

## ABC Talks Department

The Talks Department of the then Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) was established in 1936. Its central office was in Sydney, with offices in each of the state capitals.

A Talks Department's draft policy statement, written in 1940, gives an indication of the nature of talks broadcasts on ABC radio and later ABC television.

Talks are programmed on a wide array of subjects and every effort is made to make them instructive, stimulating to thought and entertaining. The subjects include literature, art, science and philosophy, as well as talks relating to current events of all kinds ranging from sport to international affairs. Talks about Australia figure prominently in the programme. (as well as) talks about men and women who have been prominent in various fields of endeavour.

The talks were authored and presented by thousands of Australian and international guests. The records generated by the Talks Department are wonderfully illustrative of Australian social, cultural and political life during the twentieth century.

### ABC Talks Department scripts

The record series listed below contain scripts of talks presented by the Talks Department. The list is arranged in chronological order.

#### General scripts

| Title or description of record   | Date range | Series number |
|--|------------|---------------|
| <u>Central files (boxes 34–41 relate to the Talks Department)</u>                    | 1932–45    | SP1558/2      |
| <u>ABC talk scripts – general</u>  | 1937–50    | SP300/1       |
| <u>Talks scripts – general</u>   | 1937–68    | SP1474/2      |
| <u>Radio scripts files Talks Department, alphabetical series</u>                     | 1944–82    | C1989         |
| <u>Programs files – Talks Department (radio and television), alphabetical series</u> | 1948–83    | C1985         |
| <u>Talks scripts – general subjects</u>  | 1951       | SP369/1       |
| <u>Scripts – talks</u>   | 1951–58    | SP478/1       |
| <u>Program files – State Talks Department</u>  | 1953–72    | C1986         |

|  |              |         |
|--|--------------|---------|
| <u>Talks scripts</u>   | 1957–59      | SP618/1 |
| <u>Programs files – talks Department (television), alphabetical series</u> | 1958–ongoing | C1984   |
| <u>Scripts, talks (general subjects)</u>                                   | 1960–62      | SP677/1 |
| <u>Scripts, talks (general subjects)</u>                                   | 1963–64      | SP860/1 |

## Women's broadcasts

| Title or description of record   | Date range | Series number |
|--|------------|---------------|
| <u>London and American letters – Women's Session scripts</u>                   | 1940–51    | SP300/5       |
| <u>Kitchen front scripts</u>   | 1942–48    | ST3332/3      |
| <u>Women's broadcast scripts incorporating scripts for the Women's Session</u> | 1945–52    | C3224         |

## Wartime scripts

| Title or description of record   | Date range | Series number |
|--|------------|---------------|
| <u>Chester Wilmot series (includes scripts, reports and personal files)</u>                  | 1936–55    | SP300/4       |
| <u>Frank Legg Series (includes scripts and correspondence)</u>                               | 1939–49    | SP300/6       |
| <u>War correspondents' talks scripts, general wartime scripts and related correspondence</u> | 1940–47    | SP300/3       |

## News presentations

| Title or description of record  | Date range | Series number |
|---|------------|---------------|
| <u>Talks scripts – news commentaries, discussions on international affairs, Notes on the News and News Review</u> | 1937–51    | SP369/2       |
| <u>Talks scripts – Nation's Forum of the Air</u>  | 1944–55    | SP369/3       |
| <u>Scripts, talks – radio digest and special series</u>   | 1949–57    | SP478/4       |
| <u>Scripts, talks (documentary &amp; radio digest)</u>  | 1949–59    | SP860/3       |
| <u>Scripts, talks – news commentary</u>   | 1952–56    | SP478/3       |
| <u>Scripts, talks (news &amp; science commentaries)</u>   | 1957–60    | SP733/1       |
| <u>Scripts, talks (news &amp; science commentaries)</u>   | 1961–64    | SP860/2       |

## Rural scripts

| Title or description of record              | Date range | Series number |
|---|------------|---------------|
| <u>Scripts – Rural Department – general</u> | 1948–54    | SP620/1       |
| <u>Scripts – land and its people</u>        | 1949–62    | SP620/2       |
| <u>Scripts – land and its people</u>        | 1959–66    | SP897/2       |

## Miscellaneous scripts

| Title or description of record  | Date range | Series number |
|---|------------|---------------|
| <u>Scripts of talks by special speakers, alphabetical order</u>             | 1939–54    | SP300/2       |
| <u>Scripts – reports and correspondence listening and discussion groups</u> | 1939–55    | SP495/1       |

|  |         |          |
|--|---------|----------|
| <u>Vance Palmer collection – scripts of talks presented during his regular ABC radio programme</u> | 1941–59 | SP300/7  |
| <u>Talks serials scripts</u>   | 1945–53 | ST3332/2 |

## Other records of the Talks Department

The table below lists the main administrative records of the Talks Department, which include correspondence files and staff and reporting files.

### Collection references

| Title or description of record  | Date range | Series number |
|---|------------|---------------|
| <u>Correspondence files created by the Talks Department</u>                               | 1936–69    | SP1474/1      |
| <u>Departmental and General Manager's reports</u>   | 1937–54    | SP1558/5      |
| <u>Correspondence – budget and estimates for ABC Talks Department</u>                     | 1938–56    | SP478/2       |
| <u>Diaries relating to radio talks programs, chronological series</u>                     | 1939–66    | C1988         |
| <u>General correspondence files</u>   | 1943–69    | C1979         |
| <u>Personal history files for contributors to ABC Talks programs, alphabetical series</u> | 1945–83    | C1987         |
| <u>Contributors (staff) files to ABC Talks Programs, alphabetical series</u>              | 1945–79    | C2008         |

## Sound recordings of talks

Sound recordings of talks have not been kept as systematically as the related talk scripts. Those that have survived are held within several general series of ABC sound recordings. Relevant series are C102, and C100 and C1827, for which lists are held in the research centre in Sydney.

## Purchasing copies of recordings

The National Archives does not provide copies for sale of ABC, SBS or ScreenAustralia items. To purchase copies, these organisations should be contacted directly. Copies of ABC, SBS and ScreenAustralia items can be made available for viewing in the National Archives' Sydney research centre