



AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

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Family History Kit contents

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

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- Queensland
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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 nearly every aspect of the lives of Indigenous people was closely controlled by government: relationships and marriage, children, work, travel, wages, housing and land, and access to health care and education.

Records about the Stolen Generations and their families were kept by governments, as well as by churches, missions and other non-government agencies. Many records have been lost as the result of poor recordkeeping practices, fires, floods, and in some cases, due to deliberate destruction. Changes to the structure of government departments and within non-government organisations can also make it very difficult to trace records to assist with finding family connections.

History of Link-Up

Family tracing and reunion services are available to members of the Stolen Generations throughout Australia via the national Link-Up program.

The first Link-Up service in Australia was established in 1980 in New South Wales. This was followed by Link-Ups in Queensland and the Northern Territory. Prior to 1997 other types services also operated to assist people who had been separated from their families to reconnect.



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 Section, Dept. of Family and Community Services	1994–95

The Bringing Them Home report

From 1995 to 1997 the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) undertook a National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families. The Commission's findings were published in 1997 in the Bringing Them Home Report. <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/bringing-them-home-report-1997>.

This report included 54 recommendations, a number of which related to records and family tracing. Recommendation 30a stated:

That the Council of Australian Governments ensure that Indigenous community-based family tracing and reunion services are funded in all regional centres with a significant Indigenous population and that existing Indigenous community-based services, for example health services, in smaller centres are funded to offer family tracing and reunion assistance and referral.

As a result of this recommendation the Australian Government funded a national network of family tracing and reunion services – the National Link-Up Program. Link-Ups in NSW, Queensland and the NT gained improved funding and new Link-Up Programs were established in other areas including South Australia, Central Australia and Western Australia.

Role of Link-Up

Link-Up organisations around Australia provide family tracing and reunion services to members of the Stolen Generations and their 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-Up gives 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-Up also provides 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.

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 families and to find out about their family history.

- In conjunction with Link-Ups, AIATSIS 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 may 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 or to provide documentation/information that confirms your heritage. 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 Ngannawal 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

- do a search for land councils and other Indigenous organisations in your area on the website of the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations <http://www.oric.gov.au/>
- search for local Aboriginal Health Services on the Australian Indigenous HealthInfonet website here - <https://healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/key-resources/health-professionals/health-workers/map-of-aboriginal-and-islander-healthmedical-services/>
- contact an Indigenous Coordination Centre see listing here <http://www.atns.net.au/subcategory.asp?subcategoryID=112>



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Understanding the challenges

Family history research projects can be complex, time-consuming and frustrating but also rewarding. 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 differ from information found 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 is like being a detective. You look for pieces of evidence to put together your family's story. This evidence comes in the form of different types of 'records'. Records are the many sheets of paper that officials, professionals or others create about us. Think of the records a doctor or a school might keep about you or your children and the forms and documents that government agencies like Centrelink keep about you. Records may not just be written documents. They can also be photographs, maps, genealogies, oral history and many other things.

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. It can be even harder when these types of finding aids have not been developed.

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. These can be valuable starting points for researching your family and community. Native Title claims may also be a significant source for Indigenous family history researchers. Paperwork associated with these can often be found online.



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

Unfortunately written evidence or information about family members may not exist because the records have been:

- lost with the passing of time
- destroyed because their value was not recognised, they were regarded as 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 significance 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', especially 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. However be aware that the word 'native' was also used on official certificates, such as death certificates, to indicate that a non-Indigenous person was born in Australia rather than having immigrated from England or Europe.
- They may also include 'caste' terms like 'full blood', 'half-caste', 'quarter-caste', 'quadroon', 'octaroon' – derogatory categories used to indicate the 'amount' of Aboriginal heritage a person had 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 Aboriginal people were sometimes given their employer's surname.
- Some surnames were derived from the names of rural properties or places 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.
- Names differ on documents because they were being recorded by different people. The spelling of names on early official documents such as birth, death and marriage certificates can vary depending on who was giving the information, who was writing the information down, and how neatly or accurately they recorded the names.

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

Name variants

Al, Alen, Alan, Allan
Anne, Hannah,
Herbert
Bevely, Bev
William, Billy, Will
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, Jas
Jeff, Jefferey, Geoffrey, Geoff
Jessica Jessy, Jes
Joe, Jo, Joey
Joy
Judy
Cathy, Kate, Kay
Kathline, Kath
Leslie, Les
Lyn

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

Maggie, Meg, Peg, Molly, Daisy
Marjory, Marj
Maisie
Tilly, Mattie, Matie, Tilda, Mathilda
Mick, Micky
Agnes, Nance
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 will need to know this to request birth, death and marriage certificates.. 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 ceremonies. Members of the Stolen Generations who were removed from their families as children were



institutionalised, fostered and adopted far from their homes. For example, many children from the Northern Territory were sent to southern states.

If members of 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, or were forced to move around. You can use a printed map or one that's online, like Google Maps. Local libraries often have historical maps, including maps of stations and properties. You can also find many maps through searching on the Maps section of [Trove](http://trove.nla.gov.au), a website created by the National Library of Australia. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/map>.

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. Sometimes Area School libraries have local history information as well as local school records which can help place family members in an area at a certain time.

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, or a

piece of land they occupied or owned. You might be able to 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. However many people 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 because it means that

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

This is frustrating if the reason you want to do research on this person is to prove your relationship to them. This is a very common problem faced by members of the Stolen Generations and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people trying to find out about family members from whom they were separated.

What information do you need?

Our experience at the Family History Unit is that people may already have one or more family names, the names of some places where the people they are researching 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 by searching historical indexes of births, deaths and marriages [BDM]. There is more information about where to find BDM resources in the fact sheet: Sources-birth-death-marriage-records
 - 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, it will give you a great starting point. If you don't, it suggests that your ancestor's birth, marriage or death was never registered. It might also mean that they used a different name, or the name was misspelled, or the records were lost or destroyed.
 - Do name and place searches in the following indexes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:
 - AIATSIS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI) <http://aiatsis.gov.au/research/guides-and-resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-biographical-index/search-abi>
 - AIATSIS Mura® catalogue <https://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/using-collection/search-collection>
 - Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies (CIFHS) – this website draws together information from publicly available records held in the National Archives and various state archives throughout Australia. <http://www.cifhs.com/> You can do searches on this site by typing the phrase – site:cifhs and then your search terms, such as site:cfhs “angelina”
 - If you think there is a chance that one of the people you are researching might have done military service, search the National Archives of Australia RecordSearch database. For tips on how to do this go to <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/researching-war-service.aspx> For more information check out: Sources-military-service-records.
 - Explore Indigenous family history resources available for each state and territory (see Where to get help). These guides will give you many ideas and resources.
 - There are also other places to try. These are introduced in different sections of this Kit.

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 part of your 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. Some of these teams sit within

government departments and some work out of State Archives. 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 like).

- The two AIATSIS search engines available on the AIATSIS website -ABI and Mura - will give you a list of material held in the AIATSIS collections about that place. Try and locate life stories of people in a certain place or the history of a family or mission in the area. 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. If you are fortunate, people in your family might be mentioned in the book.
- A CIFHS search on place will enable you to see if any people are recorded at that place in the CIFHS collection. Remember you need to use the phrase “site:cifhs” and your search term in Google to conduct a search of the records on the site. 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 AND Aboriginal. (Type the word AND in capitals to get google to search for both words).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. For example the Western Sydney Airport Environmental Impact statement has a chapter and a Technical paper on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage which includes information about the Aboriginal organisations

involved in consultations. <http://westernsydneyairport.gov.au/media-resources/resources/environmental-assessment/index.aspx>

- The 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. To do so you do a Google search on the name of the language group AND Native title claim: for example Ngadjuri AND native title claim. Alternatively you can search the by typing the language group name in the “Application Name” search box on the Native Title Register. <http://www.nntt.gov.au/searchRegApps/NativeTitleRegisters/Pages/Search-Register-of-Native-Title-Claims.aspx>

Sometimes the information about a claim includes a list of claimants and their line of descent from original traditional owners. See: AIATSIS Pathways Thesaurus for information on languages and groups.

<http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/>

Extend your search net to more general resources

- Search the National Library of Australia’s [Trove](#) newspaper database
- Search a genealogical database like [Ancestry.com.au](#) or [FindMyPast](#). Both of these require paid subscriptions, but most State and Territory Libraries, local libraries, genealogical societies and and/or local family history groups allow free searching on subscription sites. You might also find information in historical Electoral Rolls which are held in State and Territory libraries.

Get help from government record agencies

If you haven’t found information that is accessible to the public in the places listed above, you can also apply for access to records that have ‘access conditions’. Restrictions mean that you won’t be able to have access to some records unless you can prove your relationship to the person the records are about. Different groups of government records are restricted for varying lengths of time. These restriction periods also differ between state, territory and commonwealth records. The best way to navigate this often confusing and frustrating situation is to contact the government departments that assist Indigenous Australians to do family history research or contact the Aboriginal Access Team or other archival reference officers in the government archive where the records are held. (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.

Depending on how long ago the records you are seeking were created, you may find that some records are already open access or might become so in a few years. For example with birth, death and marriage records, each year there is a new release of records that fall within the 30 (death), 75 (marriages), 100 (births) year limit. See Sources – birth, death and marriage records for more specific 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



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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 including photographs, address books, birth, death and marriage certificates.. Sit down with family members and collect all 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 you know, it's time to get information from organisations. Most of these will be government agencies – libraries, archives, records authorities, registries, although some may also be held by church and other non-government organisations. At this point 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 internet?

These days the answer is probably, yes.

It is difficult to do research without using the internet. Many of the resources that will help you to do your family history research are now 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. If you have relatives or friends who use computers regularly, you might be able to ask them to help you. Libraries and community centres often run short courses in using computers and/or searching the internet.

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. You can also print off the sections or the whole kit if you would like to.

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. It can help to put this 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 or dot points 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 find out about how to access divorce papers. You might ask other family members. Bear in mind that you could be asking sensitive questions that may cause distress.
- 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 may be church and/or government records.
- You will need to become familiar with the range of 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 and/or the ones that are the 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.

Reviewing your findings

It's important to step back from time to time and check how your research is 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? Are there other places you might be able to find what you want to know?

If you get stuck

- Ask for help. Record holders, librarians, archivists, historians and genealogists are very good sources for advice on types of records and how to locate them.
- Discuss what you have found and what you can't find with friends or others who are researching their own families. They might be able to give you some new ideas.
- Choose a different research direction and follow this new trail.
- Go back to your notes and follow up some of your more 'outside of the square' ideas. These may or may not lead you to more information
- Do some more background reading. Reading other people's family histories may give you some fresh ideas. Always check if any new family or community histories have been published, or any recent books or journal articles relating to 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.
- Unfortunately, you might have to accept that you'll never know the answer to a particular question.



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Get organised

When doing family history, you'll probably need a system for keeping track of things. If you don't, you will find yourself with 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 and which ones are copies and where they all came from.
- 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 stored in folders, display books or ring binders
- electronic documents arranged in folders on your computer (e.g. Microsoft Word)
- genealogy software (e.g. Brothers Keeper, Legacy Family Tree)
- 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, emails and texts.



Taking care of original documents. Keep the originals of any old family documents and photographs separately from your research notes. These include 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 about [preserving your family collections](#) in the “How to” guides on the State Library of Queensland’s website. You can also find this kind of information on other Library and/or historical society websites.

Charts and worksheets

Charts and worksheets can help you to organise and see the results of 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 are Microsoft Word documents so you can add to them and 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 you and/or family members might have at home
- **Family member information** – a worksheet to help you gather and record information about each 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 or at least put their maiden name in brackets – Iris STACEY (nee LONG)
- 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 them. Here are some suggestions:

- 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 types of historical sources are birth, death and marriage certificates, divorce papers, wills, photographs and other pictures, oral histories, family interviews, sound recordings, books, maps, 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
- If it is a record in an archive or library and you are allowed to take a digital photo or photocopy, take one of the cover of the file or book with the title of the file or book on it, as well as the page(s) you need so you can keep them together and always have a record of where the images or copies came from
- always write down the source of your information at the time you find it, not later
- If you print something off from a web page, record the name and details of the website and the date that you found it on the internet. Websites constantly change and/or are updated so it's good to know when you found something in case it later disappears or is moved.
- print out or copy information about the source from library or archives catalogues
- 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. If you clearly reference where you found something, it makes it possible for others to find it too.



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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 from documents you have at home. These documents might include birth, death and marriage certificates, wills, family photographs, newspaper clippings and family letters. Look especially for things that you own that have been passed down through the family. As well as documents and photographs, these could be objects such as household items, books, jewellery or even furniture. Sometimes objects have names, dates and/or places written on them which may provide you with information about family members.

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. If you find that a family member has many family stories you might ask them whether you could record an oral history interview with them.

Sensitivities about the past

Be aware that some family members might not want to talk about the past. It might bring up difficult memories or touch on sensitive issues they'd rather forget. This can be frustrating for you as a researcher, but you need 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.

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. 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. You can easily make a copy of items by taking a photo with a digital camera or smart phone. 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.

Looking at family records and talking to your relatives 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. You might never have heard about this, but once you start asking questions people will tell you many useful details.

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.

See: Sources at home checklist.



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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 search for books and other material for 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. To do this, go into Mura and then choose Family History from the list on the left hand side of the Mura Collections Catalogue Home page
- **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 name doesn't appear 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 the names of people or groups associated with places or names. See Thinking about place.

Other places to search for family histories:

- National Library catalogue
- State and Territory Library catalogues
- Catalogues of your local council library or local history collection. You may be surprised at what you might find.
- Google and Google books. In each of these you might include a family name, a place, the word 'Indigenous' or 'Aboriginal' and 'family history' in your search.

Administrative histories

The term 'administrative history' refers to histories of the government departments responsible for Aboriginal people. It also refers to historical information about the legislation enacted by governments for the 'protection' and 'welfare' of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Each state and territory developed, passed and enforced its own laws, so it is valuable to understand what happened in the states/territories that are important to your family.

Why is it useful to read administrative histories?

You will find that some of the records that may be available about your family were created because of legislation. For example, under protection legislation in most parts of Australia individuals were permitted to apply for an 'exemption' from the Act (Act meaning the legislation controlling Aboriginal people at the time). An exemption or 'dog tag' as it was often referred to, meant that an Aboriginal person wasn't treated as Aboriginal for the purpose of the Act. For example, they were permitted to move around and work in similar ways to a non-Aboriginal person. If a family member was exempted, there should be a file held by among government records with the exemption application and other related paperwork.

It is also useful to know the names of the departments that were responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and Child Protection at different times in Australia's history because you then know who might have been creating records about your family members.

Aboriginal Family History Research guides

Each state, territory and commonwealth archive holds government records related to Aboriginal protection and welfare. These archives have developed research guides to help people trying to find records about themselves or their families. Most guides include a short history of the protection/welfare regime and information about the kinds of records that were created. State and Territory Libraries also have research guides which can lead you to many different kinds of

resources for Aboriginal Family History research and offer other ideas on approaches to family history. Below are some links to Research Guides in State/Territory Archives and Libraries.

New South Wales

- Research guides related to Aboriginal people - State Records of NSW
<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-people/guides>
- Aboriginal Australians family history – State Library of NSW:
<http://guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/aboriginal-australians>

Northern Territory

- Researching your Aboriginal family history – Northern Territory Archives Service:
<https://dtc.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets>
- Tracking family: A guide to Aboriginal records relating to the Northern Territory – National Archives of Australia:
<http://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
- Queensland State Archives
<https://www.qld.gov.au/dsiti/qsas>
<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/collection>
- Queensland Government links for Aboriginal Family and Personal history
<https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts>

South Australia

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

Tasmania

- Records on Tasmanian Aboriginal people – LINC Tasmania:
<https://libraries.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/default.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:
<https://prov.vic.gov.au/walata-tyamateetj-research-guide>
- Finding your mob: Researching Aboriginal family history at the Victorian Archives Centre
<https://prov.vic.gov.au/finding-your-mob>
- Finding your story: Resource manual to the records of the Stolen Generations in Victoria: <https://www.prov.vic.gov.au/koorie-services/finding-your-story>

Western Australia

- Indigenous family history – State Library of Western Australia:
<https://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/indigenous-wa/family-history/wa-indigenous-family-history-resources>
- 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

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 and looking at Research Guides on library and archive websites. See Background reading

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

Birth, death and marriage [BDM] records

If you have a good look at your own birth certificate, you will find information on it which can help you apply for access to the birth, death and marriage certificates of your ancestors. If you don't have a copy of your own birth certificate, your first step would be to apply for one.

- For living relatives or certificates that are not historical you will need permission from the person, or to prove your relationship to them. For this reason you will also need your own birth certificate and identity documents.
- You could ask other family members to help you get them or if you are eligible you might be able to become a client of a service – such as Link-Up - who may be able to apply on your behalf. 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 certificate you receive will set off a new round of requests – each new certificate 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 government agencies responsible for Aboriginal 'welfare' and 'protection' in the past. See Where to get help guides for each State and Territory in this Kit.

Quick searches – name indexes

- **Aboriginal Biographical Index [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.
- **Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies [CIFHS]**. It is also worth searching the CIFHS website. You may find direct information about your ancestors and references to some government records. Some CIFHS documents include file numbers so you can track down where the original records are held. To search CIFHS, you need to type the phrase "site:cifhs" and the name you are searching in "quote marks" into Google to do a search of the documents on the CIFHS site.
- **National Archives of Australia [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 note down what you have tried so you can 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 our list of Family history sources that there is a lot to choose from and everyone will follow 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 about what pathway to follow 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. However in family history it is like doing the puzzle without the picture on the box lid to guide you. Often new information 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 useful to return to the Toolkit periodically. At the beginning the amount of information and advice in the Toolkit may be overwhelming. But as you start collecting information and planning what to do next, you may find the tools more useful.



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Put it all together

Once you have gathered a good amount of information about your family, you may 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 clearly referenced 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 or an ancestor chart when doing your research. Family trees are useful for sharing the outcomes of your research because they're simple and easy to understand. But while they help make sense of names and dates and places, they don't allow you enough space 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 the very least, for each event include the date, place and people involved, as well as the sources 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 they had, when and where they died and where they are buried. Or if you have gathered a lot of information about a particular part of your ancestor's life, you might like to write about it. 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 and when it happened.

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 might never find the time to finish.

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
- State Library of Victoria – Publish your family history
<https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/publishing>
- State Library of South Australia -
<http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/familyhistorygettingstarted/writingfamilyhistory>

- Australian Copyright Council – Family histories and copyright
https://www.copyright.org.au/ACC_Prod/ACC/Information_Sheets/Family_Histories_Copyright.aspx
- Family Search – Create a family history
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Create_a_Family_History

Some genealogical societies have special interest groups who support each other in writing family histories. For example Genealogy SA in South Australia has a group that meets once a month <https://www.genealogysa.org.au/membership-gsa/18-uncategorised/89-fh-writers-group.html>

When you have finished writing your family history, consider donating a copies to the local library and historical society where your family lived, to AIATSIS and to your state/territory library.

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

It is 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 including birth, death or marriage certificates, wills, old family photos, newspaper clippings or family letters.

- 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 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 camera or a digital camera to photograph items they have. Make sure you make a note of who has what item.
- 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. If they do give you documents or items, it is good practice to write a note or receipt listing what they gave you and when. In this way they have a record of the items they gave to you if another family member asks.

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 to look for. Of course, you won't necessarily need all of the sources listed.

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. The National Archives of Australia has digitized Australian First World War



service records and these are publicly available via their website. You can do a name search on their RecordSearch online catalogue.

Records can include information about 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 the activities took place. You can draw a map. Visiting a place may help memories and stories 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 family history research you are doing and why. 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. If you take notes you might miss an important piece of information or interrupt the flow of the conversation.

Oral history interviewing

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

If you would like to record an oral history interview with a family member or someone else, it is a good idea to learn how to do this properly. Oral History Australia has a branch in each state and territory and they run workshops for people who want to learn how to record interviews. You can learn about how to prepare for an interview, the types of questions you might like to ask as well as many other aspects of the craft of oral history. Oral History Australia branches can also offer advice on the best equipment to use so that your interviews will be clear and can be preserved for future generations. See <https://www.oralhistoryaustralia.org.au/>

Find out more

Further 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 <https://www.genealogybargains.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/EBOOK-Preserving-Family-Oral-History.pdf>.
- Penny Taylor & AIATSIS, *Telling it like it is: A guide to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1996
- Beth M Robertson, *Oral History Handbook*, Oral History Association of Australia, SA branch, Fifth Edition 2006 – available from Oral History Australia SANT <http://oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au/publications/>.

Websites

- FamilySearch – Creating oral histories
familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Creating_Oral_Histories
- Smithsonian Institution – Folklife and oral history interviewing guide
<https://folklife.si.edu/the-smithsonian-folklife-and-oral-history-interviewing-guide/smithsonian>
- Oral History Association (USA) Web guides to doing oral history
<http://www.oralhistory.org/web-guides-to-doing-oral-history/>
- Oral History in the Digital Age <http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/>



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Sources – photographs

Photographs are a valuable source for family history. Both photos held by family members 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 are not labelled so it is difficult to work out 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. This will also ensure that you have a digital copy if ever the original is lost.

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 in them, 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/or 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 black and white 'snapshot' photographs usually date from the early 20th century.



- If the photograph is a studio style photograph and the name of the photographer or a studio is 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 there are any vehicles in the photograph the style and make of them can also help in dating a 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, by travellers or by scientists, anthropologists and other researchers, 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.

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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 only be searched and printed at the AIATSIS reading room in Canberra. However if you find a photo caption via your Mura search that might relate to your research, you can contact AIATSIS to arrange for a digital copy or printed copy to be made for you.

AIATISIS has also digitised the *Dawn* and *New Dawn* magazine. This was printed by the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board from 1935 to 1965 and contains many photographs related to New South Wales Aboriginal people. All issues are available online and the magazine 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, non-government/church archives, museums and local historical societies.

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

Use search terms such as 'Aboriginal' or 'Aborigine' combined with a place name (for example, 'Aboriginal Dubbo' or Aboriginal AND Dubbo) or search using the name of a mission, reserve or station (for example, 'Ernabella'). You are less likely to find relevant photographs searching by people's names but it might be worth a try. For example a search for Aboriginal AND Wilson finds photos of people with the surname Wilson as well as Wilson as the name of a street and a river.

Offensive language

Photographs held in Libraries, museums and archives often include offensive and racist language in the captions. Historical photographs themselves may be offensive and distressing because they reveal the ways in which Aboriginal people were treated. In addition, some photographers used offensive backdrops and put people into costumes that fit current stereotypes. Sometimes people were 'paid' for posing in such photographs with valuable goods such as food or tobacco.



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Sources – birth, death and marriage records

Births, deaths and marriages [BDM] 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 within the date ranges which are open for public searching access. 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. These can be keys for your search. If you don't know all these things, just one can be a starting point.

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 often 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 people under their control. 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. Remember that there will be many

people for whom there is no official or other type of birth record. This guide also provides information about what to do if this is the case.

What information will you find on BDM certificates?

BDM certificates can provide a wealth of information beyond 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, ages, 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 parent(s) • 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 many people could not read and write.
- Try to double-check information on certificates with other records such as cemetery records, headstone inscriptions or other records.

- 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 their own 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 sometimes related 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. However it also occurred for many other reasons such as the remoteness of a birth place.
- 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. Sadly many of these records have not survived because most stations were privately owned and preservation of documents relied on the individual owners.
- Sometimes you will see the word 'native' on a birth, death or marriage certificate. Be aware that this notation, especially on early records, does not refer to Aboriginality but refers to a person born in Australia rather than immigrating from England or elsewhere.
 - 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.

In early times BDM registrations were recorded by District Registrars and then sent to a central register in the cities. Occasionally the records never made it to the city. If you are unable to find a record in the main BDM index, you can also try a search of the district registers for the place you believe your ancestor was born. These are usually held in State libraries.

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 included in South Australia)
- Australian Capital Territory 1930 (formerly included in 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 where they are available

You can do online name searches of historical BDMs for the states listed below. You can use google to search for different BDM websites by typing in something like 'BDM NSW'. Their webpages will provide you with other information about the Registry in that state or territory such as their contact details and how to apply for certificates.

- New South Wales (or search for 'NSW BDM')
<https://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/family-history-research/family-history-search.aspx>
- Northern Territory – no online access
- Victoria (or search for 'Victoria BDM')
<https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>
- Queensland (or search for 'Queensland BDM')
<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/births-deaths-marriages-and-divorces/family-history-research>
- Western Australia (or search for 'WA BDM')
<https://bdm.justice.wa.gov.au/apps/pioneersindex/default.aspx>
- South Australia (or search for 'SA BDM') access is via Genealogy SA online database, which also indexes Advertiser newspaper BDM notices
<https://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>

- Tasmania (or search for Tasmania BDM) best access is via the LINC website Names Index https://linc.tas.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en_AU/names/

You can also access some BDM indexes through Ancestry.com and Family Search. Many libraries and family history societies have copies of BDM indexes in printed volumes, 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. Concerns about privacy and identity theft mean that more recent BDM events are not available. These are considered 'closed'.

What historical BDMs are available (years ago by state and territory)

State	Birth	Marriage	Death
New South Wales	100 years ago	50 years ago	30 years ago
Queensland	100	75	35
Northern Territory	100	75	30
South Australia	100	75	30
Victoria	100	65	30
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/app/answers/detail/a_id/18/~/apply-for-a-birth%2C-death-or-marriage-certificate
- New South Wales: <https://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/family-history-research/family-history-research-nsw.aspx>
- Northern Territory: <https://nt.gov.au/law/bdm/search-births-deaths-and-marriages-records>
- 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: <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/family-and-community/births,-deaths-and-marriages/family-research>
- Victoria: <https://www.bdm.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation-policies-and-practices/access-to-registry-information/information-is>
- Western Australia:
http://www.bdm.dotag.wa.gov.au/C/certificate_access_policies.aspx

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 via their websites. Unfortunately certificates are costly to purchase.

To find BDM websites with addresses and contact information, remember to just do a google search like NSW BDM or Vic BDM.

Transcription services

In some states you can use a transcription service to record what is on a certificate. 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 your state.

