

Family history sources held in Canberra

The National Archives holds a valuable collection of family history sources. The majority of these holdings date from Federation in 1901, although in some fields material from the colonial period is held. Records are generally available to the public once they enter the [open access period](#). Information about the main family history sources held by the National Office in Canberra is provided below.

Immigrant arrivals

Passenger lists – The master of each passenger vessel and aircraft arriving at Australian ports was required to provide port authorities with a list of passengers disembarking at that port. The Commonwealth assumed responsibility for passenger arrivals and departures from the states in 1923.

Original passenger lists for all Australian ports from 1924 and microfilm copies of earlier passenger lists for some ports are held. See *Fact sheet 38 – Passenger records held in Canberra* for more information.

Migrant selection documents – The Commonwealth government's participation in the administration of migration schemes dates from 1945. Prior to World War II this responsibility lay principally with the state governments. All offices of the National Archives have considerable holdings of migrant selection documents from 1945, which include schemes for resettlement of refugees and displaced persons, and a range of assisted passage schemes. See *Fact sheet 66 – Migrant selection documents held in Canberra* for more information.

Migrant case files – Migrant case files cover those migrants who were not participants in assisted migration schemes. These are usually held in the general correspondence series of the Department of Immigration, or Australian overseas posts. There are considerable holdings of these records.

Naturalisation records – Naturalisation records for the Commonwealth of Australia from 1904 are held in Canberra, as are some earlier records of the former colony of Victoria. See *Fact sheet 68 – Naturalisation records held in Canberra* for more information.

Indigenous people

Many records relating to the Commonwealth's administration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory from 1911 are held by the National Archives in Canberra. Names of Indigenous people referred to in these records have been indexed in the [Bringing Them Home name index](#). See *Fact sheet 175 – Bringing Them Home name index* for more information.

Military service

Service records for Australians who served with the First AIF in World War I or the Army, Navy or Air Force in World War II are available.

The following fact sheets contain more specific information about holdings:

- *Fact sheet 30 - Navy service records*
- *Fact sheet 31 - Navy crew and ships records*
- *Fact sheet 32 - RAAF service records*
- *Fact sheet 136 - Army service records*
- *Fact sheet 177 - World War I and World War II Service Records*

Electoral records

Main printed electoral rolls are held for the electoral division of the Australian Capital Territory for the period 1930 to 1983 (and the divisions of Canberra and Fraser from 1974) in series [A6354](#).

Aliens, internees and prisoners of war

Aliens – As part of the domestic security measures adopted during the two world wars, aliens living in Australia were required to seek registration. Relevant records are held for both periods and include lists of aliens, registration files, and relevant information within correspondence file series. Further details are listed in the National Archives research guide *Finding Families: The Guide to the National Archives of Australia for Genealogists*.

Internees and prisoners of war – Internment was the wartime confinement within a prescribed area, normally a camp, of people considered to be a threat to domestic security. Internees and prisoners of war were administered under similar arrangements. Details of relevant records are included in the following fact sheets:

- *Fact sheet 58 - World War I internee, alien and POW records held in Canberra*
- *Fact sheet 59 - World War II internee, alien and POW records held in Canberra*

ASIO/Security intelligence files

Security dossiers of individuals (and organisations) identified for surveillance by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and its predecessors, are being progressively transferred from ASIO. Records not already in the custody of the National Archives will be transferred from ASIO on request. See *Fact sheet 33 – Security intelligence records held in Canberra* for more information.

Members of Parliament and Commonwealth government employees

Published sources – A number of government publications contain information on people elected to either the Senate or the House of Representatives, or Commonwealth government employees. These publications include Commonwealth staff and seniority lists (1903 to 1972), Federal guides and Commonwealth government directories (from 1921), Commonwealth of Australia Gazettes and Commonwealth Parliamentary Handbooks (from 1901). See *Fact sheet 22 - Commonwealth of Australia Gazettes*.

Personal files – The personnel records of former public servants will generally be found in the records of the department in which they last worked, or its successor. However, all except the most senior public servants' records are destroyed once the person has or would have reached the age of 75 years.

Personal records collections – The National Archives also holds the personal records of many former governors-general, prime ministers, ministers and senior public servants. [Search the collection](#) using the surname of the person will confirm holdings.

Prime ministers' records – The National Archives holds records about all prime ministers of Australia and personal records collections (some quite small) for the majority of them. See *Fact Sheet 70 - Prime ministers of Australia* for details of fact sheets on all prime ministers to 1991, and the [Australia's Prime Ministers](#) website.