



Papers of Pat Healy

MS 4185

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COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator:	Pat Healy
Title:	Freedom Ride papers of Pat Healy
Collection no:	MS 4185
Date range:	1964-1966
Extent:	18 metres (1 box) + 1 folio box
Repository	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

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ACCESS TO COLLECTION

Access and use conditions

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Exceptions

Series 2, Item 60 and Series 5 have closed access, copying and quotation. Library Director's permission required [Access code A1 B1]

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Preferred citation

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COLLECTION OVERVIEW

Scope and content note

Pat Healy took part in the 1965 Student Action for Aborigines Survey and Demonstration Bus Tour, or, as it became known, the Freedom Ride. This was a bus tour, through some New South Wales country towns, undertaken by a group of students, mainly from the University of Sydney. The aim of the ride was non violent direct action in towns where investigations showed that there was racial discrimination. The students also prepared questionnaires on areas such as health, housing and education, conducting surveys in towns that they visited.

The only Aboriginal passenger for the whole ride was Charles Perkins, one of the leaders of Student Action for Aborigines (SAFA) group which organised the ride. Aboriginal student Gary Williams, also active in SAFA, joined the ride at Bowraville. Healy and Curthoys were both active in SAFA, Healy becoming the SAFA Publicity Officer in September 1964.

The papers relate to the organisation of the Freedom Ride by Student Action for Aborigines (SAFA), the Freedom Ride itself, and other SAFA activities. They consist mainly of correspondence and completed questionnaires and related papers from the survey conducted by the students as part of their Bus Tour.

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Provenance

The Freedom Ride papers of Pat Healy were transferred to the Library by Professor Ann Curthoys in March 2003. These papers were used by Curthoys as part of her research material for her book *Freedom Ride: a freedom rider remembers* (Crows Nest, NSW, 2002) for which she received the AIATSIS Stanner Award for 2003. Curthoys transferred her Freedom Ride Papers ([MS 4186](#)) to the Library at the same time.

Related material

For a complete listing of material about the Freedom Ride, and about the Student Action for Aborigines, is held by the Institute and for other related material, consult [Mura®, the AIATSIS catalogue](#), including the Freedom Ride papers of Ann Curthoys held at [MS 4186](#).

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Pat Healy comes from a well known political family. Her grandfather, Jim Healy was the former communist leader of the Waterside Workers' Federation. She was not politically active until she attended a civil rights demonstration at the United States Consulate, on 7 May 1964, where she was arrested. Healy was an Arts student at the University of Sydney at the time and obtained her degree from there.

Healy became the Student Action for Aborigines Publicity Officer in September 1964 and she was one of the Freedom Riders. Remaining a political activist, Healy became a member of the Communist Party soon after her return from the Freedom Ride, remaining a member until it ceased to exist in 1991. She has been involved in the Aboriginal and other movements, including the anti-war and the women's movements, the Gurindji land rights campaign, and, after the birth of her two children, with school and local politics. Healy is an active member of Amnesty International and the Convenor of the NSW Religious Network.

Healy is currently working at the National Research Centre on an ARC funded project on the regulation of farm chemical safety and has worked, as both a researcher and a practitioner, in occupational health and safety and in community and public health.

Healy has qualifications in health program evaluation from Melbourne University, obtained her Master of Applied Science (OHS) from Ballarat University in 1993 and has commenced a PhD thesis in Sociology at the Australian National University.

Healy is married to Brian Aarons and has two daughters.

References:

Ann Curthoys, *Freedom Ride: a Freedom Rider remembers*, [Crows next, NSW], Allen & Unwin, [2002]

The Human Rights Defender online, December 2001 Viewed January 2002
<<http://www.amnesty.org.au/airesources/newsletterDEC2001/activism.html>>

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ONLINE EXHIBITION

The [Freedom Ride Online Exhibition](#) on the AIATSIS website includes exhibits of manuscripts held in this collection and in the 'The Freedom Ride Papers of Ann Curthoys' collection held by the Library at [MS 4186](#). There are also links to other sites containing information about the Freedom Ride.

