.au

Web: www.gsnt.org.au

Family history research websites

- [CoraWeb](#): a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links and useful advice about tracing your family history (Australia)
- [Ancestry – Help & Advice](#): general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia)



- [Cyndi's List](#): a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (USA)
- [FamilySearch Learning Center](#): articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)

Find family history and historical societies

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies:
www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- Cape Banks Family History Society – Australian Family History Societies:
www.capebanks.org.au/australian-family-history-societies/

Society of Australian Genealogists

The Society of Australian Genealogists helps people trace their family history, providing genealogy advice and running workshops and lectures. It has an excellent family history library and a manuscript collection in central Sydney.

'Richmond Villa', 120 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 02 9247 3953

Fax: 02 9241 4872

Email: info@sag.org.au

Web: www.sag.org.au





AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Where to get help – Queensland

Organisations in each state and territory can help with your Indigenous family history research. There are also a number of national organisations and non-government websites that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history.

- **Libraries** hold a range of material that is useful for family history, including books, indexes and original manuscripts. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Some libraries have online research guides to help you understand their collections.
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Before you contact them

Try to collect and organise as much information as you can before approaching organisations for help. They will need names, dates and places in order to help you with your research.

See Family history sources for more information.



Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

The AIATSIS Family History Unit can help people researching their Indigenous family history. The AIATSIS Finding Your Family website is an online resource with a focus on helping people to learn how to do Indigenous family history research. AIATSIS offers an Australia-wide service. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index enables you to do an online name search of some of the material in the collection. AIATSIS cannot compile family trees or help you to confirm Aboriginality.

51 Lawson Crescent, Acton ACT 2601

GPO Box 553, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: 02 6246 1111

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4285

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Web: www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family

State Library of Queensland

The State Library of Queensland provides family history services, with lots of online information as well as librarians who can help you access the library's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander materials and family and local history collections.

Cultural Precinct, Stanley Place, South Bank, Brisbane QLD 4101

PO Box 3488, South Brisbane QLD 4101

Ph: 07 3840 7810

Fax: 07 3840 7795

Web: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history (Family history)

www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queensland)

James Cook University – Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family History

James Cook University Library has prepared an online guide to assist Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander family historians locate sources available to them at James Cook University in Townsville and Cairns.

Web: libguides.jcu.edu.au/atsifamhistory

Queensland State Archives

Queensland State Archives holds records of the Queensland Government. Many records contain historical information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This



information exists because of the control past Queensland governments had over Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's lives. This information can be helpful in researching the family and community links of Indigenous Queenslanders.

The Community and Personal Histories team in the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships can help you with your research (see below).

435 Compton Road, Runcorn QLD 4113
PO Box 1397, Sunnybank Hills QLD 4109
Ph: 07 3131 7777
Fax: 07 3131 7764

Email: info@archives.qld.gov.au

Online form: www.archives.qld.gov.au/Researchers/Runcorn/Pages/Enquiries.aspx

Web: <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/Researchers/Resources/Pages/Indigenous.aspx>
(Indigenous resources)

www.archives.qld.gov.au/Researchers/Resources/FamilyHistory/Pages/Default.aspx (Family history)

Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships – Community and Personal Histories

The Community and Personal Histories team can help you use Queensland state government records to research your family and personal history. If you or your family were born in Queensland, they may be able to help you with other information, such as proving your birth date.

Level 6A, Neville Bonner Building, 75 William Street, Brisbane QLD 4000
PO Box 15397, City East QLD 4002
Free call: 1800 650 230

Email: enquiries@datsip.qld.gov.au

Online form: www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/family-history-request-form/index.html

Web: www.datsip.qld.gov.au/people-communities/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-family-history

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages has records of birth, death and marriage in Queensland from 1856, as well as some earlier church records. You can search and access historical birth, death and marriage records online. The cost of BDM records varies from state to state but is normally \$30 to \$50 per certificate.

110 George Street, Brisbane QLD 4000
PO Box 15188, City East QLD 4002



Free call: 1300 366 430

Email: bdm-mail@justice.qld.gov.au

Web: www.qld.gov.au/law/births-deaths-marriages-and-divorces/family-history-research

Link-Up Queensland

Link-Up Queensland provides services to individuals, families or communities who have been affected by past Australian government removal policies and practices, including separation through adoption, fostering, removal or institutionalisation. It provides family history research assistance to members of the Stolen Generations.

Free call: 1800 200 855

Email: contact@link-upqld.org.au

Web: www.link-upqld.org.au

Brisbane office

3-5 Reid Street, Woolloongabba QLD 4102
PO Box 3229, South Brisbane, Queensland QLD 4101
Ph: 07 3034 8444

Cairns office

18 Scott Street, Parramatta Park QLD 4870
PO Box 298, Bungalow QLD 4870
Ph: 07 4041 7403

Townsville office

c/-Relationships Australia, 745 Riverway Drive, Thuringowa QLD 4817
PO Box 247, Thuringowa QLD 4817
Ph: 0410 639 645

Mt Isa office

1/81 Miles Street, Mt Isa QLD 4825
PO Box 296, Mt Isa DC QLD 4825
Ph: 0417 097 322 or 0459 028 380

Find & Connect Support Service Queensland – Lotus Place

Find & Connect supports people who grew up in orphanages, children's homes, institutions and foster homes. Find & Connect can help you obtain your personal records, trace your history and understand why you were placed into care, as well as providing counselling and other services.



56 Peel Street, South Brisbane QLD 4101
Free call: 1800 16 11 09
Ph: 07 3055 8500
Email: lotus@micahprojects.org.au
Web: www.lotusplace.org.au (Lotus Place)
www.findandconnect.gov.au (Find & Connect)

Post Adoption Support Queensland – Benevolent Society

Post Adoption Support Queensland provides specialised post adoption counselling and support for people in Queensland, including help in searching for relatives and mediation for people reuniting with family members.

