Where to get help – New South Wales

Organisations in each state and territory can help with your Indigenous family history research. There are also a number of national organisations and non-government websites that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history.

- **Libraries** hold a range of material that is useful for family history, including books, indexes and original manuscripts. Many larger libraries have special family history librarians who can help you with your research. Some libraries have online research guides to help you understand their collections.

- **Archives** hold original records, created by government agencies, private organisations or individuals. Archives are different from libraries, and you will need help from an archivist to locate and access records.

- **Indigenous family history services** are provided by state and territory governments to assist you in accessing records and personal information about your and your ancestors held in government archives.

- **Link-Up organisations** provide services to members of the Stolen Generations, their families, and foster and adoptive families. These include researching family and personal records, finding family members and support and counselling.

- **Organisations for adoptees and care leavers** (and their families) can help you find information about your personal and family history and connect you with family. They also provide counselling and support services.

- **Family history community projects and organisations** offer practical help in researching your family history. Some are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focused. They may have library collections, computers, online resources and provide training courses and workshops.

**Before you contact them**

Try to collect and organise as much information as you can before approaching organisations for help. They will need names, dates and places in order to help you with your research.

See Family history sources for more information.
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

The AIATSIS Family History Unit can help people researching their Indigenous family history. The AIATSIS Finding Your Family website is an online resource with a focus on helping people to learn how to do Indigenous family history research. AIATSIS offers an Australia-wide service. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index enables you to do an online name search of some of the material in the collection. AIATSIS cannot compile family trees or help you to confirm Aboriginality.

51 Lawson Crescent, Acton ACT 2601
GPO Box 553, Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: 02 6246 1111
Freecall: 1800 352 553
Fax: 02 6261 4285
Email: familyhistory@aiatsis.gov.au
Web: www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family

State Library of New South Wales

The State Library of New South Wales has a significant collection of books and manuscript material relating to Aboriginal people, as well as many family history resources. The family history area of the library has staff who can help you get started with your research and show you how to use the library’s collections. You can also contact the Indigenous Services librarians.

Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Ph: 02 9273 1414
Fax: 02 9273 1255
Email: info.koori@sl.nsw.gov.au (Indigenous Services)
www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/family_history (Family History)

State Records NSW

State Records NSW holds NSW state government records. Many records relate to Aboriginal people, in particular those created by the Aborigines Protection Board (later Aborigines Welfare Board) from the 1880s to the 1960s.

If you think there might be state government records about your Aboriginal family, you can contact the Family Records Unit at Aboriginal Affairs (see below) who can search on your behalf.

143 O’Connell Street, Kingswood NSW 2747
PO Box 516, Kingswood NSW 2747
Family Records Unit – Aboriginal Affairs

The Family Records Unit at Aboriginal Affairs helps people from New South Wales access state government records about themselves and their family. They also give researchers permission to access Aborigines Protection Board and Aborigines Welfare Board records.

Level 13, Tower B, Centennial Plaza, 300 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010
Free call: 1800 019 998
Ph: 02 9219 0700
Fax: 02 9219 0790
Email: familyhistory@aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au
Web: www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/about/family-records-unit/

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (NSW)

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages has records of birth, death and marriage in New South Wales from 1856, as well as some earlier church records. You can search family history indexes online. If you need to contact the registry you can request that an Indigenous staff member handle your inquiry. The cost of BDM records varies from state to state but is normally $30 to $50 per certificate. There is a fee waiver policy that includes Stolen Generations and forced adoptions.

35 Regent Street, Chippendale NSW 2008
GPO Box 30, Sydney NSW 2001
Ph: 13 77 88
Email: bdm-familyhistory@agd.nsw.gov.au (for questions about family history searches)
Web: www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/family-history/family-history (Family history)
www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/Pages/contact-us/aboriginal (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services)

Link-Up New South Wales Aboriginal Corporation

Link-Up NSW assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the Stolen Generations – those who have been fostered, adopted or raised in institutions under government policies of the time. Link-Up helps members of the Stolen Generations trace their families and be reunited with them (or their gravesites, country or kin).
Find & Connect Support Service New South Wales – Wattle Place

Find & Connect supports people who grew up in orphanages, children’s homes, institutions and foster homes in New South Wales from the 1920s to the 1990s, no matter where they live. Find & Connect can help you obtain your personal records, trace your history and understand why you were placed into care, as well as providing counselling and other services.

