GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of Justice

Family History Kit

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages



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1. History of the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages

In Western Australia the earliest records of births, deaths, marriages, baptism and burials are church records dating from 1829, the year the State was founded. Transcripts of early colonial records deposited with the State Archives, can be viewed at the J S Battye Library, Alexander Library building in Northbridge.

On 27 May 1841 the first act of State Parliament to regulate the registration of births, deaths and marriages was passed. This Act became operative on 1 September 1841. Under the Act, recording of these events became an official government function and the Registrar General's Office was established.

The duty of registering births, deaths and marriages rested with the Registrar General, George Frederick Stone, who was appointed for the whole colony. Sub-Registrars were also appointed for districts surrounding the towns of Perth in Fremantle, Guildford, Bunbury, Busselton and Albany. The registration system was based on there being two registrations made for every event; one retained in the Register of the district in which the event occurred and the other kept in the General Register located at the Registrar General's Office.

Due to rapid and widespread development within the State it became necessary to determine and fix Registry Districts and to appoint District Registrars. Under the *Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act 1894* forty (40) Registry Districts were declared and District Registrars, who were located in the principal town of each district, were appointed. This network was further enhanced by the appointment of Assistant District Registrars and was intended to ensure most towns had an authority to whom an event could be reported.

On 14 April 1999, the revised *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1998* was proclaimed and the Registrar General's Office was re-named the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Although registry districts have since been abolished, metropolitan and regional courts continue to provide select registry services by administrative directive. Registration of life events is now centralised at the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages in Perth and the Register maintained in the form of a computer database.

Following the Titles Office, the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages is the second oldest State Government department continuously providing service since 1 September 1841.

2. Tracing your family history overview

The best way to trace your family tree is to start with the information you know and work backwards – yourself, your parents, grandparents, great grandparents. Your relatives can provide information about other family members, however, as you move through the generations, you will need to start utilising other sources. This is where birth, death and marriage records can help.

The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages has more than 3.1m records relating to people who were born, married or died in Western Australia. Other Australian states and territories operate similar registration systems. To locate records relating to your ancestors who may have lived interstate, go to Births, Deaths and Marriage Registry Office locations.

The Registry offers free online index searching of historic Western Australian births, deaths and marriages registered from 1841. Currently, the Online Index contains indexes of registered events for the following date periods with more planned to be added at a later date:

- Birth indexes - 1841 to 1925
- Death indexes - 1841 to 1995
- Marriage indexes - 1841 to 1950

The free online index is available on our website at Online Index Search Tool.

This service incorporates the option to purchase a family history certificate for a reduced fee. Family history certificates provide information not just about the subject of that registration but also other family members. For example, depending on the year of registration, a death certificate may detail a person's name, occupation, age at death, parents, spouse and children. A death/birth/marriage certificate can be the stepping stone back to the previous generation.

Other sources for tracing your family ancestry can include military records, shipping and passenger records, genealogical societies, the National Archive Library, electoral roles and other organisations which provide family tracing services. Website links for these resources can be found at the end of this kit.

More information on family history can be found and viewed at the J S Battye Library, Alexander Library building in Northbridge.

3. Searching Western Australian Online Indexes

When searching the Online Indexes, various factors will impact on how you find an entry on the Western Australian Online Indexes. Consider the following points to assist your search:

- The more details you enter, the more filtered your search results. However, this approach may lead to relevant records not being displayed if an exact match is not found.

- If you are unsure of spelling, try typing the first couple of letters of a name. For example, enter "math" if you don't know if you are looking for "Mathieson" or "Matheson".

- Try entering the person's surname and a range of years only - this may result in more index entries from which you may locate any record of interest.

- Widen the range of search years: A birth, death or marriage that occurred late in a year may not have been registered until the following year. Alternatively, the event may have occurred in a year earlier than previously known.

- Refrain from including apostrophes in names eg O'Brien, D'Silva etc. Although this punctuation may be in the registration, it is not generally included in the online indexes.

- If you are having difficulty locating an entry you believe should be there, consider the phonetics of the surname and then try variations of that name.

- To broaden your search you can prefix the field with the '%' key:
  '%Mary', the search will return all instances of that name contained anywhere within that field; eg **Mary** Jane, Emily **Mary**, **Mary**llia.
  '%Ver', the search will list all instances of that string of letters contained anywhere within that field; eg **Ver**a, **Ver**onica, Oli**ver**, Be**ver**ley.

- The initial search results will be based alphabetically on the surname field. You can sort by any other information displayed by clicking on any column heading.