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SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

Series 1 Student Action for Aborigines (SAFA) minutes, 1964-65

This series consists of handwritten minutes of SAFA, 1964-65.

The listing below is based on a list received with the collection. The list was compiled by Lani Russell, one of Curthoys' Research Assistants.

Item

- | | |
|---|--|
| 0 | Listing of file contents by Lani Russell |
| 1 | 21 December 1964. Includes speakers, Bill Ford, Charlie Perkins, Jim Spigelman, David Sloper and Pat Healy; report on preliminary trip; discussion of questionnaires |

Item

- 2 30 March 1965. Includes discussion of plans for Queensland SAFA
- 3 13 April 1965. Includes discussion of demonstration or other action at launch of Liberal Party election campaign later that day
- 4 4 May 1965. Includes discussion of Abschol, a petition, a vigil, plans for May vacation visits to country towns and University of Sydney Commem Day float
- 5 11 May 1965. Includes discussion on May visits, mention of Channel 7 *Seven Days* program 'End of the bitumen' to be screened on 24 May; Mr St John's investigations on legal aspects of Moree Pool
- 6 Notes on activities in Sydney during the holidays, listing students involved
- 7 'Committees of Sydney & NSW to decide policy - 12th May'. Includes list of resolutions
- 8 16 May 1965. Editorial Board meeting regarding a magazine called *Sundown*
- 9 17 June 1965. Committee meeting. Includes mention of seminar in August of Aboriginal leaders from country centres; co-sponsorship of meeting with Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship; sending a group of students to country towns
- 10 29 June 1965. Committee meeting. Includes resignation of Charles Perkins as chair; mention of contacting Faith Bandler regarding visit to La Perouse; NADOC Week; equal wage case
- 11 16 September 1965. Plans for summer 1965/66
- 12 28 September 1965.
- 13 12 October 1965. These minutes are in a different handwriting to the ones previous listed

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Series 2 Correspondence, 1964-65

This series of correspondence mainly contains letters addressed to Charles Perkins and Jim Spigelman, as Secretary to SAFA.

A list of the correspondence, which includes notes on each letter, was compiled by Lani Russell, one of Curthoys Research Assistants and was received with the collection. The descriptions below are based on this list. Several of the documents listed were not received with the collection.

Item

- 0 List of correspondence in file, including notes on each letter, compiled by Lani Russell
- 1 Receipt for refund from Aborigines Advancement League (Victoria) to Charles Perkins
- 2 Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees' Union of Australia seeking detailed information on Freedom Riders before committing to support re discrimination in hotels, 8 September 1969
- 3-6 Best wishes and donations, from Dorothy May, Maurice Carter, Eleanor Brunton and Philip Foreman, 1964
- 7a-7d Best wishes and proposed national anthem from T. Frawley, Kensington, 18 September 1964
- 8 Forest Coach Lines, Belrose, 19 September 1964. Would like to tender for the trip
- 9 Quote for coach from Pathfinder Travel, Lidcombe, 22 September 1964
- 10 Request to let C.T. Oliver, Secretary, Australian Workers Union (AWU) know if have evidence of underpayment of Aborigines, 24 September 1964
- 11a-11b Best wishes and donation, 1964 from Jean Culley, Port Melbourne and M.E. Hellier, Surfers Paradise
- 12 Gloria Phelan, NSW Teacher's Federation, 12 October 1964. Letter from Jim Spigelman is on Executive business paper and personally welcomes SAFA efforts
- 13 Aboriginal Children's Advancement Society, Gymea regarding interview with Eric Baume and press report of tour; anxious to assist, [n.d.]
- 14 Margaret Langford, 13 October, 1964. Donation and opposes assimilation
- 15 NSW Teachers' Federation, 28 October 1964. Expresses view that 'This type of action is premature at this stage and may have undesirable aftermath as far as the Aboriginal people themselves are concerned' and refuses request for financial support
- 16 Australian Workers' Union (AWU), 16 November 1964. Notes letter of 9 November
- 17 Librarian, Consulate General of USA, 11 December 1964 with addresses of National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and Southern Christian Leaders Conference. Could not find address of Student Non-Violent Co-ordination Committee (SNCC)
- 18 SNCC, Atlanta, Georgia, 16 January 1965. Includes advice to read Jim Peck, *Freedom Ride* and enclosed '*The Student Voice*'
- 19 Carbon copy of circular notice stating aims and committee of SAFA. **[Not received]**
- 20 [Jack Horner, Aboriginal-Australian Fellowship](#), 19 January 1965. Information for SAFA. Carbon copy

