



# 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:info.koori@sl.nsw.gov.au) (Indigenous Services)

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

[www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/family\\_history](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:linkup@nsw.link-up.org.au)

Web: [www.linkupnsw.org.au](http://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](http://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](mailto:parc@bensoc.asn.au)  
Web: [www.benevolent.org.au/services/post-adoption-services](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx) (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)

[www.naa.gov.au/collection/family-history](http://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](http://www.nla.gov.au/askalibrarian)

Web: [www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/family-history](http://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/family-history)

[www.nla.gov.au/what-we-collect/indigenous](http://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](mailto:info@awm.gov.au)

Web: [www.awm.gov.au](http://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](mailto: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](https://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](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](http://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/](http://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](mailto:info@sag.org.au)

Web: [www.sag.org.au](http://www.sag.org.au)