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Collection Summary

Creator: The Aboriginal Treaty Committee and HC Coombs
Collection no: MS 1867
Date range: 1976-1994
Extent: 5.8 linear metres, 34 boxes (32 archival boxes and 2 folio boxes)
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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Clients using this finding aid should be aware that in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, seeing images of deceased persons in photographs, film and books or hearing them in recordings etc. may cause sadness or distress; and in some cases offend strongly held cultural beliefs.
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**Access conditions for this collection**
Open access - reading. Open copying and quotation. Not for Inter-library Loan.

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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 Number, Series Number, Subseries Number, Item or Folder Number.

For example:

Meeting minutes and agenda, Apr 1979-May 1981, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, MS 1867, Series 1, Item 1
Collection Overview

Scope and contents note

The bulk of the collection is material arising from operation of the ATC which ran from 1979-1983 under the chairmanship of Dr HC Coombs. Also included is material on Dr Coombs and other former ATC members efforts to advance a Treaty, and in support of Aboriginal rights, after the ATC ended.

The papers have been arranged in four series: Administrative Papers of the Aboriginal Treaty Committee, 1979-1983; Correspondence; Resource Material and Fundraising; and HC Coombs’ ATC and Other Papers 1976-1994.

The first series includes meeting minutes and agendas, financial statements and accounting information and banking records.

Series two covers correspondence on office operations, publications, land rights legal papers, conferences, exchanges with governmental and non-governmental bodies, and between the ATC and its support groups.

Series three consists of papers on ATC publications and resource materials, conference papers and information on fund raising activities and donors.

Series four contains further ATC correspondence, administrative papers and some meeting records, resource and fund-raising material, as well as material on Dr Coombs and other former ATC members work on a Treaty and other Aboriginal rights issues after the Committee ended. The ATC was Canberra-based but campaigned nationally for a Treaty and on land rights and related issues, including through its extensive network of support groups.

Provenance

Dr Coombs deposited the initial collection of ATC papers in December 1983, following the Committee’s termination (MS 1867). A second collection of ATC and other papers (initially processed as MS 3783) was deposited around 1994, most likely also by Dr Coombs although a separate deposit form has not been located. A note from the AIATSIS Library indicated that MS 3783 should be incorporated into MS1867.

Material separated from the collection

No material has been separated from this collection.
Related material

See also Dr HC Coombs' papers relating to the establishment of the ATC, MS 1897.

For a complete list of ATC material held by the 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

Administrative / Biographical history note

The Aboriginal Treaty Committee, a voluntary non-government body, was established on 29 April 1979 for the purpose of obtaining and spreading information on the need for a formal Treaty between the Commonwealth Government and Aboriginal representatives chosen by Aborigines to negotiate on their behalf. Its activities included the publication of newspaper advertisements, the book, ‘It’s Coming Yet’, a number of pamphlets on land rights, media publicity, the organisation and encouragement of academic and public seminars and conferences, and nine issues of Aboriginal Treaty News.

The Committee terminated in November 1983. Following cessation of the ATC, Dr Coombs and other former ATC members continued to campaign for a Treaty and for the advancement of Aboriginal rights. Publications by former ATC members include Judith Wright’s ‘We Call For A Treaty’, written mainly while the ATC was extant and published in 1985. In the book’s final chapter Dr Coombs summed up the ATC’s work and suggestions for future action.

Archivists note

The collection was rehoused in 2020 and the material previously processed as MS 3783 was incorporated into MS 1867. The Finding Aid was updated in May 2021. Series 1-3 comprise the original MS 1867 material and retain the item numbering from that collection. While now part of MS 1867, the former MS 3783 material is preserved as a separate Series (Series 4 HC Coombs’ ATC and Other Papers).
Series Description

Series 1  Administrative papers of the ATC 1979-1983

This series includes meeting minutes and agendas, financial statements and accounting information and banking records.