Some states have specialised information or services to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to find and get access to BDM information. Links to information in New South

Wales, Victoria and the NT are below or you could contact the registrar and ask if they have an Indigenous staff member to help you or someone to assist with Aboriginal BDM records.

New South Wales: <http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/aboriginal>

Northern Territory: <http://guides.naa.gov.au/tracking-family/chapter5/5.19.aspx>

Victoria: <https://www.bdm.vic.gov.au/koori-services/culturally-sensitive-services> or
Email bdmindigenousaccess@justice.vic.gov.au

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.
- Other online indexes of birth, death and funeral records in newspapers – Genealogy SA online database (birth and death notices in the South Australian Advertiser newspaper), Ryerson Index <https://www.ryersonindex.org/> (death and funeral notices in Australian newspapers) Savill Index <http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/fh/savill/> Advertiser funeral notices).

- 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
- School and/or hospital admission registers
- Family Bible

See CoraWeb – <http://www.coraweb.com.au/categories/birth-death-and-marriage-records> for more ideas.



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Sources – burial and cemetery records

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

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 on the mission.

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 from the place they were living just before their death. From these you may 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.
- If you find a funeral notice, the funeral director (if they are still operating) may be able to assist you with information about where the person concerned was buried or if they were cremated.

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. Try the following cemetery searching websites:
- Australian Cemeteries website - <http://www.australiancemeteries.com.au/>
- Australian Cemeteries Index - <https://www.austcemindex.com/>

You can also do a Google search for useful guides to cemetery and burial records in libraries and on other websites using the search terms or links below.

- [National Library of Australia – Australian cemetery records - https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/cemetery-records](https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/cemetery-records)
- [CoraWeb – Cemeteries http://www.coraweb.com.au/categories/cemeteries](http://www.coraweb.com.au/categories/cemeteries)
- State Library of NSW – Deaths and burials
<http://guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/c.php?g=671850&p=4729307>
- State Library of Victoria – Cemetery records
<https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/victorianancestors/cemeteries>
- State Library of Queensland – Cemetery records <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/cemetery-records>
- State Library of SA – SA deaths <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/bdm/SAdeaths> and <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/bdm/sacemeteries>
- State Library of WA – Cemeteries
http://cms.slwa.wa.gov.au/dead_reckoning/private_archives/a-f/cemeteries
- LINC Tasmania – Cemetery records <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/guides-records/Pages/cemetery.aspx>
- Genealogical Society of the NT
<http://www.gsnt.org.au/sites/default/files/Cemeteries%20of%20the%20Northern%20Territory.pdf>



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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. Many experienced all of these - first removed to an institution, placed out in a foster home, or as a domestic servant/labourer, and later adopted.

The institutions included Homes for children from all backgrounds and institutions exclusively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Some were separated into dormitories on missions (run by religious groups) or stations/reserves (run by governments).

Why were Indigenous children sent to both types of institutions?

Across Australia, from colonisation until the 1970s governments removed Aboriginal children from their families. From the 1950s onwards many followed 'assimilation' policies to separate children from their Indigenous families and raise them to become white Australians.

- Some Indigenous children were removed under Aboriginal protection and welfare laws and sent to segregated Indigenous institutions.
- Indigenous children with lighter skin were separated and adopted, fostered or institutionalised under 'mainstream' child welfare legislation and sent to 'mainstream' institutions.
- Many children were passed between these two systems and spent time in both types of institutions.

During the 1970s Aboriginal protection and welfare legislation began to be repealed and the majority of segregated institutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were closed down. However some continued to operate until the 1980s-1990s. Indigenous children continued to be adopted, fostered or institutionalised under 'mainstream' child welfare law.

The key point for family history research is that there were separate bureaucracies (different government departments) 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 publication of the Bringing Them Home Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families (April 1997) Australian governments have created special teams to assist people to apply for 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 members of the 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 the report of the Senate inquiry into children in institutional care was published. This report was titled, *Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*.

The Find & Connect web resource – www.findandconnect.gov.au was developed to provide information about children's homes across Australia, including homes for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children.

The site provides short histories of each institution and information about what types of records have survived about the children who lived there, where the records are held and how to apply for access to them. Find & Connect was set up to help people who were in out-of-home 'care' as children to learn more about their histories and to locate and access their personal records. On this site you can:

- find historical information about government and non-government institutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- trace the history of institutions that started missions and were taken over by governments and later came under Aboriginal community control
- trace the name changes of institutions over time
- search for information about institutions in different ways – who ran them, where they were located, when they opened and closed

- read information about and view images of children's homes
- get help to find records about your childhood in 'care'
- view an interactive timeline of child welfare in Australia and find brief histories of child welfare in each state and territory
- find information about accessing records and freedom of information/privacy legislation in each jurisdiction
- connect with support services in your state/territory.

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

To locate 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.

<https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/browse/>

For more information about the records and accessing them, see Find & Connect – Information about records. <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/information-about-records/>

For help with searching the Find & Connect website download the Induction Pack

<https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/resources/find-connect-web-resource-induction-pack/>



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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 include births, deaths, funerals, marriages, obituaries, inquests, court cases, social events, church activities, school exam results, 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 its website, Trove . Over 218 million newspaper articles are available and the number is growing all the time

You can search digitised newspapers on Trove using keywords like your ancestor's name and the place they lived. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>

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). To search for a full name "John Smith", put the name in quotation marks. To add and place, write AND Dubbo.

- 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 distressing personal details about your ancestors and their lives.

Read more about using digitised newspapers in Trove in the [Trove Help Centre](#).

- Using Trove: Digitised newspapers - <http://help.nla.gov.au/trove/using-trove/digitised-newspapers>
- Using Trove: Searching in newspapers - <http://help.nla.gov.au/trove/using-trove/digitised-newspapers/searching-in-newspapers>
- Trove tips for family historians - <https://www.nla.gov.au/blogs/trove/2014/08/25/trove-tips-for-family-historians>

The National Library is continually adding more digitised newspapers to Trove, but not all historical newspapers are available yet. The latest year for the majority of newspapers is 1954 due to copyright restrictions. A very small number of newspapers are digitised beyond that date including *The Canberra Times*. An alphabetical list of newspaper titles by state and territory is available here: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/about>. 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/or event to look for.

Some newspaper indexes are available, but they may not 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 a local public library, historical society or

museum. For information about newspapers in State and Territory Libraries, use the following search phrases or links:

- National Library of Australia: Newspapers <https://www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/newspapers>
- State Library of New South Wales: Newspapers <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/research-and-collections-using-library/newspapers>
- State Library of Victoria: How to find newspapers <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/newspapers>
- State Library of Queensland: Newspapers <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/newspapers>
- State Library of South Australia: Newspapers and guide to SA newspapers <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/newspapers>
- State Library of Western Australia: WA newspapers <http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/wa-heritage/wa-newspapers>
- LINC Tasmania: Tasmanian newspapers <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/Pages/newspapers.aspx>
- Northern Territory Library: Territory Stories: Newspaper NT <http://www.territorystories.nt.gov.au/handle/10070/190886#>
- ACT Heritage Library: Newspaper holdings https://www.library.act.gov.au/find/history/search/local_and_regional_newspapers

Aboriginal newspapers

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

- The Australian Abo Call, published by the Aborigines Progressive Association in 1938 - <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/title/51>. Click on this link to go to the Trove catalogue entry for this paper. Links to the digitised issues are on the right of the screen
- Dawn and New Dawn, published by the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board from 1952 to 1975 (AIATSIS) <http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/dawn-and-new-dawn>
- Koori Mail, digitised copies are available for issues published from 1991 to 2011 (AIATSIS). <http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/koori-mail>
- The Australian Indigenous Index known as InfoKoori is accessible via the State Library of NSW website. It is an index to the *Koori Mail* and to biographical information from various magazines including: *Our Aim* (1907–1961), *Dawn* (1952–1969), *New Dawn* (1970–1975) and *Identity* (1971–

1982). <http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au:1084/search/> AIATSIS holds an extensive collection of other Aboriginal newsletters and newspapers. Some were published over many years, some only lasted a short time.



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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 and other 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. The records also include 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 can sometimes include the language groups and/or traditional names of people, where a family member was born or lived as well as other brief notes about them. Charts are numbered and are referenced with the date and place where the information was gathered. Charts indicates if the families of connected individuals are mapped out in more detail on a related chart

WARNING: Tindale, like many anthropologists/scientists from the 1920s and 30s was very interested in 'caste', the 'admixture of Aboriginal and European blood', and therefore his notes may 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 Tindale collection, which includes the genealogies, is held in the South Australian Museum Archives. Various state and community organisations also have copies of the genealogies relevant to their region. To apply for family history information that may be held by the SA Museum, you can fill in a Family History Application Form, available online or from the Museum Archives. <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/collections/collection-services-fees>

All of Australia

The **South Australian Museum** is the custodian of the complete Tindale collection as well as other records related to families and communities all around Australia. You will need to contact the Family and Community History Consultant to access and view the material. For more information about the Tindale collection explore the South Australian Museum website or search the following terms and links.

- Overview of the Tindale collection - <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/collections/information-resources/archives/tindale-dr-norman-barnett-aa-338>
- Online gallery of examples from the Tindale collection - <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/gallery/aacg/speakingland.htm>
- Detailed finding aid to the Tindale collection - <http://archives.samuseum.sa.gov.au/aa338/>
- Contact details for the SA Museum Family and Community History Consultant - <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/about/staff/mr-ali-abdullah-highfold>

You can also search the entire Museum Archives collection via ArchivesSearch - <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/collections/information-resources/archives-search>

Tindale Genealogies and photographs in other repositories

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, Cumeragunga, Kempsey, Menindee, Pilliga, Walgett, Wallaga Lake and Woodenbong. Check the Index to the NSW Tindale Genealogies on the State Library website before making an appointment with one of the library's Indigenous services librarians. http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/findingaid/2009/D02036/Index_to_Tindale_Genealogies.pdf

Muda Aboriginal Corporation holds copies of genealogies for Brewarrina only.
Ph: (02) 6872 1869 or Email muda@muda.com.au

Dhiyaan Indigenous Centre in Moree holds copies of genealogies for all of New South Wales (Cnr Balo & Albert Streets, Moree NSW 2400, Ph: (02) 6752 1346).

<http://www.moreetourism.com.au/things-to-do/educational-centres.html>

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 Norman Tindale Collection Alphabetical Index on the State Library website

http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/177788/Tindale_Index_2ndEd.pdf

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

<https://www.townsville.qld.gov.au/facilities-and-recreation/libraries/search/indigenous-community>

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. <http://www.utas.edu.au/riawunna>

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 Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries** holds copies of the Tindale genealogies, photographs and journals, as well as other anthropological records relating to Aboriginal people in Western Australia. Search for the term Aboriginal History Research Unit to find their website or use the following link:

<https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/achwa/Pages/AHRU.aspx>.

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, Gnowangerup, Gogo, Gordon Downs, Inverway, Jigalong, Laverton, Leopold, Liveringa, Margaret River, Meda, Moola Boola, Moore River, Mount Barker, Noonkanbah, Norseman, Quanbun, Southern Cross, Sturt Creek, Wiluna and Wotjulum.



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Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

Sources – military service records

Indigenous people have served in every military conflict in which Australia has been involved 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 content of service records and the amount of detail 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 might also be 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

However, you can still search with just a name and the conflict in which your family member served. In fact sometimes, researchers use a military record to find a person's date and place of birth.

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 about 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.

<http://www.defence.gov.au/records/>

You may also find military records on family history websites like Ancestry and Find My Past but generally all of these can be accessed directly 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 - <http://guides.naa.gov.au/tracking-family/chapter6/>
- Service records – learn more about military service records - <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/index.aspx>
- Discovering Anzacs – search this website for records about your service person (World War I and the Boer War) - <https://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/>
- RecordSearch – search the National Archives collection database for records about your service person (all conflicts) - <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/search/>

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 <https://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people>
- of known Indigenous service persons - <https://www.awm.gov.au/indigenous-service>
- Indigenous service - <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>
- Researching a person– learn more about how to research your family member's military service. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/understanding-the-memorials-collection/researching-a-person>

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. Some war diaries and other records are digitised and available online on the

War Memorial website - <https://www.awm.gov.au/learn/understanding-military-history/unit-diaries>

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 servicemen (Australian War Memorial) – an overview of the history of Indigenous service - <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>

' Indigenous Australians at War (Department of Veterans' Affairs) - <https://www.dva.gov.au/i-am/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander/indigenous-australians-war>

Mura® catalogue (AIATSIS) – search for 'WW1', 'WW2', 'Vietnam' or other conflicts for material on Indigenous service persons http://catalogue.aiatsis.gov.au/client/en_AU/external

Cemeteries (Department of Veterans Affairs) – information about locating the burial place of a service person - <https://www.dva.gov.au/commemorations-memorials-and-war-graves/cemeteries>

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
<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/index.html>

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
<http://nominal-rolls.dva.gov.au/>

Researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander WWI soldiers from Queensland communities – guide produced by State Library of Queensland -
http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/269609/Guide-for-IKCs-Indigenous-Soldiers-Jan2018.pdf

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
<http://www.ntlexhibit.nt.gov.au/exhibits/show/bod/roh>

Register of Aboriginal Veterans of South Australia – nearly 500 names of Aboriginal veterans in SA - <http://www.reconciliationsa.org.au/learn/ravsa>

Military records on CoraWeb – a website with links for family history research
<http://coraweb.com.au/categories/military-records>

Books

The following books relate to 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)

Ngarrindjeri Anzacs by Doreen Kartinyeri ((Adelaide, South Australian Museum and Raukkan Council, 1996)



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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 under 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 are varied. 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 organisation which was responsible for the mission or sometimes in state archives. Some records have been deposited in state libraries, the National Library of Australia and in the AIATSIS collections. The AIATSIS subject guide: [How to find mission and reserve records](#) has a comprehensive list of AIATSIS holdings on missions and reserves.

Mission records are further complicated by the fact that records relating to one mission may be split between church bodies and government bodies. In addition, some former mission organisations, like the United Aborigines Mission, do not officially exist anymore, so their records are held privately and not by a major church organisation.

Find & Connect

The [Find & Connect](#) web resource www.findandconnect.gov.au includes a lot of information about missions where Aboriginal children lived, frequently separated from their families in dormitory accommodation. 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](https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/look-for-homes/) page. <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/look-for-homes/>

Search AIATSIS or National Library

Various researchers and writers have worked on the history of Aboriginal missions and reserves. This means that you might be able to read about 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. Be aware that some of the earlier commemorative type histories were written by missionaries themselves or by people connected with the mission so can be biased towards the missionary point of view rather than the experiences of Aboriginal people on the mission.

Search the [AIATSIS Mura catalogue](http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/using-collection/search-collection) <http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/using-collection/search-collection> or [Trove](https://trove.nla.gov.au/) <https://trove.nla.gov.au/> 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 can be within state government departments of Aboriginal affairs or based within state archives and they specialise in locating personal records.

New South Wales Aboriginal Family Records Service

Free call: 1800 019 998

Email: familyhistory@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

Web: <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/healing-and-reparations/family-records-service>

Northern Territory Archives Service

Darwin

Northern Territory Archives Centre, Kelsey Crescent, Millner NT 0810

GPO Box 1347, Nightcliff NT 0814

Phone - general enquiries: (08) 8924 7677

Phone - reference enquiries: (08) 8999 6890

Fax: (08) 8924 7660

Email: ntac@nt.gov.au

Alice Springs

Northern Territory Archives Service, Mineral House, 58 Hartley Street, Alice Springs NT 0870

PO Box 8225, Alice Springs, NT 0871

Ph: (08) 8951 5669

Web: <https://dts.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service> (Northern Territory Archives Service)

<https://dts.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/informaton-for-researchers/aboriginal-family-research> (Aboriginal family history research)

<https://dts.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/informaton-for-researchers/aboriginal-family-research> (Fact sheet on Researching your Aboriginal family history)

Mission Records held at the NT Archives Service - <https://dts.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets>

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

Community and Personal Histories Team

Level 9, 1 William Street

Brisbane, Queensland

Phone 1800 650 230 (toll-free within Australia) or 07 3003 6466

Email: enquiries@datsip.qld.gov.au

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

Web: <https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/family-personal-history>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Histories - <https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/community-histories>

State Records of South Australia – Aboriginal Access team

State Records Research Centre

115 Cavan Road

Gepps Cross SA 5094

Tel (+61 8) 8343 6800 GPO Box 464, Adelaide SA 5001

Ph: 08 8343 6800

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

Email: StateRecords@sa.gov.au

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

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

<https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/finding-aboriginal-history> (Finding your Aboriginal history)

LINC Tasmania

2nd Floor, 91 Murray Street, Hobart TAS 7000

Ph: 03 6165 5597

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)

Public Record Office Victoria – Koorie Records Unit

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

PO Box 2100, North Melbourne VIC 3051

Ph: 03 9348 5600

Fax: 03 9348 5656

Online form: prov.altarama.com/ref100.aspx

Web: <https://prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/koorie-services>

Aboriginal Victorians Family History guide - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/aboriginal-victorians-1830s-1970s/aboriginal-victorians-family>

Aboriginal History Research Unit – Department of Local Government, Sport and cultural Industries, Western Australia

The 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 applicant 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.

140 William Street, 2nd floor Reception, Perth 6000
PO Box 3153, East Perth WA 6892
Free call: 1300 651 077
Ph: 08 6551 8004
Fax: 08 6551 8088
Web: <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/achwa/Pages/AHRU.aspx>

Family History Application form -
https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/achwa/Documents/Family_History_Application-Consent_Form.pdf

Missions and reserves by state and territory

The 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.

More information

- State Records NSW holds various records relating to reserves. See [State archives relating to Aboriginal people](https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-resources-guide-nsw-state-archives).
<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-resources-guide-nsw-state-archives>

- Also see [Living on Aboriginal reserves and stations](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/chresearch/ReserveStation.htm), a NSW Government Environment & Heritage website.
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/chresearch/ReserveStation.htm>

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.

More information

- The [Mission voices](https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/aboriginal-culture/missions/mission-voices/mission-voices-new/) web site which has now been archived, contains background information, stories, timelines and maps on Victorian missions and reserves. <https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/aboriginal-culture/missions/mission-voices/mission-voices-new/>

Queensland – selected missions and reserves

Below is a list of 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](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/community-history/missions). <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/community-history/missions>

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 \(pdf, 385kb\)](https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/SupportingIndividualsAndFamilies/Documents/LookingWest.pdf).
<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/SupportingIndividualsAndFamilies/Documents/LookingWest.pdf>

Also see their webpage about [Aboriginal records](#).

<http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/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](#).
<http://signposts.cpfs.wa.gov.au/>

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](http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal_Missions).
http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal_Missions

Tasmania

- There were no church–run Aboriginal missions in Tasmania – see [Aboriginal missions](http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/A/Aboriginal%20missions.htm) in the *Companion to Tasmanian History* for more information.
http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/A/Aboriginal%20missions.htm
- 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 (see Channel Island)		
Borrooloola	AIM	1951–today
Buckingham Bay (see Elcho Island)		
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 (see Elcho Island)		

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 their guide to mission held in the NT Archives. These include the personal records of missionaries and government workers.

<https://dta.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets>

- 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*.

<http://guides.naa.gov.au/records-about-northern-territory/part2/chapter8/index.aspx>

Australian Capital Territory

There were no missions or reserves in the ACT



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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 (also used for the Australian 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. You can read more about the Referendum here -

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/australian-1967-referendum>

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 managed to avoid the protection and welfare system and/or were able to hide their Aboriginality to gain the same rights as any other citizens.

For these reasons, it is 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. If you have non-Aboriginal ancestry in your family, finding those people on an electoral roll might help you to locate Aboriginal ancestors.

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 or lived in the same area.



What information do you need to search for electoral rolls?

To start researching you need to know:

- the name (most importantly, the surname) of the person you are researching
- the electorate, town or general area where they lived. However you can still search for your ancestors if you don't know where they lived, it is just much more time consuming. Early Electoral Rolls listed people alphabetically for each electorate, rather than for the entire state as is the case these days, so you may need to scan through multiple electorates to find them.

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](https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/finding-electoral-rolls) <https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/finding-electoral-rolls> 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.
- Most State Libraries have electoral rolls for various states and territories. These can be printed volumes or microfiche or a combination of media.
- [Ancestry.com.au](https://www.ancestry.com.au) provides access to scanned and searchable electoral rolls mostly covering the period 1903-1980 for each state and territory except South Australia for which only a very small number of rolls are available. For a full list of the electoral rolls currently on Ancestry go to <https://search.ancestry.com.au/search/db.aspx?dbid=1207>

Current electoral roll

You can view an electronic copy of the current Commonwealth electoral roll (e-roll) at any office of the Australian Electoral Commission. See the [AEC website](https://www.aec.gov.au) for more information.

Other resources

- Voting rights and Aboriginal people (Creative Spirits)
<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/selfdetermination/voting-rights-for-aboriginal-people>
- [Indigenous Australians – electoral timeline](https://www.aec.gov.au/indigenous/milestones.htm) (Australian Electoral Commission)
<https://www.aec.gov.au/indigenous/milestones.htm>.



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Sources – police gazettes, court and gaol records

Legal records, including records created by the police, courts and 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 journals, occurrence books and charge books
- records about members of the police force
- judges' bench books and court case files
- photographs and registers of prisoners

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

Police gazettes were publications 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. Children and young people who absconded from institutions were sometimes listed in gazettes.

What information do you need to look for these records?

You may need to search using a combination of:

- 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 doing searches on [Trove Digitised Newspapers](#) first to see what you can find.

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>

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

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 https://www.ancestry.com.au/](https://www.ancestry.com.au/) and [Find My Past https://www.findmypast.com.au/](https://www.findmypast.com.au/) provide access to some police, court and gaol records, but you will find these records and more through government archives. Remember that later records may be restricted from public access. Reference Archivists can assist you with information about access.

The [Centre for Indigenous Family History](#) also includes many police records, the majority of which are held in State/Territory Archives. Remember you will need to type the phrase “site:cifhs” into Google along with the name you are searching for in “quotation marks”.

These websites are useful for checking but because they only have a selection of records, for more in-depth research you should visit or send a research query to your state/territory archives. Reference archivists will be able to help you to identify records that might be useful in your research.

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 - <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-resources-guide-nsw-state-archives>
- Index to Aboriginal colonial court cases, 1788–1838
<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/indigenous-colonial-court-cases>
- [Police service records](#) – has information on records about Aboriginal trackers who worked with the police
<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/police-service-guide>

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:

- Researching your Aboriginal Family History from Northern Territory Archives Service - - <https://dta.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets>
- Information about the Northern Territory Archives Services in the National Archives of Australia's: *Tracking Family*: a guide to Aboriginal records relating to the Northern Territory - <http://guides.naa.gov.au/tracking-family/chapter5/5.17.aspx>

Queensland

See these resources from Queensland State Archives:

- Records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/atsi> and <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa/resource/3a08df52-1b0e-4bbd-957a-c948a0712612>
- Police gazettes - <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa/resource/d9a557b5-7286-4064-b067-c79d6520f064>
- Court records - <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/courts> and <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa/resource/98e44d9d-483f-4321-a187-20a985f52a17>
- Murder files - <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa/resource/363d1757-83c9-4904-aef6-84a40b853f44>
- Complete list of [Brief guides](#) from Queensland State Archives <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa>

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

<https://www.police.qld.gov.au/aboutUs/facilities/museum/default.htm>

South Australia

See these resources from State Records of South Australia:

- Finding your Aboriginal history - <https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/finding-aboriginal-history>
- Courts - <https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/courts-0>
- Gaols - <https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/gaols>

You may also find information at the South Australia Police Historical Society.
<http://www.sapolicehistory.org/>

Tasmania

See these resources from LINC Tasmania:

- Tasmanian court records - <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/Court.aspx>
- Tasmanian prison records - <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/Prison.aspx>

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 - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/aboriginal-victorians-1830s-1970s>
- walata tyamateetj: A guide to government records about Aboriginal people in Victoria – includes a section on legal, police and prison records <https://prov.vic.gov.au/walata-tyamateetj-research-guide>
- Court records - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/justice-crime-and-law>
- Prison records - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/justice-crime-and-law>
- Police records - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/justice-crime-and-law/police-correspondence-records-1853-1920>

You might also find information at the Victoria Police Museum and Historical Services Unit - <http://www.policemuseum.vic.gov.au/>

Western Australia

See these resources from the State Records Office of WA:

- Aboriginal records – lists police, court and prison records relating to Aboriginal people <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/aboriginal-records>
- Court records - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/court-records>
- Police records - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/police-records>
- Prison and gaol records - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/prison-and-gaol-records>



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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 that has changed.

Probably one of the best places to search for maps or to find out a map that includes the place you are interested in is Trove: Maps - <https://trove.nla.gov.au/map>

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. Trove will help you to find many of these or you can also do searches in State/Territory library catalogues. You might also try your local library or historical society.

Maps of Aboriginal Australia

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

- AIATSIS Aboriginal Australia map <https://aiatsis.gov.au/aboriginal-studies-press/products/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>
- State Library of South Australia: Maps of Aboriginal Australia <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/MapsAboriginalAustralia>



- Western Australian Department of Planning Lands and Heritage: WA State Maps <https://www.daa.wa.gov.au/about-the-department/publications/maps/state-maps/>

Online guides to maps

National

- National Library of Australia: Australian maps for family historians - <http://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/australian-maps-for-family-historians>
- Trove: Maps - <https://trove.nla.gov.au/map>
- Noel Butlin Archives Centre: Information about map collection <http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/noel-butlin-archives-centre/finding-aids>

New South Wales

- State Library of NSW: Maps collections - <http://guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/maps>
- NSW Land Registry Services: Parish and historical maps - http://www.nswlrs.com.au/land_titles/historical_research/parish_maps

Queensland

- State Library of Queensland: Maps - <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/maps>

South Australia

- State Library of South Australia: Mapping - <http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=691>

Tasmania

- Tasmania: LINC Maps and plans - <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/guides-records/Pages/Maps-and-Plans.aspx>

Victoria

- State Library of Victoria: Maps for family history - <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/mapsforfamilyhistory>
- University of Melbourne: Map collection - https://library.unimelb.edu.au/collections/map_collection

Western Australia

- State Records Office of Western Australia: Maps online - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/maps-online>

Northern Territory

- Historic Map Index - <http://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/imfPublic/historicMapImf.jsp>



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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 can help you understand what their life was like.

