



Finding Your Story

**A Resource Manual to the
records of The Stolen
Generations in Victoria**

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Foreword

Access to records is a crucial issue for Indigenous people. The information in *Finding Your Story* has the potential to change the lives of individuals, families and communities. Accessing records is the crucial first step in each person's own journey of healing.

The records relating to the removal of children from their families are a vital resource for Indigenous people and a precious part of Victoria's cultural heritage. Despite the pain and sadness of the stories they can tell, we need to manage and preserve these records and respect their value. For many people, these records can hold the key to identity. A detail in a register, a name on a case file; the smallest pieces of information in the records documenting children's lives away from their families can have a huge impact on someone's life.

Finding Your Story provides a comprehensive and cohesive resource of government and non-government record and archival collections in Victoria relevant to the Stolen Generations and their families. It seeks to assist in breaking down the barriers that surround access to records. *Finding Your Story* is useful and practical because it has been written and presented in a clear, concise and culturally appropriate manner achieved by extensive consultation and input from Koorie user groups.

The release of this publication has been a long-held goal for the Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce since its establishment in 2001 as part of the Victorian Government's response to the *Bringing them Home Report*. The Taskforce is a cooperative venture between Public Record Office Victoria, Koorie Heritage Trust Inc. and Aboriginal Affairs Victoria.

Its preparation has been an extraordinary team effort between agencies of the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments, the community services sector as well as Victorian Aboriginal Community organisations.

I have great pleasure in delivering this publication to the Victorian Aboriginal Community on behalf of Public Record Office Victoria, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria and the Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce.

Jason Eades
Chairperson, Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce



Acknowledgments

Finding Your Story: A Resource Manual to the Records of the Stolen Generations in Victoria has been developed with the valued commitment and hard work of a large number of individuals. The project started with a strong partnership built by the former Director of Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), Ross Gibbs, and the former CEO of the Koorie Heritage Trust Inc., Jim Berg JP. It was during Jim's time as President of the Public Records Advisory Council that this project was conceived and part of the funding secured from Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV).

The commitment of the staff at AAV, in particular former Executive Director Tony Cahir, Amanda Young and Sandy Hodge, to seeing the *Finding Your Story* publication come to fruition has also been instrumental in the final result.

The members of the *Finding Your Story* Steering Committee provided vital direction, advice, input and feedback at every stage of the publication process from selecting the researcher, to the design of the front cover. Both they as individuals and their agencies and organisations should be commended for their unswerving commitment and dedication to seeing *Finding Your Story* become a useful and culturally appropriate resource for Victoria's Indigenous community. The Steering Committee members are:

Nicole Bloomfield (formerly of Link-Up Victoria),

Maureen Cleary (Department of Human Services, Adoption and Family Records Service),

Jason Eades (Koorie Heritage Trust Inc.),

Jenny Glare (MacKillop Family Services),

Genevieve Grieves (formerly of Koorie Heritage Trust Inc.),

Ross Latham (National Archives of Australia),

Dianne Reilly (State Library Victoria),

Carl Temple (Department of Human Services, Freedom of Information Unit) and

Chris Walker (Link-Up Victoria).

The preparation of the text for this publication must be credited to James Jenkinson, whose research into out-of-home care providers in Victoria, and commitment to using clear, concise and jargon-free language is one of the central reasons that we can present *Finding Your Story* to you today. Thank you to Kerry Biram, whose friendly manner and fast turn-around times for the editing and indexing made the production process seem that little bit easier. Thank you also to Reanna Bono and Craig Small at Deadly Design for taking the time to really understand the project and for their professionalism and support through the design and production process.

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Justine Heazlewood
Director and Keeper of Public Records
Public Record Office Victoria

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1

Introduction





Introduction

Information about the past is critical to helping the Stolen Generations reunite with family and explore their Indigenous identity.

The Stolen Generations

The policies of past governments that led to the separation and removal of Indigenous children from their families are well documented. Indigenous people who were separated from their families as children and those who had their own children removed have lived for years with the hurt and humiliation caused by these policies and practices.

Thousands of Indigenous children throughout Australia were placed in institutions or with non-Indigenous families. This was a painful experience and for many, pride in family was diminished, self identity severely damaged and contacts with family and community members lost. Some children were never able to return home to their families and the links to their community were severed.

Many of these children had multiple placements in children's homes and in foster care. Some became involved with the State's juvenile justice system and ultimately, the adult prison system.

Recognition of the Stolen Generations issue

During the 1970s, Indigenous agencies, including the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) gathered research material and personal stories to make the case for changes to child welfare policy and practice.

VACCA recognised that Indigenous children were significantly over-represented in child welfare and juvenile justice services. As well as making concrete proposals for more culturally appropriate and Koorie-controlled services, VACCA and other Victorian Indigenous agencies supported the national call for an inquiry into the separation of Indigenous children, their families and communities.

Indigenous workers have long recognised that access to past records is critical in assisting children separated from their parents to discover their true identity, locate family members and begin the process of reunion.

Key recommendations of the *Bringing Them Home* report focused on the importance of enabling Indigenous communities to access archival and historical information about themselves and their families.

Responding to the 'access to records' issue

Finding records is often not a straightforward or simple task. The first step is finding out what records are available and how to access them. The second step is finding out that some records may not have survived at all.

In the past, the importance of keeping records so that people could find out about their family background was not understood by all agencies. Some record-holding agencies did not have the resources for archiving and maintaining old and fragile records as this can be a complex and very expensive business.

Many non-government agencies did not have a policy of keeping records, as this was not required by law. Others destroyed records because they thought they were protecting the confidentiality of their clients. Still others lost or destroyed records during a move to new buildings, renovations or the takeover of their agency by another to save space and administrative complications.

It must also be understood that not all personal records are kept as a matter of course. Most agencies, in particular government departments, have policies about which records to keep and which to destroy. An Act of Parliament gives the Keeper of Public Records (who is also the Director, Public Record Office Victoria), the State's archival authority, and the power to approve the destruction or retention of records created by government agencies in Victoria. Government agencies cannot destroy records without this approval.

Most community sector agencies now recognise the importance of keeping personal records from the past. Previous clients are now encouraged by both government and community sector agencies to look for their records and fill in the gaps from their past.

Finding Your Story

Finding Your Story has been produced because Victoria's Indigenous communities wanted more information on the location of *their* personal and historical records and ways to access them.

Finding Your Story brings together in one place the information collected by the Koorie Heritage Trust Inc., Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), the Department of Human Services (DHS), Link-Up Victoria and other agencies already working with members of the Stolen Generations. It also draws together the 'access to records policies' of community service agencies involved with the care of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in the past.

Finding Your Story contains information on the location of personal welfare records which will be of relevance to others, such as non-Indigenous people searching for information about their time in care.

Finding Your Story also provides linkages to Indigenous organisations, national government agencies, museums and libraries where Indigenous people can find out more about their wider family history and Indigenous community and cultural heritage.

Finding Your Story

Finding Your Story has been produced by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria, Public Record Office Victoria and the Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce as a reference tool for individual Indigenous Victorians seeking information on their separation. It will also assist agencies continuing to help the Stolen Generations on their journey of discovery and healing.



Melissa Brickell

You have to know where you come from to know where you're going in life.¹

The effects of removal from family, culture and country – and that search for answers to such questions as: Who am I? Where do I come from? Why did this happen? Why was I put there? – are not always answered through reunification with loved ones. Many of us were institutionalised until we turned 18 years of age, or adopted. Not only do we lose our family, along the way, we tend to lose our sense of self-esteem, and identity. Many of us reach adulthood before we even begin to adequately and appropriately tackle these sorts of questions and issues.

A good start is to locate your story. And it's about information. You have to know that records were kept about you – and/or not destroyed. I didn't know, and it made my search just that much more prolonged and difficult. I didn't know who I could even talk to – to help me. And really, I didn't want anybody to help me for fear they would ask stuff – and I wasn't ready to deal with stuff or have someone intrude into my business.

When I got my records, it helped me to answer some of the questions, raise other questions, reflect on certain events, name someone that I'd dearly love to see or find out about, and reopen the wounds. The records returned me to my childhood experiences, and contributed to my facing the issues of removal for myself. Eventually I was better able to tell my story, and to share my story with others, including my family and community. I was able to begin to put my life into some sort of perspective.

Aboriginal people are still experiencing the burden and trauma of those government policies and practices which removed Aboriginal children and families from their families and homes. For many individuals and communities there remain physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual wounds to heal. Knowledge can help lead to healing. Just by knowing who your mob are, where your mob comes from, and why and where you fit into all of it – can lead you to be better enabled to move on, move forward, and know exactly where you're going – for the rest of your life.

Melissa Brickell
Yorta Yorta clan

¹ Paraphrased from Carol Kendall, Link-Up New South Wales Booklet, 1998, p. 73, with permission from Link-Up New South Wales.





2

Finding your story



2

Finding your story

Locating records about your separation from family or obtaining information about your Indigenous heritage is not an easy task. Finding Your Story has been produced to help you with your search.

How *Finding Your Story* will help

Were you removed from your family as a child, and are you seeking information about yourself? Are you affected by the past removal of your parents or grandparents? *Finding Your Story* provides detailed information on where records may be found which may contain information about your separation from family and your time in the care of others. It might also help you find out more about the separation of your brothers and sisters, parents or grandparents. *Finding Your Story* will identify these records and show you how to access those of most interest to the Stolen Generations.

Finding Your Story will also help you find information which could extend your understanding and knowledge of your family, community and country. It will help you find out the background to the policies and practices that led to your separation and the separation of many other Indigenous children from family and community. *Finding Your Story* will show you how to find information about your cultural and community heritage as an Indigenous Victorian.

Finding Your Story recognises that researching the records of government and large community service agencies can often be time consuming, complex and rather frightening. This guide is designed to make the process easier.

Finding Your Story

- outlines the things you need to think about before beginning your search;
- identifies the information that is available and where it can be found;
- identifies the people and agencies that can help with your search.

The records of the Stolen Generations

Chapters 3 to 6 of *Finding Your Story* will help you prepare for your journey of discovery.

Chapter 3 suggests you record as much as you can remember about your separation from your family as well as any memories you have of the places where non-family members may have cared for you. It also recommends that you gather any documents you might have that you can use as identification, such as a birth certificate. Having these documents and information before you start searching can help make the process easier.

Chapter 4 identifies some of the emotional issues that may arise as you uncover information about your past.

Chapter 5 identifies Indigenous and non-Indigenous agencies that can help and support you through the search process. Remember, you are not completely alone. Many other people have already completed this journey and the support agencies have considerable experience in helping searchers.

Chapter 6 provides answers to many of the questions asked by members of the Stolen Generations seeking information about their personal records and Indigenous heritage.

Chapters 7 to 11 of *Finding Your Story* focus on the information needs of people directly affected by past separation policies. These chapters will help you search for records about your separation from parents and family.

Finding Your Story focuses on government welfare records and the records of community service agencies that provided care for children who were separated from their parents or other relatives and guardians. It details the many sources of personal information about yourself, your parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents or other family members.

In many instances these records will contain information about your placement in a children's home, in foster care or with adoptive parents. They may also contain information about how welfare and other services responded to your needs and to the needs of your family. The files could include the reasons given at the time for your separation from family. There may be also be information on your education, health, personal achievements as well as other important personal details.

Chapters 7 to 12 will show you how to access information about your or your family's:

- involvement with the child protection system;
- State Government welfare department records if you were:
 - a Ward of State,
 - in foster care,
 - a youth trainee in a youth training centre,
 - on youth probation or parole,
 - placed in a Government children's home;
- involvement with other government (Departmental) services;
- adoption records;
- church and community (non-government) sector children's home and child welfare program records;

- Aboriginal Welfare Board and Victorian Aboriginal mission, reserve and station records;
- birth, death and marriage certificates;
- other non-welfare-related personal information about siblings, parents and grandparents.

* Please note that the term 'welfare department' is used throughout *Finding Your Story* as a general term to refer to the Victorian State Government departments that had responsibilities for child welfare and protection from the 1830s up to today. For a list of the specific names of these departments go to the glossary entry on page 106.

Indigenous heritage records

Chapter 13 is designed to assist you widen your search and to find out more about your extended family, Indigenous community and the history of Indigenous Victorians.

These chapters go beyond the records held by non-government welfare agencies and government agencies and look at what is available in Indigenous and non-Indigenous archives, libraries, museums and internet databases. They will direct you to library collections (both text and photographic), Indigenous name indexes, information about reserves and missions and other sources of historical information about the rich cultural heritage of Indigenous Australians.

The Stolen Generations in Victoria: an historical overview

A short history of the Stolen Generations can be found in Chapter 14. This traces the impact of European settlement on Indigenous communities and its long term and at times tragic consequences for Indigenous children.



3

Your search

3
Your search



3

Your search

Gathering as much background information as possible before you begin will increase the effectiveness of your search.

Locating records

Just knowing which agency holds your records can be an obstacle, as most people were babies or children when these records were created.

As an adult wanting to see your records you may not:

- have enough basic information to know where to start or who to approach;
- know or remember the name or location of the children's home or foster placement where you spent part of your childhood (even if you know where you were placed, the records could have been transferred to another agency);
- know the name of the organisation which ran the home or foster placement, or the agency's current name if it has changed.

To make matters even more difficult, if you had multiple placements, you may have to go a number of separate agencies to create a complete picture of your time in the care of others.

How to begin

The Koorie Heritage Trust Inc, Link-Up Victoria, the Adoption and Family Records Service, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), VANISH and MacKillop Family Services are very experienced in helping Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with the exciting and sometimes painful search for personal information or lost family connections.

Each of these agencies encourages searchers to collect and record as much background information as possible before they begin their search journey. Gathering background information and thinking about your search will help you pinpoint exactly what it is you are looking for. It will also give the agencies holding information a better chance of finding something of importance to you.

First steps

- Write out what you know about your family. Ask family and friends to help you write down as much information as possible.
- If you are already aware of your Indigenous heritage, but want to find out more about family or community, talk to as many people as you can, including Indigenous Elders and community groups. Write down as much of the information as you can, including names, nicknames, place names, dates. Note if members of your family were in the armed service, or in a home, or even in prison, because important information can be found in the records of those institutions.
- Try and define what it is you are seeking. Write it down or think about it in a way that you would feel comfortable explaining to a friend or to someone who could help you with your search.
- Once you start contacting agencies, keep a written record of agency telephone numbers, web addresses and the names of contact people. Write down what they said they would do to help you, what information they might be able to provide and what they actually gave you.
- Put everything you do and everything you get in the one file or folder. This will be very helpful if you are contacting a number of agencies about similar issues, and for keeping any information provided handy. You can use the *My Story* section of this publication to keep all of this information together.

Preparing to access information about yourself

In most cases agencies holding records will need some basic information about you and your information needs before they begin to search their archives.

Firstly, the agency will want to know that you are who you say you are and that you have the right to look at certain records.

Be prepared to provide the following information about yourself:

- your name,
- address,
- contact telephone number,
- date of birth and
- name at birth if your name has changed.

Gather together as many as possible of the following documents for identification if they are available:

- birth certificate,
- marriage certificate,
- passport,
- current drivers licence,
- pension card,
- Medicare card, etc.

(Go to page 71 for information on where birth and marriage certificates are kept, and how to go about getting official copies.)

When you receive these certificates, make several copies of them so you can send one of each with each request for information. Put these together in a file to give to agency workers or to include in applications and letters requesting information from agencies.

If you are trying to find information from when you were in a children's home or other institutional placement

Many people, including ex-Wards of State, may not know exactly which organisation was caring for them, especially if they were in foster care or a family group home. If you do know which children's home or homes you were in, write down whatever you can remember of the name and the time you were there. Go to page 43 and see if it is listed. If it is, contact the current organisation holding the records.

If you were a Ward of State

The names of the children's homes which care for Wards of State are usually recorded on their Ward file. Contact the Department of Human Services Adoption and Family Records Service to obtain information from your Ward file. (Go to pages 19-20 for details).

Remember: There is no single index or listing of client files which covers all government and non-government agencies. You may need to approach a number of agencies to obtain a complete picture of your time in care.

If you don't know the name of the children's home or homes which cared for you, the agencies on pages 19-21 may be able to help you identify it if they have enough information.

To help them, write down what you remember about your time in care:

- Was it out in the country, in a country town or city or somewhere in Melbourne?
- When were you there? Write down the years if you know this. It might help if you can remember how old you were.
- Do you know if it was a government home or one run by the Catholic church, another church, or another group of people?
- Was it run by a religious order (with priests, nuns, sisters or other religious staff)?
- What can you remember about the home? Was it big? Were the buildings old? Did it have farm animals? Were there many other children? Did you sleep in large dormitories or in small rooms with only a few other children? Did you eat in a large dining hall or around a small table with just a few other children and some adults? Can you remember the names of any of the staff or other children in the home?
- Did you live in an ordinary house in a local street? How many other children were there at the same place?
- Do you think or know whether you were in foster care? Many children know they were in foster care or a family group home, however, they may not know the name of the agency that supervised the family group home or foster care placement. Do you know the name of the agency? If not, can you remember the name of the family group or cottage parents or the foster parents?
- Some Indigenous and non-Indigenous children were placed in hostels and special residential units with 'rostered' staff, i.e., staff who worked shifts. If you don't know what the place was called, write down what you can remember about the location, buildings and staff.

If you had a number of different placements, you may need to do this for as many placements as you can remember. This will help you or the people assisting you put together a fuller picture and gather as much information about you as possible.

If you are looking for information about other people

You may be looking for information about someone else and their experience with the welfare system and their time in children's homes or foster care. This might be a close relative or a friend you are helping with their search. You might also want to look for records other than those held by welfare agencies in order to learn more about your family, community or Indigenous heritage.

If you are seeking personal information about someone else you will need to:

- obtain the written permission of that person to apply for information on their behalf;
- provide proof of your relationship with that person where this is required (proof may be in the forms of a birth, death or marriage certificate).

Summary

- Try and remember as much of your own past as possible and write it down.
- Gather as much 'official' information as possible (e.g., birth and marriage certificates) before you begin your welfare records search.
- Talk to as many relatives and friends, and write down as much information about your family as you can.
- Keep a file to record the information provided to you by your family and the agencies you have contacted. Dates of events such as births, deaths and marriages can be particularly useful. You can use the *My Story* section of *Finding Your Story* to keep all of this information together.



4

The emotional journey



4

The emotional journey

Finding out about your time in care or being reunited with your family can be a very emotional experience. You must be prepared for some highs and lows as you search for information about your past.

Accessing records

Once you have found the agency that holds your records, you need to be able to approach that agency with confidence that they will understand your need for information, and that they are organised so that it is as easy as possible for you to have access to the records. Most agencies are now aware of the special information needs of the Stolen Generations and many have specially trained staff or procedures to respond to your request for past records.

You must remember that although the information on files and records is about you and your family, those files and records remain the property of the agency that created them.

In some cases the agency holding the records may not be the agency from whom you need permission to look at them. This can sometimes mean that it will take longer for you to get permission to access your records.

Freedom of Information


When you receive a copy of your files, you may not be given all of the information on file. This is usually due to Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation and Information Privacy restrictions. Under FOI, you have a right to apply for information held by State government agencies, but personal information relating to someone

other than yourself may be exempt (that is, it cannot be made available to you) if it is considered to be unreasonable to release. For example, if you were a Ward of State (this means you were placed under the guardianship of the Victorian State Government) and placed in a children's home, there is often personal information relating to other ex-Wards recorded on your file. This information would usually be exempt from release in order to protect those individuals' privacy.

Dealing with the information provided

Indigenous Victorians have spoken in a heartfelt way about the emotional impact of searching for information about their separation from family. They have spoken of 'the difficult and painful emotions in trying to fill the gaps', and the 'trauma of remembering family and events that have been taken away'.

Some Indigenous Victorians who have been through the process of 'opening sealed memories' recognise the need for culturally appropriate support and counselling. Many agencies holding records are aware of this issue, and will do all they can to assist you.



In addition, there are Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations in Victoria and interstate with specific experience in helping the Stolen Generations discover their past. *Finding Your Story* will introduce you to these agencies.

Points to remember

- The fact that a person was Aboriginal was not often recorded in official welfare records.
- The amount of information available will vary and you may be disappointed with the lack of information of importance to you in your files and documents.
- Some of the information about your family's circumstances may be distressing to you. There are support services available to you, and many will let you bring along a family member or friend for support as well.
- The way the information in the files is written could offend you. In the past, file notes were written by officials and welfare workers with little understanding of Indigenous cultures or family life.
- The language used could also cause offence. Reports were written using the language that was usual at the time; sometimes that language would be quite unacceptable now.
- Reading your file could trigger deep emotional memories of your treatment in care, some of which you may have tried to forget.
- Up until the late 1960s siblings were routinely separated, and each child had their own file. However, welfare department files often contain information about a particular Ward of State's brothers and sisters, particularly if they entered care together.
- You may need to trace your time in care and gather together files from a number of sources.

Summary

- Some of your records may not have survived.
- You may need to do some personal background work in order to identify which agency might hold your records.
- Any files you see remain the property of the agency holding them, even though they contain information about you. However in most cases you will be able to access these files and get copies.
- You will not be able to see information relating to the private affairs of other people unless you have their permission.
- Accessing the information on your file may be distressing to you.
- The agencies listed in the **Getting Help** section will be able to help you with your search.
- Many agencies now understand that past client records are important and will do all they can to assist you access them.



5

Getting help



5

Getting help

Searching for records can be complicated and time-consuming. *Finding Your Story* identifies those agencies and organisations that can help and support you through the process.

Finding support and assistance

Because of some of the complexities and stresses involved in finding records and the possibility of reuniting with your family, you might feel in need of some help. The agencies and organisations listed below can be a good place to start. If they can't help you, they will most likely know who can.

These agencies and organisations are experienced in and sensitive to the search needs of the Stolen Generations. In addition they have strong connections with the agencies holding information, as well as expertise in finding and organising the retrieval of records.

The workers in these agencies and organisations can help you think the issues through, work out what is it you are looking for, provide emotional and practical help and give you specific advice as to how to proceed.

Note: The following organisations and agencies are listed in alphabetical order.

Care Leavers of Australia Network (CLAN)

Care Leavers of Australia Network (CLAN) is a support and advocacy group for people brought up in care away from their family as Wards of State or Home children raised in children's homes, orphanages or other institutions, or in foster care. CLAN is also for anyone who has a close family member who was placed in 'care'. Many of these people are now middle-aged or older but still carry the burden of unresolved issues from this past. CLAN's aim is to raise community awareness of these issues, and to campaign for government assistance to redress them. CLAN welcomes everyone who has been affected by the 'care' system, regardless of your background or heritage.

Contact:

Care Leavers of Australia Network
PO Box 164
GEORGES HALL NSW 2198
Phone: 1800 008 774 (from Victoria only)
or (02) 9709 4520
Email: support@clan.org.au

Department of Human Services: Adoption and Family Records Service

The Adoption and Family Records Service (AFRS) is responsible for the release of information from records about adoption and Wards of State. While AFRS is a mainstream service (that is, it is responsible for records about adoption and Wardship concerning non-Indigenous people too), it has developed a close working relationship with Victoria's Indigenous community on the Stolen Generations issue.

AFRS provides support, counselling, search and mediation services to adopted people, birth parents, birth relatives and adoptive parents. AFRS also provides search and support services to former Wards of State and their families.

No fees are charged for former Wards of State or Indigenous clients searching for their records. (See page 40 for more information on how to access adoption records.)

Contact:

Adoption and Family Records Service
16th floor, 595 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 9616 2822
Email: afrsduty@dhs.vic.gov.au
Website:
<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/formerstatewards/>

Koorie Heritage Trust Inc.

The Koorie Heritage Trust Inc., through its Koorie Family History Service, can help you trace your family and reconnect you with your history, heritage and culture.

The Trust's workers can provide information on Indigenous families in Victoria, record your family tree, help to access records, or give support and advice to help you in your search. The Trust can help you reconnect with your family.

The Trust is recording the stories of the Stolen Generations, their families and those involved in their removal.

Contact:

Koorie Heritage Trust Inc.
259 King Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 8622 2600
Email: familyhistory@koorieheritagetrust.com
Website: www.koorieheritagetrust.com

Link-Up Victoria

Link-Up Victoria assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 18 years of age to trace their families. Link-Up Victoria also 'takes them home' to meet their family and community.

As part of the search for a person's past history, Link-Up Victoria provides support and guidance to address issues of cultural identity, self-worth and resolve issues regarding community and family.

Link-Up Victoria will help you search for records relating to you and your family, and help you to obtain copies of files and other documents.

Link-Up Victoria also offers a family tracing and family reunion service and provides support and culturally relevant counselling for people returning to their Indigenous family, country and culture.

Copies of an abridged version of the *Bringing Them Home* report are available to all Link-up clients or other people interested in the Stolen Generations issue.

Contact:

Link-Up Victoria
2 Watt Street
(PO Box 1132)
THORNBURY VIC 3071
Phone: (03) 9480 4511
Email: progcoord@vaccalinkup.org
Website: http://www.vacca.org/link_up/index.html

MacKillop Family Services: the records of the Catholic Church

The Heritage Workers at MacKillop Family Service can assist searchers with background information on the range of homes and services conducted by the Catholic Church. While MacKillop Family Services only holds the records of the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of St Joseph and the Christian Brothers, their Heritage Workers will help searchers identify other sources of information about Catholic institutions and assist with a referral to agencies holding their records. The Heritage and Information Service also provides advice about where to search for additional records held by government departments and other private organisations.

Contact:

The Manager
Heritage and Information Service
MacKillop Family Services
237 Cecil Street
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205
Phone: (03) 9699 9177
Fax: (03) 9696 6496
Email: mfs.heritage@mackillop.org.au
Website: www.mackillop.org.au

VANISH

VANISH is a self-help community service organisation for people separated by adoption or as Wards of State. VANISH provides search advice, assistance and general support to adoptees, birth families, adoptive families and adults affected by the Ward of State system.

