



AIATSIS

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDIES

AIATSIS INSTRUCTIONS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI) Policy

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*Note this review date is the minimum date by which this policy must be reviewed. If there are significant changes in the area of this policy prior to the next scheduled review date, a full review must be performed at that time.





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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI) policy 2018-2020



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Scope and purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the AIATSIS approach to the selection and indexing of materials for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI) in order to achieve consistent definitions and application of standards.

This policy applies to designated AIATSIS staff selecting data for the Index; adding data to the Index; or who may contribute data from other AIATSIS programs and projects; or contribute data in formats that are subsequently repurposed into Index records. The policy also informs staff tasked with enhancing operability and access to the ABI database management system.

Implementation of policy is outlined in the Creating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ABI records procedure manual.

This policy replaces ABI Selection Policy (2009/updated November 2014) and ABI Indexing Policy 2013-2016 (May 2014).

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI) Policy 2018-2020 operates alongside other policies and guidelines at AIATSIS.

Introduction - the ABI

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI) is an internationally recognised name index containing references to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Names are usually selected from generally available publications¹ in the AIATSIS collections. Some names may be indexed from materials that are not generally available. These records have conditions of access.

Index records are created from text, data and photographs within a publication. The index makes information discoverable through selection of relevant material, best practice indexing and user-friendly interface.

The ABI serves Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, Link-Up services around Australia, and other information seekers within and outside AIATSIS. It is an important resource for members of the Stolen Generations reconnecting with family members. It supports the work of the Family History Unit (FHU) and AIATSIS research activities.

¹ 'Generally Available Publication' means a magazine, book, article, newspaper or other publication that is, or will be, generally available to members of the public: (a) whether or not it is published in print, electronically or in any other form ... Australia. Privacy Act (1988) Section 6 Interpretation http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/pa1988108/s6.html

History of the ABI

The ABI was developed from 1979 as a card index of names of Aboriginal persons. In April 1986, the ABI comprised 12,000 cards. In the late 1980s the card index was moved to The Corporate Retriever (TCR) database and in 1997 transferred to Mura® and available online. The Index name changed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index in 1998, the acronym remaining as ABI. In June 2018 the ABI comprised over 82,000 records. An historic timeline appears as Appendix 1.

ABI records

ABI records are a visible summary of information taken directly from the indexed source. Each record includes a name and points to the source of information for that name. The source may include other biographical information including dates, places, people/language terms and subject terms. Names are taken from, or established in, the AIATSIS Name Authority. An index record is created for all Indigenous persons mentioned in a selected source, regardless of how much information is provided or how well the person is known. Some records in the Index may be of non-Indigenous persons.

Sensitivity and Privacy

Wording is culturally and emotionally respectful and each record includes a sensitivity message. Records indexed from materials that are not generally available include information on how to access the content.

Persons, families and communities are welcome to contact the Family History Unit if they have concerns about a record in the ABI.

Content and Format

Selection focus, indexing practice and input standards used in the ABI over time has meant that record quality varies. Priorities in selection and indexing reflect staffing and other resources.

Selection

AIATSIS selects from generally available publications for the ABI created by, with or about, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- In response to specific need and events; (See Appendix 2)
- Representative of geographic diversity
- Representative of specific time periods
- To facilitate knowledge access and discovery

Publications include:

- Genealogical (family trees and family history)
- Personal history or story (autobiography, biography and oral)
- Community, mission, reserve and institutional history or story
- Other historical works

Selection is undertaken by the ABI indexer in consultation with the FHU research coordinator.

Generally available information for inclusion in the ABI may be identified from other AIATSIS program areas or research publications by the Director, Collection Services.

Selection procedure is described in the Creating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ABI records procedure manual.

Indexing

The ABI supports AIATSIS' expertise in the creation of name authorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It supports data sharing and interoperability within AIATSIS, between AIATSIS and external systems and provides accessible information for clients through the creation of records in a robust schema in a standard format. It contributes high quality, standards-based records to external aggregators, such as Trove. It achieves these aims through the use of:

- ATILIRN protocols
- AIATSIS Name Authority terms
- AIATSIS Pathways thesauri (an internationally approved thesaurus for describing material with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content)
- Descriptive and structural metadata standards in line with AIATSIS practice
- Authority control on Mura® guidelines
- Resource Descriptive Access (RDA) principles

Indexing is undertaken by the ABI indexer co-located with other AIATSIS staff engaged in creating collection metadata.