9 Wilson Street, West End QLD 4101
Free call: 1300 914 819
Ph: 07 3170 4600
Fax: 07 3255 2953
Email: pasq@benevolent.org.au
Web: www.benevolent.org.au/connect/post--adoption--support--home

National Archives Australia (Brisbane)

The National Archives of Australia holds federal government records, including many about Indigenous Australians (mostly people from Victoria and the Northern Territory). The archives has offices around Australia. Records about Queensland are mostly held in Brisbane and Canberra. The Bringing Them Home name index can help you find information about Indigenous family members in National Archives records.

16 Corporate Drive, Cannon Hill QLD 4170
PO Box 552, Cannon Hill QLD 4170
Ph: 07 3249 4200
Fax: 07 3249 4299
Email: ref@naa.gov.au
Web: www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)
www.naa.gov.au/collection/family-history (Family history)

National Library of Australia

The National Library collects and makes available material of national significance about Australia and Australians. It holds books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs and oral histories that could be useful in researching your family – much of this is available online through Trove. The library has a family history collection and staff you can help you to locate material.



Parkes Place, Canberra ACT 2600

Ph: 02 6262 1111

Fax: 02 6257 1703

Ask a Librarian (online contact form): www.nla.gov.au/askalibrarian

Web: www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/family-history

www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/indigenous

Australian War Memorial

Indigenous people have served in every military conflict that Australia has been involved in since the Boer War (1899–1902). Military records are a rich source of information about the men and women who served in the armed forces, and sometimes their family members.

Treloar Crescent, Campbell ACT 2612

Ph: 02 6243 4211

Fax: (02) 6243 4325

Email: info@awm.gov.au

Web: www.awm.gov.au

Indigenous Australian servicemen: www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/indigenous/

People, profiles and biographies: www.awm.gov.au/people/profiles/ (940 Indigenous service persons)

Research guides for Indigenous family history

Research guides provide comprehensive information for people doing family history research. They often include an outline of the history of colonisation and Aboriginal protection/welfare legislation, linking these to the records that were created about Indigenous people.

Books published by AIATSIS

- Penny Taylor, *Telling it like it is: A guide to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history*, AIATSIS, 1992
- Diane Smith and Boronia Halstead, *Lookin for your mob: A guide to tracing Aboriginal family trees*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990.

Online guides

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history – State Library of Queensland: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi
- Records about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – Queensland State Archives: www.archives.qld.gov.au/Researchers/Resources/Pages/Indigenous.aspx
- Records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Brief guide 50) – Queensland State Archives:

www.archives.qld.gov.au/Researchers/CollectionsDownloads/Documents/BG50ATSI.pdf
(PDF 51 KB)

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – National Archives of Australia:
www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx

Websites

- Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies (CIFHS) – a name searchable archive of some government documents relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The site is updated with new records continuously. Some of the documents contain offensive language.
<http://www.cifhs.com>

General family history organisations

Family history groups, local history societies and local libraries

Local family history groups, local history societies and local libraries are valuable sources of information and resources. They can put you in contact with people with a good knowledge of the local history of a town or area that you are interested in. Many also have local studies collections with books, newspapers, family histories, photographs and manuscripts.

Find local libraries

You can use Australian Libraries Gateway – Find a Library (www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries) to locate libraries in Queensland with family history and local history collections. Under location select 'QLD' and under library type select 'Local/Family history'. You can also browse using the map.

Genealogical Society of Queensland

The Genealogical Society of Queensland's mission is 'helping to discover your family history'. It has the largest family history library in Queensland and offers courses and talks. As well as its main resource centre at East Brisbane, the society has five branches in the South East Queensland region.

38 Fisher Street, East Brisbane QLD 4102

PO Box 8423, Woolloongabba QLD 4102

Ph: 07 3891 5085

Email: info@gsq.org.au

Web: www.gsq.org.au

Family history research websites

- [CoraWeb](#): a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links and useful advice about tracing your family history (Australia)



- [Ancestry – Help & Advice](#): general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia)
- [Cyndi's List](#): a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (USA)
- [FamilySearch Learning Center](#): articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)

Find family history and historical societies

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies:
www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- Cape Banks Family History Society – Australian Family History Societies:
www.capebanks.org.au/australian-family-history-societies/

Society of Australian Genealogists

The Society of Australian Genealogists helps people trace their family history, providing genealogy advice and running workshops and lectures. It has an excellent family history library and a manuscript collection in central Sydney.

'Richmond Villa', 120 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 02 9247 3953

Fax: 02 9241 4872

Email: info@sag.org.au

Web: www.sag.org.au





AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Where to get help – South Australia

Organisations in each state and territory can help with your Indigenous family history research. There are also a number of national organisations and non-government websites that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history.

- **Libraries** hold a range of material that is useful for family history, including books, indexes and original manuscripts. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Some libraries have online research guides to help you understand their collections.
- **Archives** hold original records, created by government agencies, private organisations or individuals. Archives are different from libraries, and you will need help from an archivist to locate and access records.
- **Indigenous family history services** are provided by state and territory governments to assist you in accessing records and personal information about your and your ancestors held in government archives.
- **Link-Up organisations** provide services to members of the Stolen Generations, their families, and foster and adoptive families. These include researching family and personal records, finding family members and support and counselling.
- **Organisations for adoptees and care leavers** (and their families) can help you find information about your personal and family history and connect you with family. They also provide counselling and support services.
- **Family history community projects and organisations** offer practical help in researching your family history. Some are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused. They may have library collections, computers, access to resources and provide training courses and workshops.

Before you contact them

Try to collect and organise as much information as you can before approaching organisations for help. They will need names, dates and places in order to help you with your research.

See Family history resources for more information.



Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

The AIATSIS Family History Unit can help people researching their Indigenous family history. The AIATSIS Finding Your Family website is an online resource with a focus on helping people to learn how to do Indigenous family history research. AIATSIS offers an Australia-wide service. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index enables you to do an online name search of some of the material in the collection. AIATSIS cannot compile family trees or help you to confirm Aboriginality.

51 Lawson Crescent, Acton ACT 2601

GPO Box 553, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: 02 6246 1111

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4285

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Web: www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family

State Library of South Australia

The State Library of South Australia has a lot of specialist material relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This includes books, manuscripts, anthropological material, oral histories and photographs. Specialist librarians who work with the library's Indigenous collections can help you with locating and accessing material. The library also has a general family history collection.