Contact:

VANISH
199 Cardigan Street
CARLTON VIC 3053
Phone: (03) 9348 2111
Free call: 1800 334 043
Email: vanish@vicnet.net.au
Website: www.vicnet.net.au/~vanish

Victorian Aboriginal Family Counselling Service

The Family Counselling Service is an Indigenous agency which provides culturally sensitive counselling services to members of the Stolen Generations and Indigenous families, children and adolescents. It also provides specialist counselling in the areas of mental health and alcohol and drug abuse.

Contact:

Victorian Aboriginal Family Counselling Service
279 High Street
NORTHCOTE VIC 3070
Phone: (03) 9403 3300
Website: <http://www.vaahs.org.au/family.html>

Victorian Aboriginal cooperatives

Victoria's Aboriginal cooperatives can provide a good starting point for people wishing to access personal records and cultural heritage information. Many Aboriginal cooperative workers have developed information resources on the location of such records. Aboriginal Affairs Victoria keeps an up-to-date listing of Victorian Aboriginal Community contacts. You can see this list on their website at <http://www.dvc.vic.gov.au/AAV/INDEX.HTM>.

Cooperative name	Telephone, fax, email	Street and postal address
Aborigines Advancement League	Phone: (03) 9480 6377 Fax: (03) 9416 9092	2 Watt St THORNBURY VIC 3071
Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd	Phone: (03) 5331 5344 or (03) 5331 5934 Fax: (03) 5333 1637 Email: badac@ballarat.com.au	5 Market Street BALLARAT VIC 3350 PO Box 643 BALLARAT VIC 3353
Bangerang Cultural Centre Co-operative Ltd	Phone: (03) 5831 1020 / 1457 Fax: (03) 5821 0718 Email: marlenea@mcmedia.com.au	c-/ International Village Aboriginal Keeping Place Parkside Drive SHEPPARTON VIC 3630 PO Box 1386 SHEPPARTON VIC 3630
Bendigo and District Aboriginal Cooperative	Phone: (03) 5442 4947 Fax: (03) 5442 4941	13-15 Forest St BENDIGO VIC 3550
Central Gippsland Aboriginal Health and Housing Co-operative Ltd	Phone: (03) 5136 5100 Fax: (03) 5133 8069 Email: accounts@nindedana.net	Cnr Buckley & Collins Streets MORWELL VIC 3840 PO Box 250 MORWELL VIC 3840
Framlingham Aboriginal Trust	Phone: (03) 5567 1003 Fax: (03) 5567 1298 Email: fram@hotkey.net.au	C/o Post Office PURNIM VIC 3278
Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd	Phone: (03) 5152 5089 Fax: (03) 5152 3115 Email: kooriekare@net-tech.com.au	37-53 Dalmahoy Street BAIRNSDALE VIC 3875 PO Box 634 BAIRNSDALE VIC 3875
Goolum-Goolum Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd	Phone: (03) 5382 5033 Fax: (03) 5381 1563 Email: craiggoolum@bigpond.com	'Droylsden' 143-145 Baillie Street HORSHAM VIC 3400 PO Box 523 HORSHAM VIC 3402
Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative Ltd	Phone: (03) 5564 3333 Fax: (03) 5561 1650 Email admin@gunditjmara.org.au	Harris Reserve WARRNAMBOOL VIC 3280
Jaara Jaara Loddon Aboriginal Corporation		2/24 Thomas Street CASTLEMAINE VIC 3450

Cooperative name	Telephone, fax, email	Street and postal address
Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust	Phone: (03) 5156 5554 Fax: (03) 5156 5482	PO Box 1115 LAKES ENTRANCE VIC 3909
Mildura Aboriginal Corporation	Phone: (03) 5023 0893 Fax: (03) 5023 7852 Email: macrecep@hotmail.com.au	120 Madden Avenue MILDURA VIC 3500 PO Box 2130 MILDURA VIC 3502
Moogji Aboriginal Council East Gippsland Incorporated	Phone: (03) 5154 2133 Fax: (03) 5154 2120 Email: moogji@net-tech.com.au	52-54 Stanley Street ORBOST VIC 3888 PO Box 617 ORBOST VIC 3888
Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation	Phone: (02) 6024 7599	10Hovell Street WODONGA VIC 3690
Murray Valley Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd	Phone: (03) 5026 3353 Fax: (03) 5026 4332 Email: bumbang@ruralnet.au	Lot 2, Latje Road ROBINVALE VIC 3549 PO Box 680 ROBINVALE VIC 3549
Njernda Aboriginal Corporation	Phone: (03) 5480 6252 Fax: (03) 5480 6116	84 Hare Street ECHUCA VIC 3564
North West Nations Clans Aboriginal Corporation	Phone: (03) 5033 0666 Fax: (03) 5033 0600	231 Campbell Street SWAN HILL VIC 3585
Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation	Phone: (03) 5143 1644	117 Foster Street SALE VIC 3850
Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd	Phone: (03) 5825 2111 or (03) 5825 2333 Fax: (03) 5825 4493 Email: rumbalara@raclimited.com.au	20 Rumbalara Road (off Toolamba Road) MOORoopna VIC 3629 PO Box 614 MOORoopna VIC 3629
Victorian Aboriginal Health Service Cooperative LTD	Phone: (03) 9419 3000	186 Nicholson St FITZROY VIC 3065
Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Cooperative Ltd	Phone: (03) 9419 3888 Freecall 1800 064 865	6 Alexandra Pde FITZROY VIC 3065
Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative Ltd	Phone: (03) 5277 0044 Fax: (03) 5278 4123	Lot 62 Morgan St NORTH GEELONG VIC 3215 PO Box 402 NORTH GEELONG VIC 3215

Cooperative name	Telephone, fax, email	Street and postal address
Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation	Phone (03) 5527 2051 Fax: (03) 5527 2052 Email: wmac@windamara.com	21 Scott St HEYWOOD VIC 3304
Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation and Cultural Heritage Council Incorporated	Phone: (03) 5962 1848 Fax: (03) 5962 1848	19 Barak Lane HEALESVILLE VIC 3777
Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation	Phone: (03) 5869 3353 Fax: (03) 5869 3352 Email: yorta@mmedia.com.au	Cnr Schier & Maloney Streets BARMAN VIC 3636 PO Box 27 NATHALIA VIC 3638

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service

The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) provides advice, court representation, casework and community legal education services to the community. If you feel that you may have a possible damages claim in relation to your separation from family, you can contact the Legal Service.

Contact:

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
6 Alexandra Parade
Fitzroy VIC 3065
Phone: (03) 9419 6024
Tollfree: 1800 064 865



Merryn Edwards


My name is Merryn Edwards. I am a descendent of the Aranda people of Central Australia. I currently work as a Bringing Them Home Support Worker at the Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative in my adopted home town of Geelong. I have two children, five grand-children and am an Aunty to about 30 kids, and I am also a godmother.

I have been an active member of the Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative for approximately 25 years. In this time I have been on many committees, and have been recently appointed to the Interim Board for the newly established Stolen Generations organisation here in Victoria. I am also on the committee for the Koorie Heritage Trust's Stolen Generations CD ROM. I have attended many forums in the five years of this position to assist in the process of educating the Government on a State and local level to enable them to provide a better understanding and service delivery to clients and families removed and affected by Stolen Generations practices.

I am the third generation of the removal process. My grandmother was removed from her birth country, Alice Springs, and taken to South Australia to become a maid for a prominent anthropologist. My mother was then removed from my grandmother and placed in the Colebrook Children's Home in South Australia. I was born in Murray Bridge Hospital and taken from my mother at birth and adopted by a non-Indigenous family in Shelford, Geelong, Victoria. The family that adopted me had four

children of their own and adopted eight other children, seven of them Indigenous and one non-Indigenous. I was raised on a 60-acre Soldier Settlement farm with all my adopted brothers and sisters and knew nothing of my Indigenous background or culture. It wasn't until I was an early teenager that I recognised that I was different to my adopted parents and decided that I wanted to know who I was.

It was at the time of the founding of the Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative that the now-current CEO was visiting families in the Geelong region. This was due to the fact that there were a high number of children removed to Geelong and placed in the many homes that were in the region. With the help of Wathaurong Cooperative I was able to access the information and resources at the time to find my natural mother. However, there were not other services like there are now to support and assist in the process when I found my mother. I did it on my own, which made it extremely difficult to express and confide in someone to understand what I was going through.



People need to understand the bigger picture of this whole mania. You have no idea what we have to go through. It is the leaving behind of the family that raised you, finding out and dealing with deception, untruths, and childhood traumas; adapting to your new family – in most cases it's more than just your birth parents, it's other members of the family; going home to your Country that you belong to; dealing with politics; trying to fit in. It is also learning the culture of both where your family descendents are from and then your adopted Country, and then finally being accepted on the whole as Indigenous and also accepted by the non-Indigenous community.

Personally, I am overwhelmed and proud of the progress to date and to see the moving forward that many of the Government Departments, community organisations, Stolen Generations peoples and workers in the various areas that has occurred to heal our people who have been affected, and that we are finally being heard. Although there is still a long way to go, we are a very strong race, otherwise we wouldn't be here today, and we are not going away.

It is now 25 years ago since I found my mother. I am now 42 years of age, and it has been a journey that I never ever could have imagined was going to be. It has taken me this long to come to terms with the fact that I have to accept that I can't change what has happened, and that it is never going to go away. The building of family bonding is going to be an ongoing process, and in some cases such as mine, may never be what I want.

The most important aspect of my healing for me is that I have come a long way as an Indigenous woman, who is proud of my culture. I am still learning about my family history, and guess I will be for the rest of my life. The most rewarding thing is that through my own personal experience and journey I can help others, which makes it all worth while, and I guess I wouldn't be the person who I am today; I could have been bitter but I am just sorry.

Merryn Edwards
Bringing them Home Support Worker
Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative
62 Morgan Street
North Geelong, Victoria, 3215
Phone: (03) 5277 0044



6

Frequently asked questions



6

Frequently asked questions

It has been the experience of the agencies working with the Stolen Generations that some questions arise again and again. This section will briefly answer these questions and refer you to other parts of *Finding Your Story* for further information.

Finding my records

How can I get a copy of my birth certificate?

You can apply in person for your Victorian birth certificate at the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages at 595 Collins Street Melbourne. You can also apply in writing or on-line. (See Chapter 12 for more information.)

If you were adopted in Victoria you can obtain a birth certificate in your adopted name from the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

If you were born interstate you will need to contact the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages in the State where you were born. Go to Chapter 15 for a listing of these agencies.

If you were adopted and you are over 18 years of age, you can obtain a copy of your original birth certificate, which will contain information about your birth parents. However, you must register with an adoption information service and attend an interview before you apply to the Registry of Birth, Deaths and Marriages for your original certificate (see page 41).

I was adopted in Victoria. Where are my records?

Adoption records are held by the Department of Human Services. Some non-government approved adoption agencies also hold adoption records. If you are searching for adoption records it is best to contact the Department of Human Services Adoption and Family Records Service (AFRS) initially. They will help you find both government and non-government adoption records including the records of church and community service agencies that were involved in arranging adoptions and which may have since closed. (See Chapter 8 for more information.)

I was adopted in another State, not Victoria. Where are my records?

Your adoption records will be held in the State where the adoption occurred. Each State has a special agency which can help you access your adoption records. The names and contact details of these agencies are in the **interstate agencies** listings on pages 95-102.

You can approach these agencies directly or you could contact the Victorian Department of Human Services Adoption and Family Records Service (See page 20 for details). They will help you to make contact with the interstate agency for your adoption records.

I was not adopted but other people cared for me. Would there be any records?

If you were placed in the care of others through an informal arrangement between your parents and a relative or friend of the family, then there are unlikely to be any official records. If you were cared for by a children's home, or in a family group home or foster care then it is more likely that records will be available. *Finding Your Story* provides some pointers for thinking about your time in care before you approach an agency for help to find records. The agencies listed in Chapter 5, **Getting Help**, will be able to start you on the journey to finding your records.

I was a Ward of State. Where can I get my government records?

Access to the records of Victorian Wards of State is managed by the Department of Human Services. The Department's Adoption and Family Records Service has a special responsibility to help ex-Wards of State gain access to their records. Go to Chapter 5 for more information.

The Department also holds the records of youth trainees (Ward and non-Ward) and young people placed on probation and parole as well as the records of children and young people who were involved with other Departmental services. These records can be accessed through the Department's Freedom of Information Unit.

How long will it take for me to get my records?

It shouldn't take longer than six weeks for you to see your records. In most cases it will take much less time. Some small agencies could make records available to you within a few days of you making contact with them. Larger agencies that have a larger number of records, some of which may be stored off-site, need more time to find the files, assess and prepare them. All agencies must meet Freedom of Information or Information Privacy legislation requirements. They will also need to arrange a time for you to read the records and receive copies of your personal information.

Can I get copies of my records on the spot if I go to the agency which has them?

No, you cannot visit the agency which has your records and expect them to give you copies of your records without contacting them first. In most cases you will need to make a formal application in writing or in person to the agency. You will also need to provide identification so that the agency knows it is giving the records to the right person.

For records from the Department of Human Services (e.g. Ward of State records), after the agency has received your written request for information, the records will be prepared for release to you.

Some agencies may offer the option of viewing the original file, but if you would like to do this, you may wish to request this in your application.

How much does it cost to see your records?

The *Bringing Them Home* report urged agencies not to charge people from the Stolen Generations searching for their records. The Department of Human Services will waive Freedom of Information fees if you can prove financial hardship (e.g. if you have a health care or pension card). There is no charge to access Wardship or adoption records or for assistance from the Department's Adoption and Family Records Service.

Almost all of the community service agencies contacted said that members of the Stolen Generations would not be charged to access their records.

I am under eighteen years of age.

Can I access my records?

You need to be over eighteen years of age to apply for a copy of your original birth certificate. If you are under eighteen, a parent, legal custodian or guardian must apply for you. They will be required to provide proof of identity.

If you were adopted you need to be over eighteen to obtain a copy of your original birth certificate.

Most community service agencies will allow you to access your personal records even if you are under eighteen years.

If you are under eighteen you can apply for personal information held by any Government agency under Freedom of Information provisions.

I was separated from my family as a child. How can I find out who my parents are?

It is best to contact one of the agencies listed in Chapter 5 **Getting Help** (see pages 19-21). These agencies have a lot of experience in searching for relatives and can provide you with a good deal of practical help and support. They will help you explore welfare records, birth, death and marriage records, electoral rolls and many other sources of information which may lead you to your parents or at least information about them.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the National Archives of Australia (NAA) and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) is an exception. This arrangement allows sensitive personal information that would normally be exempt from public access under the Commonwealth Archives Act 1983 to be available to the subject of the record or to family members for the purposes of re-establishing family and community links. See Chapter 12 under **Memorandum of Understanding with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)**. See page 76 for more information on the Memorandum of Understanding.

How can I get the birth, death or marriage certificate of my parents and grandparents?

You will need to make an application to the Government agency which keeps these records in the State in which the birth, death or marriage occurred. (See page 71 for information for Victoria and pages 95-102 for interstate agencies.)

Depending on which certificate is required and whether any restrictions apply to access to the records, you may need to provide evidence of your relationship to the person who is the subject of your inquiry.

The agencies in the **Getting Help** section of *Finding Your Story* can assist you to find the birth, death and marriage certificates of your parents and grandparents.

Finding other peoples' records

Can I access the records of my parents, grandparents, brother or sister or other relatives?

Under FOI and Information Privacy legislation, you may be able to access information relating to your relatives; however this is assessed on a case-by-case basis and depends on the circumstances. Some information from adoption records may be accessed by birth relatives. You may need to provide proof of your relationship to the other person and/or their written consent. If the other person has died and you are not the next of kin, you may need to provide the written consent of their next of kin.

Many of the agencies holding records will provide you with basic information to assist in family tracing, but they will not allow you to look at personal records without the permission of the person who is the subject of the records.

Who can help me?

I am worried about what might be in my records. Can someone be with me when I look at them? I don't want to go on my own to the place where the records are. Who can help me? If I get upset after seeing my records, is there anyone I can turn to who will understand my feelings and help me?

Some people may find the information in their files distressing or that reading the file triggers deep emotional memories of their time in care.

Most of the agencies holding personal welfare records will either provide counselling or support when you look at your records or refer to you to an appropriate counselling and support service. You can also ask a family member or friend to go with you when you visit the agency to obtain the records. Agencies such as Link-Up Victoria, the Koorie Heritage Trust, the Aboriginal Family Counselling Service and your local Aboriginal cooperative can also provide support. (See pages 22-4 for contact details.)

The Department of Human Services Adoption and Family Records Service provides similar support and counselling to ex-Wards and people who were adopted and to birth relatives when they request access to records. The Department encourages applicants for information to use the support of a family member or friend when receiving their records if they wish to do so.

Public Record Office Victoria and the Melbourne office of the National Archives of Australia employ an Indigenous Reference Officer who can assist you to access personal records held in their collections.

Once I have my records ...

Can I change the information on the records?

If you believe the records to be inaccurate, the FOI Act provides people with the right to add to or amend records relating to yourself.

Firstly, you need to make a request in writing for the records to be amended, or added to so that extra information is included in the records. You should ask an FOI officer to help you make this request so that it satisfies the requirements of the FOI Act.

Usually the records will have a notation added to them rather than be amended. This is because of the strict rules around the destruction and deletion of records under the Victorian *Public Records Act 1973*.

The Department of Human Services generally encourages and supports individuals adding information to records in order to create a balanced representation of a person's experiences. Under the FOI Act, inaccurate information can only be deleted or destroyed with the approval of Public Record Office Victoria, the archives of the State Government of Victoria.

Can I destroy the records once I have looked at them?

You cannot destroy original files, as these are the property of the agency which created them. You can destroy any photocopied material given to you by the agency if you wish, but the original documents will remain on the file.

Some files held by Government and community service agencies are destroyed from time to time in accordance with official records storage and destruction policies, however, most agencies are now keeping client files for long periods of time.

Some files (e.g.: Ward of State files and court adoption records) can never be destroyed.

I received my records, but some of the information was masked out. Why was this done?

Under FOI, you have a right to apply for information held by State government agencies, however personal information relating to someone other than yourself may be exempt from release if it is considered to be unreasonable to release. The National Archives of Australia follows a similar procedure, in accordance with the *Archives Act 1983*. This information is usually blacked-out of the file or in the documents you will receive. (See page 66 for further information on FOI and Information Privacy provisions and administration.)

Searching outside Victoria

I was born in another State, not Victoria. Where can I get some information about my own or my parents' birth, death or marriage?

Finding Your Story lists the agencies responsible for issuing birth, death and marriage certificates in each State. (See pages 95-102)

Some agencies have a website which will outline the procedure for applying to obtain the certificates. Remember, there will be some restrictions on which certificates you can receive without the permission of your parents, or evidence that they have died and that you are their next-of-kin.

I was in a children's home (or foster-care) in another State. Can anyone help me find my records?

The interstate listings from pages 95-102 have the name and contact details of the Government agencies who deal with requests for information from people who were adopted or were in Government care. The agencies listed in the Getting Help section can help you make contact with the appropriate interstate agency.

Questions about the system

Why are all the records not kept in one place?


Records are not all kept in the one place because your files were created by different agencies at different times. State government files are initially held by the Department that created them. Records that are to be kept forever are then transferred to Public Record Office Victoria for permanent storage.

Other files created by the Commonwealth Government are held by the National Archives of Australia.

Community services and Church agency client files remain the property of the agency that created them. Some agencies prefer to keep these files in their own archives; others pass them on to the State Library of Victoria or in rare cases, the Department of Human Services. If an agency no longer exists they may have chosen to place their non-adoption records in the State Library of Victoria or with the Department.

If a community service or church agency ceases to be an approved adoption service they are required by the Adoption Act to transfer their records to DHS. If they continue to arrange adoptions they may choose to keep these records in their own archives along with other non-adoption records such as foster care records.

Unfortunately, there is no single index or listing of client files which covers all Departmental and non-Government agencies. You may need to approach a number of agencies to obtain a complete picture of your time in care.



I live a long way from Melbourne. How can I access my records? Do I have to come to Melbourne?

In most cases your personal records can be posted to you once you have made an application and your identity has been verified. The community service and government agencies will also try to arrange local counselling and support for you when you read your file if you feel you need this. Your local Aboriginal cooperative may be able to help you with your application and provide support when your information arrives.

If I have to travel to Melbourne, will any of the organisations listed in Finding Your Story offer me travel assistance?

Link-Up may provide assistance with travel. Assistance regarding intra-state travel, that is, from a country area to the office of Link-Up Victoria, will be based on client need and circumstance and will also be at the sole discretion of the Link-up Program Coordinator.

If I am on a Centrelink payment or some type of pension, will this be taken into account if there are any processing fees?

Yes, it will. Most of the community service agencies holding records will not charge a fee to Indigenous people seeking access to their personal records. The agencies listed in *Finding Your Story's* **Getting Help** section do not charge fees for their services.

If you are applying for adoption information, or access to government records under Freedom of Information, the normal fees are waived. You can make an application to have the normal fees waived when applying for birth, death and marriage certificates. The fact that you are on a Centrelink payment is sufficient evidence of possible financial hardship, and any fees will be waived.



7

The Stolen Generations records

7 Stolen Generations records



7

The Stolen Generations records

Chapters 7 to 11 focus on government welfare records, and the records of community service agencies which provided care for children who were separated from their parents or other relatives and guardians. Where possible it outlines the types of records available.

The Stolen Generations records

These sections show you how to access information about you or your family's:

- involvement with the child protection system;
- State government welfare department records if you were:
 - a Ward of State;
 - in foster care;
 - in a youth training centre;
 - on youth probation or parole;
 - placed in a departmental children's home.
- Involvement with other departmental services:
 - adoption records;
 - community sector children's home and child welfare program records;
 - Aboriginal Welfare Board and Victorian Aboriginal mission, reserve and station records;
 - birth, death and marriage certificates.

* Please note that the term 'welfare department' is used throughout *Finding Your Story* as a general term to explain the Victorian State Government departments that had responsibility for child welfare and protection from the 1830s up to today. For a list of the specific names of these departments go to the glossary entry on page 104.

Child protection

The Department of Human Services (DHS) provides access to most Industrial, Reformatory School and Wardship records. These records have been in existence since 1864. Records over 99 years old can be accessed at Public Record Office Victoria (see pages 62-3).

Since 1883, additional services to protect children in Victoria have been provided by the Children's Protection Society, Victoria Police and the State's welfare department. You have a right to look at any child protection records containing personal information about you.

Police child protection records

Victoria Police were involved in child protection from 1864 to 1990. The work was undertaken mainly by the Women's Police and the Community Policing Squad.

The police do not hold extensive child protection records. Police briefs of evidence in child protection cases were usually destroyed after two years. However, if a child was placed with the government welfare department, the brief of evidence (which outlined the reason why the child was apprehended, and family details), was usually placed on the child's Ward file.

In addition the police have retained some registers or 'case entry' books and index cards relating to the work of the Women's Police and the Community Policing Squad. The records can be accessed under Freedom of Information. (Contact foi@police.vic.gov.au or phone (03) 9247 6801. Go to pages 66-7 for further information on FOI in Victoria.)

Children's Protection Society (CPS)

The Children's Protection Society (formerly known as the Victorian Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children) undertook child protection investigations and family casework in many, but not all, parts of Victoria from 1883 until 1985.

CPS files from 1921 to 1968 are held by the State Library of Victoria. You must obtain permission from the CPS to access these files. (See page 55 for CPS contact details.)

Some CPS files from the early 1970s to 1985 are held by the Department of Human Services. These cover CPS work in regions centred on Dandenong, Preston, Geelong, Ringwood and Ballarat. These files can be accessed under Department of Human Services Freedom of Information arrangements (see page 65).

Department of Human Services: Child Protection

From 1985 the State Government gave the department that is responsible for child welfare the power to investigate allegations of abuse and neglect and to make application to the Children's Court for protection orders.

Before that, the Department's involvement in a child protection matter began when a child was made a Ward of State or placed under the supervision of the Department by the Children's Court. (See page 28 for information on how to access Ward records.)

You can apply under Freedom of Information for any existing records relating to the investigation, any application to the court and for any files created if you were placed in the care of the State Government.

State Government Welfare Department clients

1. Wards of State

The records on Wards of State are located at Department of Human Services and can be accessed through the Adoption and Family Records Service. Records over 99 years old are available from Public Record Office Victoria. (See page 78). If you were placed in a State or church institution or you were in foster care, you may have been a Ward of State.

Ward files

If you were a Ward of State, you may have a register entry or personal file. Registers were used from 1864 to the mid 1960s. In addition, files were created from about 1920; however, only files relating to children who were still Wards after the Second World War have survived.

Your Ward file will contain most of the written records kept about you. Early files (from the 1940s to the 1960s) commonly have very limited amounts of information, sometimes only twenty pages or so for someone in care for many years. In these cases you may find that there is little information to help you understand why you were taken into care or why particular placement changes were made.

More importantly, you may find it hard to understand why there was little follow-up with your family to see if you could return home. Unfortunately, this was common practice at the time. After 1960, when social workers were employed, the amount of information placed on a file increased.

Your Ward files will contain details of the government and non-government children's homes and foster care placements used to provide day-to-day care while you were a Ward of State. Additional personal information can sometimes be found in the files of these services.

Where can I apply to read my file?

If you were a Ward of State you have the right to look at your own departmental Ward file. You can do this by contacting the Department of Human Services' Adoption and Family Record Service (AFRS):

Adoption and Family Record Service
16th floor, 595 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Phone: (03) 9616 2822
Email: afrsduty@dhs.vic.gov.au
Website:
<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/formerstatewards/>
Follow the links to the Adoption and Family Records Service.

