



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**



About us:

Post Adoption Services team



This booklet outlines the support and information available through the Department of Communities' Post Adoption Services team.




Post Adoption Services team

The Post Adoption Services team provide support and information for people involved in or impacted by adoptions in Western Australia. The team are part of the Department of Communities Adoption Services.

We recognise and acknowledge the history of forced adoption in Western Australia and the role of the Department of Communities (under its previous names) in forced adoption policies and practices. We acknowledge the impacts of historic forced adoption continue to impact people today, and for many people, their experience is living. This awareness is reflected in all our practices and interactions.

Our Values

The Department of Communities' agency values underpin our shared behaviour and guide our culture. They define how we work together with our partners and the community.



I	Integrity	We are honest We do what we say we'll do
C	Courage	We are bold We are brave
R	Respect	We treat everyone with dignity We recognise contribution and value diversity
E	Empathy	We are authentic and understanding We are compassionate
A	Accountability	We are collectively responsible We are reliable
T	Trust	We are fair We act in good faith
E	Empowerment	We support our colleagues We build on strengths

Our Team

The Post Adoption Services team members are professional and qualified staff who are deeply committed to providing trauma-informed, efficient, and quality services to people involved in an adoption.

Our team is committed to ensuring those involved in adoption or impacted by adoption, are supported, listened to, and receive the best available information. Our team has specialist training in:

- Adoption
- Forced adoption, including forced adoption training provided by the Australian Psychology Society¹ and the Department of Social Services²
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Attachment theory and applications to practice
- Mental health first aid
- Family and Domestic Violence.

Our team consists of Information officers, Information and Research Officers, Case Workers and Child Protection Workers, and a Team Leader.

Information Officers, and Information and Research Officers, research and gather information about an adoption. They have skills and experience in navigating various historical data bases and conducting research.

Case Workers and Child Protection Workers have tertiary qualifications in social work, psychology or other human service-related fields. The role of Case Workers and Child Protection Workers includes providing:

- Support whilst providing information to relevant parties about adoption information/records.

¹ Australian Psychological Society, 'Understanding forced adoption: Training for psychologists' [APS Events: 23364 | APS](#)

² Department of Social Services, 'Forced Adoption: Practical Skills and Awareness' [Forced Adoption: Practical Skills and Awareness - Overview](#)

- Assistance with contact and mediation between parties if they are wanting to connect.
- Trauma-informed support whilst notifying a parent or a sibling of the death of an adopted person or one of the parties to an adoption.
- Referrals to relevant counselling and support services.
- Intercountry liaison for people adopted in WA but born overseas who are seeking their information and/or contact with their family.
- Support with Adoption Plans - assisting with contact or mediating contact/exchange of information where relevant.
- Message Box Service - exchange of messages and letters/photos between parties.
- Provision of information relating to the discharge of adoption process.
- Advice in relation to how to apply for and access original birth certificates.

Our Services

We can provide information and support to people impacted by adoption in Western Australia with the following services:

- Access to Original Birth Certificate with Adoption details
- Access to Adoption Court Documents
- Access to records held by the Department
- Implementation of Adoption Plan (applies to options finalised after 1995)
- Inter-country Liaison
- Contact or Information Veto cancellation
- Information about or referral to support, mediation and counselling services

Our Approach

Our team strongly support the individual as an expert in their own lives and recognise that people have varying views and responses to adoption and that these can change over time.

Our team understands the importance of identity, attachment and relationships in human development and wellbeing, and recognise the profound impact adoption can have on an individual, their family and community.

Trauma-Informed

A trauma-informed approach recognises the profound impact trauma can have on an individual's mental, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. It informs our understanding of the varied responses people can have to trauma and the impact trauma can have on families and communities.

A trauma-informed approach promotes the physical, psychological and emotional safety of people and emphasises the importance of supporting people to feel empowered in making decisions that affect them.

There are five foundational trauma-informed principles³ that guide our approach:

- Safety – we prioritise the physical, psychological and emotional safety of people
- Trustworthiness – we are transparent in what we do and why we do it
- Choice – we provide information, so people are informed and have choice in making decisions that affect them

³ Blue Knot Foundation, 'Talking About Trauma' [Blue Knot Fact Sheets](#)

- Collaboration – we work alongside people and respect their knowledge and skills
- Empowerment – we seek to understand people's lived experiences and promote their strengths and voice.

Strengths-based

A strengths-based approach emphasises that all people have strengths and are experts in their own lives. Our team works alongside and with people understanding that individuals are best placed to make their own decisions, and our role is to support an individual's resilience and provide information about resources and assistance they are seeking.

Legislation

The services our team provide are in accordance with the Adoption Act 1994 and the Adoption Regulations 1995. These outline the legal framework in which we operate and govern our policies, procedures and practice.

How to Contact Us

You can contact us by:

Telephone: 1800 182 178

Email: adoptions@communities.wa.gov.au

Postal Address:

Locked Bag 5000
FREMANTLE WA 6959

Street address:

5 Newman Court
FREMANTLE WA 6160





Above: The forced adoption memorial, Empty Arms – Broken Lives, was unveiled in the Town of Victoria Park on 21 March 2019 to mark the sixth anniversary of the national apology offered by the Australian Government on 21 March 2013. The memorial was commissioned by the Association Representing Mothers Separated from their Children by Adoption, known as ARMS, and was funded by the Australian government.

Feedback/Complaints

We welcome and value your feedback. Whether you are lodging a complaint or paying a compliment, your feedback is integral to our continuous improvement and ensuring our service is responsive to the needs of the community.

We respect the right for anyone who is dissatisfied about our service to make a complaint. Complaints can be made about:

- Any service provided by our team.
- A lack of service that could reasonably be expected.

In the first instance you are welcome to discuss your feedback with the Team Leader of Post Adoption Services who can be contacted on:

- **Telephone:** 1800 182 178
- **Email:** adoptions@communities.wa.gov.au
- **Postal Address:**
Locked Bag 5000
FREMANTLE WA 6959

Complaints and feedback can also be lodged with the Department of Communities Complaints Management Unit. In some circumstances the Complaints Management Unit will offer people the option for Early Resolution and refer the complaint back to Adoption Services. Complaints suitable for Early Resolution may include issues not yet discussed with Adoption Services, relatively simple or minor matters that can be easily resolved or urgent issues where the timeframes of a formal complaint are not practicable.

You can lodge a complaint with the Complaints Management Unit:

- Online at Department of Communities - Complaints and feedback and select the option 'General Complaints and feedback'
- **By telephone:** 1800 333 325 (1800 FEEDBK)
- **By post:**
Locked Bag 5000
FREMANTLE WA 6959



Department of Communities

5 Newman Court, Fremantle WA 6160

Postal address: Locked Bag 5000, Fremantle WA 6959

Telephone: 1800 176 888

Email: enquiries@communities.wa.gov.au

Website: www.communities.wa.gov.au

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) – Telephone: 13 14 50

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service. For more information search National Relay Service.