Unfortunately because most pastoral properties were privately owned, survival of station records is dependent on the foresight of owners and the amount of value they placed on their records. For this reason some have been deposited in official repositories, some are kept privately, many have been lost or destroyed. It is also possible that many records are still in private family hands but not sorted or listed anywhere.

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. <https://search.findmypast.com.au/search-world-Records/australian-pastoral-directories>. This is a subscription family history site but you can visit your state or territory library or even a local library to search this site for free. State and local libraries also often hold printed 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 hold pastoral maps, land survey information and detailed records of who bought and sold properties over time. If you can't find accessible information from government land agency websites, remember most archives and libraries have good fact sheets about searching land records including pastoral lands.

Australian Capital Territory

- ACT Land Information System – <https://actlis.act.gov.au/>

New South Wales

- Land Registry Services: Historical research - http://www.nswlrs.com.au/land_titles/historical_research
- Land Registry Services: Parish and historical maps - http://www.nswlrs.com.au/land_titles/historical_research/parish_maps

Northern Territory

- NT Historic map index – includes many Pastoral station maps - <http://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/imfPublic/historicMapImf.jsp>
- Northern Territory Land Supply and Property Information - <https://nt.gov.au/property/land/find-land-records/get-land-information-online>

- Northern Territory Archives Service: Guide to archives relating to the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory - https://dta.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/267885/pastoral_guide.pdf

National Archives of Australia: Records about the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory - <http://guides.naa.gov.au/records-about-northern-territory/part1/chapter1/1.4.aspx>

Queensland

- Department of Natural Resources and Mines: Land and property - <https://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/land>
- Museum of Lands, mapping and surveying - <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/museum-of-lands>
- Queensland State Archives Lands and mining - <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/lands>

South Australia

- Housing, property and land: About historical searching <http://www.sa.gov.au/topics/planning-and-property/buying-a-home-or-property/researching-a-property/about-historical-searching>

Tasmania

- Land Tasmania - <http://dpiwve.tas.gov.au/land-tasmania>

Victoria

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning: Property and Land titles - <https://www.propertyandlandtitles.vic.gov.au/>

Western Australia

- Landgate: Historical records - <http://www.landgate.wa.gov.au/titles-and-surveys/historical-records>

Pastoral station records

Records that provide historical information about pastoral properties 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 - <http://trove.nla.gov.au> - 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 <http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/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 - <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/land-records-available-state-records>

Queensland

- Land records from the State Library of Queensland <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/land-records>
- Queensland Museum of Lands, mapping and surveying <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/museum-of-lands>
- Queensland: Queensland State Archives – Lands and Mining <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/lands>

South Australia

- Family History SA – Land, maps, place names - <http://www.familyhistorysa.org/>

Victoria

- Public Record Office of Victoria Researching Land and property - <https://www.prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/researching-land-and-property>

Tasmania

- LINC Tasmania research guides, including land titles, place names, building histories <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/guides-records/Pages/default.aspx>

Victoria

- Researching your Victorian ancestors: Land records - <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/c.php?g=245235&p=1632907>

Western Australia

- Landgate historical records - <https://www0.landgate.wa.gov.au/titles-and-surveys/historical-records>

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 holds pastoral station records) for help tracking ownership - <http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/noel-butlin-archives-centre>.

Ancestry and Find My Past provide access to certain land and property records. Remember you can use these subscription family history websites at a state or local library for free.

The genealogy website, CoraWeb, has a section on maps, place names and land records. <http://coraweb.com.au/categories/maps-places-and-land-records>



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AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

Family History Unit

Freecall: 1800 352 553

Fax: 02 6261 4287

Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

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 information and an exchange of news and views. *Dawn* and *New Dawn* used by Aboriginal people to keep in contact with each other.

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.

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?

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. The AIATSIS Library in Canberra 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) - <https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/guides-and-resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-biographical-index/search-abi>
- search INFOKOORI - <http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au:1084/search>
- browse the digital copies of *Dawn* and *New Dawn* - <https://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/dawn-and-new-dawn>

- find hard copies held by Australian libraries using Trove (National Library of Australia) as per below:

Dawn A magazine for the Aboriginal people of NSW -

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/13803668?q&versionId=23015864>

New Dawn: A magazine for the Aboriginal people of New South Wales

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/16355154?q&versionId=26618342+44989490>



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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. Some are searchable online, others are managed by archives and you will need to contact the archives to request a search of the index.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index – AIATSIS
<http://aiatsis.gov.au/research/guides-and-resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-biographical-index>
- INFOKOORI Australian Indigenous Index – State Library of New South Wales
<http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au:1084/search/>
- Bringing Them Home Name Index – National Archives of Australia
<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs175.aspx>
- Indigenous indexes – Queensland State Archives
<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/atsi>
- Index to the Chief Protector of Aborigines files 1898–1908 – State Records Office of WA - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/aboriginal-records/index-chief-protector-aborigines-files-1898-1908>
- Aboriginal Information Management System (AIMS)– State Records of SA
<https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/finding-aboriginal-history>

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. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>

Census records

Aboriginal people were counted in some early censuses of the Australian population, but were 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. It was not until the 1967 Referendum that Aboriginal people were officially included in the census.

The way in which the government defined Aboriginality varied over time. This meant that an Aboriginal person of mixed ancestry might have been counted in one census and excluded from others.

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, <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/earlycensus> including a section on censuses of Aboriginal Australians. <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/earlycensus/aboriginal>

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 as part of their 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.

A number of websites maintain lists of family history and historical societies including:

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies - www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- The Federation of Australian Historical Societies - <https://www.history.org.au/>
- 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.

Genealogical Societies

Genealogical Societies in each state and territory can be sources of information. They have good collections of genealogical books as well as many records in hard copy, on microfiche, and microfilm as well as online. Many have created online indexes and databases related to various types of records. Genealogical societies are usually staffed by experienced volunteers who can offer advice about research.

South Australia – Genealogy SA - www.genealogysa.org.au

Northern Territory – Genealogical Society of the Northern Territory – www.gsnt.org.au

Western Australia – Western Australian Genealogical Society – www.membership.wags.org.au

New South Wales – The Society of Australian Genealogists – www.sag.org.au

Victoria – Genealogical Society of Victoria – www.gsv.org.au

Family History Connections (formerly the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies) - www.familyhistoryconnections.org.au

Queensland – Genealogical Society of Queensland – www.gsq.org.au

Tasmania – Tasmanian Family History Society – www.tasfhs.org

ACT – The Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra – www.familyhistoryact.org.au

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 language group information and historical information. To find land councils in your area do a google search with 'land council' and your state territory, area or town. You can find information about Aboriginal organisations on the website of the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations website – www.oric.gov.au 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 - <http://www.archives.anu.edu.au/collections> 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. If your ancestor worked on a station or in a particular industry, it is possible you might find some information about them in these records.



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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 in the state or territory where you currently live. Even if you or your ancestors lived and were removed from family in another location, your local Link-Up will be able to assist you.

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 (not available from mobile phones)

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

Central Australia Aboriginal Congress Link-Up Service

The Congress Link-Up Service works with Aboriginal people and families living in Central Australia who were separated from their families through forced removal, fostering, adoption or institutionalisation. They assist with family history research and reunion, family tracing, graveside reunions, return to country, support before, during and after reunions and healing activities.

14 Leichhardt Terrace, Alice Springs

Ph: (08) 8959 4750

Email: congress.linkup@caac.org.au

Web: <https://www.caac.org.au/client-services/social-emotional-wellbeing-service/congress-link-up-service>

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, QLD 4101

Ph: 07 3638 0411

Cairns office

2/128 Spence Street, Cairns, QLD 4870

PO Box 298, Bungalow QLD 4870

Ph: 07 4041 7403

Link-Up South Australia – Nunkuwarnin Yunti of SA Inc.

Nunkuwarnin 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.

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

Adelaide office

182–190 Wakefield Street, Adelaide SA 5000

PO BOX 7202, Hutt Street, Adelaide, SA 5000 Ph: 08 8406 1600

Fax: 08 8232 0949

Email: nunku@nunku.org.au (for general enquiries)

Tasmania

There is no Link-Up service in Tasmania but Link-Ups in other states/territories, particularly Link-Up Victoria, will be able to assist you.

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.

48 Mary Street, Preston, VIC 3072

PO Box 191 Preston Post Office, Preston VIC 3072

Free call: 1800 OUR MOB (1800 687 662)

Ph: 03 7002 3700

Fax: 03 9484 5403

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. Case workers coordinate family research, client reunification, back to country and overall Link-Up activities. The Link-Up team works closely with Social Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) counselling services to provide a holistic support service.

Email: reception@yorgum.org.com

Web: <http://www.yorgum.org.au/services/link-up-program/>

Perth Link-Up

3 Brammal Street, East Perth WA 6722

PO Box 236 Northbridge WA 6865

Ph: (08) 9428 3700

F: (08) 9227 0514

Email: linkup@yorgum.org.au

South Hedland – Link-Up

Suite 4/ 3 Brand Street, South Hedland WA 6722

Ph: 08 9140 4029

Fax: 08 9227 0514

Kalgoorlie – Link-Up

34 Dugan Street, Kalgoorlie WA 6430

Ph: 08 9091 6359

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: admin@kimberleystolengeneration.com.au

Web: <http://www.kimberleystolengeneration.com.au/information/link-up>



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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, original manuscripts and photos. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Most 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 yourself and your ancestors held in government archives.
- **Link-Up organisations** provide services to members of the Stolen Generations and their families. These include researching family and personal records, finding family members, organising reunions and providing holistic 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 make contact

Before approaching organisations put together any information you already have about your family. Names, dates and places are good starting points for them 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. The 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, but they can offer you advice on how to begin this work yourself

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

Access Canberra is a central hub for many services including the registration of births, deaths, marriages, changes of name and recording changes of sex in the ACT. There are a number of service centres in different suburbs of Canberra but it is probably best to contact the BDM section of Access Canberra online or by phone first. 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.

GPO Box 158, Canberra City ACT 2601

Ph:13 22 81 Access Canberra

Email: bdm@act.gov.au

Web: https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/2113

ACT Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

The ACT Government undertook an extensive genealogy project with the ACT Aboriginal community during 2010-2012 to compile a comprehensive genealogical database. This project was called the Our Kin, Our Country genealogy project, The database documents more than 5000 individuals and includes a collection of some 2000 primary source records. For information about this database contact the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

Level 3, 11 Moore Street, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph: 02 6207 9784

Email: oatsia@act.gov.au

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

2012 report about the project:

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 assists people who grew up in orphanages, children's homes, institutions and foster homes. Find & Connect can help you obtain your personal records and where possible trace your history and understand why you were placed into care. The service also provides personalised counselling and support.

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

Free Call 1800 236 762.

Ph: 02 9504 6788

Email: parc@bensoc.asn.au

Web: <https://www.benevolent.org.au/services/post-adoption-services>

ACT Heritage Library

The ACT Heritage Library collects, preserves, promotes and provides access to materials that record the lives of the people of Canberra. Their collections include books, journals, newspapers, archival and manuscript records, oral histories, photographs, maps, plans and reports. These resources include materials related to the history of Aboriginal people of the ACT and to general family history.

Level 1, Woden Library, Corner Corinna and Furzer Streets, Phillip ACT 2606

GPO Box 158, Canberra City ACT 2601

Ph: 02 6207 5163

Email: act.heritage.library@act.gov.au

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. Some of these resources, such as photographs and newspapers, can be viewed online via Trove. Other material, such as some oral histories can be access via the Library website. The library has a family history collection and staff who 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 they can also provide information about 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

Researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defence force service:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/indigenous-service/researching> and

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>

Researching a person– learn more about how to research your family member's military service.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/understanding-the-memorials-collection/researching-a-person>

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

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

In order to do a name search in the documents on this website you need to type the following into google - site:www.cifhs.com – followed by the name you are searching for in quotation marks, such as “John Smith”.

General family history resources

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

The Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra Inc.

Also known as Family History ACT, the society offers assistance to people who want to trace their family history. Volunteers provide genealogy advice and run regular workshops, seminars and talks. The society has a comprehensive family history library and is a great place to start if you are new to family history research.

Cook Community Hub, 41 Templeton Street, Cook ACT 2614
PO Box 152, Jamison Centre, ACT 2614
Ph: 02 6251 7004

Contact form: https://familyhistoryact.org.au/contact_new/
Web: <https://familyhistoryact.org.au/>

Find local libraries

You can use Australian Libraries Gateway – Find a Library website - www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries - to locate libraries in your region with family history and local history collections. Under location select your state or territory 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)
<http://www.coraweb.com.au/>
- Ancestry – Help & Advice: general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry’s paid services (Australia)
<https://www.ancestry.com.au/> Remember that many libraries have subscriptions which you can use on site for free.
- Cyndi’s List: a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (Australia)
<https://www.cyndislist.com/australia/>
- FamilySearch Learning Center: articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page

Find family history and historical societies

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies
www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- The Federation of Australian Historical Societies - <https://www.history.org.au/>
- 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 provide assistance to people who want to trace their family history. Volunteers give genealogy advice, run workshops and deliver talks on different family history related subjects. The society has a family history library and manuscript collection located in Sydney which may have resources related to the ACT.

Research Centre: ‘Richmond Villa’, 120 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Ph: 02 9247 3953

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 – 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, original manuscripts and photos. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Most 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 yourself and your ancestors held in government archives.
- **Link-Up organisations** provide services to members of the Stolen Generations and their families. These include researching family and personal records, finding family members, organising reunions and providing holistic 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

Before approaching organisations put together any information you already have about your family. Names, dates and places are good starting points for them 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. The 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, but they can offer you advice on how to begin this work yourself.

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: <https://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

General Inquiries: Ph: 02 9273 1414

Indigenous Services Ph: (02) 9273 1577

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 Aboriginal Family Records Service (see below) who can search on your behalf.

161 O'Connell Street, Kingswood NSW 2747

PO Box 516, Kingswood NSW 2747

Ph: 02 9673 1788

Email: info@records.nsw.gov.au

Web: <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-people>

Aboriginal Family Records Service – Aboriginal Affairs

The Aboriginal Family Records Service helps people from New South Wales to access state government records about themselves and their ancestors. The records include those created by the former Aborigines Welfare Board (formerly known as the Aborigines Protection Board) and by the Chief Secretary relating to Aboriginal affairs. These records span the period from 1890 to 1969.

Level 3, 35 Bridge Street, Sydney, NSW 2000

GPO Box 33, Sydney NSW 2001

Free call: 1800 019 998

Email: familyhistory@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

Web: <https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/healing-and-reparations/family-records-service>

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. The cost of purchasing BDM records varies from state to state per certificate. There is a fee waiver policy that includes Stolen Generations and people affected by Forced Adoptions.

35 Regent Street, Chippendale NSW 2008

GPO Box 30, Sydney NSW 2001

Ph: 13 77 88

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

Web: <https://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/family-history-research/family-history-research-nsw.aspx> (Family history) and
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 (not available from mobile phones)

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. 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
Fax: (02) 9633 5395

Web: <http://www.relationshipsnsw.org.au/support-services/wattle-place/> (Wattle Place) Online enquiry form also available at this link
www.findandconnect.gov.au (Find & Connect web resource)

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.

Level 2, 7-11 The Avenue, Hurstville NSW 2220
Free Call 1800 236 762.
Ph: 02 9504 6788
Email: parc@bensoc.asn.au
Web: www.benevolent.org.au/services/post-adoption-services

Adoption Information Unit – Family and Community Services

The Adoption Information Unit offers assistance with accessing past adoption information in New South Wales to adoptees, birth parents, adoptive parents and other family members.

Free call: 1300 799 023
Ph: (02) 9716 3005
Email: adoption.information@facs.nsw.gov.au
Web: <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/adoption/finding-info>

National Archives of Australia (Sydney)

The National Archives of Australia holds federal government records, including many relating to Indigenous Australians (primarily from Victoria and the Northern Territory). The archives has offices and reading rooms 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 available for the public to search, but an archivist 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). World War I records have been digitised and are available online. These are an excellent source of family history information for the thousands of Indigenous military service personnel.

120 Miller Road, Chester Hill NSW 2162

Locked Bag 4, Chester Hill NSW 2162

Ph: 02 9782 4900

Fax: 02 9782 4999

Email: archives@naa.gov.au

Ask a question about records: <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/askquestion/index.aspx>

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. Some of these resources, such as photographs and newspapers, can be viewed online via Trove. Other material, such as some oral histories can be access via the Library website. 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 they can also provide information about 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

Researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defence force service:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/indigenous-service/researching> and

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>

Researching a person– learn more about how to research your family member's military service.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/understanding-the-memorials-collection/researching-a-person>

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: <http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/noel-butlin-archives-centre>

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

State Library of NSW - guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/aboriginal-australians

Indigenous communities State Records NSW

<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-people/guides>

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. One long-standing and useful site is the Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies [CIFHS]. CIFHS is a name searchable archive of a selection of mainly government documents relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The site is updated with new records continuously. Many of the documents contain offensive language.

www.cifhs.com.

In order to do a name search in documents on this website you need to type the following into google - [site:www.cifhs.com](http://www.cifhs.com) – followed by the name you are searching for in quotation marks, such as “John Smith”.

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 often put you in contact with people with a good knowledge of the local history of a town or area. 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)
<http://www.coraweb.com.au/>
- Ancestry – Help & Advice: general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia)
<https://www.ancestry.com.au/> Remember that many libraries have subscriptions which you can use on site for free.
- Cyndi's List: a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (Australia)
<https://www.cyndislist.com/australia/>
- FamilySearch Learning Center: articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page

Find family history and historical societies

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies
www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- The Federation of Australian Historical Societies - <https://www.history.org.au/>
- 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 provide assistance to people who want to trace their family history. Volunteers give genealogy advice, run workshops and deliver talks on different family history related subjects. The society has a family history library and manuscript collection in central Sydney.

Research Centre: '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, original manuscripts and photos. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Most 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.
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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. The 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, but they can offer you advice on how to begin this work yourself.

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 assist with advice and assistance with a wide range of family history resources.

4 Bennett Street, , Darwin City NT 0800

GPO Box 42, Darwin NT 0801

Free call: 1800 019 155

Ph: 08 8999 7177

Email: ntl.info@nt.gov.au or use the Ask a Librarian link <https://ntl.nt.gov.au/ask-librarian>

Web: <https://ntl.nt.gov.au/>

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 1347, Nightcliff NT 0814
Phone - general enquiries: (08) 8924 7677
Phone - reference enquiries: (08) 8999 6890

Fax: 08 8924 7660

Email: ntac@nt.gov.au

Web: <https://dtc.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service>

<https://dtc.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/informaton-for-researchers/aboriginal-family-research> (Protocol for Aboriginal family history research)

<https://dtc.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets> (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: <https://nt.gov.au/law/bdm/search-births-deaths-and-marriages-records>

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

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

PO Box 8043, Alice Springs NT 0871

Ph: 08 8951 5339

Fax: 08 89515340

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

Central Australia Aboriginal Congress Link-Up Service

The Congress Link-Up Service works with Aboriginal people and families living in Central Australia who were separated from their families through forced removal, fostering, adoption or institutionalisation. They assist with family history research and reunion, family tracing, graveside reunions, return to country, support before, during and after reunions and healing activities.

14 Leichhardt Terrace, Alice Springs

Ph: (08) 8959 4750

Email: congress.linkup@caac.org.au

Web: <https://www.caac.org.au/client-services/social-emotional-wellbeing-service/congress-link-up-service>

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

5 Shepherd Street, Darwin, 0800

Ph: 08 8923 4999

Email: rantreception@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: archives@naa.gov.au

Ask a question about records: <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/askquestion/index.aspx>

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. Some of these resources, such as photographs and newspapers, can be viewed online via Trove. Other material, such as some oral histories can be access via the Library website. 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 they can also provide information about 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

Researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defence force service:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/indigenous-service/researching> and

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>

Researching a person– learn more about how to research your family member's military service.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/understanding-the-memorials-collection/researching-a-person>

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: <http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/noel-butlin-archives-centre>

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: <https://dtc.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets>
- 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

The Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies CIFHS website is a name searchable archive of a selection of mainly government documents relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The site is updated with new records continuously. Many of the documents contain offensive language. www.cifhs.com.

In order to do a name search in documents on this website you need to type the following into google - `site:www.cifhs.com` – followed by the name you are searching for in quotation marks, such as “John Smith”.

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 often put you in contact with people with a good knowledge of the local history of a town or area. 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)
<http://www.coraweb.com.au/>
- Ancestry – Help & Advice: general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry’s paid services (Australia)
<https://www.ancestry.com.au/> Remember that many libraries have subscriptions which you can use on site for free.
- Cyndi’s List: a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (Australia)
[https://www.cyndislist.com/australia /](https://www.cyndislist.com/australia/)
- FamilySearch Learning Center: articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page

Find family history and historical societies

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



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, original manuscripts and photos. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Most 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 yourself and your ancestors held in government archives.
- **Link-Up organisations** provide services to members of the Stolen Generations and their families. These include researching family and personal records, finding family members, organising reunions and providing holistic 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 make contact

Before approaching organisations put together any information you already have about your family. Names, dates and places are good starting points for them 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. The 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, but they can offer you advice on how to begin this work yourself.

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. You can also contact 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 7666

Ask a Librarian form: <http://askslq.altarama.com/reft100.aspx?key=RefAtt>

Web: www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history (Family history)

<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/atsi> (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family history)

James Cook University Library and Information Services – 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 3037 6777
Fax: 07 3131 7764

Email: info@archives.qld.gov.au

Online form: <https://www.qld.gov.au/dsiti/qsar/request-form>

Web: <https://www.qld.gov.au/dsiti/qsar> and

<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/collection/atsi>

<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/collection/family> (Family history)

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

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 9 1 William Street, Brisbane QLD 4000
PO Box 15397, City East QLD 4002
Free call: 1800 650 230
Ph: (07) 30036466

Email: enquiries@datsip.qld.gov.au

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

Web: <https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/family-personal-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.

Level 32, 180 Ann Street, Brisbane QLD 4000

PO Box 15188, City East QLD 4002

Free call: 13 74 68

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, QLD 4101

Ph: 07 3638 0411

Cairns office

2/128 Spence Street, Cairns, QLD 4870

PO Box 298, Bungalow QLD 4870

Ph: 07 4041 7403

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 assist you to understand why you were placed into care, as well as providing counselling and other services.

Lotus Place – Brisbane

46 Cleveland Street, Stones Corner, QLD 4120

PO Box 3449, South Brisbane, QLD 4101

Free call: 1800 16 11 09

Ph: 07 3347 8500

Fax: (07) 3347 8590

Email: lotus@micahprojects.org.au

Web: www.lotusplace.org.au (Lotus Place)

www.findandconnect.gov.au (Find & Connect)

Lotus Place North Queensland

382 Sturt Street, Townsville QLD 4810

PO Box 2027 Townsville QLD 4810

Free call: 1800 16 11 09

Ph: (07) 4724 4410

Fax: (07) 4772 0011

Email: lotusnq@micahprojects.org.au

Lotus Place Central Queensland

Swan Office Building

159 Denison Street, Rockhampton QLD 4700

PO Box 586, Rockhampton QLD 4700

Free call: 1800 16 11 09

Ph/Fax: (07) 4927 7604 or

Email: lotuscq@micahprojects.org.au

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.

Office addresses: <https://www.benevolent.org.au/contact-us/office-locations>

Free call: 1800 236 762

Online Enquiry: <https://www.benevolent.org.au/contact-us/general-enquiries>

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. The index isn't available for the public to search, but an archivist will do a search for you.

16 Corporate Drive, Cannon Hill QLD 4170

PO Box 552, Cannon Hill QLD 4170

Ph: 07 3249 4200

Fax: 07 3249 4299

Email: archives@naa.gov.au

Ask a question about records: <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/askquestion/index.aspx>

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. Some of these resources, such as photographs and newspapers, can be viewed online via Trove. Other material, such as some oral histories can be access via the Library website. 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 they can also provide information about 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

Researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defence force service:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/indigenous-service/researching> and

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>

Researching a person– learn more about how to research your family member's military service.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/understanding-the-memorials-collection/researching-a-person>

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: <http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/noel-butlin-archives-centre>

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 StateArchives:
<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/collection/atsi>
- Records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Brief guide 50) Queensland State Archives - <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qa/resource/3a08df52-1b0e-4bbd-957a-c948a0712612>
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – National Archives of Australia: www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx

Websites

The Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies CIFHS website is a name searchable archive of a selection of mainly government documents relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The site is updated with new records continuously. Many of the documents contain offensive language. www.cifhs.com.

In order to do a name search in documents on this website you need to type the following into google - [site:www.cifhs.com](http://www.cifhs.com) – followed by the name you are searching for in quotation marks, such as “John Smith”.

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 often put you in contact with people who have a good knowledge of the local history of a town or area.. 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.

25 Stackpole Street, Wishart, QLD 4122

PO Box 1467, Carindale, QLD 4152

Ph: 07 3349 6072

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)
<http://www.coraweb.com.au/>
- Ancestry – Help & Advice: general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia)
<https://www.ancestry.com.au/> Remember that many libraries have subscriptions which you can use on site for free.
- Cyndi's List: a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (Australia)
<https://www.cyndislist.com/australia/>

- FamilySearch Learning Center: articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page

Find family history and historical societies

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



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.

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Before you make contact

Before approaching organisations put together any information you already have about your family. Names, dates and places are good starting points for them 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. The 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, but they can offer you advice on how to begin this work yourself

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 large collection of 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 5000
PO Box 419 , Adelaide SA 5001
Free call: 1800 182 013 (Regional South Australia only)
Ph: 08 8207 7250
Fax: 08 8207 7307
Online form: <https://askslsa.altarama.com/reft100.aspx?key=AskUs>
Email: slsainfo@sa.gov.au
Web: www.slsa.sa.gov.au
www.slsa.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=657 (Indigenous collections and services)
http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal_FH (Aboriginal family history)
http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/sb.php?subject_id=81789 (Aboriginal Australia Library guides)

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 reunite with family members from whom they were separated. The Aboriginal Access Team can help you with your research.