67 High Street, Harris Park NSW 2150
Free call: 1800 16 11 09 or 1800 663 844
Email: wattleplace@ransw.org.au
Web: www.findandconnect.gov.au (Find & Connect)

Post Adoption Resource Centre – Benevolent Society

The Benevolent Society’s Post Adoption Resource Centre provides information, counselling and support to people affected by adoption in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

Suite 253, Level 5, 7–11 The Avenue, Hurstville NSW 1481
Ph: 02 9504 6788
Email: parc@bensoc.asn.au
Web: www.benevolent.org.au/connect/post--adoption--support--home

Adoption and Permanent Care Services Unit – Family and Community Services

The Adoption and Permanent Care Services Unit offers services about past adoptions in New South Wales to adoptees, birth parents, adoptive parents and other family members.

Ph: 02 8855 4900
Email: adoption@community.nsw.gov.au
National Archives of Australia (Sydney)

The National Archives of Australia holds federal government records, including many about Indigenous Australians (mostly people from Victoria and the Northern Territory). The archives has offices around Australia. Records about New South Wales are mostly held in Sydney and Canberra. The Bringing Them Home name index can help you find information about Indigenous family members in National Archives records. The index isn’t public, but the Archives will do a search for you.

The National Archives also holds military service records of all people who have served in the armed services since the Boer War (1899–1902). The WW1 records have been digitised and are available online. These are an excellent source of family history information for the thousands of Indigenous military servicepersons.

120 Miller Road, Chester Hill NSW 2162
Locked Bag 4, Chester Hill NSW 2162
Ph: 02 9782 4900
Fax: 02 9782 4999
Email: ref@naa.gov.au
Web: www.naa.gov.au/collection/a-z/aboriginal-people.aspx (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people)
www.naa.gov.au/collection/family-history (Family history)

National Library of Australia

The National Library collects and makes available material of national significance about Australia and Australians. It holds books, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs and oral histories that could be useful in researching your family – much of this is available online through Trove. The library has a family history collection and staff you can help you to locate material.

Parkes Place, Canberra ACT 2600
Ph: 02 6262 1111
Fax: 02 6257 1703
Ask a Librarian (online contact form): www.nla.gov.au/askalibrarian

Australian War Memorial

Indigenous people have served in every military conflict that Australia has been involved in since the Boer War (1899–1902). Military records are a rich source of information about the men and women who served in the armed forces, and sometimes their family members.
Some pastoral station owners or managers kept records like diaries, wage and ration books, and registers of births, deaths and marriages. The Noel Butlin Archives Centre at the Australian National University in Canberra holds some of these records, mainly for farms and cattle properties in New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

ANU Archives
The Australian National University
Menzies Building
2 Fellows Rd
Acton ACT 2601
Ph: 02 6125 2219
Email: butlin.archives@anu.edu.au
Web: archives.anu.edu.au/collections

Research guides for Indigenous family history

Research guides provide comprehensive information for people doing family history research. They often include an outline of the history of colonisation and Aboriginal protection/welfare legislation, linking these to the records that were created about Indigenous people.

Books published by AIATSIS

- Penny Taylor, *Telling it like it is: A guide to making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history*, AIATSIS, 1992

Aboriginal Australians family history – State Library of NSW
Indigenous communities – State Records NSW

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people – National Archives of Australia

Indigenous family history websites

There are many family history websites, some developed by individuals or communities doing their own family histories, some developed by individuals or organisations to help people with Indigenous family histories. New sites come online everyday.

- Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies – a searchable collection of material from state and territory archives. Contains personal information that some people may find objectionable. www.cifhs.com

General family history organisations

Family history groups, local history societies and local libraries

Local family history groups, local history societies and local libraries are valuable sources of information and resources. They can put you in contact with people with a good knowledge of the local history of a town or area that you are interested in. Many also have local studies collections with books, newspapers, family histories, photographs and manuscripts.

Find local libraries

You can use Australian Libraries Gateway – Find a Library (www.nla.gov.au/apps/libraries) to locate libraries in New South Wales with family history and local history collections. Under location select ‘NSW’ and under library type select ‘Local/Family history’. You can also browse using the map.

Family history research websites

- CoraWeb: a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links and useful advice about tracing your family history (Australia)

- Ancestry – Help & Advice: general family history advice, as well as information about using Ancestry’s paid services (Australia)

- Cyndi’s List: a comprehensive, categorised and cross-referenced list of links that point you to genealogical research sites online (USA)

- FamilySearch Learning Center: articles and short online courses put together by the largest genealogical organisation in the world (USA)
Find family history and historical societies


Society of Australian Genealogists

The Society of Australian Genealogists helps people trace their family history, providing genealogy advice and running workshops and lectures. It has an excellent family history library and a manuscript collection in central Sydney.

‘Richmond Villa’, 120 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Ph: 02 9247 3953
Fax: 02 9241 4872
Email: info@sag.org.au
Web: www.sag.org.au