



Family History

Orphanages, institutions and child migrants

Orphanage and home records

Access to most records relating to orphanages and children's homes is restricted. Records are generally held by the government or by the organization which ran the institution. Early records of government run institutions may be found in the relevant State archival repository. State Library of Queensland holds a number of published resources that can assist family historians to locate the appropriate records and there are a number of websites that are also helpful.

Australia

Find and Connect <https://findandconnect.gov.au/> is a first port of call. It provides up-to-date lists of support groups and services available to Forgotten Australians and former Child Migrants. There is an email enquiry form as well as practical help and advice about accessing records. This is an Australia-wide site, but records are organised on a state basis.

Queensland

Missing Pieces: information to assist former residents of children's institutions to access records. Available at the level 3 desk. It lists locations of records for government and non-government Queensland institutions. It provides brief details of the establishment and operation of each institution, the types and date ranges of records available, and contact details for access to the records.

Find and Connect is more up-to-date.

Queensland State Archives

- *Index to Orphanage Admission Registers 1865-1909* <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives/search-the-records> [Search the records > Schools, hospitals and orphanages > Orphanage Admission Registers 1865-1909]
- *Research Guide - Orphanage and Children's Home Records* <https://bit.ly/3xmEmzE>
This guide has links to catalogue records and to the digitised admissions registers for several of the institutions.

State Library of Queensland holds:

- *Index to registrar of Townsville Orphanage 1878-1943* [microfiche] (MFC 929.39436 1994)

New South Wales

Museums of History NSW State Archives Collection - Child Care and Protection Guide

<https://mhnsw.au/guides/child-care-and-protection-guide/>

The online index, *Child Care and Protection 1817-1942* (<https://mhnsw.au/indexes/child-care-and-protection/child-care-and-protection-index/>), includes Mittagong Farm Home for Boys (1907-21); Randwick Asylum for Destitute Children (1852-1915), Orphan schools records (1817-86); and Industrial Schools records (1867-1942).

Sydney Benevolent Asylum – Index to admissions and discharges 1857-1900

<https://sydneybenevolentasylum.com/>

State Library holds:

- ***NSW Orphan School Index 1817-1833*** [microfiche] (MFC 929.3944 1944).
An index to AO/SR reels 2776 and 2777, held at State Library.
- ***Application for admission into the orphan schools: letters received 1825-1833; Applications: children out of orphan schools, letters received, 1825-1833*** [microfilm] / [NSW] Clergy and School Lands Corporation. (MFL 929.3944 1984) [AO reels 2776 and 2777].

Victoria

Public Record Office Victoria

Records held include Ward of State registers, 1864-1965 and Child migration files, 1947-1971.

See **PROV Adoption, Ward of State and Care Leaver records**.

<https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/explore-topic/adoption-ward-state-and-care-leaver-records>

State Library holds:

- **Index to children in Victorian institutions 1860-1863** [microfiche] / compiled by Helen Doxford Harris (MFC 929.3945 1994)
- **Childrens registers of state wards in the colony of Victoria old series (admissions) 1864-1899** [microfiche]. (MFC 365.4209945 1995)
- **Index to children's registers, c.1850-1893** [microfiche] / compiled by Jenny Carter and Marion Paul. (MFC 929.3945 1994)
- **Infant Life Protection Act** [microfiche] / compiled by Helen D. Harris (MFC 613.0432 2001-) . Contents: Pt 1 : The nurses 1901-1908 ; - Pt 2 : Illegitimate births 1901-1908; - Pt 3 : Children & nurses 1901-1908; - Pt 4 : Adoptions 1901-1913.

Tasmania

Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office – Community Welfare Organisations in Tasmania guide

<https://libraries.tas.gov.au/family-history/life-as-a-child-in-care/introduction/>

Records include Queens Orphan School and personal files of children who lived at the Northern Tasmanian Home for Boys (Glenara) 1921-1983. Access to files less than 75 years is restricted.