State Records Research Centre
115 Cavan Road, Gepps Cross SA 5094
GPO Box 464, Adelaide SA 5001
Ph: 08 8343 6800
Fax: 08 8204 8777
Online form: www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/contact-us-form

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

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. The cost of BDM records varies from state to state but is normally \$30 to \$50 per certificate.

You can access the South Australian BDM indexes on CD-ROM and in printed volumes 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 <https://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>

91 Grenfell Street, Adelaide SA 5000
GPO Box 1351, Adelaide SA 5001
Ph: 131 882
Web: <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/family-and-community/births,-deaths-and-marriages>

Link-Up South Australia Program – Nunkuwarrin Yunti of SA Inc.

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.

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

Adelaide office

182–190 Wakefield Street, Adelaide SA 5000
PO BOX 7202, Hutt Street, Adelaide, SA 5000
Ph: 08 8406 1600
Fax: 08 8232 0949
Email: nunku@nunku.org.au (for general enquiries)

Find & Connect Support Service South Australia – Elm Place

Find & Connect supports people who experienced out-of-home-care as children. This includes people who grew up in orphanages, children's homes, institutions and foster homes. Find & Connect can help with records access, counselling services, reconnecting with family as well as many other kinds of support. "Elm Place recognises that people have different experiences of their time in care and the service is respectful of people's varying needs and issues."

Ground Floor, 191 Flinders Street, Adelaide SA 5000
Free Call: Telephone: 1800 16 11 09
Ph: 08 8223 4566
Web: www.rasa.org.au/elm-place

Department for Protection

The Department for Child Protection 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 separated from their families as children under previous government policies and laws.

Department for Child Protection
31 Flinders Street
Adelaide, SA 5000
GPO Box 1072
Adelaide SA 5001
Ph: 8124 4185
Email: DCP.FOI@sa.gov.au

Web: <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/adoption/applying-adoption-information>
<https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/department/freedom-information>

South Australian Museum

The South Australian Museum's collection of Australian ethnographic material is the largest and most representative in the world. Items in the collection come 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. Staff in the museum's Aboriginal Family History Unit can help you with locating and accessing material about your family.

Aboriginal Family History Unit

South Australian Museum
North Terrace Adelaide SA 5000
GPO Box 234, Adelaide, SA 5001
Ph: 08 8207 7381
Email: archives@samuseum.sa.gov.au
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. The index isn't available for the public to search, but an archivist will do a search for you. The Adelaide Reading Room is in the State Library of South Australia building.

Corner North Terrace and Kintore Avenue, Adelaide SA 5000
PO Box 3563, Rundle Mall, SA 5000
Ph: 08 8204 8787
Email: archives@naa.gov.au
Ask a question about records: <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/askquestion/index.aspx>
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. Some of these resources, such as photographs and newspapers, can be viewed online via Trove. Other material, such as some oral histories can be accessed via the Library website. 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 they can also provide information about 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

Researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defence force service:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/indigenous-service/researching> and

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>

Researching a person– learn more about how to research your family member's military service.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/understanding-the-memorials-collection/researching-a-person>

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:
http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal_FH
- 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

The Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies CIFHS website is a name searchable archive of a selection of mainly government documents relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The site is updated with new records continuously. Many of the documents contain offensive language. www.cifhs.com.

In order to do a name search in documents on this website you need to type the following into google - [site:www.cifhs.com](http://www.cifhs.com) – followed by the name you are searching for in quotation marks, such as “John Smith”.

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. 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 South Australia with family history and local history collections. Under location select 'SA' 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

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)
<http://www.coraweb.com.au/>
- Ancestry – Help & Advice: general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia)
<https://www.ancestry.com.au/> Remember that many libraries have subscriptions which you can use on site for free.
- Cyndi's List: a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (Australia)
<https://www.cyndislist.com/australia/>
- FamilySearch Learning Center: articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page

Find family history and historical societies

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



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, original manuscripts and photos. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Most 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.
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- **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 online resources and provide training courses and workshops.

Before you make contact

Before approaching organisations put together any information you already have about your family. Names, dates and places are good starting points for them 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. The 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, but they can offer you advice on how to begin this work yourself.

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

Libraries Tasmania

Libraries Tasmania includes a network of libraries throughout Tasmania, the State Library and Archive Service and the Lily Allport Library and Museum. 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 Libraries Tasmania's reference services. Staff from the Tasmanian Information and Research Service can provide personal help with family history research.

1st Floor, 91 Murray Street, Hobart TAS 7000

Ph: 03 6165 5597

Online form: <https://sltas.altarama.com/reft100.aspx?pmi=IOGrkWKmIN>

Web: <https://libraries.tas.gov.au>

<https://libraries.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/guides-records/Pages/Aboriginal.aspx>

(Guide to Aboriginal records)

<https://libraries.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/default.aspx>

(Family History including Aboriginal ancestry)

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.

30 Gordons Hill Road, Rosny Park TAS 7018

Free call: 1300 135 513

Ph: 03 616 53457

Fax: 03 6173 0204

Email: bdm@justice.tas.gov.au

Web: <https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/bdm>

<https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/bdm/indexes> (Family History)

https://librarianstas.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en_AU/names/ (Tasmanian Name Index)

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre was developed in the early 1970s. TAC “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, aged care and children’s programs and many other health and wellbeing initiatives.

Web: <http://tacinc.com.au/>

Hobart office

198 Elizabeth Street, Hobart TAS 7001

GPO Box 569, Hobart TAS 7001

Free Call 1800 132 260 (All offices)

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 6436 4100
Fax: 03 6436 4151
Email: burnie@tacinc.com.au

Find & Connect Support Services Tasmania

The Find & Connect Support Service in Tasmania provides support to Forgotten Australians, Former Child Migrants and other Care Leavers. They assist clients to apply for records understand the reason they were placed into care, reconnect with family where possible and to access counselling and other supports.

Hobart office

20 Clare Street, New Town TAS 7008
Free call: 1800 16 11 09 or 1300 364 277

Email: enquiries@reltas.com.au
Web: <http://www.tas.relationships.org.au/services/find-and-connect>

Launceston office

6 Paterson Street, Launceston, TAS 7250
PO Box 968, TAS 7250

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. The index is not available for the public to search, but an archivist will do a search for you.

91 Murray Street, Hobart TAS 7000

GPO Box 309, Hobart TAS 7001

Ph: 03 6165 5607

Fax: 03 6233 7902

Email: archives@naa.gov.au

Ask a question about records: <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/askquestion/index.aspx>

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. Some of these resources, such as photographs and newspapers, can be viewed online via Trove. Other material, such as some oral histories can be accessed via the Library website. 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 they can also provide information about 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

Researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defence force service:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/indigenous-service/researching> and
<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>

Researching a person– learn more about how to research your family member’s military service.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/understanding-the-memorials-collection/researching-a-person>

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

- 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

Websites

The Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies CIFHS website is a name searchable archive of a selection of mainly government documents relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The site is updated with new records continuously. Many of the documents contain offensive language. www.cifhs.com.

In order to do a name search in documents on this website you need to type the following into google - `site:www.cifhs.com` – followed by the name you are searching for in quotation marks, such as “John Smith”.

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. 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 and, preservation and transcription of family history records. The Society has branches in Hobart, Burnie, Huon, Launceston and Mersey and a number of reference libraries

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)
<http://www.coraweb.com.au/>
- Ancestry – Help & Advice: general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia)
<https://www.ancestry.com.au/> Remember that many libraries have subscriptions which you can use on site for free.
- Cyndi's List: a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (Australia)
<https://www.cyndislist.com/australia/>

- FamilySearch Learning Center: articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page

Find family history and historical societies

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



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, original manuscripts and photos. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Most 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 yourself and your ancestors held in government archives.
- **Link-Up organisations** provide services to members of the Stolen Generations and their families. These include researching family and personal records, finding family members, organising reunions and providing holistic support and counselling.
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Before you make contact

Before approaching organisations put together any information you already have about your family. Names, dates and places are good starting points for them to help you with your research.

See Family history sources for more information.



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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 including genealogy books, indexes, databases, microform collections. Family history librarians are available to help you get started with your research. Many resources and guides are also available online.

328 Swanston Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Ph: 03 8664 7000

Ask a librarian: <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/interact-us/ask-librarian>

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 covering the period from the 1830s to the 1970s are held by the Public Record Office Victoria. These records were primarily created by the Aboriginal Protectorate and the Board for the Protection of Aborigines and their successors.

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 as well as 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 03 9348 5600

Fax: 03 9348 5656

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

Online form: prov.altarama.com/ref100.aspx

Web: <https://prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/koorie-services>

Aboriginal Victorians Family History guide - www.prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/aboriginal-victorians-1830s-1970s/aboriginal-victorians-family

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 4332, Melbourne VIC 3001

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

Ph: 03 9613 5103 (Koori Access Team)

Contact BDM: <https://www.bdm.vic.gov.au/contact-us>

Web: <https://www.bdm.vic.gov.au/research-and-family-history/search-your-family-history>
(Family history)

<https://www.bdm.vic.gov.au/koori-services> (Koori services)
BDMIndigenousAccess@justice.vic.gov.au (Koori Access Team)

Link-Up Victoria

Link-Up Victoria supports and assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were separated from their families, communities, culture and land under past government legislation and who were adopted, placed in foster care or in an institution. Link-Up conducts research, assists with accessing records and traces family. They also organise reunions and provide counselling for Stolen Generations.

PO Box 191 Preston Post Office, Preston VIC 3072
Free call: 1800 OUR MOB (1800 687 662)
Ph: 03 7002 3700
Fax: 03 9484 5403
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 6300
Email: familyhistory@korieheritagetrust.com
Web: <http://korieheritagetrust.com.au/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 and trace your history as well as providing counselling and other services.

Suite 1/8 Bromham Place, Richmond VIC 3121
Free call: 1800 16 11 09 or 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 Health and Human Services – Family Information Networks and Discovery

Family Information Networks and Discovery (FIND) provides access to information about past adoptions that are connected to Victoria. FIND also helps family members to make contact with each other. They also support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people affected by adoption, wardship or other family separation

50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

PO Box 588 Collins Street West Melbourne VIC 3000

Free call: 1800 130 225

Email: findduty@dhs.vic.gov.au

Web: <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-family-records>

VANISH – Victorian Adoption Network for Information and Self Help

VANISH helps people with their search for relatives from whom they have been separated from by adoption, state wardship and donor conception. They provide 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 VANISH (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. The index is not available for the public to search, but an archivist will do a search for you. 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: archives@naa.gov.au

Ask a question about records: <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/askquestion/index.aspx>

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 newspapers, photographs and oral histories that could be useful in researching your family. Some of these resources, such as photographs and newspapers, can be viewed online via Trove. Other material, such as some oral histories can be accessed via the Library website. 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 they can also provide information about 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

Researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defence force service:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/indigenous-service/researching> and

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>

Researching a person– learn more about how to research your family member's military service.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/understanding-the-memorials-collection/researching-a-person>

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: <https://prov.vic.gov.au/walata-tyamateetj-research-guide>

- Finding your mob: Researching Aboriginal family history at the Victorian Archives Centre
<https://prov.vic.gov.au/finding-your-mob>
- Finding your story: Resource manual to the records of the Stolen Generations in Victoria: <https://www.prov.vic.gov.au/koorie-services/finding-your-story>
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – National Archives of Australia: www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx

Websites

The Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies CIFHS website is a name searchable archive of a selection of mainly government documents relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The site is updated with new records continuously. Many of the documents contain offensive language. www.cifhs.com.

In order to do a name search in documents on this website you need to type the following into google - `site:www.cifhs.com` – followed by the name you are searching for in quotation marks, such as “John Smith”.

General family history organisations

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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 6/85 Queen Street, Melbourne VIC 3000

Ph: 03 9662 4455

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)
<http://www.coraweb.com.au/>
- Ancestry – Help & Advice: general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia)
<https://www.ancestry.com.au/> Remember that many libraries have subscriptions which you can use on site for free.
- Cyndi's List: a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (Australia)
<https://www.cyndislist.com/australia/>
- FamilySearch Learning Center: articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page

Find family history and historical societies

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



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, original manuscripts and photos. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Most libraries have online research guides to help you understand their collections.
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See Family history sources for more information.



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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 Battye 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: http://yourenquiryservice.slwa.wa.gov.au/reft100.aspx?key=YES_ClientWeb
www.slwa.wa.gov.au

<http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/indigenous-wa> and

<https://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/indigenous-wa/family-history>

(Indigenous family history)

<https://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/family-history> (Family history)

Storylines Project

A State Library of Western Australia project designed “to explore, identify and return Aboriginal heritage material” from Library collections. Storylines works with community to identify people, places and stories in the images and other records.

<http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/indigenous-wa/storylines>

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, James Street West Entrance, Perth WA 6000

Ph: 08 9427 3600

Fax: 08 9427 3668

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 Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries

The 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 applicant 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.

140 William Street, 2nd floor Reception, Perth 6000

PO Box 3153, East Perth WA 6892

Free call: 1300 651 077

Fax: 08 6551 8088

Email: ahru@daa.wa.gov.au

Web: <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/achwa/Pages/AHRU.aspx>

Family History Application form -

https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/achwa/Documents/Family_History_Application-Consent_Form.pdf

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.

http://www.bdm.dotag.wa.gov.au/F/family_history.aspx?uid=5846-4309-4806-6596.

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

Fax: 08 9264 1599

Web: www.bdm.dotag.wa.gov.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. Case workers coordinate family research, client reunification, back to country and overall Link-Up activities. The Link-Up Up team works closely with Social Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) counselling services to provide a holistic support service.

Email: reception@yorgum.org.com

Web: <http://www.yorgum.org.au/services/link-up-program/>

Perth Link-Up

3 Brammal Street, East Perth WA 6722

PO Box 236 Northbridge WA 6865

Ph: (08) 9428 3700

F: (08) 9227 0514

Email: linkup@yorgum.org.au

South Hedland – Link-Up

Suite 4/ 3 Brand Street, South Hedland WA 6722

Ph: 08 9140 4029

Fax: 08 9227 0514

Kalgoorlie – Link-Up

34 Dugan Street, Kalgoorlie WA 6430

Ph: 08 9091 6359

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: admin@kimberleystolengeneration.com.au

Web: <http://www.kimberleystolengeneration.com.au/information/link-up>

Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support

The Department for Communities, Child Protection and Family Support is responsible for 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 000 277 (Western Australian country callers only)

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 provides support and assistance to people who want to obtain records of your time in 'care' and to trace their family. Staff provide individual counselling and group support, and can connect you with other services and support organisations that may be able to help.

165 Great Eastern Highway, Belmont, WA 6104
Free call: 1800 16 11 09
Ph: 08 6164 0240
Email: lanterns@relationshipswa.org.au
Web: www.relationshipswa.org.au/en/services/find-and-connect

Tuart Place

Tuart Place is a resource service for people who experienced out of home care in Western Australia. Tuart Place can assist with finding records, tracing family, counselling and social activities.

24 High Street, Fremantle WA 6160
Freecall 1800 619 795
Ph: 08 6140 2380 or
Email: admin@tuartplace.org
Website: <http://www.tuartplace.org>

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. The index is not available for the public to search, but an archivist will do a search for you.

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: archives@naa.gov.au

Ask a question about records: <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/askquestion/index.aspx>

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. Some of these resources, such as photographs and newspapers, can be viewed online via Trove. Other material, such as some oral histories can be accessed via the Library website. 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 they can provide information about 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

Researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander defence force service:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/indigenous-service/researching> and

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>

Researching a person– learn more about how to research your family member's military service.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/understanding-the-memorials-collection/researching-a-person>

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: <http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/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
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – National Archives of Australia: www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx

Websites

- Storylines Project – searchable digitised collection of photographs, sound, movies and text of Indigenous people
<https://storylines.slwa.wa.gov.au/welcome>
- The Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies CIFHS website is a name searchable archive of a selection of mainly government documents relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The site is updated with new records continuously. Many of the documents contain offensive language.
www.cifhs.com. In order to do a name search in documents on this website you need to type the following into google - [site:www.cifhs.com](http://www.cifhs.com) – followed by the name you are searching for in quotation marks, such as “John Smith”.

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 who have a good knowledge of the local history of a town or area. 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

Ph: 08 9271 4311

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)
<http://www.coraweb.com.au/>
- Ancestry – Help & Advice: general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry's paid services (Australia)
<https://www.ancestry.com.au/> Remember that many libraries have subscriptions which you can use on site for free.
- Cyndi's List: a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (Australia)
<https://www.cyndislist.com/australia/>
- [FamilySearch Learning Center](#): articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)



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Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

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 search for books and other material for 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. To do this, go into Mura and then choose Family History from the list on the left hand side of the Mura Collections Catalogue Home page
- **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 name doesn't appear 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 the names of people or groups associated with places or names. See Thinking about place.



Other places to search for family histories:

- National Library catalogue
- State and Territory Library catalogues
- Catalogues of your local council library or local history collection. You may be surprised at what you might find.
- Google and Google books. In each of these you might include a family name, a place, the word 'Indigenous' or 'Aboriginal' and 'family history' in your search.

Administrative histories

The term 'administrative history' refers to histories of the government departments responsible for Aboriginal people. It also refers to historical information about the legislation enacted by governments for the 'protection' and 'welfare' of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Each state and territory developed, passed and enforced its own laws, so it is valuable to understand what happened in the states/territories that are important to your family.

Why is it useful to read administrative histories?

You will find that some of the records that may be available about your family were created because of legislation. For example, under protection legislation in most parts of Australia individuals were permitted to apply for an 'exemption' from the Act (Act meaning the legislation controlling Aboriginal people at the time). An exemption or 'dog tag' as it was often referred to, meant that an Aboriginal person wasn't treated as Aboriginal for the purpose of the Act. For example, they were permitted to move around and work in similar ways to a non-Aboriginal person. If a family member was exempted, there should be a file held by among government records with the exemption application and other related paperwork.

It is also useful to know the names of the departments that were responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and Child Protection at different times in Australia's history because you then know who might have been creating records about your family members.

Aboriginal Family History Research guides

Each state, territory and commonwealth archive holds government records related to Aboriginal protection and welfare. These archives have developed research guides to help people trying to find records about themselves or their families. Most guides include a short history of the protection/welfare regime and information about the kinds of records that were created. State and Territory Libraries also have research guides which can lead you to many different kinds of resources for Aboriginal Family History research and offer other ideas on approaches to family history. Below are some links to Research Guides in State/Territory Archives and Libraries.

New South Wales

- Research guides related to Aboriginal people - State Records of NSW
<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-people/guides>
- Aboriginal Australians family history – State Library of NSW:
<http://guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/aboriginal-australians>

Northern Territory

- Researching your Aboriginal family history – Northern Territory Archives Service:
<https://dta.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets>
- Tracking family: A guide to Aboriginal records relating to the Northern Territory – National Archives of Australia:
<http://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
- Queensland State Archives
<https://www.qld.gov.au/dsiti/qsas>
<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/collection>
- Queensland Government links for Aboriginal Family and Personal history
<https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts>

South Australia

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

Tasmania

- Records on Tasmanian Aboriginal people – LINC Tasmania:
<https://libraries.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/default.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: <https://prov.vic.gov.au/walata-tyamateetj-research-guide>
- Finding your mob: Researching Aboriginal family history at the Victorian Archives Centre <https://prov.vic.gov.au/finding-your-mob>
- Finding your story: Resource manual to the records of the Stolen Generations in Victoria: <https://www.prov.vic.gov.au/koorie-services/finding-your-story>

Western Australia

- Indigenous family history – State Library of Western Australia: <https://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/indigenous-wa/family-history/wa-indigenous-family-history-resources>
- 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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Family History Kit – Before you start – contents

- 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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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 nearly every aspect of the lives of Indigenous people was closely controlled by government: relationships and marriage, children, work, travel, wages, housing and land, and access to health care and education.

Records about the Stolen Generations and their families were kept by governments, as well as by churches, missions and other non-government agencies. Many records have been lost as the result of poor recordkeeping practices, fires, floods, and in some cases, due to deliberate destruction. Changes to the structure of government departments and within non-government organisations can also make it very difficult to trace records to assist with finding family connections.

History of Link-Up

Family tracing and reunion services are available to members of the Stolen Generations throughout Australia via the national Link-Up program.

The first Link-Up service in Australia was established in 1980 in New South Wales. This was followed by Link-Ups in Queensland and the Northern Territory. Prior to 1997 other types services also operated to assist people who had been separated from their families to reconnect.



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 Section, Dept. of Family and Community Services	1994–95

The Bringing Them Home report

From 1995 to 1997 the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) undertook a National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families. The Commission's findings were published in 1997 in the Bringing Them Home Report. <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/bringing-them-home-report-1997>

This report included 54 recommendations, a number of which related to records and family tracing. Recommendation 30a stated:

That the Council of Australian Governments ensure that Indigenous community-based family tracing and reunion services are funded in all regional centres with a significant Indigenous population and that existing Indigenous community-based services, for example health services, in smaller centres are funded to offer family tracing and reunion assistance and referral.

As a result of this recommendation the Australian Government funded a national network of family tracing and reunion services – the National Link-Up Program. Link-Ups in NSW, Queensland and the NT gained improved funding and new Link-Up Programs were established in other areas including South Australia, Central Australia and Western Australia.

Role of Link-Up

Link-Up organisations around Australia provide family tracing and reunion services to members of the Stolen Generations and their 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-Up gives 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-Up also provides 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.

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 families and to find out about their family history.

- In conjunction with Link-Ups, AIATSIS 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 may 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 or to provide documentation/information that confirms your heritage. 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

- do a search for land councils and other Indigenous organisations in your area on the website of the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations <http://www.oric.gov.au/>
- search for local Aboriginal Health Services on the Australian Indigenous HealthInfonet website here - <https://healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/key-resources/health-professionals/health-workers/map-of-aboriginal-and-islander-healthmedical-services/>
- contact an Indigenous Coordination Centre see listing here <http://www.atns.net.au/subcategory.asp?subcategoryID=112>



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Understanding the challenges

Family history research projects can be complex, time-consuming and frustrating but also rewarding. 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 differ from information found 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 is like being a detective. You look for pieces of evidence to put together your family' story. This evidence comes in the form of different types of 'records'. Records are the many sheets of paper that officials, professionals or others create about us. Think of the records a doctor or a school might keep about you or your children and the forms and documents that government agencies like Centrelink keep about you. Records may not just be written documents. They can also be photographs, maps, genealogies, oral history and many other things.

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. It can be even harder when these types of finding aids have not been developed.

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. These can be valuable starting points for researching your family and community. Native Title claims may also be a significant source for Indigenous family history researchers. Paperwork associated with these can be often be found online.



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

Unfortunately written evidence or information about family members may not exist because the records have been:

- lost with the passing of time
- destroyed because their value was not recognised, they were regarded as 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 significance 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', especially 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. However be aware that the word 'native' was also used on official certificates, such as death certificates, to indicate that a non-Indigenous person was born in Australia rather than having immigrated from England or Europe.
- They may also include 'caste' terms like 'full blood', 'half-caste', 'quarter-caste', 'quadroon', 'octaroon' – derogatory categories used to indicate the 'amount' of Aboriginal heritage a person had 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 Aboriginal people were sometimes given their employer's surname.
- Some surnames were derived from the names of rural properties or places 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.

- Names differ on documents because they were being recorded by different people. The spelling of names on early official documents such as birth, death and marriage certificates can vary depending on who was giving the information, who was writing the information down, and how neatly or accurately they recorded the names.

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

Name variants

Al, Alen, Alan, Allan
Anne, Hannah,
Herbert
Bevely, Bev
William, Billy, Will
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, Jas
Jeff, Jefferey, Geoffrey, Geoff
Jessica Jessy, Jes
Joe, Jo, Joey
Joy
Judy
Cathy, Kate, Kay
Kathline, Kath
Leslie, Les
Lyn

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

Maggie, Meg, Peg, Molly, Daisy
Marjory, Marj
Maisie
Tilly, Mattie, Matie, Tilda, Mathilda
Mick, Micky
Agnes, Nance
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 will need to know this to request birth, death and marriage certificates.. 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 ceremonies. Members of the Stolen Generations who were removed from their families as children were institutionalised, fostered and adopted far from their homes. For example, many children from the Northern Territory were sent to southern states.



If members of 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, or were forced to move around. You can use a printed map or one that's online, like Google Maps. Local libraries often have historical maps, including maps of stations and properties. You can also find many maps through searching on the Maps section of [Trove](http://trove.nla.gov.au), a website created by the National Library of Australia. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/map>

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. Sometimes Area School libraries have local history information as well as local school records which can help place family members in an area at a certain time.

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, or a piece of land they occupied or owned. You might be able to 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. However many people 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 because it means that

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

This is frustrating if the reason you want to do research on this person is to prove your relationship to them. This is a very common problem faced by members of the Stolen Generations and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people trying to find out about family members from whom they were separated.

What information do you need?

Our experience at the Family History Unit is that people may already have one or more family names, the names of some places where the people they are researching 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 by searching historical indexes of births, deaths and marriages [BDM]. There is more information about where to find BDM resources in the fact sheet: Sources-birth-death-marriage-records



- 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, it will give you a great starting point. If you don't, it suggests that your ancestor's birth, marriage or death was never registered. It might also mean that they used a different name, or the name was misspelled, or the records were lost or destroyed.
 - Do name and place searches in the following indexes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:
- AIATSIS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI)
<http://aiatsis.gov.au/research/guides-and-resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-biographical-index/search-abi>
- AIATSIS Mura® catalogue <https://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/using-collection/search-collection>
- Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies (CIFHS) – this website draws together information from publicly available records held in the National Archives and various state archives throughout Australia. <http://www.cifhs.com/> You can do searches on this site by typing the phrase – site:cifhs and then your search terms, such as site:cfhs “angelina”
 - If you think there is a chance that one of the people you are researching might have done military service, search the National Archives of Australia RecordSearch database. For tips on how to do this go to <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/researching-war-service.aspx> For more information check out: Sources-military-service-records.
 - Explore Indigenous family history resources available for each state and territory (see Where to get help). These guides will give you many ideas and resources.
 - There are also other places to try. These are introduced in different sections of this Kit.