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- 21 CORE, New York, 25 January 1965. Information about the activities on public buses in the United States
- 22 City of Warwick, 28 January 1965. Letter about accommodation forwarded to Warwick Show Society
- 23 Australian Workers' Union (AWU), 2 February 1965 in reply to letter of 26 January 1965. Advises no legal discrimination against employment of Aborigines; awards give equal rights; Federal Pastoral Industry Award does discriminate but it is a Commonwealth document
- 24 Copy of 'Student Action for Aborigines', a circular letter. Information on Freedom Ride, including actions, survey, mention of Ted Noffs, accommodation. **[Not received. Manuscript of letter held in MS 4185/3/2]**
- 25 George Heaton, Methodist Church of Australasia, 8 February, 1965. Permission to use church hall at Warwick
- 26 Captain G.L. MacRobb, Church Army in Australia, 9 February 1965. About Mobile Mission to Aborigines; visited most stations and fringe situations in New South Wales; aimed to provide pastoral and evangelistic ministry to fringe dwellers; consisted of two Aboriginal, one white evangelists
- 27 Anonymous note of best wishes
- 28 Donation from A.A. Sherwood
- 29 Secretary, Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees' Union of Australia, 9 February 1965 refusing to guarantee to take industrial actions against all hotel licensees who discriminate against Aborigines, but will look at particular cases
- 30 Secretary, North Coast National Agricultural and Industrial Society, 10 February, 1965. Offer of cheap accommodation at Lismore Showground
- 31 Barry Corr, 11 February, 1965. \$4 for bus trip and arranging to join at Lismore
- 32 Letter from Alex Mills to General Manager, Airlines of New South Wales requesting free flights for Professor Brennan and Bill Ford. Refers to previously offered free flights to Orange
- 33 Reverend P.J. Dowe agreeing to students staying in St Peters Church of England, Walgett church hall for two nights, 11 February 1964
- 34-39 Letters of congratulation on actions, comments and some donations
- 40 Bill Ray, Cootamundra, 23 February 1965. Contains copy of editorial from *Cootamundra Herald*. [Cutting not received]
- 41 L.S. Confell, Chullora Boiler Shop, 23 February, 1965. Mass meeting of combined unions at Boiler Shop on 22 February 1965 and congratulations on student's actions