It may take some weeks for the Department of Human Services to find out if you have a file and to prepare your file for you to read.

Who can help me understand my file?

You may find some of the information on your Ward file distressing. The Adoption and Family Records Service has a special service to assist former Wards apply for their records. The AFRS will provide support or counselling if necessary and help you search for family members from whom you have been separated.

If you would like to read the file you may do this. You will also receive a copy of any documents on the file that relate to you.

Can I take my file away with me?

Your original file must remain with the Department of Human Services. Government public records legislation requires that original documents such as your birth certificate, school reports and personal photos cannot be removed from a Departmental file, however copies would be provided to you. Many non-government agencies will provide you with original documents from their files, but retain a copy for their own records.

Other information available from the Department of Human Services

There may be additional information about your stay in a Departmental children's home, reception centre, youth hostel or other facility. Separate client files were sometimes created by the following homes and some may have survived. You should request a search for any information available from the specific facilities in which you were placed.

State Government Department children's homes and youth training centres in Victoria from 1940

Acheron Youth Training Centre (Near Buxton)
Allambie Reception Centre (Burwood)
Ashdene Boys Home (Olinda)
Ballarat Reception Centre (Warrawee)
Baltara Reception Centre (Parkville)
Bendigo Reception Centre
Hillside Boys Home (Glen Waverley)
Illoura Children's Home (Balwyn)
Ivanhoe Hostel
Malmsbury Youth Training
Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre (Parkville)
Miraltee Reception Centre (Mildura)
Northcote School Children's Home (Bacchus Marsh)
Nunawading Youth Residential Centre
Parkville Youth Residential Service
Pirra Girls' Home (Lara)
Sunshine Boys' Hostel
Sutton Grange Children's Home (Mornington)
The Gables Children's Home (Kew)
Turana (Parkville)
Winlaton Youth Training Centre (Nunawading)

2. Youth Welfare Division clients and youth trainees

From 1961 to 1978 the Youth Welfare Division of the State's welfare department supervised Wards of State and young offenders who were over 14 years of age (from 1970 this was 15 years of age). A Ward was deemed by the Children's Court to be in need of the care and protection of the Department because they had been neglected or because of their behaviour. The Youth Welfare Division provided a supervision and after-care service to young persons over 15 years who were Wards of State.

A young offender was a person sentenced to a fixed period of institutional training once convicted of an offence. However, some young offenders were admitted to the care of the Department as Wards of State rather than placed on fixed term sentences in Youth Training Centres.

Children were transferred to this Division from the Family Welfare Division when they reached that age. Others were referred to the Department by the Children's Court on the basis of 'neglect' or because the court determined they were in need of care and protection or for other reasons.

Young people over 14 years (or 15 after 1970) could also be sentenced for certain offences to a period of probation or a term of detention in a Youth Training Centre. Offences might have included assault, robbery with violence, breaking and entering and theft of motor vehicles.

The Department of Human Services archive provides access to the files of all clients of the Youth Welfare Division. If you were a Ward of State, your Family Welfare Division and Youth Welfare Division files were placed on a new Youth Welfare Division file once you turned 14. After 1970 this was done when you turned 15.

The Adoption and Family Record Service will help ex-clients of the Youth Welfare Division gain access to all available files controlled by the Department of Human Services.

These could include:

- your Family Welfare or Youth Welfare Division files;
- your probation supervision file if you were placed on probation by the Court;
- your parole supervision and Youth Parole Board file if you were released from a youth training centre on parole;
- any files or information about you held in the Department's hostels or youth training centres.

3. Other welfare department clients and sources of information

In most cases when you apply to the Department of Human Services under Freedom of Information, you will be provided with information from your 'central' file if you were a Ward or youth welfare client.

However, from the early 1970s much of the Department's case work was carried out in regional centres and by special units in head office. In many cases these regions and units created separate files in addition to the central Ward or youth welfare file.

Consequently, there are a number of other possible sources of information about you in the Department of Human Services archives.

Possible sources of information

The following regional records may provide additional information about your involvement as a client with the Department. The Adoption and Family Record Service and other support services can help you explore these possible sources of information.

Special units:

- Children's Court Advisory Service
- Liaison and Advocacy Unit
- Streetworks Outreach Service
- Early Intervention Unit files

Additional client-related files:

- Regional office family files,
- Regional foster care records.
- Medical files for Wards and Youth Trainees.

The Department of Human Services also holds some files relating to contact from individuals and families seeking family counselling or advice from its regional offices. This information is contained in:

- Client history cards,
- Single contact records,
- Family support unit files.

Other Department of Human Services holdings

The Department of Human Services controls access to the records of people who were clients in the following client service systems:

- Intellectual Disability,
- Psychiatric Services,
- Maternal and Child Health,
- Non-statutory client contacts with the Department's suburban and regional offices,
- Drugs of Addiction client files.

You may apply for these records through the Department's Freedom of Information Unit. See pages 66-7 for contact details.

Freedom of Information website

The Victorian State government also has a website dedicated to Freedom of Information at:

www.foi.vic.gov.au

This website provides assistance and general information to help you access government documents by using the Victorian Freedom of Information Act 1982.

What might be in my file?

Personal files

Your personal client file (or files) will be your most important, and first, source of information, particularly in your search for Stolen Generations records.

Many people have no idea what to expect or what might be available in government and welfare agency records. People who have seen their own records are often disappointed about the lack of information contained in them or on the other hand overwhelmed by the detailed documentation about themselves or their family.

The amount of information on a file will usually depend on when a person was in the care of the government or a particular home or agency, whether there were professional case workers involved, and on the complexity of the case. In most cases, the earlier the file was created, the less information is likely to be available.

Your personal file could contain social work, medical and psychiatric reports, letters from family to official agencies and school and police reports.

Example:

A typical Ward file from the 1960s and 1970s would contain:

- a 'Form 276': police details for a children's court prosecution;
- Children's Court documents admitting the child to the care of the Department;
- social worker reports before and after admission to care, including home visit reports;
- shorter file notes recording day-to-day phone calls and contact with the child, young person or family;
- psychiatric and medical reports;
- regular 'inspection', 'review', and education reports detailing progress in care, behaviour, placement possibilities, etc.;
- official letters to the family and other people involved with the case;
- case plans summarising the situation and outlining future action, i.e., referral to another placement or home release etc.;
- transfer documentation when a child or young person was moved from one placement to another.

Additional sources of information

In addition to your main or 'central' government file or your community sector agency client file, important information about your time in care may also be found in other documents. It must be remembered that not all agencies created files or retained these documents.

- *Registers and admission books*
– These were an early form of record keeping. They were large books in which very basic information was recorded, usually on contact with an agency or when a child was transferred, or when contact with the agency was finished. The register might only contain the name of the child, names of the parents, date of birth, dates of admission and discharge.
- *Card indexes* – From the 1950s many agencies used index cards. Again, these may contain only limited amounts of information, or just act as indexes to other sources of information such as files.

- *Visitors book* – A record of people who visited you in the home.
- *Log books, day books, diaries etc.* – In some institutions, staff kept 'working diaries' or reports of activity during the day or night, recording incidents and other activity.
- *Medical diary* – Some homes kept a diary of hospital visits, doctors appointments and changes to medication.

There may also be separate files created by the agency or home in which you were placed. If you have had a number of placements with different agencies, you may find a wide variety in the availability, amount and nature of information on your personal records.

The amount of information available from church and other community service agencies will also vary. Many homes used only registers and index cards to record information about the people in their care.



8

Adoption records



8

Adoption records

Legal adoptions began in Victoria in 1928. Between 1928 and 1964 adoptions could be arranged by private individuals or adoption agencies. From 1964 all adoptions were arranged by approved adoption agencies, most of which were church and welfare organisations. The welfare department in Victoria also arranged adoptions from 1964.

If you know you were adopted, you have the right to information about the adoption. You can only access adoption information through an adoption information service.

Early adoptions

Before the first *Adoption of Children Act* 1928 in Victoria, unofficial (de facto) adoptions were sometimes arranged by government and non-government organisations and by individuals. This information was often recorded in the De Facto Adoption Register and is sometimes the only way to obtain information about an adoption in this period. Information from the Register can be obtained through the Adoption and Family Records Service.

Adoption information

Records relating to people who were adopted, made Wards of State or supervised by the welfare department and/or placed in children's homes run by community service organisations are held by:

- the Department of Human Services,
- Public Record Office Victoria (non-adoption records over 99 years old only),
- non-government community service organisations

Starting to find out about adoption records

The best starting point if you think you were adopted, gave up a child for adoption or want to find out more about adoption is the Adoption and Family Records Service run by the Department of Human Services. It can:

- help you find both government and non-government adoption records, including the records of church and community service agencies which previously arranged adoptions, but which have since closed;
- find the records of Wards of State who were adopted;
- access information from Court records of all legalised adoptions since 1928. (There may also be additional information from agency records, especially after the introduction of the *Adoption Act 1964*);
- refer you to the non-government agencies that provide information about past adoptions with their agency.

How to apply for adoption information

If you want to obtain information about a past adoption and trace birth records you need to be registered with an adoption information service. There are several of these in Victoria, located both within Government and within community services organisation. The Government's Adoption and Family Records Service will provide you with forms and information on how to register with any of these services.

Adult adopted persons will receive information about their origins, including the names of their birth parents. If you are over 18, you will receive a copy of your original birth certificate at an interview (For more information on the interview go to web site: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/formerstatewards/ and follow the links to the Adoption and Family Records Service.)

Your *original* birth certificate will show:

- when and where you were born;
- the name of your birth mother and her address at the time;
- how old your mother was when you were born;
- where she was born;
- your name at birth.

This information is the basis for tracing birth family members. In the past, if the birth parents were not married (to each other), the birth father's name would not be recorded on the birth certificate.

If your adoption was arranged by the government or an adoption agency, there will usually be records relating to your birth mother and possibly your birth father. The agency will try and locate these records.

After receiving information about your adoption, you may want to trace your birth family. A number of resources are available to you if you decide to go ahead:

- a search-guide booklet, given to you at the interview;
- *Adoption: Myth and Reality*, a DHS booklet about the experiences of people who have obtained information from adoption records and who may have traced family members;
- further assistance from the Adoption and Family Records Service;
- an agency called VANISH, which is a free service providing support and search services (contact details can be found on page 16);
- the telephone search advice service at VANISH;
- assistance from organisations such as Link-Up Victoria, and the Koorie Heritage Trust's Family History Service.

The adoption information interview

During the interview you will receive information from the adoption records. You will also be informed whether the Adoption and Family Records Service has received any enquiries concerning you from a birth parent or relative.

The interview is not a personal assessment. It is a discussion and information session explaining the services available to assist you, including the support and self-help groups that exist in the community to help you.

The Adoption and Family Records Service offers a choice of individual or a group interview:

- *Individual interview* offers an opportunity to talk privately with a counsellor about the information you receive, your wishes regarding searching and contact and any other issues important to you about the adoption. You may take along a family member, a friend, or an agency worker to the individual interview for support.
- *Group interview* offers an opportunity to discuss with other people, in a group setting, issues of adoption, searching and contact. Participants in the group are other people also seeking information from their adoption records. Group discussion can be a very supportive experience at this stage of obtaining information. Friends, family members and agency workers are not permitted to attend the group interview.

Birth certificates and other information

You will need a Certificate of Interview from the Adoption Information Service before seeking information about your birth family from the Registry of Birth, Deaths and Marriages. This certificate shows that you have attended an interview with an approved adoption information service.

The adult child of an adopted person has the right to the same information that is provided to their parent; however, the adopted person (parent) must be notified unless you can produce evidence of their death.

Other parties to an adoption, such as birth parents, birth relatives, adoptive parents and adopted people under 18 years, are initially able to receive non-identifying information from adoption records. Identifying information may be exchanged with the permission of the adult adopted person. AFRS counsellors are happy to provide more information or to talk over issues with you.

Counsellors are available to provide search assistance, mediation services, reunion counselling and support for people wishing to make contact with family members separated by adoption.

If your child was placed for adoption

Birth parents are entitled to non-identifying information about their child's adoption and relevant adoptive family history, from the adoption records. Contact or other information may be provided with the permission of the adult adopted person. Assistance with search, mediation, reunion and other support is available to birth parents and all parties to adoption.

Contact:

The Duty Worker
Adoption and Family Records Service
16th floor, 595 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 9616 2822
Email: afrsduty@dhs.vic.gov.au
Website:
<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/formerstatewards/>
Office hours: 8:45am to 1pm Monday to Friday



9

Community sector children's homes and child welfare programs



9

Community sector children's homes and child welfare programs

Many Wards of State were placed in homes run by churches and community service organisations. These homes also cared for children voluntarily placed by their family. Many of these agencies will assist former residents looking for personal information in their archives.

The tables in the following pages list the children's homes which operated in Victoria from the early nineteenth century to about the 1990s, and the current organisations responsible for the records of these earlier homes and services.

Here you will find a listing of the name and location of each early home. Also provided is the name and address of the organisation currently responsible for the records of the home and the contact details for each agency. It also contains that agency's 'access to records' policy where this is available. If a policy statement is not available, just the agency's contact details are provided.

The list has been organised into separate sections as follows:

- Church of England;
- Uniting Church (previously the Presbyterian and Methodist churches);
- Catholic Church;
- other religious organisations;
- larger community service organisations;
- smaller community service agencies.

Church of England

Anglicare – Victoria

Mission of St James and St John

Adoption Information Service

Andrew Kerr Memorial Home
– Mornington

Beryl Booth Court – East Melbourne

Blackburn South Cottages

Buckland House – Newport

Butler House for Homeless Girls
– Carlton and Fitzroy

Ellen Connell Holiday Home – Healesville

Fairhaven – Fairfield

George Hall Hostel – Box Hill North

Homecraft Hostel – East Melbourne

Kedesh – Carlton/Kew

Ramoth Toddlers Home – Ferntree Gully

Residential and support services
– Western suburbs

St Agnes – Glenroy

St Barnabus' – Phillip Island

St Gabriel's – Balwyn

St Luke's (Langely Hall) – Bendigo

St Nicholas' Home for Boys – Glenroy

St Paul's Children's Home – Phillip Island

Mission to the Streets and Lanes

Brighton Family Centre – 'St Faiths'

Brighton Family Centre – 'Unit 64'

Church of England Homes for Children
– Brighton

Darling Babies Home – East Malvern

House of Mercy Home for Girls
– Cheltenham

Moria Private Hospital – Sandringham

Napier House – Fitzroy

Southbridge Adolescent Services

St David's – Fitzroy

St John's Homes for Boys and Girls
– Canterbury

Anglicare has catalogued and archived the records of its earlier agencies. Clients have free access to their own records.

Clients should apply in writing (or email) giving their name and date of birth and as much information about the home or service as possible. Copies of file papers will be forwarded, with the originals of personal papers (e.g., photographs, school reports, etc.). Copies of these will be retained on the file. Only information relevant to the client is provided.

While clients only have access to their own records, every assistance is given to people trying to trace family members. General information only will be provided to people trying to trace family members after Anglicare has been given proof that the person is deceased.

Clients receive support in reading their files. There are no fees for these services.

Contact:

The Director
Anglicare, Victoria
12 Batman Avenue
West Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 9321 6133
Email: info@anglicarevic.org.au
Website: www.anglicarevic.org.au

Church of England Diocese of Ballarat

St Cuthbert's Homes for Boys – Colac

Contact:

The Bishop
Church of England
Diocese of Ballarat
PO Box 89
Ballarat VIC 3350
Phone: (03) 5331 1183
Email: office@ballaratanglican.org.au
Website: <http://www.ballaratanglican.org.au>

St Luke's – Anglicare Inc.

St Luke's Anglicare – Adolescent
Community Placement – Bendigo

St Luke's Family Care Foster Care and
Out-of-Home Care Programs – Bendigo

St Luke's Family Centre – Bendigo

St Luke's Family Group Homes and
Special Residential Units

St Luke's takes all reasonable steps to ensure people have access to personal information on their files. Written requests for information should note names, appropriate dates and the location of the service involved if known. Freedom of Information and privacy principles will be applied to protect information on the file about other people. Incorrect information on the files can be corrected. Photocopies of personal information will be provided to the client. Some original documents (e.g., school reports, certificates etc.) are given to the client and copies placed on the file. Counselling and support will be provided if necessary. There is no cost for this service.

Contact:

Chief Executive Officer
Children and Family Services
St Luke's Anglicare
PO Box 315
Bendigo VIC 3552
Phone: (03) 5440 1100
Email: stlukes@stlukes.org.au
Website: www.stlukes.org.au

Uniting Church

UnitingCare Connections

Canterbury Family Care (Babies Home)
– Camberwell

Canterbury Family Centre

Copelan Street Family Services
(including Prahlan Foster Care)

Girls Memorial Home – Fairfield

Grassmere Centre – Doveton

Methodist Babies Home – South Yarra

Methodist Child Care Service

Methodist Department of Social Services

Methodist Home Mission Society

Presbyterian and Methodist Child Care
Service (Foster Care Programs etc)

Presbyterian and Scots Church
Children's Aid Society Children's Home

Presbyterian Babies Home (including
Kildonan) – Camberwell

Presbyterian Department
of Social Services

Presbyterian Sisterhood

People eligible to receive information on their adoption under the Adoption Act 1984 need to complete a UnitingCare Connections Adoption Information Registration Form.

A mandatory interview will be provided by an agency counsellor and verification of identity will be required at the interview. Fees are waived for Indigenous applicants.

Former clients and residents of Methodist and Presbyterian institutions and services can also obtain records regarding their time in care. A written request for information signed by the applicant is required. There is no interview requirement (as for adoption information) but applicants can discuss their records and institutional experience with a UnitingCare Connections counsellor if they wish. There are no fees for this service.

Applicants for information (in particular, adoption information) are welcome to involve family members, friends or support people or workers from agencies such as Link-Up.

Contact:

Officer in Charge
Adoption Information Service
UnitingCare Connections
274 High Street
Windsor VIC 3181
Phone: (03) 9521 5666
Email: enquiries@connections.org.au
Website: www.connections.org.au

Contact for inquiries relating to Grassmere
Centre or Canterbury Family Centre:
Chief Executive Officer
UnitingCare Connections
185 Mt Dandenong Road
Croydon VIC 3136
Phone: (03) 9724 2222
Email: Doug.Dalton@careconnections.org.au
Website: <http://www.connections.org.au/>

Wimmera UnitingCare

Wimmera Community Care Family Group
Home – Stawell and Horsham

Wimmera Community Care Foster Care
Program – Horsham

Contact:

Executive Director
Wimmera Uniting Care
185 Baille Street
Horsham VIC 3400
Phone: (03) 5382 6789
Email: peterb@wimmera.unitingcare.org.au
Website: <http://www.unitingcare.org.au/>

Catholic Church

Brothers of St John of God

Churinga – Greensborough

Marian Lodge Training Centre
– Cheltenham

Raelene Hostel – Mentone

St John of God Training Home
– Cheltenham

Yarra View – Lilydale

Information is available upon written request from
persons providing identification and stating the
right to access the information requested.
No fees are charged.

Contact:

The Provincial
Brothers of St John of God
PO Box BN1055
Burwood North NSW 2134
Phone: (02) 9747 1699
Email: provincial@stjohnofgod.org.au
Website: www.stjohnofgod.org.au

Franciscan Friars

Morning Star Reformatory School, also
known as Morning Star Boys Home and
Morning Star Youth Training Centre
– Mount Eliza

Padua Hall – Kew

The Franciscan Friars do not hold any client
records for residents of Morning Star Youth
Training Centre or Padua Hall, however,
records of Wards and youth trainees are
available from the Department of Human
Services. (See page25.)

Contact:

Very Reverend Minister
Orders of Friars Minor
Provincial Office
47 Victoria Street
Waverley NSW 2024
Phone: (02) 9369 9300
Email: office@franciscans.org.au,
Website: www.franciscans.org.au

Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services

Adolescent Community Placement Program

Clients can access past adolescent placement records. No fees apply.

Contact:

Director
Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services
117 Johnston Street
Collingwood VIC 3066
Phone: (03) 9419 5477
Email: goodshep@infoxchange.net.au
Website: www.goodshepherd.com.au

Good Shepherd Sisters

Convent of the Good Shepherd
– Albert Park

Convent of the Good Shepherd
(St Joseph's Orphanage and St Euphrasia's Section, Youth Training Centre) – Abbotsford

Convent of the Good Shepherd
(St Margaret's Youth Training Centre)
– Oakleigh

Marian Hall Youth Hostel – Middle Park

St Aidan's Children's Centre,
Children's Home and Family Group
Homes – Bendigo

Access is available to former residents of the homes or other authorised persons. The archives are private and personal visitors are not catered for. Information is available in response to written inquiries only, either from former residents of the home or other authorised persons. Descendants or relatives of a person who was in care must obtain written permission from that person or provided evidence that the subject of the inquiry has died before their records can be released.

Admission and discharge records have been retained. Information relates only to the person in care, not to family members. Records of admission and departure contain only the names of girls, their place and date of birth, and parents names.

Contact:

The Provincial Leader
Good Shepherd Sisters
PO Box 182
Abbotsford VIC 3067
Phone: (03) 9419 5773
Email: kate@goodshep.com.au
Website: <http://www.goodshepherd.com.au>

Jesuit Social Service

The Brosnan Centre – Brunswick

Cambridge Street After Care Service
– Collingwood.

Four Flats – Hawthorn

Contact:

The Ignatius Centre
371 Church Street
Richmond VIC 3121
Phone: (03) 9427 7388
Email: jss@jesuit.org.au
Website: www.jss.org.au

MacKillop Family Services

Sisters of Mercy

Colac Foster Care

Geelong Foster Care

Mercy Family Care Centre
– North Geelong

Our Lady's Girls' Orphanage
– Newton, Geelong

St Catherine's Girls' Orphanage/Home
– Newton, Geelong

St Vincent De Paul Child and Family
Service – Black Rock

St Vincent de Paul Children's Home
– Black Rock

St Vincent de Paul Girls'
Orphanage/Children's Home
– South Melbourne

Christian Brothers

St Augustine's Adolescent and Family Services – Geelong

St Augustine's Boys Orphanage – Newton

St Augustine's Boys Orphanage/Home – Highton, Geelong

St Joseph's Home(s) for Children – Flemington

St Vincent's Boys Home – South Melbourne

Sisters of St Joseph

St Anthony's Family Service – Footscray

St Anthony's Home – Kew

St Joseph's Babies Home and Family Service – Glenroy

St Joseph's Foundling Hospital/Babies Home – Broadmeadows

St Joseph's Home – Surrey Hills

St Joseph's Receiving Home – Carlton

St Joseph's – Flemington

Contact:

The Manager
Heritage and Information Service
MacKillop Family Services
237 Cecil Street
South Melbourne VIC 3205
Phone: (03) 9699 9177
Fax: (03) 9696 6496
Email: mfs.heritage@mackillop.org.au
Website: www.mackillop.org.au

Marillac House Ltd

Marillac House Children's Home – East Brighton

Marillac House Maryville Hostel

Contact:

The Director
Marillac House
47 Milroy Street
East Brighton VIC 3187
Phone: (03) 9591 6400
Email: anna@marillac.com.au
Website: www.marillac.com.au

MacKillop Family Services is responsible for the client records for the former children's homes, receiving homes and orphanages run by the Christian Brothers, the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of St Joseph in Victoria.

MacKillop Family Services, through its Heritage and Information Service, provides an information and support service to former residents and/or their families. People applying for records can contact the Heritage Worker by telephone, by email or in person. MacKillop Family Services is bound by State and Federal privacy legislation.

Assistance is provided with the interpretation of records, and people are encouraged to visit in person. Assistance and support with searching for separated family members is also provided.

While MacKillop Family Services only holds the records of the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of St Joseph and the Christian Brothers, their heritage worker will help searchers identify other sources of information about Catholic and government institutions, and assist with a referral to agencies holding their records.

Sisters of Nazareth

Nazareth House – Camberwell

Information will be provided following a written request. Only the limited information recorded in admission and discharge registers is available.

Contact:

Sister Superior
Sisters Of Nazareth
PO Box 6900
Middle Camberwell VIC 3124
Phone: (03) 9830 5569
Email: regcamb@ozemail.com.au

Information will be provided following a written request. Only the limited information recorded in admission and discharge registers is available.

Nazareth House – Ballarat
St Joseph’s Home (Nazareth Boys House) – Sebastopol

Contact:
Sister Superior
Sisters of Nazareth
PO Box 634
Ballarat VIC 3353
Phone: (03) 5329 5100

Other denominations or religions

Anchor Foster Care

Abercare
Baptist Community Care
Family Group Homes – Heathmont, Blackburn
SHAC Foster Care – Blackburn, Ferntree Gully
Yarra Ranges Community Christian Care

Contact:
Anchor Inc
Level 1/111 Main Street
Lilydale VIC 3140
Phone: (03) 9739 6400
Email: mandy.fallon@anchor.org.au
Website: www.anchor.org.au

Jewish Care

Australian Jewish Welfare and Relief Society Foster Care Program
Family Group Homes
Frances Barkman Homes – Caulfield
Jewish Community Services – Geelong

Jewish Community Services currently operates an informal process for responding to requests for information from former clients. In the first instance the inquiry is handled through the agency’s duty/intake system. Any request to view a file is then referred to the Director of Community Services, who, in most instances, meets personally with the former client following a review of the file. Enquiries regarding adoption cases are referred the Department of Human Services.