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 part of your 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. Some of these teams sit within government departments and some work out of State Archives. 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 like).

- The two AIATSIS search engines available on the AIATSIS website -ABI and Mura - will give you a list of material held in the AIATSIS collections about that place. Try and locate life stories of people in a certain place or the history of a family or mission in the area. 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. If you are fortunate, people in your family might be mentioned in the book.
- A CIFHS search on place will enable you to see if any people are recorded at that place in the CIFHS collection. Remember you need to use the phrase “site:cifhs” and your search term in Google to conduct a search of the records on the site. 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 AND Aboriginal. (Type the word AND in capitals to get google to search for both words). 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. For example the Western Sydney Airport Environmental Impact statement has a chapter and a Technical paper on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage which includes information about the Aboriginal organisations involved in consultations. <http://westernsydneyairport.gov.au/media-resources/resources/environmental-assessment/index.aspx>
- The 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. To do so you do a Google search on the name of the language group AND Native title claim: for example Ngadjuri AND native title claim. Alternatively you can search the by typing the language group name in the “Application Name” search box on the Native Title Register. <http://www.nntt.gov.au/searchRegApps/NativeTitleRegisters/Pages/Search-Register-of-Native-Title-Claims.aspx>

Sometimes the information about a claim includes a list of claimants and their line of descent from original traditional owners. See: AIATSIS Pathways Thesaurus for information on languages and groups. <http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/>

Extend your search net to more general resources

- Search the National Library of Australia’s Trove newspaper database
- Search a genealogical database like Ancestry.com.au or FindMyPast. Both of these require paid subscriptions, but most State and Territory Libraries, local libraries, genealogical societies and and/or local family history groups allow free searching on subscription sites. You might also find information in historical Electoral Rolls which are held in State and Territory libraries.

Get help from government record agencies

If you haven’t found information that is accessible to the public in the places listed above, you can also apply for access to records that have ‘access conditions’. Restrictions mean that you won’t be able to have access to some records unless you can prove your relationship to the person the records are about. Different groups of government records are restricted for varying lengths of time. These restriction periods also differ between state, territory and commonwealth records. The best way to navigate this often confusing and frustrating situation is to contact the government departments that assist Indigenous Australians to do family history research or contact the Aboriginal Access Team or other archival reference officers in the government archive where the records are held. (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.

Depending on how long ago the records you are seeking were created, you may find that some records are already open access or might become so in a few years. For example with birth, death and marriage records, each year there is a new release of records that fall within the 30 (death), 75 (marriages), 100 (births) year limit. See Sources – birth, death and marriage records for more specific 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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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. It can help to put this 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 or dot points 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 find out about how to access divorce papers. You might ask other family members. Bear in mind that you could be asking sensitive questions that may cause distress.
- 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 may be church and/or government records.
- You will need to become familiar with the range of 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 and/or the ones that are the 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.

Reviewing your findings

It's important to step back from time to time and check how your research is 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? Are there other places you might be able to find what you want to know?

If you get stuck

- Ask for help. Record holders, librarians, archivists, historians and genealogists are very good sources for advice on types of records and how to locate them.
- Discuss what you have found and what you can't find with friends or others who are researching their own families. They might be able to give you some new ideas.
- Choose a different research direction and follow this new trail.
- Go back to your notes and follow up some of your more 'outside of the square' ideas. These may or may not lead you to more information
- Do some more background reading. Reading other people's family histories may give you some fresh ideas. Always check if any new family or community histories have been published, or any recent books or journal articles relating to 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.
- Unfortunately, you might have to accept that you'll never know the answer to a particular question.



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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 including birth, death or marriage certificates, wills, old family photos, newspaper clippings or family letters.

- 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 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 camera or a digital camera to photograph items they have. Make sure you make a note of who has what item.
- 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. If they do give you documents or items, it is good practice to write a note or receipt listing what they gave you and when. In this way they have a record of the items they gave to you if another family member asks.

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 to look for. Of course, you won't necessarily need all of the sources listed.

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. The National Archives of Australia has digitized Australian First World War service records and these are publicly available via their website. You can do a name search on their RecordSearch online catalogue.



Records can include information about 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 the activities took place. You can draw a map. Visiting a place may help memories and stories 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 family history research you are doing and why. 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. If you take notes you might miss an important piece of information or interrupt the flow of the conversation.

Oral history interviewing

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

If you would like to record an oral history interview with a family member or someone else, it is a good idea to learn how to do this properly. Oral History Australia has a branch in each state and territory and they run workshops for people who want to learn how to record interviews. You can learn about how to prepare for an interview, the types of questions you might like to ask as well as many other aspects of the craft of oral history. Oral History Australia branches can also offer advice on the best equipment to use so that your interviews will be clear and can be preserved for future generations. See <https://www.oralhistoryaustralia.org.au/>

Find out more

Further 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 <https://www.genealogybargains.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/EBOOK-Preserving-Family-Oral-History.pdf>
- Penny Taylor & AIATSIS, *Telling it like it is: A guide to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1996
- Beth M Robertson, *Oral History Handbook, Oral History Association of Australia, SA branch*, Fifth Edition 2006 – available from Oral History Australia SANT <http://oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au/publications/>

Websites

- FamilySearch – Creating oral histories
familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Creating_Oral_Histories
- Smithsonian Institution – Folklife and oral history interviewing guide
<https://folklife.si.edu/the-smithsonian-folklife-and-oral-history-interviewing-guide/smithsonian>
- Oral History Association (USA) Web guides to doing oral history
<http://www.oralhistory.org/web-guides-to-doing-oral-history/>
- Oral History in the Digital Age <http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/>



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Sources – photographs

Photographs are a valuable source for family history. Both photos held by family members 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 are not labelled so it is difficult to work out 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. This will also ensure that you have a digital copy if ever the original is lost.

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 in them, 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/or 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 black and white 'snapshot' photographs usually date from the early 20th century.



- If the photograph is a studio style photograph and the name of the photographer or a studio is 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 there are any vehicles in the photograph the style and make of them can also help in dating a 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, by travellers or by scientists, anthropologists and other researchers, 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.

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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 only be searched and printed at the AIATSIS reading room in Canberra. However if you find a photo caption via your Mura search that might relate to your research, you can contact AIATSIS to arrange for a digital copy or printed copy to be made for you.

AIATISIS has also digitised the *Dawn* and *New Dawn* magazine. This was printed by the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board from 1935 to 1965 and contains many photographs related to New South Wales Aboriginal people. All issues are available online and the magazine 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, non-government/church archives, museums and local historical societies.

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

Use search terms such as 'Aboriginal' or 'Aborigine' combined with a place name (for example, 'Aboriginal Dubbo' or Aboriginal AND Dubbo) or search using the name of a mission, reserve or station (for example, 'Ernabella'). You are less likely to find relevant photographs searching by people's names but it might be worth a try. For example a search for Aboriginal AND Wilson finds photos of people with the surname Wilson as well as Wilson as the name of a street and a river.

Offensive language

Photographs held in Libraries, museums and archives often include offensive and racist language in the captions. Historical photographs themselves may be offensive and distressing because they reveal the ways in which Aboriginal people were treated. In addition, some photographers used offensive backdrops and put people into costumes that fit current stereotypes. Sometimes people were 'paid' for posing in such photographs with valuable goods such as food or tobacco.



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Sources – birth, death and marriage records

Births, deaths and marriages [BDM] 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 within the date ranges which are open for public searching access. 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. These can be keys for your search. If you don't know all these things, just one can be a starting point.

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 often 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 people under their control. 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. Remember that there will be many people for whom there is no official or other type of birth record. This guide also provides information about what to do if this is the case.

What information will you find on BDM certificates?

BDM certificates can provide a wealth of information beyond 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, ages, 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 parent(s) • 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 many people could not read and write.
- Try to double-check information on certificates with other records such as cemetery records, headstone inscriptions or other records.
- 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 their own 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 sometimes related 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. However it also occurred for many other reasons such as the remoteness of a birth place.
- 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. Sadly many of these records have not survived because most stations were privately owned and preservation of documents relied on the individual owners.
- Sometimes you will see the word 'native' on a birth, death or marriage certificate. Be aware that this notation, especially on early records, does not refer to Aboriginality but refers to a person born in Australia rather than immigrating from England or elsewhere.
- 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.

In early times BDM registrations were recorded by District Registrars and then sent to a central register in the cities. Occasionally the records never made it to the city. If you are unable to find a record in the main BDM index, you can also try a search of the district registers for the place you believe your ancestor was born. These are usually held in State libraries.

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 included in South Australia)
- Australian Capital Territory 1930 (formerly included in 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 where they are available

You can do online name searches of historical BDMs for the states listed below. You can use google to search for different BDM websites by typing in something like 'BDM NSW'. Their webpages will provide you with other information about the Registry in that state or territory such as their contact details and how to apply for certificates.

- New South Wales (or search for 'NSW BDM')
<https://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/family-history-research/family-history-search.aspx>
- Northern Territory – no online access
- Victoria (or search for 'Victoria BDM')
<https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>
- Queensland (or search for 'Queensland BDM')
<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/births-deaths-marriages-and-divorces/family-history-research>
- Western Australia (or search for 'WA BDM')
<https://bdm.justice.wa.gov.au/apps/pioneersindex/default.aspx>
- South Australia (or search for 'SA BDM') access is via Genealogy SA online database, which also indexes Advertiser newspaper BDM notices
<https://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>
- Tasmania (or search for Tasmania BDM) best access is via the LINC website Names Index https://linc.tas.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en_AU/names/

You can also access some BDM indexes through Ancestry.com and Family Search. Many libraries and family history societies have copies of BDM indexes in printed volumes, 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. Concerns about privacy and identity theft mean that more recent BDM events are not available. These are considered 'closed'.

What historical BDMs are available (years ago by state and territory)

State	Birth	Marriage	Death
New South Wales	100 years ago	50 years ago	30 years ago
Queensland	100	75	35
Northern Territory	100	75	30
South Australia	100	75	30
Victoria	100	65	30
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/app/answers/detail/a_id/18/~/apply-for-a-birth%2C-death-or-marriage-certificate
- New South Wales: <https://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/family-history-research/family-history-research-nsw.aspx>
- Northern Territory: <https://nt.gov.au/law/bdm/search-births-deaths-and-marriages-records>
- 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: <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/family-and-community/births,-deaths-and-marriages/family-research>
- Victoria: <https://www.bdm.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation-policies-and-practices/access-to-registry-information/information-is>
- Western Australia:
http://www.bdm.dotag.wa.gov.au/C/certificate_access_policies.aspx

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 via their websites. Unfortunately certificates are costly to purchase.

To find BDM websites with addresses and contact information, remember to just do a google search like NSW BDM or Vic BDM.

Transcription services

In some states you can use a transcription service to record what is on a certificate. 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 your state.

Some states have specialised information or services to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to find and get access to BDM information. Links to information in New South

Wales, Victoria and the NT are below or you could contact the registrar and ask if they have an Indigenous staff member to help you or someone to assist with Aboriginal BDM records.

New South Wales: <http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/aboriginal>

Northern Territory: <http://guides.naa.gov.au/tracking-family/chapter5/5.19.aspx>

Victoria: <https://www.bdm.vic.gov.au/koori-services/culturally-sensitive-services>. Email bmindigenousaccess@justice.vic.gov.au

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.
- Other online indexes of birth, death and funeral records in newspapers – Genealogy SA online database (birth and death notices in the South Australian Advertiser newspaper), Ryerson Index <https://www.ryersonindex.org/> (death and funeral notices in Australian newspapers) Savill Index <http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/fh/savill/> (Advertiser funeral notices).

- 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
- School and/or hospital admission registers
- Family Bible

See CoraWeb – <http://www.coraweb.com.au/categories/birth-death-and-marriage-records> for more ideas.



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Sources – burial and cemetery records

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

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 on the mission.

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 from the place they were living just before their death. From these you may 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.
- If you find a funeral notice, the funeral director (if they are still operating) may be able to assist you with information about where the person concerned was buried or if they were cremated.

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. Try the following cemetery searching websites:
- Australian Cemeteries website - <http://www.australiancemeteries.com.au/>
- Australian Cemeteries Index - <https://www.austcemindex.com/>

You can also do a Google search for useful guides to cemetery and burial records in libraries and on other websites using the search terms or links below.

- [National Library of Australia – Australian cemetery records - https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/cemetery-records](https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/cemetery-records)
- [CoraWeb – Cemeteries http://www.coraweb.com.au/categories/cemeteries](http://www.coraweb.com.au/categories/cemeteries)

- State Library of NSW – Deaths and burials
<http://guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/c.php?g=671850&p=4729307>
- State Library of Victoria – Cemetery records
<https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/victorianancestors/cemeteries>
- State Library of Queensland – Cemetery records <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/cemetery-records>
- State Library of SA – SA deaths <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/bdm/SAdeaths> and <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/bdm/sacemeteries>
- State Library of WA – Cemeteries
http://cms.slwa.wa.gov.au/dead_reckoning/private_archives/a-f/cemeteries
- LINC Tasmania – Cemetery records <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/guides-records/Pages/cemetery.aspx>
- Genealogical Society of the NT
<http://www.gsnt.org.au/sites/default/files/Cemeteries%20of%20the%20Northern%20Territory.pdf>



AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
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Family History Unit

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Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au

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. Many experienced all of these - first removed to an institution, placed out in a foster home, or as a domestic servant/labourer, and later adopted.

The institutions included Homes for children from all backgrounds and institutions exclusively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Some were separated into dormitories on missions (run by religious groups) or stations/reserves (run by governments).

Why were Indigenous children sent to both types of institutions?

Across Australia, from colonisation until the 1970s governments removed Aboriginal children from their families. From the 1950s onwards many followed 'assimilation' policies to separate children from their Indigenous families and raise them to become white Australians.

- Some Indigenous children were removed under Aboriginal protection and welfare laws and sent to segregated Indigenous institutions.
- Indigenous children with lighter skin were separated and adopted, fostered or institutionalised under 'mainstream' child welfare legislation and sent to 'mainstream' institutions.
- Many children were passed between these two systems and spent time in both types of institutions.

During the 1970s Aboriginal protection and welfare legislation began to be repealed and the majority of segregated institutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were closed down. However some continued to operate until the 1980s-1990s. Indigenous children continued to be adopted, fostered or institutionalised under 'mainstream' child welfare law.

The key point for family history research is that there were separate bureaucracies (different government departments) 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 publication of the Bringing Them Home Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families (April 1997) Australian governments have created special teams to assist people to apply for 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 members of the 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 the report of the Senate inquiry into children in institutional care was published. This report was titled, *Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*.

The Find & Connect web resource – www.findandconnect.gov.au was developed to provide information about children's homes across Australia, including homes for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children.

The site provides short histories of each institution and information about what types of records have survived about the children who lived there, where the records are held and how to apply for access to them. Find & Connect was set up to help people who were in out-of-home 'care' as children to learn more about their histories and to locate and access their personal records.

On this site you can:

- find historical information about government and non-government institutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- trace the history of institutions that started missions and were taken over by governments and later came under Aboriginal community control
- trace the name changes of institutions over time
- search for information about institutions in different ways – who ran them, where they were located, when they opened and closed
- read information about and view images of children's homes

- get help to find records about your childhood in 'care'
- view an interactive timeline of child welfare in Australia and find brief histories of child welfare in each state and territory
- find information about accessing records and freedom of information/privacy legislation in each jurisdiction
- connect with support services in your state/territory.

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

To locate 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.

<https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/browse/>

For more information about the records and accessing them, see Find & Connect – Information about records. <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/information-about-records/>

For help with searching the Find & Connect website download the Induction Pack

<https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/resources/find-connect-web-resource-induction-pack/>



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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 include births, deaths, funerals, marriages, obituaries, inquests, court cases, social events, church activities, school exam results, 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 its website, Trove . Over 218 million newspaper articles are available and the number is growing all the time

You can search digitised newspapers on Trove using keywords like your ancestor's name and the place they lived. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>

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). To search for a full name "John Smith", put the name in quotation marks. To add and place, write AND Dubbo.

- 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 distressing personal details about your ancestors and their lives.

Read more about using digitised newspapers in Trove in the [Trove Help Centre](#).

- Using Trove: Digitised newspapers - <http://help.nla.gov.au/trove/using-trove/digitised-newspapers>
- Using Trove: Searching in newspapers - <http://help.nla.gov.au/trove/using-trove/digitised-newspapers/searching-in-newspapers>
- Trove tips for family historians - <https://www.nla.gov.au/blogs/trove/2014/08/25/trove-tips-for-family-historians>

The National Library is continually adding more digitised newspapers to Trove, but not all historical newspapers are available yet. The latest year for the majority of newspapers is 1954 due to copyright restrictions. A very small number of newspapers are digitised beyond that date including *The Canberra Times*. An alphabetical list of newspaper titles by state and territory is available here: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/about>. 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/or event to look for.

Some newspaper indexes are available, but they may not 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 a local public library, historical society or museum. For information about newspapers in State and Territory Libraries, use the following search phrases or links:

- National Library of Australia: Newspapers <https://www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/newspapers>
- State Library of New South Wales: Newspapers <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/research-and-collections-using-library/newspapers>
- State Library of Victoria: How to find newspapers <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/newspapers>
- State Library of Queensland: Newspapers <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/newspapers>
- State Library of South Australia: Newspapers and guide to SA newspapers <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/newspapers>
- State Library of Western Australia: WA newspapers <http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/wa-heritage/wa-newspapers>
- LINC Tasmania: Tasmanian newspapers <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/Pages/newspapers.aspx>
- Northern Territory Library: Territory Stories: Newspaper NT <http://www.territorystories.nt.gov.au/handle/10070/190886#>
- ACT Heritage Library: Newspaper holdings https://www.library.act.gov.au/find/history/search/local_and_regional_newspapers

Aboriginal newspapers

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

- The Australian Abo Call, published by the Aborigines Progressive Association in 1938 - <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/title/51>. Click on this link to go to the Trove catalogue entry for this paper. Links to the digitised issues are on the right of the screen
- Dawn and New Dawn, published by the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board from 1952 to 1975 (AIATSIS) <http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/dawn-and-new-dawn>
- Koori Mail, digitised copies are available for issues published from 1991 to 2011 (AIATSIS). <http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/koori-mail>
- The Australian Indigenous Index known as InfoKoori is accessible via the State Library of NSW website. It is an index to the *Koori Mail* and to biographical information from various magazines including: *Our Aim* (1907–1961), *Dawn* (1952–1969), *New Dawn* (1970–1975) and *Identity* (1971–1982). <http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au:1084/search/> AIATSIS holds an extensive collection of other Aboriginal newsletters and newspapers. Some were published over many years, some only lasted a short time.



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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 and other 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. The records also include 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 can sometimes include the language groups and/or traditional names of people, where a family member was born or lived as well as other brief notes about them. Charts are numbered and are referenced with the date and place where the information was gathered. Charts indicates if the families of connected individuals are mapped out in more detail on a related chart

WARNING: Tindale, like many anthropologists/scientists from the 1920s and 30s was very interested in 'caste', the 'admixture of Aboriginal and European blood', and therefore his notes may 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 Tindale collection, which includes the genealogies, is held in the South Australian Museum Archives. Various state and community organisations also have copies of the genealogies relevant to their region. To apply for family history information that may be held by the SA Museum, you can fill in a Family History Application Form, available online or from the Museum Archives. <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/collections/collection-services-fees>

All of Australia

The **South Australian Museum** is the custodian of the complete Tindale collection as well as other records related to families and communities all around Australia. You will need to contact the Family and Community History Consultant to access and view the material. For more information about the Tindale collection explore the South Australian Museum website or search the following terms and links.

- Overview of the Tindale collection - <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/collections/information-resources/archives/tindale-dr-norman-barnett-aa-338>
- Online gallery of examples from the Tindale collection - <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/gallery/aacg/speakingland.htm>
- Detailed finding aid to the Tindale collection - <http://archives.samuseum.sa.gov.au/aa338/>
- Contact details for the SA Museum Family and Community History Consultant - <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/about/staff/mr-ali-abdullah-highfold>

You can also search the entire Museum Archives collection via ArchivesSearch - <http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au/collections/information-resources/archives-search>

Tindale Genealogies and photographs in other repositories

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, Cumeragunga, Kempsey, Menindee, Pilliga, Walgett, Wallaga Lake and Woodenbong. Check the Index to the NSW Tindale Genealogies on the State Library website before making an appointment with one of the library's Indigenous services librarians.

http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/findingaid/2009/D02036/Index_to_Tindale_Genealogies.pdf

Muda Aboriginal Corporation holds copies of genealogies for Brewarrina only. Ph: (02) 6872 1869 or Email muda@muda.com.au

Dhiyaan Indigenous Centre in Moree holds copies of genealogies for all of New South Wales (Cnr Balo & Albert Streets, Moree NSW 2400, Ph: (02) 6752 1346).

<http://www.moreetourism.com.au/things-to-do/educational-centres.html>

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 Norman Tindale Collection Alphabetical Index on the State Library website

http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/177788/Tindale_Index_2ndEd.pdf

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

<https://www.townsville.qld.gov.au/facilities-and-recreation/libraries/search/indigenous-community>

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. <http://www.utas.edu.au/riawunna>

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 Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries** holds copies of the Tindale genealogies, photographs and journals, as well as other anthropological records relating to Aboriginal people in Western Australia. Search for the term Aboriginal History Research Unit to find their website or use the following link:

<https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/achwa/Pages/AHRU.aspx>

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, Gnowangerup, Gogo, Gordon Downs, Inverway, Jigalong, Laverton, Leopold, Liveringa, 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 in which Australia has been involved 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 content of service records and the amount of detail 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 might also be 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

However, you can still search with just a name and the conflict in which your family member served. In fact sometimes, researchers use a military record to find a person's date and place of birth.

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 about 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.

<http://www.defence.gov.au/records/>

You may also find military records on family history websites like Ancestry and Find My Past but generally all of these can be accessed directly 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 - <http://guides.naa.gov.au/tracking-family/chapter6/>
- Service records – learn more about military service records - <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/index.aspx>
- Discovering Anzacs – search this website for records about your service person (World War I and the Boer War) - <https://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/>
- RecordSearch – search the National Archives collection database for records about your service person (all conflicts) - <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/search/>

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
<https://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people>
- of known Indigenous service persons - <https://www.awm.gov.au/indigenous-service>
- Indigenous service - <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>
- Researching a person– learn more about how to research your family member's military service. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/understanding-the-memorials-collection/researching-a-person>

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. Some war diaries and other records are digitised and available online on the War Memorial website - <https://www.awm.gov.au/learn/understanding-military-history/unit-diaries>

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 servicemen (Australian War Memorial) – an overview of the history of Indigenous service - <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>

‘ Indigenous Australians at War (Department of Veterans’ Affairs) - <https://www.dva.gov.au/i-am/aboriginal-and-or-torres-strait-islander/indigenous-australians-war>

Mura® catalogue (AIATSIS) – search for 'WW1', 'WW2', 'Vietnam' or other conflicts for material on Indigenous service persons http://catalogue.aiatsis.gov.au/client/en_AU/external

Cemeteries (Department of Veterans Affairs) – information about locating the burial place of a service person - <https://www.dva.gov.au/commemorations-memorials-and-war-graves/cemeteries>

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
<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/index.html>

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 service during World War II
<http://nominal-rolls.dva.gov.au/>

Researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander WWI soldiers from Queensland communities – guide produced by State Library of Queensland -
http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/269609/Guide-for-IKCs-Indigenous-Soldiers-Jan2018.pdf

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
<http://www.ntlexhibit.nt.gov.au/exhibits/show/bod/roh>

Register of Aboriginal Veterans of South Australia – nearly 500 names of Aboriginal veterans in SA - <http://www.reconciliationsa.org.au/learn/ravsa>

Military records on CoraWeb – a website with links for family history research
<http://coraweb.com.au/categories/military-records>

Books

The following books relate to 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)

Ngarrindjeri Anzacs by Doreen Kartinyeri ((Adelaide, South Australian Museum and Raukkan Council, 1996)



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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 under 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 are varied. 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 organisation which was responsible for the mission or sometimes in state archives. Some records have been deposited in state libraries, the National Library of Australia and in the AIATSIS collections. The AIATSIS subject guide: [How to find mission and reserve records](#) has a comprehensive list of AIATSIS holdings on missions and reserves.

Mission records are further complicated by the fact that records relating to one mission may be split between church bodies and government bodies. In addition, some former mission organisations, like the United Aborigines Mission, do not officially exist anymore, so their records are held privately and not by a major church organisation.

Find & Connect

The [Find & Connect](#) web resource www.findandconnect.gov.au includes a lot of information about missions where Aboriginal children lived, frequently separated from their families in dormitory accommodation. 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. <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/look-for-homes/>

Search AIATSIS or National Library

Various researchers and writers have worked on the history of Aboriginal missions and reserves. This means that you might be able to read about 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. Be aware that some of the earlier commemorative type histories were written by missionaries themselves or by people connected with the mission so can be biased towards the missionary point of view rather than the experiences of Aboriginal people on the mission.

Search the [AIATSIS Mura catalogue](http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/using-collection/search-collection) <http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/using-collection/search-collection> or [Trove](https://trove.nla.gov.au/) <https://trove.nla.gov.au/> 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 can be within state government departments of Aboriginal affairs or based within state archives and they specialise in locating personal records.