Index records in the ABI standard format may be created or contributed by other AIATSIS program areas or research publications from generally available metadata that has been identified by the Director, Collection Services

Indexing procedure is described in the Creating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ABI records procedure manual.

Policy Review

The ABI policy is reviewed every 2 years by Director, Collection Services or delegate to meet changing selection needs, indexing standards, technical requirements and applicable changes in AIATSIS policy.

Metrics including geographic areas indexed, use statistics, record creation statistics, other online sources of information, client evaluation, are used as part of policy review.

Bibliography

ABI selection policy (2009) (stats only updated 2014)

AIATSIS cataloguing policy 2017-2020 (V3)

AIATSIS collections ABI indexing policy 2013-2016 (May 2014)

Collection Development Strategy 2017-2021 (final draft)

Creating ABI records procedures (May 2015)

FHU Policy & Procedure June 2016 (V3)

Wilson, Tikka. Report: ABI issues paper April 2016 (ABI Issues draft final)

Appendices

Appendix One Timeline for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI)

Appendix Two Selection in response to specific needs and events

Appendix Three Number of ABI records per state and territory; number of ABI records referring to missions per state and territory

Appendix One: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI) policy

Timeline for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI)

Timeline for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI)

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| October 1979 | Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies Council agrees that 'Library staff should begin abstracting biographical material for ... a non-selective name register, and appointed a committee to advise on future planning.' ² |
| 1982 | ABI 'began life ... as a national Aboriginal Biographical Register of significant Aboriginal Australians, modelled on the General Name Index developed by the Australian Dictionary of Biography. The register was in hardcopy index card format and could be consulted in the library.' ³ |
| May 1985 | Diane Barwick accepts the Institute's twelvemonth honorary appointment to establish a national Aboriginal Biographical Register. The Register took the form of a card index of names to published materials held in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) Library and included Barwick's previous research. The cards featured bibliographic and genealogical references and included all names mentioned |
| April 1986 | Diane Barwick dies a month before the completion of her appointment. At the time of her death the card index comprises twelve thousand cards |
| December 1987 | Decision to 'complete' the Index taken ⁴ |
| 1987 to about the late 1990s | Content provided by subject experts (bibliographers) annotating AIATSIS Library material. Information was handwritten on index cards. Data input procedures varied impacting on record standards |

² Parkes, Laurie and Barwick, Diane. Beginning a national Aboriginal Biographical Register at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. *Aboriginal History* Volume 6, no 2 (1982), page 136
<https://press.anu.edu.au/publications/journals/aboriginal-history-journal-volume-6>

³ Wilson, Tikka. Report: ABI issues paper, April 2016, Moreton Consulting, 2016, page 5 <https://aia-dams-pro.aiatsis.local/share/page/site/cataloguing/document-details?nodeRef=workspace://SpacesStore/ad883904-f133-40d1-8f78-e8faaef02e96>

⁴ McCarthy, Ann and McCarthy, Gavan (compilers). Diane Elizabeth Barwick (1938-1986) Guide to Records, Series 12, BARIO2138 Letter regarding completion of Aboriginal Biographical Index. University of Melbourne eScholarship research Centre, [2006], published online at <http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/guides/barw/barw.htm>

