

AIATSIS Family History Unit

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) holds a wealth of historical and contemporary information about the lives of Aboriginal people from across Australia. This information is extremely valuable as it provides Indigenous people with a tangible link to their culture and to each other. Family history is often a key part of heritage research.

The Family History Unit began with the creation of an index of names with brief biographical entries of Indigenous people referred to or depicted in material held in AIATSIS collections. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Biographical Index (ABI) is available from the AIATSIS catalogue, via the internet at www.aiatsis.gov.au.

Some major journals have already been indexed, including *Dawn* and *New Dawn* magazines, *Australian Evangel*, *Aboriginal and Islander Identity*, *The Lutheran*, the *Australian Board of Missions Review*, the *Newsletter for the Aboriginal People of Victoria* and Government Protector's reports from Victoria, Thursday Island, and Western Australia.

The ABI presently has 54,000 name entries. Material is constantly being added to the index, for example: Don and Beverley Elphick's *Kinchela Aboriginal home and school : alphabetical index of students* and the Northern Territory's *Land Claim Reports*.

The Family History Unit has recently received funding from the ATSI C Bringing Them Home Task Force to further assist members of the Stolen Generations with heritage research. A **1800 730 129 freecall** number has been set up to provide greater access to the AIATSIS Family History Unit services.

Records from every State and Territory are continually being added to the Family History and Library Collection. For example, Births Deaths and Marriage registrations as they become released, Cemetery Records and privately owned indexes of research. The Unit is trying to track down all of the early Blanket Distribution Records, along with Church Records and Historical Journals.

The Family History Unit can be contacted on 1800 730129.