New South Wales Aboriginal Family Records Service

Free call: 1800 019 998

Email: familyhistory@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

Web:

<https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/healing-and-reparations/family-records-service>

Northern Territory Archives Service

Darwin

Northern Territory Archives Centre, Kelsey Crescent, Millner NT 0810

GPO Box 1347, Nightcliff NT 0814

Phone - general enquiries: (08) 8924 7677

Phone - reference enquiries: (08) 8999 6890

Fax: (08) 8924 7660

Email: ntac@nt.gov.au

Alice Springs

Northern Territory Archives Service, Mineral House, 58 Hartley Street, Alice Springs NT 0870

PO Box 8225, Alice Springs, NT 0871

Ph: (08) 8951 5669

Web: <https://dta.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service> (Northern Territory Archives Service)

<https://dta.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/information-for-researchers/aboriginal-family-research> (Aboriginal family history research)

<https://dta.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/information-for-researchers/aboriginal-family-research> (Fact sheet on Researching your Aboriginal family history)

Mission Records held at the NT Archives Service - <https://dta.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets>

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

Community and Personal Histories Team

Level 9, 1 William Street

Brisbane, Queensland

Phone 1800 650 230 (toll-free within Australia) or 07 3003 6466

Email: enquiries@datsip.qld.gov.au

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

Web: <https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/family-personal-history>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Histories - <https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/community-histories>

State Records of South Australia – Aboriginal Access team

State Records Research Centre

115 Cavan Road

Gepps Cross SA 5094

Tel (+61 8) 8343 6800 GPO Box 464, Adelaide SA 5001

Ph: 08 8343 6800

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

Email: StateRecords@sa.gov.au

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

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

<https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/finding-aboriginal-history> (Finding your Aboriginal history)

LINC Tasmania

2nd Floor, 91 Murray Street, Hobart TAS 7000

Ph: 03 6165 5597

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)

Public Record Office Victoria – Koorie Records Unit

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

PO Box 2100, North Melbourne VIC 3051

Ph: 03 9348 5600

Fax: 03 9348 5656

Online form: prov.altarama.com/ref100.aspx

Web: <https://prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/koorie-services>

Aboriginal Victorians Family History guide - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/aboriginal-victorians-1830s-1970s/aboriginal-victorians-family>

Aboriginal History Research Unit – Department of Local Government, Sport and cultural Industries, Western Australia

The 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 applicant 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.

140 William Street, 2nd floor Reception, Perth 6000
PO Box 3153, East Perth WA 6892
Free call: 1300 651 077
Ph: 08 6551 8004
Fax: 08 6551 8088
Web: <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/achwa/Pages/AHRU.aspx>

Family History Application form -
https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/achwa/Documents/Family_History_Application-Consent_Form.pdf

Missions and reserves by state and territory

The 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.

More information

- State Records NSW holds various records relating to reserves. See [State archives relating to Aboriginal people](https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-resources-guide-nsw-state-archives).
<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-resources-guide-nsw-state-archives>

- Also see [Living on Aboriginal reserves and stations](#), a NSW Government Environment & Heritage website.

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/chresearch/ReserveStation.htm>

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.

More information

- The [Mission voices](#) web site which has now been archived, contains background information, stories, timelines and maps on Victorian missions and reserves. <https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/aboriginal-culture/missions/mission-voices/mission-voices-new/>

Queensland – selected missions and reserves

Below is a list of 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](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/community-history/missions). <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/community-history/missions>

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 \(pdf, 385kb\)](https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/SupportingIndividualsAndFamilies/Documents/LookingWest.pdf).
<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/SupportingIndividualsAndFamilies/Documents/LookingWest.pdf>

Also see their webpage about [Aboriginal records](#).

<http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/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](#).
<http://signposts.cfps.wa.gov.au/>

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](http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal_Missions).
http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal_Missions

Tasmania

- There were no church–run Aboriginal missions in Tasmania – see [Aboriginal missions](http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/A/Aboriginal%20missions.htm) in the *Companion to Tasmanian History* for more information.
http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/A/Aboriginal%20missions.htm
- 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 their guide to mission held in the NT Archives. These include the personal records of missionaries and government workers.

<https://dta.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets>

- 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*.

<http://guides.naa.gov.au/records-about-northern-territory/part2/chapter8/index.aspx>

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 (also used for the Australian 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. You can read more about the Referendum here -

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/australian-1967-referendum>

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 managed to avoid the protection and welfare system and/or were able to hide their Aboriginality to gain the same rights as any other citizens.

For these reasons, it is 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. If you have non-Aboriginal ancestry in your family, finding those people on an electoral roll might help you to locate Aboriginal ancestors.

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 or lived in the same area.



What information do you need to search for electoral rolls?

To start researching you need to know:

- the name (most importantly, the surname) of the person you are researching
- the electorate, town or general area where they lived. However you can still search for your ancestors if you don't know where they lived, it is just much more time consuming. Early Electoral Rolls listed people alphabetically for each electorate, rather than for the entire state as is the case these days, so you may need to scan through multiple electorates to find them.

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](https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/finding-electoral-rolls) <https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/finding-electoral-rolls> 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.
- Most State Libraries have electoral rolls for various states and territories. These can be printed volumes or microfiche or a combination of media.
- [Ancestry.com.au](https://www.ancestry.com.au) provides access to scanned and searchable electoral rolls mostly covering the period 1903-1980 for each state and territory except South Australia for which only a very small number of rolls are available. For a full list of the electoral rolls currently on Ancestry go to <https://search.ancestry.com.au/search/db.aspx?dbid=1207>

Current electoral roll

You can view an electronic copy of the current Commonwealth electoral roll (e-roll) at any office of the Australian Electoral Commission. See the [AEC website](https://www.aec.gov.au) for more information.

Other resources

- Voting rights and Aboriginal people (Creative Spirits)
<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/selfdetermination/voting-rights-for-aboriginal-people>
- [Indigenous Australians – electoral timeline](https://www.aec.gov.au/indigenous/milestones.htm) (Australian Electoral Commission)
<https://www.aec.gov.au/indigenous/milestones.htm>



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Sources – police gazettes, court and gaol records

Legal records, including records created by the police, courts and 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 journals, occurrence books and charge books
- records about members of the police force
- judges' bench books and court case files
- photographs and registers of prisoners

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

Police gazettes were publications 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. Children and young people who absconded from institutions were sometimes listed in gazettes.

What information do you need to look for these records?

You may need to search using a combination of:

- 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 doing



searches on [Trove Digitised Newspapers](https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/) first to see what you can find.

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>

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

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 https://www.ancestry.com.au/](https://www.ancestry.com.au/) and [Find My Past https://www.findmypast.com.au/](https://www.findmypast.com.au/) provide access to some police, court and gaol records, but you will find these records and more through government archives. Remember that later records may be restricted from public access. Reference Archivists can assist you with information about access.

The [Centre for Indigenous Family History](#) also includes many police records, the majority of which are held in State/Territory Archives. Remember you will need to type the phrase “site:cifhs” into Google along with the name you are searching for in “quotation marks”.

These websites are useful for checking but because they only have a selection of records, for more in-depth research you should visit or send a research query to your state/territory archives. Reference archivists will be able to help you to identify records that might be useful in your research.

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 - <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-resources-guide-nsw-state-archives>
- Index to Aboriginal colonial court cases, 1788–1838
<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/indigenous-colonial-court-cases>
- [Police service records](#) – has information on records about Aboriginal trackers who worked with the police
<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/police-service-guide>

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:

- Researching your Aboriginal Family History from Northern Territory Archives Service - - <https://dtc.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets>
- Information about the Northern Territory Archives Services in the National Archives of Australia's: *Tracking Family*: a guide to Aboriginal records relating to the Northern Territory - <http://guides.naa.gov.au/tracking-family/chapter5/5.17.aspx>

Queensland

See these resources from Queensland State Archives:

- Records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/atsi> and <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa/resource/3a08df52-1b0e-4bbd-957a-c948a0712612>
- Police gazettes - <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa/resource/d9a557b5-7286-4064-b067-c79d6520f064>
- Court records - <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/courts> and <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa/resource/98e44d9d-483f-4321-a187-20a985f52a17>
- Murder files - <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa/resource/363d1757-83c9-4904-aef6-84a40b853f44>
- Complete list of [Brief guides](#) from Queensland State Archives <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa>

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

<https://www.police.qld.gov.au/aboutUs/facilities/museum/default.htm>

South Australia

See these resources from State Records of South Australia:

- Finding your Aboriginal history - <https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/finding-aboriginal-history>
- Courts - <https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/courts-0>
- Gaols - <https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/gaols>

You may also find information at the South Australia Police Historical Society.

<http://www.sapolicehistory.org/>

Tasmania

See these resources from LINC Tasmania:

- Tasmanian court records - <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/Court.aspx>
- Tasmanian prison records - <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/Prison.aspx>

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 - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/aboriginal-victorians-1830s-1970s>
- walata tyamateetj: A guide to government records about Aboriginal people in Victoria – includes a section on legal, police and prison records <https://prov.vic.gov.au/walata-tyamateetj-research-guide>
- Court records - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/justice-crime-and-law>
- Prison records - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/justice-crime-and-law>
- Police records - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/justice-crime-and-law/police-correspondence-records-1853-1920>

You might also find information at the Victoria Police Museum and Historical Services Unit -

<http://www.policemuseum.vic.gov.au/>

Western Australia

See these resources from the State Records Office of WA:

- Aboriginal records – lists police, court and prison records relating to Aboriginal people <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/aboriginal-records>
- Court records - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/court-records>
- Police records - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/police-records>
- Prison and gaol records - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/prison-and-gaol-records>



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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 that has changed.

Probably one of the best places to search for maps or to find out a map that includes the place you are interested in is Trove: Maps - <https://trove.nla.gov.au/map>

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. Trove will help you to find many of these or you can also do searches in State/Territory library catalogues. You might also try your local library or historical society.

Maps of Aboriginal Australia

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

- AIATSIS Aboriginal Australia map <https://aiatsis.gov.au/aboriginal-studies-press/products/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>
- State Library of South Australia: Maps of Aboriginal Australia <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/MapsAboriginalAustralia>
- Western Australian Department of Planning Lands and Heritage: WA State Maps <https://www.daa.wa.gov.au/about-the-department/publications/maps/state-maps/>



Online guides to maps

National

- National Library of Australia: Australian maps for family historians - <http://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/australian-maps-for-family-historians>
- Trove: Maps - <https://trove.nla.gov.au/map>
- Noel Butlin Archives Centre: Information about map collection <http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/noel-butlin-archives-centre/finding-aids>

New South Wales

- State Library of NSW: Maps collections - <http://guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/maps>
- NSW land Registry Services: Parish and historical maps - http://www.nswlrs.com.au/land_titles/historical_research/parish_maps

Queensland

- State Library of Queensland: Maps - <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/maps>

South Australia

- State Library of South Australia: Mapping - <http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=691>

Tasmania

- Tasmania: LINC Maps and plans - <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/guides-records/Pages/Maps-and-Plans.aspx>

Victoria

- State Library of Victoria: Maps for family history - <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/mapsforfamilyhistory>
- University of Melbourne: Map collection - https://library.unimelb.edu.au/collections/map_collection

Western Australia

- State Records Office of Western Australia: Maps online - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/maps-online>

Northern Territory

- Historic Map Index - <http://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/imfPublic/historicMapImf.jsp>



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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 can help you understand what their life was like.

Unfortunately because most pastoral properties were privately owned, survival of station records is dependent on the foresight of owners and the amount of value they placed on their records. For this reason some have been deposited in official repositories, some are kept privately, many have been lost or destroyed. It is also possible that many records are still in private family hands but not sorted or listed anywhere.

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. <https://search.findmypast.com.au/search-world-Records/australian-pastoral-directories>. This is a subscription family history site but you can visit your state or territory library or even a local library to search this site for free. State and local libraries also often hold printed 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 hold pastoral maps, land survey information and detailed records of who bought and sold properties over time. If you can't find accessible information from government land agency websites, remember most archives and libraries have good fact sheets about searching land records including pastoral lands.

Australian Capital Territory

- ACT Land Information System – <https://actlis.act.gov.au/>

New South Wales

- Land Registry Services: Historical research - http://www.nswlrs.com.au/land_titles/historical_research
- Land Registry Services: Parish and historical maps - http://www.nswlrs.com.au/land_titles/historical_research/parish_maps

Northern Territory

- NT Historic map index – includes many Pastoral station maps - <http://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/imfPublic/historicMapImf.jsp>
- Northern Territory Land Supply and Property Information - <https://nt.gov.au/property/land/find-land-records/get-land-information-online>

- Northern Territory Archives Service: Guide to archives relating to the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory - https://dta.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/267885/pastoral_guide.pdf

National Archives of Australia: Records about the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory - <http://guides.naa.gov.au/records-about-northern-territory/part1/chapter1/1.4.aspx>

Queensland

- Department of Natural Resources and Mines: Land and property - <https://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/land>
- Museum of Lands, mapping and surveying - <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/museum-of-lands>
- Queensland State Archives Lands and mining - <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/lands>

South Australia

- Housing, property and land: About historical searching <http://www.sa.gov.au/topics/planning-and-property/buying-a-home-or-property/researching-a-property/about-historical-searching>

Tasmania

- Land Tasmania - <http://dpiwve.tas.gov.au/land-tasmania>

Victoria

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning: Property and Land titles - <https://www.propertyandlandtitles.vic.gov.au/>

Western Australia

- Landgate: Historical records - <http://www.landgate.wa.gov.au/titles-and-surveys/historical-records>

Pastoral station records

Records that provide historical information about pastoral properties 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 - <http://trove.nla.gov.au> - 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 <http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/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 - <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/land-records-available-state-records>

Queensland

- Land records from the State Library of Queensland <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/land-records>
- Queensland Museum of Lands, mapping and surveying <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/museum-of-lands>
- Queensland: Queensland State Archives – Lands and Mining <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/lands>

South Australia

- Family History SA – Land, maps, place names - <http://www.familyhistorysa.org/>

Victoria

- Public Record Office of Victoria Researching Land and property - <https://www.prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/researching-land-and-property>

Tasmania

- LINC Tasmania research guides, including land titles, place names, building histories <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/guides-records/Pages/default.aspx>

Victoria

- Researching your Victorian ancestors: Land records - <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/c.php?g=245235&p=1632907>

Western Australia

- Landgate historical records - <https://www0.landgate.wa.gov.au/titles-and-surveys/historical-records>

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 holds pastoral station records) for help tracking ownership - <http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/noel-butlin-archives-centre>.

Ancestry and Find My Past provide access to certain land and property records. Remember you can use these subscription family history websites at a state or local library for free.

The genealogy website, CoraWeb, has a section on maps, place names and land records. <http://coraweb.com.au/categories/maps-places-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 information and an exchange of news and views. *Dawn* and *New Dawn* used by Aboriginal people to keep in contact with each other.

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.

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?

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. The AIATSIS Library in Canberra 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) - <https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/guides-and-resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-biographical-index/search-abi>
- search INFOKOORI - <http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au:1084/search>
- browse the digital copies of *Dawn* and *New Dawn* - <https://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/dawn-and-new-dawn>

- find hard copies held by Australian libraries using Trove (National Library of Australia) as per below:

Dawn A magazine for the Aboriginal people of NSW -

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/13803668?q&versionId=23015864>

New Dawn: A magazine for the Aboriginal people of New South Wales

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/16355154?q&versionId=26618342+44989490>



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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. Some are searchable online, others are managed by archives and you will need to contact the archives to request a search of the index.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index – AIATSIS
<http://aiatsis.gov.au/research/guides-and-resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-biographical-index>
- INFOKOORI Australian Indigenous Index – State Library of New South Wales
<http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au:1084/search/>
- Bringing Them Home Name Index – National Archives of Australia
<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs175.aspx>
- Indigenous indexes – Queensland State Archives
<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/atsi>
- Index to the Chief Protector of Aborigines files 1898–1908 – State Records Office of WA - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/aboriginal-records/index-chief-protector-aborigines-files-1898-1908>
- Aboriginal Information Management System (AIMS)– State Records of SA
<https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/finding-aboriginal-history>

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 Rottne Island are listed.

You can find other biographical dictionaries through a search in Trove. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>

Census records

Aboriginal people were counted in some early censuses of the Australian population, but were 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. It was not until the 1967 Referendum that Aboriginal people were officially included in the census.

The way in which the government defined Aboriginality varied over time. This meant that an Aboriginal person of mixed ancestry might have been counted in one census and excluded from others.

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, <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/earlycensus> including a section on censuses of Aboriginal Australians. <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/earlycensus/aboriginal>

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 as part of their 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.

A number of websites maintain lists of family history and historical societies including:

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies - www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- The Federation of Australian Historical Societies - <https://www.history.org.au/>
- 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.

Genealogical Societies

Genealogical Societies in each state and territory can be sources of information. They have good collections of genealogical books as well as many records in hard copy, on microfiche, and microfilm as well as online. Many have created online indexes and databases related to various types of records. Genealogical societies are usually staffed by experienced volunteers who can offer advice about research.

South Australia – Genealogy SA - www.genealogysa.org.au

Northern Territory – Genealogical Society of the Northern Territory – www.gsnt.org.au

Western Australia – Western Australian Genealogical Society – www.membership.wags.org.au

New South Wales – The Society of Australian Genealogists – www.sag.org.au

Victoria – Genealogical Society of Victoria – www.gsv.org.au

Family History Connections (formerly the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies) - www.familyhistoryconnections.org.au

Queensland – Genealogical Society of Queensland – www.gsq.org.au

Tasmania – Tasmanian Family History Society – www.tasfhs.org

ACT – The Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra – www.familyhistoryact.org.au

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 language group information and historical information. To find land councils in your area do a google search with 'land council' and your state territory, area or town. You can find information about Aboriginal organisations on the website of the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations website – www.oric.gov.au 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 - <http://www.archives.anu.edu.au/collections> 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. If your ancestor worked on a station or in a particular industry, it is possible you might find some information about them in these records.



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Get organised

When doing family history, you'll probably need a system for keeping track of things. If you don't, you will find yourself with 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 and which ones are copies and where they all came from.
- 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 stored in folders, display books or ring binders
- electronic documents arranged in folders on your computer (e.g. Microsoft Word)
- genealogy software (e.g. Brothers Keeper, Legacy Family Tree)
- 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, emails and texts.



Taking care of original documents. Keep the originals of any old family documents and photographs separately from your research notes. These include 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 about [preserving your family collections](#) in the “How to” guides on the State Library of Queensland’s website. You can also find this kind of information on other Library and/or historical society websites.

Charts and worksheets

Charts and worksheets can help you to organise and see the results of 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 are Microsoft Word documents so you can add to them and 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 you and/or family members might have at home
- **Family member information** – a worksheet to help you gather and record information about each 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 or at least put their maiden name in brackets – Iris STACEY (nee LONG)
- 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 them. Here are some suggestions:

- 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 types of historical sources are birth, death and marriage certificates, divorce papers, wills, photographs and other pictures, oral histories, family interviews, sound recordings, books, maps, 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
- If it is a record in an archive or library and you are allowed to take a digital photo or photocopy, take one of the cover of the file or book with the title of the file or book on it, as well as the page(s) you need so you can keep them together and always have a record of where the images or copies came from
- always write down the source of your information at the time you find it, not later
- If you print something off from a web page, record the name and details of the website and the date that you found it on the internet. Websites constantly change and/or are updated so it's good to know when you found something in case it later disappears or is moved.
- print out or copy information about the source from library or archives catalogues
- 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. If you clearly reference where you found something, it makes it possible for others to find it too.



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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. However be aware that the word 'native' was also used on official certificates, such as death certificates, to indicate that a non-Indigenous person was born in Australia rather than having immigrated from England or Europe.
- They may also include 'caste' terms like 'full blood', 'half-caste', 'quarter-caste', 'quadroon', 'octaroon' – derogatory categories used to indicate the 'amount' of Aboriginal heritage a person had 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 Aboriginal people were sometimes given their employer's surname.
- Some surnames were derived from the names of rural properties or places 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.

- Names differ on documents because they were being recorded by different people. The spelling of names on early official documents such as birth, death and marriage certificates can vary depending on who was giving the information, who was writing the information down, and how neatly or accurately they recorded the names.

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

Name variants

Al, Alen, Alan, Allan
Anne, Hannah,
Herbert
Bevely, Bev
William, Billy, Will
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, Jas
Jeff, Jefferey, Geoffrey, Geoff
Jessica Jessy, Jes
Joe, Jo, Joey
Joy
Judy
Cathy, Kate, Kay
Kathline, Kath
Leslie, Les
Lyn

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

Maggie, Meg, Peg, Molly, Daisy
Marjory, Marj
Maisie
Tilly, Mattie, Matie, Tilda, Mathilda
Mick, Micky
Agnes, Nance
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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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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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 may 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 or to provide documentation/information that confirms your heritage. 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

- do a search for land councils and other Indigenous organisations in your area on the website of the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations <http://www.oric.gov.au/>
- search for local Aboriginal Health Services on the Australian Indigenous HealthInfonet website here - <https://healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/key-resources/health-professionals/health-workers/map-of-aboriginal-and-islander-healthmedical-services/>
- contact an Indigenous Coordination Centre see listing here <http://www.atns.net.au/subcategory.asp?subcategoryID=112>



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Put it all together

Once you have gathered a good amount of information about your family, you may 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 clearly referenced 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 or an ancestor chart when doing your research. Family trees are useful for sharing the outcomes of your research because they're simple and easy to understand. But while they help make sense of names and dates and places, they don't allow you enough space 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 the very least, for each event include the date, place and people involved, as well as the sources 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 they had, when and where they died and where they are buried. Or if you have gathered a lot of information about a particular part of your ancestor's life, you might like to write about it. 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 and when it happened.

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 might never find the time to finish.

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
- State Library of Victoria – Publish your family history
<https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/publishing>
- State Library of South Australia -
<http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/familyhistorygettingstarted/writingfamilyhistory>
- Australian Copyright Council – Family histories and copyright
https://www.copyright.org.au/ACC_Prod/ACC/Information_Sheets/Family_Histories_Copyright.aspx

- Family Search – Create a family history
[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Create a Family History](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Create_a_Family_History)

Some genealogical societies have special interest groups who support each other in writing family histories. For example Genealogy SA in South Australia has a group that meets once a month <https://www.genealogysa.org.au/membership-gsa/18-uncategorised/89-fh-writers-group.html>

When you have finished writing your family history, consider donating a copies to the local library and historical society where your family lived, to AIATSIS and to your state/territory library.

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

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



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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. Many experienced all of these - first removed to an institution, placed out in a foster home, or as a domestic servant/labourer, and later adopted.

The institutions included Homes for children from all backgrounds and institutions exclusively for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Some were separated into dormitories on missions (run by religious groups) or stations/reserves (run by governments).

Why were Indigenous children sent to both types of institutions?

Across Australia, from colonisation until the 1970s governments removed Aboriginal children from their families. From the 1950s onwards many followed 'assimilation' policies to separate children from their Indigenous families and raise them to become white Australians.

- Some Indigenous children were removed under Aboriginal protection and welfare laws and sent to segregated Indigenous institutions.
- Indigenous children with lighter skin were separated and adopted, fostered or institutionalised under 'mainstream' child welfare legislation and sent to 'mainstream' institutions.
- Many children were passed between these two systems and spent time in both types of institutions.

During the 1970s Aboriginal protection and welfare legislation began to be repealed and the majority of segregated institutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were closed down. However some continued to operate until the 1980s-1990s. Indigenous children continued to be adopted, fostered or institutionalised under 'mainstream' child welfare law.

The key point for family history research is that there were separate bureaucracies (different government departments) 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 publication of the Bringing Them Home Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families (April 1997) Australian governments have created special teams to assist people to apply for 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 members of the 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 the report of the Senate inquiry into children in institutional care was published. This report was titled, *Forgotten Australians: A report on Australians who experienced institutional or out-of-home care as children*.

The Find & Connect web resource – www.findandconnect.gov.au was developed to provide information about children's homes across Australia, including homes for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children.

The site provides short histories of each institution and information about what types of records have survived about the children who lived there, where the records are held and how to apply for access to them. Find & Connect was set up to help people who were in out-of-home 'care' as children to learn more about their histories and to locate and access their personal records.

On this site you can:

- find historical information about government and non-government institutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- trace the history of institutions that started missions and were taken over by governments and later came under Aboriginal community control
- trace the name changes of institutions over time
- search for information about institutions in different ways – who ran them, where they were located, when they opened and closed
- read information about and view images of children's homes

- get help to find records about your childhood in 'care'
- view an interactive timeline of child welfare in Australia and find brief histories of child welfare in each state and territory
- find information about accessing records and freedom of information/privacy legislation in each jurisdiction
- connect with support services in your state/territory.

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

To locate 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.

<https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/browse/>

For more information about the records and accessing them, see Find & Connect – Information about records. <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/information-about-records/>

For help with searching the Find & Connect website download the Induction Pack

<https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/resources/find-connect-web-resource-induction-pack/>



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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





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AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

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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 including photographs, address books, birth, death and marriage certificates.. Sit down with family members and collect all 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 you know, it's time to get information from organisations. Most of these will be government agencies – libraries, archives, records authorities, registries, although some may also be held by church and other non-government organisations. At this point 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 internet?

These days the answer is probably, yes.

It is difficult to do research without using the internet. Many of the resources that will help you to do your family history research are now 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. If you have relatives or friends who use computers regularly, you might be able to ask them to help you. Libraries and community centres often run short courses in using computers and/or searching the internet.

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. You can also print off the sections or the whole kit if you would like to.

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. It can help to put this 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 or dot points 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 find out about how to access divorce papers. You might ask other family members. Bear in mind that you could be asking sensitive questions that may cause distress.
- 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 may be church and/or government records.
- You will need to become familiar with the range of 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 and/or the ones that are the 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.

Reviewing your findings

It's important to step back from time to time and check how your research is 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? Are there other places you might be able to find what you want to know?

If you get stuck

- Ask for help. Record holders, librarians, archivists, historians and genealogists are very good sources for advice on types of records and how to locate them.
- Discuss what you have found and what you can't find with friends or others who are researching their own families. They might be able to give you some new ideas.
- Choose a different research direction and follow this new trail.
- Go back to your notes and follow up some of your more 'outside of the square' ideas. These may or may not lead you to more information
- Do some more background reading. Reading other people's family histories may give you some fresh ideas. Always check if any new family or community histories have been published, or any recent books or journal articles relating to 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.
- Unfortunately, you might have to accept that you'll never know the answer to a particular question.



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Get organised

When doing family history, you'll probably need a system for keeping track of things. If you don't, you will find yourself with 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 and which ones are copies and where they all came from.
- 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 stored in folders, display books or ring binders
- electronic documents arranged in folders on your computer (e.g. Microsoft Word)
- genealogy software (e.g. Brothers Keeper, Legacy Family Tree)
- 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, emails and texts.



