

Family History Research

Find and Connect was established to help Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants understand more about their past and about the historical context of child welfare in Australia. We assist people who spent time in an orphanage or children's home in Australia. Unfortunately we cannot assist with your family history research.

If you are researching your family history the following information may be helpful to you, however you are ineligible for any assistance from Find & Connect and we are unable to directly respond to family history requests.

How to do your own Family History Research

Collate anything known about the person in care (names, places, dates etc) and then try to fill in the gaps and create a chronology. Create family tree by hand or using an online family tree maker.

The [National Archives of Australia](#) holds records created by the Commonwealth government related to aboriginal affairs, immigration (including child migrants), military service and records related to the Northern Territory while it was under Commonwealth control. There are branches of the NAA in each state and territory.

The State Library in your capital city is another place to get help and advice about family history research and family tracing. Most State Libraries have a genealogy (family history) centre. At the State Library, you can get free access to websites like Ancestry.com, and search resources like Police Gazettes, post office directories, immigration and shipping records and a range of family history indexes.

The [National Library of Australia in Canberra](#) (NLA) holds records of national significance, including large manuscript, photographic and oral history collections. The latter includes interviews from the [Bringing Them Home Oral History Project](#) and the [Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants Oral History Project](#). [Trove](#) is a website managed by the NLA that brings together searchable content from libraries, museums, archives and other research organisations. For a list of newspapers available online on Trove, see [About Digitised Newspapers and more](#).

Historical Child Welfare Records

If your ancestor or relative and encountered the child welfare system, for example was in an institution, in out-of-home or foster care, or was adopted, most state archives provide guides on searching the welfare records they hold:

[NSW historical welfare records information](#)

[Victorian historical welfare records information](#)

[Tasmanian historical welfare records information](#)

[QLD historical welfare records information](#) (schools, hospitals and orphanages in the one guide)

[SA historical welfare records information](#)

[ACT Welfare Records Finding Aid \(pdf\)](#)

The [WA State Records Office](#) and [NT Library and Archives](#) hold records but do not have a finding aid or guide.

The Council for Australasian Archives and Records Authorities has published [a guide to accessing Child Migrant records \(pdf\)](#) held by commonwealth and state archives.

Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM) records

Each state/territory has a Registrar of BDM. Some sites allow for historical searching with information about availability, restrictions and how to apply for records.

Other places to search for BDM information include:

- Genealogical Societies (often have searchable indexes or online databases for members)
- Newspaper family notices – more information under newspapers below
- BDM published registers in state/territory libraries
- Church, Mission & Parish registers (including baptism registers)
- Online death and funeral indexes such as:
 - [Ryerson Index of Newspaper death notices \(National\)](#)
 - [Savill Index of Advertiser Funeral Notices](#) – (South Australia only)

Cemetery and Burial Records

Two useful sites to find cemetery records and burial places are:

- [Cemetery Records – Australia \(CoraWeb\)](#)
- [Australian Cemeteries](#)

Lone graves and unregistered deaths have been indexed in a number of states/territories. Search for these and other indexes via local genealogical societies or websites run by professional genealogists/historians. Also use newspaper family notices. Think laterally – information about a death or funeral in a newspaper can lead you to the Funeral Director, cemetery, burial place and family members.

Other useful resources

- **Genealogical Societies & Historical Societies** – online databases, library resources and valuable advice
- **Directories** – commercially published volumes listing primary occupant of residences and businesses – useful for locating where people lived and who their neighbours were
- **Electoral Rolls** – current Commonwealth and state rolls are searchable online at the electoral office in each capital city. Past rolls in hard copy or on microfiche are accessible in state libraries Land Titles records offices – for researching house and land ownership
- **Council Archives** – assessment books, local government records, maps, plans, photos, oral histories
- **Government and Police Gazettes** – information about government institutions, Acts and Regulations, employees, criminal activities, absconding, inquests, missing persons
- **School Records** – admission records, yearbooks, newsletters, photographs
- **Church and Parish Records** – baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, church newsletters, photos

- **Noel Butlin Archives** – pastoral, business and association records

Researching Aboriginal Family History

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

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies ([AIATSIS](http://aiatsis.gov.au)) in Canberra holds a unique collection of records including film, photographs, video and audio recordings and the world's largest compilation of printed materials and other resources relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The collection can be searched online via the online search engine Mura. AIATSIS also provides excellent family history searching fact sheets on their website: <http://aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family>

The [Archives of the South Australian Museum](#) holds a wide range of records valuable for genealogical searching for people with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. The Museum holds the [Tindale collection](#) which includes genealogies, information cards, photographs, maps and other information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia. Some states also have Aboriginal Family History Research Units, which may be helpful in your search.

[NSW First Nations Family History Research Guide](#)

[NT Aboriginal family history searching guide \(pdf\)](#)

[Qld Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history](#)

[SA Aboriginal family history unit](#)

[Victorian Aboriginal family history](#)

[Tasmanian Family history research](#)

[WA Aboriginal family history unit](#)

Paid Subscription Family Searching

Many libraries allow free access to subscription sites. Ancestry – popular family searching website and family tree maker.

- Ancestry – <http://www.ancestry.com.au/>
Ancestry is a popular family searching website and family tree maker. Ancestry can be used to search Australian, UK and World records including electoral rolls and BDM indexes. Through Ancestry you can make contact with others researching the same families.
- Find my Past – <http://www.findmypast.com.au/>
- Family Search – <https://familysearch.org/>
- My Heritage – <https://www.myheritage.com/>
- World Vital Records – <http://www.worldvitalrecords.com/>

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/finding-family/family-history-research/>