Cnr of North Terrace and Kintore Avenue Adelaide SA 5001

PO Box 419 , Adelaide SA 5001

Free call: 1800 182 013 (South Australia only)

Ph: 08 8207 7250

Fax: 08 8207 7307

Online form: askslsa.altarama.com/ref100.aspx?pmi=eSUeIXz1gE

Email: info@slsa.sa.gov.au

Web: www.slsa.sa.gov.au

www.slsa.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=657 (Indigenous collections)

guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/AboriginalFH (Aboriginal family history)

State Records of South Australia

As the official custodian of records created by state and local government agencies in South Australia, State Records holds a wealth of material documenting the written history and experience of Aboriginal people in the state. These records can provide you with valuable insights into your family and community history, and can help members of the Stolen

Generations identify and become reunified with family members they were separated from. The Aboriginal Access Team can help you with your research.

State Records Research Centre (in the State Library of South Australia building), Corner North Terrace and Kintore Avenue, Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 464, Adelaide SA 5001

Ph: 08 8204 8767 or 08 8204 8791

Fax: 08 8204 8777

Online form: www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/contact-us-form

Email: srsaAboriginalServices@sa.gov.au

Web: www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/aboriginal-services (Aboriginal services)

www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/family-history (Family history)

Births, Deaths & Marriages Registration Office – Office of Consumer and Business Affairs

The Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Office is responsible for maintaining registers of births, deaths and marriages. You can apply for certificates online but only if you already know the details.

You can access the South Australian BDM indexes on CD-ROM at the State Library of South Australia and other libraries around Australia. The cost of BDM records varies from state to state but is normally \$30 to \$50 per certificate.

Genealogy SA has published extracts from the South Australian BDM indexes online at <https://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>

Level 2, Chesser House, 91–97 Grenfell Street, Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 1351, Adelaide SA 5001

Ph: 131 882

Web: www.cbs.sa.gov.au/wcm/births-deaths-marriages/bdm-other-topics/family-history

Link-Up South Australia – Nunkuwarri Yunti

Nunkuwarri Yunti's Link-Up SA program provides family tracing, reunion and counselling services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families who have been separated under the past policies and practices of the Australian Government. Assistance is also provided to people over the age of eighteen years who have been adopted, fostered or raised in institutions.

Web: nunku.org.au/our-services/social-emotional/link-up



Adelaide office

182–190 Wakefield Street, Adelaide SA 5000

Ph: 08 8406 1600

Fax: 08 8232 0949

Elizabeth Downs office

28–30 Brady Street, Elizabeth Downs SA 5113

Ph: 08 8254 5300

Fax: 08 8254 9182

Adoption and Family Information Service – Department for Families and Communities

The Adoption and Family Information Service provides information, advice, advocacy and counselling about adoption and past separations of children from their families. It can provide help for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected by the removal of children because of previous government policies and laws.

Level 7, 108 North Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 1152, Adelaide SA 5001

Ph: 08 8207 2648 (past adoptions)

Fax: 08 8207 2366

Email: adoptions@sa.gov.au

Web: www.families.sa.gov.au/pages/adoption

South Australian Museum

The South Australian Museum's collection of Australian ethnographic material is the largest and most representative in the world. The collection material comes from many different Indigenous communities, language groups and individuals across Australia. The museum acquired most of this material between 1890 and 1940. The museum collection includes Aboriginal genealogies recorded by ethnologist Norman Tindale. The museum's Aboriginal family history officer can help you with locating and accessing material about your family.

Family and Community History Consultant

Mr Ali Abdullah-Highfold

Ph: 08 8207 7381

Email: ali.abdullah-highfold@samuseum.sa.gov.au

North Terrace Adelaide SA 5000

Web: www.samuseum.sa.gov.au



National Archives of Australia (Adelaide)

The National Archives of Australia holds federal government records, including many about Indigenous Australians (mostly people from Victoria and the Northern Territory). The archives has offices around Australia. Records about South Australia are held primarily in Adelaide, Sydney and Canberra. The Bringing Them Home name index can help you find information about Indigenous family members in National Archives records.

Adelaide Reading Room (in the State Library of South Australia building), Corner North Terrace and Kintore Avenue, Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 9868, Adelaide SA 5001

Ph: 08 8204 8787

Email: ref@naa.gov.au

Web: www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)

www.naa.gov.au/collection/family-history (Family history)

National Library of Australia

The National Library collects and makes available material of national significance about Australia and Australians. It holds books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs and oral histories that could be useful in researching your family – much of this is available online through Trove. The library has a family history collection and staff you can help you to locate material.

Parkes Place, Canberra ACT 2600

Ph: 02 6262 1111

Fax: 02 6257 1703

Ask a Librarian (online contact form): www.nla.gov.au/askalibrarian

Web: www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/family-history

www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/indigenous

Australian War Memorial

Indigenous people have served in every military conflict that Australia has been involved in since the Boer War (1899–1902). Military records are a rich source of information about the men and women who served in the armed forces, and sometimes their family members.

Treloar Crescent, Campbell ACT 2612

Ph: 02 6243 4211

Fax: (02) 6243 4325

Email: info@awm.gov.au

Web: www.awm.gov.au

Indigenous Australian servicemen: www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/indigenous/



People, profiles and biographies: www.awm.gov.au/people/profiles/ (940 Indigenous service persons)

Research guides for Indigenous family history

Research guides provide comprehensive information for people doing family history research. They often include an outline of the history of colonisation and Aboriginal protection/welfare legislation, linking these to the records that were created about Indigenous people.

Books published by AIATSIS

- Penny Taylor, *Telling it like it is: A guide to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history*, AIATSIS, 1992
- Diane Smith and Boronia Halstead, *Lookin for your mob: A guide to tracing Aboriginal family trees*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990.

Online guides

- Aboriginal family history – State Library of South Australia: guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/AboriginalFH
- Aboriginal services – State Records of South Australia: www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/aboriginal-services
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – National Archives of Australia: www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx

Websites

- Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies (CIFHS) – a name searchable archive of some government documents relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The site is updated with new records continuously. Some of the documents contain offensive language. www.cifhs.com

General family history organisations

Family history groups, local history societies and local libraries

Local family history groups, local history societies and local libraries are valuable sources of information and resources. They can put you in contact with people with a good knowledge of the local history of a town or area that you are interested in. Many also have local studies collections with books, newspapers, family histories, photographs and manuscripts.



