

Fostering & Adoption Records

Genealogy SA is a leading resource for family history. Access to Fostering and Adoption records is outside of our scope but once you have those records we can assist with family history searches.

We are unable to provide counselling or assistance with reconnecting with biological family members. For support with this you can contact services such as Relationships Australia or Find and Connect Support Services.

FOSTERING

Fostering is a process whereby a child is taken into care (either temporarily or permanently) when the child's original family is unable to take care of them for some reason, for example illness or death of a parent. The child may or may not have a name change in this situation.

Fostering Records

Finding records about foster care placements is a little difficult. However if the person you are looking for spent time in a children's home or institution between placements or was a ward of the state, there could be government records about their time in care which may include foster placements. Historical records about children who were wards of the State or in State based care in South Australia can be located at State Records of South Australia.

ADOPTION

Adoption is a legal process whereby a child becomes a legal member of the adopting family and all legal ties with the birth family are severed; it is as if the child were born into the adoptive family. The child usually carries a new name. Past adoption practices saw children being placed for adoption who required care because they had been abandoned or orphaned, providing childless couples with children.

Adoption Records

Anyone aged 18 years and over who is/was a party to an adoption can apply for information about a past adoption in South Australia through the Department for Child Protection (DCP). You will need to provide the necessary documentation and pay a fee. A link to the form is below:

https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1048912/provision-adoption-information.pdf

DCP will provide authorisation for you to apply to Births, Deaths and Marriages for an original birth certificate.

If you want to find a birth relative, you will need to have this information.

Historically, a party to an adoption could place a veto on the release of any identifying information. The ability to place a veto was removed from the Adoption Act on 18 December 2017 and all vetoes expired on 17 December 2022.

Tracing family

Once you obtain your adoption information and your original birth certificate you will be able to begin the process of tracing your biological family. Be mindful that this can be difficult to navigate for both the adopted person and the birth family and there are services that exist to support you and help facilitate this process such as:

Post Adoption Support Services (PASS)

<https://www.rasa.org.au/support/services/post-adoption-support-services/>

Forced Adoption Support Services (FASS)

<https://www.rasa.org.au/support/services/forced-adoption-support-services/>

Find and Connect Support Services

<https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/resources/family-tracing/>

For historic adoption family searches this information will enable you to trace birth families using standard family history research processes; birth, death and marriage certificates, shipping records, electoral rolls, trade directories etc.

Babies homes

Historically, babies relinquished for adoption were cared for in Babies Homes such as those listed below:

- Walkerville Babies Home
- Kate Cocks Memorial Babies Home. This ceased operation in 1976. There are no admission records. Information is held at State Records and DCP.
- McBride's Maternity Hospital operated by the Salvation Army.
- Destitute Asylum Lying-in-Hospital.
- Catholic Refuge at Norwood and then Fullarton
- Queens Home, Rose Park which later became Queen Victoria Hospital.

The Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department established in 1927, combined the operations of both the State Children's Department and Destitute Persons' Department. In 1966 it became the Social Welfare Department.

Various records are available at State Records which relate to these children.

- Ledgers of Children Boarded out 1862-1921 (GRG 27/5)
- Register of Children Apprenticed, Adopted or Licenced to Serve. (GRG 28/7)
- Register of Foster Mothers and Foster Children (GRG 28/15).
- Register of Children Placed with Licenced Foster Mothers GRG 27/17 (Mothers) and GRG 27/18 (children) 1886-1910, 1902-1910 respectively.
- Records of Licences Granted to Foster Mothers (GRG 27/6) for years 1900-1910
- Reports by Inspectors of Lying-In-Homes Maintained by State Children's Department (GRG 27/15)

The index to Foster Mothers and Wet Nurses is in SAGHS library.