Contact:
Jewish Care Victoria
619 St Kilda Road
Melbourne VIC 3004
Phone: (03) 8519 5999
Email: jewishcare@jewishcare.org.au
Website: www.jewishcare.org.au

Lutheran Children’s Homes

Lutheran Family Group Homes
Lutheran Foster Care Program – Glenelg
Lutheran Peace Memorial Home – Kew
Lutheran Welfare Centre – Mitcham

Information can be provided to previous clients or next of kin of deceased clients following provision of appropriate identification.

Contact:
Treasurer
Lutheran Children’s Homes
755 Station Street
Box Hill VIC 3128
Phone: (03) 9890 0566
Email: clcc@vic.lca.org.au
Website: <http://www.vic.lca.org.au/>

Wesley Mission Melbourne

Georgina House (Girls Memorial Home)
– Fairfield

Tally Ho Boys Village – Burwood East

Tally Ho Family Group Homes and
Special Residential Units

Wesley Youth Service Reception Unit
– Frankston North

Wesley Youth Services Eastern and
Southern Regions

Wesley Mission Melbourne has developed an archives policy administered by an Archives Section. Certain access conditions apply, depending on the nature of the records being sought and the particular interests of the persons making the application.

Wesley Mission Melbourne archival holdings include the records from Georgina House and other services. The Mission's archives are open by appointment. The Mission's Archivist is available weekdays (except Tuesday) between 9.30 am and 4.00 pm. For anyone wanting to access personal information about themselves there are no fees or charges.

Contact:

Wesley Mission Archives
148 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 9662 2355
Website: www.wesley.org.au

Melbourne Citymission

Elizabeth Fry Retreat, Swinborn Lodge
– South Yarra

Family Group Homes

Hartnett House (Melbourne Citymission
Babies Home) – Brunswick

Southport Community Adolescent
Program – Port Melbourne

Stopover Hostel – Carlton

Contact:

Manager, Child, Family and Youth Services
Melbourne Citymission
PO Box 13210
Law Courts Post Office
Melbourne VIC 8010
Phone: (03) 8625 4444
Website: www.mcm.org.au

Salvation Army

Bayswater Boys Homes (Nos. 1, 2 and 3)

Bayswater Youth Training Centre

Box Hill Boys Home, Hayville Child Care
Centre – Box Hill

Jacana Child Care and Family Centre

Lyndon Lodge Hostel – Hawthorn

Salvation Army Family Group Homes

Salvation Army Girls Home
(Catherine Booth Girls Home) – Kew

Salvation Army Peninsula Youth Services
– Mornington

Salvation Army Toddlers Home
– Geelong

The Harbour – West Brunswick

The Haven Hostel, Babies and Toddlers'
Home – Fitzroy

Westcare

Western Region Family Services
/Crossroads Child and Family Services,
residential and support services

William Booth Memorial Home,
East Camberwell Girls Home

The Salvation Army is developing access and archive procedures for all its records. A policy and procedure statement will be made available in the near future. In the meantime people seeking access to Salvation Army records should write to the Territorial Social Program Secretary.

Contact:

Territorial Social Program Secretary
Locked Bag 1
Mont Albert VIC 3127
Phone: (03) 9896 6000

Youth for Christ

Eastern Home Based Care

Next Stop Adolescent Community Placement Program

Northern Region Accommodation Program

Contact:

Chief Executive Officer
Youth for Christ
PO Box 169
Forest Hill 3131
Phone: 9877 3844
Email: melbourne@yfc.org.au
Website: www.yfc.org.au/branches/melbourne.htm

Larger community service agencies

(This listing is in alphabetical order)

Berry Street Victoria

Berry Street Babies Home and Hospital – East Melbourne

Berry Street Child and Family Care Family Group Homes and Special Residential Units – state-wide

Gippsland Residential Reception Care Service

Sutherland Youth and Family Services (previously Sutherland Children's Home – Diamond Creek)

Berry Street Victoria administers an Adoption and Heritage Program and holds many records from most of its predecessor organisations. Information held includes:

- adoption records since 1975,
- admission forms and registers,
- boarding-out information,
- placement records,
- medical records,
- Vietnamese war orphan records (1975),
- Children of God (Sutherland) records,
- children's photographs from Berry Street and Sutherland,
- case files,
- policy and administration files.

Berry Street's policy is to make available to ex-clients all information concerning themselves, although storage and accessibility issues are currently a concern. Berry Street Victoria is considering the establishment of a comprehensive Heritage Service to index and locate all past adoption and placement records and past and current client records in one central site.

Contact:

Adoptions Information Worker
Berry Street Victoria
PO Box 279
East Melbourne VIC 3002
Phone: (03) 9429 9266
Email: info@berrystreet.org.au
Website: www.berrystreet.org.au

Child and Family Care Network

Burwood Boys Home – Burwood

Burwood Boys Home Family Group Homes and Special Residential Units

'The Palms' Hostel – Hawthorn

Contact:

Chief Executive Officer
Child and Family Care Network
583 Ferntree Gully Road
Glen Waverley VIC 3150
Phone: (03) 9560 0188
Email: info@cfcn.org.au
Website: www.cfcn.org.au

Child and Family Services Ballarat

Ballarat Children's Home

Ballarat Children's Home Youth Support Unit

Ballarat Children's Home(s) and Family Services

Ballarat Orphanage

Child and Family Services Ballarat

Child and Family Services Ballarat have established a confidential service which provides past residents with access to their personal records and other memorabilia of the orphanage and children's home. The Heritage Support Service provides access to early records including Admission Book details for the Ballarat Orphanage from 1866. The Service can also access residents' files from approximately the mid 1930s to the present day. A photographic collection is also held, including photographs of past residents, staff and buildings.

The Heritage Worker is a trained counsellor and is able to provide support and counselling during the access process.

Requests for access must be made in writing. The Heritage Worker will then request identifying information regarding the ex-resident to assist the search. Applicants will also be requested to provide information to verify their own identity and relationship to the ex-resident. Information relating to third parties, including information on siblings, will not be released. Information is released in accordance with Freedom of Information principles.

A fee of \$40 applies for non-pensioners. No fees are charged for people from an Indigenous background.

Contact:

Heritage Worker
Child and Family Services Ballarat
115 Lydiard Street
Ballarat VIC 3350
Phone: (03) 5337 3333
Website: www.cafsballarat.org.au

Glastonbury

Family Group Homes

Glastonbury Children's Home – Geelong

Glastonbury provides full access to previous client files provided there is no reference to a third party within the file. In some circumstances the client is allowed to read the file within an interview room and leave the file with the agency. More typically a photocopy of the material is presented to the client.

Counselling and support is provided by agency staff to clients accessing their files.

Contact:

The Chief Executive Officer
Glastonbury Child and Family Services
222 Malop Street
Geelong VIC 3220
Phone: 5222 6911
Email: admin@glastonbury.org.au
Website: www.glastonbury.org.au

Gordon Care for Children

Gordon Family Group Homes

Gordon Home for Boys

Gordon Home for Boys and Girls

Very early client files and registers from the Gordon Institute are held at the State Library of Victoria. Permission must be obtained from Gordon Care for Children to access these and the more recent records held by Gordon Care at Highett.

Contact:

The Services Manager
Gordon Care for Children
1125 Nepean Highway
Highett VIC 3190
Phone: (03) 9555 1439
Email: executivedirector@gordoncare.org
Web: <http://www.gordoncare.org>

Kildonan Child and Family Services

Kildonan Admission Centre – Hawthorn
Kildonan Child and Family Services
Kildonan Family Group Homes and Adolescent Units
Kildonan Foster Care Program – Camberwell
Kildonan Homes for Children – Box Hill

Kildonan Child and Family Services have developed a Confidentiality, Privacy and Access to Records Policy. Files of past and present service users are made available to the persons concerned in line with Freedom of Information principles. Access to individual files other than the above is only by the written permission of the person concerned for their own use or through their consent for a third party to access the file.

Contact:

Kildonan Child and Family Services
188 McDonalds Road
Epping VIC 3076
Phone: (03) 8401 0100
Email: info@kcfs.org.au

Kilmany Uniting Care

Kilmany Family Care, Foster Care Programs – Bairnsdale and Sale
Kilmany Family Care, Residential and Support Services, Family Group Homes
Kilmany Park Farm Home for Boys – Sale

Kilmany Uniting Care will release client information following application in writing from the client or a legal guardian. Kilmany Uniting Care applies Freedom of Information principles in processing applications. Verbal reports or photocopies of information on record will be provided.

Contact:

The Director
Kilmany Uniting Care
126 Raymond Street
Sale VIC 3850
Phone: (03) 5144 7777
Email: mail@sale.kilmany.org.au
Website:
http://vic.unitingcare.org.au/html/directory/agency_list/comm_services/kilmany_unitingcare.html

Menzies Youth and Family Services

Menzies Home for Boys – Frankston
Menzies Homes for Children – Frankston
Menzies Youth Hostel – Frankston
Minton Boys Home – Frankston

Menzies Inc. holds records from all of its predecessor agencies, back to and including the Ragged School Mission (1865). The earlier records consist of mainly admission registers, card indexes and individual children's files. The holdings are not a complete record, as some material has been lost. Records are held in an archive room at the Menzies Inc. head office.

Menzies adheres to the regulations governing privacy and confidentiality of records. Every assistance is given to clients requiring access to their records and photocopies of information are given without charge. A check of the records is made by staff to ensure that no third-party information is provided. Ex-clients are assisted with access to their records and group photographs, where these are available.

Contact:

Director
Menzies Inc.
408 Nepean Highway
Frankston VIC 3199
Phone: (03) 9784 9700
Email: info@menzies.org.au
Website: www.menzies.org.au

Orana Family Services

Orana (Methodist Peace Memorial Homes for Children) – Cheltenham, Burwood

Orana Family Group Homes and Special Residential Units

Orana's client records are fairly extensive, with some dating back to the late nineteenth century. However, the degree of detail available varies. Records created since the 1970s have much more information than earlier files.

All previous client records are retained in a fire proof room at Orana's Bulla offices. Files are listed by client name, and admission and discharge registers have been retained.

Orana's policy on access to records is fully compliant with the provisions of the Freedom of Information and privacy legislation. Clients requesting access to records are required to make such requests in writing, detailing their name and date of birth. No financial costs are involved.

Where clients are Victorian residents, and depending on the nature of the files' contents, Orana encourages ex-clients to access their records in the presence of a social worker, due to the sensitive nature of some of the material.

Contact:

The Chief Executive Officer
Orana Family Services
PO Box 2086
Meadow Heights VIC 3048
Phone: (03) 9307 1355
Email: info@oranafamilyservices.org.au
Website: www.oranafamilyservices.org.au

Oz Child: Children's Services Inc.

Alan Marshall Centre – Black Rock

Family Action

Family Focus

Melbourne Family Care Organisation

Melbourne Family Care Organisation
Family Group Homes

Melbourne Family Orphanage 'Windermere'
– Brighton

Norman Craig Lodge – Black Rock

Somers House – Black Rock

Swinburne Lodge – Parkville

Victorian Children's Aid Society
– Parkville, Black Rock

Oz Child's approach to records is that all previous clients are entitled to have access to their records and to photocopy any part of their files they wish. Privacy principles and the Freedom of Information legislation are used as a point of reference in managing this process, although Oz Child does not come under the legislation.

Oz Child has in its charge records from Melbourne Family Care/Family Action records from the late 1950s and records from the Victorian Children's Aid Society or Family Focus from the around the 1970s. Earlier files for both organisations have been lodged with the State Library. Permission must be sought from Oz Child to access files held at the State Library, although hard copies of Melbourne Orphanage records from 1851 are held at Oz Child.

Oz Child has placed onto a searchable data base the files of past clients of the family group home and the more recently closed foster care and residential care facilities.

Contact:

The Chief Executive Officer
Oz Child: Children Australia Inc.
PO Box 1312
South Melbourne VIC 3205
Phone: (03) 9695 2200
Email: ozchild@ozchild.com.au
Website: www.ozchild.com.au

Smaller community service agencies

(This listing is in alphabetical order)

Barwon South West Youth Alliance (BAYSA Ltd.)

Contact:

Executive Officer
BAYSA
12–14 Halstead Place
Geelong West VIC 3218
Phone: (03) 5221 4466
Email: reception@baysa.org
Website: www.baysa.org.au

Bethany Community Support Inc

Bethany Adoption Agency – Geelong
Bethany Babies Home – Geelong
Bethany Day Care Service – Geelong
Bethany Family Support – Geelong
Bethany Mothercraft Training Centre
Kindergarten – Geelong

Contact:

Executive Director
Bethany Community Support
1 Gibb Street
North Geelong VIC 3215
Phone: (03) 5278 8122
Email: bfs@bethany.org.au
Website: www.bethany.org.au

Carry On (Victoria)

Carry On Club – Hurlingham – Brighton
Tracy Dutton House – Mitcham

Contact:

The Executive Officer
Carry On Victoria
1 Elizabeth Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 9629 2648
Website:
<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/carryon/web/index.html>

Children's Protection Society

Alys Keys House – Heidelberg
Child Protection Services – state-wide
Currawong House – Hamilton
Robin House – Fitzroy
Swan House – Traralgon
Victorian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Children's Protection Society records from 1896 to 1972, including client case files, have been lodged with the State Library of Victoria. Permission to access these records must be sought from the Children's Protection Society.

CPS files from the early 1970s to 1985 are held by the Department of Human Services. These cover CPS work in regions centred on Dandenong, Preston, Geelong and Ringwood as well as the Grampians region. These files can be accessed through Department of Human Services Freedom of Information arrangements (see page 66).

Client files for CPS services from 1985 are maintained by CPS. Clients have a right to access these files. In some cases, the information will only be released with counselling support.

Requests should be made in writing to the Children's Protection Society.

Contact:

Business Manager
Children's Protection Society
70 Altona Street
Heidelberg West VIC 3081
Phone: (03) 9458 3566
Email: cps@cps.org.au
Web: www.cps.org.au

Christian Alternative to Reception Accommodation (CARA)

Christian Alternative to Reception
Accommodation (CARA)

CARA holds files of all clients from 1979. At this stage there are no established procedures for accessing the files, however CARA would be supportive of any ex-client requesting access to their files.

Contact:

Executive Officer
CARA
PO Box 1069
Glen Waverley VIC 3150
Phone: (03) 9562 7776

Community Connections (Vic) Ltd.

Currawong House – Hamilton
Glenelg Family Care
Glenelg Foster Care
South-Western Tenant Support Services
Warrnambool Community Legal
Aid Service.

Previous and current clients can access their files under Community Connection's Information and Privacy – Your Rights policy. Clients can access their file on request and correct file information. When a client arrives in the care of Community Connections they are required to sign a Privacy Statement which outlines how information is gathered, and the rights and restrictions governing access to files.

Contact:

Chief Executive Officer
Community Connections (Vic) Ltd.
PO Box 404
Warrnambool VIC 3280
Phone: 1300 361 680
Email: info@comconnect.com.au
Website: www.comconnect.com.au

Cottage by the Sea, Queenscliff Inc.

Cottage by the Sea Holiday Home –
Queenscliff

Contact:

Chief Executive Officer
Cottage by the Sea Queenscliff Inc.
818 Burke Road
Camberwell VIC 3224
Phone: (03) 9813 0646
Email: cottagebythesea@bigpond.com.au
Website: www.cottagebythesea.com.au

Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc.

Campbell Edwards Lodge – Shepparton
Goulburn Valley Family Care Residential
Units – Lemnos, Mooroopna, Benalla
Adolescent Residential Unit – Benalla
Goulburn Regional Foster Care and
Goulburn Valley Family Care Family Group
Homes – Shepparton

Clients over 18 years of age may access personal information held by Goulburn Valley Family Care. Consent of a parent or guardian is required if a person under 18 years of age requires access to their records.

A request should be made in writing to the Intake Worker. It may take up to two weeks to find the relevant file and make arrangements for a time for the client to read the file at the agency. In some instances copies of information on the file will be made available to the applicant. No fees apply.

Contact:

Intake Worker
Goulburn Valley Family Care Inc
PO Box 1069
Shepparton VIC 3632
Phone: (03) 5831 1217
Email: smedson@gvfc.org.au
Website: www.gvfc.org.au

Harrison Community Service

Arthur Harrison Boys Home, Harrison House Youth Hostel – Hawthorn

Harrison Community Services Family Group Homes and Special Residential Units

West Hawthorn Presbyterian Church, Harrison House Youth Services

All files relating to statutory clients of Harrison Community Services are kept for 7 years. After 7 years they are destroyed.

Contact:

The Director
Harrison Community Services
PO Box 4503 Knox City
Wantirna South VIC 3152
Phone: (03) 9887 1055
Email: enquiries@harrison.org.au
Website: www.harrison.org.au

Legacy Melbourne

Blamey House – Beaumaris

Harelands – Kew

Holmbush – Kew

Stanhope – Kew

The records held by Legacy Melbourne date from the World War II and relate specifically to the widows and children of deceased veterans registered with Legacy. Little information is available about the programs conducted in the children's homes run by Legacy after the War.

Copies of information will be provided to those about whom the records are written, their next of kin or other direct descendants.

Written requests detailing information sought and evidence of the relationship with the client should be forwarded to Legacy's Privacy Officer.

Contact:

The Privacy Officer
Legacy Melbourne
Box 4312PP
Melbourne VIC 3001
Phone: (03) 9663 3564
Email: info@legacymelb.com.au

Lisa Lodge – Hayeslee

Hayeslee House – Ballarat then Sebastopol

Lisa Lodge Girls Hostel – Ballarat

Previous clients of Lisa Lodge/Hayeslee may access their records by contacting the agency. An agency worker would clarify if the client wished to see their whole file or just obtain a specific piece of information. If they wish to see the whole file, third-party information would be deleted and the enquiry processed according to Freedom of Information principles. Lisa Lodge/Hayeslee would seek to give the maximum amount of information with the least restrictions possible and would prefer to provide information through face-to-face contact.

Contact:

The Executive Director
Lisa Lodge/Hayeslee
PO Box 695
Ballarat VIC 3353
Phone: (03) 5331 3838
Email: admin@lisalodge.com.au

Mallee Accommodation and Support Program

Adolescent Out-of-home Placements – Mildura

Foster Care Program – Mildura

Services to Homeless Persons – Mildura

Mallee Accommodation and Support client files are maintained and retained using privacy legislation principles and access arrangements are based on Freedom of Information principles. People seeking information are supported sensitively throughout the process.

Contact:

Executive Officer
Mallee Accommodation and Support Program
PO Box 1686
Mildura VIC 3502
Phone: (03) 5023 3744
Email: masp@masp.org.au

Mallee Family Care

Adolescent Community Placement Program
– Swan Hill

Mallee Family Care Family Group Home
– Swan Hill

Mallee Family Care Foster Care
– Swan Hill

Mallee Family Care has an Access to Client Records policy covering client records created since the inception of the agency in 1979. Client files from all program areas administered by the agency are properly archived and kept indefinitely.

Mallee Family Care believes it is a legal right of clients to have access to their files upon request. Files remain the property of the agency and may not be removed from the premises. Photocopied material of information directly relating to a client will be provided and the agency uses the principles in the Freedom of Information legislation as a guide to information release. No fees apply, and counselling and support is provided to people accessing their files.

Contact:

The Deputy Director
Mallee Family Care
PO Box 1870
Mildura VIC 3502
Phone: (03) 5023 5966
Web: www.malleefamilycare.com.au

North East Support and Action for Youth Inc (NESAY)

Adolescent Community Placement Program
– Wangaratta

The records of the Adolescent Community Placement Program and other records are kept for seven years where the client was over 16 years of age, and 21 years where the client was under 16 years of age. NESAY has an 'open file' policy, permitting young people to access their own records. A written request must be made to view a file.

Contact:

Chief Executive Officer
NESAY
PO Box 572
Wangaratta VIC 3676
Phone: (03) 5721 7006
Email: nesay_ad@dragnet.com.au

Queen Elizabeth Centre

Carlton Female Refuge – Carlton

Queen Elizabeth Centre – Noble Park

Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Mothers
and Babies – Carlton (approved
adoption agency)

Queen Elizabeth Maternal and Child
Welfare Centre – Carlton

Medical records are made available under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 1982. The Centre holds early records and registers including some records of clients who were Wards of State.

Applicants should apply in writing to the Centre, providing as much information as possible. No fees are payable by any Indigenous applicant.

Contact:

Chief Executive Officer
Queen Elizabeth Centre
53 Thomas Street
Noble Park VIC 3174
Phone: (03) 9549 2777
Email: theqec@qec.org.au
Web: www.qec.org.au

Share Care Inc

Share Care, Foster Care – Abbotsford

Share Care has a general policy of access to records held on the children and families involved with its program. No fees are charged.

Contact:

Duty Worker
Share Care Inc.
Gahans Reserve
Park Street
Abbotsford VIC 3067
Phone: (03) 9417 1288
Email: sharecare@austarmetro.com.au
Website: www.sharecare.org.au

Temcare

Bethany Children's Home – Box Hill North
Christian Brethren Family Care
Temcare

All past Christian Brethren Family Care and Temcare records are held at the Temcare Office in Wheelers Hill. Clients may access their own records.

Contact:

The Secretary
Temcare
127–133 Garnett Road
Wheelers Hill VIC 3150
Phone: (03) 9790 6018
Email: temcare@webprophets.net.au
Website: www.carrick.addr.com/cbav/c-index.html

Try Youth and Community Services

Forster Lodge – South Yarra
Melrose Training Farm – Berwick
Try Boys Hostel – South Yarra

Early records of the Try Youth and Community Services have been lodged with the State Library of Victoria. People seeking records should contact Try Youth and Community Services who will make a referral to the library. No fees are charged.

Contact:

Try Youth and Community Services
3rd Floor, 766 Elizabeth Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 9347 2655 or 1800 136 095
Email: info@tryyouth.org.au
Website: www.tryyouth.org.au

Upper Murray Family Care Inc.

Upper Murray Family Care Family Group
Home – Wodonga

Upper Murray Foster Care – Wangaratta
and Wodonga

Contact:

Director
Upper Murray Family Care Inc.
PO Box 725
Wodonga VIC 3689
Phone: (02) 6022 8000
Email: admin@umfc.au

Windermere Child and Family Services

Windermere Family Group Home –
Temporary and Emergency Care Unit

Windermere Child and Family Services provides
free access to client records in accordance with
Government privacy principles.

Contact:

Chief Executive
Windermere Child and Family Service
48 Webb Street
Narre Warren VIC 3805
Phone: (03) 9705 3200
Email: kidsincrisis@windermerecfs.com.au
Website: www.windermerecfs.com.au



10

*Aboriginal Welfare Board
and Victorian Aboriginal
mission, reserve and
station records*

10

Aboriginal Welfare Board and Victorian Aboriginal mission, reserve and station records

If you and your family had any involvement with the Aboriginal Welfare Board or its predecessors, there may be records of this involvement held in the collections of Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) and the National Archives of Australia (NAA).

National Archives Australia holds the case files and other records for individuals and families involved with missions, reserves and stations run by the Aboriginal Welfare Board. These records date from the 1860s until the 1970s. Although the amount of information on the files varies, there is much about social welfare matters such as assistance in getting admitted to hospitals, payment of funeral expenses, requests for child endowment, invalid pensions, assistance in gaining employment, workers compensation and other matters.

The names of the Aboriginal case files held by NAA are listed in *My Heart is Breaking – A Joint Guide to Records About Aboriginal People in the Public Record Office Victoria and the Australian Archives, Victorian Regional Office*. (See page 78 for details on how to obtain this publication.)

These files do not cover all people of Indigenous descent living in Victoria at the time. Between 1886 and 1910 the Board for the Protection of Aborigines had a policy of excluding what they termed 'part-Indigenous' (see glossary for definition of the term for 'mixed-descent') people from its responsibility. During the period from 1910 to 1957 the policy was to assist only those defined as 'needy'. The names of people of part-Indigenous descent therefore appear in the record less consistently than others.

The National Archive of Australia is creating the 'Bringing them Home Name Index' to assist people search for Indigenous records in its collections. It aims to assist people find out information about themselves and to find stories about their families or their country. On request, National Archives staff will search the index to see if your family name is mentioned. They can also search for place names.

How to access the 'Bringing them Home Name Index'

The index is searched on your behalf by an Archives Reference Officer who is familiar with the 'Bringing Them Home Name Index' and is sensitive to the nature of your search.

Contact:

National Archive of Australia (NAA)
Victorian Archives Centre
99 Shiel Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051
Phone: (03) 9348 5600.

You should provide the Reference Officer with as much information as you can. (See page 9, **How to Begin.**)

Some information is withheld from general public access on privacy grounds. However, Indigenous people tracing their family can look at the files under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) reached between National Archives of Australia and VACCA. This arrangement allows records that are over 30 years old and contain sensitive personal information that would normally be exempt from public access under the *Archives Act* 1983 to be available to the subject of the record or family members for the purposes of re-establishing family and community links. (See page 76 for more information on the MOU.) An NAA Reference Officer will help you with these issues if needed.

The National Archives of Australia will provide photocopies of documents if you cannot get to an NAA reading room. If you are researching for family and community links under the MOU, there is no charge for photocopying.

Public Record Office Victoria

Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) is the archival authority for the State of Victoria.

Early official records relating to the administration of Indigenous affairs in Victoria are located at PROV. The holdings are extensive for the period 1839 to 1859. These cover the period of the Chief Protector of Aborigines and his successor, the Guardian of Aborigines. In addition, many records are held from the period 1860 to the 1950s relating to the work of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines and the Aborigines Welfare Board (see page 83).

For further information on these records consult *PROVguides* 65 and 67 and *My Heart is Breaking: A joint guide to records about Aboriginal people in the Public Record Office of Victoria and Australian Archives, Victorian Regional Office*.

For researchers of Indigenous family history Public Record Office Victoria holds a wealth of information. Through PROV you can access a variety of records about the people, institutions and government of Victoria since European colonisation. As the State's archival authority, PROV holds records created by Victorian government departments and authorities, the State's courts, municipalities (local councils), schools, and other public offices.

