



AIATSIS

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

Manuscript Finding Aid

MS 4122

Records of the Victorian Aboriginal Group

Contents

Collection Summary	3
Cultural Sensitivity Statement	3
Use of the material	3
Language	3
Deceased persons	3
Access to the Collection	4
Access conditions for this collection	4
Access and use conditions - further information	4
Copying and quotation	4
Obtaining access, copying and quotation permissions	4
Preferred citation	4
Collection Overview	5
Scope and contents note	5
Provenance	5
Material separated from the collection	6
Related material	6
Biographical and historical note	6
Controlled Access Headings	8
Archivists note	8

MS 4122: Records of the Victorian Aboriginal Group

Box List _____ 9

Collection Summary

Creator:	Spalding, Ian, 1928-2019
Title:	Records of the Victorian Aboriginal Group
Collection no:	MS 4122
Reference code:	MAR08/173
Date range:	1940 – 1969
Extent:	2.2 linear metres (4 folio boxes + 1 type 2 box)
Repository:	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

Cultural Sensitivity Statement

Use of the material

When using this finding aid, and the collection described within it, clients are encouraged to be mindful and sensitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; particularly with regard to the use of this material. This includes:

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This finding aid and collection may contain words and descriptions which may be culturally inappropriate and insensitive. The language used in this collection may not normally be used in certain public or community contexts. Clients may encounter terms and descriptions, which reflect the author's attitude or that of the period in which the manuscript was written, that may be considered inappropriate today.

Deceased persons

Clients using this finding aid should be aware that in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, seeing images in photographs, films, and books, hearing voices in recordings, or seeing names of deceased persons in collection material may cause sadness or distress; and in some cases offend strongly held cultural beliefs.

Access to the Collection

Access conditions for this collection

Open access - reading. Partial copying and use – copyright conditions. Not for Inter-Library Loan.

Access and use conditions - further information

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Preferred citation

Items from this collection should be cited as: Title or description of manuscript item, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, MS [Insert number], Series [insert number], Subseries [insert number], Item or Folder [insert number].

For example:

Newspaper clippings, 1956, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, MS 4122, Item 2.

Collection Overview

Scope and contents note

This collection consists of newspaper clippings and correspondence collated by the Victorian Aboriginal Group.

The newspaper clippings cover a wide variety of issues on Indigenous affairs, taken from a range of newspapers across all states including The Age, The Australian, The Herald, The Sun, The Anglican and The Western Australian. The source of the clipping was not always noted.

The Victorian Aboriginal Group pasted most of the clippings into albums, in roughly chronological order, but some loose clippings have also been included. A small number of additional papers have been inserted into the albums. For example, in the 1952-1957 album (MS4122/1) there is some correspondence regarding newspaper reports and there are four copies of the 8th Annual report of the National Association for the Advancement of the Native Race. In the 1967 album (MS4122/8), there are flyers for the St. Catherine's Opportunity Shop and for the National Aborigines' Day Observance Committee, part of the 23rd Annual report of the Victorian Division of the Save the Children's Fund (1966/67) and a publicity card for Lionel Rose.

Newspaper clippings date range is 1952-1969.

Most of the correspondence in the collection is addressed to the Victorian Aboriginal Group, received from various missions, government agencies, churches and other organisations including the Finke River Mission, Groote Eylandt Mission, Western Australian Native Welfare Council, Social Services, diocese of North Queensland and the Apex Club of Melbourne. There is also some correspondence written by the Victorian Aboriginal Group.

Correspondence date range is 1940-1969.

Provenance

Ian Spalding, the custodian of the press clippings for the Victorian Aboriginal Group, deposited the clippings (Items 1-10) in the AIATSIS Library in 2000.

Ian Spalding deposited the correspondence (Item 11) under MAR08/173.

Material separated from the collection

Published material has been separated from the collection and transferred into AIATSIS Library titles including:

- RS 21.3/5 Victorian Aboriginal Group's *Annual report* 1966 and 1967.
- S 25.2/2 *Dawn: a magazine for Aboriginal people of N.S.W.*, March 1967 and December 1968.
- RS 25.2/1 Report of the Aborigines Protection Board, South Australia, 1961-1962.
- RS 25.4/3 *Annual report of the Director of Native Affairs, Queensland*, 1962-1963.

Related material

For a complete list of works by Ian Spalding held by the AIATSIS Library, and for other related material consult [Mura®](#), the AIATSIS catalogue.

For access to Audio / Visual material please go to the 'Contact us' page on the AIATSIS website at aiatsis.gov.au or phone (02) 6246 1111

Important: Before clicking on the links to the catalogue entries please read our sensitivity message found on the 'Search the Collection' page on the AIATSIS website at aiatsis.gov.au

Biographical and historical note

The Victorian Aboriginal Group

The Victorian Aboriginal Group was formed as a study circle in February 1930 by the writers A. S. Kenyon, R. H. Croll and others in response to the 1929 publication of J. W. Bleakley's report on the conditions of Indigenous people in the Northern Territory.

The Group was a small organisation of non-Indigenous men and women who worked for rather than with Indigenous people and communities. They had what would now be considered a paternalistic sense of duty and aimed to promote the welfare of Indigenous people and influence public opinion in their favour.