Find local libraries

You can use Australian Libraries Gateway – Find a Library (www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries) to locate libraries in Western Australia with family history and local history collections. Under location select 'WA' and under library type select 'Local/Family history'. You can also browse using the map.

South Australian Genealogy & Heraldry Society (Genealogy SA)

Genealogy SA helps people trace their family history, providing genealogy advice and running workshops and lectures. It has an excellent family history library in Unley and a growing collection of online resources.

201 Unley Road, Unley SA 5061
GPO Box 592, Adelaide SA 5001

Ph: 08 8272 4222

Fax: 08 8272 4910

Email: saghs.admin@saghs.org.au

Web: www.genealogysa.org.au

Family history research websites

- [CoraWeb](#): a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links and useful advice about tracing your family history (Australia)
- [Ancestry – Help & Advice](#): general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia)
- [Cyndi's List](#): a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (USA)
- [FamilySearch Learning Center](#): articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)

Find family history and historical societies

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies:
www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- Cape Banks Family History Society – Australian Family History Societies:
www.capebanks.org.au/australian-family-history-societies/



Society of Australian Genealogists

The Society of Australian Genealogists helps people trace their family history, providing genealogy advice and running workshops and lectures. It has an excellent family history library and a manuscript collection in central Sydney.

'Richmond Villa', 120 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 02 9247 3953

Fax: 02 9241 4872

Email: info@sag.org.au

Web: www.sag.org.au





AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Where to get help – Tasmania

Organisations in each state and territory can help with your Indigenous family history research. There are also a number of national organisations and non-government websites that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history.

- **Libraries** hold a range of material that is useful for family history, including books, indexes and original manuscripts. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Some libraries have online research guides to help you understand their collections.
- **Archives** hold original records, created by government agencies, private organisations or individuals. Archives are different from libraries, and you will need help from an archivist to locate and access records.
- **Indigenous family history services** are provided by state and territory governments to assist you in accessing records and personal information about your and your ancestors held in government archives.
- **Link-Up organisations** provide services to members of the Stolen Generations, their families, and foster and adoptive families. These include researching family and personal records, finding family members and support and counselling.
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Before you contact them

Try to collect and organise as much information as you can before approaching organisations for help. They will need names, dates and places in order to help you with your research.

See Family history sources for more information.



Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

The AIATSIS Family History Unit can help people researching their Indigenous family history. The AIATSIS Finding Your Family website is an online resource with a focus on helping people to learn how to do Indigenous family history research. AIATSIS offers an Australia-wide service. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index enables you to do an online name search of some of the material in the collection. AIATSIS cannot compile family trees or help you to confirm Aboriginality.

51 Lawson Crescent, Acton ACT 2601

GPO Box 553, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: 02 6246 1111

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4285

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Web: www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family

LINC Tasmania

LINC Tasmania is the name of the organisation which brings together the State Library of Tasmania, Archives Office of Tasmania, Adult Education and Tasmanian Communities Online. It provides library services, research and information services, adult literacy support, community learning, online access, and archive and heritage services. The Hobart Reading Room is the base for LINC Tasmania's reference services. Staff from the Tasmanian Information and Research Service can provide personal help with family history research. LINC Tasmania also operates at 69 locations around the state.

2nd Floor, 91 Murray Street, Hobart TAS 7000

Ph: 03 6165 5538

Online form: <http://sltas.altarama.com/ref100.aspx?key=Research>

Web: www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/guides-records/Pages/Aboriginal.aspx (Aboriginal family history)

www.linc.tas.gov.au

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Registration of births, deaths and marriages commenced in 1839 in Tasmania, the first Australian colony to take over the function previously conducted by the churches. The registry holds church records (burials, baptisms and marriages) from 1803 to 1839, and birth, death and marriage registrations from 1839 to the present day.

The Tasmanian Names Index provides access to historical Tasmanian birth, death and marriage records online. The cost of BDM records varies from state to state but is normally \$30 to \$50 per certificate.

Apply in person for birth, death and marriage certificates at Service Tasmania shops around the state.

GPO Box 198, Hobart TAS 7001

Free call: 1300 135 513

Ph: 03 616 53457

Fax: 03 6233 6444

Email: bdm@justice.tas.gov.au

Web: www.justice.tas.gov.au/bdm/family_history

http://linctas.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en_AU/names/ (Tasmanian Name Index)

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre represents the political and community development aspirations of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. Its programs include counselling services, including for people separated from their families and communities.

Web: www.tacinc.com.au

Hobart office

198 Elizabeth Street, Hobart TAS 7001

GPO Box 569, Hobart TAS 7001

Ph: 03 6234 0700

Fax: 03 6234 0799

Email: hobart@tacinc.com.au

Launceston office

182 Charles Street, Launceston TAS 7250

PO Box 531, Launceston TAS 7250

Ph: 03 6332 3800

Fax: 03 6332 3899

Email: launceston@tacinc.com.au

Burnie office

53 Alexander Street, Burnie TAS 7320

PO Box 536, Burnie TAS 7320

Ph: 03 6431 3289

Fax: 03 6431 8363

Email: burnie@tacinc.com.au

Find & Connect Support Services Tasmania

The Find & Connect Support Service in Tasmania helps Forgotten Australians and former child migrants to trace their history and understand the reason they were placed into care, reconnect with family where possible and to access counselling and other supports.

20 Clare Street, New Town TAS 7008

Free call: 1800 16 11 09

Ph: 03 6279 5000

Email: enquiries@reltas.com.au

Web: www.findandconnect.gov.au

National Archives of Australia (Hobart)

The National Archives of Australia holds federal government records, including many about Indigenous Australians (mostly people from Victoria and the Northern Territory). The archives has offices around Australia. Records about Tasmania are mostly held in Hobart and Canberra. The Bringing Them Home name index can help you find information about Indigenous family members in National Archives records.