Records in the PROV collection that may be useful for researching Indigenous family histories include:

- *Wills and Probate (1841–1992)*. You will need the person's name and approximate date of death. See *PROVguide* 68.
- *Inquests and Magisterial Inquiries into Unexplained Deaths (1841–1992)*. You will need the person's name and approximate date of death. See *PROVguide* 71.
- *Education Department Files (1873–1962)*. These relate to primary schools and you will need the name or number of the school to locate the records. See *PROVguide* 56.
- *Criminal Trial Briefs (1841–1926)*. You will need the date of the trial and the name of the defendant.
- *Divorce Records (1861–1924)*. You will need the surname of the person and approximate date of the divorce. See *PROVguide* 61.

- *Prisoners (1855–1948)*. The registers of female and male prisoners contain the name of the prisoner, date of birth, country of origin, occupation and physical description, reason for conviction, sentence and dates served. See *PROVguide 58*.
- *Mental Health Records*. PROV holds copies of Admission Warrants, Registers of Patients/Admission Registers, Case Books (to 1912) and Patient Clinical Notes (from 1912), Annual and Quinquennial (five-yearly) Examination Registers, Trial Leave Registers and Discharge Registers. See *PROVguide 59*.

(PROVGuides are available on the PROV website at www.prov.vic.gov.au)

*** Please note: Records held by PROV containing personal and private information are generally closed to general public access for 75 years if they relate to adults and 99 years if they relate to children. However, you can obtain access to your own records (no matter when they were created) by contacting the Freedom of Information Unit in the department which created those records. (See pages 65-7 for more information on FOI.)**

Contact:

Public Record Office Victoria
Victorian Archives Centre
99 Shiel Street
(PO Box 2100)
North Melbourne VIC 3051
Phone: (03) 9348 5600 or
Tollfree: 1800 657 452
Email: ask.prov@dvc.vic.gov.au
Website: www.prov.vic.gov.au

Tip

As the State's archival authority, PROV holds *only* government records; it does not keep any archives of private individuals, private businesses or non-government organisations.



Koora Cooper

As a young Aboriginal women from the Yorta Yorta people I have heard and seen Aboriginal history passed down to my brothers and myself. I have heard of the injustices of the past policies and laws that have affected my people.

It wasn't until I started working as a Genealogist for the Koorie Family History Service at the Koorie Heritage Trust Inc. that I found out the National Archives of Australia (NAA) and Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) held records about my family.

These records contained details about my family, written in black and white and in a manner that disturbed me mainly because of the underlying reasons behind the actions that were taken against my family, which have now left a lasting effect and can still be felt by young people of my generation today.

NAA and PROV hold records on the day-to-day lives of Aboriginal people of Victoria, from first contact with European people to the present day. These day-to-day reports give an insight of what life was really like for Aboriginal people of Victoria, such as being controlled by the government of the day and the colonisation of our land and our people.

My Heart is Breaking is a resource which gave me, as a genealogist, an insight to what records were held at NAA and PROV. Now NAA and PROV have created this resource that can help all Koorie people and the Bringing Them Home workers to find the right contacts and the right people to take your enquiry and to help you search for family and cultural information.

This resource has been created to help us all find the records a lot quicker, so thank you to the people that have put this guide together.



11

Freedom of information and privacy legislation



11

Freedom of Information and Information Privacy provisions

Under Freedom of Information (FOI) you have a right to access information that is held by a government body. Sometimes information can be withheld because it is classed as 'exempt' under the FOI Act. An example of an exempt document is where it contains information about the personal affairs of another person.

Freedom of Information legislation does not apply to records held by non-government or community service organisations, however many of these organisations apply both FOI and Information Privacy Principles to the release of client information.

You also have a right to privacy under Victoria's Information Privacy legislation. This legislation requires that all organisations must prevent unauthorised people having access to personal information about you.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

If you have been involved with a Government department or agency, you can get copies of documents that relate to your own personal affairs. There is no restriction on the age of the documents available to you if the documents relate to your personal affairs. An agency is not required to give you access to a document of a non-personal nature if that document was created before 5 July 1978.

Your file may contain information about other people, e.g., your brother or sister and other non-related clients. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, this information may be exempt and you are not entitled to access it. An authorised FOI officer makes the decision about whether information is exempt.

You cannot see information that:

- affects or records the personal affairs of another person;
- is commercially confidential;
- concerns law enforcement; or
- contains information supplied in confidence.

How to apply

The Department of Human Services is the government department that would hold most of the information about your separation from your family. (See page 37 for details of which records are held by the Department.)

You need to make a written application to the Department to see your records. You can obtain a copy of the application form on the internet (www.foi.vic.gov.au). You can also just write a letter requesting the information. You must provide proof of identify (e.g., a copy of your driver's licence, passport or Health Care card).

The form or letter will need to include the following information:

- your name, address and contact numbers;
- your date of birth;
- a description of the document(s) you wish to look at.

It is best to give as much detailed information as you can about the documents you wish to see and be as specific as possible so that the documents can be identified by FOI staff.

You can apply for records on someone else's behalf, or have someone else apply for your records. The agencies listed on page 14 can make an application for you, as can solicitors, other professionals or members of your family. You will need to provide a statement that the request is being made on your behalf and proof of your identity.

Cost

In most cases a person has to pay for the request for information before the request is processed. As at May 2005, the fee is \$20.50. You may need to check if the fee has changed since this Manual was published. There may be additional charges for such things as access to documents, photocopying and making written transcripts.

The application fee is waived if it is likely to cause hardship. A copy of a Health Care or Pensioner Concession Card is sufficient for the fee to be waived, or you can outline reasons why it would cause hardship to you.

Currently the application fee is automatically waived if you are a former Ward of State seeking access to your records.

What actually happens

Once your request is received, under FOI legislation, the Department must process your request within 45 days.

The Department will retrieve the relevant files from Archives. The file is then assessed to determine whether any documents are exempt from release. Documents relating to you and any other non-personal documents on the file are then photocopied and mailed to you by registered post.

The agencies listed on page 13 can assist people through the sometimes sensitive process of reading their file.

Making changes to files

Under Freedom of Information legislation you have the right to correct or amend any personal information on files held by the Department if you believe the information is inaccurate, or incorrect. You must write to the Department and tell them why the information is considered incorrect. You will most likely be asked to provide evidence to support your request for your correction to be placed on the record.

If you are not satisfied

After you have received the documents you requested and if you are not happy with the decision, you have the right to request an internal review of the decision to deny you access to documents or the refusal of a request to amend personal records.

If you wish to request an internal review, you must submit your request in writing within 28 days of receiving the decision letter and documents.

If you are not satisfied with the internal review decision, you can appeal to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal (VCAT). This appeal must be made within 60 days after you receive notice of the internal review decision.

Contact:

Freedom of Information Unit
Department of Human Services
GPO Box 4057
Melbourne VIC 3001
Phone: (03) 9616 8449
Website: www.foi.vic.gov.au
Email: dhsfoi@dhs.vic.gov.au

Freedom of Information website

The Victorian State Government has a website dedicated to Freedom of Information: www.foi.vic.gov.au

This website provides assistance and general information to help you access government documents by using the Victorian Freedom of Information Act 1982.

For information about Commonwealth Government FOI legislation go to:
http://www.ag.gov.au/agd/WWW/securitylawHome.nsf/Page/Freedom_of_Information

Information Privacy legislation

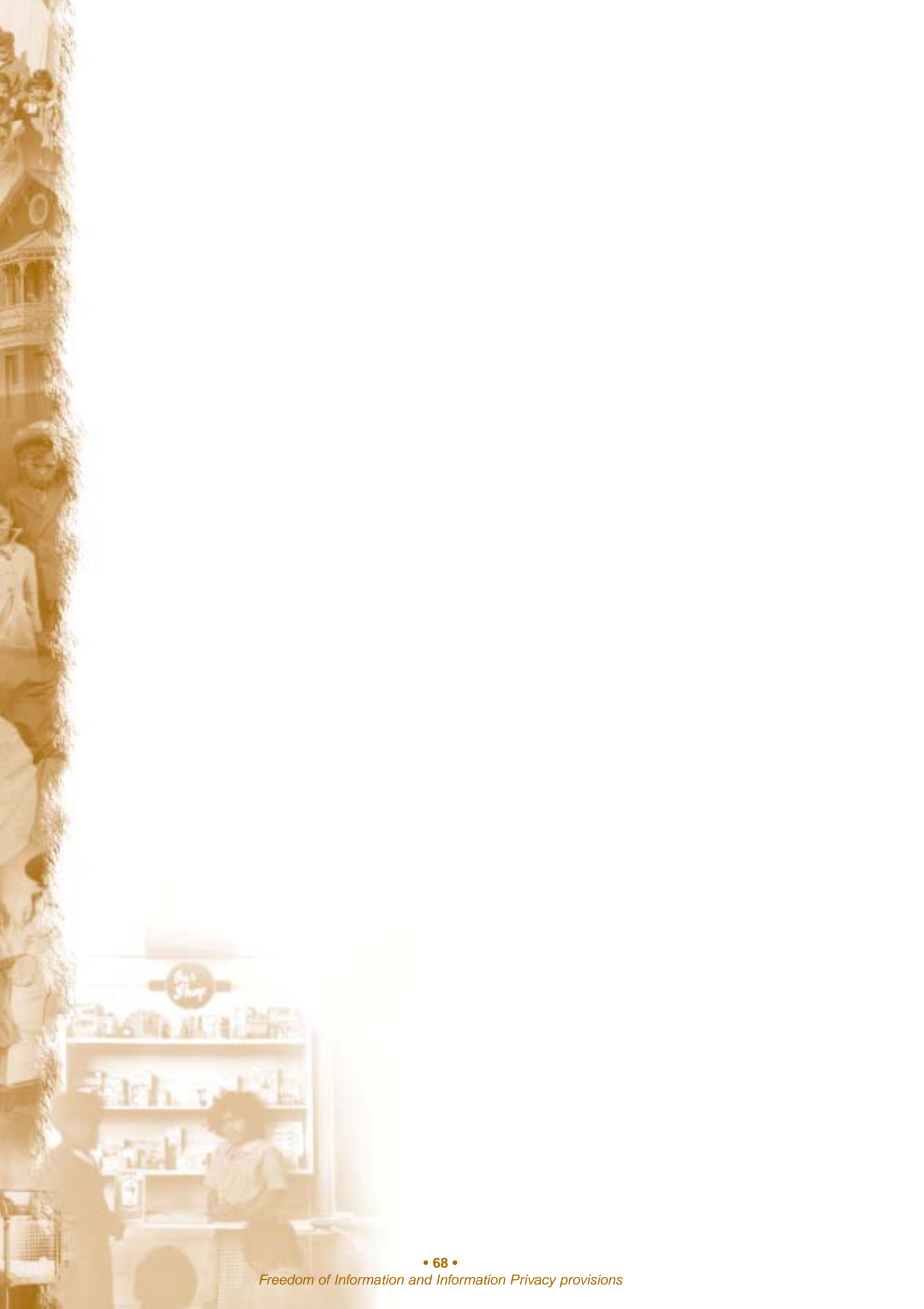
When you approach a Victorian Government department and community agency for a service, support, assistance or supervision, that agency will usually create a file related to your case.

The file will contain information provided by you as well as documents prepared by the agency. The creation of a file allows your contact with the agency to continue without you having to repeat your story each time you make contact. The file is also used for the storage and easy location of documents.

Under current privacy laws, an agency must ensure that the information they collect from and about you is accurate, complete, up-to-date and relevant.

Current Victorian Information Privacy legislation controls who may see and use the information on your file. Staff members are obliged to treat information provided by you in confidence and only discuss your case and share information with another case worker with your permission. (Note: In some situations agency staff might have to be legally required to share information with another agency.)

Further information on Victoria's Privacy legislation can be found at <http://www.privacy.vic.gov.au>





12

*Birth, death and
marriage certificates
(Victoria)*



12

Birth, death and marriage certificates (Victoria)

Obtaining information about the birth, death and marriage of family members is critical to the family reunion process.

Beginning of compulsory registration

Compulsory registration of births, deaths and marriages began in 1853. Before this, records of baptisms, burials and marriages were created by the institutions where the ceremonies were performed, e.g., churches. During this early period many births and deaths went unrecorded.

All Victorian birth, death and marriage certificates are available from the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages in Melbourne. You must provide **proof of identify documents** if you are applying for certificates for births or changes of name that happened less than 75 years ago, marriages less than 60 years ago and deaths less than 10 years ago.

You do not need proof of identify documents if you are seeking documents about events that are earlier than those outlined above.

Proof of identification documents

If you are applying for a certificate requiring proof of identify you must provide three forms of identification from the selection in the table below. Copies of original documents must be certified by a member of the police force.

You must provide one form of identification from each of the lists below. If you are unable to provide identification from List 1 you must provide two from List 2 and one from List 3.

List 1 (photo and signature)

- Australian driver licence,
- Australian passport,
- Firearms licence,
- Foreign passport,
- Key Pass,
- Defence Force ID.

List 2 (operating in the community)

- citizenship certificate,
- birth certificate,
- credit, ATM or account card,
- Centrelink or Department of Veterans Affairs cards,
- security guard licence or crowd control licence,
- tertiary education institution ID card,
- tax file statement,
- student card,
- Medicare card.

List 3 (residential address)

- utility account (gas, electricity, home phone, etc.) with current residential address,
- bank statement with current residential address,
- rent or lease agreement,
- rates notice.

Children under the age of 18 years who don't have any ID from the above lists should present as many as possible from the following list:

- student ID card (or current school report card),
- Medicare card showing child's name,
- current bill (e.g., mobile phone account).

All documents, except foreign passports, must be current. If a parent applies on behalf of an under 18, only the parent needs to produce ID. If an applicant for some reason does not have the necessary ID, they should phone the Registry and discuss what they might be able to produce as alternatives.

Who can access birth, death and marriage records?

The following people are allowed to apply for certificates from the Registry under Family Relationship provisions:

Birth and change of name records

- the registered person

If the registered person is aged less than 18 years:

- parent,
- non-parental legal custodian or guardian (documents establishing custody or guardianship to must be produced).

Grandparents seeking birth certificates

If you are a grandparent wanting birth information about a grandchild under 18 years of age, written authority from a parent or non-parental custodian or guardian must be provided.

There are no restrictions on records where a birth or change of name occurred more than 75 years earlier than your request for the record.

A full Victorian birth certificate will give you this information about the person:

- full name,
- date and place of birth,
- sex of the child,
- father's name, occupation, age and birth place,
- mother's name, occupation, age and birth place,
- parent's place and year of marriage,
- previous children of the relationship, both living and deceased.

Marriage certificates

Persons who can apply for a marriage certificate are:

- one of the parties to the marriage;
- child of the marriage or child of the bride but not of the marriage. The applicant must produce written authority of one of the parties to the marriage, or apply through an accredited welfare agency.

Access to marriage records is unrestricted after 60 years from the date of the marriage.

A Victorian marriage certificate will tell you:

- the date and place of the marriage,
- the couple's full names, birth place, usual occupation, age, place of residence;
- the name of the father and mother of both parties to the marriage.

Death certificates

Persons who can apply for a death certificate are:

- the domestic partner, parent or child; evidence of the relationship must be established.
- a non-parental legal custodian or guardian. A document establishing custody or guardianship must be produced.
- other relatives, or an ex-partner. The person must produce the written authority of the next of kin, or evidence that the certificate is needed to establish some legal right or entitlement.

Access to death certificates is unrestricted after 10 years from the date of death.

A Victorian death certificate will tell you the following about the deceased:

- name and occupation,
- date and place of death,
- age at death,
- name and occupation of the deceased's father,
- name and maiden surname of the deceased's mother,
- where and when buried,
- where born,
- place of marriage and to whom, including previous marriages,
- children of the marriage(s), their ages, and whether living or deceased,
- the name of the person who supplied this information to the registry.

Costs for birth, death and marriage certificates

A standard certificate (birth, death or marriage) currently costs \$17.50 (as at May 2005). Contact the Registry for confirmation of costs.

How to make an application for certificates

You can apply online at www.dvc.gov.au/bdm.htm for these certificates:

- your own birth, change of name or marriage certificate,
- the birth or change of name certificate(s) of your children (if aged under 18 years),
- your single status certificate (no record of marriage),
- a death certificate (1986 to current).

The steps to follow

- Check to see if you will need to provide proof of identity to obtain the certificate you want.
- If you do, see page 69 for the documents you need.
- Make a copy of each document.
- Have it certified as a true copy by a member of the Police Force
- Download an application form for the certificate you need from www.dvc.gov.au/bdm.htm and fill in all the details.
- Post or take the completed application form, the certified copies of proof of identity documents and the correct fee for the certificate (cheque, money order or credit card details) to:
Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
595 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000.

Help with historical records

The Victorian Registry also holds records dating back to 1836. You can get historical certificates as uncertified images or as certified certificates for:

- births (1853–1924)
- marriages (1853–1942)
- deaths (1953–1985)
- church baptisms, marriages and burials (1836–1853)

You can search the Registry's Family History Indexes of births, deaths and marriages dating back to 1836 and download an image of a record or make an application for certificates online, or you can apply by mail or in person.

No fee is charged by the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages for searches undertaken by the Koorie Heritage Trust on your behalf. Copies of certificates from the Registry still incur fees.

Contact:

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
595 Collins Street
Melbourne
Postal address: PO Box 4332
Melbourne VIC 3001
Phone: 1300 369 367
Email: vicbdm@dvc.gov.au
Website: www.dvc.gov.au/bdm.htm
Office hours: 8.30 am to 4.30 pm
Monday to Friday.



Other locations of birth, death and marriage indexes

Public Record Office Victoria

Consolidated index: 1837–1888

Index to births: 1853–1913

Index to marriages: 1853–1930

Index to deaths: 1853–1980

Index to deaths: 1821–1985

Note that these are indexes only; they are useful if you are only after the basic information recorded on the index (for example, names, date, and location of event). Once you get the registration number from the index, you would then need to apply to the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages for copies of certificates.

State Library of Victoria

The State Library of Victoria holds civil registration indexes, i.e. birth, death and marriage indexes, for all Australian States. (See page 80 for contact details.)

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

AIATSIS holds birth, death and marriage indexes for all States and Territories of Australia.

Many local libraries, historical and genealogical societies may also have birth, deaths and marriage indexes. (See for contact details.)



13

Indigenous heritage records



13

Indigenous heritage records

***Finding Your Story* will help you find sources of information to enable you to strengthen your understanding and knowledge of family, community and country. These sources can also provide background to the policies and practices that led to the separation of you and many other Indigenous children from family and community. These are the records about your cultural and community heritage as an Indigenous Victorian.**

Koorie Heritage Trust Inc.

The Koorie Family History Service (KFHS) at the Koorie Heritage Trust has developed a photographic and oral history resource called the Koorie Heritage Archive. Indigenous people can use the Koorie Heritage Archive to search for family, cultural and historical knowledge.

The Trust is using information gained through its client-based services to build Indigenous family trees and preserve photographic and written material that can become a resource for the Indigenous community. The KFHS has compiled a large database of genealogies of Victorian Indigenous families that are available to the Indigenous community.

The Trust holds collections relevant to Victorian Indigenous communities. They do not hold family history information for other States but they can provide you with contact details for organisations outside Victoria that can assist you.

Contact:

Koorie Heritage Trust Inc.
259 King Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 8622 2600
Email: familyhistory@korieheritagetrust.com
Website: www.korieheritagetrust.com

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

AIATSIS is an agency based in Canberra which can search the following indexes for further information which may relate to your family's history:

- birth, death and marriage indexes for all States and Territories of Australia;
- Aboriginal Biographical Index. This index contains information on 50,000 Indigenous people mentioned in published books, magazines and journals held in the AIATSIS library. You can also search it yourself on this website: <http://mura.aiatsis.gov.au>;
- archival indexes of Aboriginal Welfare Board and Protectorate records held by AIATSIS;
- the Tindale genealogies of Indigenous families collected between 1920 and the 1960s.

AIATSIS will also search their Mura catalogue for you to find information on particular missions, stations or reserves, Indigenous languages, autobiographies or genealogies. They do not compile family trees. You can also search the Mura catalogue yourself on this website: <http://mura.aiatsis.gov.au/>

Contact:

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
Lawson Crescent
Acton ACT 2601
Phone: 1800 730 129
Email: family@aiatsis.gov.au
Website: www.aiatsis.gov.au

Remember

It is the experience of Link-Up Victoria, the Koorie Heritage Trust Inc. and local Indigenous cooperatives that although some records may be lost, the oral traditions of Indigenous people mean that people can often be re-united by means other than paperwork and searching through files.

National Archives of Australia

The National Archives of Australia holds many records about Indigenous Victorians. This is a result of the Victorian government (following the 1967 referendum) legislating to transfer responsibility for Aboriginal affairs to the Commonwealth in 1975. As a consequence, most of the State's records about its Indigenous people were also transferred to the Commonwealth.

Very early records are still located at Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) (see page 83) PROV also has records up to the mid-twentieth century, but the collections are most extensive for the period from 1838 to the 1860s. These include the records of the Chief Protector of Aborigines (1838–1849) and his successor, the Guardian of Aborigines (1849–1860).

Most official records from 1860 to 1975 created by the Government agency responsible for Aboriginal Affairs in Victoria are now held by the National Archives of Australia. These include records of the following government agencies that controlled Indigenous people's lives from 1860:

- Central Board Appointed to Watch Over the Interests of Aborigines (1860–1869)
- Board for the Protection of Aborigines (1869–1957)
- Aboriginal Welfare Board (1957–1968)

The Archive also holds records from Victoria's Aboriginal missions and stations such as:

- Framlingham (1875–1957)
- Ebenezer (Lake Hindmarsh) (1857–1900)
- Lake Condah (1867–1958)
- Ramahyuck (1870–1952)
- Elliminyt (Colac) (1896–1906)
- Lake Tyers (1879-c.1970's)

These holdings include:

- correspondence files
- annual reports
- minutes of meetings
- managers' files
- name indexes of residents
- correspondence files
- station managers' records
- registers
- press copy
- maps
- plans, petitions, ledgers and reports

'Bringing them Home' Project – Name Index

National Archives Australia has been funded to index, copy and preserve its Indigenous record holdings.

NAA is creating a Name Index to assist people to search for Indigenous records. It aims to assist people find information about themselves and find stories about their families or their country. On request, National Archives staff will search the index to see if your family name or particular place names are mentioned.

The 'Bringing Them Home' Name Index contains:

- names of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- names of non-Indigenous people related to, or associated with, Indigenous persons; and
- names of missions, stations and institutions where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lived.

To compile the Index, Indigenous staff at National Archives have carefully combed correspondence and other files relating to Victorian missions, reserves and Protectorate and Board files. Names have also been identified from minutes of meetings, letter books, annual reports, Aboriginal case files, newspaper cuttings, name index books, visitors books and many other records held at the Archives.

The index itself contains very limited information about the people named. You will need to see the actual files or records from which the names were drawn to read about them in more detail.

Aboriginal Deaths In Custody Royal Commission (1987–1991)

National Archives Australia holds the records created or collected by this Commission. Many of these are available for public access although special arrangements with Indigenous organisations, State governments and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Access to records under the *Archives Act 1983*

Any person can access most 'open period' Commonwealth records, which are those records that are more than thirty years old. However, some information may be *exempt* and cannot be released because it interferes with someone's personal privacy or it has defence, security or intelligence sensitivities.

National Archives reference officers will notify you if the record (or part of the record) you have requested is exempt from public access. You can appeal against this decision if you wish. A reference officer will tell you how to do this.

Memorandum of Understanding with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)

Because of the historical and personal importance of records to Indigenous persons and communities, the Commonwealth has reached an understanding with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) about access to sensitive material.

This understanding allows you or someone working on your behalf to have access to sensitive personal information that is over 30 years old and normally exempt from public access. This information may relate to you, or to your family members. Under the MoU with VACCA, you must not reveal sensitive information about another person without the consent of that person, and you must safeguard any information given to you. The information can only be used to re-establish family and community links.

You must complete an application form to gain access to information under the Memorandum of Understanding with VACCA. The Archives will check with VACCA's Link-Up Victoria workers to ensure that you or your family were affected by past government removal practices.

If you are undertaking research about people other than yourself, you must provide evidence that they have authorised the research, or a statutory declaration that you cannot do this because the person is deceased.

You can read more about the MoU on the website of the National Archives of Australia:

http://www.naa.gov.au/the_collection/Indigeno us_records.html

How to retrieve records from the National Archives

The NAA Melbourne Reading Room is situated at:

Victorian Archives
99 Shiel Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051

A visit to the reading room is at present the best way to consult case files and other records for individuals and families involved with Aboriginal Welfare Board and Victorian Aboriginal missions, reserves and stations. If you are unable to visit a reading room you can request copying of records you can identify. Photocopies of records will be sent to you by mail, in some instances digital copies will be made available on the NAA website.

You can search for items from the National Archives collection via their website. Go to www.naa.gov.au and follow the 'Search' or 'Research' prompts. As a guest, you can view records on line but not order copies. However as a registered researcher you can order original records for viewing in a NAA reading room and, in some instances, order digital copies of records to be made available.

Contact:

National Archives of Australia
Melbourne Office
Victorian Archives Centre
99 Shiel Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051
Email: ref@naa.gov.au
Website: www.naa.gov.au

National Archives of Australia
Canberra Office
PO Box 7425
Canberra Mail Centre ACT 2610
Freecall: 1300 886 881
Email: archives@naa.gov.au
Website: www.naa.gov.au

Service records

The National Archives holds the records of service personnel who were involved in the Boer War and the First and Second World Wars.

