

Naturalisation records held in Canberra

The National Archives in Canberra holds naturalisation records for the Colony of Victoria for the period from 1848 to 1903, and many records for the Commonwealth of Australia from 1904. Details of relevant record series are listed in the table below.

Naturalisation records for the Province of South Australia before 1904 are held by our Adelaide Office.

Naturalisation records for New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania before 1904 are held by the appropriate State government archives. Please see Fact sheet 2 – Addresses of Australian Archival institutions for further information.

Locating the records

Searching the collection

The naturalisation file you are seeking may already be listed on our collection database, RecordSearch. [Search the collection](#) using the surname of the subject as a keyword. Note that the word 'naturalisation' in these file titles may be spelt either *naturalisation* or *naturalization*. Reference staff are available in research centres to guide your research.

The Citizenship Index

If the file you are seeking is not listed on RecordSearch the Department of Immigration Citizenship Index may be consulted. A microfiche version of the Citizenship Index is held by all offices of the Archives. Arranged alphabetically, the index lists all applicants for naturalisation from 1904 to the present. Because it contains information not yet in the open access period the index cannot be made publicly available. Our reference staff will consult it on your behalf to identify the file number and location of records of naturalisations. A search is more likely to be successful if the following information can be supplied:

- full name (include any known alias or alternate spelling of the name)
- date of birth
- date of arrival in Australia
- State of residence at time of naturalisation

Additional sources that may be consulted include the nominal index card series: [A1652](#), [A3907](#) and [A3908](#).

Many naturalisation files are held in Canberra, but depending on the state of residence of the subject at the time of their naturalisation relevant records may be held in another office of the Archives.

In general records relating to naturalisation become publicly available once they enter the open access period.

Contents of the record

Pre-Federation records normally consist of Memorial for Letters of Naturalization (the application), Oath of Memorialist (ie the applicant) and Certificate and Oath of Allegiance. Post-Federation records may also include a Statutory Declaration, Application for Certificate of Naturalization and some routine correspondence.

Volumes of naturalisation certificates issued for the period 1904–62 are also available on microfilm for the period 1904–37. Reference staff can assist in obtaining access to these records.

Series documenting naturalisation

Colony of Victoria

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Letters of naturalisation</u>	1851–1903	A712

Commonwealth of Australia (from 1904)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files (includes naturalisation files)</u>	1903–38	A1
<u>Correspondence files, 'A' series</u>	1910–10	A63
<u>Name index cards, naturalization</u>	1911–56	A1652
<u>Correspondence files (includes naturalisation files, 1939–43)</u>	1939–50	A659
<u>Correspondence files (includes naturalisation files, 1944–50)</u>	1939–50	A435
<u>Nominal index cards (Europeans)</u>	1945–64	A3907
<u>Nominal index cards (non-Europeans)</u>	1945–73	A3908
<u>Correspondence files (migrants) – surnames A–C</u>	1951–52	A439
<u>Correspondence files (migrants) – surnames D–G</u>	1951–52	A440
<u>Correspondence files (migrants) – surnames H–K</u>	1951–52	A441
<u>Correspondence files (migrants) – surnames L–N</u>	1951–52	A442
<u>Correspondence files (migrants) – surnames O–S</u>	1951–52	A443
<u>Correspondence files (migrants) – surnames T–Z</u>	1951–52	A444
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1953–	A446

British citizenship and naturalisation

Prior to 26 January 1949 the process of naturalisation conferred British nationality on applicants. Residents of British, or naturalised British status, were therefore not required to seek naturalisation in order to obtain citizenship. The wife and under-age children of an Australian resident of British, or naturalised British status, automatically gained citizenship upon the naturalisation of the spouse or father.

Amendments to naturalisation legislation which took effect from 26 January 1949 gave recognition to the concept of Australian nationality. This meant that all migrants wishing to become Australian citizens after this date, including spouse and children, and regardless of country of origin, were required to make application for naturalisation.

While many migrants to Australia who were eligible did seek naturalisation, it has never been compulsory. There is therefore no guarantee that a record of naturalisation will exist for all eligible migrants.