Items

1. Meeting minutes and agenda, Apr 1979-May 1981
3. Meeting minutes and agenda, Jul 1982-Aug 1983
4. Correspondence with Commonwealth Trading Bank and Price Waterhouse
5. Financial statements and Auditor’s report, 1982-1983
6. Finance sub-committee minutes
7. Press statements and advertisements
10. Accounts, Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, 1981
15. Accounts, Apr, May 1982
17. Accounts, Jun-Nov 1982
19. Accounts, Jan-Nov 1983
20. Accounts, Jan-Nov 1983


21(a)-21(b) Business entry sheets (oversize Item 21(b) held in Box 3)
21(c) Bank statements, May 1979-Feb 1984
21(d) Accounts general journal
21(e) Correspondence record
21(f) Office banking record, 1979-1980
21(g) Payments journal, Jul 1980-Apr 1981
21(h) Office daybook, 1984
21(i) Office banking record, 1982-1983
21(j) Bank receipts, 1980-1983
21(k) Banking ledger, 1979-1980
21(l) Bank books, cheque book stubs, receipt books, bank deposit slips (held in Box 4)

**Series 2  Correspondence**

The second series includes correspondence on office operations, publications, land rights legal papers, conferences, exchanges with governmental and non-governmental bodies, and between the ATC and its network of support groups.

**Items**

22. Office Operations - Childers Street office
23. Office Operations - Lease of office and equipment
24. Office Operations - Legal correspondence for Committee
25. Office Operations - Department of Taxation
26. Office Operations - Department of Taxation
27. Office Operations - Lectures and interviews by ATC Members
28. Office Operations - Correspondence/Committee members
29. Office Operations - Correspondence about a Treaty
30. Office Operations - Requests for material from non-sponsors
31. Office Operations - Support for Treaty - non-sponsors
32. Aboriginal Treaty News - General correspondence
33. Aboriginal Treaty News - General correspondence
34. Aboriginal Treaty News – Subscriptions
35. Aboriginal Treaty News – Subscriptions
36. Aboriginal Treaty News – Advertising
37. Commonwealth Games
38. Community Groups - Business community
39. Community Groups - Religious community
40. Community Groups - Aboriginal organisation - NAIHO, FAIRO, Blackbooks, legal services, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, resource centres
41. General groups - Citizens for Democracy and others
42. Conservation Groups - National Conservation Strategy
43. Conservation Groups - Human Rights Commission
44. Conservation Groups - Environment centres
45. Educational Institutions - Student Organisations
46. Educational Institutions - Student Organisations
47. Educational Institutions - Aboriginal Law Research Unit, University of NSW
48. Educational Institutions - Universities and CAEs
49. Educational Institutions - Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies
50. Educational Institutions – Schools
51. Media - General file
52. Phillip Adams
53. Advertising in journals
54. Advertising in newspapers
55. Advertising sources
56. Publications subscriptions
57. Overseas Organisations
58. United Nations Association of Australia. Correspondence about UN Media Peace Prize and copy of award
59. Committee Against Racial Exploitation (CARE)
60. Unions
61. Aboriginal Land Councils
62. 1983 Federal Election Campaign. Fund-raising for Aboriginal candidates
63. Government, State and Commonwealth - Correspondence with Senate Standing Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs
64. Government, State and Commonwealth - Letter to political parties canvassing attitudes to negotiating a treaty
65. Government, State and Commonwealth - Correspondence with politicians
66. Government, State and Commonwealth - Correspondence with political parties on general attitudes to Aboriginal issues
67. Government, State and Commonwealth - Australian Democrats, correspondence and policy
68. Government, State and Commonwealth - ALP policy and comments
69. Government, State and Commonwealth - Government lists
70. Government, State and Commonwealth - State Parliament correspondence
71. Government, State and Commonwealth - Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
73. Government, State and Commonwealth - Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
74. Government, State and Commonwealth - Office for Community Relations
75. Aboriginal Groups - Draft letter to groups and individuals on recording their views, sample questions
76. Aboriginal Groups - General correspondence
77. Aboriginal Groups - Land Rights, 1979-1980
78. Department of Aboriginal Affairs
79. National Aboriginal Conference
80. Land rights legal papers - General papers and correspondence with legal services and representatives
81. Land rights legal papers - General papers and correspondence with legal services and representatives
82. Land rights legal papers – Noonkanbah
83. Land rights legal papers - Queensland land rights legislation including 'Deeds of Grant in Trust'
85. Conferences - 'Aborigines and International Law', ANU, Nov, 1983
86. Conferences - 'Fourth Russell Tribunal on the Rights of Indians', Rotterdam, November 1980

87. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Canberra Support Group

88. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Interest expressed in support group movement in individual states

89. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Interest expressed in support group movement in individual states

90. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - ANU Aboriginal Support Group

91. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Interest expressed in support group movement in individual states

92. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - NSW Lismore (Ms Belcher)

93. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - NSW Paddington (Ms J. Byrnes)

94. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - NSW Mona Vale (Mrs P. Beasley)

95. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - NSW Gordon (Mrs B Fulton)

96. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - NSW Turramurra (Dr R. Langley)

97. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Qld Brisbane

98. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Qld Bundaberg

99. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Qld Rockhampton

100. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Interest expressed in support group movement in individual states

101. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Qld Townsville (Noel Loos)

102. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Qld Boonah-Kalbah

103. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Qld Gold Coast 1980-1983 (Sylvia Monk)

104. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Qld Gold Coast 1980-1983 (Sylvia Monk)

105. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Qld Gold Coast 1980-1983 (Sylvia Monk)
106. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Interest expressed in support group movement in individual states

107. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - NT Alice Springs

108. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - SA Adelaide

109. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Interest expressed in support group movement in individual states

110. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Tas Ferntree (Tom Errey)

111. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Interest expressed in support group movement in individual states

112. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Vic Melbourne

113. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Vic Geelong

114. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Vic Melbourne State College

115. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - Interest expressed in support group movement in individual states

116. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - WA Mt Lawley

117. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups – England

118. Aboriginal Treaty Committee Support Groups - West Germany.

### Series 3  Resource material and fund raising

Includes ATC publications and resource materials, conference papers and material on fund raising activities and donors.

#### Items

119. Fund-raising projects - Book club

120. Fund-raising projects - Book club

121. Fund-raising projects - Book club

122. Fund-raising projects - Judith Wright-McKinney's correspondence about ATC book

123. Fund-raising projects - Film lists

124. Fund-raising projects - Film Festival
125. Fund-raising projects - Manuscript collection, correspondence with authors, National Library, catalogue
126. Fund-raising projects - Manuscript collection, correspondence with authors, National Library, catalogue
127. Fund-raising projects - Manuscript collection, correspondence with authors, National Library, catalogue
128. Fund-raising projects - Manuscript collection, correspondence with authors, National Library, catalogue
129. Fund-raising projects - Manuscript collection, correspondence with authors, National Library, catalogue
130. Fund-raising projects - Myer Foundation
131. Fund-raising projects - Oral program
132. Fund-raising projects – Publications
133. Fund-raising projects – Embroidery
134. Publications by Aboriginal Treaty Committee - 'It's coming yet'
135. Publications by Aboriginal Treaty Committee - 'It's coming yet'
136. Publications by Aboriginal Treaty Committee - 'It's coming yet'
137. Publications by Aboriginal Treaty Committee - 'It's coming yet'
138. Publications by Aboriginal Treaty Committee - 'It's coming yet'
140. Publications by Aboriginal Treaty Committee - Possible publications
141. Publications by Aboriginal Treaty Committee - Pamphlets, poster
142. Publications by Aboriginal Treaty Committee - Land rights publications
143. Publications by Aboriginal Treaty Committee - Other publications including cards
144. Publications by Aboriginal Treaty Committee - Other publications including cards
145.  Aborigine Art Exhibition, Sydney, 9 Jan-1 Feb 1981
146.  Speakers; volunteers prepared to speak on Treaty concept and other issues
147.  Letters to and responses from supporters during fund drives
148.  Letters to sponsors and list of donors
149.  Sponsors addresses
149(a)  Envelope address files containing original letter of support
150.  Resource material - Land rights kit prepared for Commonwealth Games, 1982
151.  Resource material - 'Aboriginal rights in international law', Gordon Bennett, 1980
152.  Resource material - Human rights Bill, 1973
154.  Resource material - Papers on Makarrata
155.  Resource material - Kembi land claim
156.  Resource material - NT Land Rights Bill, 1976, 1979
158.  Resource material - Miscellaneous papers on Aboriginal land rights, law and treaty
159.  Resource material - Transcript of cable to K Colbung from Indian Association of Alberta, Canada
160.  Resource material - Aboriginal comments on Makarrata
161.  Resource material - Murray Island land claim and correspondence
162.  Resource material - AMAX material
163.  Resource material – HC Coombs papers and tape transcripts concerning Treaty and land rights
164. Resource material - Senate Standing Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs, papers and report