Contact:

Defence Service Records
National Archives of Australia
PO Box 7425
Canberra BC ACT 2610
Freecall: 1300 886 881
Email: archives@naa.gov.au
Website: www.naa.gov.au

The records of personnel who served in more recent campaigns, including Korea, Malaya and Vietnam, are held by the Department of Defence.

Contact:

Soldier Career Management Agency
Department of Defence
GPO Box 393D
Melbourne 3001
or
Personnel Records (RAN and RAAF)
Queanbeyan Annex 2
Department of Defence
Canberra ACT 2607

Aboriginal Affairs Victoria – Alick Jackomos Library

The Alick Jackomos Library houses a collection of more than 4000 books, 35 journal subscriptions, CD-ROMS, a thesis collection and a rare book display.

The book collection covers a range of subject areas including native title, the Stolen Generations, economic development, housing, archaeology, site protection and cultural heritage. Access is via a computer catalogue that may be searched by author or title. The catalogue is also available to search on-line from the library website.

A range of on-line and CD-ROM databases are available for research purposes. The collection is not for loan but photocopies can be made for 20 cents per A4 page.

Members of the Indigenous community and those people from the general public with an interest in Indigenous issues can visit or phone the library.

Contact:

Alick Jackomos Library
Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
Level 9, 1 Spring Street
Melbourne VIC 3001
Phone: (03) 9208 3272
Website: The Alick Jackomos Library catalogue can be search online at <http://www.dvc.vic.gov.au/AAV/aj-library/catalogue/>
Opening hours: 9 am to noon; 1 pm to 4.30 pm, Monday to Thursday (excluding public holidays).
Appointments are essential.

Museum Victoria: Indigenous Family History Project

The Museum's Indigenous Family History Project is an initiative of the Indigenous Cultures Department at the Museum. This project includes family histories that are being collated from written records and edited through consultation with individuals and families. This project is in progress with much more to be undertaken. It also provides a service to individuals and families who want assistance with researching and writing their family histories. The project has, with community consultation, drafted many family trees for the Victorian community. These are accessible to family members on request.

The Department is also responsible for the collections of historic papers (e.g. Anthropologist and explorer A. W. Howitt's and Lake Tyers Manager John Bulmer's papers), and photographs. Also relevant to the Stolen Generations is the collection of Aboriginal artefacts which add an extra dimension to the exhibitions for cultural knowledge at Bunjilaka Aboriginal Centre.

Contact:

Melbourne Museum
11 Nicholson St
Carlton VIC 3053
Postal address:
GPO Box 666E
Melbourne VIC 3001
Phone: (03) 8341 7777
Email: ssmith@museum.vic.gov.au
Website: www.museum.vic.gov.au

Public Record Office Victoria (PROV)

PROV holds some of the earliest official records about Indigenous Victorians. Its most extensive holdings cover the period 1839 to 1860 and describe the work of the Chief Protector of Aborigines, his successor the Guardian of Aborigines and the earliest Aboriginal protection boards.

The holdings include reports, registers, inward correspondence, letter books, correspondence files, ledgers and legal records.

In 1975 most of Victoria's official Indigenous records were transferred to the Commonwealth, when it assumed legislative responsibility for Indigenous Affairs. You would need contact both the PROV and the National Archives of Australia (see page 76) for records covering the period 1860 to 1960.

The records held by the PROV and the NAA are listed in *My Heart is Breaking – A joint guide to records about Aboriginal people in the Public Record Office Victoria and Australian Archives, Victorian Regional Office*. This publication also contains a list of the case files held by the National Archives of Australia (see page 76) *PROVguide 67, Aboriginal Records at PROV* and *PROVguide 65, Researching Koorie Family History at PROV*, will also be helpful. The *PROVguides* provide useful starting places for research into particular topics using PROV records. They list useful records, provide advice on research and in some cases link to PROV online resources. *PROVguides* are available in the PROV Reading Rooms as well as online at <http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/access/rguides.htm>.

Access to PROV records

To research records in the PROV collection you can visit a PROV reading room in North Melbourne or Ballarat (see locations below) or you can use PROV's online catalogue to search and order records for viewing in one of the Reading Rooms. The online catalogue can be found at www.prov.vic.gov.au. Detailed instructions and help sheets are available online. You can also ring Freecall 1800 657 452 if you need help using the online catalogue.

Copies of both original material and microfilmed records can be made at the reading rooms.

Contact:

Public Record Office Victoria
Victorian Archives Centre
99 Shiel Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051
Phone: (03) 3948 5600
Tollfree: 1800 657 452
Email: ask.prov@dvc.vic.gov.au
Website: www.prov.vic.gov.au
Visit:
<http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/access/visitus.htm>
for opening hours, directions on how to get there
and a public transport map

Public Record Office Victoria
Ballarat Archives Centre
Level One, State Public Offices
Cnr. Doveton and Mair Streets
Ballarat VIC 3350.
Reference Enquiries: (03) 5333 6611.
Opening Hours: Monday and Tuesday ONLY;
9.30 am to 4.30 pm

National Library of Australia

The National Library of Australia holds a significant collection of materials about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Mura Gadi is a culturally sensitive online gateway to the manuscripts, pictures and oral history material held by the National Library. It has been designed so that Indigenous Australians can have better access to previously hidden information about themselves and their story in Australia. You can search for material specific to Victoria in Mura Gadi. Go to www.nla.gov.au/muragadi/

Additional printed material can be found in the Library's on-line catalogue.

Contact:

National Library of Australia
Canberra ACT 2600
Phone: (02) 6262 1111
Website: www.nla.gov.au/muragadi/

State Library of Victoria

Information about Indigenous Victorians can be found in the Library's Australiana book and journal, manuscripts and picture collections.

Australiana Book and Journal Collection

Books and journals with information on Victoria's Indigenous history can be found in the La Trobe Reading Room, the Australiana section of the State Library of Victoria, located on the first floor in the Library building on Swanston Street.

You can find items about Indigenous Victorians and history using the computer catalogues anywhere in the Library or on your personal computer at home or anywhere you have access to the internet. Library staff can help you do this.

Manuscripts Collection

The Library's heritage collections include a significant collection of manuscripts, many of which include material about Indigenous Victorians.

The Manuscripts Collection contains unpublished personal and family papers and records of non-Government organisations. It contains some material concerning Indigenous life in colonial Victoria and the interaction of pastoralists and others with Indigenous Victorians. The collection includes items relating to the missions at Lake Tyers, Lake Condah, Framlingham and Ramahyuck.

The online catalogue contains entries for about half the collection, the remainder being accessible via a card catalogue and descriptive lists which can be viewed by appointment. Manuscripts staff are available to assist with the use of the card catalogue and descriptive lists.

Pictures Collection

This collection reflects the history of Victoria in illustrative form. Over 700,000 images of all types are held, including paintings, drawings, prints, photographs and other pictorial material.

The Pictures Collection includes a large number of images of Indigenous people. Some of the pictures held by the Library are of people and places that have not yet been identified.

You can search for original works by selecting the 'Pictures Catalogue' from the Library's main catalogue menu. It is best to start your catalogue search (on-line or at the Library) with the name of a person or a location.

If you find something of interest, record the details from the catalogue, in particular the 'Accession Number' which will look like this (H97.273/1-12). This will help library staff to easily refer to the item again.

Much of the Pictures Collection has been digitised and images can be seen by using the Library's Pictures Catalogue (or image database). All the public computer terminals in the Library's reading rooms will allow you to access this catalogue and you can also access it on the website.

The Library also has an Illustrations Index, which is a guide to pictures in printed material, i.e., books and journals.

Library staff can make copies of pictures. Fees apply; they start at \$35 for an A4 digital print or scan. A full list of photographic reproduction costs can be viewed on the Library's website at http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/services/copy_supply/photography/prices.html

Viewing records from the Manuscript and Picture Collections

Once you have searched the catalogues, you will need to make an appointment to view any material from the Manuscripts and Picture Collections. Contact the staff in the La Trobe Reading Room for help or phone (03) 8664 7007 to view items from the Manuscript and Pictures Collections. Your call will allow library staff time to retrieve the records for you and provide further help if required.

Contact:

State Library of Victoria
328 Swanston Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 8664 7000
Website: www.slv.vic.gov.au

State Library of Victoria's Genealogy Centre

If you would like to further explore your family history, the Genealogy Centre houses most of the records usually used for genealogical searching. All of this material is on open access at Swanston Street including:

- current and retrospective electoral rolls for all Australian States;
- civil registration indexes, i.e. birth, marriage and death indexes for all Australian States and Territories;
- Australian directories and cemetery transcripts and a wide range of other indexes and resources.

General assistance is available to people starting out on their search, although you are required to search indexes yourself. The Centre also has a collection of ready reference books on indexes, searching etc.

On-line resources

http://online.slv.vic.gov.au/about/using/guides/by_collection/genealogy/genie1.html (The Library's Genealogy Resource Guide)

<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about/visiting/spaces/genealogy.html> (Information about the Genealogy Centre)

http://buddynew.slv.vic.gov.au/cgi-bin/buddy/gen/other_australian_sources (A list of genealogy internet sites available on the web)

<http://buddynew.slv.vic.gov.au/cgi-bin/buddy/gen/familysearch> (Information on FamilySearch, a computer program which enables automated access to a large database of genealogical records stored on compact disks)

Contact:

State Library of Victoria
328 Swanston Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 8664 7000
Email: webinfo@slv.vic.gov.au
Website: www.slv.vic.gov.au

Royal Historical Society of Victoria

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria can provide a list of local historical societies in Victoria. Local historical societies often have genealogical databases and resources as well as photographic and newspaper collections.

Contact:

Royal Historical Society of Victoria
239 A'Beckett Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Phone: (03) 9326 9288
Email: office@historyvictoria.org.au
Website: www.historyvictoria.org.au

Indigenous Australian genealogical resources

The following is a selected list of additional resources for researching Indigenous historical and genealogical information. State and Commonwealth library and museum staff can help you explore these and other resources held in their collections.

Aboriginal Biographical Index
ATSIROM: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander CD-ROM – featuring:

- AEI-ATSIS – Australian Education Index – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Subset
- AGIS-ATSIS – Attorney-General's Information Service – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Subset
- AHB-ATSIS – Australian Heritage Bibliography – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Subset
- AIATSIS – Indigenous Studies Bibliography
- APAIS-ATSIS – Australian Public Affairs Information Service – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Subset
Indigenous Australia
- ATSIhealth – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Bibliography
CINCH-ATSIS – Australian Criminology Database – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Subset
- FAMILY-ATSIS – Australian Family and Society Abstracts Database – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Subset
- FNQ – Far North Queensland Collection
- MAIS-ATSIS – Multicultural Australia and Immigration Studies – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Subset

Information about ATSIROM can be viewed online at: <http://www.rmitpublishing.com.au/show.asp?id=ATSIROM&type=OD>

The State Library of Victoria has a copy of ATSIROM in its collection; you can use it in their La Trobe Reading Room.

Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, *Resources for Aboriginal Family History*, Canberra, 1986, GI 994.0016 F492C.

Ciolek, T. Matthew (Ed.), *Aboriginal Studies WWW Virtual Library*, available online at <http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-Aboriginal.html>

Evans, Heather, *The Aboriginal People of Victoria. Select bibliography of pre-1960 printed sources in the collections of the State Library of Victoria*. State Library of Victoria, 1993.

Evans, Heather and Macdonald, Judy, *The Aboriginal People of Victoria. Select bibliography of post-1959 printed sources in the collections of the State Library of Victoria*, State Library of Victoria, 1998.

Fawcett, Jenny Williams, *Aboriginal Genealogy and History Sources and References*, available online at: <http://www.hotkey.net.au/~jwilliams4/native.htm>

Miller, James, *Tracing Koori Ancestry*, Sydney, Royal Australian Historical Society, 1989, GI 994.0049915 M615T.

National Archives of Australia, *Archival Resources relating to Indigenous Australians*.

National Australian Archives, *Finding Families: the guide to the National Archives of Australia for Genealogists*, Sydney, Hale and Ironmonger in association with the Archives, 1998, GI 994 AU78F.

National Australian Archives, ACT Regional Office. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in Commonwealth records: a guide to records in the Australian Archives*, ACT Regional Office, 1993, GI 994 AU78F.

Num, Cora, *Web Sites for Genealogists: An Australian Gateway Site for Tracing your Family History*, 1998-2004, available online at www.coraweb.com.au. Of particular interest is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander genealogical resource listing, www.coraweb.com.au/abor.htm

Smith, Diane and Boronia Halstead, *Lookin for your mob : a guide to tracing Aboriginal family trees*, Canberra, Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990, GI 994.0049915 SM54L.

State Library of Victoria ATSIROM (Bibliographic database 1998–2003 *Dictionary of Aboriginal Place Names in Victoria, Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia, Lore of the Land, Meet the Kulin: the Aboriginal people of Central Victoria.*

State Library of Victoria, 'Koori History: Sources for Aboriginal Studies in the State Library'. *La Trobe Library Journal*, Vol 11, No. 43, 1989 (recently reprinted by the La Trobe Library).

Yano, Didj, *Murri Koori*, Abbotsford Vic, Aboriginal History Program, 1986, Genealogical Tables LTP 929.2 M96A.





14

The Stolen Generations an historical overview



14

The Stolen Generations in Victoria: an historical overview

Arrival

On arrival, the European colonisers of Australia lacked any knowledge or understanding of the continent's original inhabitants. The Indigenous peoples' social organisation, values, beliefs and family arrangements, way of life and their cultural and spiritual connection with the land were beyond the comprehension of the first settlers.

This lack of understanding about Indigenous family and society would have devastating effects on the future of Indigenous people across Australia. Rather than trying to understand the uniqueness and diversity of the country's traditional owners, the Europeans' instinctive response was to consider them as one race which required 'protection', religious instruction and a European education. Most significantly, they had no idea of the long-term impact the appropriation of Indigenous lands would have on Indigenous communities and cultural life.

Protection

Out of misplaced humanitarian concern, colonial governments moved quickly to appoint Europeans to 'protect' the Indigenous population and to issue food and clothing. This resulted in the rapid destruction of traditional patterns of Indigenous child-rearing and family life. For Indigenous people living in Victoria, change came so quickly that their languages and social and spiritual life were rapidly destroyed and much of it was not permitted to be passed from elders to the younger generations.

In Victoria, missions, stations and reserves were established as early as 1836, some controlled by government, others by religious groups. At first, Aboriginal people were encouraged, not forced, to settle in these stations and missions. In the main, they chose not to do so.

Aboriginal Reserves & Missions in Victoria



1. Yarra
2. Merri Creek
3. Warrandyte
4. Dandenong Native Police Camp

The arrival of the Europeans saw a dramatic population decline in Victoria's Aboriginal population. Introduced diseases, frontier violence and alcohol took their toll, and together with the destruction of Aboriginal land by introduced livestock, caused malnutrition and death. At the same time, Aboriginal people were dispossessed from their land.

Following two committees of inquiry into the situation of Aboriginal Victorians, in 1860 the Victorian Government appointed a Central Board to Watch Over the Interests of Aborigines. The Board formed the views that Aboriginal Victorians were a 'dying race and not capable of looking after themselves' and that any hope of 'civilising' them lay in the education of their children.

During the 1860s the Central Board tried to coax Aboriginal communities onto newly created reserves with a view to 'protecting' them by 'educating and Christianising' them and 'teaching them the virtues of hard work and agricultural self-sufficiency'. A school was established at Coranderrk with separate living quarters for the children, a model used on other Aboriginal stations. Even at this stage, the Board expressed special interest in the control and supervision of '*neglected children* or children surrendered to them by the Aborigines themselves'. These early attempts to bring together Victoria's Aboriginal populations on reserves failed as most Aboriginal people still elected to reside outside the reserves.

Remembering Koorie histories – an interview with Wayne Atkinson

'With the destruction of many Aboriginal tribal groups, you then had a situation where there were a lot of children who were orphaned. These children were put in the situation of "neglect" because the tribal structure had been shattered by the European invasion. The general view of the Government at the time was because the Aboriginal population had declined so dramatically over such a short period of time, the Aboriginal race would eventually become extinct. By removing the children by force and placing them in these institutions they would eventually be absorbed into European society and become white people.'

Extract from 'Remembering Koorie histories – an interview with Wayne Atkinson'.

Increasing control

The Central Board to Watch Over the Interests of Aborigines sought new powers to establish permanent reserves, the power to place people on these reserves and the power to force them to remain. It also asked for an Act of Parliament to authorise the removal of 'half-caste' girls and orphans against the wishes of those persons who may have assumed charge of them. Without this, the Board members argued, 'they [the Aboriginal girls] would not be able to use the means at their disposal for their education, nor to protect them from the perils which now surround them'.²

The greater degree of control sought by the Central Board was provided by the *Aboriginal Protection Act 1869*. The Act provided for the protection and management of 'every aboriginal native of Australia and every aboriginal half caste or child of a *half-caste*'.

A newly created 'Board for the Protection of Aborigines' recommended that, 'for their better management and control', Aboriginal people be 'closely confined' to permanent reserves where clothing, rations and medical aid could be provided.³

Previously the Protectors had developed informal practices which resulted in the separation of Aboriginal children from their parents. The *Aboriginal Protection Act 1869* gave the Board specific powers in relation to children. Although it did not assume guardianship, the Board was able to transfer the custody of station children from their parents to the control of orphanages or the Department of Neglected Children if they were deemed to be in need of care, custody and education. This power could be applied to any Aboriginal child, 'half-caste' child or child of a 'half-caste'.

The Board for the Protection of Aborigines persisted with the earlier assumption that the Aboriginal people were a dying race not capable of looking after themselves and that the only hope lay with their children.

The Board was given extraordinary powers over the lives of Aboriginal Victorians. Apart from prescribing where Aboriginal people would live, it administered a system of certificates and contracts relating to their employment and could use the money earned by Aboriginal people for official purposes. The Board controlled almost all other aspects of Aboriginal peoples' lives, including the decision to marry.

The decision to force all Aboriginal people to live on the reserves generally failed, although some Aboriginal people moved onto the reserves and stayed, developing a new community identity based on the reserve experience. Others moved on and off the reserves depending on employment opportunities and other factors.

Early attempts at assimilation

In 1877, following disputes within the Board concerning the management of the Coranderrk station, the Victorian Government established a Royal Commission to inquire into the 'present condition of Aborigines and advise on the best means of caring and dealing with them in the future'. The Commission noted that those on the stations seemed much better off than those living elsewhere and it recommended that all Aboriginal people be gathered together on the stations then scattered across Victoria. (See glossary for definitions of 'mission', 'station' and 'reserve'.)

However the Board for the Protection of Aborigines had a different view. It wanted to separate 'half-castes' for what it saw as their own benefit and to save money. In 1884 it proposed the removal of all 'half-castes' from the stations.

The *Aboriginal Protection Act 1886* allowed this to happen. Instead of encouraging Aboriginal people to live in special areas, the Board could force younger 'part-Aborigines' and their families to leave the stations and missions so they might be absorbed into the broader community. The intention was, in effect, to make them 'disappear'. However, paradoxically, the Board retained control over many aspects of these families' lives.

² Central Board, *Fourth Report*, 1864, p. 10.

³ From 'Protection Policies 1860–1886', pp. 30–3, *Victorian Government Submission to the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Parents*, Part 1, 1996.

The 1886 Act changed the definition of an Aboriginal to exclude 'half-castes' unless this person was over 34 years old, a female 'half-caste' married to an Aboriginal, an infant of an Aboriginal, or any 'half-caste' licensed by the Board to reside on a station. Those not so defined or licensed to stay were forced to move off the stations.

The Board was also given a level of control over those not defined as an Aboriginal under the Act, i.e., any person who was of mixed Aboriginal descent. In addition, the legislation allowed the Government to licence or apprentice 'half-caste' children to any person and to transfer any 'half-caste' orphan to an institution. From 1890 to 1937, ill, infirm or poor 'half-castes', or the children of 'half-castes', needed a special licence from the Aboriginal Protection Board to stay on a reserve, even if their family lived there.

Remembering Koorie histories – an interview with Wayne Atkinson

'The 1886 Act ... continued to remove children from their family groups but it was specifically designed to break up the Aboriginal family as we know it. Breaking up the extended family by dividing Aboriginal people into different categories according to the colour of their skin, so those of mixed Aboriginal/European ancestry were regarded as not being Aboriginal. These were regarded as more European and were expected to move into mainstream society.

When the children were removed, they were placed in European institutions. In Victoria a lot of people from all different parts of the State, like up along the Murray, for instance, were taken to a place called Coranderrk, which was an Aboriginal reserve. They were placed in dormitories and dressed like European kids and were instructed to European cultural values and beliefs. Once the children were removed there was a concerted effort to change them culturally into European people and they lost all of their (Koorie) thinking.'

Extract from 'Remembering Koorie histories – an interview with Wayne Atkinson'.

Government pursued policies of separation and protection for the dwindling 'full-blood' population, and amalgamation or assimilation for those of 'mixed race'.

In 1917 the Board made a decision to 'concentrate' the remaining 'full bloods' to a strictly regulated life at Lake Tyers. Although the Aboriginal Protection Board could assist Aboriginal Victorians no matter where they lived, it would only assist those who chose to stay at Lake Tyers. Other communities were left to fend for themselves.

During the 1930s the Board's policies were directed at the further concentration of Aboriginal people and the closure of stations. However, many Aboriginal people resisted this pressure and built shanty towns near former missions, stations and reserves.

Because of the lack of basic amenities, the poor general living conditions in these communities became an issue. The Board's actions caused poverty and dislocation for many Aboriginal families. A further negative outcome was the growing numbers of Aboriginal children being removed into the children's homes system by child welfare authorities. This was often because of the perception that Aboriginal family child care was not up to non-Aboriginal community standards.

It must be remembered that Aboriginal people themselves were seeking civil rights very early in Australia's history. People living on missions, such as William Barak and the people of Coranderrk, pursued Aboriginal rights in the 1800s. Aboriginal civil rights activism increased in the 1930s through Aboriginal leaders such as William Cooper, who established Victoria's first Aboriginal organisation, the Australian Aborigines League, in 1932.

During the 1930s and 1940s, the Victorian Government denied there was an 'Aboriginal problem'. In 1932, William Cooper from Cummeragunga founded the Aborigines League in Fitzroy and began to petition King George V in protest about the conditions under which Aboriginal people were forced to live. In 1935, Cooper called for a deputation to the Federal Minister to the Interior asking for representation for Aboriginal people in Parliament, a unified national Department of Native Affairs and State advisory councils on Aboriginal Affairs. Nothing came of his attempts.

Indigenous children

Early protection policies and legislation gave colonial governments very wide powers over the lives of Indigenous people. Within this context there was one consistent and tragic policy theme. This was the belief that Aboriginal adults were a lost cause, and that the 'Aboriginal problem' would be solved only if Indigenous children were separated from their parents for the purpose of education and training in 'white ways'.

From the very first days of colonisation, Indigenous children were removed from their families through a variety of legal provisions and informal action. Not only were Indigenous families exposed to formal and informal policies which emphasised the separation of Indigenous children from their parents for the purpose of education and training in white ways, but they also had to contend with the often inappropriate application of parallel government powers for dealing with neglected and criminal non-Indigenous children.

Non-Indigenous officials and charity workers lacked an understanding of how Indigenous families interacted with their children. They did not understand that traditional Indigenous families were focused on immediate survival rather than abstract planning for the future or that traditional Indigenous life emphasised the sharing of responsibilities for welfare and child rearing by the extended family or tribe.

Indigenous children were brought up by family members who provided security, physical closeness and affection. Grandparents and close relatives were also involved in training older children and adolescents. If there were difficulties caring for family members, the extended family network provided care to children without the necessity for strangers being involved or any formal arrangements made. All this was lost on officials who insisted on imposing European models of the family and child-rearing on the Indigenous population.

Removal of children

From European settlement to about 1900, Aboriginal children could be separated from their families by being placed in dormitories on Aboriginal missions and stations, or by being placed in separate institutions or schools for Aboriginal children.

In 1880 regulations were introduced which specified that Aboriginal children under 14 years of age were to attend for education and that males under 14 years and females under 18 years located on any station should eat, reside and sleep in buildings created for such purposes (i.e., dormitories).

Later regulations empowered the Governor-in-Council to make orders for the removal of any neglected or unprotected Aboriginal child to a station or to an industrial or reformatory school where they could be 'taught and trained to useful employment'.

Institutionalisation and 'apprenticing out' were also significant ways that Aboriginal children were removed from their families from the 1860s to the 1920s. At the same time there was intense activity in the non-Aboriginal community focussing on the rescue of slum children from neglect and a criminal way of life. This resulted in the creation of new institutions for different age groups of children, institutions which also, ultimately, received many Aboriginal children.

From the late 1920s poverty, poor living conditions, lack of educational opportunities and the breakdown of traditional structures saw Aboriginal families additionally exposed to the provisions of legislation concerned with the control of neglected, destitute, ill-treated or offending non-Aboriginal children. As a consequence more and more Aboriginal children found their way into orphanages, children's homes and foster care.

From the 1930s to the 1950s, the Victorian Government denied there was an 'Aboriginal problem' and the Board for the Protection of Aborigines came under increasing criticism from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups for its inactivity and inappropriateness. Although the procedures for the removal of Aboriginal children from their parents became more consistent with child welfare practices at the time, they were slower to change in some key aspects. Culturally inappropriate placements continued to be made and in fact increased as residential and foster care programs run by non-Aboriginal agencies expanded across the State.

Impacts

The cumulative impact of these early policies on Indigenous Australians was profound. The policies and practices resulted in the dispossession of Indigenous communities from their land, the fragmentation and destruction of Indigenous society and a dramatic decline in Indigenous populations in many States. This led to a breakdown and loss of respect for traditional ways.