91 Murray Street, Hobart TAS 7000

GPO Box 309, Hobart TAS 7001

Ph: 03 6165 5607

Fax: 03 6233 7902

Email: ref@naa.gov.au

Web: www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)

www.naa.gov.au/collection/family-history (Family history)

National Library of Australia

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Parkes Place, Canberra ACT 2600

Ph: 02 6262 1111

Fax: 02 6257 1703

Ask a Librarian (online contact form): www.nla.gov.au/askalibrarian



Web: www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/family-history
www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/indigenous

Australian War Memorial

Indigenous people have served in every military conflict that Australia has been involved in since the Boer War (1899–1902). Military records are a rich source of information about the men and women who served in the armed forces, and sometimes their family members.

Treloar Crescent, Campbell ACT 2612

Ph: 02 6243 4211

Fax: (02) 6243 4325

Email: info@awm.gov.au

Web: www.awm.gov.au

Indigenous Australian servicemen: www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/indigenous/
People, profiles and biographies: www.awm.gov.au/people/profiles/ (940 Indigenous service persons)

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- Diane Smith and Boronia Halstead, *Lookin for your mob: A guide to tracing Aboriginal family trees*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990.

Online guides

- Documenting Tasmanian Aboriginal descent – LINC Tasmania:
www.linc.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/Aboriginal-ancestry.aspx
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – National Archives of Australia:
www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx

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www.cifhs.com

General family history organisations

Family history groups, local history societies and local libraries

Local family history groups, local history societies and local libraries are valuable sources of information and resources. They can put you in contact with people with a good knowledge of the local history of a town or area that you are interested in. Many also have local studies collections with books, newspapers, family histories, photographs and manuscripts.

Find local libraries

You can use Australian Libraries Gateway – Find a Library (www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries) to locate libraries in Tasmania with family history and local history collections. Under location select 'TAS' and under library type select 'Local/Family history'. You can also browse using the map.

Tasmanian Family History Society

The Tasmanian Family History Society promotes family history research through education, preservation and transcribing of relevant records. It provides reference libraries and associated learning opportunities around the state. Branches are located in Hobart, Burnie, Huon, Launceston and Mersey.

PO Box 326, Rosny Park TAS 7018

Ph: 03 6244 4527

Email: secretary@tasfhs.org

Web: www.tasfhs.org

Family history research websites

- [CoraWeb](#): a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links and useful advice about tracing your family history (Australia)
- [Ancestry – Help & Advice](#): general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia)
- [Cyndi's List](#): a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (USA)
- [FamilySearch Learning Center](#): articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)

Find family history and historical societies

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies:
www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- Cape Banks Family History Society – Australian Family History Societies:
www.capebanks.org.au/australian-family-history-societies/

Society of Australian Genealogists

The Society of Australian Genealogists helps people trace their family history, providing genealogy advice and running workshops and lectures. It has an excellent family history library and a manuscript collection in central Sydney.

'Richmond Villa', 120 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 02 9247 3953

Fax: 02 9241 4872

Email: info@sag.org.au

Web: www.sag.org.au





AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Where to get help – Victoria

Organisations in each state and territory can help with your Indigenous family history research. There are also a number of national organisations and non-government websites that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history.

- **Libraries** hold a range of material that is useful for family history, including books, indexes and original manuscripts. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Some libraries have online research guides to help you understand their collections.
- **Archives** hold original records, created by government agencies, private organisations or individuals. Archives are different from libraries, and you will need help from an archivist to locate and access records.
- **Indigenous family history services** are provided by state and territory governments to assist you in accessing records and personal information about your and your ancestors held in government archives.
- **Link-Up organisations** provide services to members of the Stolen Generations, their families, and foster and adoptive families. These include researching family and personal records, finding family members and support and counselling.
- **Organisations for adoptees and care leavers** (and their families) can help you find information about your personal and family history and connect you with family. They also provide counselling and support services.
- **Family history community projects and organisations** offer practical help in researching your family history. Some are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused. They may have library collections, computers, access to resources and provide training courses and workshops.

Before you contact them

Try to collect and organise as much information as you can before approaching organisations for help. They will need names, dates and places in order to help you with your research.

See Family history sources for more information.



Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

The AIATSIS Family History Unit can help people researching their Indigenous family history. The AIATSIS Finding Your Family website is an online resource with a focus on helping people to learn how to do Indigenous family history research. AIATSIS offers an Australia-wide service. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index enables you to do an online name search of some of the material in the collection. AIATSIS cannot compile family trees or help you to confirm Aboriginality.

51 Lawson Crescent, Acton ACT 2601

GPO Box 553, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: 02 6246 1111

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4285

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Web: www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family

State Library of Victoria

The State Library of Victoria has a significant collection of books and manuscript material relating to Aboriginal people, as well as many family history resources. The library has a designated Family History & Newspapers Room where you can access genealogy books, indexes, databases and microform collections. The room is open during normal library opening hours and there are staff available to help you get started with your research. Some resources are also available online.

328 Swanston Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Ph: 03 8664 7002

Online form: www.slv.vic.gov.au/online-inquiry-form

Web: www.slv.vic.gov.au/explore/family-history-resources (Family history)

guides.slv.vic.gov.au/aboriginalfamilyhistory (Aboriginal family history research guide)

Public Record Office Victoria – Koorie Records Unit

Government records about Victorian Aboriginal people are held in two separate but related collections: the collection of Public Record Office Victoria and the collection of the National Archives of Australia. The Public Record Office Victoria collection is particularly strong in the period to 1860. It includes records of the Port Phillip District, including information regarding the early Aboriginal Protectorate and the Guardian of Aborigines, as well as records of more recent history.

The Koorie Records Unit at the Public Record Office Victoria promotes awareness about Aboriginal records created by governments in Victoria and improves access to records for the

Aboriginal community. The unit helps researchers to access records about Aboriginal people in Public Record Office Victoria's collection and in the collection of the National Archives of Australia's Melbourne office.