- If an abbreviated given name is in the index, it will probably be abbreviated in the registration record. There is no guarantee the given name of a person will be consistent throughout the index entries. For example, Ann at birth may be Anne when married and Annie in the death register.

- Given names are usually shown in full, although on occasion they may be abbreviated:

Geo. - George	Jas. - James	Thos. - Thomas

- If numerals appear, it indicates years. Numerals followed by a letter indicates:

M - months	H - hours	CHD - child
W - weeks	ADU - adult	UNK - unknown
D - days	STI - stillborn	

4. Information provided on the certificate

Births

1841-1846

- Registration number
- Date registered
- Date of birth
- Child's name
- Sex
- Place of birth
- Parents' names
- Mother's maiden surname
- Father's occupation
- Parents' residence
- Informant's name
- Occupation
- Description
- Name if added after registration of birth

1847-1895

- Registration number
- Date of birth
- Place of birth
- Name
- Sex
- Parents' names
- Mother's maiden surname
- Father's occupation
- Name of informant, description and address
- Date registered
- Registrar
- Name if added after registration of birth

1896-to current date

- Registration Number
- Child:
  - Surname
  - Given names
  - Date of birth
  - Time of birth (1999 onwards)
  - Place of birth
  - Sex
- Father and Mother:
  - Surname
  - Given names
  - Mother's maiden surname
  - Fathers occupation (pre 1986)
  - Age (pre 1992)
  - Date of birth (1992 onwards)
  - Place of birth
  - Date and place of marriage
  - Mother's occupation (1986 onwards)
  - Previous children of the parents' marriage (pre 1992)
  - Previous children of the same parents (1993 onwards)
- Informant:
  - Name(s) (both parents from 1995 onwards)
  - Address (no address from 1974 onwards)
  - Description
- Registration:
  - Date of registration
  - Registered by

Information provided on the certificate (cont.)

Deaths

1841-1847

- Registration number
- Surname
- Given names
- Place of death
- Date of death
- Occupation
- Sex
- Age
- Usual address
- Cause of death
- Informant's name
- Description
- Capacity
- Registration date

1847-1895

- Registration number
- Surname
- Given names
- Place of death
- Date of death
- Occupation
- Sex
- Age
- Cause of death
- Informant's name and address
- Description
- Registration date
- Registered by

1896- to current date

- Registration number
- Surname
- Given names
- Place of death
- Date of death
- Occupation
- Sex
- Age
- Date of birth (1984 onwards)
- Usual address (1951 onwards)
- Place of birth
- Years lived in each state (pre 1983)
- Father's surname and given name
- Father's occupation
- Mother's maiden surname and given names
- Mother's occupation (1984 onwards)
- Marital status (1951 onwards)
- Place of marriage
- At what age (pre 1951)
- Date of marriage (1951 onwards)
- To whom married
- De facto partner's name at deceased's time of death (2005 onwards)
- Names and ages of children (pre 2001)
- Names and dates of birth of children (2001 onwards)
- Cause of death
- Name of Doctor
- Date last seen alive (pre 1983)
- Place of burial or cremation
- Date of burial, cremation or transportation
- Person certifying (pre 1983)
- Certifying person company (pre 1983)
- Crematorium Official (1951-1983)
- Officiating Minister (pre 1983)
- Religious denomination of Minister (pre 1983)
- Witnesses (pre 1984)
- Informant's name
- Address
- Description
- Registration date
- Registered by

Information provided on the certificate (cont.)

Marriages

1841-1846
- Registration number
- Date of marriage
- Place of marriage
- Registration date
- Bridegroom and Bride:
  - Surname and given names
  - Usual occupation
  - Marital status
  - Age
- Celebrant's name
- Registration date
- Registered by

1847-1895
- Registration number
- Date of marriage
- Place of marriage
- Rites
- Bridegroom and Bride:
  - Surname
  - Given names
  - Usual occupation
  - Residence at time of marriage
  - Marital status
  - Age
  - Father's name
  - Father's occupation

1896-to current date
- Registration number
- Date of marriage
- Place of marriage
- Witnesses (1940 onwards)
- Bridegroom and Bride:
  - Surname
  - Given names
  - Usual occupation
  - Usual place of residence
  - Present place of residence (pre 1923)
  - Marital status
  - Age (pre 1963)
  - Date of birth (1964 onwards)
  - Place of birth (1923 onwards)
  - Father's name
  - Father's occupation
  - Mother's maiden name
  - Witnesses (1940 onwards)
  - Rites
  - Celebrant's name
  - Registration date
  - Registered by
- Rites
- Celebrant's name
- Registration date
- Registered by

5. BDM products for order

Once you have located the desired entry on the Online Index Search you have the option of ordering a certificate. These are available in the following formats:

- Certified Birth/Death/Marriage Certificate (less than 75 years old)* $60
- Certified Birth/Death/Marriage Certificate (more than 75 years old) $39
- Commemorative Birth Certificate* $70
- Uncertified Certificate* $25
- Birth/Death/Marriage Search* $36

*Certificates are subject to applicants meeting the Registry's Certificate Access eligibility requirements. Please refer to section 7 of this document.

