

Edward John Connellan and Connellan Airways

Edward John Connellan (1912–83)

Edward John Connellan was born in Melbourne in 1912. He began his working life as a teacher, but his real interests were aviation and the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory.

Having obtained his pilot's licence in 1936 and with the financial backing of friends, Connellan was able to undertake two aerial surveys of the Territory in 1938 in order to assess the potential role of aviation in the Territory's development. The results urged him to establish the service that in time became known as Connellan Airways. He was a keen believer in the benefits aviation could bring to the Territory.

From the 1940s Connellan and his family lived in Alice Springs. They established a small home called *Araluen* west of the town and also developed a cattle station on the property *Narwiotooma*, north-east of the town.

Connellan died in 1983 and is buried in the memorial cemetery at Alice Springs. Adjacent to the cemetery is a museum devoted to Connellan and his airline.

Connellan Airways

In 1939 Connellan persuaded the Commonwealth Government to grant him a subsidy to operate a mail service between Alice Springs and Wyndham, Western Australia and subsequently founded an air transport company based in Alice Springs. The company, initially known as Survey and Inland Transport, became Connellan Airways in 1943 and Connair from 1970. It flew routes throughout the Territory and the north of Western Australia and provided support for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Connair fell into financial difficulty and was bought out by East-West airlines in 1980, but went into liquidation shortly after.

Record holdings

Records relating to E J Connellan and the operations of Connellan Airways are held by the National Archives' offices in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide and Darwin. A selection of items held is included in the table below.

Aerial surveys by E J Connellan

Canberra

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>EJ Connellan. Application to assist NT aerial survey</u>	1937–49	A431, 1949/1113

Melbourne

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Mr EJ Connellan, aerial survey work NT. Notes on method of aerial survey</u>	1940–42	MP508/1, 307/701/30

Connellan Airways and aerial mail services

Canberra

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Connellan's air service, Alice Springs-Wyndham</u>	1938–44	A659, 1944/1/549
<u>Spares for aircraft. EJ Connellan</u>	1943–50	A705, 69/18/285

Melbourne

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Agreement between the Commonwealth and EJ Connellan. Alice Springs and Wyndham air services</u>	1939	MP183/1, 112
<u>Alice Springs-Wyndham service, EJ Connellan</u>	1940–41	MP347/1, 192/115/36
<u>EJ Connellan operation of aircraft</u>	1940–47	MP115/1, 8/101/1300
<u>EJ Connellan. 12 months agreement from 3/2/1941</u>	1941–42	MP347/1, 192/115/78

Darwin

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Inland aerial mail service contract with EJ Connellan, Alice Springs-Wyndham service</u>	1938–40	F1, 1939/697
<u>Inland aerial mail service contract with EJ Connellan, Alice Springs-Wyndham Service (pedal radio sets at Tanami Desert)</u>	1941	F1, 1941/69
<u>Inland aerial mail service contract with EJ Connellan, Alice Springs-Wyndham Service. Emergency landing grounds</u>	1944	F1, 1942/402
<u>Inland aerial mail service, contract with EJ Connellan</u>	1944–47	F1, 1945/42
<u>Ayers Rock – Central Australia, request by EJ Connellan to construct aerodrome in vicinity</u>	1945	F1, 1945/189

Adelaide

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>NT airmail, Barkly Tableland – Alice Springs – Camooweal – Borroloola, Connellan Airways</u>	1944–53	D961, C1952/447

Properties held by E J Connellan

Canberra

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Connellan EJ, application for agricultural lease, NT</u>	1942–45	A659, 1944/1/551

Darwin

Title or description of record	Date range	Series, item number
<u>Narwietooma Station – EJ Connellan</u>	1947–66	E740, P86
<u>Proposed purchase of privately owned residence Araluen, EJ Connellan</u>	1955	F1, 1955/374