Indigenous individuals, families and whole communities suffered social dislocation, alienation and poverty. A sense of hopelessness and powerlessness came into Indigenous life.

The impacts were felt at the most personal level in many individuals, as they experienced low self-esteem, a lack of dignity and the development of a dependent mentality.

Indigenous children separated from their families were denied their inherent right to identify as Aboriginal, and were subjected to the negative effects of institutionalisation and the breakdown in family ties.

Post-war developments

In Victoria, the concerns about the inactivity and inappropriateness of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines increased after World War II. There was also increasing concern and discussion about the plight of Victoria's Aboriginal people in the newspapers and other forums.

The Victorian Government decided that the 'Aboriginal issue' was in need of urgent review. In 1955 the Victorian Government appointed Charles McLean, a retired Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, to report on Aboriginal numbers, distribution, living conditions and the capacity of the communities to maintain themselves. He was also to report on factors which might prevent their absorption into mainstream society.

McLean found 'deplorable' living conditions in country Victoria and inner urban Melbourne. Unfortunately, McLean's recommendations reflected, and in fact reinforced, earlier non-Aboriginal views about the nature, capacity and future of Aboriginal Victorians. McLean recommended a 'helpful but firm policy of assimilation', i.e., to encourage or force Aboriginal people to abandon their traditions and enter a 'white' way of living. The provision of housing, education and employment

opportunities was seen as the key to 'raising the Aborigine from his substandard way of life'.

Consistent with his colonial forebears, McLean was convinced that action to deal with the 'Aboriginal problem' should be directed to 'fresh generations, growing up'.

McLean recommended the establishment of a new Board to replace the Board for the Protection of Aborigines. He did not make special recommendations concerning the removal of Aboriginal children from their parents, as he felt the provisions of the *Children's Welfare Act 1954* were adequate, if removal was necessary.

Assimilation

The Victorian *Aborigines Act 1957* implemented the major recommendations of the McLean report. The definition of 'Aborigines' was changed to include full-blooded Aboriginal natives of Australia and *any person* of Aboriginal descent. A new Aboriginal Welfare Board was established to promote the moral, intellectual and physical welfare of Aborigines with a view to their assimilation into the general community.

The Board was deeply disturbed by the shanty towns which had developed near the old missions, stations and reserves. Its priority became the provision of housing. Unfortunately, the poorly designed European-style dwellings supplied (which would have been totally unacceptable to non-Aboriginal families) proved to be a disaster. A view expressed at the time was that the Aboriginal communities were being turned into rural slum-dwellers.

The Board also focused on services for children, the result of a continuing pessimistic view of what could be achieved through their parents. The Board did not grasp the possibility that these same parents and communities had the potential to be part of the solution to the severe problems facing Aboriginal communities. A Government understanding of the capacity of Aboriginal peoples for self-determination and self-management of resources would not emerge for another twenty years.

In 1966 the Board noted that Aboriginal children were much more likely to become Wards of State than non-Aboriginal children. This was in spite of the efforts of Board staff to strengthen ties within Aboriginal families and keep children with their families or re-unite them with their parents. When Aboriginal children were made Wards, there were few culturally appropriate care options available to the State Government welfare department or support services for Aboriginal families to assist with family reunion.

By the mid 1960s, problems and tensions within the Aboriginal Welfare Board about program direction, an increase in Aboriginal activism and the entry of the Commonwealth into Aboriginal affairs meant that the Victorian Government was under pressure to, yet again, reassess its Aboriginal Affairs policies and the mechanisms for its administration.

In 1967 the Aboriginal Welfare Board was phased out and replaced by a Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs was required to assist individual Aboriginal Victorians obtain suitable housing, provide educational assistance, health, medical care and coordinate voluntary organisations. The Ministry could also acquire and manage land set aside for Aboriginal use.

This approach was facilitated by the entry of the Commonwealth into Indigenous affairs following the 1967 referendum. The Commonwealth began to provide funds to the States for Indigenous programs and initiatives, although its overall policy thrust still promoted assimilation into the non-Indigenous community.

Aboriginal activism

Victoria's Aboriginal people themselves were 'heading in another direction' during the 1960s. A keen and increasing sense of identity meant that Aboriginal leaders were moving away from the integration model (i.e., referral to mainstream services) which finally emerged as the Ministry's preferred policy direction. Aboriginal leaders began to press for their own legal, health and child care agencies as well as local community organisations.

In 1974 the Commonwealth entered into agreements with the States so that it would assume responsibility for the planning, coordination and financing of Aboriginal programs. The Commonwealth Government began to implement new policies together with

relevant Commonwealth, State and local government agencies as well as with Aboriginal organisations. The Commonwealth Government's stated policy aim was to 'restore lost power of self-determination in economic, social and political affairs' to Australia's Indigenous populations.

The Commonwealth not only made funds available directly to the Victorian Government in almost every social policy area, but it provided funds for the establishment of key Victorian Aboriginal services in the legal and health fields and in local communities through the funding of cooperatives.

This was to have a significant impact on the identification of the 'Stolen Generations' as an issue and the development of strategies to deal with both the impacts of past policies and the need to ensure it wouldn't happen again.

Placement of Aboriginal children 1950–1980

Whilst the informal placement of Indigenous children with relatives or friends had always occurred within Indigenous communities, the placement of their children with non-Indigenous families or services continued unabated from the 1950s to the mid 1970s.

These placements occurred in a number of ways:

- **Private placements** of Aboriginal children. Individuals and welfare agencies such as Apex clubs, the Country Women's Association, the Save the Children's Fund, Harold Blair Aboriginal Children's Holiday Project and children's homes continued to place Aboriginal children with non-Aboriginal families. Aboriginal children from the Northern Territory and Queensland were also placed through these Victorian programs.
- **Holiday schemes** – It was common practice with children's homes to place children in short-term care with holiday hosts during the home's Christmas closedown. Aboriginal children were involved in these placements and in some cases arrangements were made for them to stay for longer terms or not return to the home at all.

- **Medical care** – Aboriginal children needing medical or intellectual disability services were placed with non-Aboriginal people whilst undergoing specialist treatment in Melbourne. Some placements continued after the treatment finished.
- **Care and protection** – Aboriginal children were much more likely to become Wards of State, although there is little evidence that there was a high incidence of Aboriginal parents neglecting their children. However, Aboriginal parents often had to raise children in conditions of poverty and in poor living conditions. In addition, different standards (non-Aboriginal) of child care were often applied by welfare authorities in assessing particular cases. In some cases, Aboriginal families' ignorance of legal processes prevented them from reclaiming children committed as Wards of State when the families' living standards had improved.
- **Adoption** – From 1958 to 1968 the Aboriginal Welfare Board was an 'approved adoption agency'. It is understood that only a small number of adoptions were arranged by the Board. It is not known how many Aboriginal children were adopted through other approved adoption agencies.
- **Juvenile offenders** – Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young offenders were removed from the care of their parents by sentence of the Courts. In most cases they returned to their families at the completion of the sentence, but in others, inadequate post-release service for offenders meant that linkages with families could be lost. The number of Aboriginal young people charged with offences increased significantly during the 1970s.

Aboriginal agencies and the Stolen Generations issue

During the late 1960s and early 1970s the Aborigines Advancement League (AAL) noted with concern the increasing numbers of young Aboriginal people appearing before the courts. At that stage, 90% of young Aboriginal people facing court had been removed from their family or kin origin and placed with non-Aboriginal caretakers. Many of these placements had failed. The League began to work with the State Government welfare department to find answers to the problems of failed placements and the lack of alternatives to institutions.

The *Aboriginal Affairs Act 1967* required the police to notify the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs if an Aboriginal person was charged with an offence. A Ministry social worker would then assess the situation and arrange legal representation if necessary. The League also attempted to assist Aboriginal children and young people by coordinating voluntary legal resources. These developments led to the formation of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service in 1973. Once established, the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) became extensively involved in trying to understand and meet the needs of Aboriginal children presenting at the Children's Court.

Innovative diversionary work by the League and the Legal Service, and improved liaison with the State Government welfare department on the handling of Aboriginal child welfare cases, led to a drop in the numbers of children on care and protection applications being made Wards. However, the problem of over-representation of Aboriginal children in the system remained.

This period saw the emergence of a group of skilled and committed Aboriginal activists who used their direct experience working with Aboriginal children and families, together with the data being gathered by the Legal Service and others, to identify significant issues of concern. The child care worker and policy activist Ms Molly Dyer was at the forefront of this group.

The Legal Service and other community agencies began to express concerns about the numbers of Aboriginal children in care and in the juvenile justice system. They were also concerned about the practice of unauthorised foster care growing out of holiday schemes, and the high numbers of other informal separations arising from hospitalisation or medical treatment.

There were also other issues of concern. Aboriginal children were being removed and placed elsewhere without the consent of their extended family. In cases where Aboriginal children were placed with non-Aboriginal families, there was an extremely high failure rate and breakdown of placements.

By the mid 1970s the rate of Aboriginal juvenile admission to State care was up to 24 times higher than for non-Aboriginal children. In 1973, 220 Aboriginal children were in the care of the State Government welfare department. By 1976 this had risen to 350.

All of this was occurring in a context where Aboriginal child welfare leaders were commenting on the lack of rapport, understanding and trust between the Department and Aboriginal Victorians. In 1974 a coalition of activists, using the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service as a base, declared that substitute care for Aboriginal children in institutions, foster homes, and adoption was 'white care' and that important decisions were being made by non-Aborigines.

It was their view that Aboriginal children considered to be at risk or neglected should not be placed in foster care, put up for adoption, made Wards or placed informally, without reference to the wishes of Aborigines as expressed by their child care organisation. They felt strongly that placement outside the Aboriginal community could result in identity crisis and associated problems later in life.

Aboriginal organisations and groups began to lobby Government, arguing that Aboriginal children should be both assessed and cared for by Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal agencies. In 1976 the Aboriginal Child Placement Agency was established by Aboriginal activists as a direct response to the failure of cross-cultural foster care and group home placements, and to the over-representation of Aboriginal children in child welfare and juvenile justice services.⁴

The Agency was specifically established to involve Aboriginal Victorians in matters relating to child welfare. Its aim was to reverse the removal of Aboriginal children from their kinship system and to provide alternative supports to Aboriginal children and families within their own communities.

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (or VACCA, as it was to become known) moved as quickly as funds would allow to find foster parents and alternative family group homes for children already in institutions.

Most importantly, VACCA began to bridge the gap between white authorities and Aboriginal Victorians by linking its expertise and resources gained through personal knowledge of Aboriginal Victorian families and children.

Relationships with the State Government welfare department developed to the extent that in 1978 the Department issued instructions that its field staff must consult with VACCA in relation to any Aboriginal child which came to the attention of the Department. Further, every Aboriginal child in foster care was to be jointly reviewed by the Department and VACCA staff. The combined efforts of VACCA and the welfare department's Aboriginal Program staff reduced the numbers of Aboriginal children in children's homes by 40% over the two years from 1977 to 1979.

The pioneering work of Victoria's Aboriginal child welfare activists and program developers is reflected in current legislation and the Government's field service standards for guardianship. The *Children's and Young Persons Act 1989* specifically recognises the importance of Aboriginal self-management and self-determination. The Act separately provides for the declaration of agencies as Aboriginal agencies and explicitly covers the role of the Aboriginal community in case planning. Departmental operational procedures identify the roles of Departmental and Aboriginal workers in relation to the involvement of Aboriginal children, families and communities within the protection and care service network.

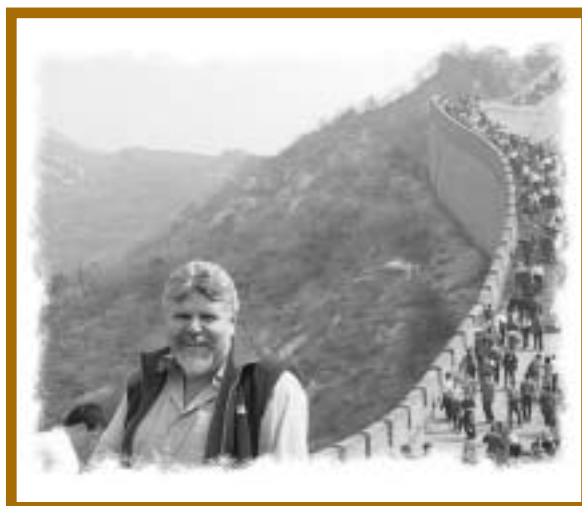
⁴ Information on the background to the development of Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency was drawn from the following sources:

- Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Submission for Funding (undated paper).
- Mollie Dyer, 'Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Cooperative Limited', in *Conference Proceedings, 2nd Australian Conference on Adoption (1978)*.pp 181–187
- Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Cooperative Limited, 'History of Victorian Aboriginal Affairs as it relates to Aboriginal Children's and Family Welfare Services' (undated paper).

Similarly, the *Adoption Act 1984* provides detailed direction covering the adoption of Aboriginal children. The Department's current legislation and practice is supportive of Aboriginal self-determination and self-management, emphasises the importance of Aboriginal identity and culture, and specifies clear roles for Aboriginal agencies and workers.

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency and local Aboriginal cooperatives continue to provide the key role in the assessment, case planning, placement and ongoing support of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

Following the 1994 *Going Home Conference*, the Commonwealth Government agreed with key Aboriginal agencies and communities that something needed to be done to address the general public's ignorance of the history of forcible removal of children in Australia. In 1995, the Commonwealth Government established the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families. The Inquiry provided an opportunity for Aboriginal people to tell their story in their own words and for the history of the Stolen Generations to be told. The Report made 54 recommendations, including the opening of records, and the introduction of family tracing and reunion services. *Finding Your Story* is part of the Victorian Government's response to these recommendations.



Mark Rose⁵

This was out on the mission, out on the Black flat, where Geoff Rose was playing as a kid. He had just gone six years old when he was playing in the water beside the hut, where his auntie was inside. I was up with Mum, playing outside Mum's hut on the "island" there, when I was called inside because there was a car down the road.

Henry Alberts in *Critchett*, 1998, p. 201

One solitary act

Henry Alberts was there the day Geoff Rose was taken. This one solitary act of removal may seem little more than a mere thread of a far larger tapestry of interwoven genocidal policies, that as if it were a blanket continues to smother the spirit of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. While the rhetoric and debate continues around issues of formal apologies and reconciliation, attention is often drawn away from the contemporary ramifications of individual stories of loss and betrayal.

The focus upon this one solitary act, as tragic as it is, is not motivated by the desire to induce guilt, but rather to contribute to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agenda of moving to national maturity. It is maybe because of the way my life has unfolded that I am equipped to explore life on both sides of the bridge that divides Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia.

⁵ This is an extract reproduced with Mark's permission from his PhD thesis, 'Bridging the Gap: The Decolonisation of a Master of Business Administration Degree by Tactical and Pedagogical Alignment with the Capacity Building Needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community'.

The story of Geoff Rose

One cold, windy day on Framlingham, a six-year-old child was taken. The child was institutionalised, cut off physically, emotionally and spiritually from his mother, his family and his culture. He served in the Korean war for a country that didn't, at that time, recognise him as a citizen. This child's whole life story is a legacy of the policy that effected his removal that day. For sixty years, he lived with his secret and then took his secret to the grave. My father died in 1989 and took with him the trauma of his removal, the litany of abuse while institutionalised in an orphanage, and the day-to-day paradox of living as white and knowing that he was black. The child removed that day, Geoffrey John Rose, a Gunditjmarra man, a stolen child, and for much of his life a misplaced soul, was my father.

Any personal question of my father that was ever asked by anyone drew the immediate response: 'I was an orphan. I don't know who my parents were and that is all you need to know!' He was a person without a past. He had been welcomed into a typical Australian family with a very genuine and generous spirit, but not strong enough to quell the rage that was constantly inside him and which he often expressed in the form of anger and domestic violence.

'I can still hear his voice ... crying out and calling for his mother's people ... till the day that I die, it is the most horrible thing I ever heard'.

Banjo Clark in *Critchett* 1998, p. 206

Geoffrey John Rose was born to Emily Rose on 17 February, the official transcript recording the mother's name only. It is believed that his father was Caucasian and possibly an American serviceman. This gave him an almost olive complexion that, combined with a good academic performance in school, placed him high on the criteria for removal. Circumstances meant that by age six, Geoff was left in the care of his Auntie Gracie on the Framlingham Mission, while Emily worked in Melbourne. Elders to this day remember him fondly, even though he was taken from them so early. His cousin Maisie Clarke still talks about their early adventures in the mission school.


On that fateful day, Geoff was playing boats in a stream that ran close to the hut in which he was staying. The Elders reminisce how as children, they all had their designated hiding places, which they practised and rehearsed, should a trail of dust from a motor vehicle herald the dreaded Welfare police. Geoff was too preoccupied with the game he was playing, and didn't make it to his hiding spot in time. He paid for this mistake with eleven years of institutionalisation.

Auntie Gracie accompanied Geoff and The Welfare operatives into Warrnambool in an attempt to plead his case, but accepting that there was no chance, she asked if she could purchase sweets for the next stage of his trip to Melbourne. When she emerged from the shop, there was yet another cloud of dust, for she had been duped. The Welfare used the distraction for a clean getaway and drove off. The dust and the sweets in her hands were her last fleeting contact with Geoff; no farewell and no closure for either.

He spent the next eleven years in the Menzies Boys Home where his screams were externally silenced. The regimentation of institutional life and emotional isolation certainly would have contributed to a distorted view of normality, which was fed to him as a daily diet.

His daily life was, however, far from normal for any average six-year-old. Meeting and talking to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in that particular orphanage, I know that it would have almost certainly meant sexual abuse as well as slavery. In his latter years in the orphanage, he and other boys were compelled to work for Gippsland farmers for no reward, carting hay from snake-infested fields. Part of the plan behind this was a forced systematic deconstruction of his Indigenous self, which is often referred to by fellow Stolen Generation survivors as having the 'black beaten out of you'.

When he emerged from the Menzies Boys Home at the age of seventeen, there was still something of a spark left. He made a trip back to Framlingham, which would have added to his own complexity, for he was now on the fringe psychologically, spiritually and emotionally, in both communities. A photograph of Geoff standing on Framlingham Mission was taken and today hangs in the Museum of Victoria.



When he was released from the orphanage, the Navy beckoned. There were obviously common threads between the military and the institutionalised life of the orphanage. Serving on HMAS ANZAC, HMAS *Quickmatch* and HMAS *Melbourne*, Geoff saw action in Korea. It was his prowess in football, and having represented the Navy on a number of occasions, that led to better acceptance among fellow sailors. It was in fact a shipmate that happened to be courting my mother's older sister at the time who asked my grandmother if he could bring home his friend who had nowhere to go for Christmas dinner. This is when my mother and my father met and an engagement, interrupted by sea duty, followed. Marriage gave him something more than a partner; it gave him something that had been denied from him since the age of six and for which he naturally yearned – a family.

After the Navy, a short stint in the Post Office was followed by 46 continuous years of service in Customs. Professionally, he excelled from an early age, with large captures of contraband and working his way up to the Intelligence Section.

Domestically it was another story. Having little to no experience in family life, Geoff was challenged by the day-to-day demands of both his immediate and extended family. His pressure and angst were often expressed by domestic violence and when evidence of this seeped beyond the immediate family, his sense of isolation and alienation was reinforced.

During the height of the violence, it was decided that I would be placed in a boarding school in Ballarat, only two kilometres from yet another orphanage, housing many of my Aboriginal relations. They were experiencing the same life my father had endured two decades earlier, and under the guise of the very same rhetoric and policy. Here, in just one generation, Geoff was faced with another removal – this time his of sons, albeit through the sanitised agency of a Catholic boarding school.

Legacy of an abduction

As far as I am concerned it was abduction.

Henry Alberts in *Critchett* 1998, p. 201

Gunditjmara Elder, Henry Alberts, in Critchett's book *Untold Stories* (1993), and subsequently in conversation with me, refers to my father's removal as abduction. It was, however, much more than an abduction. What was stolen by that one solitary act was more than the physical person. Also abducted on that cold windy day at Framlingham were his emotional, cultural and spiritual selves. Geoff Rose was rendered a virtual fringe dweller in both worlds. His abduction made him neither black or white, just abandoned, confused, and isolated. He was left without the basic support mechanisms that mainstream Australia takes for granted. He never had a chance to liberate himself from the chains that enslaved him on that fateful day.

I also had something abducted from me. My father's choice to conceal his Aboriginal heritage stole from me my own authentic identity for almost forty years. My emotional response swings between residual guilt, anger and determined resolve. Not being aware of the story of his removal/abduction, I judged him and his actions against a framework that feels inappropriate now. I regret many judgments and perceptions that I made without the full facts.

I am angered that the policy that affected my father's life was operable formally until the seventies, with many children, even today, being removed under other guises of it. The policies were pervasive and widespread across the nation. Their existence was systematically denied and sanitised by governments, education systems and by history.

My father died in 1989; his mother died one year later in 1990. By a twist of fate, they spent the last three years of their lives living within five kilometres of each other. Despite the close proximity, their paths never crossed.

Such was the cost of the Stolen Generations.



15

Additional information

15 Additional information

A
The Hon. J. M. Grant
Dear Sir
Boardwalk
Feb 19th 1882
Chief Secretary
We informed
you by those few lines
that we don't want
change in the
Manager
The
please

15

Additional information

Confirmation of Aboriginality

You do not need a piece of paper to prove that you are of Aboriginal descent, unless you are applying for Aboriginal-specific loans, grants and so on. Many Aboriginal people do not have 'Confirmation of Aboriginality'. Identity is a personal thing; being Aboriginal is more about knowing who you are, who you are related to, where you come from, your culture and history. The 'Confirmation of Aboriginality' is used only for the purposes stated above.

If you have any questions regarding Confirmation of Aboriginality, these should be directed to your local Indigenous community organisation (See list on pages 22-4).

If you wish to establish your Aboriginality you have to meet certain criteria. You must:

- be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent;
- identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person;
- be accepted as such by the community in which you currently or formerly lived.

People who wish to officially establish their Aboriginality have to obtain a 'Confirmation of Aboriginality or Torres Strait Islander Descent Form' from your local Aboriginal Co-op, then complete it and have it signed by a Justice of the Peace. It is then submitted to an Aboriginal community organisation for its approval, and then stamped with their common seal. When you have completed your family history and can show you are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

you can approach the local Aboriginal Community organisation (where your family is from) with your family tree and records. If you are not known to the local Koorie Community, it is up to you to establish your links to the community.

Interstate agencies

Australian Capital Territory records

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

Lawson Cres, Acton, ACT
Postal address: GPO Box 553
Canberra ACT 2601
Freecall: 1800 730 129
Fax: (02) 6246 1113
Email: family@aiatsis.gov.au
Website: www.aiatsis.gov.au

The family history unit assists Indigenous peoples trace their family history. (You can see the AIATSIS page in the Koorie Heritage Trust's Family History Service Search Pack for more information.)

Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages

Registrar General's Office
Allara House, 48/56 Allara Street
Canberra City ACT 2601
Postal address: PO Box 225
Civic Square ACT 2608.
Phone: (02) 6207 0460 (recorded message)
or (02) 6207 6444
Website: www.rgo.act.gov.au

National Archives of Australia (NAA)

Queen Victoria Terrace
Parkes ACT 2600
Postal Address: PO Box 7425
Canberra Mail Centre ACT 2610
Phone: (02) 6212 3900
Fax: (02) 6212 3999
Website: www.naa.gov.au

The NAA holds records from Government departments, defence and war service records, as well as other records that may have been given to them for preservation. The records held at NAA State offices vary, but local staff will be able to advise you of what they hold.

New South Wales records

Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA)

Level 13 Tower 3, Centennial Plaza
280 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: (02) 9219 0700
Tollfree 1800 019 998
Fax: (02) 9219 0790
Website: www.daa.nsw.gov.au

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs is the main point of access to Aboriginal Welfare Board records in New South Wales.

Link-Up NSW Aboriginal Corporation

5 Wallis Street
Lawson NSW 2783
Postal address: PO Box 93
Lawson NSW 2783
Phone: (02) 4759 1911
Fax: (02) 47592607
Email: linkup@nsw.link-up.org.au

Link-Up is an Australia-wide organisation with offices in every State. It focuses on reunion with family and country for members of the Stolen Generations.

National Archives of Australia (NAA)

120 Miller Rd
Chester Hill NSW 2162
Phone (reading room): (02) 9645 0110
Fax: (02) 9645 0108
Website: www.naa.gov.au
Email: ref@naa.gov.au

NAA holds records from Commonwealth government departments, defence and war service records as well as other records that may have been given to them for preservation. The records held at NAA State offices vary, but local staff will be able to advise you of what they hold.

NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS)

4–6 Cavill Avenue
Ashfield NSW 2131
Postal address: Locked Bag 28
Ashfield NSW 1800
Phone: (02) 9716 2222
Fax: (02) 9716 2999
Website: www.community.nsw.gov.au
Email, Records Supervisor:
john.sharman@community.nsw.gov.au

A copy of *Connecting Kin – Guide to Records* is available on the DoCS website. The guide lists records relating to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people separated from their families. It provides information about where records are kept and how to access them.

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

35 Regent Street
Chippendale NSW 2008
Postal Address: GPO Box 30
Sydney NSW 2001
Freecall: 1300 655 236
Email: bdm-webmail@agd.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.bdm.nsw.gov.au

There is a lot of excellent information on the NSW BDM website, including how to access records in NSW and research your family history.

State Library of NSW (Mitchell Library)

Address: Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: (02) 9273 1414
Fax: (02) 9273 1255
Email: library@slnsw.gov.au
Website: <http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/indigenous/>

The Mitchell Library has an extensive collection of manuscripts, photographs and records, including records relating to Cummeragunja Mission on the Victorian/New South Wales border. They also have Indigenous staff who can assist you in your search.