Historical Certified Birth/Death/Marriage Certificates
These certificates can be ordered by selecting the 'order' option located at the end of each index entry. This will redirect you to the Western Australian Registration Online platform which will open on a separate web tab.

Recent Certified Birth/Death/Marriage Certificates
These can be ordered by completing the certificate application through the Western Australian Registration Online platform.

Commemorative Birth Certificate
Commemorative birth certificates cannot be used for official purposes, however, they make the perfect gift or memento of your family history. A complementary certified birth certificate is issued with each commemorative birth certificate ordered. Images of the commemorative birth certificate styles can be found in the 'apply for a birth certificate' section on the Births page of our website. You can apply for these certificates through the Western Australian Registration Online platform.

Uncertified Certificate
Uncertified plain paper copies of original handwritten or typed records are available for:

- Births that occurred 100 years or more ago
- Deaths between 1841 to 1983 (original handwritten or typed records are not available for deaths from 1984 as they have all been digitised)
- Marriages that occurred 75 years or more ago

Uncertified copies of original records may be of varying quality and legibility, handwritten or typed. Every effort is made to provide the best image quality possible but where the image is difficult to decipher and is unable to be transcribed the Registry will provide a refund.

Please note that some words in Open Era records may cause offence. In order to avoid causing offence, the copy you receive will be redacted unless you specifically ask for an un-redacted copy. By asking for an un-redacted copy, you accept that the copy you receive could contain words that may cause, or be capable of causing, offence to you or someone else who is aware of it.

Birth/Death/Marriage Search

If you are unsure of the particulars of an event or you cannot locate an entry on the Online Search Index, a ten year search of the WA Register can be requested. When applying through this method provide as much information as you can as this will affect the results of the search. The Registry will issue a letter of confirmation which can then be used to apply for a certificate if required.

A separate birth, death or marriage certificate application form, along with payment of the prescribed fee, must be submitted to obtain the certificate for the event being searched.

6. How to apply

Online
Certified Birth/Death/Marriage (recent and historical) Certificate and Commemorative Birth Certificate applications can be submitted through the Western Australian Registrations Online (WARO) platform:



By Post:
Certified Birth/Death/Marriage (recent and historical) Certificate, Commemorative Birth Certificate, Uncertified Certificate, Birth/Death/Marriage Search forms can be posted to:

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
PO Box 7720 Cloisters Square
PERTH WA 6850

In Person:
Certified Birth/Death/Marriage (recent and historical) Certificate, Commemorative Birth Certificate, Uncertified Certificate, Birth/Death/Marriage Search forms can be submitted in person at:

Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
Level 10, 141 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6000
9.00am – 4.00pm Mon to Fri

In Person:
Certified Birth/Death/Marriage (recent and historical) Certificate applications can also be submitted in person at the following courthouses:

184 Stirling Terrace
ALBANY WA 6330

109 Jull Street
ARMADALE WA 6112

Hamersley Street
BROOME WA 6725

3 Stephen Street
BUNBURY WA 6230

12 Stanley Street
BUSSELTON WA 6280

Corner of Babbage Island Road &
Robinson Street
CARNARVON WA 6701

Wittenoom Street
COLLIE WA 6225

Loch Street
DERBY WA 6728

100 Dempster Street
ESPERANCE WA 6450

8 Holdsworth Street
FREMANTLE WA 6160

15 Marine Terrace
GERALDTON WA 6530

21 Reid Promenade
JOONDALUP WA 6027

208 Hannan Street
KALGOORLIE WA 6430

Balmoral Road
KARRATHA WA 6714

Clive Street
KATANNING WA 6317

94 Coolibah Drive
KUNUNURRA WA 6743

333 Pinjarra Road
MANDURAH WA 6210

Mount Street
MANJIMUP WA 6258

20 Mitchell Street
MERREDIN WA 6415

24 Spring Park Road
MIDLAND WA 6056

Dandaragan Street
MOORA WA 6510

Fortune Street
NARROGIN WA 6312

118 Wellington Street
NORTHAM WA 6401

15-17 Whitfield Street
ROCKINGHAM WA 6168

Hawke Place
SOUTH HEDLAND WA 6722

Forms **cannot** be submitted by fax, email or telephone. All certificate fees include regular domestic or international postal delivery.