| | |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1989 | Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Act was passed by parliament |
| Approx. 1989 | ABI card index transferred to The Corporate Retriever (TCR) database. The Index continued to be available in the AIATSIS library only |
| 1990s | Selection included books, pamphlets, kits, microforms, journals, annual reports, newsletters, newspapers, Government publications, non-generally available materials with access conditions |
| Mid 1990s | Family History Unit (FHU) created with external funding, initially from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC); ABI seen as the Unit's primary research tool |
| From mid 1990s | ABI continues as an externally funded activity (rather than managed as a core AIATSIS function); impact on sustainability |
| From mid 1990s | Content included areas identified by the FHU, e.g. geographic gaps; content relating to members of the Stolen Generations following the 1997 Inquiry |
| 1997 | ABI data migrated from TCR to SirsiDynix (WorkFlows) and searchable on Mura®; records now accessible from outside the AIATSIS Library. Records compiled from materials with access conditions were 'shadowed' i.e. made unavailable on Mura® |
| From 1997 | Indexing standards introduced including US Marc, ATSLRN protocols, use of AIATSIS name authorities, use of AIATSIS Language and Peoples and Place names thesauri in the creation of ABI records |
| 1997 | Creating ABI records procedures manual written for SirsiDynix |
| 1998 | Index name changes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (acronym remained as ABI) |
| 2000 | ABI card index disposed of. Pre 2000, number sequences to differentiate personal names in the card index were lost |
| January 2001 | AIATSIS moves to new building on Acton Peninsula |
| From 2001 | ABI indexing undertaken by a staffer with indexing training; personnel changes every couple of years with a period of stability from 2005 to 2015 |
| 2005 | Records and Archives Management System (RAMS) occupation terms added to applicable records |
| September 2009 | ABI Selection Policy written authored by FHU (R Stubbs and J Cannon) (last reviewed (stats only) in November 2014) |

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2012 | RAMS occupation terms found to be not suitable and discontinued |
| 2013 | RDA (Resource Descriptive Access) principles introduced |
| May 2014 | ABI indexing policy 2013 to 2016 written authored by J Wood |
| May 2014 | Selection from generally available books and pamphlets only |
| May 2014 | Creating ABI records procedures manual updated, authored by J Cannon and J Wood |
| October 2014 | Initial harvest of ABI open access records on HuNI (harvests pending) |
| 2015 | 12 week outsourced Indexing Pilot Project (Report by Moreton Consulting, July 2015) |
| April 2015 | Initial harvest of ABI open access records on Trove (harvests continuing) |
| April 2016 | ABI issues paper (Moreton Consulting, final draft April 2016) authored by Dr Tikka Wilson |
| July 2016 | Indexing undertaken by contract staffer working in house (7 to 14 hours per week) |
| July 2016 | AIATSIS subject thesauri terms used to describe occupations; all names in a photograph included on a single record |
| 2017 | Directive to 'unshadow' records compiled from materials with access conditions i.e. make available on Mura® (process undertaken by manuscripts staff) |
| January 2018 | 76,700 ABI records available on Mura |
| January 2018 | 75,965 ABI records available on Trove |
| January 2018 | 1,361 ABI unique page views ABI web page |
| January to May 2018 | Review of ABI policy and procedure |
| June 2018 | 82,416 ABI records available on Mura. Work begins on transferring data from SirsiDynix to Drupal |

Timeline for ABI on Trove (People and organisations)

| | |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 15 April 2015 | Initial harvest of open access records 27,100 |
| 13 May 2016 | 2 nd harvest additional 28, 266 records totalling 55,336 |
| January 2018 | 75,965 AIATSIS ABI records are in Trove, describing 46,087 individuals; there are 893 records pending a human review |
| January 2018 | Harvests run automatically every Friday night at 6:30pm and pick up all new/updated/deleted records. An email notification is sent to Collections Infrastructure when the harvest completes |

Timeline for ABI on Humanities Networked Infrastructure (HuNI)

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| October 2014 | Initial harvest of open access records 70,000 |
| January 2018 | Technical issues at HuNI end remain pending |

References

1. Garwood-Houng, Alana. Personal interview. 29 Mar. 2018
2. McCarthy, Ann and McCarthy, Gavan (compilers). *Diane Elizabeth Barwick (1938-1986) Guide to Records, Series 12*, University of Melbourne eScholarship Research Centre, [2006] <http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/guides/barw/barw.htm>
3. Parkes, Laurie and Barwick, Diane. *Beginning a national Aboriginal biographical register at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies*. Aboriginal History Volume 6, no 2 (1982), pages 135-138 http://press.anu.edu.au/titles/aboriginal-history-journal/ah06_citation/pdf-download/
4. Rowse, Tim. 'Barwick, Diane Elizabeth (1938-1986)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/barwick-diane-elizabeth-76/text21837>, published first in hardcopy 2007, accessed online 31 January 2018
5. Wilson, Tikka. *Report: ABI issues paper*, April 2016, Moreton Consulting, 2016
6. Wood, Jenny. Personal interview. 11 Jan. 2018

