Investigating service records

Army personnel and civilians working on Australian Army service records in London, 1916. AWM H03961

The service records of those who have served for Australia in the First World War are held by the National Archives of Australia. They have been digitised and can be viewed online: https://www.naa.gov.au/

   a. Create a list showing the information that can be found in service records.

2. Closely examine the enlistment forms for the men. These are usually the first page of a service record.
   a. Discuss the meaning of “natural born British subject” and “naturalized British subject”.
   b. What response did the men give to section 3: “Are you a natural born British subject or a naturalized British subject”?
   c. How do you think Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians felt about declaring themselves British subjects during the early 1900s?
   d. What other information is collected on an enlistment form? Why do you think the Australian Imperial Force would want this information?
   e. Can you find any mention of Aboriginality in the men’s service records, and if so, by whom?

3. Read the case study of the Dickerson brothers, and follow the links in the document to the brothers’ service records.
   a. Identify which parts of the service records have been used to create the case study. For example, where can you find the brothers’ ages, occupations, and details of any wounds?
Service Records: Richard Martin:
Service Records: Alfred Hearps:
Service Records: Gilbert Williams: