

## Stevedoring industry

### Commonwealth regulation of the stevedoring industry

Before World War II, the Commonwealth government had little involvement in the running of the stevedoring industry. In 1942, because of continuing industrial disruption on the waterfront, the government established the first Stevedoring Industry Commission, to be responsible for regulating stevedoring functions allocated to the Commonwealth under the National Security (Stevedoring Industry) Regulations. With the aim of improving efficiency in loading and unloading ships, the Commission was charged Australia-wide with coordinating labour, controlling and regulating waterside work and stevedoring operations at all Australian wharves, and providing for the safety of workers in the event of an enemy attack.

After the war, regulatory authority was extended to a permanent Stevedoring Industry Commission under the *Stevedoring Industry Act 1947*. Subsequent legislation in 1949 replaced the Commission with a three-member board for administrative purposes, while a judge within the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration was responsible for industrial functions.

Following recommendations of the 1954 Committee of Inquiry, the Australian Stevedoring Industry Authority was established by the *Stevedoring Industry Act 1956*. At the same time the Commonwealth Industrial Court and the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission took over industrial functions from the Conciliation and Arbitration Court. Various entitlements were paid, through several awards, by the Arbitration Commission to the Authority which, from October 1965, also had full responsibility for the recruitment of waterside workers.

Commonwealth agencies with responsibility for administering the stevedoring function since 1942 are listed below.

Name of Agency	Date	Agency no.
Stevedoring Industry Commission [I]	1942–47	<u>CA 272</u>
Stevedoring Industry Commission [II]	1947–49	<u>CA 3551</u>
Australian Stevedoring Industry Board, Head Office	1949–56	<u>CA 131</u>
Australian Stevedoring Industry Authority, Head Office	1956–78	<u>CA 78</u>
Stevedoring Industry Finance Committee	1977–ongoing	<u>CA 3934</u>

## Documenting the records

Records of the agencies listed below are held by the National Archives in Sydney, having been transferred from agency head offices located in Sydney from 1943. Records of agency state offices have not been transferred to the National Archives.

A variety of records is held, including correspondence files, registration cards, minutes, reports, transcripts and financial papers (see the table below for details). Note that the waterside workers registration cards held as ST4359/1 may be a useful family history source.

## Collection references

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Reports of proceedings and minutes of the Stevedoring Industry Commission</u>	1942–49	SP1515/1
<u>Minutes of meetings of the Waterside Employment Committees, all ports</u>	1942–49	SP1515/2
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1509/1
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1509/2
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1509/3
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1509/4
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1509/5
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1509/6
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1510/1
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1510/2
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1510/3
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1510/4
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1510/5
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1510/6
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1510/7
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1515/18
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	SP1529/1
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1942–78	ST4433/1
<u>Miscellaneous papers and documents</u>	1942–77	SP1525/1
<u>Waterside workers registration cards</u>	1942–77	ST4359/1
<u>Report on Stevedoring Industry control by Judge Foster</u>	1946	SP1515/9
<u>Annual reports of the Australian Stevedoring Industry Board and the Australian Stevedoring Industry Authority</u>	1950–77	SP1515/14
<u>Report on the turn round of ships in Australia by Henry Basten, CMG</u>	1952	SP1515/8
<u>Binder titled History of Stevedoring in Australia</u>	1953	C4311
<u>Records from the Stevedoring Industry Act 1954, Committee of Inquiry, and transcripts of evidence and report of the Board of Reference case</u>	1954	SP1515/4

<a href="#"><u>Records from the Stevedoring Industry Act 1954, Committee of Inquiry, and transcripts of evidence and report of the Board of Reference case</u></a>	1954	SP1515/5
<a href="#"><u>Records from the Stevedoring Industry Act 1954, Committee of Inquiry, and transcripts of evidence and report of the Board of Reference case</u></a>	1954	SP1515/6
<a href="#"><u>Transcripts of evidence of log of claims – hearing of an application relating to the Waterside Workers Award</u></a>	1956–58	SP1515/7
<a href="#"><u>Reports and drafts of reports</u></a>	1956–77	SP1515/15
<a href="#"><u>Minutes of meetings of the Port Safety Advisory Panels and the Federal Advisory Committee on waterfront accident prevention</u></a>	1960–77	SP1515/16

## For more information

You can obtain more information about the record series listed above (and the items within the series) from [RecordSearch](#), the National Archives database. Follow the links in the series lists to go directly to information on that series. Searches using keywords in items titles, such as 'waterside worker', 'wharfies', or 'maritime worker' or other synonyms will help you to identify material of interest. You can also use RecordSearch to find out about the agencies that created the records and to locate more records on your subject. You might also explore [PhotoSearch](#) to find out if there are photos pertaining to your subject.

For further information on records of Australia's industrial relations system please see *Fact sheet 232 – Industrial relations records held in Melbourne*.