Appendix Two: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI) policy 2018-2020

Selection in response to specific needs and events

In allowing easy access to the AIATSIS Library's collections by members of the Stolen Generations and other Indigenous Australians, the ABI contributes to the fulfilment of the recommendations of the ***Bringing them home report and the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: national report*** (to records relating to the family and community histories of Indigenous people) - specifically:

Recommendation 22a:

That all government record agencies be funded as a matter of urgency by the relevant government to preserve and index records relating to Indigenous individuals, families and/or communities and records relating to all children, Indigenous or otherwise, removed from their families for any reason.

Recommendations 22b:

That indexes and other finding aids be developed and managed in a way that protects the privacy of individuals and, in particular, prevents the compilation of dossiers.⁵

Recommendation 53:

That Commonwealth, State and Territory governments provide access to all government archival records pertaining to the family and community histories of Aboriginal people so as to assist with the process of enabling Aboriginal people to re-establish community and family links with those people from whom they were separated as a result of past policies of government. The Commonwealth recognises that questions to the rights of privacy and questions of confidentiality may arise and recommends that the principles and processes for access to such records should be negotiated between government and appropriate Aboriginal organisations, but such negotiations should proceed on the basis that as a general principle access to such documents should be permitted.⁶

The ABI also supports the Council of Australian Governments *Closing the Gap Refresh: framework for prosperity* (2018) and the *United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples*

⁵ National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families (Australia). *Bringing them home : report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*, 1997

⁶ Australia. Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody : national report*, 1991

The ABI supports the Council of Australian Governments *Closing the Gap Refresh: framework for prosperity* (2018) statement that ‘Indigenous culture is central to the key pillars of prosperity’ by facilitating elements of the four key pillars: economic, individual, environment and community.

Family history research provides skills development; connection to country, land and sea; supports strong family relationships, thriving traditions and cultural practice, sense of belonging, and social inclusion

Connection with culture through research into family history contributes to the social, emotional, physical and mental health-wellbeing of Indigenous individuals, families and communities

Research seeks to ‘honour and celebrate the richness and diversity of the world’s oldest living culture, and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to prosper’⁷

The ABI provides a means for Indigenous people to reconnect with their histories, culture and identities. In doing so, the ABI supports the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, including:

Article 14

Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

Article 16

Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information⁸

References

12. *ABI Selection Policy, 2009* (updated stats only 2014), pages 4-5

⁷ Commonwealth of Australia. Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. *Closing the Gap Refresh: a joint initiative of the Council of Australian Governments: framework for prosperity*, © [2018] <https://closingthegaprefresh.pmc.gov.au/framework-prosperity#framework>

⁸ United Nations. General Assembly. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, 2008

Appendix Three

Number of ABI records per state and territory;

**Number of ABI records referring to missions per
state and territory**

Table 1: Number of ABI records per state and territory

| State or Territory | No. of ABI records 2013 | No. of ABI records 2014 | No of ABI records June 2018 |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| NSW | 22880 | 24680 | 25662 |
| ACT | 1000 | 1012 | 1035 |
| Vic | 5840 | 5976 | 6343 |
| Qld | 14704 | 15209 | 15847 |
| NT | 8330 | 8342 | 8437 |
| SA | 7899 | 8695 | 8818 |
| WA | 12410 | 12623 | 13481 |
| TAS | 1437 | 1439 | 1563 |