State Records New South Wales

2 Globe Street
The Rocks
Sydney NSW 2000
Postal Address: PO Box 516
Kingswood NSW 2747
Phone: (02) 9673 1788
Fax: (02) 8276 5626
Email: alo@records.nsw.gov.au (Aboriginal Liaison Archivist)
Website: www.records.nsw.gov.au

You can contact the Aboriginal Liaison Archivist at State Records for advice and assistance on accessing records in their collection.

Northern Territory records

Note: Many NT records may be found at the same addresses as South Australian records.

Central Australian Stolen Generations and Families Aboriginal Corporation

80 Hortley Street
Alice Springs NT 0870
Phone: (08) 8953 3899
Fax: (08) 8953 6684
Email: sg@central.link-up.org.au

National Archives of Australia (NAA)

Kelsey Crescent
Millner NT 0810
Phone: (08) 8985 0300
Fax: (08) 8985 0399
Website: www.naa.gov.au

To help people who were affected by government separation policies link up with their communities and families, NAA Darwin Office has an agreement with Northern Territory Aboriginal people. It helps them access Commonwealth records that are categorised as being in the 'open period'. Under Commonwealth Archives legislation records over 30 years old are considered to be in the 'open period' unless they are closed to protect privacy and personal information.

The Memorandum of Understanding sets out arrangements to assist NT Aboriginal people or their agents to access Commonwealth records held in any of the Archives' offices. Sensitive personal information that would normally be exempt from public access under the *Archives Act 1983* is made available subject to the record or to family members. For more information about the Memorandum of Understanding, see Fact Sheet 114, 'Memorandum of Understanding with Northern Territory Aboriginal people', at http://www.naa.gov.au/Publications/fact_sheets/fact_sheet_full_listing.html

Northern Land Council

9 Rowlings St
Casuarina NT 0810
Postal Address: PO Box 42921
Casuarina NT 0810
Phone: (08) 8920 5100
Fax: (08) 8945 2633
Website: www.nlc.org.au

Northern Territory Archives Service (NTAS)

Darwin Office:
2nd Floor
25 Cavenagh Street
Darwin NT 0800
Postal address: GPO Box 874
Darwin NT 0801
Phone: (08) 8924 7677
Fax: (08) 8924 7660

Alice Springs Office:
Minerals House, ground floor
58 Hartley St
Alice Springs NT 0870
Postal address: PO Box 8225
Alice Springs NT 0871
Phone: (08) 8951 5669.
Fax: (08) 8951 5232.
Website: www.nt.gov.au/nta
Email: nt.archives@nt.gov.au

The NTAS holds oral history recordings, provides access to archives in a public reading room and has a public information service.

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Nichols Place
Cnr Cavenagh and Bennett Streets
Darwin NT
Postal Address: GPO Box 3021
Darwin NT 0801
Phone: (08) 8999 6119
Fax: (08) 8999 6324
Website:
<http://www.nt.gov.au/justice/graphpages/bdm/index.shtml>
Email: registrargeneral.ntag@nt.gov.au

Queensland records

Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action (FAIRA)

Postal Address: PO Box 8402
Woolloongabba QLD 4102
Phone: (07) 3391 4677
Fax: (07) 3391 4551
Website: www.faira.org.au
Email: letterbox@faira.org.au

John Oxley Library of Queensland History

State Library of Queensland
996 Wynnum Road, Cannon Hill
Postal Address: PO Box 3488
South Brisbane QLD 4101
Phone: (07) 3840 7880
Fax: (07) 3840 9126
Email jol@slq.qld.gov.au
Website: www.slq.qld.gov.au/about/coll/jol

The Indigenous Library Services is an important starting point for information on Indigenous family history.

Resources include: How to get started in Family History Research, Indigenous Military Index, The Tindale Collection and 100 years of Queensland Aboriginal History.

Norman Tindale, an anthropologist with the South Australian Museum, compiled information about Aboriginal people between 1928 and 1950. He photographed many Aboriginal people and completed a significant number of family trees. John Oxley Library staff will help you to use and access the Queensland component of the indexes they hold.

Link-Up Queensland

47 Cordelia St
South Brisbane QLD 4101
Postal Address: PO Box 1128
Coorparoo QLD 4151
Phone: (07) 3255 0855
Freecall: 1800 624 332
Fax: (07) 3255 2099
Email: linkupq@tpgi.com.au

Link-Up is an Australia-wide organisation with offices in every State that focus on reunion with family and country for members of the Stolen Generations.

National Archives of Australia (NAA)

16 Corporate Drive
Cannon Hill QLD 4170
Postal Address: PO Box 552
Cannon Hill QLD 4170
Phone: (07) 3249 4226
Website: www.naa.gov.au
Email: ref@naa.gov.au

NAA holds records from Government departments, defence and war service records. The records held at NAA State offices vary, but local staff will be able to advise you of what they hold.

Queensland State Archives

435 Compton Rd
Runcorn QLD 4113
Postal address: PO Box 1397
Sunnybank Hills QLD 4109
Phone: (07) 3131 7777
Fax: (07) 3131 7764
Website: www.archives.qld.gov.au
Email: qsa@iie.qld.gov.au

The records contain information about family and community links, mainly generated by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development. You can also view publications such as: *A guide to Queensland Government records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: Records Guide Volume 1* and the *Mackett Index* which lists people's names.

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

501 Ann Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
Postal address: PO Box 188
Brisbane QLD 4002
Phone: (07) 3247 9203
Fax: (07) 3247 5818
Email: bdm-mail@justice.qld.gov.au
Website: www.justice.qld.gov.au/bdm

South Australian records

Department of Human Services

First floor, 45 Wakefield St
Adelaide SA 5000
Postal address: PO Box 287
Rundle Mall SA 5000
Phone: (08) 8207 0060
Email: adoptions@saugov.sa.gov.au
Website: www.adoptions.sa.gov.au

Contact the Adoption and Family Information Service (AFIS) of the Department of Human Services for information relating to adoption and Wardship records.

Indigenous Information Centre, South Australian Museum

North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5001
Phone: (08) 8207 7500
Fax: (08) 8207 7430
Website: www.samuseum.sa.gov.au

Visit Ingarnendi, a website associated with the Indigenous Information Centre, for details about the Indigenous Information Centre, Aboriginal Family History, Australian Aboriginal Cultures Gallery, Ara Irititja Archives and Genealogies.

National Archives of Australia (NAA)

78 Angas St
Adelaide SA 5000
Postal address: PO Box 6356
Halifax Street, Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: (08) 8409 8400
Fax: (08) 8409 8499
Email: refsa@naa.gov.au
Website: www.naa.gov.au

The NAA holds records from Government departments, defence and war service records as well as other records that may have been given to them for preservation. The records held at NAA State offices vary, but local staff will be able to advise you of what they hold.

Nunkuwarrin Yunti of South Australia Inc. (Link-Up SA)

182–190 Wakefield St
Adelaide SA 5000
Phone: (08) 8223 5217
Fax: (08) 8232 0949
Email: nunku@webmedia.com.au
Website: www.nunku.org.au

The Link-Up SA Program provides family tracing and reunion services to members of the Stolen Generations. Assistance is also given to people who have been adopted, fostered, or raised in institutions. The program is not funded to provide genealogies.

Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages

Level 2, Chesser House
91–97 Grenfell St
Adelaide SA 5000
Postal address: GPO Box 1351
Adelaide SA 5001
Phone: (08) 8204 9599
Fax: (08) 8204 9605
Website: www.ocba.sa.gov.au

State Library of South Australia

Address: North Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000
Postal address: GPO Box 419
Adelaide SA 5001
Phone: (08) 8207 7250
Fax: (08) 8207 7247
Email: research@slsa.sa.gov.au
Website: www.slsa.sa.gov.au

The Library has detailed indexes titled: 'Aboriginal Family History' and also 'Aboriginal Family History: Tracing the Families of the Stolen Generations at the State Library of South Australia'. This includes information from the Mortlock Library of South Australia and the Bray Reference Library.

State Records of South Australia

115 Cavan Road
Gepps Cross, SA 5094
GPO Box 1072
Adelaide SA 5001
Phone: (Aboriginal Access Team): (08) 8226 8005
Email: srsaAboriginalservices@saugovsa.gov.au
(Aboriginal Access Team)
Website: www.archives.sa.gov.au

State Records have developed a number of resources relating to Aboriginal peoples including: 'Guide to Records Relating to Aboriginal People', 'Aboriginal Resource Kit' and 'The Aboriginal Name Index'. The State Records also has an Aboriginal Access team to assist with enquiries.

Tasmanian records

Archives Office of Tasmania

77 Murray Street
Hobart TAS 7000
Phone: (03) 6233 7488 or (03) 6233 7490
Fax: (03) 6233 7471
Website: www.archives.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian Archives Online is the Archives Office of Tasmania's on-line link to information on its publicly available holdings. Searching the database provides descriptive and contextual information on Tasmanian State and local government records and private records from individuals and organisations held by this office.

National Archives of Australia (NAA)

85 Macquarie Street
Hobart TAS 7000
Postal address: GPO Box 309
Hobart TAS 7000
Phone: (03) 6230 6111
Fax: (03) 6230 6134
Website: www.naa.gov.au

NAA holds records from Government departments, defence and war service records as well as other records that may have been given to them for preservation. The records held at NAA State offices vary, but local staff will be able to advise you of what they hold.

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Address: Lands Building, 134 Macquarie Street
Hobart TAS 7000
Postal address: GPO Box 198
Hobart TAS 7001
Phone: (03) 6233 3793
Fax: (03) 6233 6444
Website: www.justice.tas.gov.au/bdm

Registration of births, deaths and marriages commenced in 1839 in Tasmania, the first Australian colony to take over the function previously conducted by the churches.

The Registry holds and can produce certificates for:

- church records (burials, baptisms and marriages) from 1803 to 1839;
- birth, death and marriage registrations from 1839 to date.

Access to birth and marriage records are available to anyone after 75 years. Access to death records are available to anyone after 25 years.

State Library of Tasmania

91 Murray St
Hobart TAS 7000
Phone: (03) 6233 7511
Fax: (03) 6231 0927
Website: www.tased.edu.au/library
Email: state.library@education.tas.gov.au

Tasmania GenWeb

Website only: www.rootsweb.com/~austas
Free online family history sources website.

Tasmania Library Heritage Services

91 Murray St
Hobart TAS 7000
Postal address: PO Box 569
Hobart TAS 7000
Phone: (03) 6233 7474
Fax: (03) 6233 7902
Website: www.statelibrary.tas.gov.au/heritage
Email:
Heritage.Collections@education.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Incorporated

198 Elizabeth St
Hobart TAS 7000
Postal address: PO Box 569F
Hobart TAS 7001
Phone: (03) 6234 8311
Fax: (03) 6231 1348

Torres Strait records

Records relating to Torres Strait Islander people were not regularly collected or documented until about 1935 and so there are not a lot of early records available. The Islands are under Queensland Government jurisdiction and the search methods for finding information about Torres Strait people are the same as detailed above for Queensland Records.

Western Australian records

Department of Indigenous Affairs – Aboriginal Family History Information Service

Level 1, 197 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000
Postal address: PO Box 7770
Cloister's Square
Perth WA 6850
Phone: (08) 9235 8000
Fax: (08) 9235 8088
Email: info@dia.wa.gov.au
Website:
www.dia.wa.gov.au/Heritage/FamilyHistory/

The DIA holds a collection of records from 1920 to 1948 from the former Department of Native Welfare about Aboriginal families. The personal records dealt mainly with people from the south-west of the State, in particular, those sent to the Moore River Native Settlement.

Family Information Records Bureau – Department for Community Development

189 Royal Street
East Perth WA 6004
Postal Address: PO Box 6334
East Perth WA 6892
Phone: (08) 9222 2777
Fax: (08) 9222 2767
Freecall: 1800 000 277
Website:
<http://community.wa.gov.au/Resources/FindingOutFamily/>

The Family Information Records Bureau (FIRB) has information about what happened to many Aboriginal families in Western Australia in the past. Some records go back to before 1920.

FIRB can provide access to the files which were kept by the former WA Native Welfare Department. FIRB is also able to search for records held by other departments and organisations for information about you or your family. You do not need to contact these departments or agencies individually unless you wish to do so.

To find out about your family, FIRB will look through the various files and records to see if there is information such as the names of some of your early relatives, where they came from, when they got married and to whom, when and where they were born, any children they had, when they died.

JS Battye Library of Western Australian History

State Library of Western Australia
Alexander Library Building
Perth Cultural Centre
Perth WA 6000
Phone: (08) 9427 3111
Fax: (08) 9427 3256
Website: www.liswa.wa.gov.au/battye.html
Email: info@mail.liswa.wa.gov.au

The J.S. Battye Library is a resource for Western Australia Documentary Heritage Services and holds information about Indigenous peoples.

Link-Up WA

Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service, Stolen
Generations Program, Building Strong
Families and Link-Up
Wittenoom Street
East Perth WA 6004
Phone: (08) 9421 3802
Fax: (08) 9421 3883
Website: www.derbarlyerrigan.com.au

National Archives of Australia (NAA)

384 Berwick St
Victoria Park WA 6101
Postal address: PO Box 1144
Victoria Park WA 6981
Phone: (08) 9470 7500
Fax: (08) 9470 2787
Website: www.naa.gov.au
Email: refwa@naa.gov.au

The NAA holds records from Government departments, defence and war service records as well as other records that may have been given to them for preservation. The records held at NAA State offices vary, but local staff will be able to advise you of what they hold.

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Level 10, 141 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000
Postal address: PO Box 7720
Cloisters Square
Perth WA 6850
Phone: (08) 9264 1555
Fax: (08) 9264 1599
Website: www.justice.wa.gov.au

On payment of a fee, the Western Australian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages can provide a certified copy or extract from a registration of birth, death or marriage that occurred and was registered in Western Australia since 1 September 1841, and a certified copy of a change of name document registered at its office since 31 January 1957.

State Records WA

Alexander Library Building
James Street (West Entrance)
Perth Cultural Centre
Perth WA 6000
Phone: (08) 9427 3360
Fax: (08) 9427 3368
Email: sro@sro.wa.gov.au
Website: www.sro.wa.gov.au

Southern Aboriginal Corporation

Address: Peels Place
Albany WA 6330
Postal address: PO Box 5277
Albany WA 6332
Phone: (08) 9842 7777
Fax: (08) 9841 6573
Email: sacrec@sacorp.com.au
Website:
<http://www.albanygateway.com.au/Topic/Indigeno-us/Southern%5FAboriginal%5FCorporation/>

The Southern Aboriginal Corporation is the largest Aboriginal representative and resource agency in the Kaatanyiny region, which comprises the south-western corner of Australia. Its field of operations covers 16 towns from Bunbury in the west, Brookton and Pingelly in the north, Albany in the south and eastward across to Knodinin.

Abbreviations

AAV	Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
AFRS	Adoption and Family Records Service
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
BTH worker	<i>Bringing Them Home</i> worker
CLAN	Care Leavers of Australia Network
CPS	Children's Protection Society
DHS	Department of Human Services
FoI	Freedom of Information
KFHS	Koorie Family History Service
KHT	Koorie Heritage Trust Inc.
MOU	memorandum of understanding
NAA	National Archives of Australia
PROV	Public Record Office Victoria
SLV	State Library of Victoria
VACCA	Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency Cooperative Limited
VALS	Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
VKRT	Victorian Koorie Records Taskforce

Glossary

adoption – The permanent transfer of full child-rearing responsibility (and legal guardianship) from a natural parent to another family. Once adopted, a child has the same status as a natural child in the adopting family.

agency – For *Finding Your Story*, the term 'agency' is used broadly to describe government, non-government (community service) or Indigenous agencies which have or had dealings with the Stolen Generations.

apprenticing out – Under early legislation, one of the ways the Secretary for Welfare could deal with a Ward of State in his care was to place the person as an apprentice to some trade 'either on land or on sea'. Children could also be 'placed in service'. However, following their initial placement in a receiving home most children were placed with 'some suitable person', i.e. with an individual or in a children's home, detained in an industrial school or probationary school or transferred to a reformatory school.

archives – Records created by both government agencies and non-government organisations that are no longer currently in use but will be kept permanently.

assimilation – The policy of assimilation meant that all Indigenous Australians are expected eventually to attain the same manner of living as other Australians, to live as members of a single Australian community, enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs as other Australians

child protection – This definition is from the Victorian Auditor General's Report on Protective Services, 1996:

'Protective services in Victoria are provided to children and families by the Department of Human Services. The Department endeavours to assist families where protective concerns have been identified, to allow children to remain safely at home. Where this aim cannot be achieved, children are removed from home and provided with a range of accommodation and support services either by the Government or from community sector service providers funded by the Government.'

congregate care – An older style of residential child care involving the care of large numbers of children in dormitory-style accommodation. During the 1960s and 1970s most congregate care institutions closed and children were placed in foster care or family group homes in the community.

counselling – The provision of face-to-face assistance and support to people with a focus on identifying and resolving problems and issues of concern to the client.

family group homes – Ordinary homes in the community where four to eight children were cared for by 'cottage parents'. Family group homes were operated by both the State Government **welfare department** and various community service and church agencies.

family tree – A graphic representation of successive generations of kin (also referred to as a genealogy).

file – For *Finding Your Story*, a 'file' means a collection of papers and documents relating to a particular person, placed in a folder. Such files usually have a specific number or identifier so they can be found in an organisation's **archives**.

foster care – Planned placement of a child (or children) with an unrelated family for a planned period of time. Foster parents do not have legal custody of children placed in their care.

full-blood – A race-based term that classified Indigenous people of mixed Indigenous and European descent. 'Full-blood' people were defined as those Indigenous people whose parents and ancestors were all Indigenous. It is now accepted as an offensive term and is no longer used to refer to Indigenous Australians.

genealogy – The study and description of the descent and ancestry of a person.

guardianship – This is when through a decision made by the Children's Court, the State becomes the child's guardian and assumes responsibility for the care, custody and control of the child to the exclusion of parental rights. This guardianship and exclusion exists until the child turns 18 or until the order expires (whichever comes first)

half-caste – A race-based term that classified Indigenous people of mixed Indigenous and European descent. ‘Half-caste’ people were defined as those Indigenous people who had one Indigenous parent. It is now accepted as an offensive term and is no longer used to refer to Indigenous Australians in official records (Source: Glossary of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2003). See also **mixed descent**.

index cards – Cards used to record client details, usually filed in alphabetical order by the family name of the client.

Indigenous – The preferred term to describe the original inhabitants of Australia. The term is now used internationally to refer to peoples who are the original inhabitants of a particular country.

Indigenous/Aboriginal Affairs – The area of public administration which focuses on policy, legislation and funding issues of relevance to Australia’s (and Victoria’s) Indigenous population.

interview – For *Finding Your Story*, this normally refers to a face-to-face meeting where an applicant for adoption information receives a copy of information from the adoption records. The applicant also learns whether another related party has previously registered with the Adoption Information Service in order to provide information or seek contact with the adopted person, or relative. Attendance at an interview is required under the *Adoption Act 1984* unless distance makes this impractical (where the applicant lives at a great distance, such as interstate or overseas). (See page 32 for further details.)

mainstream service – An agency or service which is required to respond to the needs of any person who wishes or needs to use its programs. This can be contrasted with an Indigenous agency which focuses solely on the needs of Indigenous populations. Many mainstream agencies have special programs which target Indigenous Australians in order to better meet the needs of that group.

mediation – A process of resolving differences or disputes between parties. This might involve a Koorie agency working with a member of the Stolen Generations and their birth family to gain acceptance into the family.

mission – A term loosely used to refer to reserves, government stations and Christian institutions where Aboriginal people were placed. Many of the ‘missions’ were established and run by missionaries and were used to restrict the movements of Aboriginal people. In most States, missions were regulated by the State governments after Aboriginal Protections Boards were set up. (Source: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Website 2003, Glossary)

mixed descent – A term that was in the past used to describe people who have both Indigenous and non-Indigenous ancestry. See also half-caste.

next of kin – A person’s close living relative either by blood or marriage.

non-identifying information – Information provided by an agency which outlines case details (i.e., the circumstances of an adoption application) but does not include the names or contact details of the people involved.

on-line – For *Finding Your Story*, ‘being on-line’ means that you need to be connected to a particular database or source of information via the internet using a computer.

open period – this term means records held by the National Archives of Australia that are over 30 years old and are publicly open and available to view in a reading room.

protection – This definition is from the Victorian Auditor General’s Report on Protective Services 1996:

‘Protective services in Victoria are provided to children and families by the Department of Human Services. The Department endeavours to assist families where protective concerns have been identified, to allow children to remain safely at home. Where this aim cannot be achieved, children are removed from home and provided with a range of accommodation and support services either by the Government or from community sector service providers funded by the Government.’

protective services – A service systems which provides child-centred, family-focused services to protect children and young people from significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect within the family unit. Protective services also deal with the impact of abuse and neglect on a child’s wellbeing and development.

reception centre – A residential facility which cares for children on a short-term basis. A plan involving more permanent arrangements (i.e., a return to family, or placement in foster care) is then made following an assessment of the child's situation whilst in reception care.

records – For Finding Your Story, 'records' has been broadly defined to include personal and administration files, registers, card-indexes, photos, manuscripts and the wide range of other materials which can be found in archives and collections.

referral – An agency 'makes a referral' when it asks another agency to assist with or take over the responsibility for a particular case.

register – A book used to record client details.

reserve – 1. An area of crown land set aside for Aboriginal use or purposes.
2. An unstaffed Aboriginal institution located on an Aboriginal reserve.
(Source: *Department of Human Services Briefing Notes in Anticipation of the 'Stolen Generations' Inquiry (Phillip Felton) 1996.*)

social dislocation – (In relation to Indigenous people) a loss of ties to community, authority, culture, shared history and traditional activity brought about by dispersal, loss of land, or a forced move to a mission or station.

station – 1. A staffed institution for Aboriginal people on an Aboriginal reserve.
2. A similar institution conducted by a missionary society ('Mission Station').
(Source: *Department of Human Services Briefing Notes in Anticipation of the 'Stolen Generations' Inquiry (Phillip Felton) 1996.*)

Stolen Generations – The term 'Stolen Generations' was coined by the Canberra-based historian Peter Read. Through his work with Coral Edwards, Read became aware of the large number of Indigenous children removed from their families and communities through much of the twentieth century, many in ways which could only be described as stolen or kidnapped. Upon the release of the 'Bringing Them Home' Report, the media coined the term to describe the Indigenous people and others who told their story to the Inquiry.

The Report does not use this term, but rather uses 'forcible removal policies' to identify the authority under which children were removed illegally or through 'compulsion, duress or undue influence'. (Source – *Glossary: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2003.*)

The Victorian Stolen Generations Taskforce, which operated between 2002 and 2003, recognised that the term 'Stolen Generations' could encompass any number of scenarios related to the removal of children from family and culture, such as forcible removal, relinquishment at birth under duress or otherwise, removal by deception, and being fostered or adopted. Similarly, family members left behind, non-Indigenous adoptive family members and descendants of persons removed who have been deprived of community ties could be included in the term. Accordingly the Taskforce developed a working definition for the Stolen Generations as follows:

The term 'Stolen Generations' is taken to mean any adult Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person separated at a young age from community, family, language, land or culture, as well as the families of that separated child.

Ward of State – Term used to describe a child under the **guardianship** of a State child welfare authority.

Welfare Department – In *Finding Your Story* the term 'welfare department' is used as a general term to describe the government agency which dealt with children placed in the care of the State. The term covers the following Departments:

- 1864–1887: Department of Industrial and Reformatory Schools
- 1887–1954: Department of Reformatory Schools
- 1887–1924: Department of Neglected Children
- 1924–1960: Children's Welfare Branch (of the Chief Secretary's Department)
- 1960–1970: Social Welfare Branch (of the Chief Secretary's Department)
- 1970–1978: Social Welfare Department
- 1978–1985: Department of Community Welfare Services
- 1985–1992: Community Services Victoria
- 1992–1995: Health and Community Services
- 1995– ct: Department of Human Services

youth trainee – A young person detained in a remand centre or committed to a fixed-term sentence in a Youth Training Centre.

List of illustrations

Koorie Heritage Trust Inc

AH1707

MacKillop Family Services

1879 St Josephs Babies Home Broadmeadows
c1965

National Archives of Australia

A1200, L26163 Aboriginal People and Torres
Strait Islander Peoples – Robinvale, Victoria Club
Rooms and Centre Showing Solar Hot Water
Heating System, 1958

Private Collection Jim Berg JP

Images from Framlingham

Public Record Office Victoria

VPRS 6760/P0, Unit 1, Item 6, Aboriginal
Estrays, Chief Protector of Aborigines

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Supplementary Registered Inward
Correspondence, Chief Secretary

VPRS 14562/P4, unit 6, 555 Lake Tyers Special
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State Library of Victoria

H20918/2929, Aboriginal Woman Holding Child,
Three Quarter Length, Full Face, c1890's, Henry
King photographer

H95.74/180, image number mp020059,
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in Kings Domain, Melbourne N.W of Myer Music
Bowl, Dennis Mayor photographer

H90.100/849, image number jc000844, Ballarat
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1996. (The total submission to the Inquiry was
as follows: An Interim Submission, January 1996.
An Ancillary Paper – 'Victorian Legislation which
may be of Relevance to the Inquiry into the
Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Children', January 1996. Associated
reports and manuals handed to the Commission.
Copies of all relevant legislation handed to the
Commission. A Final Submission in two Parts,
August 1996, comprising Part 1 = 1.1 Further
Reponses to Terms of Reference. Answers
to Questions Taken on Notice. Answers to
Additional Questions from the Commission. Part
2 = 2.1 Appendices. The historical overview cited
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My Story

