

Radar production and use in World War II

While the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) was responsible for radar research and the development of prototypes, other government agencies had responsibility for assisting in the development by approving and supporting the financial costs, procuring the appropriate technology and materials, manufacturing the machinery, or using the completed product. This fact sheet contains details of relevant records of some of these key agencies, including the War Cabinet, the Postmaster-General's Department, the Department of Munitions, and the armed services, which put the radar technology to use.

War Cabinet records

The matter of radar research and equipment was considered by the Australian War Cabinet ([CA 1468](#)) on a number of occasions during World War II. Records of the War Cabinet comprise the War Cabinet Agenda, War Cabinet Minutes and War Cabinet Notebooks. The major decisions of the War Cabinet in relation to radar are contained in the Agenda and Minutes listed below. A photocopied set of the Minutes is held in all research centres. The Agenda are held in Canberra.

War Cabinet Minutes and Agenda

Subject	Minute no. (Series A2673)	Minute date	Agenda no. (Series A2671)
Delays in local production of RDF equipment	1750	24 Jan 1942	No agendum
Finance for radio location work	1653	31 Dec 1941	349/1941
Position of radio location work	1769 2106	26 Jan 1942 17 Apr 1942	54/1942
RDF equipment and personnel	829	11 Mar 1942	150/1942
RDF equipment for RAAF	2296	7 Aug 1942	312/1942
RDF policy and program	2433 3303	14 Oct 1942 4 Mar 1944	421/1942
Radiophysics Advisory Board – First report – for period ending 30 November 1942	No minute recorded		515/1942
Radar equipment for RAAF	3168	24 Nov 1943	484/1943
Radar equipment for RAN	3332	22 Feb 1944	44/1944

Production of radar equipment

The production of radar equipment was initially only undertaken by the Postmaster-General's Department, but due to the increasing demand as the war progressed, private companies and other government agencies also became involved in producing radar equipment.

From 1942 the Department of Munitions assumed responsibility for the production of radar equipment in Australia. It was also responsible for the supervision of private contractors who made radar equipment and arranged for the import and export of materials and completed machines.

Records of these agencies containing information relating to the production of radar equipment are listed below. These records are all held by the National Archives in Melbourne.

Records containing information about radar production

Postmaster-General's Department (CA 9)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1939–50	B2947
<u>W files, relating to matters arising from the War</u>	1938–50	MP721/1

Department of Munitions, Central Administration (CA 39)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1942–47	MP45/5

Materials Supply Branch, Department of Munitions (CA 3476)

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1941–48	MP392/37

Directorate of Radio and Signal Supplies, Department of Munitions (CA 3723), 1942–1947

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1942–45	MP392/5
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1942–45	MP1680/8

Use of radar by the armed services

The use of radar equipment was the responsibility of the Army, the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). Records relating to the services' views, policies, research and use of radar technology are contained in the record series listed below. Unless otherwise indicated, these records are held by the National Archives in Canberra.

Army

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1935–58	A816
<u>Radio research</u>	1941	A816, 48/301/28
<u>Radio location – Use to provide long-range warning of attack</u>	1941–42	A816, 48/301/34

RAN

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files (general)</u>	1923–50	MP1049/5 *
<u>Radio direction finding performance report</u>	1942	MP1049/5, 2037/7/108*
<u>Radio direction finding report on policy</u>	1941–42	MP1049/5, 2037/7/256*

RAAF

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Correspondence files</u>	1935–60	A1196
<u>Press censorship re radio location</u>	1943–48	A1196, 10/501/41
<u>Press censorship re radio location</u>	1943–48	A1196, 10/501/41
<u>CSIR 'War Report'</u>	1943–44	A1196, 37/501/460

* held in Melbourne

More information about records relating to radar research and development.

- *Fact Sheet 125 - Radar research in Australia during World War II.*