The Group pursued its objectives through accepted political means including writing to government, newspapers, politicians, missionary organisations and welfare bodies; annual meetings and reports; and lectures to schools and organisations. The Group also sold 'traditional' Aboriginal handicrafts and artefacts and provided practical educational

assistance to mission schools and opportunities for Indigenous students to receive further education.

Two women became the Group's driving force, Miss V. A. Leeper (daughter of Alexander Leeper, the educationalist) as the honorary treasurer, and Miss Amy Brown, as the honorary secretary. Among its affiliates were missionary societies and women's organisations such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and it was linked with influential humanitarian bodies in Sydney and London.

In its early years, the Group advocated a policy of protection, federal control of Indigenous affairs and a uniform policy through the use of so called 'expert' anthropological advice, and the deployment of trained personnel, including women, as protectors. A permanent society emerged by 1933 and it existed until 1971 when it amalgamated with the National Association for the Advancement of the Native Race.

The Group lobbied government in the 1930s on conditions at Lake Tyers and Framlingham reserves and Indigenous fringe camps throughout Victoria. The Group was one voice urging a committee of inquiry which resulted in the McLean Inquiry of 1956 (an inquiry commissioned to review and recommend changes to Victoria's Aboriginal affairs policy).

Later, the Group recommended assimilation whereby Indigenous people would be 'helped' by being absorbed into European culture, and they opposed segregation since its members saw no future for Indigenous culture. The Group's records are concerned with Indigenous affairs continent-wide, but three or four of the eleven items in the series contain material on its political welfare efforts for Victorian Kooris.

The Group supported reform and was reluctant to confront government or be involved in controversy. As a result, the Group had little influence, even before its decline in the 1960s and eventual demise in 1971. Yet its members typify the opinions of many non-Indigenous people in Melbourne who were dedicated to the cause of Indigenous welfare between the 1930s and 1960s.

Ian Spalding

Ian Spalding was born in Victoria in 1928. Ian and his brother Alan boarded at Geelong College. Following school, Ian returned to Ararat to work with his father in the family business (stock and station agency), as well as study commerce. By 1954, Ian had moved to Melbourne and was on teaching staff at Wesley College. Ian married Barbara and together they had three daughters.

Ian's second career was in international aid and community development, and he was involved in the Victorian Aboriginal Group. In the 1965 Pegasus Magazine (Geelong College publication), it is reported that "IAN F. SPALDING ('45) recently left on a six-months caravan tour with his wife and young daughter to investigate conditions in aboriginal establishments throughout the northern parts of Australia. Ian, who is the Convenor of the Melbourne publication "Aboriginal Affairs", is working with a grant from

a private foundation.” Aboriginal Affairs was a forum established in approximately 1962 in Melbourne to promote discussion about Indigenous advancement and welfare. Ian Spalding passed away on 7 April 2019, aged 90 years.

References

The Geelong College

<https://gnet.tgc.vic.edu.au/wiki/SPALDING-Ian-Frank-1928-2019.ashx>

The University of Melbourne

<https://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM01548b.htm>

<https://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/guides/barw/BARP008.htm>

State Library Victoria

<http://latrobejournal.slv.vic.gov.au/latrobejournal/issue/latrobe-43/t1-g-t15.html>

Victorian Government

<https://www.vic.gov.au/stolen-generations-reparations-steering-committee-report/chapter-2-victorian-stolen-generations-0>

Controlled Access Headings

Education

Health

History

Housing

Government policy

Media – Print media

Media – Journalism

Politics and Government – Political action – Anti racism

Race relations – Representation – Media

Socioeconomic conditions – Living conditions

Archivists note

The collection was first processed in February 2002 and originally contained ten items (Items numbered 1-10).

The AIATSIS Library photocopied the original items numbered 2-10 for preservation purposes. This photocopied material was initially included in the collection as Items 11-19. These copies are still available to use as Access copies, however they are no longer regarded as collection items (Items 11-19). Please note that the photocopies of Item 10 are missing.

Additional material received from Ian Spalding under MAR08/173 was incorporated into MS4122 as Item 11 in September 2022.

MS 4122: Records of the Victorian Aboriginal Group

The title of the collection was amended in September 2022 to reflect its contents more accurately (title amended from “Victorian Aboriginal Group Press Clippings Collection” to “Records of the Victorian Aboriginal Group”).

Items

MS4122/1	Newspaper clippings, 1952-1957.
MS4122/2	Newspaper clippings, 1956. [Access copy is available]
MS4122/3	Newspaper clippings, 1962. [Access copy is available]
MS4122/4	Newspaper clippings, 1963. [Access copy is available]
MS4122/5	Newspaper clippings, 1964. [Access copy is available]
MS4122/6	Newspaper clippings, 1965. [Access copy is available]
MS4122/7	Newspaper clippings, 1966. [Access copy is available]
MS4122/8	Newspaper clippings, 1967. [Access copy is available]
MS4122/9	Newspaper clippings, 1968. [Access copy is available]
MS4122/10	Newspaper clippings, 1969. [Access copy is missing]
MS4122/11	Correspondence, 1940-1969

Box List

Items	Box
1-3	1
4-7	2
8-10	3
11	4

Finding aid compiled by J. Churches, February 2002.
Updated June 2008.
Further update by Robyn Garcia, September 2022.

[Back to top](#)