

ASIO files on writers and literary groups

ASIO and its role

The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) was established on 16 March 1949 to protect the Commonwealth from espionage and sabotage, and from the actions of persons or organisations (from both inside and outside Australia) judged to be subversive to the security of the Commonwealth. In pursuit of these objectives, ASIO gathered information on a number of prominent Australian literary groups and writers from 1949 onwards. ASIO also inherited earlier records from the Commonwealth Investigation Service (CIS) and other security and police agencies.

ASIO records on literary groups and writers

The National Archives in Canberra holds ASIO files on several Australian literary groups and a large number of Australian writers. Files on individuals are particularly useful in showing their social and political involvement and the causes to which they lent their time and talents.

[Search the collection](#) for details of the records for each of the groups and individuals listed in the tables below. You can search using keywords or the series number and control symbol shown in the right hand column.

Records still in ASIO custody

Please note that the National Archives does not hold *all* ASIO files on literary groups and individual writers, but only those files which have been made available following applications for access under the [Archives Act 1983](#).

Files on other groups or individuals may exist in ASIO's custody and you may apply to us for access to material that is in the [open access period](#) on any as yet unreleased ASIO files. *Fact sheet 33 - Security intelligence records held in Canberra* has details on how to apply for access to ASIO records. Reference staff can assist you in completing your application.

All ASIO records are photocopied before they are released for public access. The copies are made available once any sensitive information has been exempted from release under the Archives Act.

Fact sheet 52 - Exempt information in ASIO records details the type of information in ASIO records that is withheld.

New material from ASIO is continually becoming available to public researchers, so you should regularly [search the collection](#) to ensure that you are aware of the most recent material.

The following tables list ASIO files held on Australian literary groups and writers.

ASIO files on Australian literary groups

Literary group	Date	Series & item no.
ASIO subject files	1949–	<u>A6122</u>
Australian Book Society	1952–58	1192, 1193, 1234 to 1245, 1266
Communist Party of Australia – Writers' Conference	1953	1078
Fellowship of Australian Writers	1935–63	189 to 191, 1493 to 1495
Left Book Club	1938–41	125
Left Book Shop	1938–62	1347
Meanjin (magazine)	1954–56	1152, 1153
New Theatre League	1936–65	411 to 419, 1640 to 1646, 1651 to 1700
Realist Writers' Group	1945–64	1213 to 1216
ASIO film & sound recordings	1949–	<u>A8703</u>
New Theatre League (1955 conference) (available for reference use on videotape)	1955	32/1/1 volume 2 part 2

ASIO files on Australian writers

Name of writer	Date	Series & item no.
ASIO personal files	1949–	<u>A6119</u>
Christesen, Clem	1949–60	94, 275 to 277, 477, 478
Christesen, Nina	1949–60	94, 475, 476
Cusack, Dymphna	1948–57	315, 1555
Dark, Eleanor	1945–93	481
Eldershaw, Flora	1950–55	297
Gilmore, Mary	1949–60	281, 473, 474
Gray, Oriel	1926–62	660
Hardy, Frank	1950–63	286 to 288, 1048, 1049
Hart-Smith, William	1961–62	944
Herbert, Xavier	1957–58	274
Ingamels, Rex	1949–52	291
Kaufmann, Walter	1949–63	515, 516

McKinney, Judith (Judith Wright)	1954–61	630
Marshall, Allan	1949–60	511
Moore, Tom Inglis	1955–65	521
Mudie, Ian	1926–62	659
Murdoch, Walter	1940–60	754
Murray-Smith, Stephen	1947–60	68, 69, 280, 468
Palmer, Nettie	1948–60	112, 470
Palmer, Vance	1948–54	112
Pearl, Cyril	1958–64	103, 448, 1583
Prichard, Katherine Susannah	1919–58	42, 44, 207, 208, 366, 377
Robinson, Roland	1952–62	663, 1183
Simpson, Colin	1945–59	457
Slessor, Kenneth	1959	1289
Stivens, Dallas ('Dal') George	1951–61	985
Tennant (Rodd), Kylie	1935–59	283, 447
Wannon, Bill	1948–62	1197
Waten, Judah	1928–62	101, 264, 357, 446, 814 to 819