Taking care of original documents. Keep the originals of any old family documents and photographs separately from your research notes. These include 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 about [preserving your family collections](#) in the “How to” guides on the State Library of Queensland’s website. You can also find this kind of information on other Library and/or historical society websites.

Charts and worksheets

Charts and worksheets can help you to organise and see the results of 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 are Microsoft Word documents so you can add to them and 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 you and/or family members might have at home
- **Family member information** – a worksheet to help you gather and record information about each 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 or at least put their maiden name in brackets – Iris STACEY (nee LONG)
- 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 them. Here are some suggestions:

- 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 types of historical sources are birth, death and marriage certificates, divorce papers, wills, photographs and other pictures, oral histories, family interviews, sound recordings, books, maps, 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
- If it is a record in an archive or library and you are allowed to take a digital photo or photocopy, take one of the cover of the file or book with the title of the file or book on it, as well as the page(s) you need so you can keep them together and always have a record of where the images or copies came from
- always write down the source of your information at the time you find it, not later
- If you print something off from a web page, record the name and details of the website and the date that you found it on the internet. Websites constantly change and/or are updated so it's good to know when you found something in case it later disappears or is moved.
- print out or copy information about the source from library or archives catalogues
- 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. If you clearly reference where you found something, it makes it possible for others to find it too.



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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 from documents you have at home. These documents might include birth, death and marriage certificates, wills, family photographs, newspaper clippings and family letters. Look especially for things that you own that have been passed down through the family. As well as documents and photographs, these could be objects such as household items, books, jewellery or even furniture. Sometimes objects have names, dates and/or places written on them which may provide you with information about family members.

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. If you find that a family member has many family stories you might ask them whether you could record an oral history interview with them.

Sensitivities about the past

Be aware that some family members might not want to talk about the past. It might bring up difficult memories or touch on sensitive issues they'd rather forget. This can be frustrating for you as a researcher, but you need 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.

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. 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. You can easily make a copy of items by taking a photo with a digital camera or smart phone. 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.

Looking at family records and talking to your relatives 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. You might never have heard about this, but once you start asking questions people will tell you many useful details.

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.

See: Sources at home checklist.



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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 search for books and other material for 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. To do this, go into Mura and then choose Family History from the list on the left hand side of the Mura Collections Catalogue Home page
- **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 name doesn't appear 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 the names of people or groups associated with places or names. See Thinking about place.



Other places to search for family histories:

- National Library catalogue
- State and Territory Library catalogues
- Catalogues of your local council library or local history collection. You may be surprised at what you might find.
- Google and Google books. In each of these you might include a family name, a place, the word 'Indigenous' or 'Aboriginal' and 'family history' in your search.

Administrative histories

The term 'administrative history' refers to histories of the government departments responsible for Aboriginal people. It also refers to historical information about the legislation enacted by governments for the 'protection' and 'welfare' of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Each state and territory developed, passed and enforced its own laws, so it is valuable to understand what happened in the states/territories that are important to your family.

Why is it useful to read administrative histories?

You will find that some of the records that may be available about your family were created because of legislation. For example, under protection legislation in most parts of Australia individuals were permitted to apply for an 'exemption' from the Act (Act meaning the legislation controlling Aboriginal people at the time). An exemption or 'dog tag' as it was often referred to, meant that an Aboriginal person wasn't treated as Aboriginal for the purpose of the Act. For example, they were permitted to move around and work in similar ways to a non-Aboriginal person. If a family member was exempted, there should be a file held by among government records with the exemption application and other related paperwork.

It is also useful to know the names of the departments that were responsible for Aboriginal Affairs and Child Protection at different times in Australia's history because you then know who might have been creating records about your family members.

Aboriginal Family History Research guides

Each state, territory and commonwealth archive holds government records related to Aboriginal protection and welfare. These archives have developed research guides to help people trying to find records about themselves or their families. Most guides include a short history of the protection/welfare regime and information about the kinds of records that were created. State and Territory Libraries also have research guides which can lead you to many different kinds of resources for Aboriginal Family History research and offer other ideas on approaches to family history. Below are some links to Research Guides in State/Territory Archives and Libraries.

New South Wales

- Research guides related to Aboriginal people - State Records of NSW
<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-people/guides>
- Aboriginal Australians family history – State Library of NSW:
<http://guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/aboriginal-australians>

Northern Territory

- Researching your Aboriginal family history – Northern Territory Archives Service:
<https://dtc.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets>
- Tracking family: A guide to Aboriginal records relating to the Northern Territory – National Archives of Australia:
<http://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
- Queensland State Archives
<https://www.qld.gov.au/dsiti/qsqa>
<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/collection>
- Queensland Government links for Aboriginal Family and Personal history
<https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts>

South Australia

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

Tasmania

- Records on Tasmanian Aboriginal people – LINC Tasmania:
<https://libraries.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/default.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:
<https://prov.vic.gov.au/walata-tyamateetj-research-guide>
- Finding your mob: Researching Aboriginal family history at the Victorian Archives Centre
<https://prov.vic.gov.au/finding-your-mob>
- Finding your story: Resource manual to the records of the Stolen Generations in Victoria: <https://www.prov.vic.gov.au/koorie-services/finding-your-story>

Western Australia

- Indigenous family history – State Library of Western Australia:
<https://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/indigenous-wa/family-history/wa-indigenous-family-history-resources>
- 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 and looking at Research Guides on library and archive websites. See Background reading

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

Birth, death and marriage [BDM] records

If you have a good look at your own birth certificate, you will find information on it which can help you apply for access to the birth, death and marriage certificates of your ancestors. If you don't have a copy of your own birth certificate, your first step would be to apply for one.

- For living relatives or certificates that are not historical you will need permission from the person, or to prove your relationship to them. For this reason you will also need your own birth certificate and identity documents.
- You could ask other family members to help you get them or if you are eligible you might be able to become a client of a service – such as Link-Up - who may be able to apply on your behalf. 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 certificate you receive will set off a new round of requests – each new certificate 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 government agencies responsible for Aboriginal 'welfare' and 'protection' in the past. See Where to get help guides for each State and Territory in this Kit.

Quick searches – name indexes

- **Aboriginal Biographical Index [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.
- **Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies [CIFHS]**. It is also worth searching the CIFHS website. You may find direct information about your ancestors and references to some government records. Some CIFHS documents include file numbers so you can track down where the original records are held. To search CIFHS, you need to type the phrase "site:cifhs" and the name you are searching in "quote marks" into Google to do a search of the documents on the CIFHS site.
- **National Archives of Australia [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 note down what you have tried so you can 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 our list of Family history sources that there is a lot to choose from and everyone will follow 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 about what pathway to follow 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. However in family history it is like doing the puzzle without the picture on the box lid to guide you. Often new information 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 useful to return to the Toolkit periodically. At the beginning the amount of information and advice in the Toolkit may be overwhelming. But as you start collecting information and planning what to do next, you may find the tools more useful.



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Put it all together

Once you have gathered a good amount of information about your family, you may 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 clearly referenced 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 or an ancestor chart when doing your research. Family trees are useful for sharing the outcomes of your research because they're simple and easy to understand. But while they help make sense of names and dates and places, they don't allow you enough space 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 the very least, for each event include the date, place and people involved, as well as the sources 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 they had, when and where they died and where they are buried. Or if you have gathered a lot of information about a particular part of your ancestor's life, you might like to write about it. 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 and when it happened.

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 might never find the time to finish.

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
- State Library of Victoria – Publish your family history
<https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/publishing>
- State Library of South Australia -
<http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/familyhistorygettingstarted/writingfamilyhistory>
- Australian Copyright Council – Family histories and copyright
https://www.copyright.org.au/ACC_Prod/ACC/Information_Sheets/Family_Histories_Copyright.aspx

- Family Search – Create a family history
[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Create a Family History](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Create_a_Family_History)

Some genealogical societies have special interest groups who support each other in writing family histories. For example Genealogy SA in South Australia has a group that meets once a month <https://www.genealogysa.org.au/membership-gsa/18-uncategorised/89-fh-writers-group.html>

When you have finished writing your family history, consider donating a copies to the local library and historical society where your family lived, to AIATSIS and to your state/territory library.

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

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



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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. However many people 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 because it means that

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

This is frustrating if the reason you want to do research on this person is to prove your relationship to them. This is a very common problem faced by members of the Stolen Generations and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people trying to find out about family members from whom they were separated.

What information do you need?

Our experience at the Family History Unit is that people may already have one or more family names, the names of some places where the people they are researching 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 by searching historical indexes of births, deaths and marriages [BDM]. There is more information about where to find BDM resources in the fact sheet: Sources-birth-death-marriage-records



- 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, it will give you a great starting point. If you don't, it suggests that your ancestor's birth, marriage or death was never registered. It might also mean that they used a different name, or the name was misspelled, or the records were lost or destroyed.
 - Do name and place searches in the following indexes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:
- AIATSIS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI)
<http://aiatsis.gov.au/research/guides-and-resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-biographical-index/search-abi>
- AIATSIS Mura® catalogue <https://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/using-collection/search-collection>
- Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies (CIFHS) – this website draws together information from publicly available records held in the National Archives and various state archives throughout Australia. <http://www.cifhs.com/> You can do searches on this site by typing the phrase – site:cifhs and then your search terms, such as site:cfhs “angelina”
 - If you think there is a chance that one of the people you are researching might have done military service, search the National Archives of Australia RecordSearch database. For tips on how to do this go to <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/researching-war-service.aspx> For more information check out: Sources-military-service-records.
 - Explore Indigenous family history resources available for each state and territory (see Where to get help). These guides will give you many ideas and resources.
 - There are also other places to try. These are introduced in different sections of this Kit.

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 part of your 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. Some of these teams sit within government departments and some work out of State Archives. 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 like).

- The two AIATSIS search engines available on the AIATSIS website -ABI and Mura - will give you a list of material held in the AIATSIS collections about that place. Try and locate life stories of people in a certain place or the history of a family or mission in the area. 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. If you are fortunate, people in your family might be mentioned in the book.
- A CIFHS search on place will enable you to see if any people are recorded at that place in the CIFHS collection. Remember you need to use the phrase “site:cifhs” and your search term in Google to conduct a search of the records on the site. 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 AND Aboriginal. (Type the word AND in capitals to get google to search for both words). 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. For example the Western Sydney Airport Environmental Impact statement has a chapter and a Technical paper on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage which includes information about the Aboriginal organisations involved in consultations. <http://westernsydneyairport.gov.au/media-resources/resources/environmental-assessment/index.aspx>
- The 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. To do so you do a Google search on the name of the language group AND Native title claim: for example Ngadjuri AND native title claim. Alternatively you can search the by typing the language group name in the “Application Name” search box on the Native Title Register. <http://www.nntt.gov.au/searchRegApps/NativeTitleRegisters/Pages/Search-Register-of-Native-Title-Claims.aspx>

Sometimes the information about a claim includes a list of claimants and their line of descent from original traditional owners. See: AIATSIS Pathways Thesaurus for information on languages and groups. <http://www1.aiatsis.gov.au/>

Extend your search net to more general resources

- Search the National Library of Australia’s Trove newspaper database
- Search a genealogical database like Ancestry.com.au or FindMyPast. Both of these require paid subscriptions, but most State and Territory Libraries, local libraries, genealogical societies and and/or local family history groups allow free searching on subscription sites. You might also find information in historical Electoral Rolls which are held in State and Territory libraries.

Get help from government record agencies

If you haven’t found information that is accessible to the public in the places listed above, you can also apply for access to records that have ‘access conditions’. Restrictions mean that you won’t be able to have access to some records unless you can prove your relationship to the person the records are about. Different groups of government records are restricted for varying lengths of time. These restriction periods also differ between state, territory and commonwealth records. The best way to navigate this often confusing and frustrating situation is to contact the government departments that assist Indigenous Australians to do family history research or contact the Aboriginal Access Team or other archival reference officers in the government archive where the records are held. (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.

Depending on how long ago the records you are seeking were created, you may find that some records are already open access or might become so in a few years. For example with birth, death and marriage records, each year there is a new release of records that fall within the 30 (death), 75 (marriages), 100 (births) year limit. See Sources – birth, death and marriage records for more specific information about Access Conditions.



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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 and looking at Research Guides on library and archive websites. See Background reading

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

Birth, death and marriage [BDM] records

If you have a good look at your own birth certificate, you will find information on it which can help you apply for access to the birth, death and marriage certificates of your ancestors. If you don't have a copy of your own birth certificate, your first step would be to apply for one.

- For living relatives or certificates that are not historical you will need permission from the person, or to prove your relationship to them. For this reason you will also need your own birth certificate and identity documents.
- You could ask other family members to help you get them or if you are eligible you might be able to become a client of a service – such as Link-Up - who may be able to apply on your behalf. 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 certificate you receive will set off a new round of requests – each new certificate 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 government agencies responsible for Aboriginal 'welfare' and 'protection' in the past. See Where to get help guides for each State and Territory in this Kit.

Quick searches – name indexes

- **Aboriginal Biographical Index [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.
- **Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies [CIFHS]**. It is also worth searching the CIFHS website. You may find direct information about your ancestors and references to some government records. Some CIFHS documents include file numbers so you can track down where the original records are held. To search CIFHS, you need to type the phrase "site:cifhs" and the name you are searching in "quote marks" into Google to do a search of the documents on the CIFHS site.
- **National Archives of Australia [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 note down what you have tried so you can 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 our list of Family history sources that there is a lot to choose from and everyone will follow 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 about what pathway to follow 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. However in family history it is like doing the puzzle without the picture on the box lid to guide you. Often new information will raise more questions than it answers.

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Sources – birth, death and marriage records

Births, deaths and marriages [BDM] 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 within the date ranges which are open for public searching access. 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. These can be keys for your search. If you don't know all these things, just one can be a starting point.

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 often 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 people under their control. 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. Remember that there will be many people for whom there is no official or other type of birth record. This guide also provides information about what to do if this is the case.

What information will you find on BDM certificates?

BDM certificates can provide a wealth of information beyond 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, ages, 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 parent(s)• 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 many people could not read and write.
- Try to double-check information on certificates with other records such as cemetery records, headstone inscriptions or other records.
- 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 their own 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 sometimes related 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. However it also occurred for many other reasons such as the remoteness of a birth place.
- 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. Sadly many of these records have not survived because most stations were privately owned and preservation of documents relied on the individual owners.
- Sometimes you will see the word 'native' on a birth, death or marriage certificate. Be aware that this notation, especially on early records, does not refer to Aboriginality but refers to a person born in Australia rather than immigrating from England or elsewhere.
- 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.

In early times BDM registrations were recorded by District Registrars and then sent to a central register in the cities. Occasionally the records never made it to the city. If you are unable to find a record in the main BDM index, you can also try a search of the district registers for the place you believe your ancestor was born. These are usually held in State libraries.

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 included in South Australia)
- Australian Capital Territory 1930 (formerly included in 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 where they are available

You can do online name searches of historical BDMs for the states listed below. You can use google to search for different BDM websites by typing in something like 'BDM NSW'. Their webpages will provide you with other information about the Registry in that state or territory such as their contact details and how to apply for certificates.

- New South Wales (or search for 'NSW BDM')
<https://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/family-history-research/family-history-search.aspx>
- Northern Territory – no online access
- Victoria (or search for 'Victoria BDM')
<https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/bdm/indexsearch.doj>
- Queensland (or search for 'Queensland BDM')
<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/births-deaths-marriages-and-divorces/family-history-research>
- Western Australia (or search for 'WA BDM')
<https://bdm.justice.wa.gov.au/apps/pioneersindex/default.aspx>
- South Australia (or search for 'SA BDM') access is via Genealogy SA online database, which also indexes Advertiser newspaper BDM notices
<https://www.genealogysa.org.au/resources/online-databases.html>
- Tasmania (or search for Tasmania BDM) best access is via the LINC website Names Index https://linc.tas.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en_AU/names/

You can also access some BDM indexes through Ancestry.com and Family Search. Many libraries and family history societies have copies of BDM indexes in printed volumes, 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. Concerns about privacy and identity theft mean that more recent BDM events are not available. These are considered 'closed'.

What historical BDMs are available (years ago by state and territory)

State	Birth	Marriage	Death
New South Wales	100 years ago	50 years ago	30 years ago
Queensland	100	75	35
Northern Territory	100	75	30
South Australia	100	75	30
Victoria	100	65	30
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/app/answers/detail/a_id/18/~/apply-for-a-birth%2C-death-or-marriage-certificate
- New South Wales: <https://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/family-history-research/family-history-research-nsw.aspx>
- Northern Territory: <https://nt.gov.au/law/bdm/search-births-deaths-and-marriages-records>
- 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: <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/family-and-community/births,-deaths-and-marriages/family-research>
- Victoria: <https://www.bdm.vic.gov.au/about-us/legislation-policies-and-practices/access-to-registry-information/information-is>
- Western Australia:
http://www.bdm.dotag.wa.gov.au/C/certificate_access_policies.aspx

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 via their websites. Unfortunately certificates are costly to purchase.

To find BDM websites with addresses and contact information, remember to just do a google search like NSW BDM or Vic BDM.

Transcription services

In some states you can use a transcription service to record what is on a certificate. 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 your state.

Some states have specialised information or services to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to find and get access to BDM information. Links to information in New South

Wales, Victoria and the NT are below or you could contact the registrar and ask if they have an Indigenous staff member to help you or someone to assist with Aboriginal BDM records.

New South Wales: <http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/aboriginal>

Northern Territory: <http://guides.naa.gov.au/tracking-family/chapter5/5.19.aspx>

Victoria: <https://www.bdm.vic.gov.au/koori-services/culturally-sensitive-services>. Email bmindigenousaccess@justice.vic.gov.au

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.
- Other online indexes of birth, death and funeral records in newspapers – Genealogy SA online database (birth and death notices in the South Australian Advertiser newspaper), Ryerson Index <https://www.ryersonindex.org/> (death and funeral notices in Australian newspapers) Savill Index <http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/fh/savill/> (Advertiser funeral notices).

- 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
- School and/or hospital admission registers
- Family Bible

See CoraWeb – <http://www.coraweb.com.au/categories/birth-death-and-marriage-records> for more ideas.



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Sources – burial and cemetery records

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

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 on the mission.

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 from the place they were living just before their death. From these you may 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.
- If you find a funeral notice, the funeral director (if they are still operating) may be able to assist you with information about where the person concerned was buried or if they were cremated.

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. Try the following cemetery searching websites:
- Australian Cemeteries website - <http://www.australiancemeteries.com.au/>
- Australian Cemeteries Index - <https://www.austcemindex.com/>

You can also do a Google search for useful guides to cemetery and burial records in libraries and on other websites using the search terms or links below.

- [National Library of Australia – Australian cemetery records - https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/cemetery-records](https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/cemetery-records)
- [CoraWeb – Cemeteries http://www.coraweb.com.au/categories/cemeteries](http://www.coraweb.com.au/categories/cemeteries)

- State Library of NSW – Deaths and burials
<http://guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/c.php?g=671850&p=4729307>
- State Library of Victoria – Cemetery records
<https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/victorianancestors/cemeteries>
- State Library of Queensland – Cemetery records <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/cemetery-records>
- State Library of SA – SA deaths <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/bdm/SAdeaths> and <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/bdm/sacemeteries>
- State Library of WA – Cemeteries
http://cms.slwa.wa.gov.au/dead_reckoning/private_archives/a-f/cemeteries
- LINC Tasmania – Cemetery records <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/guides-records/Pages/cemetery.aspx>
- Genealogical Society of the NT
<http://www.gsnt.org.au/sites/default/files/Cemeteries%20of%20the%20Northern%20Territory.pdf>



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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 information and an exchange of news and views. *Dawn* and *New Dawn* used by Aboriginal people to keep in contact with each other.

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.

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?

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. The AIATSIS Library in Canberra 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) - <https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/guides-and-resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-biographical-index/search-abi>
- search INFOKOORI - <http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au:1084/search>
- browse the digital copies of *Dawn* and *New Dawn* - <https://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/dawn-and-new-dawn>

- find hard copies held by Australian libraries using Trove (National Library of Australia) as per below:

Dawn A magazine for the Aboriginal people of NSW -

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/13803668?q&versionId=23015864>

New Dawn: A magazine for the Aboriginal people of New South Wales

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/16355154?q&versionId=26618342+44989490>



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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. You can read more about the Referendum here -

<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/history/australian-1967-referendum>

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 managed to avoid the protection and welfare system and/or were able to hide their Aboriginality to gain the same rights as any other citizens.

For these reasons, it is 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. If you have non-Aboriginal ancestry in your family, finding those people on an electoral roll might help you to locate Aboriginal ancestors.

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 or lived in the same area.



What information do you need to search for electoral rolls?

To start researching you need to know:

- the name (most importantly, the surname) of the person you are researching
- the electorate, town or general area where they lived. However you can still search for your ancestors if you don't know where they lived, it is just much more time consuming. Early Electoral Rolls listed people alphabetically for each electorate, rather than for the entire state as is the case these days, so you may need to scan through multiple electorates to find them.

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](https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/finding-electoral-rolls) <https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/finding-electoral-rolls> 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.
- Most State Libraries have electoral rolls for various states and territories. These can be printed volumes or microfiche or a combination of media.
- [Ancestry.com.au](https://www.ancestry.com.au) provides access to scanned and searchable electoral rolls mostly covering the period 1903-1980 for each state and territory except South Australia for which only a very small number of rolls are available. For a full list of the electoral rolls currently on Ancestry go to <https://search.ancestry.com.au/search/db.aspx?dbid=1207>

Current electoral roll

You can view an electronic copy of the current Commonwealth electoral roll (e-roll) at any office of the Australian Electoral Commission. See the [AEC website](https://www.aec.gov.au) for more information.

Other resources

- Voting rights and Aboriginal people (Creative Spirits)
<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/selfdetermination/voting-rights-for-aboriginal-people>
- [Indigenous Australians – electoral timeline](https://www.aec.gov.au/indigenous/milestones.htm) (Australian Electoral Commission)
<https://www.aec.gov.au/indigenous/milestones.htm>



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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 the activities took place. You can draw a map. Visiting a place may help memories and stories 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 family history research you are doing and why. 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. If you take notes you might miss an important piece of information or interrupt the flow of the conversation.

Oral history interviewing

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

If you would like to record an oral history interview with a family member or someone else, it is a good idea to learn how to do this properly. Oral History Australia has a branch in each state and territory and they run workshops for people who want to learn how to record interviews. You can learn about how to prepare for an interview, the types of questions you might like to ask as well as many other aspects of the craft of oral history. Oral History Australia branches can also offer advice on the best equipment to use so that your interviews will be clear and can be preserved for future generations. See <https://www.oralhistoryaustralia.org.au/>

Find out more

Further 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 <https://www.genealogybargains.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/EBOOK-Preserving-Family-Oral-History.pdf>
- Penny Taylor & AIATSIS, *Telling it like it is: A guide to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history*, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1996
- Beth M Robertson, *Oral History Handbook, Oral History Association of Australia, SA branch*, Fifth Edition 2006 – available from Oral History Australia SANT <http://oralhistoryaustraliasant.org.au/publications/>

Websites

- FamilySearch – Creating oral histories
familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Creating_Oral_Histories
- Smithsonian Institution – Folklife and oral history interviewing guide
<https://folklife.si.edu/the-smithsonian-folklife-and-oral-history-interviewing-guide/smithsonian>
- Oral History Association (USA) Web guides to doing oral history
<http://www.oralhistory.org/web-guides-to-doing-oral-history/>
- Oral History in the Digital Age <http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/>



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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 can help you understand what their life was like.

Unfortunately because most pastoral properties were privately owned, survival of station records is dependent on the foresight of owners and the amount of value they placed on their records. For this reason some have been deposited in official repositories, some are kept privately, many have been lost or destroyed. It is also possible that many records are still in private family hands but not sorted or listed anywhere.

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. <https://search.findmypast.com.au/search-world-Records/australian-pastoral-directories>. This is a subscription family history site but you can visit your state or territory library or even a local library to search this site for free. State and local libraries also often hold printed 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 hold pastoral maps, land survey information and detailed records of who bought and sold properties over time. If you can't find accessible information from government land agency websites, remember most archives and libraries have good fact sheets about searching land records including pastoral lands.

Australian Capital Territory

- ACT Land Information System – <https://actlis.act.gov.au/>

New South Wales

- Land Registry Services: Historical research - http://www.nswlrs.com.au/land_titles/historical_research
- Land Registry Services: Parish and historical maps - http://www.nswlrs.com.au/land_titles/historical_research/parish_maps

Northern Territory

- NT Historic map index – includes many Pastoral station maps - <http://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/imfPublic/historicMapImf.jsp>
- Northern Territory Land Supply and Property Information - <https://nt.gov.au/property/land/find-land-records/get-land-information-online>

- Northern Territory Archives Service: Guide to archives relating to the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory - https://dta.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/267885/pastoral_guide.pdf

National Archives of Australia: Records about the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory - <http://guides.naa.gov.au/records-about-northern-territory/part1/chapter1/1.4.aspx>

Queensland

- Department of Natural Resources and Mines: Land and property - <https://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/land>
- Museum of Lands, mapping and surveying - <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/museum-of-lands>
- Queensland State Archives Lands and mining - <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/lands>

South Australia

- Housing, property and land: About historical searching <http://www.sa.gov.au/topics/planning-and-property/buying-a-home-or-property/researching-a-property/about-historical-searching>

Tasmania

- Land Tasmania - <http://dpiptwe.tas.gov.au/land-tasmania>

Victoria

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning: Property and Land titles - <https://www.propertyandlandtitles.vic.gov.au/>

Western Australia

- Landgate: Historical records - <http://www.landgate.wa.gov.au/titles-and-surveys/historical-records>

Pastoral station records

Records that provide historical information about pastoral properties 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 - <http://trove.nla.gov.au> - 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 <http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/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 - <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/land-records-available-state-records>

Queensland

- Land records from the State Library of Queensland <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/family-history/land-records>
- Queensland Museum of Lands, mapping and surveying <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/museum-of-lands>
- Queensland: Queensland State Archives – Lands and Mining <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/lands>

South Australia

- Family History SA – Land, maps, place names - <http://www.familyhistorysa.org/>

Victoria

- Public Record Office of Victoria Researching Land and property - <https://www.prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/researching-land-and-property>

Tasmania

- LINC Tasmania research guides, including land titles, place names, building histories <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/guides-records/Pages/default.aspx>

Victoria

- Researching your Victorian ancestors: Land records - <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/c.php?g=245235&p=1632907>

Western Australia

- Landgate historical records - <https://www0.landgate.wa.gov.au/titles-and-surveys/historical-records>

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 holds pastoral station records) for help tracking ownership - <http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/noel-butlin-archives-centre>.

