

## Access to Adoption Information in Australia

See below for brief legislative summaries and contact details of major agencies that provide adoption information in Australian states and territories other than NSW.

### **Australian Capital Territory**

Australian Capital Territory Adoption Act (1993), implemented July 1993. Access to identifying information (original/ amended birth certificates, adoption files post 1966) for adopted persons (18+), their birth parents and adoptive parents. Qualified rights to adoptive and birth relatives. Contact Veto available to those affected by release of information and not wanting contact. Reunion Information Register also available.

All applications to:

Office for Children, Youth and Family Support  
ACT Adoptions Unit  
GPO Box 158  
CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601  
Phone: 02 6207 1335  
Web: [www.dhcs.act.gov.au](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au)  
Email: [adoptions@act.gov.au](mailto:adoptions@act.gov.au)

### **Northern Territory**

The Northern Territory Adoption of Children Act of 1994 allows for the release of identifying information to adopted persons and birth parents for any adoption that took place both after and prior to 1994. Prior to 1994 adoptees and birth parents where the adopted person has attained in general the age of 18 years may have access to identifying information, non-identifying information and original/ amended birth certificates. Before attaining the age of 18 years consent may be given by adoptive parents to access information.

Prior to 1994 there is provision for adopted persons and birth parents to lodge a veto to prohibit the release of their identifying information. After 1994 it is not possible to place a veto to prohibit the giving of information. Applicants will not be supplied with identifying information until they receive mandatory counselling.

The NT Adoption Information Service does not charge any fees for the provision of information concerning adoption. Applicants are required to provide proof of their identity.

The Contact Register is administered by:

*Family & Community Services*

PO Box 40596

Casuarina, NT, 0811  
Phone: (08) 8922 7077  
Fax: (08) 8922 7480

## **Queensland**

Since 1 June 1991, adopted persons and birth parents (who have consented to the adoption of the child) can receive identifying information, once the child turns 18 years of age. Identifying information will only be provided if the other party has not objected to its disclosure. Identifying information also includes an authorisation to gain access to the original birth certificate.

There is provision for adopted persons and birth parents, where the adoption was made prior to June 1991, to lodge an objection to contact and/or disclosure of identifying information.

Non-identifying and medical information is also available on request.

For further information and application forms contact:

Adoption Services Queensland  
Department of Child Safety  
GPO Box 806  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Phone: 07 3224 7415  
Freecall: 1800 647 983

Website: [www.childsafety.qld.gov.au/adoption](http://www.childsafety.qld.gov.au/adoption)  
E-mail: [lpasumailbox@childsafety.qld.gov.au](mailto:lpasumailbox@childsafety.qld.gov.au)

## **South Australia**

Legislation enacted in 1988. Allows adopted adults, birth parents, adoptive parents and relatives of birth parents to receive identifying information about each other if they wish. The Act allows adopted people and birth parents, where the adoption was legalised prior to 1989, the right to restrict the release of information. The Department may assist in searching, the facilitation of contact and also runs a contact register. There are charges for registration for adoption information. These can be waived in cases of hardship.

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ABN 95 084 695 045

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Write to:

## Adoption and Family Information Service South Australia

Families SA  
Department for Families and Communities  
GPO Box 292  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5001  
Phone: 08 8207 0060  
Fax: 08 8207 0066  
Email: [adoptions@dfc.sa.gov.au](mailto:adoptions@dfc.sa.gov.au)  
Web: [www.adptions.sa.gov.au](http://www.adptions.sa.gov.au)

## Tasmania

Legislation enacted in 1988. Allows adopted adults (18+), birth parents and birth relatives to receive identifying information about each other. The Department of Community and Human Service's Adoption & Information Service may assist in searching and/ or the facilitation of contact. This Department also runs Tasmania's Adoption Information Register (contact register).

Write to:

The Department of Health and Human Services  
Adoption and Information Service  
GPO Box 538  
HOBART TAS 7001  
Phone: 03 6222 7373  
Fax: 03 6223 1343

## Victoria

Adopted adults (18+) are entitled to their original birth certificates, and court and agency records, after attending a mandatory interview (individual, group or telephone for interstate or overseas applicants).

Adopted persons under 18 are entitled to apply and can receive information, with the written permission of their birth and adoptive parents.

Birth parents and relatives are entitled to non-identifying information from records about the adopted person. Current and identifying information is given with the agreement in writing of the adult adopted person or the adoptive parents, if the person is under 18 years of age.

The adult children of adopted persons have the same rights as adopted persons. The agency must advise the adopted person that the application has been received unless evidence of the death of the adopted person is provided.

The Department maintains a register through which those entitled may express their wishes about providing or receiving information, and their feelings about contact.

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Adoptive parents are encouraged to register to facilitate the timing of approaches while the adopted person is under 18.

The Department provides a Search Guide and has a website.

Information is available from:

Adoption and Family Records Service (AFRS)

Street Address:

Level 20, 570 Bourke Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000

Mailing Address:

PO Box 588  
Collins Street West  
MELBOURNE VIC 8007  
Phone: 03 8608 5700 1300 769926  
E-mail: [afrsduty@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:afrsduty@dhs.vic.gov.au)  
Web: [www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au](http://www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au)  
(look under "Placement and Support")

## **Western Australia**

Amendments to the Adoption Act 1994 in 2003 brought changes to Adoption Information Vetoes. As of 1 June 2005 the vetoes ceased. Previously, a lodged veto meant that parties to an adoption were able to prevent the release of identifying information. Access to this information is now available. Existing Contact Vetoes will remain in force. Prior to any identifying information being released to a person affected by an Information Veto, they are required to attend an information interview. If they are also affected by a Contact Veto they will be required to sign an undertaking that they will not contact the person who placed the veto. The undertaking is a legal agreement and breaking it is an offence.

Post Adoption Services can provide further information."

*Adoption Service of the Department for Community Development*

PO Box 6334  
East Perth, WA 6004  
Phone: (08) 9222 2870  
Fax: (08) 9222 2607  
Toll-free: 1800 640 555  
Web: [www.fcs.wa.gov.au](http://www.fcs.wa.gov.au)

*Adoption Research & Counselling Service (ARCS)*

38 Queens Crescent  
PO Box 187  
Mount Lawley WA 6929  
Phone: (08) 9370 4914  
Fax: (08) 9370 4917  
Email: [arcs@adoptionwa.org.au](mailto:arcs@adoptionwa.org.au)  
Web: [www.adoptionwa.org.au](http://www.adoptionwa.org.au)

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*Adoptions International of Western Australia*  
*Specialising in pre and post intercountry adoption*  
Suite 6, St Brigid's Centre, 60 John St, Northbridge WA 6003  
Phone: 08 9328 2555  
Email: [aiwa@multiline.com.au](mailto:aiwa@multiline.com.au)  
Web: [www.multiline.com.au/~aiwa](http://www.multiline.com.au/~aiwa)

*Adoption Jigsaw WA Inc*  
*(counselling, mediation and search services for Australian and UK adoptions,*  
*operates an independent contact register)*  
91 Hensman Road  
Subiaco WA 6008  
PO Box 403  
Subiaco WA 6904  
Phone: (08) 9388 1922 (9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday)  
Fax: (08) 9388 3364  
Email: [jigsaw@jigsaw.org.au](mailto:jigsaw@jigsaw.org.au)

Post Adoption Resource Centre  
PO Box 239  
Bondi NSW 2026  
T 02 9365 3444  
F 02 9365 3666  
E [parc@bensoc.org.au](mailto:parc@bensoc.org.au)  
[www.bensoc.org.au](http://www.bensoc.org.au)