Accepted methods of payment are;

- **Credit card** – MasterCard or Visa only
- **EFTPOS debit card or cash** – when paying in person
- **Cheque of money order** – payable to Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages if sending by mail or, if attending Western Australian courthouse, payable to the Department of Justice.
- **Overseas applicants** - $AUD via credit card (MasterCard or Visa only) or international money order of bank draft payable to Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

The Registry is aware that some private companies charge a fee to download copies of birth, death and marriage certificate application forms or to assist with the certificate application process. Application forms are readily available from our website for download at no cost. These companies have no affiliation with the Registry and any complaints about their operations should be directed to the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety's Consumer Protection division.

7. Who can apply for family history certificates?

Any person (16 years of age or over) can apply for the following historical certificates:

- Births 100 years old or more
- Deaths 30 years old or more
- Marriages 75 years old or more

More recent certificates held by the Registry contain sensitive and personal information and are restricted to eligible people only. Applicants for more recent certificates and event searches will be required to provide necessary proof of identity documents.

If you are not eligible to apply, you can obtain permission from a person who is by having them complete a Letter of Authority. For more information, refer to the *Who can apply for family history certificates?* section of the Searching Family History page of our website.

8. Identification Requirements

In recognition of the fact that the fraudulent use of certificates reduces with the age of the record, the evidence-of-identity and certificate access eligibility criteria are not required for historical Open Era records.

For all other certificates and search requests applicants are required to provide at least three forms of evidence-of-identity documents and meet the certificate access eligibility criteria to receive certificates.

One from List 1, 2 and 3. At least one containing a photograph
or
One from List 1 and **two** from List 2. At least one containing a photograph
or
Two from List 2 and **one** from List 3. At least one containing a signature.

List 1
- Australian driver's license
- Australian Passport
- Australian Firearm License
- Defence Force/Police Identification Card
- Australian Citizenship Certificate (with evidence of residential status)
- Western Australian Photo Card, Over 18 or Proof of Identity Card
- Australian learner driver's permit card

List 2
- A financial institution Debit or Credit card
- Document of identity issued by the Passport Office
- Centrelink/Veterans Affairs Entitlement Card
- Birth Certificates (birth extracts are not accepted)
- Medicare Card
- Naturalisation, citizenship or immigration papers issued by the Department of Home Affairs
- Australian Security or Crowd Control License
- Student Identity Document or Statement of Enrolment

List 3
- Drivers license renewal notice
- Financial institution statement less than 6 months old
- Motor vehicle registration
- Property Lease or Tenancy Agreement
- Shire/Water rates notice
- Student Report or Certificate less than 12 months old
- Utility Account less than 6 months old

For overseas applicants, the Registry will consider overseas equivalent evidence-of-identity documents.

9. Further research sites

National Archives of Australia

- Passenger arrival records
  https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/immigration-and-citizenship/passenger-arrival-records
- Citizenship records
  https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/immigration-and-citizenship/citizenship-records
- Migrant accommodation camps
  https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/immigration-and-citizenship/migrant-accommodation-camps
- Wartime internment camps
  https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/immigration-and-citizenship/wartime-internment-camps-australia
- Alien registration records
  https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/immigration-and-citizenship/alien-registration-records
- Child migration
  https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/immigration-and-citizenship/child-migration
- Defence and war service
  https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/defence-and-war-service-records

Military Service Information

- Service and personnel records
  https://www.defence.gov.au/Records/ExService.asp
- Defence and war service
  https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/defence-and-war-service-records
- Australian war graves or memorial
  https://www.dva.gov.au/recognition/office-australian-war-graves/about-us
- Commonwealth war graves
  https://www.cwgc.org/
- Australian war memorial
  https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/research-at-the-memorial

Other Search Tools

- Births, Deaths and Marriages
  https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-justice/births-deaths-and-marriages-registry-offices
- WA Metropolitan Cemeteries Board
  https:www.mcb.wa.gov.au
- State Library of Western Australia
  https://slwa.wa.gov.au/
- State Records Office
  https://www.sro.wa.gov.au
- Red Cross: Find my Family
  https://www.redcross.org.au/get-help/help-for-migrants-in-transition/tracing-and-restoring-family-links

Further research sites (cont.)

- National Library of Australia
  https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/family-history
- Australian Electoral Roll
  https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/australian-electoral-rolls
- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
  https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history
- Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies Inc.
  http://www.aigs.org.au/