Ancestry and Find My Past provide access to certain land and property records. Remember you can use these subscription family history websites at a state or local library for free.

The genealogy website, CoraWeb, has a section on maps, place names and land records. <http://coraweb.com.au/categories/maps-places-and-land-records>



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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 that has changed.

Probably one of the best places to search for maps or to find out a map that includes the place you are interested in is Trove: Maps - <https://trove.nla.gov.au/map>

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. Trove will help you to find many of these or you can also do searches in State/Territory library catalogues. You might also try your local library or historical society.

Maps of Aboriginal Australia

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

- AIATSIS Aboriginal Australia map <https://aiatsis.gov.au/aboriginal-studies-press/products/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>
- State Library of South Australia: Maps of Aboriginal Australia <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/MapsAboriginalAustralia>
- Western Australian Department of Planning Lands and Heritage: WA State Maps <https://www.daa.wa.gov.au/about-the-department/publications/maps/state-maps/>



Online guides to maps

National

- National Library of Australia: Australian maps for family historians - <http://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/australian-maps-for-family-historians>
- Trove: Maps - <https://trove.nla.gov.au/map>
- Noel Butlin Archives Centre: Information about map collection <http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/noel-butlin-archives-centre/finding-aids>

New South Wales

- State Library of NSW: Maps collections - <http://guides.sl.nsw.gov.au/maps>
- NSW land Registry Services: Parish and historical maps - http://www.nswlrs.com.au/land_titles/historical_research/parish_maps

Queensland

- State Library of Queensland: Maps - <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/maps>

South Australia

- State Library of South Australia: Mapping - <http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=691>

Tasmania

- Tasmania: LINC Maps and plans - <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/guides-records/Pages/Maps-and-Plans.aspx>

Victoria

- State Library of Victoria: Maps for family history - <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/mapsforfamilyhistory>
- University of Melbourne: Map collection - https://library.unimelb.edu.au/collections/map_collection

Western Australia

- State Records Office of Western Australia: Maps online - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/maps-online>

Northern Territory

- Historic Map Index - <http://www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/imfPublic/historicMapImf.jsp>



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Sources – military service records

Indigenous people have served in every military conflict in which Australia has been involved 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 content of service records and the amount of detail 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 might also be 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

However, you can still search with just a name and the conflict in which your family member served. In fact sometimes, researchers use a military record to find a person's date and place of birth.

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 about 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.

<http://www.defence.gov.au/records/>

You may also find military records on family history websites like Ancestry and Find My Past but generally all of these can be accessed directly 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 - <http://guides.naa.gov.au/tracking-family/chapter6/>
- Service records – learn more about military service records - <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/explore/defence/service-records/index.aspx>
- Discovering Anzacs – search this website for records about your service person (World War I and the Boer War) - <https://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/>
- RecordSearch – search the National Archives collection database for records about your service person (all conflicts) - <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/search/>

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
<https://www.awm.gov.au/advanced-search/people>
- of known Indigenous service persons - <https://www.awm.gov.au/indigenous-service>
- Indigenous service - <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>
- Researching a person– learn more about how to research your family member's military service. <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/understanding-the-memorials-collection/researching-a-person>

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. Some war diaries and other records are digitised and available online on the War Memorial website - <https://www.awm.gov.au/learn/understanding-military-history/unit-diaries>

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 servicemen (Australian War Memorial) – an overview of the history of Indigenous service - <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/indigenous>

‘ Indigenous Australians at War (Department of Veterans’ Affairs) - <https://www.dva.gov.au/i-am/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander/indigenous-australians-war>

Mura® catalogue (AIATSIS) – search for 'WW1', 'WW2', 'Vietnam' or other conflicts for material on Indigenous service persons http://catalogue.aiatsis.gov.au/client/en_AU/external

Cemeteries (Department of Veterans Affairs) – information about locating the burial place of a service person - <https://www.dva.gov.au/commemorations-memorials-and-war-graves/cemeteries>

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
<https://www.aif.adfa.edu.au/index.html>

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 service during World War II
<http://nominal-rolls.dva.gov.au/>

Researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander WWI soldiers from Queensland communities – guide produced by State Library of Queensland -
http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/269609/Guide-for-IKCs-Indigenous-Soldiers-Jan2018.pdf

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
<http://www.ntlexhibit.nt.gov.au/exhibits/show/bod/roh>

Register of Aboriginal Veterans of South Australia – nearly 500 names of Aboriginal veterans in SA - <http://www.reconciliationsa.org.au/learn/ravsa>

Military records on CoraWeb – a website with links for family history research
<http://coraweb.com.au/categories/military-records>

Books

The following books relate to 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)

Ngarrindjeri Anzacs by Doreen Kartinyeri ((Adelaide, South Australian Museum and Raukkan Council, 1996)



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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 under 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 are varied. 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 organisation which was responsible for the mission or sometimes in state archives. Some records have been deposited in state libraries, the National Library of Australia and in the AIATSIS collections. The AIATSIS subject guide: [How to find mission and reserve records](#) has a comprehensive list of AIATSIS holdings on missions and reserves.

Mission records are further complicated by the fact that records relating to one mission may be split between church bodies and government bodies. In addition, some former mission organisations, like the United Aborigines Mission, do not officially exist anymore, so their records are held privately and not by a major church organisation.

Find & Connect

The [Find & Connect](#) web resource www.findandconnect.gov.au includes a lot of information about missions where Aboriginal children lived, frequently separated from their families in dormitory accommodation. 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. <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/look-for-homes/>

Search AIATSIS or National Library

Various researchers and writers have worked on the history of Aboriginal missions and reserves. This means that you might be able to read about 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. Be aware that some of the earlier commemorative type histories were written by missionaries themselves or by people connected with the mission so can be biased towards the missionary point of view rather than the experiences of Aboriginal people on the mission.

Search the [AIATSIS Mura catalogue](http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/using-collection/search-collection) <http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/using-collection/search-collection> or [Trove](https://trove.nla.gov.au/) <https://trove.nla.gov.au/> 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 can be within state government departments of Aboriginal affairs or based within state archives and they specialise in locating personal records.

New South Wales Aboriginal Family Records Service

Free call: 1800 019 998

Email: familyhistory@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au

Web:

<https://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/healing-and-reparations/family-records-service>

Northern Territory Archives Service

Darwin

Northern Territory Archives Centre, Kelsey Crescent, Millner NT 0810

GPO Box 1347, Nightcliff NT 0814

Phone - general enquiries: (08) 8924 7677

Phone - reference enquiries: (08) 8999 6890

Fax: (08) 8924 7660

Email: ntac@nt.gov.au

Alice Springs

Northern Territory Archives Service, Mineral House, 58 Hartley Street, Alice Springs NT 0870

PO Box 8225, Alice Springs, NT 0871

Ph: (08) 8951 5669

Web: <https://dta.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service> (Northern Territory Archives Service)

<https://dta.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/information-for-researchers/aboriginal-family-research> (Aboriginal family history research)

<https://dta.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/information-for-researchers/aboriginal-family-research> (Fact sheet on Researching your Aboriginal family history)

Mission Records held at the NT Archives Service - <https://dta.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets>

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

Community and Personal Histories Team

Level 9, 1 William Street

Brisbane, Queensland

Phone 1800 650 230 (toll-free within Australia) or 07 3003 6466

Email: enquiries@datsip.qld.gov.au

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

Web: <https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/family-personal-history>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Histories - <https://www.qld.gov.au/atsi/cultural-awareness-heritage-arts/community-histories>

State Records of South Australia – Aboriginal Access team

State Records Research Centre

115 Cavan Road

Gepps Cross SA 5094

Tel (+61 8) 8343 6800 GPO Box 464, Adelaide SA 5001

Ph: 08 8343 6800

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

Email: StateRecords@sa.gov.au

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

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

<https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/finding-aboriginal-history> (Finding your Aboriginal history)

LINC Tasmania

2nd Floor, 91 Murray Street, Hobart TAS 7000

Ph: 03 6165 5597

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)

Public Record Office Victoria – Koorie Records Unit

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

PO Box 2100, North Melbourne VIC 3051

Ph: 03 9348 5600

Fax: 03 9348 5656

Online form: prov.altarama.com/ref100.aspx

Web: <https://prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/koorie-services>

Aboriginal Victorians Family History guide - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/aboriginal-victorians-1830s-1970s/aboriginal-victorians-family>

Aboriginal History Research Unit – Department of Local Government, Sport and cultural Industries, Western Australia

The 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 applicant 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.

140 William Street, 2nd floor Reception, Perth 6000
PO Box 3153, East Perth WA 6892
Free call: 1300 651 077
Ph: 08 6551 8004
Fax: 08 6551 8088
Web: <https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/achwa/Pages/AHRU.aspx>

Family History Application form -
https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/achwa/Documents/Family_History_Application-Consent_Form.pdf

Missions and reserves by state and territory

The 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.

More information

- State Records NSW holds various records relating to reserves. See [State archives relating to Aboriginal people](https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-resources-guide-nsw-state-archives).
<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-resources-guide-nsw-state-archives>

- Also see [Living on Aboriginal reserves and stations](#), a NSW Government Environment & Heritage website.

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/chresearch/ReserveStation.htm>

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.

More information

- The [Mission voices](#) web site which has now been archived, contains background information, stories, timelines and maps on Victorian missions and reserves. <https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/aboriginal-culture/missions/mission-voices/mission-voices-new/>

Queensland – selected missions and reserves

Below is a list of 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](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/community-history/missions). <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/atsi/community-history/missions>

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 \(pdf, 385kb\)](https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/SupportingIndividualsAndFamilies/Documents/LookingWest.pdf).
<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/SupportingIndividualsAndFamilies/Documents/LookingWest.pdf>

Also see their webpage about [Aboriginal records](#).

<http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/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](#).
<http://signposts.cpfs.wa.gov.au/>

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](http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal_Missions).
http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal_Missions

Tasmania

- There were no church–run Aboriginal missions in Tasmania – see [Aboriginal missions](http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/A/Aboriginal%20missions.htm) in the *Companion to Tasmanian History* for more information.
http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/A/Aboriginal%20missions.htm
- 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 their guide to mission held in the NT Archives. These include the personal records of missionaries and government workers.

<https://dta.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets>

- 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*.

<http://guides.naa.gov.au/records-about-northern-territory/part2/chapter8/index.aspx>

Australian Capital Territory

There were no missions or reserves in the ACT



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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 (also used for the Australian 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 – 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 include births, deaths, funerals, marriages, obituaries, inquests, court cases, social events, church activities, school exam results, 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 its website, Trove . Over 218 million newspaper articles are available and the number is growing all the time

You can search digitised newspapers on Trove using keywords like your ancestor's name and the place they lived. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>

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). To search for a full name "John Smith", put the name in quotation marks. To add and place, write AND Dubbo.

- 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 distressing personal details about your ancestors and their lives.

Read more about using digitised newspapers in Trove in the [Trove Help Centre](#).

- Using Trove: Digitised newspapers - <http://help.nla.gov.au/trove/using-trove/digitised-newspapers>
- Using Trove: Searching in newspapers - <http://help.nla.gov.au/trove/using-trove/digitised-newspapers/searching-in-newspapers>
- Trove tips for family historians - <https://www.nla.gov.au/blogs/trove/2014/08/25/trove-tips-for-family-historians>

The National Library is continually adding more digitised newspapers to Trove, but not all historical newspapers are available yet. The latest year for the majority of newspapers is 1954 due to copyright restrictions. A very small number of newspapers are digitised beyond that date including *The Canberra Times*. An alphabetical list of newspaper titles by state and territory is available here: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/about>. 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/or event to look for.

Some newspaper indexes are available, but they may not 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 a local public library, historical society or museum. For information about newspapers in State and Territory Libraries, use the following search phrases or links:

- National Library of Australia: Newspapers <https://www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/newspapers>
- State Library of New South Wales: Newspapers <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/research-and-collections-using-library/newspapers>
- State Library of Victoria: How to find newspapers <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/newspapers>
- State Library of Queensland: Newspapers <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/resources/newspapers>
- State Library of South Australia: Newspapers and guide to SA newspapers <http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/newspapers>
- State Library of Western Australia: WA newspapers <http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/explore-discover/wa-heritage/wa-newspapers>
- LINC Tasmania: Tasmanian newspapers <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/Pages/newspapers.aspx>
- Northern Territory Library: Territory Stories: Newspaper NT <http://www.territorystories.nt.gov.au/handle/10070/190886#>
- ACT Heritage Library: Newspaper holdings https://www.library.act.gov.au/find/history/search/local_and_regional_newspapers

Aboriginal newspapers

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

- The Australian Abo Call, published by the Aborigines Progressive Association in 1938 - <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/title/51>. Click on this link to go to the Trove catalogue entry for this paper. Links to the digitised issues are on the right of the screen
- Dawn and New Dawn, published by the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board from 1952 to 1975 (AIATSIS) <http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/dawn-and-new-dawn>
- Koori Mail, digitised copies are available for issues published from 1991 to 2011 (AIATSIS). <http://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/koori-mail>
- The Australian Indigenous Index known as InfoKoori is accessible via the State Library of NSW website. It is an index to the *Koori Mail* and to biographical information from various magazines including: *Our Aim* (1907–1961), *Dawn* (1952–1969), *New Dawn* (1970–1975) and *Identity* (1971–1982). <http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au:1084/search/> AIATSIS holds an extensive collection of other Aboriginal newsletters and newspapers. Some were published over many years, some only lasted a short time.



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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. Some are searchable online, others are managed by archives and you will need to contact the archives to request a search of the index.

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index – AIATSIS
<http://aiatsis.gov.au/research/guides-and-resources/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-biographical-index>
- INFOKOORI Australian Indigenous Index – State Library of New South Wales
<http://library.sl.nsw.gov.au:1084/search/>
- Bringing Them Home Name Index – National Archives of Australia
<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs175.aspx>
- Indigenous indexes – Queensland State Archives
<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/atsi>
- Index to the Chief Protector of Aborigines files 1898–1908 – State Records Office of WA - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/aboriginal-records/index-chief-protector-aborigines-files-1898-1908>
- Aboriginal Information Management System (AIMS)– State Records of SA
<https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/finding-aboriginal-history>

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 Rottne Island are listed.

You can find other biographical dictionaries through a search in Trove. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>

Census records

Aboriginal people were counted in some early censuses of the Australian population, but were 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. It was not until the 1967 Referendum that Aboriginal people were officially included in the census.

The way in which the government defined Aboriginality varied over time. This meant that an Aboriginal person of mixed ancestry might have been counted in one census and excluded from others.

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, <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/earlycensus> including a section on censuses of Aboriginal Australians. <https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/earlycensus/aboriginal>

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 as part of their 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.

A number of websites maintain lists of family history and historical societies including:

- CoraWeb – Genealogy, Family History and Historical Societies - www.coraweb.com.au/categories/family-history-and-historical-societies
- The Federation of Australian Historical Societies - <https://www.history.org.au/>
- 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.

Genealogical Societies

Genealogical Societies in each state and territory can be sources of information. They have good collections of genealogical books as well as many records in hard copy, on microfiche, and microfilm as well as online. Many have created online indexes and databases related to various types of records. Genealogical societies are usually staffed by experienced volunteers who can offer advice about research.

South Australia – Genealogy SA - www.genealogysa.org.au

Northern Territory – Genealogical Society of the Northern Territory – www.gsnt.org.au

Western Australia – Western Australian Genealogical Society – www.membership.wags.org.au

New South Wales – The Society of Australian Genealogists – www.sag.org.au

Victoria – Genealogical Society of Victoria – www.gsv.org.au

Family History Connections (formerly the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies) - www.familyhistoryconnections.org.au

Queensland – Genealogical Society of Queensland – www.gsq.org.au

Tasmania – Tasmanian Family History Society – www.tasfhs.org

ACT – The Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra – www.familyhistoryact.org.au

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 language group information and historical information. To find land councils in your area do a google search with 'land council' and your state territory, area or town. You can find information about Aboriginal organisations on the website of the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations website – www.oric.gov.au 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 - <http://www.archives.anu.edu.au/collections> 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. If your ancestor worked on a station or in a particular industry, it is possible you might find some information about them in these records.



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Sources – photographs

Photographs are a valuable source for family history. Both photos held by family members 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 are not labelled so it is difficult to work out 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. This will also ensure that you have a digital copy if ever the original is lost.

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 in them, 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/or 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 black and white 'snapshot' photographs usually date from the early 20th century.



- If the photograph is a studio style photograph and the name of the photographer or a studio is 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 there are any vehicles in the photograph the style and make of them can also help in dating a 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, by travellers or by scientists, anthropologists and other researchers, 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.

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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 only be searched and printed at the AIATSIS reading room in Canberra. However if you find a photo caption via your Mura search that might relate to your research, you can contact AIATSIS to arrange for a digital copy or printed copy to be made for you.

AIATISIS has also digitised the *Dawn* and *New Dawn* magazine. This was printed by the New South Wales Aborigines Welfare Board from 1935 to 1965 and contains many photographs related to New South Wales Aboriginal people. All issues are available online and the magazine 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, non-government/church archives, museums and local historical societies.

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

Use search terms such as 'Aboriginal' or 'Aborigine' combined with a place name (for example, 'Aboriginal Dubbo' or Aboriginal AND Dubbo) or search using the name of a mission, reserve or station (for example, 'Ernabella'). You are less likely to find relevant photographs searching by people's names but it might be worth a try. For example a search for Aboriginal AND Wilson finds photos of people with the surname Wilson as well as Wilson as the name of a street and a river.

Offensive language

Photographs held in Libraries, museums and archives often include offensive and racist language in the captions. Historical photographs themselves may be offensive and distressing because they reveal the ways in which Aboriginal people were treated. In addition, some photographers used offensive backdrops and put people into costumes that fit current stereotypes. Sometimes people were 'paid' for posing in such photographs with valuable goods such as food or tobacco.



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Sources – police gazettes, court and gaol records

Legal records, including records created by the police, courts and 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 journals, occurrence books and charge books
- records about members of the police force
- judges' bench books and court case files
- photographs and registers of prisoners

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

Police gazettes were publications 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. Children and young people who absconded from institutions were sometimes listed in gazettes.

What information do you need to look for these records?

You may need to search using a combination of:

- 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 doing



searches on [Trove Digitised Newspapers](#) first to see what you can find.

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/>

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

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 https://www.ancestry.com.au/](https://www.ancestry.com.au/) and [Find My Past https://www.findmypast.com.au/](https://www.findmypast.com.au/) provide access to some police, court and gaol records, but you will find these records and more through government archives. Remember that later records may be restricted from public access. Reference Archivists can assist you with information about access.

The [Centre for Indigenous Family History](#) also includes many police records, the majority of which are held in State/Territory Archives. Remember you will need to type the phrase “site:cifhs” into Google along with the name you are searching for in “quotation marks”.

These websites are useful for checking but because they only have a selection of records, for more in-depth research you should visit or send a research query to your state/territory archives. Reference archivists will be able to help you to identify records that might be useful in your research.

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 - <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/aboriginal-resources-guide-nsw-state-archives>
- Index to Aboriginal colonial court cases, 1788–1838
<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/indigenous-colonial-court-cases>
- [Police service records](#) – has information on records about Aboriginal trackers who worked with the police
<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/police-service-guide>

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:

- Researching your Aboriginal Family History from Northern Territory Archives Service - - <https://dtc.nt.gov.au/arts-and-museums/northern-territory-archives-service/archives-information-leaflets>
- Information about the Northern Territory Archives Services in the National Archives of Australia's: *Tracking Family*: a guide to Aboriginal records relating to the Northern Territory - <http://guides.naa.gov.au/tracking-family/chapter5/5.17.aspx>

Queensland

See these resources from Queensland State Archives:

- Records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/atsi> and <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa/resource/3a08df52-1b0e-4bbd-957a-c948a0712612>
- Police gazettes - <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa/resource/d9a557b5-7286-4064-b067-c79d6520f064>
- Court records - <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/courts> and <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa/resource/98e44d9d-483f-4321-a187-20a985f52a17>
- Murder files - <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa/resource/363d1757-83c9-4904-aef6-84a40b853f44>
- Complete list of [Brief guides](#) from Queensland State Archives <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/brief-guides-at-qlsa>

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

<https://www.police.qld.gov.au/aboutUs/facilities/museum/default.htm>

South Australia

See these resources from State Records of South Australia:

- Finding your Aboriginal history - <https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/finding-aboriginal-history>
- Courts - <https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/courts-0>
- Gaols - <https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/content/gaols>

You may also find information at the South Australia Police Historical Society.

<http://www.sapolicehistory.org/>

Tasmania

See these resources from LINC Tasmania:

- Tasmanian court records - <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/Court.aspx>
- Tasmanian prison records - <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/family-history/Pages/Prison.aspx>

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 - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/aboriginal-victorians-1830s-1970s>
- walata tyamateetj: A guide to government records about Aboriginal people in Victoria – includes a section on legal, police and prison records <https://prov.vic.gov.au/walata-tyamateetj-research-guide>
- Court records - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/justice-crime-and-law>
- Prison records - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/justice-crime-and-law>
- Police records - <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/justice-crime-and-law/police-correspondence-records-1853-1920>

You might also find information at the Victoria Police Museum and Historical Services Unit -

<http://www.policemuseum.vic.gov.au/>

Western Australia

See these resources from the State Records Office of WA:

- Aboriginal records – lists police, court and prison records relating to Aboriginal people <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/aboriginal-records>
- Court records - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/court-records>
- Police records - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/police-records>
- Prison and gaol records - <http://www.sro.wa.gov.au/archive-collection/collection/prison-and-gaol-records>



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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 from documents you have at home. These documents might include birth, death and marriage certificates, wills, family photographs, newspaper clippings and family letters. Look especially for things that you own that have been passed down through the family. As well as documents and photographs, these could be objects such as household items, books, jewellery or even furniture. Sometimes objects have names, dates and/or places written on them which may provide you with information about family members.

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. If you find that a family member has many family stories you might ask them whether you could record an oral history interview with them.

Sensitivities about the past

Be aware that some family members might not want to talk about the past. It might bring up difficult memories or touch on sensitive issues they'd rather forget. This can be frustrating for you as a researcher, but you need 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.

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. 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. You can easily make a copy of items by taking a photo with a digital camera or smart phone. 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.

Looking at family records and talking to your relatives 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. You might never have heard about this, but once you start asking questions people will tell you many useful details.

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.

See: Sources at home checklist.



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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 nearly every aspect of the lives of Indigenous people was closely controlled by government: relationships and marriage, children, work, travel, wages, housing and land, and access to health care and education.

Records about the Stolen Generations and their families were kept by governments, as well as by churches, missions and other non-government agencies. Many records have been lost as the result of poor recordkeeping practices, fires, floods, and in some cases, due to deliberate destruction. Changes to the structure of government departments and within non-government organisations can also make it very difficult to trace records to assist with finding family connections.

History of Link-Up

Family tracing and reunion services are available to members of the Stolen Generations throughout Australia via the national Link-Up program.

The first Link-Up service in Australia was established in 1980 in New South Wales. This was followed by Link-Ups in Queensland and the Northern Territory. Prior to 1997 other types services also operated to assist people who had been separated from their families to reconnect.



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 Section, Dept. of Family and Community Services	1994–95

The Bringing Them Home report

From 1995 to 1997 the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) undertook a National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families. The Commission's findings were published in 1997 in the Bringing Them Home Report. <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/bringing-them-home-report-1997>

This report included 54 recommendations, a number of which related to records and family tracing. Recommendation 30a stated:

That the Council of Australian Governments ensure that Indigenous community-based family tracing and reunion services are funded in all regional centres with a significant Indigenous population and that existing Indigenous community-based services, for example health services, in smaller centres are funded to offer family tracing and reunion assistance and referral.

As a result of this recommendation the Australian Government funded a national network of family tracing and reunion services – the National Link-Up Program. Link-Ups in NSW, Queensland and the NT gained improved funding and new Link-Up Programs were established in other areas including South Australia, Central Australia and Western Australia.

Role of Link-Up

Link-Up organisations around Australia provide family tracing and reunion services to members of the Stolen Generations and their 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-Up gives 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-Up also provides 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.

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 families and to find out about their family history.

- In conjunction with Link-Ups, AIATSIS 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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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 will need to know this to request birth, death and marriage certificates.. 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 ceremonies. Members of the Stolen Generations who were removed from their families as children were institutionalised, fostered and adopted far from their homes. For example, many children from the Northern Territory were sent to southern states.



If members of 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](https://www.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, or were forced to move around. You can use a printed map or one that's online, like Google Maps. Local libraries often have historical maps, including maps of stations and properties. You can also find many maps through searching on the Maps section of [Trove](https://trove.nla.gov.au/map), a website created by the National Library of Australia. <https://trove.nla.gov.au/map>

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. Sometimes Area School libraries have local history information as well as local school records which can help place family members in an area at a certain time.

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, or a piece of land they occupied or owned. You might be able to see the places they worked, and get a feel for what their local community was like.



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Understanding the challenges

Family history research projects can be complex, time-consuming and frustrating but also rewarding. 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 differ from information found 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 is like being a detective. You look for pieces of evidence to put together your family' story. This evidence comes in the form of different types of 'records'. Records are the many sheets of paper that officials, professionals or others create about us. Think of the records a doctor or a school might keep about you or your children and the forms and documents that government agencies like Centrelink keep about you. Records may not just be written documents. They can also be photographs, maps, genealogies, oral history and many other things.

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. It can be even harder when these types of finding aids have not been developed.

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. These can be valuable starting points for researching your family and community. Native Title claims may also be a significant source for Indigenous family history researchers. Paperwork associated with these can be often be found online.



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

Unfortunately written evidence or information about family members may not exist because the records have been:

- lost with the passing of time
- destroyed because their value was not recognised, they were regarded as 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 significance 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', especially 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!