

South Australian lighthouse records

The protection of shipping was vital to the developing colony of South Australia. The Cape Willoughby Lighthouse – or Sturt Light as it was originally named – was therefore established on Kangaroo Island in 1852 to guide vessels through the treacherous waters of Backstairs Passage. Other lighthouses were established on Troubridge Island off the coast of Yorke Peninsula in 1855, at Cape Borda on Kangaroo Island in 1858 and at Cape Northumberland, also known as McDonnell Light, in 1859.

For vessels sailing through the Roaring Forties of the Southern Ocean, the Cape Northumberland light was the first light visible on the Australian coast. Construction of lighthouses continued for the remainder of the 19th century and into the 20th century resulting in more than 20 lighthouses along the South Australian coastline.

With Federation in 1901, the administration of lighthouses became a Commonwealth responsibility. However, the transfer of control did not occur until 1915 when the *Lighthouses Act 1911* came into effect.

Record holdings

Records relating to the operation of South Australian lighthouses are held in the Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra and Sydney offices of the National Archives. The earliest South Australian records date from 1852 and include drawings, logbooks, weather reports and various records relating to individual lighthouses as well as central administration records. Details of the major record holdings are listed below.

Lighthouse drawings, plans and images

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Drawings and plans of lighthouses and associated buildings and equipment</u>	1833–1968	A9568
<u>Original drawings, plans and prints of National Estate properties</u>	1847–1980	D1051
<u>Lightstation drawings</u>	1860–	A10182
<u>Glass plate copy negatives of Australian coastal lighthouses</u>	1917–	A6247
<u>Photographs of buildings, installations, sites, etc</u>	1946–97	D3481

General administrative and staffing records

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Register of vessels (arrivals and departures), Port Adelaide</u>	1874–1923	D1
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1924–57	D2014
<u>Correspondence files of the Navigation Section</u>	1921–55	D1911
<u>Taking-on forms (persons taken for lighthouse service)</u>	1934–46	AP143/5
<u>Confidential personal administration files</u>	1952–72	D2113
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1955–92	D935

Records of South Australian lighthouses

A selection of records relating to South Australian lighthouses is listed in the table below.

Cape Borda (Flinders Light)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Log books</u>	1858–1990	D21
<u>Lighthouse log book and monthly return of weather</u>	1966–71	D2159
<u>Monthly fuel and oil statements</u>	1972	D2017

Collection references

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Lighthouse log books</u>	1867–1966	D25
<u>Monthly return of weather</u>	1952–66	D2230
<u>Navigational aid station log books</u>	1971–	D2016
<u>Half-yearly returns of children on lightstation</u>	1976–79	D2924

Cape Willoughby (Sturt Light)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Lighthouse log books</u>	1852–1966	D26
<u>Record of passing vessels</u>	1931–40	D39
<u>Requisitions book</u>	1933–41	D40
<u>Visitors book</u>	1970–	D2037

Lowly Point

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Log books</u>	1883–1973	D18
<u>Record of necessary work</u>	1934–44	D43
<u>Head lightkeepers general order books</u>	1940–44	D45

Register of rainfall observation	1946–72	D2903
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For more information

Records about South Australian lighthouses in the period before Federation can be found at [State Records of South Australia](#).

For information on other Australian lighthouses please see:

- *Fact sheet 122 - Lighthouse records held in Hobart*
- *Fact sheet 233 - Lighthouse records held in Brisbane*