Victorian Archives Centre, 99 Shiel Street, North Melbourne VIC 3051

PO Box 2100, North Melbourne VIC 3051

Free call: 1800 657 452

Ph: 03 9348 5735

Fax: 03 9348 5656

Email: koorie.records@prov.vic.gov.au

Online form: prov.altarama.com/reft100.aspx

Web: prov.vic.gov.au/community-programs/koorie-records-unit
prov.vic.gov.au/publications/finding-your-mob

Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria

Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria has records of birth, death and marriage in Victoria from 1853, as well as some earlier church records. You can search and access historical birth, death and marriage records online. The cost of BDM records varies from state to state but is normally \$30 to \$50 per certificate.

The Koori Access Team at Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria can help you apply and pay for Victorian birth, death and marriage certificates if you are a Koori, Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and you hold a pension concession card or health care card.

Ground floor, 595 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3001

GPO Box 5220, Melbourne VIC 3001

Free call: 1300 369 367 (General and family history inquiries)

Ph: 03 9613 5103 (Koori Access Team)

Email: vicbdm@justice.vic.gov.au (General and family history inquiries)

BDMIndigenousAccess@justice.vic.gov.au (Koori Access Team)

Web: www.bdm.vic.gov.au/home/family+history (Family history)

www.bdm.vic.gov.au/home/koori+services (Koori services)

Link-Up Victoria

Link-Up Victoria helps Indigenous people over the age of eighteen who were adopted, placed in foster care, institutionalised or forcibly removed to trace and be reunited with their families. Among its services are tracing family, conducting reunions and delivering counselling for Stolen Generations.

34 Wurruk Avenue, Preston VIC 3072

Free call: 1800 687 662

Ph: 03 9470 3666

Fax: 03 9470 3788

Email: linkup@vacca.org

Web: www.linkupvictoria.org.au

Koorie Heritage Trust Family History Service

The Koorie Heritage Trust's Family History Service provides confidential client-based genealogy research to members of the Stolen Generations, Koories in custody and members of the Koorie community. The service has built an extensive confidential database of Koorie family trees and genealogy information to assist Koorie clients searching for family, cultural and historical knowledge.

Levels 1 and 3, The Yarra Building, Federation Square, Cnr Flinders & Swanston Streets, Melbourne VIC 3000

Ph: 03 8662 6329

Fax: 03 9654 4390

Email: familyhistory@korieheritagetrust.com

Web: www.korieheritagetrust.com/korie_family_history_service

Find & Connect Support Services Victoria – Open Place

The Find & Connect support service in Victoria is called Open Place. It supports people who grew up in orphanages, children's homes, institutions and foster homes. It can help you obtain your personal records, trace your history and understand why you were placed into care, as well as providing counselling and other services.

Suite 1, 8 Bromham Place, Richmond VIC 3121

Free call: 1800 779 379

Ph: 03 9421 6162

Email: info@openplace.org.au

Web: www.openplace.org.au (Open Place)

www.findandconnect.gov.au (Find & Connect)

Department of Human Services – Family Information Networks and Discovery

Family Information Networks and Discovery (FIND) works with a range of Aboriginal agencies involved in supporting the Stolen Generations and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected by adoption, wardship or other family separation.

Level 20, 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Free call: 1800 130 225

Ph: 03 8608 5700

Email: findduty@dhs.vic.gov.au



Web: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/applying-for-documents-and-records/adoption-and-family-records/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-family-records

VANISH – Victorian Adoption Network for Information and Self Help

VANISH helps people with their search for relatives they have been separated from by adoption, state wardship and donor conception, and provides support and guidance throughout the search and contact process.

1st Floor, 50 Howard Street, North Melbourne VIC 3051

PO Box 112, Carlton South VIC 3053

Free call: 1300 826 474

Ph: 03 9328 8611

Fax: 03 9329 6527

Email: info@vanish.org.au

Web: vanish.org.au

National Archives of Australia (Melbourne)

The National Archives of Australia holds many government records about Indigenous Australians from Victoria, dating from the 1860s to the 1970s. The Bringing Them Home name index can help you find information about Indigenous family members in National Archives records. Specialised help with accessing records in the National Archives' Melbourne office is available from the Koorie Records Unit at the Public Record Office Victoria (see above).

Victorian Archives Centre, 99 Shiel Street, North Melbourne VIC 3051

PO Box 8005, Burwood Heights VIC 3151

Ph: 03 9348 5600

Fax: 03 9348 5628

Email: ref@naa.gov.au

Web: www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)

www.naa.gov.au/collection/family-history (Family history)

National Library of Australia

The National Library collects and makes available material of national significance about Australia and Australians. It holds books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs and oral histories that could be useful in researching your family – much of this is available online through Trove. The library has a family history collection and staff you can help you to locate material.



Parkes Place, Canberra ACT 2600

Ph: 02 6262 1111

Fax: 02 6257 1703

Ask a Librarian (online contact form): www.nla.gov.au/askalibrarian

Web: www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/family-history

www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/indigenous

Australian War Memorial

Indigenous people have served in every military conflict that Australia has been involved in since the Boer War (1899–1902). Military records are a rich source of information about the men and women who served in the armed forces, and sometimes their family members.

Treloar Crescent, Campbell ACT 2612

Ph: 02 6243 4211

Fax: (02) 6243 4325

Email: info@awm.gov.au

Web: www.awm.gov.au

Indigenous Australian servicemen: www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/indigenous/

People, profiles and biographies: www.awm.gov.au/people/profiles/ (940 Indigenous service persons)

Research guides for Indigenous family history

Research guides provide comprehensive information for people doing family history research. They often include an outline of the history of colonisation and Aboriginal protection/welfare legislation, linking these to the records that were created about Indigenous people.

Books published by AIATSIS

- Penny Taylor, *Telling it like it is: A guide to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history*, AIATSIS, 1992
- Diane Smith and Boronia Halstead, *Lookin for your mob: A guide to tracing Aboriginal family trees*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990.