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- 42 Iris Ecob, Kurnell, 23 February 1965. Letter of congratulations on letter in *Sydney Morning Herald*.
- 43 Letter to G.W. Ford. Disagrees with Ford's column in *Herald* 23 February 1965
- 44 Winifred Weller, Nabitac, 24 February 1965. Would like to assist some Aboriginal children; Local Country Women's Association Branch has been discussing interracial marriages to aid assimilation; seeks opinion on issue; congratulations
- 45 Request (25 February 1965) to Charles Perkins to speak at Constitutional Association of Australia meeting on 15 March; along the lines of 'What can be done for Aborigines in Australia'
- 46 Request for article for *Purge*, an Australian National University student paper
- 47-49 Support, information, comments and donations, including one from the Union of Australian Women, 1964-65
- 50 Reference to interview with Alex Mills in Kempsey and about the needs of Aborigines in Kempsey area, 26 February 1965 **[Not received]**
- 51-52 Copy of 'Resolution for Council on Racial Discrimination', NSW Teachers' Federation, 27 February 1965 and letter of support from General Secretary, enclosing donations from individual teachers
- 53 Question 'What did you set out to achieve'; 'you have to teach Aborigines what to do with their money'
- 54-55 Letters relating to donations, 1965
- 56 John Gowdie, 1 March 1965. Relates to critical interview on Ride surveys in *Sunday Telegraph*. Denies had anything to do with it
- 57 Support and donation
- 58 Article request for *Semper* from University of Queensland Union
- 59 North Coast National Agricultural Society regarding reduced accommodation costs and request for payment, 26 February 1965
- 60 Background and desire to replace her child who had been adopted with an Aboriginal child. Marked confidential. Includes poem 'Only our skin is different'. **[In separate folder – Closed access, copying and quotation. Library Director's permission required]**

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- 61-71 Support and donations, including letters from University of Queensland Union. Includes letters from Australian Council of Churches, Queensland Plasterer's Union, the Canterbury-Bankstown District of the Building Workers Industrial Union, Builders Workers' Industrial Union of Australia, South Coast Labour Council and New South Wales Teachers' Federation and W.H. Hartley, State Secretary, Australian Labour Party
- 72 Request to Spigelman to speak on the Freedom Ride to Kings' Cross Labor Youth Club, Wayside Chapel, 29 March 1965. Charles Perkins and Hall Greenland also invited to attend
- 73a-73b Two letters regarding *Outlook* magazine article, 12 March 1965. The article appeared in the April 1965 issue of *Outlook* with the title 'The Student bus: SAFA interviewed'. [Copy of article held in Library at P STU. The manuscript of the article is held at MS 4185, Series 3, Item 10].
- 74-80 Support and congratulations, 1965. Includes letters from Asquith Branch of the Australian Labor Party, Monash University Labour Club, Aboriginal Children's Advancement Society, Newcastle Area Committee of the Union of Australian Women and Victorian Central Executive of the Australian Labour Party
- 81 Request for data on Aboriginal rights for Junior Farmer's Club debate, 14 April 1965
- 82a-82b Two notes with addresses. [In folio box]
- 83 'Freedom rider claims survey failure' *Sunday Telegraph*, February 28, 1965, p. 13 [In folio box]
- 84 "Freedom Ride' supported', by Hill Hartley, Victorian A.L.P. [Australian Labor Party] Secretary [In Folio Box]

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Series 3 Freedom Ride, 1963-65

Item

- 1a-1d 'Our struggle', a condensed version of article by American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, written while he was in Birmingham City Gaol and reprinted by S.A.F.A. in 1963. Four copies
- 2 'Student Action for Aborigines', outlining aims of SAFA. Annotated carbon copy. Annotations include 'This printed late 1964'
- 3 'Student Action for Aborigines' describing proposed bus tour [Freedom Ride] and its aims. Postit sticker reads 'SAFA Press release early 1965'
- 4 S.A.F.A. address list. Annotated carbon copy

Item

- 5 'Constitution of the Student Action for Aborigines Organisation' [n.d.]
- 6a-6b Final draft itinerary'. One annotated roneoed copy and one handwritten copy [6a in folio box]
- 7 'S.A.F.A. Survey and Demonstration Tour – February 1965'. List of names , addresses and contact numbers, possibly compiled after the Tour
- 8 Handwritten notes which include a description of students being asked to leave the Anglican church hall where they were staying in Walgett and the Tour bus being forced off the road as it left Walgett. Headed 'at 10 o'clock last night', the author is unknown.
- 9 Notice 'To the citizens of Moree' of public meeting to discuss 'the Aboriginal question in Moree'
- 10 Manuscript of *Outlook* feature on SAFA tour for Issue 2, 1965. Typed carbon copy of early draft. The article appeared in the April 1965 issue of *Outlook* with the title 'The Student bus: SAFA interviewed'. [Copy of article held in Library at P STU]