Map 1: Number of ABI records per State and Territory June 2018

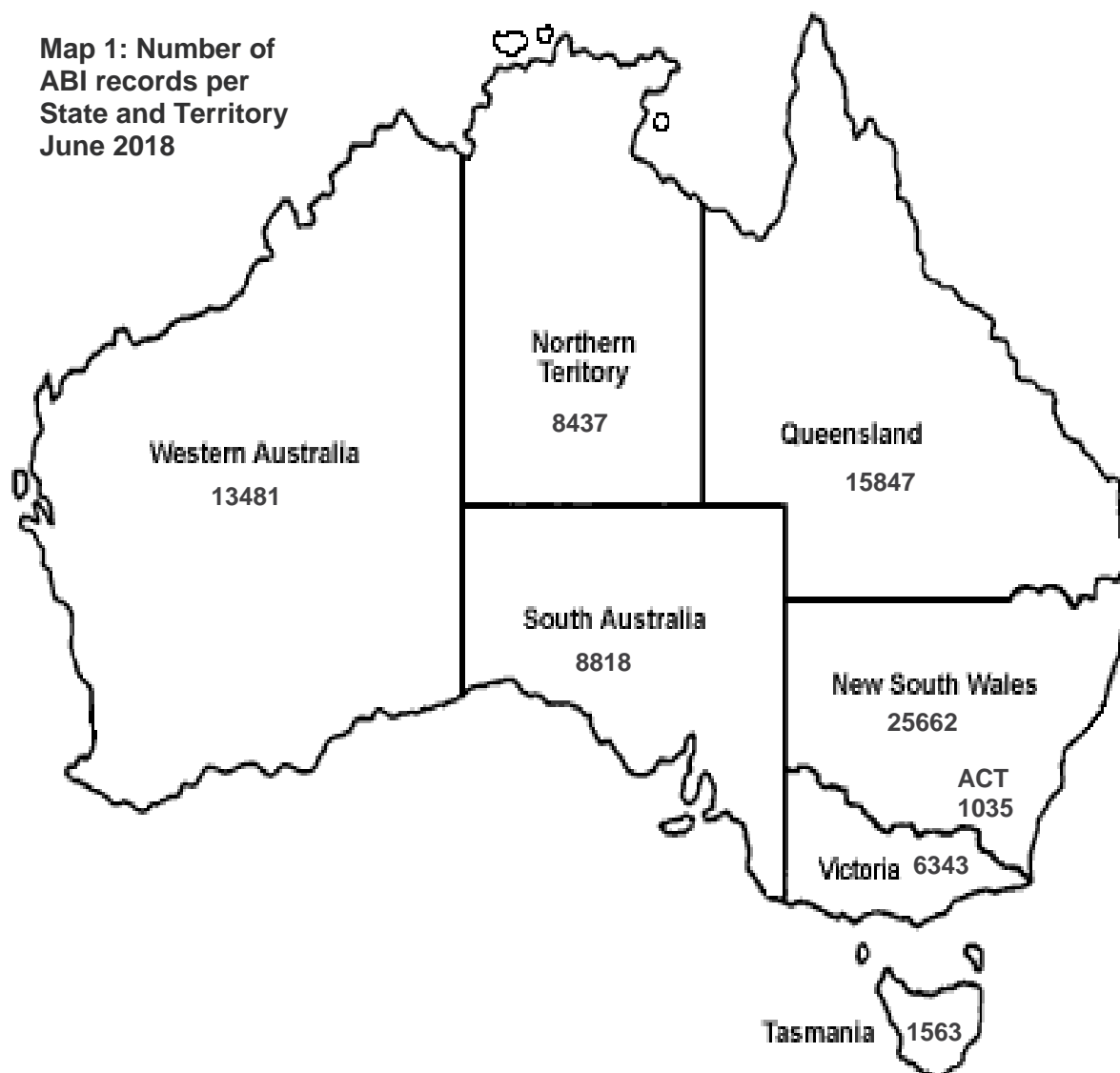


Table 2: Number of ABI records referring to missions per state and territory

| State or Territory | No. of ABI records 2014 | No. of ABI records June 2018 |
|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| NSW | 2493 | 2620 |
| Vic | 276 | 384 |
| Qld | 1789 | 1817 |
| NT | 496 | 507 |
| SA | 570 | 574 |
| WA | 2173 | 2271 |
| Tas. | 15 | 29 |
| ACT | 30 | 31 |

Map 2: Number of ABI records referring to missions per state and territory June 2018

