

RELEASE OF INFORMATION ABOUT UNACKNOWLEDGED BIRTH FATHERS

In past adoption practice, it was unusual for one's birth father to be named on the birth certificate and subsequently on your Supply Authority.

Adoptees wanting to trace their birth fathers should try to obtain his details from their birth mothers. If this is not possible for any reason, you can contact the relevant Adoption Service Provider to ask them if the full name is held on their file. Usually if an adoptee has applied for Social and Medical Information the Adoption Service Provider will give an indication whether the birth father's full name is held on their file. The Adoption Service Provider may be the Adoption Information Unit at the Department of Community Services or it might be one of the Private Adoption Agencies such as Anglicare Adoption Services or Centacare Adoption Services (Previously the Catholic Adoption Agency) depending on which agency organised the adoption. If an adoptee is not sure which agency organised the adoption, the Adoption Information Unit should be able to provide this information.

It is also important for the adopted person to register their details on the Reunion and Information Register held by the Adoption Information Unit at the Department of Community Services. This is because the birth father may have already registered his own details on the Register in which case, once the adoptee's details have been registered, a match can be made.

Even if there is a full name on the Adoption Service Provider's file, the birth father is not legally considered an acknowledged birth father unless his name is on the original birth certificate or he signed an adoption consent. If the birth father is unacknowledged, his name may only be released to an agency, such as PARC, on a non disclosure basis. This means that until the information has been confirmed and your birth father has given permission to do so, his name may not be disclosed to you.

If the adopted person wishes to pursue this option, s/he will have to apply in writing to the Adoption Service Provider requesting his name be released to PARC. If the name is on file, the name will be released after the adoptee has applied to the Adoption Service Provider and approval has been given from the manager.

The Adoption Service Provider will consider releasing information to PARC under the following circumstances.

- If your birth mother has died
- If your birth mother can't be located; you would have to explain what steps you have taken to locate her
- If you are subject to a contact veto from your birth mother
- If your birth mother does not want contact with you or is unable or unwilling to name your birth father

All the relevant information about your attempt to contact your birth mother and your search outcomes should be outlined in your letter.

Once approval is given and PARC obtains his name, the PARC counsellor will make every attempt to locate him and confirm that he is the birth father. The counsellor will then have to get his permission to release his name to the adoptee. The fee for this service through PARC is \$50.

An adoptee has the right to choose which agency they work with. The original Adoption Service Provider may be able to search for and mediate contact with an unacknowledged birth father, as can the Salvation Army Special Search Service and PARC. The above service providers are also able to share information with each other if an adoptee prefers not to work with the original Adoption Service Provider but would rather work with the Salvation Army Special Search Service or with PARC.

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