168. Resource material - Sociological studies

169. Resource material - Sociological studies


171. Conference papers presented by ATC - 'Aborigines and international law', ANU, 1983

172. Conference papers presented by ATC - 'Race relations', seminar, James Cook University, Townsville, 1981

173. Conference papers presented by ATC - 'Race relations', seminar, James Cook University, Townsville, 1981

174. Conference papers presented by ATC - 'Race relations', seminar, James Cook University, Townsville, 1981

174(a) North American Indians

175. Publications - Aboriginal Treaty Committee, Newsletter. 20 May 1980

176. Publications - Aboriginal Treaty Committee, Newsletter. 1 October 1980

177. Publications - Aboriginal Treaty News, No. 1


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<tr>
<td>185</td>
<td>Publications - Aboriginal Treaty News, No. 9, Oct, 1983</td>
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<td>186</td>
<td>Publications - Information brief for 'It's coming yet'</td>
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<tr>
<td>187</td>
<td>Publications - 'A Makaratta - the legal options'</td>
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<td>188</td>
<td>Publications - 'The importance of Noonkanbah'</td>
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<td>189</td>
<td>Publications - 'We call for a treaty', pamphlet</td>
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<td>190</td>
<td>Publications - 'It's coming yet', Stewart Harris – Summary</td>
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<td>191</td>
<td>Publications - 'It's coming yet', Stewart Harris</td>
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<td>Publications - 'Support a Treaty'</td>
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<td>201</td>
<td>Publications - 'The Makaratta - some ways forward'</td>
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201 (a) Publications - Coombs, HC, 'Signing an Australian Peace Treaty'
Social Alternatives, Vol 1, nos. 6/7, 1980

202-212. Background material used in Aboriginal Treaty News
213-243. 'We call for a Treaty', Judith Wright-McKinney, manuscript and source material

Includes press clippings, working correspondence, ATC meeting records and reports, articles and talks, tape transcripts

244. Sponsorship

245. Items added by Judith Wright, Aug 1988

(Nothing was found under this item when the collection was re-housed in Feb 2020)


Also includes material on land rights, Aboriginal health and access to legal aid, conference papers and parliamentary reports

247. Scrap book of press clippings (held in box 31)

**Series 4  HC Coombs’ ATC and other papers 1976-1994**

This series includes further ATC correspondence, administrative papers including meeting records, and resource and fund raising material, as well as documents on ATC follow-up and Aboriginal rights issues after the ATC was terminated.

Series 4 was initially processed as MS 3783 before being incorporated into MS1867.

**Subseries 1 Administrative papers**

**Items**


MS1867/4/2 Meetings, Dec 1981-Aug 1983, Pt 1, Pt 2

**Subseries 2 Correspondence**

**Items**

MS1867/4/2/1 General: 1980-1984 Correspondence List. Letter on Public Lending Rights for 'We Call for a Treaty', 1988

MS1867/4/2/2 General: 1982-1990, Pt 1, Pt 2
Subseries 3 Resource material and fund raising

Items

| MS1867/4/3/1 | Press clippings and related material, 1981-1992 |
| MS1867/4/3/2 | Makarrata Papers, 1979-1982 |
| MS1867/4/3/5 | Barunga Statement, 1988 |

Box List

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