Online guides

- Aboriginal people and family history – State Library of Victoria: guides.slv.vic.gov.au/aboriginalfamilyhistory
- walata tyamateetj: A guide to government records about Aboriginal people in Victoria: www.prov.vic.gov.au/publications/walata-tyamateetj

- Finding your mob: Researching Aboriginal family history at the Victorian Archives Centre <http://prov.vic.gov.au/publications/finding-your-mob>
- Finding your story: Resource manual to the records of the Stolen Generations in Victoria: prov.vic.gov.au/publications/finding-your-story
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – National Archives of Australia: www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx

Websites

- Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies (CIFHS) – a name searchable archive of some government documents relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The site is updated with new records continuously. Some of the documents contain offensive language. www.cifhs.com

General family history organisations

Family history groups, local history societies and local libraries

Local family history groups, local history societies and local libraries are valuable sources of information and resources. They can put you in contact with people with a good knowledge of the local history of a town or area that you are interested in. Many also have local studies collections with books, newspapers, family histories, photographs and manuscripts.

Find local libraries

You can use Australian Libraries Gateway – Find a Library (www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries) to locate libraries in Victoria with family history and local history collections. Under location select 'VIC' and under library type select 'Local/Family history'. You can also browse using the map.

Genealogical Society of Victoria

The Genealogical Society of Victoria provides family history advice and expertise. It has a reference library in central Melbourne providing access to family history records for Victoria, Australia, New Zealand, Britain and other countries.

Level B1, 257 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Ph: 03 9662 4455

Fax: 03 9663 0841

Email: gsv@gsv.gov.au

Web: www.gsv.org.au

Family history research websites

- **CoraWeb**: a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links and useful advice about tracing your family history (Australia)



- [Ancestry – Help & Advice](#): general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia)
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www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- Cape Banks Family History Society – Australian Family History Societies:
www.capebanks.org.au/australian-family-history-societies/

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Ph: 02 9247 3953

Fax: 02 9241 4872

Email: info@sag.org.au

Web: www.sag.org.au





AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Where to get help – Western Australia

Organisations in each state and territory can help with your Indigenous family history research. There are also a number of national organisations and non-government websites that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history.

- **Libraries** hold a range of material that is useful for family history, including books, indexes and original manuscripts. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Some libraries have online research guides to help you understand their collections.
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Try to collect and organise as much information as you can before approaching organisations for help. They will need names, dates and places in order to help you with your research.

See Family history sources for more information.



Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

The AIATSIS Family History Unit can help people researching their Indigenous family history. The AIATSIS Finding Your Family website is an online resource with a focus on helping people to learn how to do Indigenous family history research. AIATSIS offers an Australia-wide service. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index enables you to do an online name search of some of the material in the collection. AIATSIS cannot compile family trees or help you to confirm Aboriginality.

51 Lawson Crescent, Acton ACT 2601

GPO Box 553, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: 02 6246 1111

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4285

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Web: www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family

State Library of Western Australia

The State Library of Western Australia holds material that can help you trace your family tree. The library's Genealogy Centre has a wide variety of sources for all Australian states and territories as well as for other countries. The JS Batty Library of West Australian history holds key resources for Aboriginal family history including mission records, photographs, oral history recordings and published books which can offer information on people, places and communities throughout Western Australia.

Perth Cultural Centre, 25 Francis Street, Perth WA 6000

Free call: 1800 198 107 (Western Australian country callers only)

Ph: 08 9427 3111

Fax: 08 9427 3256

Online form: yourenquiry.service.slwa.wa.gov.au/ref100.aspx?pmi=kyXDx0Ptld

Web: www.slwa.wa.gov.au

www.slwa.wa.gov.au/find/guides/indigenous_material/indigenous (Indigenous family history)

www.slwa.wa.gov.au/find/family_history (Family history)

www.slwa.wa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/27067/aboriginal_family_history_4_-_online_resources.pdf (Online resources for Aboriginal family history)

storylines.slwa.wa.gov.au/archive/index.php (Storylines archive of photographs of Indigenous people)

State Records Office of Western Australia

State government agencies controlled the lives of Aboriginal people in Western Australia from 1905 until citizenship rights were granted in the late 1960s. The official records that document this control are of vital significance, particularly for those people who were removed from their families and resettled elsewhere in the state. Many of these records are now held by the State Records Office. Archives staff can help you with locating records of relevance to your family history.

The Aboriginal History Research Unit in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs can also help you access state archives (see below).

Alexander Library Building, Perth Cultural Centre, 25 Francis Street, Perth WA 6000

Ph: 08 9427 3360

Fax: 08 9427 3368

Email: sro@sro.wa.gov.au

Web: www.sro.wa.gov.au

www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/aboriginal-records (Aboriginal records)

Aboriginal History Research Unit – Department of Aboriginal Affairs

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs Aboriginal History Research Unit manages access to Western Australian state archives and some privately owned records. You can apply as a personal or family history applicants for your own records or those of your ancestors. You can apply for any records relating to you held by the department, or those relating to a specific purpose such as evidence of genealogy, dates and place of birth or a specific ancestor.

151 Royal Street, East Perth WA 6004

PO Box 3153, East Perth WA 6892

Free call: 1300 651 077

Fax: 08 6551 8088

Email: ahru@daa.wa.gov.au

Web: www.daa.wa.gov.au/community-development/ahru

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages has records of births, deaths and marriages in Western Australian from 1841. You can search historical indexes online for free. The cost of BDM records varies from state to state but is normally \$30 to \$50 per certificate.

Westralia Square, Level 10, 141 St Georges Terrace, Perth WA 6000

PO Box 7720, Cloisters Square, Perth WA 6850

Free call: 1300 305 021

Ph: 08 9264 1555

Fax: 08 9264 1599

Web: www.bdm.dotag.wa.gov.au

Link-Up Western Australia – Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Service

The Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Service in Broome helps members of the Stolen Generations find information about their family and locate their family members. It also helps reunite family members who have not met before.

28 Barker Street, Broome WA 6725

PO Box 2775, Broome WA 6725

Free call: 1800 830 338

Ph: 08 9193 6502

Fax: 08 9193 5693

Email: kimberley.linkup@iinet.net.au

Web: www.kimberleystolengeneration.com.au

Link-Up Western Australia – Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation

Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation provides Link-Up services to Aboriginal people affected by past government policies relating to the removal of children. Its case workers coordinate family research, client reunification, back to community and overall Link-Up activities.

