

HISTORY OF FINGERPRINTS IN AUSTRALIA

Australia - N.S.W.

In 1901, Mr. Sam McCauley, Deputy Controller of Prisons and Inspector of Prisons in New South Wales, investigated the use and classification of fingerprints at New Scotland yard and on his return recommended that fingerprinting and classification under the Henry System be introduced to New South Wales Gaols.

In 1902, fingerprinting commenced in New South Wales Gaols, and a Fingerprint Bureau was established in the Darlinghurst Gaol under the Direction of Sam McCauley. Following its successful introduction, it was recommended that the system be introduced in the other States of Australia and New Zealand.

In 1903, Senior Sergeant W.H. Childs, of the New South Wales Police Force, received training from Mr. McCauley and also spent several weeks at the Darlinghurst Gaol Bureau. In June 1903, the Prisons Department handed over approximately 6,000 copies of fingerprint impressions to the New South Wales Police Department. The New South Wales Police Fingerprint Bureau was established at the Detectives' Office of Police Headquarters, with Senior Sergeant Childs as Officer in Charge.

Australia - Other States

The other States' Fingerprint Bureaux were commenced as follows: -

Victoria 1903 Supt. T. Sharp Det. L.F. Potter

South
Australia 1904 Det W.T. Lingwoodsmith

Queensland 1904 1st Const D. Fowler

Western
Australia 1928 Det. Sgt V. Penrose

Tasmania 1912 Det. Chief Insp S. Weston

Northern
Territory 1957 Sgt R. McDonald (NSW)

Canberra
A.C.T. 1967 Sgt. Broomby

Central Fingerprint Bureau of Australia

On the 1st April 1941, the New South Wales Police Fingerprint Bureau commenced operations as the Central Fingerprint Bureau for the Commonwealth of Australia, with each State contributing financially towards its upkeep. All other States and Territories of the Commonwealth maintain their own Fingerprint Bureaux, and Criminal Records Offices, but are dependent upon the Central Bureau for an Australia-wide coverage of a person's criminal activities.

The Central Fingerprint Bureau ceased to exist with the introduction of the N.A.F.I.S. (National Automated Fingerprint Identification System) in 1987. This nationwide fingerprint identification system was at the time the only National computerised system of its type in the world.

During February 2001 the old NEC NAFIS System was replaced by the new SAGEM Morpho System operated by CrimTrac, which was officially launched by the Prime Minister, Mr. Howard, in Canberra. This system is the first in the world to offer palm print searching.