Family History

Adoption records

What adoption records are available in Australia?

Legal adoption started at different times in the various States. Records began around the early 1920s. For information on access conditions in a particular State contact the relevant State government agency (See the list at the end of the guide).

State Library of Queensland holds resources helpful in placing and tracing the parties to an adoption including:

- *Infant life protection act: Part 4: [Victorian] Adoptions 1901-1913* (MFC 613.0432 2001-) [microfiche]. Check One Search catalogue for other titles https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/
- birth, death and marriage indexes for all States and Territories
- Commonwealth electoral rolls for all States and Territories from 1903 and earlier Queensland State electoral rolls
- Post office and telephone directories – check One Search catalogue for dates in different States.

How can I trace the parties to an adoption?

Apply to the relevant State government agency for identifying information on the adoption and/or access to records.

- Check electoral rolls to locate the birth parent's residential address and track him/her through the rolls in subsequent years.
- Check local and interstate births, deaths and marriages (BDM) registers for:
  - marriage/s of birth parent/s
  - birth/s of siblings from marriages of birth parents
  - death/s of birth parent/s
- Apply for copies of the birth parents' individual marriage and birth certificates
- Check for possible changes of name by deed poll.
- Look at newspaper funeral, death and obituary notices; and cemetery records. See our research guides covering these records.

See also **Queensland State Archives Research Guide** - *Orphanage and Children's Home records* https://bit.ly/3xmEmzE

What about adoption of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?

State Library's First Nations family history, https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/collections/family-history/whos-your-mob, provides information and useful links for First Nations peoples doing their family histories.

Contact the National Archives of Australia (NAA), https://www.naa.gov.au/, for:

- 'Bringing Them Home' index, a name index to Commonwealth records about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were removed from their families. All searches are done by staff at the NAA. https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/first-australians/bringing-them-home-name-index.

- records for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria (from 1860) and the Northern Territory (1911-1975).

For other States contact the State government archives. Adoption records are often restricted. You may need special authority to see them.

How can I find adoptions in England and Wales?

It can be hard to trace adoptions in England and Wales before 1900 because:

- Children were often taken in and brought up by members of the family or friends.
- Where solicitors or charities were involved, you need to know the name of the solicitor or charity to trace the records through county office files or charity records. In many cases, the records have not survived.

In January 1927 an 'Adopted Children's Register' began. It recorded all adoptions after this date. Under the 'Adopted Children's Register':

- The adoptee was given a copy of his/her certificate of adoption. This was used for all legal purposes, rather than the birth certificate.
- The birth registration stayed in the Register Office and the entry was marked 'adopted'.

Indexes to the Adopted Children's Register are available for consultation at Adoptions Section Room C202 General Register Office Trafalgar Rd Southport PR8 2HH. Information about applying for copies of adoption certificates is on the Gov UK website: https://www.gov.uk/adoption-records

How can I find adoptions in New Zealand?

Oranga Tamariki, is a service of the New Zealand Ministry for Children. They give information on their website for adult adoptees who are tracing their birth parents.
https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/adoption/finding-your-birth-family/

What State government agencies are responsible for adoption in Australia?

- **A.C.T. Department of Community Services, Family Information Services**
  https://www.act.gov.au/community/families/find-adoption-records-and-birth-relatives

- **N.S.W. Department of Communities and Justice, Children and families, Adoption**
  https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/children-and-families/adoption/finding-information-on-past-adoptions.html

- **N.T. Department of Community support and care, Child protection and care, Adoption**
  https://nt.gov.au/community/child-protection-and-care/adoption/find-out-about-a-previous-adoption-in-the-nt

- **Queensland. Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, Adoption Services Queensland**
  https://www.qld.gov.au/community/caring-child/adoption/post-adoption-support-services

- **South Australia. Department for Child Protection**
  https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/support-and-guidance/adoption-processes/applying-for-adoption-information

- **Tasmania. Department for Education, Children and Young People, Adoptions & Permanency Services**
  https://www.decyp.tas.gov.au/safe-children/adoptions-and-permanency/about-adoption-in-tasmania/how-to-access-information-about-an-adoption/

- **Victoria. Department of Justice, Community and Safety, Adoption** https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/adoption/past-adoption

- **W.A. Department of Communities; Child Protection & Family Support, Fostering & Adoption, Past Adoption Services** https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-communities/past-adoption-information-and-support

Useful websites

- **Adopted.com** https://www.adopted.com provides a free searchable database of profiles posted by adoptees and birth parents seeking family reunion. There is also a paid subscription service that offers further features.
- **UK Birth Adoption Register** http://www.ukbirth-adoptionregister.com/ was founded in 2001. Registrations are accepted from adoptees, birth parents, siblings and other interested birth relatives.
- **International Social Service Australia** https://www.iss.org.au connects families internationally with professional support.
- **Jigsaw Queensland Inc** https://www.jigsawqueensland.com/ provides information and emotional support to those affected by adoption.
- **Link-Up Qld** https://www.link-upqld.org.au/ provides information and support services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples affected by separation from their families.
- **Post Adoption Support Queensland** https://www.benevolent.org.au/services-and-programs/post-adoption-services provides professional support to those involved after adoption.
- **International Adoptive Families of Queensland Inc.** https://iafq.org.au/ The IAFQ is an Australian volunteer, non-profit support group for Queensland families involved in overseas adoptions that offers a wide variety of support services and resources.