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Series 4 Later SAFA activities, 1964-66**Item**

- 0 Listing of file contents by Lani Russell
- 1 'Open letter to the Premier & the Leader of the Opposition' regarding funding for, and representation on, the Aborigines Welfare Board (AWB) and inclusion of anti discriminatory clauses in the Local Government and Theatres and Public Halls acts. Copies to be sent to 'Renshaw, Askin, *Australian, Sydney Morning Herald, Telegraph*'. Annotated 'This letter sent 22 April by Committee'
- 2 'NUAUS [National Union of Australian University Students] report on Student Action for Aborigines', submitted by Warwick Mosman, National Abschol Director. Roneoed
- 3 Agenda for National Abschol Conference, June 4 – 6, [no year]. Annotated. Roneoed
- 4 'Précis of paper delivered to A.I.R.S.'
- 5a – 5d 'Aborigines', authorised by Chris Page. One copy annotated 'April 1964'. Four copies
- 6 Letter to members from Sue Johnson, Secretary of Student Action for Aborigines, regarding SAFA activities [n.d.]
- 7a-7b 'Student Action for Aborigines' activities since first founded in May 1964'. Includes activities from 1965 to 1967. Two copies, one annotated

Item

- 8 Handwritten list of eleven questions, such as 'Did 'Freedom Ride' cause any resentment among Aborigines' and 'How many Aborigines enrolled in Australian universities'. Author unknown
- 9a - 9b 'The State of S.A.F.A.', issued by John Powles, Vice President of SAFA. Two versions, one roneoed with handwritten annotation signed by John Powles and one handwritten.
- 10 'UNSW – SAFA'. Handwritten notes, including several names
- 11 'Bega May 1965'. Handwritten report. Annotated 'John Powles. Howard Foley's Report from Bega'
- 12 'Report of Delegation to Walgett 13th – 15th August, 1965'
- 13 'Report of Second Delegation to Walgett 27th – 29th August, 1965'
- 14 Twenty eight replies to circular letter from SAFA regarding interest in SAFA's activities, payment of levy and General Meeting on 13 December [1966?] plus one blank form
- 15 Flyer for general meeting of S.A.F.A. Tuesday 25 January regarding report to be presented to a Select Parliamentary Committee investigating the 'Aboriginal situation throughout Australia'. Twelve copies
- 16 'Severe economic discrimination suffered by Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders', issued by Equal Wages for Aborigines (and Torres Islanders) Committee of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. 'Brindle's Case' is attached. Brindle was successfully supported in a court action by the Council for Civil Liberties
- 17a -17b 'South Africa Protest: a campaign for Human Rights in South Africa', 29 April 1965. Information sheet and notification about a public meeting on South Africa Freedom Day. Two copies

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Series 5 SAFA survey, 1965

As part of the preparation for the Freedom Ride the students prepared a series of questionnaires on areas such as health, housing and education, conducting surveys in towns that they visited.

This series contains completed survey questionnaires, some tabulations of results, a code sheet for the 'Aboriginal Attitudes' questionnaire and notes. Completed 'Aboriginal Questionnaire' forms comprise the bulk of the series, with some completed 'Housing' and one completed 'Occupations and incomes' and two blank 'European' and two blank 'Aboriginal' questionnaire forms. The original tabulation of the 'Housing; survey is held in the folio box

There are completed 'Aboriginal Questionnaires' from the towns of Wellington, Gulargambone, Walgett, Moree, Boggabilla, Lismore – Cabbage Tree Island, Bowraville, Kempsey – Green Hills and Kempsey – Burnt Ridge.

There is also a list, received with the collection, of the contents of this series.

There is also a photocopied set of the papers in this series held in the folio box.

Four folders and one folio box

Finding Aid compiled by J. Churches, April 2004. Updated March 2006 & June 2008

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