

Correspondence files ('AO' later 'AD' files) – Aborigines Office and successor

1866 – 1969

To access these records:

Please contact the State Records Research Centre:

Postal Address: GPO Box 464, Adelaide SA 5001

Phone: 08 7322 7077

Reference Number

Website: <https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/contact-us>

Quote this number to access your records: State Records of South Australia Series ID, GRG52/1

Records Location

These records are part of [Correspondence - Aboriginal Women's Home, North Adelaide \(1925 - 1929\)](#), [Kurbingai Boys Home General Docket - Prop: WJ Sutton, 128 Esplanade, Semaphore \(1958 - 1962\)](#) and [Letter from Professor JB Cleland on the history of Campbell House \(1959\)](#)

Details

The Correspondence files of the Aborigines Office and its successors are the major series of correspondence of the state government department responsible for the administration of Aboriginal affairs in the period 1866 through to 1969. The files include letters, memoranda, reports and many other documents. Files relate to individuals, families, Missions, Homes. Policies and many other subjects.

Access Conditions

A Research Centre Members card, obtainable at the Archives, is required to research records held at State Records.

Although some very early records relating to children in care in South Australia are open for access, most records relating to children are subject to a 100 year restriction, particularly those which contain personal information about individuals. Written permission must be obtained from the government agency which created the record in order to access restricted material. To obtain permission a Freedom of Information (FOI) request form must be submitted to the relevant government department. State Records staff will be able to assist you with this.

Records

The Correspondence files of the Aborigines Office and its successors are the major series of correspondence of the state government department responsible for the administration of Aboriginal affairs in the period 1866 through to 1969. This includes the Aborigines Office from 1866 to 1912, the Aborigines Department, 1912-1962 and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1962-1969.

The correspondence files include letters, memoranda, reports and many other documents. Files relate to individuals, families, missions, Homes, policies and many other subjects. Many subject files or files related to

Homes or Missions contain the names and details of Aboriginal people, including children. Documents related to a particular person, issue or subject created over many years may be placed on the same file. The file covers also often have annotations indicating other files that are related. Taking note of these file references is a good way of finding more information on the same or a related subject.

Unfortunately many of the files in this series have been lost, damaged or destroyed. Files dating from 1950 onwards which related to policies were subject to random sampling as a result of the policies of the Libraries Board in the early 1970s. A 5% sample as retained and the remainder of file destroyed.

A total restriction was placed on these records by the Attorney General in 2004. As a result of this, all requests to access this series of records must be sent to the Department for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation for permission. The Department will examine the records and, once a decision is made regarding access, will advise the applicant and State Records.

Finding Aids

An index to the series which lists name of writer, dates and subject is available in series GRG 52/2: Register of correspondence received – Aborigines' Office, later Aborigines' Department. This series is subject to 100 year restriction.

There is also a published guide prepared by State Records: Volume 5 of the set of guides titled, State Records, 'Guide to Aboriginal People'. A comprehensive index of names and localities is also being developed. To access this index please ask to speak to the Aboriginal Access Officer.

This series is used often, so photocopies have been made for material dated from 1949-1969. These photocopies are available to researchers who are granted permission to access the files.

State Records has also produced a history and guide to records related to the administration of Aboriginal Affairs. This guide, *A Little Flour and A Few Blankets, An Administrative History of Aboriginal Affairs in South Australia, 1834-2000*, is a valuable resource for understanding how Aboriginal matters were administered and the types of records created by the Government.

More info

Organisations in these records

Is part of

- [Records of the Aborigines' Office and Successor Agencies \(1866? - 1971?\)](#)

Records

Related Contact Details

- [State Records of South Australia - Contact Details](#)

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