

Indonesian independence

Proclamation of independence

On 17 August 1945 the Indonesian nationalist forces unilaterally declared Indonesian independence after almost 350 years of Dutch rule. Five years of revolution and military hostilities with the Dutch occupation followed. As a result of the intervention of the British and the United Nations Security Council, agreement between the Dutch and Indonesians was reached on 2 November 1949. The Republic of the United States of Indonesia was granted complete and unconditional sovereignty on 27 December 1949.

The Australian government played a significant role in the diplomatic negotiations during this period, with the Minister for External Affairs, Herbert Vere Evatt, taking a keen interest in developments in Indonesia.

Record holdings

The National Archives holds many documents relating to Indonesian independence, mainly located in Canberra. These can be divided into a number of general categories corresponding to Commonwealth government functions. Details of records in the collection relating to five of these functions – Defence, Foreign Relations, Executive Government, Immigration and Security and Intelligence – are listed below.

Location of the records

Records listed under the Defence function in the table overleaf are held by offices of the National Archives or the Australian War Memorial as indicated. All records listed under the remaining categories are held by the National Archives in Canberra.

Identifying records of interest

Some of the record series listed below are large and include many records unrelated to Indonesia. You may need to consult relevant indexes to identify records from these series that are specifically related to Indonesia. Alternately a keyword search for items using [RecordSearch](#) will locate relevant material. Try searching on terms such as *Indonesia*, *Netherlands East Indies*, *RUSI*, *Sukarno*, *Hatta*, and other personal and place names associated with Indonesian independence.

Records with information relating to Indonesian independence

Defence – Canberra

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>The Sir Frederick Shedden collection</u>	1901–70	A5954
<u>Correspondence files, Department of Defence</u>	1935–58	A816
<u>Correspondence files, Department of Air</u>	1935–60	A1196

Defence – Melbourne

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files (general)</u>	1923–50	MP1049/5
<u>Secret correspondence files, Army</u>	1939–45	MP729/7
<u>General and civil staff correspondence files, Army</u>	1943–51	MP742/1
<u>Translations of cypher messages</u>	1945–46	B5555

Defence – Sydney

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>General correspondence files, 'C' (Confidential) series, Australian Military Forces</u>	1934–52	SP1048/6

Australian War Memorial

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Special collection II – Defence Committee records</u>	1939–57	AWM123

Foreign Relations – Canberra Department of External Affairs

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Cumpston collection of documents on Australian foreign policy</u>	1901–69	A4311
<u>Correspondence files (South East Asia Top Secret)</u>	1948–50	A6537
<u>Correspondence files, Department of External Affairs</u>	1945	A1066
<u>Correspondence files, Department of External Affairs</u>	1945–46	A1067
<u>United Nations documents</u>	1969–73	A1726
<u>Correspondence files, Department of External Affairs</u>	1947	A1068
<u>Cables to and from External Affairs Minister, HV Evatt (E series)</u>	1947–49	A9420
<u>Records of the Australian Delegation to the United Nations Security Council Committee of Good Offices [GOC], and United Nations Commission for Indonesia [UNCI]</u>	1947–51	A10158
<u>Correspondence files, Department of External Affairs</u>	1948–89	A1838

Department of External Affairs, Overseas Posts files

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files, Australian High Commission, London</u>	1920–68	A2908
<u>Correspondence files, Washington</u>	1939–87	A3300
<u>Correspondence files, Djakarta/Jakarta</u>	1946–50	A4355
<u>Secret/Top Secret correspondence files, Washington</u>	1949–51	A5460
<u>Correspondence files, Singapore</u>	1946–57	A4968
<u>Correspondence files, Djakarta/Jakarta</u>	1948–50	A4357
<u>Correspondence files, Washington</u>	1949–51	A3094

Immigration

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files, Department of Immigration</u>	1939–50	A659

Executive Government

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files, Prime Minister's Department</u>	1934–50	A461
<u>Correspondence files, Department of Primary Industry</u>	1948–56	A609

Security and intelligence

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>War correspondence files, Attorney-General's Department</u>	1939–49	A472
<u>Subject files (files on organisations and subjects)</u>	1949–	A6122
<u>Microfilm copies of personal and subject files</u>	1949–	A6126

Further sources on Indonesia

- Research guide: *Near Neighbours: Records on Australia's Relations with Indonesia*
- *Fact sheet 238 - The Balibo affair, East Timor, October 1975*