State Library holds:

- **Children in Queen's Orphanage, Hobart Town, 1828-1863** / Joyce Purtscher. (PAM 929.309946 1993)
- **Infants at Queen's Orphanage Hobart 1851-1863** / Joyce Purtscher. (PAM 929.3946 1993)
- **Applications for Queen's Orphanage, Hobart Town 1858-1878** / Joyce Purtscher. (PAM 929.39461 1993)
- **Apprentices and absconders from Queen's Orphanage, Hobart Town, 1860-1883** / Joyce Purtscher. (G 929.309946 1994)
- **Juveniles requiring education in Van Diemen's Land c1821-1822** / Thelma McKay. (PAM 929.3946 1994)
- **More references for Tasmanian children in care 1826-1899** / compiled by Joyce Purtscher (FAMHIS 929.3946 1996)

Western Australia

State Records of Western Australia

<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/state-records-office-of-western-australia>

Records include files relating to Maltese child migrants between 1952 and 1963 (Item 1952/1358).

Access to the files is restricted. For child migration schemes check the **Passenger Lists and**

Immigration guide <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/state-records-office-of-western-australia/passenger-lists-and-immigration>

See also *Signposts: A guide for children and young people in care in WA from 1920*

<https://signposts.communities.wa.gov.au/>

South Australia

State Records of South Australia <https://www.archives.sa.gov.au/finding-information/discover-our-collection/health-and-welfare/children-in-state-based-care>

See also *Finding your own way* <http://nunku.org.au/resources/?term=finding-your-own-way>

State Library holds:

- **Far from a low gutter girl: the forgotten world of State wards: South Australia 1887-1940** / Margaret Barbalet. (G 362.73 1983) [Case studies of state wards]

Child migrants

From 1900-1960 state governments and charitable institutions operated various schemes to bring child migrants to Australia. Many children were orphans but large numbers were illegitimate and had at least one parent living. The Federal Government supported these schemes but most records that name individual migrants are located in State government archives or in the archives of the relevant charitable institutions.

Australia

National Archives of Australia (NAA)

<https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/immigration-and-citizenship/child-migration>

Provides background information and a list of personal documents on child migrants held in the NAA collection.

Child Migrants: Accessing records held by Commonwealth and State Archives / Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities

<https://www.caara.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Child-Migrants-Accessing-records-held-by-Commonwealth-and-State-Archives.pdf>

United Kingdom

The Child Migrant Trust provides professional help to former UK child migrants and their families

<https://www.childmigrantstrust.org/>

PHIND – Personal History Index <https://www.cbars.org/archive/phind.asp.htm>

The *Personal History Index* for former child migrants sent to catholic homes in Australia is a confidential index to the location of personal, migration, residence, and other records of individual child migrants sent from Britain and Malta to Catholic Homes in Australia between 1938 and 1965. Only former child migrants or persons nominated by them may access the index.

Books in State Library's collection about British child migrants include:

- ***Orphans of the empire*** / Allan Gill. (G 362.730994 1997)
- ***Child migration to Catholic institutions in Australia: objectives, policies, realities, 1926-1966*** / B.M. Coldrey. (G 325.94 1995)

Check **One Search** online catalogue for further titles. <https://onesearch.slq.qld.gov.au/>

Irish orphans

During the Famine in the 1840s Irish orphans from the workhouses were shipped to Australia.

Information about these orphans may be found in:

- ***Barefoot and pregnant: Irish famine orphans in Australia: documents and register*** / Trevor McLaughlin. (FAMHIS 929.102594 1991-2001). A database and images of some of these orphans may be viewed at the Australian Irish Famine Memorial site <https://irishfaminememorial.org/orphans/>
- ***Unnamed Irish boys on convict ships, 1841-1843, sent to Queen's Orphanage, Hobart, Van Diemen's Land*** / Joyce Purtscher. (PAM 929.3946 1993)
- ***Wages paid to orphans index, 1849-1851*** [microfiche] / compiled by Aileen Trinder & Pat Stemp. (MFC 331.21086945 1996)

Need further information?

(07) 3840 7810 | <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/services/ask-librarian>



This guide is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY-4.0) licence. You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this work, so long as you attribute State Library of Queensland. For more information see <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>