Email: reception@yorgum.org.com

Web: www.yorgum.org.au

Perth office

176 Wittenoom Street, East Perth WA 6004

PO Box 236, Northbridge WA 6865

P: 08 9218 9477

F: 08 9221 0487

South Hedland – Link-Up

Suite 4/ 3 Brand Street, South Hedland WA 6722

Ph: 08 9140 4029

Fax: 08 9140 4031



Kalgoorlie – Link-Up

16-18 McDonald Street, Kalgoorlie WA 6430

Ph: 08 9091 6359

Fax: 08 9091 9247

Department for Child Protection and Family Support

The Department for Child Protection and Family Support has records that include historical family and personal information about Aboriginal people and former state wards. The department's Freedom of Information team can provide more information on accessing your own or your ancestor's records.

189 Royal Street, East Perth WA 6004

PO Box 6334, East Perth WA 6892

Free call: 1800 622 258 (Western Australian country callers only)

Ph: 08 6217 6388 or 08 6217 6381

Email: foi@cpfs.wa.gov.au

Web:

www.dcp.wa.gov.au/SupportingIndividualsAndFamilies/Pages/Searchingforyourfamilyhistory.aspx

Find & Connect Support Services Western Australia – Lanterns House

Lanterns House is specifically equipped to provide support and assistance if you want to obtain records of your time in 'care' and trace your family. It provides individual counselling and group support, and can connect you with other service and support organisations that may be able to help.

23 Southport Street, West Leederville, WA 6901

Free call: 1800 16 11 09

Ph: 08 9489 6388

Email: lanterns@wa.relationships.com.au

Web: www.wa.relationships.com.au/services/find-and-connect.aspx

National Archives of Australia (Perth)

The National Archives of Australia holds federal government records, including many about Indigenous Australians (mostly people from Victoria and the Northern Territory). The archives has offices around Australia. Records about Western Australia are mostly held in Perth and Canberra. The Bringing Them Home name index can help you find information about Indigenous family members in National Archives records.

384 Berwick Street, East Victoria Park WA 6101
PO Box 1144, East Victoria Park WA 6981
Ph: 08 9470 7500
Fax: 08 9470 7555
Email: ref@naa.gov.au
Web: www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)
www.naa.gov.au/collection/family-history (Family history)

National Library of Australia

The National Library collects and makes available material of national significance about Australia and Australians. It holds books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs and oral histories that could be useful in researching your family – much of this is available online through Trove. The library has a family history collection and staff you can help you to locate material.

Parkes Place, Canberra ACT 2600
Ph: 02 6262 1111
Fax: 02 6257 1703
Ask a Librarian (online contact form): www.nla.gov.au/askalibrarian
Web: www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/family-history
www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/indigenous

Australian War Memorial

Indigenous people have served in every military conflict that Australia has been involved in since the Boer War (1899–1902). Military records are a rich source of information about the men and women who served in the armed forces, and sometimes their family members.

Treloar Crescent, Campbell ACT 2612
Ph: 02 6243 4211
Fax: (02) 6243 4325
Email: info@awm.gov.au
Web: www.awm.gov.au
Indigenous Australian servicemen: www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/aborigines/indigenous/
People, profiles and biographies: www.awm.gov.au/people/profiles/ (940 Indigenous service persons)

Research guides and websites for Indigenous family history

Research guides provide comprehensive information for people doing family history research. They often include an outline of the history of colonisation and Aboriginal protection/welfare legislation, linking these to the records that were created about Indigenous people.



Books published by AIATSIS

- Penny Taylor, *Telling it like it is: A guide to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history*, AIATSIS, 1992
- Diane Smith and Boronia Halstead, *Lookin for your mob: A guide to tracing Aboriginal family trees*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990.

Online guides

- Indigenous family history – State Library of Western Australia:
www.slwa.wa.gov.au/find/guides/family_history/australia/indigenous
- Aboriginal family history – State Records Office of Western Australia:
www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/aboriginal-records/aboriginal-family-history
- Looking west: A guide to Aboriginal records in Western Australia – Department for Child Protection:
www.dcp.wa.gov.au/SupportingIndividualsAndFamilies/Documents/LookingWest.pdf (pdf, 385kb)
- Signposts: A guide for children and young people in care in WA from 1920 – Department for Child Protection: signposts.cdfs.wa.gov.au
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – National Archives of Australia:
www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx
- Online resources for Aboriginal family history
www.slwa.wa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/27067/aboriginal_family_history_4_-_online_resources.pdf

Websites

- Storylines Project – searchable digitised collection of photographs, sound, movies and text of Indigenous people
storylines.slwa.wa.gov.au/archive/index.php
- Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies – a searchable collection of material from state and territory archives. Contains personal information that some people may find objectionable. www.cifhs.com

General family history organisations and websites

Family history groups, local history societies and local libraries

Local family history groups, local history societies and local libraries are valuable sources of information and resources. They can put you in contact with people with a good knowledge of



the local history of a town or area that you are interested in. Many also have local studies collections with books, newspapers, family histories, photographs and manuscripts.

Western Australian Genealogical Society Inc.

The Western Australian Genealogical Society aims to promote, encourage and foster the study, science and knowledge of genealogy. It has a large family history lending library, runs education courses and has special interest research groups.

6/48 May Street, Bayswater WA 6053

PO Box 265, Bayswater WA 6933

Ph: 08 9271 4311

Fax: 08 9370 1572

Email: genealogy@wags.org.au

Web: wags.org.au

Find local libraries

You can use Australian Libraries Gateway – Find a Library (www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries) to locate libraries in Western Australia with family history and local history collections. Under location select 'WA' and under library type select 'Local/Family history'. You can also browse using the map.

Family history research websites

- CoraWeb – a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links and useful advice about tracing your family history (Australia): www.coraweb.com.au
- Ancestry – Help & Advice – general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia): ancestry.com.au/cs/helpandadviceau
- Cyndi's List – a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (USA): www.cyndislist.com
- FamilySearch Learning Center – articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA): familysearch.org.learningcenter/home.html

Find family history and historical societies

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies:
www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- Cape Banks Family History Society – Australian Family History Societies:
www.capebanks.org.au/australian-family-history-societies/



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