



THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES

NAME OF COLLECTION	BURNET, IAN D
ACCESSION NO	2003.0004
CATEGORY	Other, individuals
ACTIVITY	Farmers
DATE RANGE	1942-2003
SIZE OF COLLECTION	2 cm.
HISTORICAL NOTE	<p>On 10 March 2002, following release by the National Australian Archives of some 50-year old records concerning the Australian Government's involvement in biological warfare policy c.1948, 'The Sunday Age' published an article headed 'How Australia's greatest scientist planned to poison S-E Asia: the Macfarlane Burnet solution'. Subsequently Burnet's son, Ian D. Burnet, engaged in a round of correspondence with The Age, and with the National Australian Archives, both of which supplied copies of various official documents upon which the story was said to be based, and with the Australian Press Council in an attempt to clarify his father's role at the time.</p>
DATE OF TRANSFER	13 th Jan 2005
ACCESS CONDITIONS	Access: Open
DESCRIPTION	<p>Copies of archival documents 1942-1951; copies of newspaper articles March 2002; correspondence of Ian D. Burnet, Marilyn Minell (Acting OIC Reference, Access & Information Services, NAA, Canberra, Dr John Best (Chairman, Australian Institute of Political Science, and opponent of the 'tall poppy syndrome'), Jack Herman (Executive Secretary, Australian Press Council), Steve Foley (Editor, The Sunday Age), Ray Cassin (The Age), Prof. Ken McKinnon (Chairman, Australian Press Council); covering letter from Ian D. Burnet, 6 January 2003.</p>
LISTED BY	Mark Richmond
DATE	24 th March 2005

Burnet, Ian D. (Accession 103.4)

N.B. The documents are listed in the order in which they were arranged by the transferor; throughout, many passages were marked in highlighter and finepoint pen, by whom is not made clear

1. *The Sunday Age*, 10 March 2002, section of front page lead-in to Special Report by Brendan Nicholson centred round Burnet's alleged involvement in biological warfare research; 1 p. (photocopy)

2/1. Brendan Nicholson, 'Burnet's solution: The plan to poison S-E Asia', *The Age*, Sunday 10 March 2002, online edition; 3 pp. (printout)

2/2 Paul Heinrichs, 'Nobel prize winner a pawn in propaganda war', *The Age*, Sunday 10 March 2002, online edition, 3 pp. (printout)

3/1. Covering letter, Merilyn Minell, Acting OIC Reference, National Archives of Australia – Ian D. Burnet, 13 March 2002, for enclosed copies of documents:

3/2 Minutes from Defence Committee meeting 23 January 1947, items 30/1947 and 31/1947 (extracts from documents controlled as A5954, 1378/6 and A5954, 1599/8; 7 pp. including cover sheet (photocopy)

4. Ian D Burnet, Port Fairy – Dr John Best, Chairman, Australian Institute of Political Science, Balmain, 21 March 2002; 3 pp. typescript (unsigned copy)

5. Steve Foley, Editor, *The Sunday Age* – Jack Herman, Executive Director, Australian Press Council, Sydney, 12 April 2002; 2 pp. (photocopy)

6/1. John Best, on Diagnosis Pty Ltd letterhead, Balmain – Ian Burnet, 27 March 2002; 1 p., enclosing an item sent to Best by Frank Fenner:

6/2 Extract from *Canberra Times* 27 March 2002, being Simon Grose's 'Biological warfare was once considered to be legitimate'; 2 pp.

7. Ray Cassin, *The Age* – Jack Herman, Australian Press Council, 15 May 2002; 1 p. (photocopy)

8. Jack R Herman, Australian Press Council – Ian Burnet, 27 June 2002; 2 pp.

9. Ray Cassin, chief leader writer, *The Age* and *The Sunday Age*, - Professor Ken McKinnon, Chairman, Australian Press Council, 25 July 200[2]; 2 pp. (unsigned copy)

10. Copy of *Australian Press Council News*, August 2002, page 15; containing Adjudication No. 1172; 1 p.

11. Ian D Burnet – Jack Herman, Australian Press Council, 31 August 2002; 4 pp. [being Burnet's submission to the sub-committee hearing on *The Age's* appeal against Adjudication No. 1172] (unsigned copy)

12. Copy of *Australian Press Council News*, November 2002, p.13, containing Adjudication No.1172 as reissued September 2002; 1 p.

13. Copy of item 'Press Council Ruling', *The Sunday Age*, 22 September 2002; 1 p.

14/1. Ian D Burnet – Jack Herman, Australian Press Council, 6 October 2002; 1 p.(unsigned copy), covering:

14/2 Ian D Burnet – The Editor, *The Sunday Age*, 5 October 2002; 2 pp. (unsigned copy)

15 Brendan Nicholson, Canberra Bureau *The Age* – Ray Cassin, 24 July 2002, facsimile, 48 pp. including the cover sheet which contains in the 'Comments' section 'Ray. I hope this material helps – I've cut the original documents well back. It does show Burnet's consistent view that Australia should develop biological weapons, Regards, Brendan'. The pages faxed contain copies of documents obtained from National Australian Archives, 6 April 1942 – 6 February 1951, and include minutes of the Defence Committee and of the Chemical and Biological Warfare Sub-Committee (of the latter of which Burnet was a member).